

**The Power of Proximity:
Creating and Venerating Shrines in Indian Buddhist Narratives**
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In India, in the first centuries of the Common Era, along with a sudden and vast proliferation of Buddhist monasteries—most of them situated just outside of urban centers on easily accessible trade routes (Heitzman 1984)—a promotional plan was put in place to encourage pilgrimage to Buddhist shrines. In a wide range of Buddhist sources,¹ devotees are shown extolling and enjoying the benefits of visiting sites associated with the Buddha's biography, and reliquaries of the Buddha are shown to be powerful tools for merit making. But what constitutes a shrine of a Buddha? What empowers it? What transforms a place, such as a building at a monastery, into a site of veneration? And why go there? What does one do at such a site, and how does one benefit?

In an effort to address these questions, I want to examine a story found in the *Divyāvadāna* ("Divine Legends")—a compilation of Indian Buddhist narratives from the early centuries of the Common Era. In both the "Story of a Brahman named Indra" (*Indrabrahmaṇa-avadāna*) and then again in the "Story of the Toyikā Festival" (*Toyikāmahā-avadāna*),² a tale is told about a place called Toyikā concerning the great merit that is accrued when devotees who are faithful in mind perform ritual practices at a shrine of a Buddha. Though tropes are repeated in the *Divyāvadāna*, this is the only tale that is told twice, and the only tale that contextualizes the mechanics of practice for

¹There are numerous references, if anyone cares to see them.

²Divy 76.10–80.10 and 465.10–469.19.

the faithful both for when a Buddha is alive and for when no Buddha is in living-and-breathing presence.

The story begins with the Buddha and Ānanda going to Toyikā. There a brahman plowing in the fields sees the Buddha, and then reflects,

'If I go to Lord Gautama and pay my respects, my work will suffer. If I don't go to him and pay my respects, my merit will suffer. Isn't there any skillful way that neither my work will suffer nor my merit?' Then this thought occurred to him: 'I will pay my respects standing right here. This way neither my work will suffer nor my merit.' Standing right there and still holding his goad-post,³ he paid his respects: 'I pay my respects to Lord Buddha!'⁴

The Buddha then explains to Ānanda,

This brahman has a [great] opportunity to put an end to worldly existence. If he only had the proper experience, knowledge, and insight, [it would have occurred to him] that in this place lies the undisturbed assemblage of bones of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa. Hence, he could have venerated me and, in this way, have venerated two Perfectly Awakened Buddhas. How is that? In this place, Ānanda, lies the undisturbed assemblage of bones of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa.⁵

³This image of the "goad-post" (*pratodayaṣṭi*) has different associations in the *Indrabrahmaṇa-avadāna* and the *Toyika-avadāna*. In the former, the associated image is the Buddha-sized post (*yaṣṭi*) which, in the previous embedded story, engendered a brahman's faith. In the latter, the associated image is the goad (*pratoda*) which, in the preceding narrative, was used to beat and bruise oxen.

⁴Divy 76.18–25 (cp. 465.16–22), *yadi bhagavantaṃ gautamaṃ upetyābhivādayiṣyāmi karmaparihāṅṅir me bhaviṣyatīti | atha nopetyābhivādayiṣyāmi puṇyaparihāṅṅir bhaviṣyati | tat ko 'sāv upāyaḥ syād yena me karmaparihāṅṅir na syān nāpa puṇyaparihāṅṅir iti | tasya buddhir utpannā | atrastha evābhivādanaṃ karomy evaṃ na karmaparihāṅṅir na puṇyaparihāṅṅir iti | tena yathāgrhītayaiva pratodayaṣṭyā tatrasthenaivaābhivādanaṃ kṛtam abhivādaye buddhaṃ bhagavantam iti |*

⁵Divy 76.25–77.3, *bhavaḥṣayakaraḥ kṣaṇa eṣa brāhmaṇaḥ^a saced asyaivam samyakpratyayaḥjñānadarśanaṃ pravartate^b etasmin pradeśe kāśyapasya samyakṣaṃbuddhasyāvīkopito 'sthisamghātas tiṣṭhatīty aham anenopakrameṇa vandīto bhaveyam evam anena dvābhyām samyakṣaṃbuddhābhyām vandanā kṛtā bhavet | tat kasya hetoḥ | asminn ānanda pradeśe kāśyapasya samyakṣaṃbuddhasyāvīkopito 'sthisamghātas tiṣṭhati |*

^aFollowing ms. A. Ms. B, *kṣubhavaḥṣayakaraḥ ṇa eṣa*. Ms. C, *bhavaḥṣayakaraḥṣaṇa eṣa*. Ms. D, *kṣuṇa eṣa*. In his "Critical Notes" to the *Divyāvadāna*, Vaidya (Divy-V 545) explains that "*bhavaḥṣayakaraḥ kṣaṇaḥ | eṣa brāhmaṇaḥ* means that this is an auspicious moment which would put an end to the saṃsāra of this man, who is born a brahman."

^bThis clause may be corrupt. Although the expression *jñānadarśanaṃ pravartate*, which is preserved in the version of this passage in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* (GM iii 1, 74.11), is quite common in the *Divyāvadāna* (e.g., Divy 83.7, 84.6–7, 147.26), this configuration of the expression is unattested elsewhere in the text.

The "skillful way" (*upāya*) that the brahman devises to venerate the Buddha and not stray from his work is not skillful enough, however. The rite performed by the brahman is not considered successful by the Buddha. The brahman "pays his respects" (*abhivādanam* √*kṛ*) to the Buddha from beside his plow, yet the Buddha tells Ānanda that the brahman has missed a "[great] opportunity to put an end to worldly existence." If the brahman had "the proper experience, knowledge, and insight," he would have known to come closer and *venerate* Gautama Buddha and Kāśyapa Buddha.

In the version of the story preserved in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*—the probable source for the narratives in the *Divyāvadāna*, if not the *Divyāvadāna* itself (cf. Hiraoka 1998)—the problem is glossed even more clearly as one of proximity. As the Buddha explains,

Ānanda, this brahman has made a mistake. [Had he approached and respectfully greeted me in this place,] then he could have looked and come to know for himself that in this place lies the undisturbed assemblage of bones of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa. Having approached, he could have venerated me. Hence, he could have venerated two Perfectly Awakened Buddhas. How is that? In this place, Ānanda, lies the undisturbed assemblage of bones of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa.⁶

It is being in the presence of the object of veneration that allows for a skillful way of practice. In this case, ritual action from a distance is a mistake.

In the above portion of the Toyikā story, two forms of ritual action are differentiated—that of "respectfully greeting" (*abhivādana*) and "venerating" (*vandana*). The act of "respectfully greeting" does not occur frequently in the *Divyāvadāna*, nor is it described in detail, but it is elaborated upon in texts such as the

⁶GM iii 1, 74.9–15, *kṣuṇa ānanda eṣa^a brāhmaṇaḥ* | [*anenopakramyāsmiṇ pradeśe abhivādane kṛte*] *sati pratyātmaṃ jñānadarśanaṃ pravartate* | *etasmīn pradeśe kāśyapasya samyaksambuddhasyāvīkopito 'sthisamghātas tiṣṭhatī* | *aham anenopakramya vandito bhavyam* | *evam anena dvābhyāṃ samyaksambuddhābhyāṃ vandanā kṛtā bhavet* | *tat kasya hetoḥ* | *asmīn ānanda pradeśe kāśyapasya samyaksambuddhasyāvīkopito 'sthisamghātas tiṣṭhati* |

^aThe Tibetan (N309b3; cited in GM iii 1, 74, note 2) reads *bram ze 'dis nyes de*. For another translation of this passage, see Schopen 1997: 131.

Manusmṛti (Manu ii.120–126). V. S. Apte (PSED, s.v. *abhivādāna*) explains the practice as a form of "salutation of a superior or elder by an inferior or junior, or of a teacher by his disciple. It consists in (1) rising from one's seat (*pratyutthāna*); (2) clasping the feet (*pādopasaṃgraha*), and (3) repeating the form of salutation (*abhivāda*) which includes the name of title of the person addressed, followed by the mention of the person's own name." In the Toyikā story, however, the act of "respectfully greeting" is done at a distance, too far away for "clasping the feet." As a practice in the *Divyāvadāna*, it is distinguished only by its relative lack of efficacy. By "respectfully greeting" the Buddha, the brahman has not "put an end to worldly existence." The process of "venerating" is also not defined in the *Divyāvadāna*, but it does occur frequently in a stereotyped trope of what one does upon meeting the Buddha—one "venerates with one's head the feet of the Blessed One."⁷ This act does require physical proximity and also a touching of the feet. And it is this act that has great karmic efficacy.

Now to return to the story—

In response to the Buddha's pronouncement that the brahman has missed a chance to venerate two Buddhas, Ānanda springs into action:

The venerable Ānanda very quickly folded his upper garment into four as a seat, and then said this to the Blessed One: 'May the Blessed One please sit down on this seat that I have specially prepared. In this way this piece of earth will be made-use-of by two Perfectly Awakened Buddhas—by the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa and now by the Blessed One.'⁸

Gregory Schopen (1997: 29, 131–132) has written about the Toyikā story, and in his assessment, the text "is concerned solely with the sacralization of that otherwise

⁷Divy 18.1, 18.22, 19.15, 21.3–4, etc.

⁸Divy 77.3–7 and Divy 465.29–466.4, *athāyusmān ānando laghu laghv eva caturguṇam uttarāsaṅgam prajñāpya bhagavantam idam avocat | niṣīdatu bhagavān prajñāpta evāsane evam ayaṃ pṛthivīpradeśo dvābhyāṃ samyaksambuddhābhyāṃ paribhukto bhaviṣyati yac ca kāśyapena samyaksambuddhena yac caitarhi bhagavateti |*

unmarked piece of ground by acts of worship and the establishment of a festival (*maha*)" (1997: 29). While Schopen is no doubt right that the text is concerned with the sacrilization of the site at Toyikā—with somehow endowing it with sacred significance, with marking it as a site of ritual efficacy—the text is also interested in explaining how the ritual efficacy of such a site arises. And this problematic doesn't seem to involve the cult of the book, as Schopen (1975: 174–175) had previously speculated. Instead, it involves the action of "making use" (*paribhoga*) of something.

Now in the Toyikā story, the Buddha first explains that if the brahman plowing his fields had come to him, "in this place" he could have venerated two Buddhas. Ānanda then asks the Buddha to sit down there so that "this piece of earth will be made-use-of by two Perfectly Awakened Buddhas—by the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa and now by the Blessed One."

Judging by Ānanda's request that the Buddha sit down there so that the place will be twice "made-use-of," the internment of Kāśyapa's bones there constitute one making-use-of the spot, but the Buddha's standing there does not. It seems that for the Buddha to make-use-of the spot, he needs to sit down on it—perhaps understood as a need to touch it, to engage with it more physically.

In the version of the Toyikā story in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, this notion of a shrine being constituted by an object that has been made-use-of is stated explicitly. There the Buddha explains to a brahman that there are "three kinds of shrines: shrines for bodily remains, memorial shrines, and shrines by use."⁹ In a commentary to the *Khuddakapāṭha*, the great fifth century scholar Buddhaghosa clarifies this classificatory system:

It should be built up, thus it is a shrine—it is said that it should be the object of

⁹Dhp-A iii, 252, *sarīracetiyaṃ uddissacetiyaṃ paribhogacetiyaṃ ti tīṇi cetiyāni* |

pūjā. Or, it is a shrine because it has been built up. Moreover, it is of three kinds: a shrine by use, a memorial shrine, and a relic shrine. In this regard, the Bodhi tree is a shrine by use, an image of the Buddha is a memorial shrine, a *stūpa* with a reliquary that contains a relic is a relic shrine.¹⁰

In regard to the creation of shrines, it seems that there may have been a connection between making-use-of an object and sitting on it or in its presence. Both "the place" (*pradeśa*) in question in the Toyikā story and the Bodhi tree in Buddhaghosa's example are apparently made-use-of by the Buddha's sitting there. In the story of the present that begins the *Kāliṅgabodhi-jātaka* (Ja iv, 228–230; trans. in Cowell et al. 1990: iv, 142–143), a Bodhi tree is likewise transformed into a "shrine by use" by the Buddha's sitting at its base and meditating.¹¹ Though Kāśyapa's bones would technically be a shrine for bodily remains according to this schema, Kāśyapa's bones also could be said to make-use-of the spot, for they too could be said to have an active connection with it.

This notion of making-use-of is further glossed in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. As Gregory Schopen explains, monastics are shown to be obligated to make-use-of things that people give them as a way of generating merit for those donors. Hence, the notion of "merit resulting from use" (*paribhogānvyayaṃ puṇyam*) is applied to a range of monastic offerings (Schopen 1996: 112ff.). Much like these examples, here too there is a sense that certain objects must be put to use as a way of creating merit. Here, however, merit is not created as a gift-in-turn or a payment-of-goods to an individual donor. Instead, merit is created by dint of transforming a place into a more efficacious

¹⁰PJ i, 221–222 (also trans. in Ñāṇamoli 1960: 249–250), *tattha cayitabban ti cetiyaṃ, pūjetabban ti vuttaṃ hoti, citattā vā cetiyaṃ taṃ pan' etaṃ tividham hoti; paribhogacetiyaṃ uddissakacetiyaṃ dhātu[ka]cetiyan ti, tattha bodhirukkho paribhogacetiyaṃ, buddhapaṭimā uddissakacetiyaṃ, dhātugabbhathūpa sadhātukā dhātu[ka]cetiyaṃ.*

¹¹By contrast, however, in the last verses of the *Buddhavaṃsa* (Bv 101; trans. in Horner 1975: 98–99), one of the latest additions to the Pali canon, a wide array of "relics of use" (*paribhogikadhātu*) are enumerated. Among these objects are included the Buddha's almsbowl, walking staff, robes, bed covering, and drinking vessel, but it is only his "sitting mat" (*nisīdana*) that was apparently activated by the act of sitting.

Field of Merit for any future donor.¹²

Now in the Toyikā story, this passage concerning the logic of making-use-of something has multiple concerns, and primary among them is promoting pilgrimage to shrines of a Buddha. The text seems to contend that a "place" becomes a "shrine of a Buddha" when it is made-use-of by a Buddha, and that this occurs through close physical contact. If this is the case, then the notion of a "shrine of a Buddha" may have had a very wide signification, encompassing any place that the Buddha sat or slept.¹³ India may very well be filled with such shrines, whether they are recognized or not.

Yet how does one know if a place has been transformed into a "shrine of a Buddha"? In the "Story of Kunāla" (*Kunāla-avadāna*), for example, when Upagupta brings King Aśoka to various sites associated with the Buddha's life and explains that "in this place" such-and-such event occurred, are these sites merely "places" or also "shrines of a Buddha"? Did the Buddha's activities in these places constitute a making-use-of them or were these activities inert, as standing apparently was in the Toyikā story? When one considers the exhortations that the Buddha later makes in the Toyikā story regarding the great rewards accrued from ritual practices at "shrines of a Buddha," this question of the status of these sites becomes crucial.

It is striking, nonetheless, that in this case the activity of standing is not sufficient to transform a place into a shrine, for the existence of "footprint shrines" (*padacetiya*) is well attested in the Buddhism of South Asia. In his discussion of the

¹²A similar example can be found in the *Sahasodgata-avadāna*. There Sahasodgata is said to earn merit by offering certain objects so that they can be made-use-of by the Buddha and the monastic community. As the Buddha explains, "by providing bedding and seats to be made-use-of, you would be reborn among the god—much less providing food and drink to be made-use-of" (*śayanāsānaparibhogena tāvat tvam deveṣupapadyethāḥ prāg evānnapānaparibhogeneti* | Divy 307.14–16).

¹³As Kern (1896: 91; cited in Schopen 1975: 151) noted more than a century ago, "all edifices having the character of a sacred monument are *caityas*, but not all *caityas* are edifices." What does constitute a shrine, at least to me, is still ambiguous.

status of the Buddha's footprint, Jacob Kinnard (2000: 42–43) explains that "as objects that have come into direct contact with the Buddha himself, they most logically fall into the *pāribhogika* [i.e., shrines by use] category (although these are clearly not objects that the Buddha used); however, since they serve to commemorate the Buddha's presence in a particular spot, they could also be considered *uddeśika* relics [i.e., memorial shrines]." In the case of the Toyikā story, however, the ground on which the Buddha stands falls into neither category. Though the Buddha comes into "direct contact" with the ground beneath his feet, it is not considered to be an object "that the Buddha used," and no mention is made of its status as a memorial shrine.

Now to return to the story once again—

After Ānanda has made a seat for the Buddha with his robe, the Buddha sits down and then asks the monks if they would like to see "the undisturbed assemblage of remains of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa."¹⁴ They assent, and remark that "at the sight of it, monks can cultivate faith in their minds."¹⁵ Some *nāgas* then raise the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa's undisturbed assemblage of remains.¹⁶ Thereafter, the Buddha tells the monks to grasp its appearance, and then it disappears.

¹⁴Divy 77.9–10 and Divy 466.6–7, *samyaksambuddhasya śarīrasaṃghātam avikopitaṃ* | What had been referred to as an assemblage of Kāśyapa's "bones" (*asthi*) is now described as his "remains" or "relics" (*śarīra*). The former term seems to be used to describe Kāśyapa's deceased form in a dormant invisible state, while the latter term may suggest that Kāśyapa's form, once visible, can be used as an object of ritual activity. See, for example, Schopen's (1997: 99–113) discussion of *śarīra-pūjā*.

¹⁵Divy 77.12–13 and Divy 466.9–10, *dṛṣṭvā bhikṣavo cittaṃ abhiprasādayiṣyanti* |

¹⁶Strangely, the *nāgas* raise the assemblage of Kāśyapa's remains not because the monks want to see it, but because they are convinced that the Buddha himself wants to see it. As it is explained in the text, after the monks express their desire to see the remains of the Fully Awakened Kāśyapa, the Buddha has a worldly thought. And when a Buddha has a worldly thought, all creatures "know with their minds the thought of that Blessed One" (*bhagavataś cetasā cittaṃ ājānanti* | Divy 77.16). Hence, when the Buddha has a mundane thought about Kāśyapa's remains, the *nāgas* reflect, "What is the reason that the Blessed One has had a worldly thought?" And then they saw that he wanted to see the undisturbed remains of the Fully Awakened Kāśyapa" (*kiṃ kāraṇaṃ bhagavatā laukikacittaṃ utpāditaṃ iti | paśyanti kāśyapasya samyaksambuddhasya śarīrasaṃghātam avikopitaṃ draṣṭukāma iti* | Divy 77.17–19; cp. Divy 466.13–15, which also preserves *draṣṭukāma*). The Gilgit Manuscripts (GM iii 1, 75.7) likewise preserves *dṛṣṭukāmāḥ*, but the referent is unclear as there is no mention of any *nāgas*. Though one might expect the Buddha to "want to make [others] see" (*darśitukāma*) the assemblage of Kāśyapa's remains, no such reading is preserved.

Meanwhile, King Prasenajit hears that the Blessed One has raised up the undisturbed assemblage of remains of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa,¹⁷ so he and a host of others set out to see it. But it disappears before they arrive. The people "feel miserable and dejected"¹⁸ and wonder whether their coming there has been in vain. A lay disciple of the Buddha then begins to circumambulate the place where the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa's remains had been.

And he thus formed this thought with his mind: 'How much merit will I get from respectfully walking around [this place]?'

Then the Blessed One, knowing with his mind the thoughts of that lay disciple and that large crowd of people, uttered this verse so that they wouldn't have any regrets:

Hundreds of thousands of gold coins or nuggets
are not equal to the wise man, faithful in mind,
who walks around shrines of a Buddha.

One of the lay disciples then offered a lump of clay at this place, and thus formed this thought: 'Elsewhere the Blessed One has explained how much merit [is earned] from respectfully walking around [shrines of a Buddha]. But how much merit will there be from [offering] a lump of clay?'

Then the Blessed One, knowing with his mind his thoughts as well, uttered this verse:

Hundreds of thousands of gold coins or nuggets
are not equal to one, faithful in mind,
who places a single lump of clay
at a shrine of a Buddha.

After hearing this, many hundreds of thousands of beings placed lumps of clay there as offerings.¹⁹

¹⁷According to the account in the story, however, the *nāgas* did it.

¹⁸Divy 78.3–4 and 466.28, *duḥkhadaurmanasyam utpannam* |

¹⁹Divy 78.6–18, *evaṃ ca cetasā cittam abhisamskṛtam asmān me padāvihārāt^a kiyat puṇyaṃ bhaviṣyati | atha bhagavāṃs tasya mahājanakāyasyāvipratīṣārasaṃjānanārthaṃ tasya copāsakasya cetasā cittam ājñāya gāthāṃ bhāṣate |*
śataṃ sahasrāṇi suvarṇaṇiṣkā jāmbūnadā nāsyā samā bhavanti |
yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacittaḥ padāvihāraṃ prakaroti vidvān ||
anyatamenopasākena tasmīn pradeśe mṛttikāpiṇḍo dattaḥ | evaṃ ca cittam abhisamskṛtam padāvihārasya tāvat iyat puṇyam ākhyātaṃ bhagavatānyatra^b mṛttikāpiṇḍasya kiyat puṇyam bhaviṣyati |
atha bhagavāṃs tasyāpi cetasā cittam ājñāya gāthāṃ bhāṣate |
śataṃ sahasrāṇi suvarṇaṇiṣkā jāmbūnadā nāsyā samā bhavanti |
yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacitta āropayen mṛttikāpiṇḍam ekam ||
śrutvānekaiḥ prāṇiśatasahasrair mṛttikāpiṇḍasamāropaṇaṃ kṛtam |

The story continues with this style of exposition as the Buddha explains that hundreds of thousands of golden objects are not equal

to one, faithful in mind, who places heaps of pearls and lovely flowers at shrines of a Buddha
 . . . to the wise man, faithful in mind, who festoons with garlands shrines of a Buddha
 . . . to the wise man, faithful in mind, who makes a gift oil lamps at shrines of a Buddha
 . . . to the wise man, faithful in mind, who sprinkles perfume at shrines of a Buddha;²⁰
 and so on.

After the Buddha has sat down and transformed the site at Toyikā into a place made-use-of by two Perfectly Awakened Buddhas, he then makes visible the remains of the Perfectly Awakened Kāśyapa so that they may be seen and their sight may be used to cultivate faith. This ritual practice of "seeing" (*darśana*) is quite common in the *Divyāvadāna*, particularly in the following type of scenario: a being sees the Buddha, faith arises in him or her, and then the being makes an offering to the Buddha. The Buddha, in turn, foretells the great karmic reward that the donor will accrue as a result of his or her gift.

Here, however, it is the skeleton of a previous Buddha—not a presently living-and-breathing Buddha—that is seen and used to cultivate faith. But as the Buddha later observes, after hundreds and thousands of beings have already performed a variety of ritual acts at the site where the Buddha Kāśyapa lies buried,

One may honor [a Buddha] still living
 as well as one passed into final nirvāṇa.
 Cultivating faith equally in one's mind,

^aThis expression seems to be similar to the Pali expression *jaṅghāvihāra*.

^bCp. Divy 467.10 which preserves *bhagavatāsyā tu*. Speyer (1902: 111) strongly favors this reading.

²⁰Divy 78.24–79.16, *yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacitta āropayen muktapusparāśrim . . . yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacitto mālāvihāraṃ prakaroti vidvān . . . yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacittaḥ pradīpadānaṃ prakaroti vidvān . . . yo buddhacaityeṣu prasannacitto gandhābhiṣekaṃ prakaroti vidvān |*

here there is no difference in merit.²¹

As Schopen (1997: 132) rightly remarks, "the implications here are that there is no distinction between a living Buddha and an assemblage of relics—both make the sacred person equally present as an object of worship, and the presence of either makes available the same opportunity to make merit."

But in the Toyikā story the remains of the Buddha Kāśyapa soon disappear, and this leads to the performance and explanation of a different set of efficacious ritual actions. These actions do not require one to see the object of veneration; one only need be in its presence. Furthermore, these actions are shown to be quite easy to accomplish, for "many hundreds of thousands of beings" are said to have followed ritual protocol in offering lumps of clay there. Presumably, if a multitude of people could go to a shrine like the one at Toyikā, make offerings, and receive promise of great rewards, then such journeys should be emulated. The argument here is clear: those sites that have been made-use-of by a Buddha should be visited, and in their presence offerings should be made. The results will be extraordinary.

Now, in addition to demonstrating that Buddhas and Buddha-relics are functionally equivalent and that efficacious ritual actions can be performed without great difficulty before even unseen objects of veneration, the Toyikā story also seems to have another purpose—the proverbial land grab.

John Strong argues that the various Toyikā stories may attest to a Buddhist project of using the cults of previous Buddhas, such as Kāśyapa, to co-opt sites associated with other divinities into Śākyamuni's dispensation. As Strong (1999: 10) explains,

²¹Divy 79.19–20 (cp. 469.3–4),
tiṣṭhantaṃ pūjayed yaś ca yaś cāpi parinirvṛtam |
samaṃ cittaṃ prasādyeha^a nāsti puṇyaviśeṣatā ||

^aDivy 469.4, *cittaprasādena*.

The cult of previous Buddhas, in fact, would seem to have been an ideal way for incorporating non-Buddhist, pre-Buddhist or brahmanical elements into the Buddhist fold. By identifying indigenous divinities and local sacred places with *past* Buddhas, Buddhists could effectively 'convert' them to Buddhism while still maintaining them at a distance.²²

While this project of incorporation is somewhat vague in the Toyikā story in the *Divyāvadāna*—the sacralization of the "place" in question merely creates a Buddhist site on an area that abuts a brahman's land—in other versions of the story, it is more explicit. The version of the story in the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*, for example, tells of a co-option of a brahmanical site. As Strong (1999: 9) nicely summarizes:

The Buddha and his entourage, approaching the village of Todeyya (Skt., Toyikā), come to a shrine, a 'god-place'—*devatṭhāna*—that is apparently dedicated to some local divinity. The Buddha sits down next to it and sends Ānanda to summon the brahmin who is plowing a nearby field. The brahmin comes but instead of venerating the Buddha, he pays his respects only to the shrine. The Buddha then asks him about the place he has just venerated and the brahmin answers that the shrine (which he now calls a '*cetiyaṭṭhāna*,' 'a caitya place'), has long been there and that worshipping it is an old custom of his people. The Buddha then reveals to him that this shrine is actually the site of the golden caitya of the Buddha Kāśyapa, a replica of which he then fashions in mid-air, using his supernatural powers. This is enough to convert the brahmin and his shrine to Buddhism.

A similar co-option of brahmanical phenomena can be seen in the incident that precedes the Toyikā story in the "Story of a Brahman named Indra." The Buddha tells a haughty brahman named Indra that he should look underneath the pit in his home where the sacrificial offering is made, and that there he'll find a "post" (*yaṣṭi*) made of *gośīrṣa* sandalwood that is the length of the Buddha's body. The brahman does so, and as a result becomes full of faith. He then goes to the Buddha and receives teachings, at which time he directly experiences the reward of the Stream-Enterer. The brahman then asks the Buddha if he can celebrate a festival with the *gośīrṣa* sandalwood post,

²²Although there are indications, Strong (1999: 12) notes, that "the veneration of previous Buddhas *apart* from Śākyamuni was potentially seen as schismatic, the cult of their relics *in conjunction* with that of Śākyamuni served to reinforce the charisma of the latter and give it chronological depth."

and the Buddha gives his permission. Then,

in a remote place, with great respect, he raised²³ that post and a festival was celebrated. Realizing that this [festival] would be for the gaining of religious merit, other brahmins and householders as well bound *kuśa* grass [for offerings]. The brahmin Indra celebrated this festival with the post, and it came to be known as the Indramaha, Indramaha ("Indra Festival").²⁴

While the Indramaha is well-known in Sanskrit sources as a brahmanical festival that originated with the gift of a post by the great god Indra,²⁵ here the festival is given a Buddhist origin. Instead of the Indramaha being so called because it is in praise of the god Indra, the idea here is that the festival is actually in praise of the Buddha but named after the brahmin Indra who originated it. With this etiological story, a brahmanical festival not only becomes a Buddhist one, but good brahmins are shown to be Buddhist. Though I can find no reference to a brahmanical festival called Toyikāmaḥa, the parallels between these two stories in the "Story of a Brahmin named Indra" are unmistakable.

The most blatant aspect of this land grab at Toyikā, however, occurs through the ritual actions that are performed there—most notably, the offering of lumps of clay. Following the example of the lay disciple who offered lumps of clay at Toyikā, and bearing in mind the Buddha's words that "hundreds of thousands of gold coins or nuggets are not equal to one, faithful in mind, who places a single lump of clay at a

²³In a parallel trope, here a post is "raised" (*ucchrāpita*) as an object of religious devotion, and later in the avadāna, in the Toyikā story, Kāśyapa's skeleton is "raised" (*ucchrāpitaḥ* | Divy 77.20) for similar purposes.

²⁴Divy 76.5–9, *tena viviktāvikaśe mahatā satkāreṇāsau yaṣṭīr ucchrāpitā mahāś ca prajñāpitaḥ | anyair api brāhmaṇagr̥hapatibhiḥ kuśalam adhiṣṭhānāya^a bhavati iti viditvā <kuśā>^b baddhā | indreṇa brāhmaṇena yaṣṭīyā mahāḥ prajñāpita iti indramaha indramaha iti samjñā samvṛtā |*

^aPerhaps emend to *kuśalādhiṣṭhānāya*.

^bFollowing the Tibetan (Shakleton Bailey 1951: 86), *rtsa ku shas btags te*. Divy 76.8, *kuśā baddhā*. Reading from the *Divyāvadāna*, Agrawal (1966: 71) suggests that "the Brāhmaṇas and the householders tied a strip of cloth to the Indrayaṣṭī [i.e., post] at the time of the Indramaha festival."

²⁵See, for example, the *Mahābhārata*, Ādiparva 57.17–27. For a detailed account of this festival, see Agrawala 1970: 49–66.

shrine of a Buddha," many hundreds of thousands of beings place lumps of clay there as offerings. Though the site had been unmarked, it is now presumably piled high with an enormous mound of clay. In short, a shrine has been created. As John Strong (1999: 17) observes,

This, to be sure, is a commemorative stupa; its mode of construction makes it clear that the remains of [the Buddha] Kāśyapa are not enshrined in it. But it is exactly the way the *stūpa* at Toyikā is built in the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, and the Mahāsāṃghika Vinayas, except that in the latter, King Prasenajit eventually arrives with seven hundred carts filled with bricks and asks the Buddha for permission to "enlarge" (and obviously to reinforce) the dirt *stūpa*.

The *Divyāvadāna*, to summarize, seeks to transform the Toyikā site into a recognized and *recognizable* "shrine of a Buddha" (and a doubly powerful one at that), and hence into a site of pilgrimage. The doctrine of presence necessitates that such sites would need to be visited in person but also that such sites may abound. They just need to be pointed out. One can be sure that there are more shrines yet to come.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Dhp-a	<i>Dhammapada-aṭṭakathā</i> . See Norman 1906–1914.
Divy	<i>Divyāvadāna</i> . See Cowell and Neil 1886.
Divy-V	<i>Divyāvadāna</i> . See Vaidya 1959.
GM	<i>Gilgit Manuscripts</i> . See Dutt 1984.
Ja	<i>Jātaka</i> . See Fausböll 1877–1896.
PJ I	<i>Parmaramatthajotikā</i> of Buddhaghosa. See Smith 1959.
PSED	<i>The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> . See Apte 1986.

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