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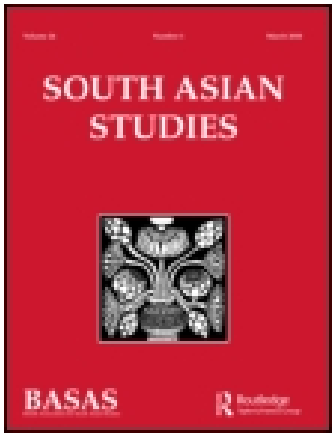

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Married Monks: Buddhist Ideals and Practice in Kroraina

Sam van Schaik*

The British Library

This article examines the documents recovered from the Central Asian kingdom of Kroraina (Chinese Shanshan 鄯善), from the third to fourth centuries, as rare records of the way Buddhism was adapted outside of India during the Gupta period. In particular, the evidence for the existence of married Buddhist monks (*śramana*) is examined, and the reasons why this situation might have developed are explored. The introduction examines in brief the evidence for monastic marriage in other Buddhist cultures, concluding that only in Meiji-era Japan was this situation both widespread and supported by the ruling powers. This is followed by an overview of the sources, documents in Gāndhārī from the archaeological site of Niya, which reveal the existence of *śramana* with wives and children, and manuscripts in Sanksrit which show that the normative ideals of Buddhism, including the *pratimokṣa* vows of monks and nuns, were not unknown in this region. Finally, a possible explanation for the state-sanctioned existence of married monks is presented in the context of the Buddhist state rituals described by the pilgrim Faxian in the neighbouring kingdoms of Khotan and Kashgar.

Keywords: Buddhism; Kroraina; Gāndhārī; Sanskrit; Kharoṣṭhī; celibacy; ritual; kingship

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Introduction

There are always compromises and adaptations involved in establishing a religious tradition outside of its original context. The kingdom of Kroraina provides an opportunity to look closely at one example of how Buddhism was adopted outside of India using archaeological sources rather than received history. The finds of the Niya and Loulan sites of administrative documents in Gāndhārī provide a detailed (if incomplete) picture of the daily life of Buddhist monks in the region during the third to fourth centuries CE. One aspect of Buddhist life in Kroraina that has often been remarked on, but has not been explained, is the existence of married monks.[1]

Married monks are not unknown in other Buddhist cultures, but there has been confusion on this matter in the history of western descriptions of Asian Buddhism. For example, in early works on Tibetan Buddhism, it was often asserted that there were 'married Lamas' in certain sects of Tibetan Buddhism. However, such claims mistook the nature of practitioners found in the Nyingma, Sakya, and Kagyu schools, who wear robes similar to members of monastic orders, but who are not ordained, and therefore do not follow the *pratimokṣa* vows. They are never considered 'monks' (*dge slong*) in the Tibetan tradition itself.[2] Tibetan histories do tell of the existence of a class of quasi-monks in the tenth century:

> *jo bo mched gnyis byams pa chos 'khor rnams khri thog du spyan drangs nas mchod pa byas/ rtags rang gis blangs nas sham thabs gong ba can gon/ skra gzhan bregs gtsug phud bzhag pa dbyar zla gsum dbyar gnas byed zer nnas gtsug lag khang du sbdad nas gtan khrims lnga srung/ de nas dgag dbye byed zer ste grong du khyim thab byed/ ming dgra bcom gtsug phud can zer ba mang po byung nas skye bo'i mchod gnas byed/*
>
> They performed a ceremonial enthronement of the two Jowo statues and the statue of Maitreya Dharmacakra, and made offerings to them. Adopting the characteristics of the statues, they wore cassocks with collars, tied up their hair on top of their heads and shaved the rest. Saying that they were performing the three months' summer retreat, they stayed in the temples while observing the five rules for laypeople. Then, saying that they had performed the closing ceremony of the retreat, they returned to the villages as householders. Many of these so-called 'arhats with topknots' appeared, acting as priests for the ordinary people.[3]

These 'arhats with topknots' are said to have flourished in central Tibet at a time when the imperial support of Buddhism had collapsed with the end of the Tibetan empire, and the transmission of the *vinaya* is said to have been lost. The existence of these characters is presented in the traditional histories as a sign of the decline of Buddhism, a symptom to be concerned about, and one that was to be eradicated with the re-establishment of the *vinaya* lineages in the late tenth century.[4]

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1. An under-tablet containing the partial text of a letter. Or.8211/1374, (c). Courtesy of The British Library.

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2. Photograph of the excavation of site N.xxvi in Niya, one of the houses in which śramaṃna *lived. Photo 392/27(89), (c). Courtesy of The British Library.*

It is possible to speak of the existence of married monks in Japan, but this must be understood to be a culturally specific phenomenon that arose out of particular historical circumstances. It was the monk Saichō (767–822 CE), founder of the Tendai School in Japan, who introduced the concept of a married monk in the face of resistance from other Buddhist schools and the Japanese government. Essentially, his innovation was to extend the definition of a monk to one who has received only the bodhisattva vows of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The bodhisattva precepts, which had already been popular in China since at least the fourth century, could be conferred on monks or lay people as a vow to honour the Mahāyāna ideal of working to end the suffering of all sentient beings. Though it became common for Tendai monks to marry, this was not the case in other Buddhist

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monastic establishments, which held that the bodhisattva precepts did not confer monastic status. The non-ordained priests of the Jōdo Shinshū also remained in the minority.[5]

In fact, in Japan, as in China, government regulation of Buddhist communities tended to enforce the *vinaya* against the perceived decadence of the monasteries, using the monastic code itself to constrain and control the activities of the monasteries. As one scholar puts it, the Japanese *Sōniryō* laws for regulating the Buddhist monastics were introduced in the reign of Emperor Temmu (676–686 CE) to 'make every priest and nun into an efficient agent of support for what has been called Temmu's imperial system'.[6] Just as monastic celibacy was the subject of government enforcement, the sudden decline of celibacy was the result of government intervention in the Meiji period (1868–1912 CE), when new regulations eliminated the stricture of celibacy.[7]

While this revised idea of what it meant to be a monk became more common in Japan in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has not been generally accepted in other Buddhist cultures.[8] As Richard Jaffe states in his study of this phenomenon:

> The departure of Japanese Buddhism from the monastic and ascetic emphasis of most other forms of Buddhism is striking. The Japanese Buddhist clergy are unique among Buddhist clerics in that the vast majority are married, but they continue to undergo clerical ordination and are considered members of the sangha (*sôgya*) by both the Buddhist establishment and parishioners alike.[9]

Thus it is only in Japan in the late nineteenth century that we have clear case of married monks being socially and legally accepted. The vigorous survival of the ideal of celibacy elsewhere belies the narrative of 'decline' and 'degeneracy' that is often invoked in discussions of culturally specific Buddhist practices outside of India. This is not to say that in other Buddhist cultures monks always kept their vows of celibacy; we know that this was not the case.[10] This brief historical overview suggests that monastic communities have occasionally abandoned celibacy in certain situations. However, in the one well-documented instance of a widespread, sustained, and legally accepted form of non-celibate Buddhist monasticism that we know of, the primary cause for the abandonment of celibacy appears to have been state intervention. Let us now look at how relevant this might be for the Buddhists of Kroraina.

Kroraina's married monks

The most numerous and useful sources on Buddhism in the kingdom of Kroraina are the documents found at the archaeological site of Niya.[11] The town, which was known at the time as Caḍota, was relatively small. Padwa describes it as a 'sparsely populated and very rural landscape of agricultural land stretched along canals, with scattered farms, hamlets, and individual residences, but lacking any densely inhabited central town'.[12]

Over seven hundred and sixty documents were excavated from Niya and neighbouring sites by Aurel Stein in the early twentieth century, and are now housed in the collections of the British Library and the National Museum of India.[13] Most of these are letters, composed in the Gāndhārī language and written in the Kharoṣṭhī script on wooden tablets. The documents, which may be either rectangular or wedge-shaped, were bound with string and sealed with clay. Usually the cover tablet was inscribed with the name of the addressee and the content of the letter was on the inner sides of one or both tablets. Many documents were addressed to, or sent by, a local official holding the title of *cozbo*. Some were sent directly to, or from, the king of Kroraina. Most deal with problems or disputes arising from unpaid taxes, loans that had not been repaid, and the buying and selling of property, goods, and slaves.[14]

Some of these disputes were between people identified as *śramamna*, the Gāndhārī equivalent of the Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, a word that, in the Buddhist context, usually refers to a monk. The documents show not only that these *śramamna* were involved in the buying and selling of goods, property, and slaves – activities that are well documented in other Buddhist monastic communities – but also that they had wives and children. One of these documents, found in Or.8211/1374, an undertablet, contains the following letter:

> *(2) śramaṃna budhavarma maṃtreti yatha śramaṃna śariputrena denuga aṃto- (3) aṣa paride dhitu uṃneya giḍa śirsate[ya]e nama śramaṃna śariputrena sa dhitu (4) śirsateyae śramaṃna budhavarmaṣa jañatvena bharya dita taya striyae śirsa- (5) tiyae dhitu puṃñavatiyae nama śramaṃna jivalo aṭhamaṣa bharya didi hu- (6) ati se aṭhama mṛta se pu śramaṃna budhavarma taya dhitu puṃñavatiyae…*
>
> The *śramaṃna* Budhavaṁa says that the *śramaṃna* Śariputra received as an adopted child from Denuǵa Aṃto his daughter called Śirsateyae. The *śramaṃna* Śariputra gave this daughter to the *śramaṃna* Budhavaṁa as his wife in lawful marriage. The daughter of that woman Śirsateyae, Puṃñavatiyae by name, was given as wife to the *śramaṃna* Jivalo Aṭhama. This Aṭhama died. Then this *śramaṃna* Budhavaṁa, of that daughter Puṃñavatiyae…[15]

According to this text, a woman was adopted by a *śramaṃna*, and subsequently both the adopted woman and her daughter were married to two other *śramaṃna*. Here the term is 'given as a wife' (*bharya dita/didi*). Another document, KI 474 (N.xxii.iii.8 + 11) mentions

'the wife of the *śramaṃna* Saṃgapala'. These documents suggests that men and women, or boys and girls, could be brought into the Buddhist community through adoption (a practice also seen outside of the Buddhist context), and a woman would then sometimes be married to a *śramaṃna*. Such practices appear to be regarded as normal, and were only recorded because a problem that led to a dispute arose, in this case the death of the *śramaṃna* Aṭhama.

This raises the question of the role of these *śramaṃna*, and how they were distinct from other social groups. Or.8211/1443, an oblong tablet, contains a list of social groups, including the *śramaṃna*:

> *(1) cozboana kranaya lẏipeyaṣa ca lihati ◊ apsu opgeya tasuca casgeya śramaṃna bharsavaḍhiṣa ca maṃtra deti adehi puṃniyade sarva traṃghadhare (2) goṭha bhaṭara jaṃna śramaṃna bramaṃna vurcuga ṣa ca ede jaṃna tusmahu cavala aja divasaṃmi iśa anitavo yati ede jaṃna aja na iśa aniṣyatu (3) prahar[e] 20 20 10.*[16]
>
> The *cozbo*s Kranaya and Lẏipeya write, they give instructions to the *apsu* Opǵeya, the *tasuca* Casǵeya, and the *śramaṃna* Bharsavaḍhi. From there, from Puṃni, all the officials, householders, *śramaṃna, brahman*s, and *vurcuǵa*s, these people are to be quickly brought here by you today. If you do not bring these people here today, fifty strokes [is the penalty].

According to this document, the *śramaṃna* were a separate class, and distinct from ordinary householders, a distinction that is underlined by the celibacy of the monastic class in most Buddhist cultures. Nevertheless, here they were recognised in law as having wives and children and responsibility towards them. One possibility is that these married *śramaṃna* did maintain their vows of celibacy, not consummating their marriages, and brought children into their family units through the practice of adoption.[17] This may be supported by the fact that several of the Niya documents concerning adoptions involve *śramaṃna*, and two name the adopted child as a *śramaṃnera*, a novice monk.[18]

The evidence of these householder *śramaṃna* in Niya cannot simply be extended to the whole of the kingdom of Kroraina. Nevertheless, the documents show that the family connections of the *śramaṃna* were legitimated by law. Given the interest of the kings in regulating Buddhist communities, this could hardly have been a local phenomenon that went unnoticed. Therefore, it is likely that it took place in other parts of the kingdom as well.

Communities and practices

The archaeological evidence shows that a large group of *śramaṃna* in Niya (or Caḍota) lived in three neighbouring properties: N.xxiii, N.xxiv, and N.xxvi (using Stein's identification numbers). All three properties were houses, and while the concentration of documents mentioning *śramaṃna* indicates their presence in all three, N.xxiv in particular seems to have been a scriptorium in which Stein discovered what he referred to as a 'hidden archive'. Padwa points out that 'of 9 literary and Buddhist documents discovered at Niya, 7 were discovered at this settlement'.[19] Another nearby structure, N.v, may have been a small Buddhist place of worship. These structures do not differ significantly from other houses in the Niya site, so it appears that the *śramaṃna* did not live in essentially different quarters from the other inhabitants of the town.

Some idea of the way that the monks of Caḍota were regulated is given by the text of an edict from the king of Kroraina handed down to the *śramaṃna* community, now housed in the National Museum of India. The cover tablet lists the 'regulations for the community of monks [*bhikṣusaṃga*] at Caḍota', and the rules themselves are detailed on the verso (the under-tablet is missing):

> *(1) saṃvatsare 10 mahanuava maharaya jituṃga devapu [tra] mahagiri [mā]ṣe maṣe 10 2 divaṣe 10 iśa… (2) mi khuvaneṃci bhikṣusaṃga caḍoti bhikṣusaṃgasya kriyakara prañapta śruyati navaka bh-… (3) vṛdhasya na śrota maṃñati vṛdha ratu bhikṣu abhomata hutaṃti udiśa devaputrena bhikṣusaṃ… (4) sya puraṭha eta kriyakara prañapta vṛdha śilaprabha puṃñaṣena viharavala ete saṃgasya… (5) re saṃgakarani kartavya yatha dharmena pruchidavo yo bhikṣu 6 saṃga[ka]rani sarva edeṣa [karta]… (6) yena bhikṣusaṃga atamaṃna bhaveyati yo bhikṣu saṃgakarani na anuvarteyati taṣa… (7) dadavo paṭa 1 yo bhikṣu posathakarmaya nānuvarteyati tasya daṃḍa paṭa 1 yo bhikṣu posatha-… (8) karma nīmaṃtreṣu grihasta coḍina praviśayāti taṣa daṃḍadavo paṭa 1 yo bhikṣu bhikṣusya prahara… (9) deyati mṛduka paṭa 4 1 madya paṭa daśa 10 asimatra paṃcadaśa 10 4 1 yo grihasta śramaṃnaṣa pra…*[20]
>
> In the tenth year of his majesty the great king, Jiṭugha Mahagiri, son of heaven, in the twelfth month, tenth day… the community of monks in the capital laid down regulations for the community of monks in Caḍota. It is heard that the novices do not pay attention to an elder; they disobey the old monks. Concerning this these regulations have been laid down by his majesty in front of the order of monks. The elders Śilaprabha and Puṃñaṣena (are to be) in charge of the monastery (*viharavala*). They have to administer all the activities of the community. (Disputes) are to be examined in accordance with the dharma. All the activities of the community of monks are to be administered by them… so that the community of monks shall be content in mind (*atanaṃna*). Whichever monk does not partake in the activities of the community of monks shall pay a fine of one roll of silk. Whichever monk does not take part in the *posatha* ceremony his penalty is (a fine of) one roll of silk. Whichever monk at the invitations to the *posatha* ceremony enters in householder's dress shall

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> pay a fine of one roll of silk. Whichever monk strikes another monk (in the case of) a light (blow the fine is) five rolls of silk, (in the case of) a moderate (blow) ten rolls of silk, (in the case of) an excessive (blow) fifteen rolls of silk. Whichever householder to a *śramaṃna*…

The king himself handed down the regulations detailed in this document, though day-to-day administration was delegated to the community's elders (*vṛdha*). The king's involvement with the Buddhist community that is evident here can be interpreted as an aspect of the self-identification of the Kroraina royal line with Buddhism. This is evident in the longer royal titles given in some of the documents, for example: 'the great king, the king of kings, the great, the victorious, the just, abiding in the true dharma, his majesty the great king Aṃkvaǵa, son of heaven'.[21] Some of these titles seem to have been adopted directly from the Kushan kings. In a recently discovered Kharoṣṭhī inscription from Endere, an honorific title applied to the same king refers specifically to the Mahāyāna. The following is Richard Salomon's conjecturally reconstructed reading:

> *(1) bhaṭaraǵaṣa maharayaṣa ra(yatiraṣa mahaṃtaṣa jayaṃtaṣa dharmiyaṣa [+ one or more additional titles]) (2) ṣa amitra-mardhanaṣa svayaṃ-balaṣa pari(grahita-nāmaṣa deva manuṣya-saṃpu)-jitaṣa mahayana-saṃ- (3) prastidaṣa saca-dharme stidaṣa mahanuava (ṣa maharayaṣa (aṃgokaṣa saṃ)-vatsa(*re)*
>
> In the year… of the lord, the great king, the king of kings, the great, victorious, pious… crusher of his enemies, who is his own army, whose name is well-received, who is worshipped by gods and men, who has set forth on the Mahāyāna, who is fixed in the true dharma, of great majesty, the great King Aṃgoka… The names of the supervisors of (?) are Okaripa, Sirsa, and Kutre. This (???) at Hinarga.[22]

The epithet 'one who has set forth in the Mahāyāna' (Gāndhārī *mahayana-saṃpratida*, Sanskrit *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*) also appears in a document from Niya addressed to a local official (*cozbo*).[23] It points to an early association of the royal Buddhist cult with the Mahāyāna, which we know from later sources was also a feature of Khotanese Buddhism.

The specific rules and fines levied by the king in the Niya document (cited above) concern the monks' behaviour during the performance of the *posatha* (or *uposatha*) ceremony of group confession. In the translation above, 'monk' is *bhikṣu* (Sanskrit *bhikṣu*) and only in an incomplete sentence at the end does the term *śramaṃna* appear. Thus, we should keep in mind the possibility that the words *bhikṣu* and *śramaṃna* referred to different roles in this monastic community. The rules do not mention celibacy, but since the text it is not complete (the under-tablet probably contained more text), this may not be significant. On the other hand, it is interesting that the king had to reinforce a rule against the monks arriving at the *posatha* ceremony in lay clothes, which suggests that at least some monks only put on their robes for ceremonial purposes. This, which is reminiscent of the description of the Tibetan 'arhats with topknots', would be a violation of the *vinaya*.

This raises the question of how well known the strictures of the *vinaya* were in Kroraina. A few of the manuscripts from Niya do give a sense of the moral and doctrinal aspects of Buddhism. Two Sanskrit texts, inscribed on the rectangular tablet Or.8211/1393 and the wedge-shaped under-tablet Or.8211/1401, provide moral instruction of the kind found in the *sūtra*s, emphasising the impermanence of wealth and happiness and the suffering caused by greed and desire. For example, 'first a man prospers, then he languishes; first he is praised, then blamed; first he grieves, then he rejoices; first he gives, and then he begs'.[24] In Or.8211/1393, the dangers of associating with women are communicated in the same pithy style: '[if] he is liked by women, nothing pleasant results from that; women are like the edge of [a] razor; who would speak praise of them?'[25]

Thus, the ideals of renunciation and celibacy, central to Buddhist monastic culture, are present among the manuscripts from Niya. The actual texts of the monastic code are partially represented in only one manuscript from Niya, KI 510 (from N.xxiv). This fragment is too damaged and incomplete to be placed in a particular *vinaya* tradition; its verses appear towards the end of several versions of the *Prātimokṣa-sūtra* as well as in the *Udānavarga*.[26] Nevertheless, it provides evidence of the presence of at least one *vinaya* text in the region. Another manuscript mentions the *pratimokṣa* vows (*pratimokhe sa[vaṃ]ra*) that are taken by all monks.[27] These texts, few as they are, do suggest that the Buddhist communities in Caḍota were aware of the codes of behaviour expected of Buddhist monks.

The role of ritual

If the strictures of celibacy laid down in the monastic code were generally understood, why were married *śramaṃna* tolerated at all? The possibility that I want to explore here is that married *śramaṃna* fulfilled the need for monastics in Buddhist rituals in the absence of a fully ordained monastic community. One clue to the ritual practices of the Buddhist community in Caḍota is the large wooden plank Or.8211/1682, which contains part of a Sanskrit prayer on the ritual of bathing for the Buddhist monks. This text, which may have been written down for recitation at such a ritual, extols the qualities to be gained by performance of bathing; and the involvement of lay sponsors is indicated in the mention of 'he who provides material for removing

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dirt, he who provides oil for rubbing, and he who provides a dry bath.'[28]

The regulations in KI 514, coming from the king, also show the close relationship between the ruling elite and Buddhist groups. Taking this into account, along with the association of the royal line with a Buddhist identity, as indicated by the Endere stone inscription, it would be surprising if there was no regular practice of rituals ratifying the king's Buddhist identity and relationship with the Buddhist establishment. Such rituals are described in the neighbouring Central Asian states of Khotan and Kashgar in the account of Faxian's travels at the end of the fourth century. Faxian's account does contain a description of Kroraina itself, though it is very brief: 'their king has received the dharma, and there may be some four thousand monks belonging to the hīnayāna'.[29] In Khotan, Faxian's account describes an annual religious festival involving the royal court and the Buddhist monasteries:

> 其城門上張大幃幕。事事嚴飾。王及夫人婇女皆住其中。瞿摩帝僧是大乘學。王所敬重。最先行像。離城二四里作四輪像車。高三丈餘。狀如行殿。七寶莊校。懸繒幡蓋。像立車中二菩薩侍。作諸天侍從。皆以金銀雕瑩懸於虛空。像去門百步。王脫天冠易著新衣。徒跣持花香翼從出城。迎像頭面禮足散花燒香。像入城時。門樓上夫人婇女遙散眾花紛紛而下。
>
> Over the city gate they stretch a large awning with all kinds of ornamentation, under which the king and queen and court ladies take their place. The monks at Gomati monastery follow the Mahāyāna, which is deeply venerated by the king; and it takes first place in the procession. At a distance of two to four *li* from the city, a four-wheeled image-car is made, over thirty feet in height, looking like a moveable temple and adorned with the seven preciosities, with silk banners and embroidered canopies. The image of the Buddha is placed in the middle of the car, flanked by two bodhisattvas and a host of divine attendants, beautifully carved in gold and silver and are suspended in the air. When the images are one hundred paces from the city gate, the king takes off his cap of State and puts on new clothes; walking barefoot and holding flowers and incense in his hands, with attendants on each side, he proceeds out of the gates. On meeting the images he bows his head down to the ground, scatters the flowers, and burns the incense. When the images enter the city, the queen and court ladies who are on top of the gate scatter far and wide all kinds of flowers that flutter down and thus the splendour of decoration is offered up complete.

In Kashgar, the account describes a more elaborate, but similar, festival held every five years:

> 般遮越師漢言五年大會也。會時請四方沙門。皆來雲集。集已莊嚴眾僧坐處。懸繒幡蓋。作金銀蓮華著僧座後。鋪淨坐具。王及群臣如法供養。或一月二月。或三月。多在春時。王作會已復勸諸群臣設供供養。或一日二日三日五日乃至七日。供養都畢。王以所乘馬鞍勒自副使國中貴重臣騎之。並諸白氈種種珍寶沙門所須之物。共諸群臣發願布施眾僧。布施僧已還從僧贖。
>
> The *pañcapariśad* is called in Chinese 'the great quinquennial assembly'. To the assembly *śramaṇa* from all quarters are invited, and these collect together like clouds. Having gathered together, the place where the monks are to sit is splendidly adorned beforehand with silk banners and canopies. Golden and silver lotus flowers adorn the rear of where the monks sit. When all is in order, the king and his ministers make their offerings according to the rite. The assembly may last for one, two, or three months, and is generally held in the spring. The king, when the assembly is over, further bids his ministers to arrange their offerings for presentation, which ceremony may last for one, two, three, five, or even seven days. When all the offerings have been made, the king takes his own horse, saddles and bridles it himself, and causes a distinguished official to ride it. Then with some white felt and all kinds of treasures such as *śramaṇa* require, he joins with the body of officials in a vow to hand over these things as alms. After [the king] has given the alms to the monks, they are redeemed from the monks.

Both ceremonies are arranged around acts of giving by the king and government. These donations would have been largely symbolic of more regular financial operations. An example of the latter in Kashgar is described immediately after the passage above, in which the monks receive annual tithes in return for providing a portion of the wheat harvest on their land. The ceremonies offer an emblematic ritual version of the everyday economic activities of monastic Buddhists and their lay patrons. This process, which Jacques Gernet calls 'the circuit of giving', is an exchange of money or goods for religious merit, leading to an improved position in this life or the next. The Central Asian ceremonies cast the king in the role of supreme giver; he thus also had the claim to be supremely meritorious.[30]

The social and ritual structure of Buddhist kingship in Central Asia may well have been influenced by the Kushan Empire, where there is ample evidence of royal patronage of Buddhism and the adoption of Buddhist imagery by the state.[31] In the Kushan Empire, as in later Buddhist kingdoms such as Tibet, an older notion of divine kingship was assimilated to a Buddhist worldview in which the king's divinity was equivalent to the status of a bodhisattva, or even a Buddha.[32] If the kings of Kroraina were claiming the status of Buddhist kingship, as the inscription from Endere also suggests, then it would have been vital for them to have people in place to perform the Buddhist rituals ratifying their status.[33]

Rituals such as these function to maintain the roles of their participants. They are not decorative, or dispensable for those whose roles depend on them.[34] Padwa finds evidence for the close relationship between the

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monastic community of Niya and the royal court in the fact that the territory occupied by most of the *śramaṃna*s was called *deviyae navaka avana*, 'the territory of the divine queen'.[35] Despite this close relationship with the royal house, a smaller Buddhist community like the one at Niya may not have been able to support a monastic population sizable enough to perform the rituals required of them. In a society that relied on marriage and adoption in order to form family allegiances, it may not have been economically viable to lose a portion of the male population to celibate monasticism.

With the evidence that we have, we can only speculate as to the compromises made in order to permit *śramaṃna* to legally marry in the face of the prohibitions of the monastic code. It might be that the *śramaṃna*s took the full monastic ordination and simply ignored the strictures on celibacy. On the other hand, they may have received only the lay vows, but adopted the status of a fully ordained monk for ritual purposes. Another possibility, mentioned above, is that they combined the life of a celibate monk with that of a householder by taking a wife but remaining celibate (at least in theory), with children brought into the family through adoption.[36]

We know that Buddhists in China during the same period (third and fourth centuries) struggled with their political rulers over issues the duty of homage to the emperor; and the celibacy of the monastic community was a point of contention from this early period onwards, with those who were antagonistic to Buddhism arguing that the monks were an unproductive and parasitic element of the population.[37] The Buddhist communities of Kroraina may not have been large or politically powerful enough to avoid pressure from the king and his court to circumvent the strictures of celibacy and fulfil a dual role as a socially productive householder and a practitioner of Buddhist rituals for the state. In this situation, we have a possible explanation for the existence of married Buddhist monks in Kroraina.

NOTES

1. There is as yet no published single-volume study on the kingdom of Kroraina. A good overview can be found in Marylin Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Vol. 1* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 323–425. Mariner Padwa's doctoral thesis is a groundbreaking social history of the Niya oasis, see Mariner Padwa, 'An Archaic Fabric: Culture and Landscape in an Early Inner Asian Oasis (3rd–4th Century C.E. Niya)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2007). For a brief overview of the previous studies on Buddhist practices in Kroraina, including a discussion of the issue of married monks, see Valerie Hansen, 'Religious Life in a Silk Road Community: Niya during the Third and Fourth Centuries', in *Religion and Chinese Society, Vol. 1*, ed. by John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), pp. 279–315. T. Burrow published a discussion of the language of the Niya documents and a translation of the less fragmentary documents, see T. Burrow, *The Language of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937); T. Burrow, *A Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents From Chinese Turkestan* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1940). In recent years there have been several publications on the Gandhari scrolls discovered in Afghanistan; see for example Richard Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra: The British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).
2. This misapprehension is unfortunately reproduced in an otherwise excellent study of monks' and nuns' relationships with families and spouses: Shayne Clarke, *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), p. 116.
3. *The Scholar's Feast (Mkhas pa'i dga' ston)* 430.18–431.2. For the translation see André Alexander and Sam van Schaik, 'The Stone Maitreya of Leh: The Rediscovery and Recovery of an Early Tibetan Monument', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 21 (2001), 421–39.
4. See Ronald Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Sam van Schaik and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012).
5. On Saichō and his struggle for official acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the bodhisattva vows, see Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984). On the Jodō Shinshū priests and their non-celibacy, see Richard Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), Chapter 2.
6. Jaffe, p. 10, note 2 cites Kōyū Sonoda, 'Early Buddha Worship', in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Ancient Japan*, ed. by D. M. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 359–414.
7. On the bodhisattva precepts in China, see Wendi Ademek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an*

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Early Chan History and its Contents (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), Chapter 3. On Saichō's innovation of ordination through the bodhisattva vow, see Groner.

8. As Jaffe, pp. 2–3, points out, the acceptance of married Buddhist clergy in Korea and Taiwan in the twentieth century was due to Japanese colonial influence, and is currently on the wane.
9. Ibid., p. 2.
10. In many of his papers, Schopen has shown how Buddhist monastic practice differed from the ideals of the sutras and *vinaya*; see for example Gregory Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of the Mahāyāna* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 15. The example of Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu valley is also mentioned by Clarke, p. 116. However, the argument that Newar Śākya priests are Buddhists monks who at some point gave up the strictures of celibacy is difficult to substantiate and remains disputed; see Theodore Riccardi, 'Review of David N. Gellner, "Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest. Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual"', *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 16 (1996), 58–61.
11. On the first excavation of Niya and the wooden documents found there, see M. A. Stein, *Sand-Buried Ruins of Khotan* (London: Fisher and Unwin, 1903), pp. 385–97. The documents recovered by Stein are split between the British Library in London and the National Museum of India in New Delhi; the former have all been photographed and are available online at the website of the International Dunhuang Project (<http://idp.bl.uk>) [accessed 28 August 2014] along with the translations from Burrow, *Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents*. Transcriptions of the documents, originally published in E. J. Boyer, J. Rapson, and E. Senart, *Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions Discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), are available at <http://www.gandhari.org> [accessed 28 August 2014]. The language of the documents, a particular form of Gāndhārī, is discussed in detail in Burrow, *Language of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents*, which is summarized in Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 77–90.
12. Padwa, p. 90.
13. The British Library manuscripts have been digitized and are available on the website of the International Dunhuang Project (<http://idp.bl.uk>) [accessed 28 August 2014]. Apart from the Stein collections, there are wooden documents from Kroraina in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and some have been discovered more recently by Chinese archaeologists; see Meicin Lin, 'Kharoṣṭhī Bibliography: The Collections from China (1897–1993)', *Central Asiatic Journal*, 40 (1996), 187–220.
14. The different forms of the wooden documents are discussed in Padwa, pp. 100–05.
15. KI 418, Or.8211/1374 (N.xxi.6a), Obv. For a complete annotated transliteration of this and other Niya documents, see the catalogue on the website <http://www.gandhari.org> [accessed 28 August 2014]. Translations of Niya documents in this paper are from Burrow, *Translation of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents*.
16. KI 554 (N.xxiv.viii.23), Obv.
17. There is some support for this supposition in the *vinaya* passages studied by Clarke (see note 2 above). See especially Clarke, Chapter 3.
18. KI 415, Or.8211/1372+1373 (N.xxi.2+3), concerns 'an adopted child who is a novice', *putra ṣamnera uneyaga*, and KI 569 (N.xxiv.viii.72) concerns the adoption of a child called Śamamnera.
19. Padwa, p. 180.
20. KI 489 (N.xxiii.i.11), Rev.
21. KI 579 (N.xxiv.viii.82): lines 1–2: *maharaya-rayatirayaṣa mahaṃtaṣa jayaṃtaṣa dharmiyaṣa sacadharmasthidaṣa mahanuavamaharaya Aṃkvaga devaputraṣa.*
22. Richard Salomon, 'A Stone Inscription in Central Asian Gāndhārī from Endere (Xinjiang)', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 13 (1999), 1–13 (pp. 3–4).
23. KI 390, Or.8211/1673 (N.xv.355), Obv., lines 1–2*: priyadevamaṃnuśa devamaṃnuṣya-saṃpujitaṣa sunamaparikirtitaṣa mahāyana saṃprastitaṣa atripta priyadarśanaṣa mahaṃta-cozbo Ṣamaṣena [ṣa]...*
24. KI 523, Or.8211/1401 (N.xxiv.viii.9), Rev., line 3: *punar naro vardhati hāyati punaḥ ◊ punar naro śāsyati niṃdyate punaḥ ◊ punar naro śocati naṃdati punah ◊ punaṃ dadāti punar eva yācati.*
25. KI 514, Or.8211.1393 (N.xxiv.vi.4), Obv., lines 2–3: *istriyanaṃ priyu [v]asti mā priyu tina vidyati kṣura dhara saṃ[me] (3) istriya taṣa varna ko bhaṣati.*
26. Daniel Boucher, 'Review of Richard Salomon, "Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhāra"', *Sino-Platonic Papers*, 98 (2000), 58–71; also cited in Hansen. On sectarian affiliation in the Gāndhārī Buddhist manuscripts, see Collette Cox, 'What's in a Name? School Affiliation in an Early Buddhist Gāndhārī Manuscript', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, 23 (2009), 53–63.
27. KI 510, Or.8211/1388 (N.xxiv.v.1), line 2.

28. KI 511 (N.xxiv.vi.1). For a complete annotated transliteration, see the catalogue record for CKD0511 at <http://www.gandhari.org> [accessed 28 August 2014]. Some previous studies (e.g. Hansen) have stated that the ritual is for bathing an image of the Buddha, an interpretation of the Sanskrit term that appears in Burrow's translation (*gaṇottama*); but this term is an epithet for the monastic community ('the supreme assembly'). In fact, Burrow's *gaṇottama* is itself an interpretation of the word that appears in the manuscript, which is *ganuktama* (actually in the genitive as *ganuktamasya*). Also, the monks referred to in this text are *bhikṣu* rather than *śramaṇa*.
29. 其國王奉法。可有四千餘僧悉小乘學。 This and the following translations are adapted from H. A. Giles, *The Travels of Fa-hsien (399–414 A.D.), or Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1923). I would like to thank Imre Galambos and Emma Goodliffe for their assistance with these passages.
30. Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), Chapter 7. In his translation of Faxian's account, Legge compared the ceremony at Kashgar with acts of giving by kings described in the *Mahavamsa*, see James Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), p. 23.
31. Buddhism was not the only religion patronized by the Kushan kings, though Kaniṣka in particular is closely associated with Buddhism; see J. Harmatta, 'Religions in the Kushan Empire', in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Vol. II, The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, ed. by J. Harmatta and others (Paris: Unesco, 1994), pp. 313–29. The nature of Kushan influence over the Taklamakan states is debated, but the use of the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script in Kroraina remains the best evidence of a period of influence, perhaps during the second century CE. For a useful, if somewhat dated, discussion of this issue, see John Brough, 'Comments on Third-Century Shan-Shan and the History of Buddhism', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 28 (1965), 591–93.
32. For a recent study of divine kingship in Tibet, including connections with Khotan, see Martin Mills, 'Ritual as History in Tibetan Divine Kingship: Notes on the Myth of the Khotanese Monks', *History of Religions*, 51 (2012), 219–20.
33. The relationship between Kroraina and the neighbouring kingdom of Khotan appears to have been close, judging from the many Niya documents mentioning people travelling between there and Khotan.
34. This understanding of the role of ritual and other practices is concisely expressed by Latour: 'If you don't have the festival now or print the newspaper today, you simply lose the grouping, which is not a building in need of restoration but a movement in need of continuation. If a dancer stops dancing, the dance is finished. No inertia will carry the show forward'. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 37.
35. Padwa, p. 243.
36. As Clarke has shown, a close study of various versions of the *vinaya* shows a much more complex approach to familial relationships among monastics than has usually been assumed, though the relationship between this literary material and actual monastic practice 'on the ground' is, as he also points out, not clear.
37. See the sources discussed in Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Proefschrift, 1959; repr. Leiden: Brill, 2007), Chapter 1.

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