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Social Contexts and Practical Ethics of the Buddhist Precept Against Intoxicants: Gandhāran Wine Culture and the Debate on the Partial Undertaking of the Five Precepts

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Abstract

Recent archaeological evidence indicates that Gandhāran wine culture and Buddhist communities shared the same social and material environment. However, surviving evidence does not permit direct reconstruction of lay Buddhists' drinking practices. Grounded in source criticism, this study combines contextual historical interpretation with comparative textual analysis to examine Gandhāran wine culture, the application of the precept against intoxicants, and the Sarvāstivāda theory of partial undertaking of the five precepts at distinct evidentiary levels. Archaeological evidence situates Buddhist communities within Gandhāra's wine-producing environment. Vinaya materials clarify criteria of fermentation, intoxicating properties, and intended use. The *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* illuminate Gandhāran views on lay status and selective undertaking of individual precepts. The analysis identifies concern with intoxication (*mada*) and heedlessness (*pamāda*) as the normative basis for applying the precept and examines how Buddhist affiliation and wine culture could coexist within the same society. It posits no direct causal relationship between wine culture and either relaxation of the precept or debates over partial undertaking, synthesizing independently derived findings only where they are mutually compatible.

Keywords: Gandhāran wine culture; precept against intoxicants (*buyinjiu jie* 不飲酒戒); partial undertaking of the five precepts (*wujie fenshou shuo* 五戒分受說); heedlessness (*pamāda*); lay Buddhist ethics

1. Introduction

The Buddhist precept against intoxicants (*buyinjiu jie* 不飲酒戒) is one of Buddhism's ethical guidelines and is generally understood as a rule prohibiting the consumption of alcohol. Yet the precept extends beyond the act of drinking itself to intoxication (*mada*) and heedlessness (*pamāda*) that may result from it. This formulation reflects an ethical aim of preventing mental disturbance and the loss of self-control.

Gandhāra, a major center of Nikāya Buddhism, was also a region in which wine culture flourished. This combination makes Gandhāra an important case for examining how the precept against intoxicants could be understood and applied within a concrete social setting. Buddhist texts warn against drinking as an act associated with various harmful consequences, whereas archaeological remains related to wine production have been identified throughout Gandhāra, including the Swat Valley. Buddhist sites, inscriptions, and related textual sources likewise indicate that wine culture and Buddhist communities existed within the same regional and cultural environment. This contrast between textual

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norms and material culture provides a point of departure for asking how Buddhist practical ethics could operate within the conditions of local life.

The surviving evidence, however, does not permit a direct reconstruction of the specific relationship between Gandhāran wine culture and Buddhist communities or of how Buddhists at the time undertook and observed the precepts. The social conditions of Gandhāra can likewise be understood only to a limited extent from fragmentary evidence preserved in archaeological remains, inscriptions, Buddhist texts, and later pilgrimage accounts.

Previous studies have illuminated the relationship between Gandhāran Buddhism and local material culture on the basis of archaeological and related evidence, while some have discussed the possibility that wine may have been permitted under exceptional circumstances despite monastic prohibitions against alcohol consumption.[1] These discussions, however, have focused primarily on monasteries and monastics, leaving the undertaking of precepts and the conditions of lay life comparatively underexplored. In particular, the social environment associated with wine culture has not yet been sufficiently examined in conjunction with both the criteria governing the application of the precept against intoxicants and the question of how lay Buddhists undertook the five precepts.

Building on the contributions and limitations of previous scholarship, the present study treats Gandhāran archaeological evidence and Buddhist textual sources as belonging to distinct evidentiary levels and combines contextual historical interpretation grounded in source criticism with comparative textual analysis. Archaeological evidence illuminates the social and material environment of Buddhist communities, Vinaya materials provide normative criteria for the application of the precept against intoxicants, and Abhidharma texts preserve doctrinal debates concerning lay Buddhist status and the undertaking of the five precepts. These sources are examined together not to corroborate the same historical facts or establish causal relationships among them, but to address different dimensions of a common research problem. Accordingly, their respective evidentiary scope is distinguished, and independently derived findings are synthesized only insofar as they are mutually compatible.

The discussion proceeds in three stages. First, archaeological evidence is used to outline the spatial and socioeconomic environment in which Gandhāran wine culture and Buddhist communities were situated. Second, Vinaya materials clarify the range of beverages and activities to which the precept against intoxicants applies depending on such factors as fermentation status, intoxicating properties, and intended use. Finally, the study examines the debate over the partial undertaking of the five precepts in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (*Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論; T1545) and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論; T1558), focusing on the views of the Gandhāran masters referred to in the texts as the "western masters." Particular attention is given to the relationship between the three refuges and the undertaking of the five precepts, the establishment of lay Buddhist status, and the possibility of selectively undertaking individual precepts.

Throughout this analysis, the application of the precept against intoxicants and the partial undertaking of the five precepts are treated as distinct issues. The former concerns the prohibitive scope of a precept already undertaken, whereas the latter concerns the range of precepts undertaken by a lay Buddhist. By bringing the findings from these two dimensions together, the study interprets the relationship between Gandhāran wine culture and lay Buddhist undertaking and observance of the precept against intoxicants not as a simple conflict between local ways of life and Buddhist norms, but in terms of the possibility of differentiated forms of precept undertaking and observance at the social, normative, and doctrinal levels.

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2. Gandhāran Wine Culture and the Social and Material Environment of Buddhist Communities

Gandhāra was a historical region centered on the Peshawar Basin in present-day northwestern Pakistan and extending along the Kabul River. In the broader cultural sense of "Greater Gandhāra," it also encompassed Swat, Taxila, and parts of eastern Afghanistan (Salomon 2018, pp. 11–12). Situated at a pivotal crossroads linking South Asia, Central Asia, and the Iranian world, Gandhāra functioned as a major contact zone for the movement of people, goods, and religious traditions. Agricultural and commercial surpluses generated through these networks helped sustain the expansion of Buddhist monasteries throughout Gandhāra and neighboring regions (Neelis 2011, pp. 229–30).

The prosperity that developed under successive northwestern kingdoms and reached its height during the Kuṣāṇa period enabled extensive royal and elite patronage of Buddhist monasteries and the veneration of relics (Salomon 2018, pp. 28–29). This patronage laid the foundation for the construction of large monasteries and stūpas throughout Peshawar, Taxila, and Swat, as well as for the development of a culture of pilgrimage. Gandhāra was also part of a broader Buddhist cultural sphere in which diverse traditions of Nikāya Buddhism and doctrinal interpretations intersected. In particular, it was closely associated with an important scholastic current of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma. In textual sources, the proponents of this current are referred to as the "western masters" and are associated in modern scholarship with Gandhāran Sarvāstivādins, in distinction from the Kashmir-based Vaibhāṣikas (Dhammajoti 2009, pp. 75–77).

Gandhāran Buddhism thus developed within a social environment shaped by extensive trade networks, urban economies, and the intersection of diverse forms of material culture. Understanding Buddhist communities in the region therefore requires attention not only to the doctrinal and disciplinary traditions maintained within monasteries, but also to the broader economic and cultural conditions of local society.

Recent archaeological research indicates that grape cultivation and wine production formed part of Gandhāra's regional economy and material culture over an extended period. In particular, the large grape presses and fermentation-related remains discovered near monasteries in the Swat region support the view that wine was produced and consumed within local society. After the decline of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty and the expansion of Sasanian power in the mid-third century, monasteries functioned as major landholders and centers of the agricultural economy. These circumstances alone do not establish that Buddhist communities were directly and institutionally involved in wine production. Taken together, however, these socioeconomic changes and the archaeological evidence indicate that wine-production activities and Buddhist communities existed within the same socioeconomic environment (Olivieri and Vidale 2006; Olivieri 2019, pp. 160–67).

According to Elisa Iori, more than one hundred Buddhist establishments were located in and around Barikot by the early third century. Suburban monasteries participated in the management of natural and agricultural resources in the hinterland, thereby acquiring considerable socioeconomic influence. At an urban Buddhist temple in Barikot, condensers used for distillation and vessels used for drinking, storage, and serving were discovered together with stūpas, Buddhist images, altars, and offerings. These finds indicate that the material culture associated with distillation and consumption was not confined to areas outside Buddhist institutions, but was also present within the material setting of an urban Buddhist temple (Iori 2023, pp. 101–9, 119–20).

Whereas the preceding evidence indicates a spatial association between wine-related material culture and Buddhist institutions, the Chalagram Stone Bowl and related artifacts provide clues for examining the meanings and uses of grape juice and fermented beverages. The inscription on the Chalagram Stone Bowl, dated to approximately 177/178 CE, men-

tions a donor and a monk or novice for whose recovery the donation was made. Harry Falk examined this evidence together with large stone bowls decorated with lotus-petal motifs found at Takht-i Bāhī and other sites, inscriptions containing the term *nigadaka*, and images depicting wine production. He proposed that these artifacts may have been associated with the filtration or fermentation of grape juice. Falk also noted that the terms *nigada* and *niṛgada* are used in Sanskrit medical literature to describe beverages considered "healthy" or "beneficial to health," particularly in connection with alcoholic drinks. On this basis, he suggested that the local Gandhāran custom of regarding wine as beneficial to recovery may have been incorporated into the material culture and practices of Buddhist communities (Falk 2009, pp. 68–71).[2]

The distinctive character of Gandhāran wine culture becomes even clearer when compared with other regions of South Asia.[3] Although South Asia had diverse drinking cultures that included grain-based fermented liquors and sugarcane-based alcoholic beverages, grape wine occupied a particularly prominent place in Gandhāra and the regions to its north. According to the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, even poor people in the northern regions could drink grape wine, whereas in other regions even the wealthy had difficulty obtaining it.[4] This account supports the likelihood that wine was a regional specialty that circulated and was consumed relatively widely in Gandhāra and the neighboring northern regions.

Wine culture was not confined to the sphere of material production; it was also expressed in the symbolic systems of Gandhāran sites. Max Klimburg describes Gandhāra as part of the "Ancient Wine Roads," along which knowledge of wine production and consumption spread through Taxila and Peshawar. In Gandhāran Dionysian imagery—including festive banquet scenes and depictions of grapevines—he identifies a cultural configuration in which Buddhist imagination was combined with sensual pleasure (Klimburg 2016, pp. 274–75). The statue of Hārītī discovered at Barikot in the Swat Valley is also noteworthy in this context. Hārītī, a *yakṣiṇī* who converted to Buddhism, was worshipped as a guardian deity of childbirth, fertility, and the protection of children. The statue depicts her holding a child in one hand and a bunch of grapes in the other. This image represents a case in which local meanings associated with grapes and wine were combined with Buddhist protective beliefs and imagery of abundance. It thus indicates that, at the iconographic level as well, Gandhāran regional culture intersected with Buddhist material culture and symbolic systems.[5]

Taken together, the evidence discussed above suggests that grapes and wine in Gandhāra were not merely luxury goods of limited circulation introduced from outside the region, but were widely integrated into regional systems of production and everyday consumption. Gandhāran Buddhist communities likewise developed within a historical setting shaped by trade networks, urban economies, agricultural hinterlands, and local patronage. Archaeological remains associated with grape cultivation, pressing, and fermentation, the geographical proximity of monasteries to production facilities, and vessels and artifacts discovered in Buddhist spaces indicate that wine production and consumption took place within the same spheres of everyday life and economic activity in which Buddhist institutions operated. In view of these spatial and material connections, Gandhāran wine culture may be understood as one element of the socioeconomic environment surrounding Buddhist communities.

In Gandhāra, grapes and wine appear to have been associated with meanings of healing and abundance in addition to their role as economic products. Falk's interpretation of the Chalagram evidence raises the possibility that grape juice or fermented beverages were understood in relation to the restoration of health, while the bunch of grapes depicted in Hārītī's hand represents a local symbol of abundance reconfigured within Buddhist

protective-deity worship. Taken together, these two cases suggest that local understandings of grapes and wine may have extended beyond production and consumption and become connected with Buddhist practices and symbolic systems through associations with therapeutic efficacy and religious symbolism. This historical background makes it necessary to examine the precept against intoxicants not merely as an abstract prohibition detached from social realities, but in terms of the criteria by which its prohibited objects and scope of application were defined within a living environment in which wine was produced, circulated, and consumed.

3. The Meaning and Criteria for the Application of the Precept Against Intoxicants

3.1. The Dual Meaning of the Precept Against Intoxicants

The precept against intoxicants (*buyinjiu jie* 不飲酒戒)[6] is the fifth of the five precepts, which constitute the most fundamental ethical norms of Buddhism. In the five precepts (*pañcaśīla*, *wujie* 五戒) and the eight precepts observed on *uposatha* days (*uposatha-sīla*, *bazhai jie* 八齋戒) as presented in the Nikāyas, the precept against intoxicants is formulated as the rule of abstaining from grain-based liquor, fruit-based fermented liquor, and other intoxicants that constitute a basis for heedlessness (*pamādaṭṭhāna*).[7] *Surā* refers to intoxicating grain-based liquor produced by fermenting such ingredients as flour, cakes, and cooked rice. *Meraya* refers to fermented liquor made from combinations of flowers, fruits, molasses, sugar, and other ingredients.[8] *Majja* encompasses the beverages listed above or refers more generally to other intoxicating substances. Accordingly, the precept against intoxicants is not limited to particular types of alcoholic beverages; its scope of application extends to substances capable of clouding the mind and giving rise to heedlessness (*pamāda*).

A notable feature of the standard formulation of the precept against intoxicants is that it specifies both the prohibited objects and the normative basis for their prohibition. Grain-based liquor, fruit-based fermented liquor, and other intoxicating substances refer to external substances, whereas heedlessness denotes a condition in which attention and moral self-control may be weakened as a result of their consumption. The precept against intoxicants may therefore be understood not merely as a prohibition of drinking itself, but as a norm intended to prevent the mental state produced by intoxication from leading to violations of other precepts.

This dual character distinguishes the precept against intoxicants from the other four precepts. Whereas the precepts against killing (*bushasheng* 不殺生), stealing (*butoudao* 不偷盜), sexual misconduct (*buxieyin* 不邪婬), and false speech (*buwangyu* 不妄語) directly prohibit specific types of conduct, the precept against intoxicants addresses both the nature of the substance consumed and the consequences that may result from its consumption. Accordingly, whether the precept applies cannot be determined solely by the name or ingredients of a beverage; factors such as its intoxicating properties, intended use, and mode of use may also serve as criteria for judgment.

This pattern of conditional application becomes more concrete in cases involving the medicinal use of alcoholic substances and incompletely fermented beverages that have not yet acquired intoxicating properties. These cases are examined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

3.2. The Normative Significance of Intoxication (Mada) and Heedlessness (Pamāda)

Many Buddhist texts describe in detail the faults and harms associated with alcohol consumption and strongly advocate abstaining from alcohol.[9] In the Vinaya, however, alcohol consumption is not classified as a grave offense entailing expulsion from the Saṅgha or requiring a separate disciplinary procedure. Instead, it is categorized as a *pācittiya* offense (*boyiti* 波逸提). A *pācittiya* offense can be expiated through confession to another

monk. Thus, although alcohol consumption was clearly prohibited, it was treated as a comparatively minor category of Vinaya offense.

The occasion for the Buddha's formulation of the precept against intoxicants was an incident involving the monk Sāgata (*Suoqietuo* 娑伽陀). According to the Pāli Vinaya, Sāgata, who possessed supernatural powers sufficient to subdue a venomous nāga, drank alcohol offered by lay followers, became intoxicated, and collapsed. The monks carried him away and laid him down with his head facing the Buddha. Sāgata, however, turned his body around and lay with his feet pointing toward the Buddha. The Buddha pointed out that Sāgata, who had ordinarily shown him respect, no longer did so after becoming intoxicated, and consequently formulated the precept against intoxicants (Vin IV, 108–110). The *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (*Sifen lü* 四分律; T1428) similarly relates that Sāgata became intoxicated, collapsed by the roadside, and vomited. The Buddha reproached him for having become incapable of subduing even a small *nāga*, despite his previous powers, and then formulated the precept against intoxicants (T1428, 22:671b21–672a23). These accounts of the rule's formulation emphasize not only unrestrained conduct while intoxicated but also the loss of monastic deportment and self-control.

In this connection, Michibata Ryōshū (Michibata 1970, pp. 215–16) explains that alcohol is not intrinsically evil. Neither alcohol nor the act of drinking is inherently wholesome or unwholesome; they become problematic only when they give rise to unwholesome conduct (*akuśala*, *bushan* 不善). Whether alcohol functions as a poison or a medicine may depend entirely on the purpose and manner of its use. Because drinking can disturb the mind and lead to various unwholesome actions, however, the precept against intoxicants is understood as a rule intended to prevent such unwholesome conduct before it occurs.[10] Hirakawa Akira (Hirakawa 1993, pp. 539–41) interprets *pācittiya* Rule 51, the rule prohibiting alcohol consumption (*Surāpānasikkhāpada*, *yinjiu jie* 飲酒戒), as encompassing not merely the external prohibition "Do not drink alcohol," but also the voluntary resolve "I will abstain from drinking alcohol." He locates the practical significance of this rule in the exercise of self-control over the impulse to become intoxicated.[11] Building on these interpretations, this study understands the precept against intoxicants both as a rule prohibiting alcohol as an external substance and as a practice of self-control intended to prevent intoxication and heedlessness.

The principle of considering not only the nature of a substance but also the purpose and conditions of its use is also evident in Vinaya regulations permitting medicines (*bhesajja*) containing alcoholic substances for therapeutic purposes.[12] A representative case concerns the treatment of Pilindavaccha's wind disorder (*vātābādha*). When physicians prescribed that alcohol (*majja*) be added while medicinal oil was being boiled, the Buddha permitted the preparation of oil containing alcohol. After the group of six monks drank oil to which an excessive amount of alcohol had been added and became intoxicated, however, the Buddha restricted oral consumption to preparations in which the color, smell, and taste of the alcohol were no longer perceptible. Preparations in which these properties remained could be used only externally (Vin I, 204–205; Mv VI.14.1–2; Zysk 1991, pp. 92–93).

Another medicinal preparation that may have contained alcohol is *loṇasovīraka* (*supi luo jiang* 蘇毘羅漿). The Vinaya relates that when a monk suffering from a wind disorder of the abdomen drank it and experienced relief, the Buddha permitted the sick to consume it undiluted and those who were not ill to drink it mixed with water (Vin I, 210; Mv VI.16.3). The Vinaya itself does not explain its ingredients or method of preparation. On the basis of the commentaries and ancient Indian medical texts, however, Kenneth G. Zysk interprets it as an astringent medicinal liquor produced by fermenting barley and thus as an alcoholic medicine (Zysk 1991, pp. 110–13).

These cases show that medicines containing, or possibly containing, alcohol could be used for therapeutic purposes. Such use, however, did not constitute a general exemption permitting ordinary alcohol consumption. The Vinaya restricted their use according to whether the individual was ill, how the medicine was prepared, and whether alcoholic properties remained perceptible; in some cases, it permitted them only for external application. The medicinal use of alcoholic substances should therefore be understood not as an exception to the precept against intoxicants, but as a conditional permission granted within limits intended to prevent intoxication and heedlessness. This approach addressed the practical need to preserve the health of the monastic community while maintaining normative boundaries designed to control the risks of intoxication and heedlessness.

3.3. Fermented Beverages and the Problem of Restriction

The precept against intoxicants for lay Buddhists is stated relatively simply within the standard formula of the five precepts. In practice, however, determining which beverages should be classified as intoxicants was not necessarily straightforward. Beverages made from sugar-rich ingredients, such as grapes or sugarcane, could blur the boundaries between juice, sweet fermented beverages, and alcoholic drinks, depending on the degree of fermentation. An examination of the scope of the prohibition concerning fermented beverages must therefore consider not only their ingredients or names, but also their state of fermentation and capacity to produce intoxication.

Xuanzang's *Da Tang Xiyu ji* (大唐西域記; T2087) provides a general account of the customs of northern India in which beverages are classified according to the social groups that consumed them. Xuanzang first notes that alcoholic beverages (*jiǔlǐ* 酒醴) differed in type and flavor. He states that beverages made from grapes and sugarcane were consumed by the kṣatriyas, while strong liquor brewed with fermenting agents was consumed by the vaiśyas and others. By contrast, śramaṇas and brāhmaṇas drank grape and sugarcane juices (*pútáo gānzhè jiāng* 葡萄甘蔗漿), which he explicitly distinguishes from *jiǔlǐ* 酒醴 (T2087, 51:878b03–06).[13] In Chinese usage, *lǐ* 醴 denoted a sweet, lightly alcoholic beverage produced through a short fermentation process, traditionally described as maturing within a single day.[14] Xuanzang's distinction is therefore significant in showing that beverages associated with the same raw materials—grapes or sugarcane—could be classified differently according to the form and condition of the beverage rather than by their ingredients alone. This distinction provides a useful textual background for examining how the state of fermentation and intoxicating properties could serve as criteria in determining the scope of restrictions on fermented beverages.

The boundary between beverages at different stages of fermentation can also be observed in the controversy surrounding the Second Council at Vesālī, as recorded in the *Cullavagga* of the Pāli Vinaya. One of the ten disputed practices concerned whether the drinking of *jalogi* was permissible. Although *jalogi* was associated with the category of liquor (*surā*), it was described as neither fully fermented nor yet intoxicating. The Vajjian monks of Vesālī maintained that the beverage was permissible, but Yasa *Kākaṇḍakaputta* and the elders ruled against its consumption after deliberation. Ultimately, the drinking of *jalogi* was determined to fall under the prohibition against liquor and intoxicating beverages established in *Pācittiya* 51 at Kosambī (Cv XII; Vin II, 301, 307).[15]

This controversy demonstrates that differing views existed as to whether a beverage that had not completed fermentation or had not yet acquired intoxicating properties should be classified as liquor. In the final ruling, greater importance was attached not to whether the beverage was presently intoxicating, but to the fact that it was in the process of becoming alcoholic. The scope of the prohibition was therefore extended to a beverage whose fermentation was not yet complete. This case should not be interpreted as evidence that

non-intoxicating fermented beverages were generally permitted. Rather, it demonstrates that the stage of fermentation and the possibility that intoxicating properties might subsequently develop served as criteria for determining the scope of the prohibition, which was applied preventively and strictly in the monastic Vinaya.

The cases of medicated oil prepared with alcohol and *loṇasovīraka*, both examined in Section 3.2, illustrate criteria of judgment different from those applied to *jalogi*. *Loṇasovīraka* may have contained alcohol. The internal consumption of medicated oil was permitted only when the color, smell, and taste of the alcohol were no longer perceptible, while *loṇasovīraka* was administered either undiluted or diluted according to the health condition of the recipient. This indicates that these preparations were not permitted without restriction merely because they were intended for therapeutic use. Rather, the conditions of permission differed according to the state of the preparation and the circumstances of its administration. By contrast, *jalogi* was prohibited because it was in the process of becoming an alcoholic beverage, even though it did not yet produce intoxication.

A comparison of the cases examined in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 indicates that the boundary between prohibited and permitted substances was not established according to a single criterion in the Vinaya cases examined here. In the case of medicinal substances, their therapeutic efficacy was acknowledged, but the scope of their use was restricted to prevent intoxication. In the case of beverages undergoing fermentation, the possibility of intoxication was precluded before it could be actualized. The former constituted a limited permission that took therapeutic necessity into account, whereas the latter represented a preventive prohibition directed against a potential risk. Although the forms of judgment differed, both were grounded in the common normative purpose of preventing intoxication and the resulting loss of self-control. In other words, the Vinaya maintained the same principle while applying different forms of judgment according to the condition of the substance and the context of its use.

Taken together, these Vinaya cases indicate that the state of fermentation, present or potential intoxicating properties, therapeutic purpose, the condition of the recipient, and the manner of use all served as factors in determining the application of the precept against intoxicants. These factors show that, while the normative principle of preventing intoxication and the resulting loss of self-control remained consistent, the boundaries of application could vary according to the condition of the substance and the circumstances of its use.

These regulations, however, concerned the lives of monastics and therefore cannot be treated as direct evidence of the actual drinking practices of Gandhāran lay Buddhists or of the specific manner in which individual precepts were applied among them. The Vinaya cases may therefore be used not as historical evidence proving the practices of Gandhāran lay Buddhists, but as comparative materials for examining the forms of normative judgment that could have been considered when applying the precept against intoxicants to various beverages and preparations. From this perspective, the relevant question is not whether the precept against intoxicants was relaxed in a society where wine was present, but how the prohibitive scope of a precept already undertaken was determined according to the condition and intoxicating properties of a beverage and the purpose and manner of its use. This suggests that, while the normative principle of the precept against intoxicants remained intact, the boundaries of its application could vary according to specific objects and conditions.

4. Lay Buddhist Undertaking of the Precepts and the Debate on the Partial Undertaking of the Five Precepts

4.1. Forms of Taking the Three Refuges and Undertaking the Five Precepts

In the Buddhist tradition, the three refuges and the five precepts have been widely accepted as basic elements of both lay affiliation with the Buddhist community and lay practice. The forms of lay refuge, however, vary according to textual and ritual contexts, ranging from declarations of the three refuges alone to rituals combining the three refuges with the undertaking of the five precepts.

In the Pāli Vinaya account of the early Saṅgha, Yasa's father became an *upāsaka* through the three refuges alone, without separately undertaking the five precepts. Yasa's mother and former wife were likewise recognized as *upāsikās* through the three refuges (Vin I, 16–18).[16] The standard refuge formula repeatedly found in early Buddhist texts likewise concludes with the declaration, "May the Blessed One accept me as a lay follower who has taken refuge from this day forth for life." In the case of Pukkusa, who took refuge shortly before the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, affiliation with the Buddhist community was similarly recognized through the declaration of the three refuges alone (DN II, 132–133).

Forms combining the three refuges with the five precepts also appear, but their content is not uniform. In the *Youxing jing* 遊行經 of the *Dīrghāgama* (*Chang Ahan jing* 長阿含經; T1), each of the five precepts is enumerated and undertaken in sequence after the three refuges (T1, 1:19b20–22). By contrast, in the "Ugga-gahapati Sutta" (*Yujia zhangzhe jing* 郁伽長者經) of the *Madhyamāgama* (*Zhong Ahan jing* 中阿含經; T26), the individual precepts are not enumerated; the text states only that the lay follower "undertakes and upholds the five precepts" (T26, 1:480a08–11). The *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Shisong lü* 十誦律; T1435) likewise records a formula requesting the undertaking of the five precepts without separately enumerating each precept (T1435, 23:464c22–23). In certain passages of the *Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya* (*Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律; T1425) and the *Ekottarikāgama* (*Zengyi Ahan jing* 增壹阿含經; T125), however, only the precept against killing (*bushasheng jie* 不殺生戒), rather than the five precepts as a whole, is separately undertaken after the three refuges (T1425, 22:310c; T125, 2:650a).

These materials indicate that lay initiation and the undertaking of the precepts are represented in varying forms across the extant textual traditions. The texts preserve, side by side, forms in which lay Buddhist status is established through the three refuges alone, the five precepts are undertaken as a whole, each precept is enumerated in sequence, or only a particular precept is undertaken separately. This textual diversity indicates that the relationship between the three refuges and the five precepts is expressed differently according to textual traditions and ritual contexts.[17]

4.2. The Sarvāstivāda Debate on the Partial Undertaking of the Five Precepts

The requirements for establishing lay Buddhist status and the scope of undertaking the five precepts are addressed more concretely in the debate on the partial undertaking of the five precepts preserved in two major treatises of the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tradition: the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (*Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論; T1545) and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論; T1558).[18] This debate involves two interconnected issues. The first concerns whether *upāsaka* status is established through the three refuges alone or requires the acquisition of the complete ethical restraint (*saṃvara*, *lüyi* 律儀) corresponding to all five precepts. The second concerns whether an *upāsaka* must undertake all five precepts or may selectively undertake only some of them according to individual intention and capacity for practice.

In the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, this controversy is presented as a disagreement between the Gandhāran masters and the Kashmir-based Vaibhāṣikas. This distinction re-

flects different scholastic currents within Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (Dhammajoti 2009, pp. 75–77). The Gandhāran masters (*pāścātyāḥ*) maintained that a person who had undertaken the three refuges alone could be recognized as an *upāsaka*, even if that person had not yet acquired, or had only incompletely acquired, the *saṃvara* corresponding to the five precepts. By contrast, the Kashmir-based Vaibhāṣikas (*vaibhāṣikāḥ*, piposha shi 毘婆沙師) held that a person who had undertaken only the three refuges or possessed only incomplete *saṃvara* could not properly be called an *upāsaka*. In their view, becoming an *upāsaka* required the acquisition of the complete *saṃvara* corresponding to all five precepts (T1545, 27:645c19–646a18).

In the corresponding passage of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the same opposition appears as a disagreement between the foreign masters (*bahirdeśakāḥ*) and the Kashmir-based masters.[19] The position attributed to the foreign masters broadly corresponds to that advanced by the Gandhāran masters in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*. In this study, the term "Gandhāran masters" is used collectively for the northwestern Indian interpretive tendencies distinguished in these two texts from the Kashmir-centered Vaibhāṣika tradition.

The difference between the two positions becomes still clearer in their differing understandings of the establishment of *saṃvara*. In the Sarvāstivāda tradition, *saṃvara* functions both as a form of ethical restraint that suppresses unwholesome conduct and sustains the continuous observance of the precepts, and as a doctrinal requirement for attaining status as a *bhikṣu*, *śrāmaṇera*, or *upāsaka*. The Kashmir-based masters held that an *upāsaka*, like a *bhikṣu* or *śrāmaṇera*, was required to acquire complete *saṃvara*. According to this position, the *saṃvara* corresponding to all five precepts arose at the moment the three refuges were declared, while the subsequent enumeration of the individual precepts served to specify the content of the *saṃvara* already established.

By contrast, the Abhidharma masters associated with Gandhāra did not define *upāsaka* status according to the same system of *saṃvara* applied to monastics. In their view, *upāsaka* status was established through the three refuges, after which a lay follower could undertake a greater or smaller number of the five precepts according to personal intention and capacity for practice. The establishment of lay Buddhist status and the undertaking of all five precepts therefore did not necessarily form a single simultaneous procedure.

This difference of opinion can also be seen in interpretations of the classification of partial-practice lay followers (*fenxing youposai* 分行優婆塞) found in the *Abhidharmadharmaskandhapādaśāstra* (*Apidamo fayun zulun* 阿毘達磨法蘊足論; T1537). This treatise classifies lay followers according to the number of precepts they observe: the one-part practitioner (*ekadeśakārin*, *yifenxing* 一分行), who observes one precept; the few-part practitioner (*pradeśakārin*, *shaofenxing* 少分行), who observes two precepts; the many-part practitioner (*yadbhūyaskārin*, *duofenxing* 多分行), who observes three or four precepts; and the full practitioner (*paripūrṇakārin*, *manfenxing* 滿分行), who observes all five precepts (T1537, 26:454a15–27).

The Gandhāran masters interpreted this classification as referring to differences at the stage of undertaking the precepts. After becoming an *upāsaka* through the three refuges, a lay follower could selectively undertake one or more of the five precepts and was accordingly classified as a one-part, few-part, many-part, or full practitioner. By contrast, the Kashmir-based masters held that every *upāsaka* acquired the *saṃvara* corresponding to all five precepts at the stage of undertaking. For them, designations such as "one-part practitioner" referred not to the number of precepts undertaken, but to the number actually observed after all five precepts had been undertaken. They explained that "this describes the stage of observance, not the stage of undertaking" (*ci shuo chi wei, fei shuo shou wei* 此說持位，非說受位) (T1545, 27:646b07–11).

The central issue in the debate on the partial undertaking of the five precepts was not simply whether lay followers could observe a smaller or larger number of precepts. The two sides differed in their understanding of the relationship between *upāsaka* status and the *saṃvara* corresponding to the five precepts. Whereas the Kashmir-based masters understood lay Buddhist status within a system of *saṃvara* continuous with the monastic system, the masters associated with Gandhāra recognized the three refuges as the essential requirement for *upāsaka* status and treated the scope of undertaking the five precepts as a separate issue. This explains why the same classification of partial-practice *upāsakas* referred, for the former, to differences in actual observance after all five precepts had been undertaken, but, for the latter, to the selective undertaking of precepts at the stage of undertaking them (Fukuda 2005, pp. 59–76).

It would be inappropriate, however, to reduce this opposition simply to a contrast between a strict Kashmiri position and a permissive Gandhāran position. The Gandhāran masters understood the scriptural classification of *upāsakas* into one-part, few-part, many-part, and full practitioners as referring to differences at the stage of undertaking the precepts. By contrast, the Kashmir-based masters reinterpreted this classification, in accordance with the systematized Sarvāstivāda theory of *saṃvara*, as referring to differences in the stage of observance after the precepts had been undertaken. The controversy therefore concerned not only the scope of precept observance, but also the hermeneutical question of whether interpretive priority should be accorded to the classification found in scripture or to the Abhidharma theory of *saṃvara* (Ishida 2012a, pp. 1194–99).

The view that some, rather than all, of the five precepts could be undertaken was not confined to these two treatises. The *Satyasiddhiśāstra* (*Chengshi lun* 成實論; T1646) and the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*Za apitan xin lun* 雜阿毘曇心論; T1552) likewise state that *saṃvara* may be acquired whether one undertakes many or only a few of the five precepts (T1646, 32:300b09; T1552, 28:883b21–23). The partial undertaking of the five precepts was not an exceptional claim confined to particular texts, but a recurring doctrinal issue within the Sarvāstivāda and related traditions concerning the establishment of lay Buddhist status and the scope of precept undertaking and practice.

The diverse ways in which the three refuges and the five precepts were combined, as examined in the preceding section, provide a broader textual background for understanding this debate. The extant texts preserve several different forms of lay initiation and precept undertaking. Lay Buddhist status may be established through the three refuges alone, the five precepts may be undertaken as a whole, or only particular precepts may be undertaken separately. Against this background of textual diversity, the position of the Gandhāran masters may be understood as distinguishing affiliation with the Buddhist community through the three refuges from the undertaking of individual precepts. On this view, lay Buddhist status did not necessarily presuppose the undertaking of all five precepts, and even a person who had not undertaken the precept against intoxicants could be recognized as an *upāsaka*. The doctrine of partial undertaking should therefore be understood not as a doctrine sanctioning alcohol consumption, but as a doctrinal structure in which Buddhist affiliation and the undertaking of individual precepts did not necessarily coincide.

When these findings are interpreted alongside Gandhāran wine culture, the nature and evidentiary scope of the two bodies of material must be distinguished. Archaeological evidence illuminates the social and material environment of Gandhāra in which wine was produced and consumed, whereas the debate on the partial undertaking of the five precepts constitutes a doctrinal discourse concerning lay Buddhist status and the scope of undertaking individual precepts. Accordingly, it cannot be concluded that wine culture directly gave rise to the doctrine of partial undertaking or that this position reflected the actual drinking practices of lay Buddhists at the time. Wine culture as a feature of regional

life and the doctrinal structure in which undertaking all five precepts was not required of every lay Buddhist belong to different analytical levels, but they are not mutually contradictory. In the following section, these two levels are considered together with the criteria governing the application of the precept against intoxicants, providing a basis for a contextual interpretation of Gandhāra's social environment and lay Buddhist precept practice.

5. Contextual Interpretation of Gandhāran Wine Culture and the Practice of the Precept Against Intoxicants

Gandhāran wine culture, the criteria governing the application of the precept against intoxicants, and the doctrine of the partial undertaking of the five precepts, as examined in the preceding sections, belong to different bodies of evidence and domains of inquiry. Archaeological evidence illuminates the social and material environment in which Gandhāran Buddhist communities were situated, while Vinaya and Abhidharma texts provide, respectively, normative and doctrinal grounds for understanding the scope of application of the precept against intoxicants and the ways in which lay Buddhists could undertake the five precepts. These bodies of evidence are considered together not to corroborate the same historical facts, but to interpret different dimensions of a single research problem. Accordingly, while maintaining the limits of inference permitted by each body of evidence, this section synthesizes independently derived findings only where they are mutually compatible and offers a contextual interpretation of the living conditions and precept practice of Gandhāran lay Buddhists.

In Gandhāra, grapes and wine were not merely imported luxury goods but formed part of a regional way of life in which they were produced, circulated, and consumed. Evidence including grape-pressing facilities, wine-related vessels and inscriptions, as well as production installations and associated finds identified near Buddhist sites, indicates that Buddhist sites were not spatially isolated from the regional environment in which wine was produced and consumed. The presence of Buddhist communities in a region where wine was produced and consumed, however, is not equivalent to evidence that their members violated the precept against intoxicants. The precept was not a norm prohibiting social contact with wine culture itself, but an individual precept directed against the consumption of intoxicating beverages and the intoxication and heedlessness that could result from it.

The various rulings preserved in the Vinaya indicate that the application of this precept was not determined uniformly by the name of a beverage alone. The state of fermentation, present and potential intoxicating properties, and the purpose and manner of use all served as factors in determining whether a particular beverage or substance fell within the scope of prohibition. In the case of beverages whose fermentation was not yet complete, the possibility that they might subsequently acquire intoxicating properties was taken into account, while the therapeutic use of intoxicating substances was subject to conditions intended to prevent intoxication. What matters here is not simply the existence of exceptions, but the fact that concrete criteria of judgment operated when the same precept was applied to substances differing in their properties and uses. At the normative core of these judgments lay the aim of preventing intoxication (*mada*), heedlessness (*pamāda*), and the resulting loss of self-control.

From this perspective, there are limits to interpreting Gandhāran wine culture as standing in direct opposition to the practice of the precept against intoxicants. Even if wine was widespread in the regional economy and everyday culture, the issue for lay Buddhists who had undertaken the precept was not the existence of wine culture itself, but the particular beverages and actions that conflicted with the precept they had undertaken. Belonging to a society in which wine was produced, circulated, and consumed must there-

fore be distinguished from violating an individual precept. This distinction helps explain how the observance of the precept against intoxicants could remain normatively possible even in a region where wine culture was well established.

The doctrine of the partial undertaking of the five precepts, meanwhile, explains lay Buddhist precept practice at a different level. The restrictions that apply to particular beverages and actions for a person who has already undertaken the precept against intoxicants concern the scope of application of that precept, whereas partial undertaking concerns which of the five precepts a lay Buddhist undertakes. The former concerns the extent to which an already undertaken precept applies to particular acts, while the latter concerns the range of precepts accepted by a lay follower. A case in which a particular beverage falls outside the scope of application of the precept against intoxicants must therefore be distinguished from a case in which the precept itself has not been undertaken.

This structure of precept undertaking is particularly clear in the position of the Abhidharma masters associated with Gandhāra. They distinguished the establishment of *upāsaka* status through the three refuges from the undertaking of all five precepts and recognized the selective undertaking of individual precepts. According to this position, a person who had not undertaken the precept against intoxicants could still be recognized as an *upāsaka*; affiliation with the Buddhist community therefore did not necessarily entail the uniform undertaking of all five precepts. Within this specific doctrinal framework, *upāsaka* status did not, by itself, categorically exclude the possibility of alcohol consumption by a lay follower who had not undertaken the precept against intoxicants. This neither sanctioned alcohol consumption nor diminished the normative value of the precept against intoxicants. Rather, it was a doctrinal possibility arising from the distinction between lay Buddhist status and the undertaking of individual precepts.

When the scope of application of the precept against intoxicants and the scope of undertaking the five precepts are considered together, it becomes difficult to posit a single uniform form of precept practice among Gandhāran lay Buddhists. For lay Buddhists who had undertaken the precept against intoxicants, the normative principle of preventing intoxication and heedlessness applied; from the perspective that recognized partial undertaking, however, undertaking the precept against intoxicants was not obligatory for every lay Buddhist. Even among lay Buddhists living within the same social environment, the content of precept practice could therefore differ according to the range of precepts they had undertaken, while the applicability of an already undertaken precept against intoxicants could itself be determined according to the particular characteristics of a beverage or act.

This structure makes it difficult to explain Gandhāran wine culture and lay Buddhist practice simply in terms of an opposition between "prohibition and violation." Belonging to a society in which wine was produced, circulated, and consumed; being affiliated with the Buddhist community and attaining *upāsaka* status; determining which of the five precepts to undertake; and applying an undertaken precept to particular acts were interrelated, but they did not belong to the same analytical level. In particular, the view of the Gandhāran masters that lay Buddhist affiliation and the undertaking of all five precepts did not necessarily coincide provided a doctrinal basis for recognizing different ranges of precept undertaking.

The relationship between Gandhāran wine culture and lay Buddhist practice therefore need not be understood in terms of a relaxation of the precept against intoxicants or an institutional sanctioning of wine. Rather, distinguishing among local living conditions, the scope of a lay Buddhist's undertaking of the five precepts, and the criteria governing the application of individual precepts allows the coexistence of these two phenomena to be understood more concretely. The extant evidence does not directly reveal

whether Gandhāran lay Buddhists actually consumed alcohol or how individual lay Buddhists observed the precepts. It does, however, illuminate, at different evidentiary levels, the social environment in which they lived, the requirements for Buddhist affiliation, and the criteria governing the undertaking and application of individual precepts. From this perspective, the precept against intoxicants can be approached not merely as a fixed prohibitory norm standing in opposition to local ways of life, but as a question of practical ethics through which lay Buddhist undertaking and practice may be understood under diverse social conditions.

6. Conclusions

This study has taken as its point of departure the fact that Gandhāran wine culture and Buddhist communities shared the same social and material environment, and has sought to clarify how the undertaking and observance of the precept against intoxicants by lay Buddhists may be understood in a region where wine production and consumption formed part of everyday life. Given that the extant evidence does not permit a direct reconstruction of the actual drinking practices of lay Buddhists or their specific patterns of precept observance at the time, the study examined Gandhāra's social and material environment, the criteria governing the application of the precept against intoxicants, and the ways in which lay Buddhists undertook the five precepts at distinct evidentiary levels. Methodologically, it combined contextual historical interpretation grounded in source criticism with comparative textual analysis, distinguishing the character and evidentiary scope of each body of evidence and synthesizing independently derived findings only insofar as they were mutually compatible.

The analysis has shown that the social environment of lay Buddhists, their affiliation with the Buddhist community, their undertaking of individual precepts, and the application of precepts already undertaken were interrelated but did not operate at the same analytical level. In particular, distinguishing the scope of application of the precept against intoxicants from the scope of undertaking the five precepts helps explain how Buddhist affiliation and different ranges of precept undertaking could coexist even in a society where wine culture was well established.

In the Vinaya materials, once the precept against intoxicants had been undertaken, its application was determined according to the characteristics of particular beverages and actions under a normative principle aimed at preventing intoxication (*mada*) and heedlessness (*pamāda*). The Gandhāran masters' position on partial undertaking, by contrast, did not treat the establishment of *upāsaka* status and the undertaking of all five precepts as identical requirements and recognized the selective undertaking of individual precepts. Distinguishing these two dimensions does not lead to the conclusion that the precept against intoxicants was relaxed or that alcohol consumption received general Buddhist sanction. Rather, it demonstrates the existence of a doctrinal structure in which affiliation with the Buddhist community did not necessarily coincide with the undertaking of all five precepts and in which different ranges of precept undertaking could be recognized.

The significance of this study lies in examining the precept against intoxicants not merely as an abstract prohibitory norm, but in relation to its social environment, while distinguishing lay Buddhist status, the undertaking of individual precepts, and the application of particular norms. The Gandhāran case suggests that the relationship between local ways of life and Buddhist norms is better approached not through a simple binary of conformity and violation, but from the perspective of practical ethics, taking into account the social conditions of lay Buddhists together with the structure of precept undertaking and the criteria governing their application. At the same time, the extant evidence remains insufficient for a historical reconstruction of the actual drinking practices of Gandhāran

lay Buddhists and their specific patterns of precept undertaking and observance. As more detailed regional evidence and materials illuminating the lives of lay Buddhists become available, it may become possible to investigate the relationship between Gandhāran sociocultural life and Buddhist norms with greater precision.

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Abbreviations

Cv	*Cūlavagga*. In *Vinaya Piṭaka*, vol. II. Edited by Hermann Oldenberg. London: Williams and Norgate, 1880; repr. Pali Text Society, 1977 and 1995. (Oldenberg 1879–1883)
DN	*Dīgha Nikāya.* Vol. II. Edited by T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter. London: Pali Text Society, 1903; repr. 1982 and 1995. (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1903)
Mv	*Mahāvagga*. In *Vinaya Piṭaka*, vol. I. Edited by Hermann Oldenberg. London: Williams and Norgate, 1879; repr. Pali Text Society, 1969. (Oldenberg 1879–1883)
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Digital edition. SAT Daizōkyō Text Database. https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/satdb2015.php (accessed on 7 June 2026). (*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 2018)
Vin	*Vinaya Piṭaka*. Edited by Hermann Oldenberg. 5 vols. London: Williams and Norgate, 1879–1883; repr. Pali Text Society, 1969–1995. (Oldenberg 1879–1883)

Notes

1 Bryan De Notariis, building on the studies of Harry Falk and James McHugh, suggests that *madhu* may have been used in Buddhist literature as a term for wine. He draws attention to the fact that the *Abhidharmadharmaskandhapādaśāstra* (*Apidamo fayun zulun* 阿毘達磨法蘊足論; T1537), a Sarvāstivāda treatise, mentions *motuo jiu* 末沱酒 separately from *surā* (*suluo jiu* 窣羅酒) and *meraya* (*miliye* 迷麗耶), and proposes that *motuo* may be a phonetic transcription of the Indic term *madhu*. He also cites a passage from the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya in which grapes are purified or prepared with fire and surplus grape juice is heated, filtered, decanted, and stored for later consumption by the Saṅgha, suggesting that grape-based preparations could be permitted under specific conditions prescribed in the Vinaya (see De Notariis 2023, pp. 81–119; Falk 2009, pp. 65–78; McHugh 2021, pp. 113–44).

2 Falk's interpretation should not be understood as evidence that wine consumption was generally permitted among monastics, but rather as a possible indication of a material association between wine-related practices and Buddhist settings. Stefan Baums acknowledges that some wine-related vessels were donated to Buddhist monasteries or repurposed for Buddhist use. He cautions, however, that the Chalagram inscription does not specify the function of the vessel and that, even if *nigadaka* refers to "healthy contents," there is no evidence that those contents consisted of wine. Falk's interpretation should therefore be treated with caution (Falk 2009, pp. 65–78; Baums 2024, pp. 286–92).

3 McHugh's studies are particularly useful for understanding the diversity of drinking cultures in South Asia. He shows that *sīdhu* (*śīdhu*), a sugarcane-based alcoholic beverage, varied in composition according to its ingredients, additives, and regional conditions, and should be considered alongside grain-based fermented liquors (McHugh 2020a). He also examines intoxication in medieval South Asia not merely as a physiological state, but as a complex phenomenon shaped by social action, sensory experience, and cultural meaning (McHugh 2020b).

4 The *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* (*Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論; T1545, 27:60c04–05) states: "北方貧人飲葡萄酒，餘方富者亦不能得."

[5] Hārītī was originally a *yakṣiṇī* who devoured children, but after converting to Buddhism, she was reinterpreted as a guardian deity of childbirth, fertility, and the protection of children. In the Barikot image, the bunch of grapes is interpreted not merely as an ornament, but as a symbol of wine production, abundance, and the renewal of life (Moscatelli and Filigenzi 2024, pp. 224–26).

[6] The precept against intoxicants is formulated in similar terms across several Vinaya traditions. In the Pāli Vinaya, drinking *surā* or *meraya* constitutes a *pācittiya* offense, thereby explicitly prohibiting the consumption of grain-based and fruit-based alcoholic beverages. The Dharmaguptaka Vinaya likewise states, "If a monk drinks alcohol, he commits a *pācittiya* offense," whereas the Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya classifies the consumption of grain-based and sugar-based intoxicants as a *pācittiya* offense (see Vin IV, 110, Pācittiya 51; Dharmaguptaka Vinaya [*Sifen lü* 四分律; T1428, 22:672a28]; Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya [*Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律; T1425, 22:387b17–18]; De Notariis 2023, pp. 110–11).

[7] *Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

[8] Hirakawa Akira (平川彰) explains *surā* as a liquor brewed from grains using a fermenting agent and *meraya* as a distilled liquor produced from flowers, fruits, wheat, sugar, and other ingredients. By contrast, Kim Han-sang, drawing on Bhikkhu Bodhi's etymological interpretation, understands *surā* as "distilled liquor," whose alcoholic strength and aroma are enhanced through distillation (Hirakawa 1993, pp. 544–45; Kim 2015, p. 249).

[9] For representative examples, see the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (*Sifen lü* 四分律; T1428, 22:672a16–21), which enumerates ten harmful consequences of drinking alcohol; the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Shisong lü* 十誦律; T1435, 23:449a21–25), which includes drinking among five acts associated with rebirth in hell; the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* (*Da zhidu lun* 大智度論; T1509, 25:158b08–c02), which lists thirty-five harmful consequences of drinking alcohol and concludes that it should be avoided; and the *Abhidharmadharmaskandhapādaśāstra* (*Apidamo fayun zulun* 阿毘達磨法蘊足論; T1537, 26:453c07–20), which describes the consumption of intoxicating drinks as a basis for heedlessness and as a source of fear, wrongdoing, and enmity.

[10] According to the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*, alcohol may lead a person to commit the intrinsically unwholesome acts prohibited by the other four precepts. Drinking is therefore prohibited as a preventive measure against wrongdoing induced by intoxication (see *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra* [*Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論; T1545, 27:645b01–06]).

[11] The interpretations of Michibata and Hirakawa are not cited here as representing a broader scholarly consensus. Rather, their emphasis on intoxication, loss of self-control, and the risk of subsequent misconduct is consistent with patterns found in Buddhist textual sources. In the Vinaya accounts of the formulation of the precept against intoxicants, Sāgata becomes intoxicated, loses control over his conduct, and fails to maintain proper monastic deportment, leading to the establishment of the rule prohibiting alcohol consumption (Vin IV, 108–110; Dharmaguptaka Vinaya [*Sifen lü* 四分律; T1428, 22:671b21–672a23]). Later East Asian Buddhist texts and commentaries likewise associate alcohol consumption with mental confusion, heedlessness, and subsequent transgressions (*Fanwang jing* 梵網經, T1484, 24:1005b06–09; Mingkuang's *Tiantai pusa jie shu* 天台菩薩戒疏, T1812, 40:589a05–07, 590b20–24; Fazang's *Fanwang jing pusa jieben shu* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏, T1813, 40:625a16–b03). Their interpretations are therefore used here as modern formulations of a normative pattern attested in these textual materials, rather than as evidence of a general scholarly consensus.

[12] In the early period of the Buddhist monastic community, the Buddha prescribed decomposed urine medicine (*pūtimuttabhesajja, chenqi yao* 陳棄藥) as one of the basic medicines on which monastics were to depend. The "Medicine Khandhaka" also permits a variety of medicinal substances and treatments according to particular illnesses. The Vinaya permits five medicinal substances—ghee (*sappi*), fresh butter (*navanīta*), oil (*tela*), honey (*madhu*), and molasses or sugarcane syrup (*phāṇita*)—along with seven additional categories: fats, roots, extracts, leaves, fruits, resins, and salts. These substances also appear in the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* as nourishing and therapeutic agents and formed part of the medicinal resources used in Buddhist monasteries (Vin I, 199; Mv VI.1.2–5; Zysk 1991, pp. 74–83).

[13] The *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (T2087, 51:878b03–06) states: "若其酒醴之差滋味流別，蒲萄甘蔗刹帝利飲也，麴糵醇醪吠奢等飲也，沙門婆羅門飲蒲萄甘蔗漿，非酒醴之謂也."

[14] Liu et al. describe *lǐ* 醴 as a fermented beverage made from malted cereals and brewed for a single day. It was unfiltered, slightly sweet, and low in alcohol content, and was commonly associated with ancestral ritual offerings (Liu et al. 2025, sec. 5.3).

[15] At the Second Council of Vesālī, the Vajjiputtaka monks argued that *jalogi* was permissible because it was "not yet liquor and had not yet become intoxicating," but Yasa Kākaṇḍakaputta and the elders ruled it "not allowable" (*na kappati*) (Vin II, 301). This beverage should not be identified with *muddikāpāna*, a grape drink listed among the eight permitted beverages in the *Mahāvagga*, because the texts neither specify the ingredients of *jalogi* nor indicate whether *muddikāpāna* underwent fermentation. The evidence therefore does not establish a general permission for non-intoxicating fermented beverages, but it shows that the prohibition extended to a beverage in the process of becoming liquor, even before actual intoxication occurred.

[16] In the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, Yasa's family is described as undertaking the five precepts "from abstaining from killing to abstaining from drinking alcohol." Since this account concerns the earliest generation of lay followers, the formulation may reflect a later stage in the textual or ritual development of the tradition rather than an already established rite combining the three refuges with the five precepts (see *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* [*Sifen lü* 四分律; T1428, 22:789c26–29]).

[17] Different textual traditions present varying relationships between the three refuges and the five precepts. The historical development of these formulations, including the processes by which the three refuges and the five precepts came to be combined or distinguished, requires further study (see Ishida 2012a, pp. 1194–99).

[18] The *Jñānaprasthāna*, an early Sarvāstivāda treatise, does not yet contain the later debate over the partial undertaking of the five precepts or over whether *saṃvara* could be acquired only partially. Jung Myung-Jin notes that explicit discussions of partial undertaking appear primarily in Sarvāstivāda-related texts and in certain Mahāyāna sources (see Jung 2018).

[19] The identification of the "western masters" (*xifang zhushi* 西方諸師) with Gandhāran Sarvāstivādins is based primarily on later commentarial evidence. The *Jushe lun ji* 俱舍論記 explains that the "western masters" were Sarvāstivāda masters of Gandhāra, located west of Kashmir (T1821, 41:46c22–24). Modern scholarship has likewise associated this northwestern Sarvāstivāda interpretive tendency with Gandhāra and, in some contexts, with the Sautrāntika-oriented current (Ishida 2012a, pp. 1194–99; Ishida 2012b, pp. 78–102). It should be noted, however, that expressions such as the "western masters" (xifang zhushi 西方諸師), *pāścātyāḥ*, and "foreign masters" (bahirdeśakāḥ) in Sarvāstivāda literature cannot be assumed to refer invariably to the same group in every context. Accordingly, the term "Gandhāran masters," as used in this study, should be understood not as the official designation of a specific institutionally defined school, but as an analytical label for an interpretive tendency associated with northwestern India and distinguished in this debate from the Kashmir-based Vaibhāṣika tradition.

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