



Gandharan Avadanas: British Library Kharosthi Fragments 1-3 and 21 and Supplementary Fragments A-C (Gandharan Buddhist Texts)

Timothy Lenz

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The Gandharan Buddhist Texts series presents editions, translations, and studies of the British Library's unique collection of Buddhist manuscripts in the Gandhari language, dating from the first century AD.

Gandharan Avadanas features editions and studies of five fragmentary scrolls containing collections of avadanas, or edifying stories. The manuscript fragments presented here comprise twenty-one avadanas that briefly summarize stories, typically furnishing no more than a title, identification of the main character, and minimal reference to the plot. Presumably, these summaries would have served as memory prompts for the intended reader, perhaps the scribe himself, who would already have been familiar with the avadanas. The newly discovered Gandharan avadanas differ from those popular in other Buddhist literatures in their lack of explicit reference to underlying karmic causes and also in addressing a broader array of themes such as the inevitable disappearance of the dharma, the pitfalls of samsaric existence, and the history of the first Buddhist council after the Buddha's nirvana.

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