

Manuscript Fragments in the Schøyen Collection: King Bimbisāra's conversion

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Buddhist texts of different literary genres – sūtra, *vinaya* and commentaries – touch on the issue of king Bimbisāra's conversion, which is the theme of the Schøyen manuscript fragments number 2382/284 and 2382/285 as well as smaller fragments (2382/uf17/2c + 2381/uf4/1b + 2382/297 + 2381/uf7/5d + 2382/256b). The birch bark manuscripts describe how king Bimbisāra together with millions of persons of his retinue takes refuge with the Buddha, the dharma and the *saṃgha*. Among other implications the identification helps to fit a small additional piece into the complicated puzzle of the Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit of the Schøyen collection.

The purpose of the presentation is to establish the relation of the manuscript fragments with the extant Pāli and Chinese parallel versions and to propose a possible school affiliation. I will further attempt to place the texts narrating king Bimbisāra's conversion within the greater context of the scriptures of the early and middle phases of Indian and Central Asian Buddhism.