

To Acharya Jinavarman of Nalanda
Keeper of the Northern Discourse Halls
PATALIPUTRA

5th of Caitra, Year 136 of the Gupta Era
In the 14th year of Kumaragupta I's Emperorship

Acharya,

I write not in doubt of the dharma, but in awe of its limit.

Two nights ago, beneath the north-facing cloister, I sat in meditation. A pale red light pulsed along the horizon—not sunrise, not torchlight, but a trembling aurora, like the breath of a wounded god. It moved not with the winds. It followed no path of season or moon.

The Vedas say such things come in the Kali Yuga. The Tripitaka warns that at the end of a world-cycle, even the sky shall burn. But this—this is not burning. It is waning.

I recited the Prajñāpāramitā. I read the Lalitavistara. I sought clarity in the Jātakas. Yet all I found was silence.

The Huns march in the west. The Nalanda halls grow thin. Fewer students arrive. More monks are taken for war. Ashoka's trees wither along the riverbanks, and the Bodhi grove bears no fruit. We whisper that the yugas turn. But I feel this is not a turning—it is a cancellation.

The flames in the temple do not dance. The breath of the chants seems swallowed. The sacred syllables echo, but the walls no longer respond.

You once told me that impermanence is not destruction, but transition. That the soul is not lost in change, but refined. But what I see now is not transition. It is evaporation. Karma does not follow this path. It ends in it.

Let it be known:

In the fourteenth year of Emperor Kumaragupta, when a blood aurora stained the north and the Dharma Wheel faltered, Dharmapala Varma, monk of Nalanda, bound the failing light into the scrolls of wisdom.

You are receiving this because you guard the manuscripts. Hide this scroll in the hollow beneath the Buddha's seat, where we keep the texts never finished.

Let it say: *the monks saw the sky flicker, and they could not tell if it was fire or forgetting. They sat, and they listened. And the silence grew.*

With bowed head,

Dharmapala Varma

Scholar of the Southern Library

NALANDA