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A NOTE ON A NEWLY IDENTIFIED PALM-LEAF
MANUSCRIPT OF THE SAMĀDHIRĀJASŪTRA

During his visit to the Sa skya Monastery in 1936, the famous Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana photographed a palm-leaf manuscript consisting of altogether 108 folios, which he described as containing an Arthaviniścaya-dharmaparyāya.¹ In fact he noticed a discrepancy between this manuscript and two others of a text with the same title,² which he could also examine and photograph (nos. 47 and 87 on his list, both from the Nor monastery), but he apparently found no time to assess this puzzling difference. Evidently relying on the colophon of the last folio, he was misled just as a Tibetan reader had been before him, who had written (*don*) *nam par ñes pa'i chos kyi nam granis* (= Arthaviniścayadharmaparyāya) in Dbu-med characters on the title page, the syllable *don* being broken off with part of this leaf.

Indeed, the colophon has *arthaviniścayo nāma dharmaparyāyaḥ samāptaḥ*, and the size and the script of this folio look so similar to those of the foregoing 107 leaves, that, on first sight, they all seem to belong to one and the same manuscript.³ On closer examination, however, they have to be separated for two formal reasons. First, the folios are consecutively numbered from 1 to 107, while the last folio bears the page number 10, and second, folios 1 to 107 are divided by two punch holes into three columns of text, while the last leaf has two punch holes as well, but with only the left one dividing all the lines of the text. Accordingly, only the last folio belongs to a manuscript of the Arthaviniścayasūtra, preserving text from *mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa* 29 (it begins with the word *keśatā*)⁴ until the end of the sūtra (10b5).

All the remaining folios, however, form part of a manuscript of the Samādhirājasūtra, and once this is recognized, it becomes possible to read some very faint akṣaras in the middle of the first page as “Candrapradīpa”, the alternate title of the sūtra. Next to the Gilgit manuscript which goes back to the 6th century,⁵ it appears to be the second oldest manuscript known so far, since the script can, with a great deal of caution, be dated to the 11th century. Judging by the script, the five palm leaves of a Samādhirājasūtra manuscript listed by Hara Prasad Śāstri and microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project under reel no. A 38/8⁶ are definitely younger, and the same probably holds true for the 25 palm leaves in the Tokyo University Library,⁷ which I have not seen. Regrettably, the

present manuscript is also incomplete; the last folios are missing, and therefore no final colophon is preserved which could help in dating the copy more precisely. It is very well written, and one's first impression is that it contains few errors. Generally, it corresponds to the version represented by the Nepalese manuscripts (see below), but there are other features which connect it with the version on which the Tibetan translation is based, as for example the splitting up of chapter 22 into two separate chapters and the length of chapter 24. A few chapter titles show differences from those in some of the other versions (3, 4, 6, 22).

Since the chapter colophons are not easily found on first sight, they will be given here with reference to folio, line and column.

Introductory verses (1bff.): verses 1 to 12 and 43 in Appendix I, Nos. 1 and 3, of Vaidya's edition (cf. note 9), and three additional verses; beginning of the sūtra proper: *evaṃ mayā śrutam* etc. (1b8 middle);

1. *nidāna-parivarto nāma prathamah* (5a8 right);
2. *śāleṅdrarāja*⁸ (6b5 right);
3. *bhūtabuddhagaṇavarṇṇaprakāśana* (8b1 middle);
4. *samādhi* (9b5 left-middle);
5. *ghoṣadatta* (12b2–3);
6. *anantajñāna* (13b6 left);
7. *trikṣāntyavatāra* (15a7 right);
8. *abhāvasamudgata* (17a2 middle-right);
9. hardly readable, but probably *gambhīradharmakṣānti* (20a6 left);
10. *purapraveśa* (27b6 right);
11. *sūtradhāraṇa* (30b1 right);
12. *samādhyanuśikṣaṇā* (31b3 middle-right);
13. *samādhinirdeśa* (33a1 left-middle);
14. *smitaṃ darśana* (read *smitaṣaṃdarśana*; 36b2 middle-right);
15. *smitavyākaraṇa* (37a5 left);
16. *pūrvayoga* (39a1 left);
17. *bahubuddhanirhārasamādhimukha* (48a3 middle-right);
18. *samādhyanuparindanā* (50a4 middle);
19. *acintyabuddhadharmanirdeśa* (52b4 left-middle);
20. no colophon; the chapter ends with *samprakāśayati sma* after the text presented in Appendix I, No. 22, in Vaidya's edition, i.e. verses 1–11 are missing (54a6 left);
21. *pūrvayoga* (55b3–4);
22. *kāyādhyavasāya* (56a1 right); the chapter ends with verse 133 of

Appendix I, No. 24, in Vaidya's edition. In the Gilgit text and evidently in other Nepalese manuscripts, chapters 22 and 23 belong together, forming one chapter entitled Tathāgatakāyanirdeśa, while in the Tibetan translation this section is equally divided into two chapters, Lus ñes par bstan pa (*Kāyanirdeśa) and De bžin gsegs pa'i sku ñes par bstan pa (*Tathāgatakāyanirdeśa).⁹ Thus, chapter 24 of the present ms. corresponds to 23 in Dutt and Vaidya, 25 to 24 etc.

23. *tathāgatakāya* (58a4 left-middle);
24. *tathāgatācintyanirdeśa* (64a5 left-middle); in both the present ms. and in the Tibetan translation, this chapter is considerably longer than in the text established by Dutt.
25. *pratisamvidāvātāra* (66a2 middle);
26. *anumodanā* (67a1 right);
27. *dānānuśāṅsa* (67b2 right);
28. *śīlanirdeśa* (67b6 left-middle);
29. *daśānuśāṅsā* (71b6 right);
30. *tejoṅaṇarāja* (76a4 right); the title is mistakenly reproduced as *tejagaṇarāja* by Dutt (and, accordingly, by Vaidya), but the name of the Tathāgata is given as Tejagaṇirāja in verse 1; cf. Dutt, p. 358, note 2, with a reference to the Tibetan translation *gzi brjid tshogs (kyi rgyal po)*. The present ms. also has *tejagaṇirāja* in verse 1 (72a4, left column).
31. 76b6 (the photograph of the verso of folios 73—82 is missing in the collection of the Seminar für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde, but 77a1 starts with *tasmāt tarhi* in the first sentence of chapter 32);
32. *sarvadharmasvabhāvanirdeśa* (78a6 right);
33. *sūtradhāraṇānuśāṅsā* (86a5 right);
34. *kṣemadatta* (89a6 right);
35. *jñānāvati* (93a4 left-middle);
36. *supuṣpacandra* (104b5 middle-right); folio 107b6: end of the manuscript; it breaks off with verse 68d of chapter 37.

For the first part of chapter 9 up to verse 40, the readings of the manuscript have been checked against the exemplary edition of Christoph Cüppers, which presents the Gilgit, the Nepalese and the Tibetan versions synoptically, therefore greatly facilitating comparison. Since the script on folios 19b and 20a, containing the rest of the chapter, is generally very faint and even partly rubbed off, these two pages have been disregarded. The text agrees very well with the wording of the Nepalese recension established

by Cüppers and contains every addition or omission which distinguishes the Nepalese from the Gilgit version. To give an impression of the manuscript, in the following the major variants and mistakes are listed.

tatra khalu (17a2) with Tibetan *de nas yañ* as against only *tatra*, p. 1, line 1.

°*varṇṇitaḥ* (17a3) as against °*saṃvarṇitaḥ* 1,6.

sarvatathāgatāḥ and *sarvaśrāvaka*° with most Nepalese mss. as against *sarve* in the edited text.

paribhāsa (17b1) as against *pratibhāsa* 7,3–4.

anaṅgana (17b5) with Gilgit as against *anaṅga* 9,18.

niṣkeso (17b5) as against *niṣkleśo* 11,1, but with the variant *niṣkeso* in the manuscripts WXYZ.

tīrṇna° (17b7) with Gilgit as against *utīrṇa*° 13,4.

aparyavasāna (17b7) as against *aparyavadāna* 13,11, Gilgit *a-paryavadhāna* and Tibetan *kun nas dkris pa med pa* (= *aparyavasthāna*).

puruṣacandraprabha (18a2), probably influenced by the name of the interlocutor of the Buddha, as against *puruṣacandra* 15,7.

avabhāṣata (18a2), mistake for *abhāṣata* 15,13.

ūrdham (18a3) as against *ūrdvam*, verse 2c (probably to be read as *ūrdham*, too).

uhyantu (18a4) confirms the conjecture in 5b.

pānagadena (18a6) as against *pānamadena* 8a.

rodaye (18b1) as against *rodayī* 13b.

bālu (18b2) with Gilgit as against *bāla* 15c.

rūpān yatho (? 18b2–3) as against *rūpāṇy atho* 16a with the variant *rūpān yathā* in the mss. DV.

supināntare (°)*smin* (18b3) with most Nepalese mss. as against *supināntarasmim* 17a.

mṛtām (18b3) as against *mṛtam* 18a.

skandham (18b5) as against *skandhum* 22a.

°*pathe anarthikaḥ* (18b7), with *a* and *na* exchanged, as against °*pathena arthikaḥ* 24c.

pūrvānti (18b7) with Gilgit as against *pūrvāntu* 25a.

avekṣyamāṇe (18b7) with Gilgit as against *avekṣamāṇe* 25a.

nirvṛti (18b7) with Gilgit as against *nirvṛti* 26a.

na (19a2) omitted in 28c.

kathivā (19a2) as against *kathetvā* 29a and 30a, but also *kathetvā* (19a3) in 31a.

sarvajñinā (19a4), metrically preferable to *sarvajñinenā* 33b.

saṃpratyānubhoti (19a5) as against *sa pratyānubhoti* 35d with the variant *saṃpraty°* in the mss. WXYZ.

pratyavekṣu (19a6) with Gilgit as against *pratyavekṣya* 37b.

jīvītā° (19a6) as against *jīvikā°* 38b.

grhīta (19a6) as against *grhītva* 38d.

corāna (19a7) as against *caurāṇa* 40a (cf. above, *rūpānyatho* as against *rūpānyatho*).

Finally, aside from those misprints already noted by J. W. de Jong,¹⁰ a few more could be corrected in the edition of Cüppers: p. 1, line 3 read *mahāsatvaḥ*; verse 10c read *janayeta*; 28b read *āsuddhīti*; 36d *yathodraka°* appears to be preferable.

NOTES

¹ R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet", *JBORS* 23.1 (1937), p. 21, no. 184. He gives the size as $21 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ " and the script as Kutīlā.

² Loc. cit., note 3: "It is different from the Arthavinīścayaśūtra".

³ All the details are based on a photocopy of the manuscript in the possession of the Seminar für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde der Universität Göttingen (shelf mark: Xc 14/31). Most of the photos are clear, only one of them being partly out of focus, and with the exception of a few folios the script is easily readable. Presently, a catalogue of all the prints of R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana's photographs in the Seminar is being prepared by Frank Bandurski, M.A.; the present manuscript is no. 30 in his catalogue.

⁴ N. H. Samtani, *The Arthavinīścaya-śūtra and Its Commentary (Nibandhana)*, Patna, 1971 (Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, 13), p. 61.

⁵ Cf. C. Cüppers, *The IXth Chapter of the Samādhirājasūtra. A Text-critical Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Sūtras*, Stuttgart, 1990 (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 41), p. XVIII.

⁶ H. P. Śāstri, *A Catalogue of Palm-leaf & Selected Paper Mss. Belonging to the Durbar Library, Nepal*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1915, p. 9 (no. III.359 E); R. Grünendahl, *A concordance of H. P. Śāstri's Catalogue of the Durbar Library and the Microfilms of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project*, Stuttgart, 1989 (VOHD, Supplementband 31), p. LXXV.

⁷ S. Matsunami, *A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Tokyo University Library*, Tokyo, 1965, p. 120, no. 333.II.

⁸ The chapter colophons are written throughout in accordance with the first one, i.e.

°parivarto nāma and the number written out as a word, but this is abbreviated here to the title alone.

⁹ Cf. K. Régamey, *Three Chapters from the Samādhirājasūtra*, Warszawa, 1938, p. 9; N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. II.2, Calcutta, 1953, p. 297, note 1; P. L. Vaidya, *Samādhirājasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1961 (Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, 2), p. 143, note 1.

¹⁰ *III* 36 (1993), pp. 143–144.