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# A Paleographical Study on a Palm-Leaf Manuscript of Prajñākaramati's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (ZX0617-ZB20)

WANG Junqi

**1. Introduction** In recent years, a palm-leaf manuscript (ZX0617-ZB20) version of Prajñākaramati's (c. 10–11th century) *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (BCAP) preserved in the TAR became available to scholars worldwide. While it has since received considerable attention, this newly discovered palm-leaf manuscript remains something of a mystery. We have, for instance, considered issues such as manuscript's unorthodox pagination (Wang 2022), the seemingly arbitrary insertion within manuscript ZX0617-ZB20 of a leaf taken from the *Samghāṭasūtra* (Wang et al. 2021). We are also interested in the fact that the script seems to not have been written by one hand, but by various scribes. This paper concentrates on the latter issue, concentrating on the paleographic features of the manuscript to conduct an examination of the varied characteristics of the handwriting. Using these paleographic methods, this piece seeks to attribute these ascribed script variations to their respective sources so as to extrapolate some further conclusions on the processes involved in the manuscript's transcription.

To begin, the recto of the first folio contains two instances of Tibetan cursive script (*dbu med*). On the upper left corner of the folio there is some text inscribed by the manuscript's proprietor, or perhaps by a librarian. The note mentions that the proprietor/librarian is not certain whether this manuscript is a version of the Sanskrit *Muni-matālamkāra* (*thub dgongs rgyan*) or the BCAP (*spyod 'jugi 'grel pa*). He mentions that further comparison with the text as it appears in the *bstan 'gyur* is required. On the verso of the first folio, the manuscript reads “*namo buddhāya || mūrdhna praṇāmya sugatān\* sahadharma*”<sup>1</sup> *utkhātāmohatarumūlahataprapañcān\**.” Above the sentence “*mūrdhna praṇāmya sugatān\* sahadharmakāyā*,” there is an interlinear transliteration of the Sanskrit to Tibetan that is written using red ink. The writing stops abruptly after the short sentence mentioned above. The author of this Tibetan transliteration may have been the same proprietor or librarian who left a note on the recto.










A second note on the recto written in Tibetan script appears to the immediate right of the string hole. This note states that the original proprietor of the manuscript was called *dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' grags* and that it later was passed on to the yogi *seng ge rgyal mtshan* from *thar pa gling* Monastery. This *dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' grags* is probably the known translator of another text, the *Madhyamakāvatāraṭīkā* (D3870, P5271). According to van der Kuijp's 1993 study of the colophon to a Chinese-Tibetan version of the *Ratnaguṇasañcayagāthā* in Yunju Monastery, both *dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' grags* and another figure called Jayānanda collaborated in the translation of the *Madhyamakāvatāraṭīkā* while serving at the Tangut court under Emperor Renzong (r. 1139–1193). The former was a Dharma Preceptor (*fashi*) and the latter was the National Preceptor (*guoshi*). Chen (1985, 55–56) notes that, according to the reign title recorded in the Yunju Monastery version of the *Ratnaguṇasañcayagāthā*, the document can be dated to sometime after 1142 (Daqing 3). Therefore, we can say with some certainty that *dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' grags* and Jayānanda would have served at the Tangut court at some point between 1142 and the end of Renzong's rule in 1193. The BCAP manuscript may therefore have been owned by *dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' grags* before his posting at the Tangut court. From a paleographic standpoint, the script found in this manuscript is also similar in form and style to other scripts dated to the first half of the twelfth century.



On the whole, the manuscript is written in Proto-Bengali script and displays few textual emendations, such as deletions, insertions, and revisions. This explains in part why it contains numerous textual omissions as well as additions resulting from parablepsia. There are also various scribal errors with characters that look alike, such as *bha* and *ta*, *pa* and *ya*, *ja* and *ya*, *ma* and *sa*, *ca* and *va*, *ra* and *na*, and so forth. Therefore, while reading this manuscript, although it predates the Nepalese paper manuscript used by de La Vallée Poussin (1901–1914), and although it does offer a somewhat reliable reading of the original scripture, there are also segments that are entirely incomprehensible because of the instances of textual omission and character confusion. For example, the BCAP's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (BCA) verse 4.5 is as follows: “*atilakṣapratī-jñātātīkrame*”<sup>2</sup> *pi phalato garīyasī syād āpattir ity āha* | *manasyetyādi* | *idaṃ dāsyāmīti cī* |<sup>(42a4)</sup> *ttena vikalpya* | *punas taddānād yo nivarttate* | *sa prebho bhavati paraloke* | *alpamātre stokamātre* {*sti*} *bhaktādirūpe vastuni* | *ukta* |<sup>(42a5)</sup> *m ity āgame kathitaṃ* | *tathā carasāpratījñāyāda* *dato narakagatir uktā* |” The first term ‘*atilakṣa-*’ is difficult to



interpret. Based on the Tibetan translation '*shin tu chung ba*,' it appears that '*atilakṣa-*' might be a miswriting of '*atisūkṣma-*'. Secondly, the word '*prebho*' in the commentary is clearly a miswriting of the word '*preto*' from the BCA 4.5. The reason for this mistake is perhaps due to the visual similarity between the characters for *bha* and *ta*. Lastly, the writing of '*carasā*' is challenging for similar reasons. Considering the Tibetan translation '*tshig tu*,' '*carasā*' might be a miswriting of '*vacasā*' due to the similarity in the shapes of scripts.



**2. The handwriting of at least two scribes** Basing our observations on the differences in script forms, we can distinctly identify the handwriting of at least two scribes in this manuscript who will be known as Scribe A and Scribe B. Scribe A transcribed the majority of the folios, while Scribe B transcribed folios 93, 97, 91, 118, 92, 94, 104, 98, and 113, a total of 9 folios.<sup>1)</sup> In terms of content, the 9 folios ascribed to Scribe B correspond to the commentary section of the BCA 6.74–106. Continuity in the content of these 9 folios supports the idea that an independent scribe (i.e., Scribe B) was responsible for transcribing this portion. In terms of script forms, Scribe B exhibits particular writing habits, especially evident in characters such as *i*, *kha*, *ca*, *ja*, *la*, and so forth.



*i*: Scribe A typically writes the vowel *i* in the form of  or  with two closed loops joined together. The characters' bottom segment has an elliptical shape and there is a short vertical curved line connecting the top to the bottom. Looking at the top stroke, there are two variations of the short stroke above the horizontal top line of *i*. It either forms a short downward diagonal stroke from the upper left towards the lower right or the stroke rises to the left from the right side of the straight horizontal top line. Since both variations of *i* appear in the same folio, it can be said that both of these variations are characteristic of Scribe A's handwriting habits. In contrast, Scribe B writes *i* with a vertical straight line on the right side . A similar writing of this *i* can be observed in the *Amoghapāśakalparāja* Sanskrit Palm-leaf Manuscript (Otsuka 1997) in the form of  with an unclosed circular loop as well as in the Sanokhār tāma-kholi inscription of Valalaśeṇa (1166) in the form of . In the Tarpandighi grant of Lakshmana Sena (1122), the Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena (1095–1158), the Naihati Grant of Vallala-Sena (1159), and the Tezpur Plates of Vallabhadeva (1185), it is written as , , , and , respectively, with an additional slight horizontal curve or a dot below two loops.




*kha*: The *kha* letters written by Scribe A generally appear as . Scribe B writes *kha* as . Both of these two variations of *kha* are open at the top. The most significant difference

between the two lies in the shape of the leftmost segment of the character. Scribe A starts from the lower left of the letter, moving from bottom to top in a shape resembling the letter *S* in English. At the end of the *S*, he applies a downward diagonal stroke towards the right to join the vertical straight line. Similar writings of *kha* can be observed in inscriptions like the Tarpandighi grant of Lakshmana Sena (1122), the Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena (1095–1158), the Naihati Grant of Vallala-Sena (1159) and the Tezpur Plates of Vallabhadeva (1185). It seems that this writing of *kha* was widely used at the beginning of the 12th century.

Scribe B also starts from the lower left but, unlike Scribe A, after applying a small downward stroke, the pen tip moves back and continues upwards to write the remaining part of the letter. Scribe B's writing of *kha* is rather archaic and consistent with *kha* letters found in the Nalanda Copper-plate of Devapaladeva (850) and an *Amarakoṣaṭīka* manuscript dated 1119. In the manuscripts of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Jñānālokāṃkāra* (Kouda 2004), we can find both of these two variants of *kha*.

*ca*: The *ca* letters written by Scribe A generally appear as  in the *Nāgārī* form with a horizontal straight line at the top, and an acute triangular shape formed with the vertical line on the left. Scribe B writes *ca* in the form of , with two curves that join together at the end. In this instance, the original vertical line has become very much cursive and exhibits a transitional form of modern Bengali *ca*. Both these two variants of *ca* can be traced back to early scribal periods.

*ja*: Scribe A typically writes the consonant *ja* in a transitional form of . Scribe B writes *ja* as . We know that both of these two variants of *ja* evolved from an earlier form that was similar to an upper-case *E* in English. In the *E*-shaped form of *ja*, the top horizontal line evolved into the top horizontal line, the middle horizontal line evolved into the right cursive line, and the bottom horizontal line evolved into the curved left half seen in both variants. There are two main differences between these two variants: (1) the degree of curvature in the left half, and (2) the size of the right cursive line and the extent to which it extends downward. Scribe A's writing of *ja* exhibits a transitional form to modern Bengali *ja* and can also be found in the Deopārā inscription of Vijayasena (1095–1158).

*la*: The *la* letters written by Scribe A generally appear as  with a few exceptions where it appears as . In the case of , the curve in the left limb is directly joined to the middle of the vertical line. This form is seen in many twelfth century inscriptions such as the Deopārā



inscription of Vijayasena (1095–1158), the inscription from the time of Aśokacalladeva, Lakṣmaṇasena-year 51 (1171) and the Rākṣaskhālī Island Plate of Maḍommaṇapāla (1196). In its 𑀅 form, which retains some archaic elements, the curve in the left limb is joined to the middle of the vertical line by a small horizontal line. Scribe B tends to write *la* in the form of 𑀅 which has a curve in the left limb joined to the middle of the vertical line by a small curved stroke instead of a horizontal line.

**3. Phases of Transcription** The transcription of a text was seldom done in one sitting. There were various steps and phases completed over time and they were not always consistent. One such step is the inclusion of vertical and horizontal ruled lines that were a guide for the scribe. Regarding the 9 folios transcribed by Scribe B, there are traces of these horizontal ruled line, indicating the scribe's use of these lines to ensure an even transcription. However, these 9 folios transcribed by Scribe B do not include vertical column lines. Considering the number of folios transcribed by Scribe B, as well as his consistent transcription style throughout, this might suggest that he would have transcribed these 10 folios in a single work day. As we will see with Scribe A's folios, the phases are usually split into set of 10 or 11, indicating that the scribes regular workload in a single day was about 10 folios.

In the case of Scribe A's folios, we can discern distinct transcription steps and phases based on the presence of vertical and horizontal ruled lines, as well as the style of the script. When Scribe A utilizes vertical ruled lines and, particularly, when he uses horizontal lines, the transcription style is far more even and organized. In instances where Scribe A does not use horizontal ruled lines, his writing is comparatively unrestrained and seems, at times, hasty.

**First phase of transcription: 1A–9B** This phase originally comprised 10 folios, though the 4th folio is now missing. Vertical ruled lines appear on 1B and 2A, while folios 2B through to 9B have no vertical lines. These extant 9 folios do not have horizontal ruled lines. Pages 1B and 2B contain 7 lines of text each, while 2A and the remaining folios have 6 lines of text each. The following 11 folios (10A–20B) have vertical ruled lines and, except for folios 10A and 20B that have 6 lines of text per page, all other folios have been prepared to have 7 lines of text per page. The difference in the preparation of folios 1A–9B and folios 10A–20B, as well as their respective script coherence, suggests that they were done in one sitting and that approximately 10 folios constituted Scribe A's workload for the

day.

**Second phase of transcription: 10A–20B** This phase comprises 11 folios. They all have vertical ruled lines and no horizontal ruled lines. Aside from folios 10A and 20B that have 6 lines of text per page, all other folios have 7 lines. In the 6 lines of 20B, the size of the script is smaller in the first three lines as it gradually increases from the fourth line onward. The writing as of the fourth line also seems more hasty. Not only is the script uneven, but the spacing between the various elements of the script is also wider. Moreover, due to the absence of horizontal guide lines, the top lines of the text are not aligned, displaying an irregular arrangement. To quickly finish his daily quota (appr. 10 folios), Scribe A might have accelerated the pace of his transcription, therefore lowering the quality of the script.

**Third phase of transcription: 21A–37B** These 17 folios have both vertical and horizontal ruled lines, containing six text lines per page. The script is written in a highly formalized style. Notably, the commentary on the BCA verse 3.10 concludes on folio 37B, and the commentary on the BCA verse 3.28 begins on folio 38A. These are the extant numbered folios, but there is a gap of approximately seven or more palm-leaves between the two commentaries. Given that these seven or more missing folios might also have included vertical ruled lines, the 17 extant folios (21–37) may only represent a part of the scribe's work done over a period of two or three days.

**Fourth phase of transcription: 38A–111B; 117B–108A** The presence of horizontal ruled lines without vertical ruled lines characterizes this phase. There are six lines of text per page. The script is written in a highly formalized style.

We can observe that during the third and fourth phases, Scribe A's transcription becomes more uniform and neat, a rise in quality attributed to the use of horizontal ruled lines for transcribing. In contrast, the first and second phases of transcription reveal a relatively uneven style in Scribe A's work as well as an instance of hasty script writing in folio 20B.

**4. Conclusion** By analyzing the manuscript's script variations and the presence in certain folios of vertical and horizontal ruled lines, this paper suggested that this Sanskrit manuscript was transcribed by at least two scribes. Furthermore, the scribe responsible for copying the main body of the manuscript (Scribe A) completed his portion in four phases, with an average daily output of approximately 10 folios. Scribe B also only copied around

10 folios, indicating that they both had a similar daily quota. Despite variations in the quality of the writing attributed to Scribe A done in four transcription phases, there was a consistent script style throughout, indicating that the attribution of those folios to a single copyist is plausible.

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#### Note

1) The incorrect folio numbers from the original manuscript have been reorganized based on the manuscript's content. See Wang (2022).

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**Key words** *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, *kun dga' grags*, *Prajñākaramati*

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## Interpretation of *ekābhisambandha* in *Sambandhaparīkṣā* v.4:

Focusing on Comparisons of Commentaries

GAO Ting

### 1. Introduction

Dharmakīrti's (ca. 600–660) *Sambandhaparīkṣā* (SP) includes the refutation of the reality of relation (*sambandha*) in general and in particular.<sup>1)</sup> In the general refutation (vv.1–6), the fourth verse refutes the fourth view of the opponent<sup>2)</sup> (v.4) as follows:

[The opponent states:] Through a relation with a single [entity] (*ekābhisambandha*), there is a relation between two [relata]. [Then ask:] What is the relation between that [single relation] and the two [relata]? Moreover, [there would be] infinite regress. Thus (*tathā*), there is no conception of relation. (SP 3, 9–10)

Previous research has proposed diverse interpretations of the opponent's assertion in the first half of v.4,<sup>3)</sup> particularly of the term '*ekābhisambandha*,' for the commentaries on SP provide different readings. Śāṅkaranandana's (ca. 9/10c.) SPA devotes a larger portion to elucidating this v.4 than to other verses, and his interpretation significantly differs from those of earlier commentaries, that is Devendrabuddhi's (ca. 630–690) SPV and its sub-commentary by Vinītaśāstra (ca. 710–770) titled SPT. This paper first focuses on their interpretations of the term '*ekābhisambandha*' in the opponent's assertion. I then compare their interpretations to clarify the differences.

### 2. The opponent's assertion

#### 2.1. Interpretation according to the *Sambandhaparīkṣāvṛttiṭīkā*

SPV 14, 3–6<sup>4)</sup> and SPT D5a6–5b1 provide a very clear explanation of the compound word '*ekābhisambandha*.' First, '*ekābhisambandha*' is interpreted as an instrumental *tatpuruṣa* as *ekena* (*abhi*) *sambandha*,<sup>5)</sup> meaning a relation with a single entity. Subsequently, three possible referents of the word '*eka*' are explained: (1) As something distinct from the relata, '*eka*' refers to conjunction, a quality as one of categories taught in the Vaiśeṣika