

A RARE MANUSCRIPT OF ASAMGA'S *ABHIDHARMASAMUCCAYA*

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Among the list of Sanskrit manuscripts reported to have been discovered by Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana¹ in the Tibetan monastery of Śa-lu near Śi-ga-rtse, is an incomplete palm-leaf manuscript of Asaṃga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, described as being 21½ by 2 inches and written in the Māgadhī script, with seven lines on each page.² Four photographs of this manuscript, taken on quarter size films so as to include both sides of all the seventeen leaves, had to be enlarged to about four times their original size in order to make the writing legible with the help of a magnifying lens. Copies of such enlargements are available for consultation on the premises of the Bihar Research Society, Patna.

After Nāgārjuna had laid the foundations of a śūnyatā dialectic, which came to be accepted after the second century A. D. as the irrefutable background of all Buddhist philosophizing, it was given to Asaṃga to establish, in the fourth century A. D., a complete scheme of the ways and means of realizing the logically inconceivable mode of Becoming. This philosophy rested on direct experience (*yoga*) rather than on intellectual criticism (*prajñā*) with respect to reality. It meant a return to the older realistic attitude of the founders of Buddhism on the new level of philosophic ability attained by the Mahāyānists. Just as Nāgārjuna's negativistic philosophy represented at its best the spirit of the unsettled, leveling, and yet peculiarly virulent political complex in northern India, dominated by Kaniṣka, Asaṃga seems to reflect in his thought the activising, reconstructing, and even compromising spirit of the Gupta age. The Yogācāra system, the foundation

¹ K. P. Jayaswal pays an enthusiastic tribute to his remarkable spirit of enterprise: "Lost Sanskrit Works Recovered from Tibet" in the *Modern Review* (Feb. 1937) 159-64.

² *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society (JBORS)* 33 (Pt. 1) 48, title no. 312.

of which he was inspired by Maitreya to lay, thus came to be recognized as containing a complete and standard description of the entire field of Buddhist philosophy³ in Asaṃga's time. At least three fundamental works relating to this system are attributed to Asaṃga: ⁴ (1) the encyclopedic *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*,⁵ (2) the present work, *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and (3) the *Mahāyānasamgraha*,⁶ the last two of which are in the nature of summaries.

According to recorded legends,⁷ Asaṃga was born in the Kauśika gens at Peshawar (the former "Puruṣapura" in the Gandhāra district) of a Brāhmaṇa mother and a Kṣatriya father, and was in his early days initiated by Piṇḍola into the Mahīśāsaka school of Hīnayāna, which must have influenced the character of his later philosophical theories. Not being satisfied with his own learning, he went into the wilderness to receive inspiration from Maitreya, whom he had to serve for many a long and tedious year, full of discouragement and despair, until he was blessed by a revelation, which helped him to build up for himself a new philosophical con-

³ For a brief statement of the philosophical principles (*tattvārtha*), on which this system is founded, see *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, ed. by WOGIHARA (Tōkyō 1930-36). 37-57.

⁴ The Chinese Tripiṭaka assigns seven different works (excluding the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*, which is attributed to Maitreya) to Asaṃga. In the Tibetan Canon are assigned to him twelve separate works (including the three mentioned here). Hsüan-tsang mentions (*Buddhist Records of the Western World*, tr. BEAL, Bk. 5, 226) three works: viz., *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*, *Mahāyānasūtrāṅkārikā*, and *Madhyāntavighāgaśāstra* as having been received, among others, by Asaṃga from Maitreya and declared by the former to the great congregation. The *Madhyāntavibhāga* has, however, not been included among Asaṃga's works either in the Chinese or the Tibetan canon. See *Madhyāntavibhāgaṭīkā*, ed. S. YAMAGUCHI (Nagoya, 1934), Intro. x ff.

⁵ For a list of contents of this *Śāstra* see LEUMANN in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 62.91. A synopsis of the contents of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (which forms the 15th section of this work) is given by U. WOGIHARA at the end of his edition (pp. 1-24). Also see Rāhula Sāṃkṛtyāyana, *Darśana-digdarśana* (Hindi) (Allahabad, 1944) 702-37.

⁶ See Etienne LAMORTE, "L'Ālayavijñāna (Le Réceptacle) dans le Mahāyānasamgraha," (Chap. 2) *MCB* 3 (1934-35). 169-255, and L. DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, "Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna," *ibid.* 145-168.

⁷ See bibliography on the date of Vasubandhu (Asaṃga's younger brother) and generally on the problem of Maitreya-Asaṃga-Vasubandhu, L. DE LA VALLÉE POUSSIN, *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, Intro. xxiv ff. (Paris, 1931); also Bu-ston, (1290-1364 A.D.), *History of Buddhism* (tr. OBERMILLER, Heidelberg, 1932) Pt. 2, 136 ff.; Tāranātha (b. 1573), *Geschichte des Buddhismus* (tr. A. SCHIEFNER, St. Petersburg, 1864) 107 ff.

viction. Surrounded by a few select disciples, he spent the later years of his life in teaching, propagating, and converting at different centers of learning in the U. P. and Bihar. Among his converts was his own younger brother, Vasubandhu (born of a Brāhmaṇa father), who, having belonged at first to the Sarvāstivāda sect, had deprecated the system of Asaṃga as being "so difficult and burdensome that it can be carried only by an elephant."

To return to the four photographs containing the text of Asaṃga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, marked as 1A and 1B, containing nine folios, and 2A and 2B, containing eight folios (where A and B represent the obverse and the reverse sides of the same folios placed one below the other) it was found on examination that the lefthand margins of the reverse sides of the folios were marked with the following (not always continuous) numbers: 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 (on 1B), and 14, 16, 19, 31, 30, 36, 42, 38 (?) (on 2B).⁸ In 2B (as well as, of course, in 2A) the last folio placed at the bottom of the photograph is seen to be in a damaged condition, to wit, the whole of the lefthand margin, along with the first two or three letters in each line, is missing, so that number 38 in this enumeration is based only on a conjecture. This conjecture is founded on a comparison of the Sanskrit text found in this manuscript with the Chinese translation of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, made by Hsüan-tsang in 652 A. D.,⁹ and with the Tibetan translation, made by Jinamitra and Śilendra-bodhi with the help of Lo-tsa-ba Ye-śes-sde in 814 A. D.¹⁰ The Chinese and Tibetan portions of these translations, corresponding to the nine lacunae in the Sanskrit manuscript are shown in the following table:

⁸ The footnote given to the title of this MS. in the list published in *JBORS* (*loc. cit.*) is to be corrected accordingly.

⁹ Taishō Tripitaka (No. 1605) 31.663-694, each page containing three sections, marked below as a, b, c, each of which consists of 29 lines; also Catalogue Sec. 1.433 of the same edition.

¹⁰ Narthang *Tanjur* (of which the copy belonging to the Adyar Library has been cited here) Vol. Mdo Li (LVI), Fol. 47a⁸-129b⁸; Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana, *Tibbat me Bauddhadharma* (Hindi), Appendix No. 17, Benares, *sam.* 1991 (=1935-36 A. D.).

Sanskrit (missing folios)	Chinese (Taishō 1605)	Tibetan (Mdo LVI Nar- thang <i>Tanjur</i>)
1-2 (with 1a as blank)	663a ¹ -664a ³	47a ⁶ -50b ⁷
6-7	666a ¹³ -667b ⁷	57b ¹ -61a ⁶
15	672c ¹³ -673b ¹⁵	75b ⁷ -78a ²
17-18	674a ²⁷ -675b ¹⁴	80a ³ -83b ³
20-29	676b ³ -683a ²⁶	85a ⁵ -102a ²
32-35	684b ²³ -687b ²⁰	105a ⁶ -112b ⁶
(37)	688a ²⁷ -689a ⁹	114b ² -116b ²
(39-41)	689c ³ -692a ³	118a ⁴ -124a ⁴
43- (45) (with 45b as blank)	692c ⁵ -694b ¹⁰	125b ⁶ -129b ⁵

It will be obvious from the data given above that, calculated on the basis of an average of about thirty-one lines of Chinese text and just a little less than one folio of the Tibetan text as corresponding to one side of the Sanskrit folio, the conjectural number 38 of the folio with the missing pagination fits in nicely between the existing numbers of folios 36 and 42. The exact nature of the folios at the beginning and at the end of the manuscript, in which the a and the b sides respectively of these two folios must have been left blank as title pages, can also be taken as well established. Further, the same method of calculation leads us to the conclusion that only about forty per cent of the complete original ¹¹ text of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* is now available to us in the seventeen folios photographed by Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana.

From the broken edges of the folios of uneven configuration and the smooth writing, visible in the photographs, etc., the original manuscript can easily be judged to have been written on palm leaves in ink, with the usual arrangement of two holes in each leaf for inserting the binding strings. A blank column, accommodating the hole on the left side only, divides the writing on each page (containing from six to eight lines) into two unequal parts.

The characters in the manuscript show a considerable development from the older form of the acute-angled script into the Northern Nāgarī form of the alphabet. Among the dated paleo-

¹¹ It is interesting to find that calculations made on the comparative basis of the number of lines found in the Chinese and Tibetan translations also indicate the portion corresponding to the available Sanskrit text as 39.5 per cent and 39.8 per cent of the complete texts.

graphical documents, which may be compared with the present undated manuscript are: ¹² (1) Pehoa-Praśasti (ca. 900 A. D.) — Bühler Plate V (III) and (2) Deccan College MS. (1081 A. D.) — Plate VI (XV), in both of which the advanced forms particularly of *ja*, *na*, and *pha* have already appeared, as in our manuscript, along with the straight top strokes which characterize the Nāgarī

ज	ण	र	ह	दि	वी	घ
<i>ja</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>rtr</i>	<i>rdi</i>	<i>rbi</i>	<i>rṣa</i>
क्ष	श	ट	॥	मंलिखित		
<i>kṣa</i>	<i>sha</i>	<i>ta</i>	(full stop)	<i>samlikhita-</i>		
१	२	३	४	५	६	७
1	2	3	4	5	5	6
(not found)	८	९	१०	१६	३०	४२
7	8	9	10	16	30	42

Table of paleographical data referred to in the article.

type. A depression of the superscribed *r*, noted in the Cambridge manuscript (1008 A. D.) and the manuscript of the *Vajracchedikā*, in connection with syllables like *ya* and *ha* (Plate VI [XIII-XIV]), is found here in some cases, and even in connection with *ta*, *da*, *ba* (= *va*), and *ṣa*. An interesting case, however, is that of *kṣa*, which is regularly written almost like *ṣka*. This looks like a later development under the influence of the proto-Bengali triangle with the rounded lower side, discussed by BÜHLER.¹³ Compare Plate V (XVIII) 44 of the eleventh century A. D. and V (XIX) 43 of 1142 A. D. On the other hand, *ta* with the wedgelike pendant to the right is a curious archaism.¹⁴ Interpunctuation is shown by

¹² Georg BÜHLER, *Indische Palaeographie* (Strassburg, 1896). For the paleographical data discussed here, see table, p. 210.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Sec. 26.

¹⁴ BENDALL, *Catalogue of Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1883) xlvii.

one or two vertical strokes (in the latter case, with a short bar attached on the left side of the first stroke), which method dates from the ninth century A. D. More significant than all these for the date of the manuscript, however, are the numbers used for pagination or for indicating the numbers of lines referred to in various marginal corrections. Here we find the letter-numerals mixed up with figure-numerals, both of which are fairly comparable with those used in No. 1643 (1015 A. D.), No. 1683 (1039 A. D.) and No. 1464 (1025 A. D.).¹⁵ Nos. 1 to 4 are written in figures. Nos. 5 and 6 are found both as letter-numerals (*ṭṛ* and *phra* respectively) in the pagination and as figure-numerals (the latter showing a comparatively archaic form) in the marginal corrections. No. 7 is absent from our MS. Nos. 8 and 9 look like the letter-numerals *hṛā* and *o* (turned round ?) respectively. No. 10 is *l*, no. 30 *la* and no. 40 *pta*.

All these characteristics taken together seem to me to limit the date of our manuscript on paleographical grounds to the first half of the eleventh century. That the present manuscript of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, which was always regarded as a comprehensive and standard textbook of the Yogācāra philosophy,¹⁶ must have been handled by more than one reviser and at different times is evidenced by the different hands in which the corrections have been made. Especially noteworthy is the correction in line 3 of folio 19a, where the word *saṃlikhitā-* is correctly inserted in the blank space just above the string-hole on the lefthand side of the page. This word is written with a clearly proto-Bengali *kh* and *t*, of which BÜHLER reproduces three examples belonging to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁷

Among orthographical peculiarities of the manuscript, some of which may be understood as originating in a Bengali mode of pronunciation,¹⁸ may be pointed out the very frequent use of the

¹⁵ See Bendall, *op. cit.*, last plate.

¹⁶ See Bu-ston, *op. cit.*, 2.140, 199.

¹⁷ BÜHLER, *op. cit.*, Sec. 26A; F. W. THOMAS, Introduction to the edition of *Kaṇḍaravacanāsamuccaya* (Calcutta, 1912) 2-6. (By the way, this fragmentary work is to be identified with the *Subhāsitaratnakos'a* by Bhīmārjunasoma, listed in *JBORS*, *loc. cit.*, title no. 178.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Sec. 14.

anusvāra for the ending *n*: e. g., *asmim kāye, doṣāṃ paśyatā*; and also of *m* or *n* for the *anusvāra*: e. g., *lakṣaṇam vā*. *Va* and *ba*, and sometimes *śa* and *sa*, are not distinguished. There is a tendency to avoid multiple consonants: e. g., *ūrdha* (for *ūrdhva*), *dr* (for *ddr*), *satva* (for *sattva*), *utrasanti* (for *uttrasanti*), etc. The words *dharma*, *karma*, and *nirvāṇa* are found to be written either with a single or a double *m* or *v*, as the case may be. The *avagraha* is not much in evidence.

Both the Chinese and the Tibetan translations referred to above follow the Sanskrit text as found in our manuscript very closely and deviations from it are remarkably few. The full original work consists of two parts, the first dealing with *lakṣaṇa* and the second with *vinīścaya*; each of these is further divided into four sections. Besides these divisions, the Chinese and the Tibetan versions each adopted a different way of arranging the text into seven and five chapters respectively. A detailed analysis of the contents of the work must be reserved for the proposed edition of these important fragments along with a Sanskrit commentary on the whole work by Yaśomitra (also found in manuscript in a Tibetan monastery by Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana). The present note will suffice to convey to those interested in reconstructing the history of ancient Indian thought the nature and significance of the find described above.*

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