On and around Hybrid Sanskrit in the *Mahāvadānasūtra* and the *Saṅghabhedavastu*

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Recent studies on Sanskrit Āgamas found in Eastern Turkestan have begun to take into consideration the relationship to its Gandhārī stages. Prof. Oskar von Hinüber, for instance, mentioned that some Buddhist Sanskrit words in the *Madhyamāgama* were based on Gandhārī. This research is very important because it casts some light on the position of Buddhism in Eastern Turkestan.

The *Mahāvadānasūtra* (=MAV) found in Eastern Turkestan has some words which are beyond our comprehension as Skt. terms. Moreover, the same words are found in the Gilgit manuscript of *Saṅghabhedavastu* (=SBhV) which contains a parallel version of MAV. As those words are clearly based on the Gandhārī language, it seems that the common source of MAV and SBhV were passed down through the Gandhārī tradition.

In contrast with the above mentioned, MAV and SBhV also have some variants which branched off from a common Hybrid Skt. Although MAV 4a relates the legend of a Bodhisattva entering into the womb, the verse (MAV 4a. 5) keeps the verb *utkramet* "he will go out." The prefix of this verb is not appropriate for its intended meaning. In SBhV, this verb is altered to *ākramet*. This does not corrupt the significance of this story but has different shades of meaning from the particular usage of the Buddhist Skt. *avakramet*. MAV and SBhV took a variant form due to a direct influence from the common Hybrid Skt. *ukramet* (<*avakramet*). In fact, one fragment of MAV (Cat.-No. 685, B1. 96, V. 5) keeps this form *ukramet*. Metrically three syllables are required, consequently, MAV and SBhV could not change *ukramet* to *avakramet* which has four syllables. MAV's *utkramet* is probably a misinterpretation of *ukramet*, and SBhV's *ākramet* is a reasonable Sanskritisation corresponding with *ukramet*.

Supportive evidence of the aforesaid Hybrid Skt. stage was revealed in two

MAV fragments. These fragments are Cat.-No. 652 written on paper in Turkestan Gupta type, dating from the 4th or 5th century A.D. According to paleographic research, this kind of manuscript was entirely transcribed from a document of North-Western Indian Gupta type. Consequently, they transmit the North-Western Indian tradition to us. Most interesting for our present investigation is that not only did these fragments hand down several Hybrid Skt. terms, but also this situation was a basis from which MAV and the same story in SBhV improved on Sanskritisation respectively. The first folio (B1. 1..=MAV No. 92–93) cites a case of this point in line R 5 which is equivalent to MAV 4a. 1:

  pa[śyī] bodhisatvaḥ tuṣitā devanikāyā cutvā///

This is a customary phrase in MAV and SBhV; however, the Sanskritisation is less advanced than SBhV and other manuscripts of MAV written in Northern Turkestan Brāhmī, in the 7th or 8th centuury A.D. In the above phrase, the case ending-*ā* (Ab., sg.) and the word *cutvā* (Ger. of √cyu) are apparently influenced by Middle Indic. SBhV improved this to *bodhisatvas tuṣitād devanikāyāc cyutvā*, whereas the Sanskritisation of MAV (Northern Turkestan Brāhmī type) developed separately as *vipaśyī bodhisatvas tuṣitād devanikāyāc cyavitvā*. It seems that this variant is based on local developments originating from the common Hybrid Sanskrit stage, shown by the Turkestan Gupta type which copied the North-Western Indian Gupta type.

The local developments were not only confined to Sanskritisation of words but also produced an effect of interpolation. The second folio (B1. 1[53]=MAV No. 94–95) indicates an important example in lines Ob 3–5 which contain MAV 6b. 4–6:

  3 rusya ma[hā]puru[ṣa] ◯ ++++++++(deva kumā) ++++padaparṣniḥ mṛ-
  4 dutaruṇapāṇipādaḥ mṛ(d)[u]+++++++++.. +++++++karpāsāpicur vā
  5 idaṃ mahāpuruṣasya mahā++++++++++++++++++(jā)li[ni]///

As a clue to the comprehension of this fragmentary text, the same passage in SBhV of North-Western Indian tradition is more suitable than MAV written in Northern Turkestan Brāhmī type. SBhV keeps almost the same sentence structure as in above text:

  dīrghāṅgulir deva kumāraḥ āyatapādapārṣṇir mṛdutaruṇapāṇipādaḥ; mṛdukam asya
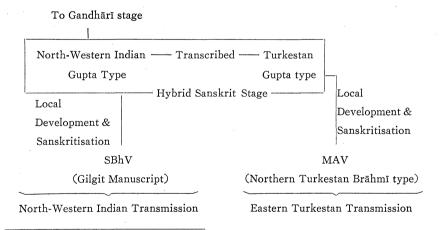
pāṇipādaṃ, tadyathā tūlapicur vā karpāsapicur vā ; idaṃ deva kumārasya mahāpuruṣasya mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇam ;

MAV (Northern Turkestan Brāhmī type), however, interpolated with the addition of the refrain "~deva kumāraḥ mahāpuruṣasya mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇam" to each sentence, in spite of the same Eastern Turkestan tradition, thus it became :

dīrghāṅgulir deva kumāraḥ/ idaṃ mahāpuruṣasya mahāpuruṣaṇam 3/

āyatapādapārṣṇir deva kumāraḥ/ idaṃ mahāpuruṣasya mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇam 4/

mṛdutaruṇapāṇipādo deva kumāraḥ/ mṛduk (am as . . . . . . tūlapicur vā karpāsapicur vā/) idaṃ mahāpuruṣasya mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇam 5/

This passage indicates that the addition of refrain is a spontaneous interpolation occuring when a sūtra is passed down by oral or written transmission. It seems that there are no other varying factors such as sect activity or tradition. Differences between MAV and SBhV arise from local developments and Sanskritisations of the common Hybrid Skt. stage which maintained the North-Western Indian tradition. On the reverse side of this folio, lines 1–3 show the same example. Diagramatic representation of my research is as follows :

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       To Gandhārī stage
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 ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
 │  North-Western Indian ──── Transcribed ──── Turkestan │
 │     Gupta Type                    Gupta type  ├─┐
 └──────────────────── Hybrid Sanskrit Stage ───────┘ │Local
 Local                    │                            │Development &
 Development &            │                            │Sanskritisation
 Sanskritisation          │

           SBhV                            MAV
     (Gilgit Manuscript)          (Northern Turkestan Brāhmī type)
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 North-Western Indian Transmission    Eastern Turkestan Transmission
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