

Background Information on the Tibetan Translation of the *Vinayasūtravṛtṭyabhīdhānasvavyākhyāna*

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1. Preamble

The *Vinayasūtravṛtṭyabhīdhānasvavyākhyāna* (VSS), an auto-commentary on the *Vinayasūtra* (VS), was translated into Tibetan by Tshul khrims 'byung gnas together with the Kashmiri Alāṅkāradeva (or Alāṅkādeva, Alāṅkakalaśa). The Tibetan translator, moreover, appears to have been responsible for copying (i.e., producing) the Sanskrit manuscripts of both VS and VSS in Tibetan *dBu med* script. The present paper examines textual features of these two Sanskrit manuscripts as well as a portion of the colophon in the Tibetan translation of the VSS, with the intention of providing background information on the Tibetan translation of the VSS.

2. Two Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibetan *dBu med* Script

Among the extant Sanskrit manuscripts of VS and VSS,¹⁾ the present paper focuses on those written in Tibetan *dBu med* script, namely, VS_{MSB} and VSS_{MSB}. As far as the interlinear notes of VS_{MSB} are concerned, the scribe can be identified as Tshul khrims 'byung gnas (Śīlākāra).²⁾ Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that he was also the scribe of VSS_{MSB}, since, as stated below, the text of VSS_{MSB} presupposes the interlinear notes of VS_{MSB}.

According to gZhon nu dpal's *Blue Annals* (BA), Tshul khrims 'byung gnas travelled to India three times.³⁾ As a result of his second stay (1132?–1136?)⁴⁾ in India, he was able not only to bring many Sanskrit manuscripts, including VS_{MSB} and VSS_{MSB}, with him to Tibet but also to commence collaboration with Alāṅkāradeva.

2.1. Interlinear Notes of the *Vinayasūtra* Manuscript in *dBu med* Script

A salient feature of VS_{MSB} is the existence of interlinear notes. Most of the notes are identified as the text of VSS.⁵⁾ In addition, there are emendations of the *sūtra* text of VS.

Although far from exhaustive, select examples of such emendations are introduced below.

VS_{MSB} 4a2 (VSS_{BG} *sūtra* 211):⁶⁾ *bahiḥsaṁvṛttasyāntarviśālasya samudrākṛter vātāpā-
«ya»nasya mokṣo madhye* | NB. The interlinear notes are indicated between « » in the transliteration below.

Here the *akṣara* ‘ya’ is emended to ‘pa.’ Conversely, there is a case in which the *akṣara* ‘pa’ is emended to ‘ya.’

VS_{MSB} 11a3 (VS_{RS} 2-340):⁷⁾ *sthūlaṁ mṛtyur evaṁ me bhavatīti bruvāṇasyāpratiya«pa»tā
tathātvasaṁpādane mṛyatām ity anusthānaiḥ glānasya* |

Despite there being no inserted erasure mark of the *akṣara* ‘ya’ in this case, it is obvious that the emendation to ‘pa’ is indicated here.

These examples reveal that the interlinear notes were copied from a Sanskrit manuscript written in an Indian script, most probably Proto-Bengali-cum-Proto-Maithili type, in which these *akṣaras* look very similar.⁸⁾ Incidentally, Tshul khrims ’byung gnas was accustomed to using this type of script from the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Lakṣ.⁹⁾

In the interlinear notes, furthermore, missing *sūtras* are sometimes supplemented together with an insertion mark († in the transliteration below).

VS_{MSB} 3a2-3 (*sūtras* (147*), (148*), and a part of (149*)): *caturṇāṁ pārājikānām anyatamāpattim āpannaḥ* | † *bhyupapataḥ syāc cet sāmagrī punaḥ praṇidhānaṁ* ||
«nānabhyupagato nimittaviparyayaḥ prāṇihitān pravrajāyeyur upasaṁpādayeyur vā ||
avasāraṇam upasaṁpādanam †»¹⁰⁾

The *sūtras* should be read as follows:

(146*) *caturṇāṁ pārājikānām anyatamām āpattiḥ āpannaḥ.*

(147*) *nānabhyupagato nimittaviparyayaḥ prāṇihitāt, pravrajāyeyur upasaṁpādayeyur vā.*

(148*) *avasāraṇam upasaṁpādanam.*

(149*) *upasaṁpādayānabhyupapataḥ syāc cet sāmagrī punaḥ praṇidhānaṁ.*

The *sūtras* supplemented here are also found together with their commentary in VSS_{MSB}.¹¹⁾

Interestingly, moreover, there is a case of an insertion mark appearing without the addition of missing *sūtra* texts to be supplemented.

VS_{MSB} 5b2 (*sūtras* (226*) and (230*)): *nopasaṁpannamātrāya nārocayet** | † *vastukarmopasthāpakaparihāreṇainam pariccheḣuḥ* ^[12] NB. * indicates *virāma*.

3. Colophon of the Tibetan Translation

After the sentence “the *Vinayasūtravṛtti-svavyākhyāna* composed by the *sthavira* Guṇaprabha is ended” (D *zu* 273a5; C *zu* 279a2–3; N *yu* 312b7–313a1; P *yu* 341a2), the colophon of the Tibetan translation of the VSS can be divided into the following sections: 1) verses about a biography of Guṇaprabha (D 273a5–b5; C 279a3–b3; N 313a1–b2; P 341a2–b3), 2) bibliographical information on the Indian text (D 273b5–7; C 279b3–5; N 313b2–3; P 341b3–6), 3) dedication of the translation (D 273b5–274a1; C 279b5–6; N 313b4–5; P 341b6–8), 4) verses on Guṇaprabha (D 274a2–5; C 279b6–280a3; N 313b5–314a2; P 341b8–342a4), 5) verses on the translator (D 274a5–7; C 280a3–5; N 314a2–4; P 342a4–7), and 6) bibliographical information on the translation (D 274a7; C 280a5–6; N 314a4–6; P 342a7–8). Among them, the present paper examines the descriptions of 2), 3), 5), and 6).¹⁴⁾

3.1. Bibliographical Information on the Indian Text

“[This] called the *Māthurī Vinayasūtravṛtti*,¹⁵⁾ composed by the *ācārya* Guṇaprabha who conducted recitation of eighteen hundred thousand [Vinaya] *granthas*, compositions of many treatises for the Mahāvādakaṣaṅgha¹⁶⁾ of the Mūlasarvāstivādins in the Mathurā region, is ended. This was written down at the great monastery in *śrī* Sa nyi in the year when the reign of the glorious supreme great king Śīlāditya began (i.e., 606 CE).”

This part looks almost as if it were translated from descriptions of the Sanskrit manuscript.¹⁷⁾ However, it is dubious whether Tshul khriims ’byung gnas utilized such an old Sanskrit manuscript.

3.2. Dedication of the Translation

“This [text] called *Svavyākhyāna* elucidating the meaning of more than one hundred thousand [rules] from the Vinaya basket consisting of 25,000 [stanzas] is translated by *lo tsā ba śākyabhikṣu* Tshul khriims ’byung gnas. What here is the merit, may that, having placed my teacher, preceptor, and parents first, be for the obtaining of supreme knowledge by all the multitude of beings.”

This part seems to have been composed in imitation of a dedication often found in inscriptions and Sanskrit manuscripts.¹⁸⁾

3.3. Verses on the Translator

“The one called śrīmat-Śīlākāra, keeping moral training taught by the Exalted one, Having obtained the supreme ordination as a perfect *bhikṣu* by means of the ritual of an act

involving a motion as the fourth requirement (*jñāpticatorthakarma*),

Having obtained true independence from others, acted by himself as a preceptor (*upādhyāya*) of renunciation (*pravrajyā*).

May he long remain a patron (*dānapati*) of the *Svavyākhyāna* translation.

Having quickly completed the two sorts of equipment for enlightenment

By the virtue you obtained

Through making efforts of translation by yourself,

You will become a buddha.”

This description suggests that Tshul khrims ’byung gnas was not only a patron but also a translator of the Tibetan translation of the VSS.

3.4. Bibliographical Information on the Translation

“[This was] translated by the two, namely, the Indian *upādhyāya paṇḍita* Alaṅkaradeva and the [Tibetan] great editor translator *śākyabhikṣu* Tshul khrims ’byung gnas sbas pa, at the dBen tsha monastery at the base of Mt. sGye’u. This is comprised of 14,000 stanzas.”¹⁹⁾

The dBen tsha monastery is situated ‘in upper Dra Valley in Yoru,’ ‘an area in Central Tibet,’ the birthplace of Klong chen rab ’byams pa dri med ’od zer.²⁰⁾ From this description, it is ascertained that the VSS was translated in Tibet.

4. Conclusion

During his second stay in India, Tshul khrims ’byung gnas (*Śīlākāra*) wrote the interlinear notes appearing in VS_{MSB} and the supplementary VSS_{MSB} on the basis of a Sanskrit manuscript written in an Indian script. The colophon of the Tibetan translation of the VSS, in which several descriptions are similar to those in the colophons of Sanskrit manuscripts, indicates that the translation was conducted in Tibet. Most probably, the original Sanskrit manuscript from which the Tibetan translation of the VSS was made might have been the Sanskrit manuscript in an Indian script, which Tshul khrims ’byung gnas himself brought with him to Tibet on his return trip from the second stay in India.

I wish to thank Prof. Shayne Clarke not only for many corrections and suggestions but also for his careful check of the English. Needless to say, I alone remain responsible for any and all errors, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies.

Notes

1) Four VS and two VSS Sanskrit manuscripts are extant, see Luo 2011a. The present paper follows

the abbreviations for these manuscripts established in Luo 2011a. Cf. Nakagawa 1999, Yonezawa 2016, 2020a, and 2020b. Concerning additional information on VSS_{MSA}, see Shōno 2021.

- 2) On the cover of VS_{MSB}, we read 'shī la a ga ra.' See Yonezawa 2016, 1150; 2019, 16. He seems to have written down the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and *Lakṣ, both of which were preserved in the same bundle as VS_{MSB} and VSS_{MSB}. See Yonezawa 2019, 38. 3) Tibetan text: BA 933-935 (= 21a5-22a6). English translation: Roerich 1949, 1052-1054. These are quoted in Yonezawa 2019, 18-20. A summary is included in Yonezawa 2016, 1150. 4) The dating 1137-1141 CE in Yonezawa 2019, 22 is to be corrected. 5) See Nakagawa 2002, 2010; VSPVSG 2013, (26)-(31); 2014, (43)-(46). 6) See also VSPVSG 2011, (81), *sūtra* (63*). 7) The text should be: *sthūlaṃ mṛtyur evaṃ me bhavatīti bruvāṇasyāpratipatā tathāvasaṃpādane mṛyatām ity anupasthānaiḥ glānasya* |. The *sūtra* numbering of VS is to be corrected. See Yonezawa 2020a, 79. 8) See Roth 1970, XXI. Cf. Matsunami 1998. 9) See Yonezawa 2019, 35-36. 10) VSPVSG 2009, (103). Cf. VSS_{BG}, 23-24 (NB. Reconstructed text from the Tibetan translation). 11) See above. 12) VSPVSG 2014, (44), (53)-(54). Cf. VSS_{BG}, 39-40, *sūtras* 395-398 (NB. Reconstructed text from the Tibetan translation). 13) See Study Group of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibetan *dBu med* Script 2001, 22; Yonezawa 2020a, 67; 2020b, 63-65, 66, 67, 71. On the characteristics of VS commentaries in general, see Luo 2009, 2011a, and 2011b. 14) Concerning 1) and 4), see Luo 2019. 15) Concerning another title of VSS, see Sasaki 1957; VSPVSG 2012, (37); Yonezawa 2016, 1149. 16) See Sasaki 1968, 20. 17) For instance, the Sanskrit text of the colophon in the VS_{MSB} runs as follows: *samāptaṃ vinayasūtram || kṛtir ācāryaguṇaprabhasya || anena puṇyena sarveṣāṃ lokapīṭakabhājanam || śākyabhikṣudharma-kīrtinā sattvārthe likhitam śrīmadvikramaśīlām āśritya phālguṇamāse*. See Yonezawa 2019, 16. 18) For instance, a dedication in both JĀA and Vkn Sanskrit manuscripts runs as follows: *deyadharmo 'yaṃ pravaramahāyānayāyinaḥ bhikṣuśīladhvajasya yad atra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu ācār yopādhyāyamātāpitrpūrvavāṇaṃ kṛtvā sakalasatvarāṣer anuttarajñānaphalaprapṛtaye*. (JĀA 32a1-2, Vkn 78a4-5. Quoted also in Yonezawa 2007, 1080) Concerning the occurrences in inscriptions, see Schopen (1979) 2005. 19) See also Sasaki 1968, 20 and Nietupski 2009, 8. Happy omens in N and P are left untranslated. 20) See Tsumagari 2014, 174, n. 4.

Abbreviations

BA *The Blue Annals, completed in A.D. 1478 by Ḥgos-lotsawa Gzhon-nu-dpal (1392-1481)*, reproduced by Lokesh Chandra from the Collection of Prof. Raghu Vira. Śata-pīṭaka Series, Indo-Asian Literature, vol. 212. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1976.

JĀA (*Sarvabuddhaviṣayāvatāra-*) *Jñānālokaṇīkāra*. *Lakṣ **Lakṣaṇatīkā*; see Yonezawa 2019. Vkn *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. VS *Vinayasūtra*. VS_{MSB} VS Sanskrit manuscript in *dBu med* script. VSPVSG *Vinayasūtra's Pravrajyāvastu* Study Group (Ritsukyō Shukkeji Kenkyūkai 『律経』「出家事」研究会). VS_{RS} See Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1981. VSS *Vinayasūtravṛtyabhidhānasavyākhyāna*. VSS_{BG} See Bapat & Gokhale 1982. VSS_{MSB} VSS Sanskrit manuscript in *dBu med* script.

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Key words *Vinayasūtravṛtṭyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna*, Tshul khriṃs ’byung gnas, Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibetan *dBu med* script, colophon of the Tibetan translation

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