

**“On Two Sanskrit Manuscripts of Ārya  
Vimuktiṣeṇa’s Commentary on the  
*Abhisamayālaṅkāra*” by Youngjin Lee in  
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Despite its importance, Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* has not been extensively studied, mainly because of the absence of sufficient textual sources. Until recently, the extant portion of this text had been available only in a Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript (ms A), which is incomplete and has several seriously damaged folios. However,

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\* Hereafter Lee 2015.

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this situation has taken a favorable turn since another palm-leaf manuscript (ms B), with only partial damage to the few last folios, has been made accessible for research purposes.

## Corrupt Sentence in Prakrit

The following Prakrit sentence quoted in Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary “*tathāgato tti vattavvo ño tu vattavvo sammāsambuddhaḥ*”<sup>1)</sup> is important because it gives us some insight into Ārya-Vimuktisena's scholarly background. The source of this quotation is yet to be identified. In Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary we do not find many quotations, or much influence, from texts written in Indic languages other than Sanskrit. However, in Chapter 8, the description of the *kṛtsnāyatana* bears a close resemblance to the treatment of the same topic in the *Visuddhimagga*, which was composed in Pali.<sup>2)</sup> Previously, I concluded that Ārya-Vimuktisena either wrote this section based on the *Visuddhimagga*, on another Pali text with the same content, or on a Sanskrit translation from either of both. However, this Prakrit sentence quoted above now leads us to assume that Ārya-Vimuktisena had access to texts written in Prakrit or Pali, and allows us to exclude the possibility that he used Sanskrit translations.

Although, thus far, we have only found one passage similar to this Prakrit sentence in the *Daśabhūmikasūtra*, we still consider it possible that

1) This sentence is here reported in the form reconstructed by Youngjin Lee. His emendation is very well-founded and the resulting wording is most likely very close to the original one.

2) Nakamura 2014. For the abbreviations of the references, see the bibliography of Lee 2015.

Ārya-Vimūktisena is referring to the Mahāsaṃghika school. Haribhadra, in both his commentaries, cites a similar sentence from the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (PvsP): “*ity evaṃ navabhūmir atikramya daśamyāṃ punar bhūmau bodhisattvo buddha eva vaktavyo na tu samyaksambuddha iti pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāyā vacanāt*”.<sup>3)</sup> The version of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* that Ārya-Vimuktisena consulted could not have contained this sentence. Otherwise, he would not have needed a Prakrit quotation reporting the same content. It is possible that someone later added this sentence based on Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary. However, the difference between the words “*tathāgato*” and “*buddha*” implies the possibility that other sources detailed the differences between the terms *buddha* (or *tathāgata*) and *samyaksambuddha*.

## Transmission of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and Its Commentaries into Tibet

I would also like to add several points, based on my research,<sup>4)</sup> regarding the transmission of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*-literature into Tibet. The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* had already been transmitted during the *snga dar* period (8-9th cent.). Between 814 and 826, dPal brtsegs and Vidyākaraṃbha

3) AAA[W] 104,7-9; also AAV[A] 34,20-21: “*daśamyāṃ punar bhūmau bodhisattvo buddha eva vaktavyo na tu samyaksambuddha*” *ity*(sic!) *vacanāt*.

4) Nakamura, Hodo. Presentation “The Reception and Transmission of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* in Tibet: The Interpretation of the Embodiment of Buddha in the Chapter 8”, 3rd Conference of the International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, Kobe City University for Foreign Studies, Kobe; September 4, 2012.

translated the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* as an independent treatise, which is attested in the *IDan dkar ma* and the *'Phang thang ma* catalogues.

rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109), according to his biography,<sup>5)</sup> studied the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* in Magadha under Go mi 'chi med, with whom he translated the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary. Later, he studied the *phar phyin* under bsTan skyong 'Bum phrag gsum pa, whom he invited to Tibet before returning home. After coming back to Tibet, he revised the Tibetan translation of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, of Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary, and of Haribhadra's commentaries.

bsTan skyong 'Bum phrag gsum pa is another seminal figure in the transmission of Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary. His name is recorded in the *'Phags pa gsan yig*,<sup>6)</sup> written by 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235-1280), which offers us some of the oldest lines of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* transmission. This work reveals that bsTan skyong 'Bum phrag gsum pa passed the teaching of Ārya-Vimuktisena's commentary to rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, in fact the line of transmission of the commentary is reported as follows: Haribhadra-Guṇamitra-Rin chen bzang po-Shar phyogs pa Zla ba bzang po-bsTan skyong 'Bum phrag gsum pa-rNgog Blo ldan shes rab-'Bre Shes rab 'bar-Ar Byang chub ye shes-'Dul 'dzin dkar mo-gTsang ba 'bre sgyur.

5) Kramer 2007.

6) *Lung dang brgyud pa sna tshogs thob pa'i gsan yig*, 287.2.1-287.2.3 (fols. ba 362v1-3) in *Chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa'i bka' 'bum = The complete works of Chos Rgyal 'Phags-pa*, vol. 2, 286.4.4-297.3.5 (fols. ba 361v4-383r5). Compiled by bSod nams rgya mtsho. Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1968. (Bibliotheca Tibetica; 1. The complete works of the great masters of the Sa skya sect of the Tibetan Buddhism; vol. 6-7)

## The Title of Ārya-Vimuktisena’s Commentary

The *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* as an independent treatise, as well as Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary, originally had the same title “*pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāryaprajñāpāramitopadeśam abhisamayālaṅkāraśāstram*”, or variations thereof. This could be taken as evidence that Ārya-Vimuktisena is the author not only of the commentary ascribed to him but also of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* itself; however, this argument remains hypothetical.

Bhadanta-Vimuktisena, regarded as one of Ārya-Vimuktisena’s disciples, also composed a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, or, to be more precise, on another recension of it.<sup>7)</sup> His commentary was unfortunately lost in the original Sanskrit and is nowadays only available in a Tibetan translation. The section colophons reveal that Bhadanta-Vimuktisena’s commentary has the same title as the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.<sup>8)</sup> The title shown in the last colophon reads “*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa ’i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa ’i rgyan gyi rnam par ’grel pa* |”.<sup>9)</sup> However, the title of Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary

7) Ārya-Vimuktisena wrote his commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* in accordance with the revised version of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*. Bhadanta-Vimuktisena wrote his commentary in accordance with the unrevised version of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, thus following another recension of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. This recension was evidently compiled under the influence of the unrevised *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*. However, the two commentaries are almost identical in the passages where both the revised and unrevised versions of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* read the same.

8) D (3788) kha 63v7, P [88] (5186) kha 75r6-7: *mngon par rtogs pa ’i rgyan shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’i man ngag gi bstan bcos las rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa ’i mngon par rtogs pa ’i rnam par ’grel pa ’o* ||. For the title in the section colophons of Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary, see Lee 2015, n. 64.

“*pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāryaprajñāpāramitopadeśam abhisamayālaṃkāraśāstram*” is rendered “*phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa stong phrag nyi shu lnga pa'i tshul gyi mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi man ngag gi bstan bcos kyi 'grel pa*” under the influence of Haribhadra’s commentaries.<sup>10)</sup> It is therefore possible that the title of Bhadanta-Vimuktisena’s commentary was “\**pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikaprajñāpāramitopadeśam abhisamayālaṃkāraśāstram*”, if the Tibetan translator added “*rnam par 'grel pa* (= \**vārttikā*)” under the influence of Haribhadra’s commentaries. The *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* was originally not separated from Ārya-Vimuktisena’s commentary, but further evidence of its authorship has yet to be found.

9) D (3788) kha 181r6, P [88] (5186) kha 207r2-3.

10) Lee 2015, n. 68.