Notes on Two Texts in the Phug brag Kanjur*

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From 1990 onwards, thanks to the joint efforts of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala and the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions in New York, a handwritten Kanjur from Western Tibet was made accessible in the form of a microfiche edition. Only then did it become possible to study this Kanjur on a wider scale, although scholars had already recognized its unique features before this. A catalogue was prepared by Jampa SAMTEN in 1992, and in 1993 Helmut EIMER drew up a location list of the texts in the microfiche edition for the benefit of its users.

The importance of the Phug brag Kanjur had already been stressed by SAMTEN, and in the location list EIMER justly remarks that the “manuscript of the Tibetan Kanjur written some time between A.D. 1696 and 1706 in the West Tibetan monastery of Phug brag is one of the most valuable treasures housed in the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives (LTWA), Dharamsala”; ¹ in a note EIMER refers to three studies by Michael HAHN, Paul HARRISON and Jeffrey SCHOENING which demonstrate, each in its own way, the value of this particular Kanjur.

Since then, the position of the Phug brag Kanjur within the Kanjur tradition has been examined in a growing number of studies. Paul HARRISON reached the conclusion that “despite its frequent corruptions, it is truly independent of the standard Kanjur editions, a valuable third witness which enables us to isolate some of the peculiar variants in their hyparchetypes, i.e. in the Them spangs ma and Tshal pa MSS.,” ² and he illustrated the relationship with a stemma codicum. Recently, modified stemmata were proposed by Jonathan SILK, Jeffrey SCHOENING and Peter SKILLING, each derived from...

¹ EIMER 1992, p. v.

their respective study of a single text or a group of connected works, in which they assign a slightly different position to the Phug brag Kanjur. A survey of its peculiarities and unique features was given by Samten in the preface to his catalogue, listing the inclusion of variant translations, of two different translations of the same text, of texts not found in other Kanjur editions etc. In the following, a few modest observations on two texts from the Phug brag Kanjur will be made; they deal with features not found in their parallel versions in any of the other Kanjur or Tanjur editions accessible so far.

1. The Arhatavistara-sūtra

As is well known, the Kanjur contains translations of a number of sūtras belonging to Nikāya Buddhism which were, for various reasons, found worth including in the otherwise Mahāyāna-oriented sūtra section of the Tibetan canon. One of these is the Arhatavistara-nāma-dharmaparyāya, to give its full title, a text consisting mainly of listings of groups of technical terms of Nikāya Buddhist doctrine. Originally, or, to be more cautious, at one point in its history, it formed part of the Dirghāgama of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivādins. This sūtra is listed in the $k$Dan dkar ma (or, rather, Lhan kar ma) catalogue, and therefore it must have been translated in the first half of the 9th century, at the latest. At some point during its transmission, the last page of one of the manuscript copies was either lost, misplaced or irretrievably damaged, and a loss of text occurred. This defective copy then became the prototype for later editorial work, from which all of the otherwise Mahāyāna-oriented sūtra section of the Tibetan canon.

Though in several instances it offers readings superior to those found in the editions of the Tshal pa line, the text of the sūtra as contained in the Phug brag Kanjur is complete, and a comparison with the corresponding Sanskrit fragments from Central Asia and with the two Chinese translations (T 97-98) reveals that the final sentences are preserved intact and in full agreement with the Sanskrit and Chinese versions. Although they comprise only about seven lines (338a7-b6) in the Phug brag manuscript, the possibility of a reconstruction of the missing ending is excluded, since the text breaks off in the other Kanjur versions at a point where neither the exact length nor the contents of the missing part can (as yet) be guessed at. Thus it is certain that the Phug brag version of the Arhatavistara-sūtra cannot go back to either the Tshal pa or the Them spāns ma lines of transmission; it is derived from an independent source, which confirms the findings of Silk and Skilling. The only slight disappointment, if any, lies in the circumstance that the Phug brag version ends with a colophon containing the usual conclusion of a text (‘phags pa don rgyas pa žes bya ba chos kyi rnam grags / rdzogs so l/), but without mentioning the name(s) of the translator(s) or reviser(s) of the text. However, in the dKar chag, the names Jinamitra, Śurendra(bodhi) and Ye sje sde are given as translators, which would agree exactly with the listing of the translation in the Lhan kar ma catalogue, but the source of this statement and its reliability remain of course unknown.

2. The Varāhavarna of Mātṛceṭa

One of the outstanding features of the Phug brag Kanjur is the inclusion of a number of hymns which are normally found in the Tanjur, since they do not belong to the sayings of the Buddha; instead they are from the pen of several famous Indian scholars or poets. Whether these ascriptions are correct in every case, is of no consequence here. With the exception of the hymn on Avalokiteśvara, which is included in the rGYud 'grel, they all form part of a special section of hymns in the Tanjur, the b스Tod tshogs. Altogether twelve such hymns are included in volume 80 of the Phug brag

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8 The same holds true for the Kanjur manuscript in the Tōyō Bunko; the corresponding volume of the London manuscript is lost.
10 bk'aa 'gyur rin po che'i dkar chag gsal ba'i me lha, fol. 11a6-7: Don rgyas pa'i chos kyi rnam grags so lo ka bhrugs Dji na ni zha'i Shes sde gsum gis 'gyur, cf. Samten 1992, p. 57.
Kanjur, and they appear once more in the same order in vol. 96: Nirvikalpastava (nos. 240 and 390), Paramārthastava (241/391), Nirupamasvastava (242/392), Lokāttastava (243/393), Dharmanāthastava (244/394), Acināyastava (245/395), all attributed to Nāgārjuna, Gauḍaparyantastotra (246/396) by Triratnadāsa, Manjusriḥbhagārakārānāstotra (247/397) allegedly by Nāgārjuna, Lokeśvarasvāya Bhuvanatrayastava (248/398) by a certain Bhikṣuṇi,12 Varnāhavarna (249/399) and Prasādapratiḥbodhahvā (250/400) by Mārceṣa, and finally the Vīṣeṣastava (251/401) by Udbhataśidhasvāmin.13

Already in 1988, Michael HAHN was able to demonstrate that the Nirvikalpastava, according to its colophon composed by Nāgārjuna, was nothing other than a second translation of the Prajñāpāramitāśāstra, usually attributed to Rāhulabhadra. In the same article, HAHN drew attention to the fact that the Phug brag Kanjur preserved the original title and the correct author of the Prasādapratiḥbodhahvā, one of the two famous Buddhastotras of Mārceṣa. In all the Tanjur editions this hymn is ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa and its title is given as Satapāhāśātaka, although the translation is the same in both versions. Furthermore HAHN could show that this translation was not a work of Śraddhākaraśarman and Śākya blo gros from the 11th century, as claimed in the colophon of the Tanjur text, but was carried out by Sarvajñādeva and Rin chen mchog and revised by dPal brtsegs in the 9th century, as stated in the colophon of the Phug brag version.14

Although title, author and translators are undisputed in the case of Mārceṣa’s other well-known Buddhastotra, the Varnāhavarna (“Praise of the Praiseworthy”) or Caturśatātaka (“Hymn in Four Hundred [Verses]”), the text preserved in the Phug brag Kanjur differs significantly from the one in the Tanjur in several respects.15

2.1. The chapter titles

The stotra consists of twelve chapters of varying length. In the Tanjur version each chapter concludes with a chapter colophon containing its Tibetan title. Strangely enough, in the four printed Tanjur editions the stotra begins with the title of its first chapter appearing as the main title: saṅs rgyas bcom ldan ’das la bsdod pa bsṅags pa ’os pa bsṅags pa las bsdod par mi nus par bsdod žes bya ba, which is sanskritized as varṇāhavarṇe bhagavato buddhastotre ‘sakyastavo nāma, “Celebration of What Cannot be Celebrated in the Praise of the Praiseworthy, a Buddha Hymn on the Lord”.

The version included in the Phug brag Kanjur demonstrates several peculiarities. First of all, it does not contain the first chapter of the stotra. Instead, it begins with the second chapter, but in exactly the same fashion as the Tanjur version does with the first, i.e. the chapter title is put at the beginning of the chapter. Second, the chapter titles continue to be placed at the head of each chapter, and not only in Tibetan translation, but also with the Tibetan transcription of that chapter’s Sanskrit title, each time introduced by the formula rgya gar skad du, “in Indian language”. This is, to my knowledge, an absolutely unique feature distinguishing this text of the Phug brag Kanjur from any other text in all the known Kanjur or Tanjur editions.17 Third, these Sanskrit titles can hardly be derived from a reconstruction based on their Tibetan translation, as will become evident from the following: they must go back to a Sanskrit original. The following list contains the transliteration of the Sanskrit chapter titles along with the correct Sanskrit form as found in the fragmentary Sanskrit manuscripts from Central Asia.18

[1. Asakyastova, missing in Phug brag]
2. Marṣāḥbhāṣja
   a) bar na r har ne bha ga ba to buddha stude te / mur dh a a bi še ko na ma
   (la 401a3-4)
   b) bar na har na bha ga ba to bād dha stude te / mur dh a a še ko na ma
   (la 358b4)
3. (Sarvajñāhatsidžhī) 
   a) ba r na har ne bha ga ba to buddha stude te / sar rhud ṅa ta sīd dhir nā ma
   (la 405b2)
   b) bar na har ne bha ga ba to bād dha stude te / sar rhud ṅa ta sīd dhir nā ma
   (la 362b4)
4. (Balavāśīrakarāvastava)
   a) bar n ra ha bar ne bha ga ha to buddha stude tre pa la pai ša rad dya sta pa na ma
   (la 406b8-407a1)

12 This is another translation of the Avalokiteśvarastotra by the Bhikṣuṇi Laksunī (dGe slob ma dPal mo), no. 3560 in the Peking Tanjur, cf. Samten 1992, pp. xi and 94, note 2, and Eimer 1993, nos. 248 (rdo ggas sa gsum) and 398.
13 Hahn 1988, pp. 57ff.
14 Hahn 1988, pp. 56f.
15 In Phug brag it is found twice: no. 249, vol. 80 = mdo sde la, 401a3-423b4, and no. 399, vol. 96 = mdo sde nī, 358b4-377b8; for the Tanjur version, cf. Hartmann 1987, p. 45.
17 Even the Prasādapratiḥbodhahvā, the other hymn by Mārceṣa which directly follows in the Phug brag Kanjur, contains chapter titles only at the end of each chapter and only in Tibetan translation.
18 Parentheses ( ) in the Sanskrit titles denote reconstructions due to textual gaps in the fragments. Cf. Hartmann 1987 for the Sanskrit manuscripts.
The final colophon refers only to the last chapter:

The real difference is found in the title of chapter ten, where the word reading for the synonym presupposed by the Tibetan translation does not occur in chapter twelve. The only conclusion from this.

Differences between the titles preserved in the Sanskrit manuscripts and their Tibetan transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and without great significance for the meaning: in chapters five and seven, the expected addition an transliterations are few and 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however, it appears impossible to decide which of the two readings is to be preferred.

2.2. Variant readings

Both texts of the *Vaṃśarthaśvarṇa* in the Phug brag Kanjur were either rather carelessly written or based upon an original already containing a large number of mistakes. Although both abound in scribal errors and omissions, the situation is even worse with the second text. It differs from the first in its irregular use of the *sād*, or *dānḍa*, which results in a partial loss of metre as a regulating device against the omission of single syllables. Notwithstanding such textual problems, the Phug brag version preserves a number of readings which are, in the light of the Sanskrit original, definitely superior to those found in the Tanjur version. In the edition of the *Vaṃśarthaśvarṇa*, altogether 29 cases were listed where the Sanskrit text seemed to require a correction of the Tibetan translation as preserved in all four block prints of CDNP. Since chapter one is missing in Phug brag, only 26 of these corrections could be checked against this version. The result is as follows:

2.7b: the haplography * thugs rje* instead of * thugs rjes* (stobs . . .) is also found in Phug brag (a 401b2; b 359a2); 2.17b: *mi rhū* (rite b) ba (a 402a3; b 359b3) against *mi rin(s)* ba CDNP for *ahāyin*: Phug brag obviously is to be corrected to either *mi ri th or mi rī pa;* 2.18a: * rab sbyats pa* (a 402a4; b 359b3) with CDNP for *prāra ḍāṛī*: Guided by SAKAKI's edition of the *Mahāvyutpatti*, I changed *sbyats* to sphyis (HARTMANN 1987, p. 99), but both forms evidently exist side by side, the more frequently used one being *sbyats;* 2.43d: *gtsan sbrag* (a 403b2; b 360b8) with CDNP; as in the previous case, on account of the *Mahāvyutpatti* I changed *sbra* to sphyis against all sources; 2.51d: *rig pa* (a 404a1; b 361a7) against *rigs pa* CDNP for *viśaya;* 3.9a: *rgya chen* (a 406a2; b 363a4) against *rgyal* CDNP for *viśāla;* 5.8a: *ston* (a 409a3) against don CDNP for *samākhyāna;* 5.10d: *bshis ba'i* (a 409a6) against *srid pa'i* (b 365b6 and CDNP) for *nālīṭhūra;* 5.12c: *phyun* (a 409a7; b 365b8) with CDNP for *phyag, ḏūṛya;*

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8.11c: *gar dañ* (a 415a3) with CDNP against unmetrical *gar dag dañ* (b 370b6) for *gar dag, yāñ;* 8.16a: *tshad* (a 415a7; b 371a2) with CDNP against *chāl, azamañja* or *azamañja;* 8.22a: *sred pa'i* (a 415b5) against *srid pa'i* (b 371a6) and CDNP for *trap;* 8.30a: *spyod* (b 371b4) against *spyod* (a 416a5 and CDNP) *pa med dañ sbyar* for *ama-māṃsaka;* 10.7c: *kyi* (a 417 'og b6; omitted in b 373b6) with CDNP against *kyis* (Skt. not available); 10.9b: *ku ma da* (a 418a1; b 373b8) against *ku ma tu* CDNP for *kumuda;* 10.11a: *khyod kyis* (a 418a2; b 374a1) against *khyod kyis* CDNP for *te;* 10.13b: *bi po* (a 418a4; b 374a3) with CDNP (bo C, pa D) against reconstructed *gē bo* for *drāra;* [10.19c: *phral has* (a 418b2) with CDNP and *phreñs has* (b 374a8) against reconstructed *dpral bas* for *lalātena;* however, this reconstruction in HARTMANN 1987, p. 280, was unnecessary, since *phral ba* is an old form for *dpral ba;* 10.19e: *'khyims pa* (a 418b2; b 374a8) against *'khyil pas* CDNP (has D) for *parveśin;* 10.25a: *mdzes pa yi* (a 418b7; b 374b4) against *mdzes pa yi* CDNP (Sanskrit not preserved); 10.26c: *khyod kyis* (b 374b5) against *khyod kyis* (a 418b8 and CDNP) for *te;* 10.28c: *thugs rje chen pas mig gi* (a 419a2; b 374b6-7) against *thugs rje che n po mig gi* CDNP for *yac caksurbuddhivijayam mahākaraṃśa kṛtam;* 11.21b: *sbyo mi māña* (a 420b6; b 376a5) against *sbyo mi māña* CDNP for *aśamafijā;* 11.21d: *kyis* (a 421/422a2; b 376b1) against *kyī* CDNP; 12.6d: *sbrin* (a 423a2; b 377a6) against *re na* CDNP for *dhāk;* 12.15a: *māña* (*māña* po b) *dbang sgyur* (a 423b2; b 377b5) against *māña* *dbang bskur* CDNP for *vaśavartin.*

Thus, out of 26 cases, three cannot be counted, and in six cases neither version contains a reading in agreement with the Sanskrit original. However, in 17 or two-thirds of all cases either both or at least one of the two texts in the Phug brag manuscript preserve the correct reading. Finally, in 2.13a the line missing in CDNP is found in Phug brag as *phyag 'tshal rin chen sku* (skun b) *khyod la* (a 401b7; b 359a7).

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22 The same holds true for the two copies of the *Garbhāptavastava* in the Phug brag. The translation is the same, but in the second copy many *sād* are missing, and this leads to a particularly large number of mistakes, since the metre is rather long: it contains fifteen syllables per quarter and easily becomes confused.

23 Cf. HARTMANN 1987, p. 46, note 123.

24 In the second version this line contains a ditto graph: it runs *chos kyi* (1) *de śīl ma mchis so* instead of *chos kyi de śīl ston sād du,* clearly under the influence of the foregoing line *phan thun 'gaz ba* *sūn ma mchis so.*

25 In this version the whole *pūda* is corrupt: *srid pa'i phrin ni* 'chī mañ ba for *sred pa'is brun ni* 'the mañ ba* (with *zin for *bran*, an obvious scribal error, in version a of Phug brag).

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