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A Pāla-Period Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Manuscript Distributed Between Five Collections*

Illuminated palm leaf manuscripts from India are seldom completely preserved. Frequently, single illuminated leaves appear on the art market, and subsequently find their way into various museums and collections, whereas leaves without illustrations usually go missing. It has often proved possible to reunite scattered illuminated leaves, at least in photographic form. This article will discuss, in their original order, forty-seven illuminated leaves from an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript which are presently distributed between five collections.

The leaves are held in the following five collections:

6 folia in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.1-6

3 folia in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.72.1.24a-c

4 folia in the Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, 1979.53.1-4

3 folia in the Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1995.241

32 folia in a private collection.

There are forty-eight leaves in total, of which one has illustrations on both sides (see fig. 47f.) and one is without illustration (see fig. 49f. and p. 87f. below). I have assigned the manuscript the working title “Manuscript in Five Collections”.

* I am indebted to Christian Luczanits and Karen Weissenborn for their numerous and invaluable comments on the iconography of the illustrations treated in this article and above all for their constant willingness to discuss problematic aspects. My thanks are also due to the owner of the private collection with the thirty-two folia (see fig. 1-5, 7-10, 12-14, 17-19, 22, 23, 26-28, 30, 32-35, 40, 41, 44-50), not only for placing the photographic material at my disposal but also for offering me the opportunity to study the originals.

The manuscript was first mentioned in Western art historical publications in 1966 by Pratapaditya Pal in the catalogue entitled *The Arts of India and Nepal. The Nashi and Alice Heeramanek Collection* (cf. the chronological list of previous publications provided as Appendix I). This catalogue lists fourteen illustrated and one unillustrated folio. However, none of these are reproduced in the catalogue. It remains unclear whether the Heeramaneks held only these fifteen folia, several more or indeed all of the folia known today. While single illustrated folia have been published since the 1980s, no attempt has been made to explore the issue of their position within the text as a whole.

Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts from India with such a large number of illustrations are extremely rare. The British Library holds an almost perfectly preserved illuminated manuscript of the Sūtra from the twelfth century (Or.12461). For this manuscript Losty (1982: 33) has constructed a schema of sixty-six folia with miniature paintings: two at the beginning of the first chapter and two at the end of each of the thirty-two chapters. Each pair of illustrations is inserted on two facing pages. Since in the case of our manuscript the illustrations are to be found at the beginning and at the end of the chapters, it may be assumed that there were another eighteen illustrated folia in addition to the extant forty-seven illustrated leaves.¹

Depending on their state of preservation, the leaves are approximately 6.4 cm high and c. 44 cm wide. They have six lines of *gaudīya* script each; these are interrupted by the central illustrations and by the square panels around the string-holes which are four lines high (see, e.g., pl. XII). These panels are sometimes decorated, with, for example, images of monks and animals or purely decorative elements such as rosettes or lozenges. In the case of the folios with illustrations, the margins terminate in decorative strips in the first part of the manuscript, that is, up to Chapter 16. In the second part, the margins contain alternating depictions of a *stūpa* in various colours on the verso sides. In the margins of the recto sides there are two occurrences of a standing Buddha, one of a single *ḍākinī*, six of a single standing Bodhisattva and one each of two scenes from the life of the Buddha: the taming of the elephant Nālāgiri and the descent from Trāyastriṃśa Heaven.

¹ Another manuscript with the same decorative scheme is held in the Tibet Museum in Lhasa. It has not yet been published in any detail. An illustration in *Precious Deposits* I/108f. (fig. 73) shows ten leaves of text, each with a single illustration at the centre. Three of these leaves can be identified as chapter ends: fourth leaf from top, folio 180v – Chapter 29; seventh leaf from top, recto (no folio number) – Chapter 15; tenth leaf from top, folio 191v – Chapter 30.

The foliation is found on the verso side of each leaf in three different places: at the left-hand margin, beside the left-hand string-hole and at the right-hand margin of the folio. All three numbers are written according to the system of figure numerals but with different characters. In Pāla-era manuscripts it was more common to write the numbers on the left-hand side in the system of letter numerals and to use the figure numerals on the right-hand side. The numerals on the right correspond in size to the letters and numerals within the text, and in most cases the same characters are used (see fig. 11). The numbers on the left-hand margin and beside the string-hole are mostly larger, displaying a different ductus (no hair strokes), and the colour of the ink is for the most part noticeably darker than in the text.

SEQUENCE OF THE ILLUMINATED FOLIA

Chapter 1

Folio 1v (fig. 1): Prajñāpāramitā, yellow, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, hands in *dharmacakramudrā* with a white *padma* above each shoulder.²

Folio 2r (fig. 2): Tārā, green, seated in *lalitāsana*, displaying *varada*- and *vitarkamudrā*.

This combination is very unusual for first leaves. Frequently, Prajñāpāramitā is depicted together with Amitābha, Mañjuśrī or the Buddha preaching at the beginning of the text.³

The end of Chapter 1 is missing.

Chapter 2

Folio 20v (fig. 3): Tārā, green, standing in *tribhaṅga*, displaying the *varadamudrā* with the right hand. The details of the left hand are no longer discernible as the leaf is badly rubbed at this point.

² The poor state of preservation of this folio makes it impossible to ascertain whether there was once a book upon the *padma* above the left shoulder. However, the figure cannot be mistaken for the very similar Mahāśrī Tārā, as this Tārā invariably holds the blue *utpala* and not the *padma*. On this point see Ghosh 1980: 58-59.

³ On the connection between Prajñāpāramitā und Tārā, see Conze (1967: 251) who deduces connections with other deities from an analysis of the qualities of Prajñāpāramitā: "... the element of intellectual power and erudition involved in 'wisdom' makes her (sc. Prajñāpāramitā) resemble Sarasvatī. It is, however, of the essence of Prajñāpāramitā that wisdom is fused with an all-comprehensive compassion – and that naturally leads to similarities with Avalokiteśvara. It is the function of Prajñāpāramitā to save people and that makes her close to Tārā, the popular saviouress."

Folio 21 is missing.

Chapter 3

Folio 38v (fig. 4): Hevajra, blue, standing in *pratyālīḍha*, with eight heads, sixteen arms holding a *kapāla* in each hand and four legs signifying the crushing of the four Māras.

Folio 39r (fig. 5): Ṭakkirāja, red, standing in *pratyālīḍha* on a corpse, holding *aṅkuśa* and *pāśa*.⁴

Chapter 4

Folio 42v (fig. 6): Tārā, green, standing in *tribhaṅga*, right hand displaying the *varadamudrā*, left hand upright.

Folio 43r (fig. 7): Siṃhanāda Lokeśvara, white, seated in *rājālīlāsana* on a white lion, holding a staff with entwined snakes and a white *padma* with a *khadga*.

Chapter 5

Folio 56v (fig. 8): Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇa, white, seated in *lalitāsana*, displaying the *varadamudrā*, with a white *padma* above each shoulder. He is accompanied by Sūcīmukha in a small separate panel to his right.

Folio 57 is missing.

Chapter 6

Folio 71v (fig. 9): Raktalokeśvara, red, seated in *lalitāsana*, with six hands. Of the right hands one is raised and possibly holds a *mālā*, while the other two display *abhaya*- and *varadamudrā*. Two of the left hands hold a *tridaṇḍa* and a white *padma*, and the lowest displays a gesture normally used when holding a small flask. There is, however, no sign of the latter.⁵

⁴ Ṭakkirāja is better known in his blue-complexioned manifestation as one of the ten *krodhas* in the circle of protection of many *maṇḍalas*. He is represented in this form in the “Manuscript in Five Collections” on folio 212r (fig. 45). On folio 39r he is shown in his red manifestation as an *iṣṭadevatā*. For examples for comparison from later Tibetan art, cf. Willson – Brauen 2000: 241f. and fig. 11, and Essen – Thingo 1989: I/140 and II/162f. (no. 100).

⁵ Cf. the rendering of Avalokiteśvara on Cover A of the Sūrapāla manuscript in the Yarlung Museum, Tsethang; see Allinger 2006: 221.

Folio 72r (fig. 10): Avalokiteśvara, white, seated sideways in *rājalīlāsana*, displaying the *dharmacakramudrā*, with a white *padma* above each shoulder. His right foot is grasped by the red Hayagrīva.⁶

The end of Chapter 7 is missing.

Chapter 8

Folio 83v (fig. 11): Vajrasattva, white, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, holding *vajra* and *ghaṅṭā*.

Folio 84 is missing.

Chapter 9

Folio 86v (fig. 12): Maitreya, yellow, seated in *lalitāsana*, displaying the *abhayamudrā* and holding a *nāgakeśara* branch with a gesture normally used when holding a small flask.

Folio 87r (fig. 13): Vajrapāṇi, green, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana* and holding *vajra* and *utpala*.

Chapter 10

Folio 95v (fig. 14): Vajratārā, yellow, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*. She has four faces, of which three can be seen (yellow, white and red) and eight arms, holding in her right hands a *vajra*, *pāśa*, *śara* and *śaṅkha*, and in her left hands a golden *utpala*, *dhanus* and *vajrāṅkuśa*; the remaining left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā*.

Folio 96r (fig. 15): Bodhisattva, red, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, displaying the *dharmacakramudrā*.

Chapter 11

Folio 103v (fig. 16): Bodhisattva, blue, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, displaying the *vitarkamudrā* with his right hand and holding a white *padma* with his left hand.

Folio 104r (fig. 17): Bodhisattva, yellow, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, displaying the *abhayamudrā* with his right hand; the left hand is resting in his lap.

⁶ Although no attributes can be discerned, this figure can be identified as Hayagrīva on the grounds of his position as the companion of Avalokiteśvara.

Chapter 12

Folio 114v (fig. 18): Bodhisattva, light blue, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, displaying the *vitarkamudrā* with his right hand, holding a white *padma* with his left hand.

Folio 115 is missing.

Chapter 13

Folio 117 is missing.

Folio 118r (fig. 19): An unidentified blue male *krodha*. He dances in *ardhaparyāṅka* upon a corpse. He probably has three faces – white, blue and red; the blue face displays a third eye.⁷ Of his six arms, the main pair is crossed at the breast with *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā*; one of his remaining right hands holds a *kartrikā*, while the other displays the *tarjanīmudrā*. In the remaining left hands he holds a *khaṭvāṅga* and possibly a *musala* (?). He wears a leopard skin round his hips and a *chinnamuṇḍamālā*. It might be possible to identify him as Hayagrīva.

Chapter 14

Folio 121v (fig. 20): Hevajra, blue, standing in *pratyālīḍha*, with eight heads of which six are visible (blue, red and white) and sixteen arms (similar as in folio 38v [fig. 4]).

Folio 122r (fig. 21): Bhūtaḍāmara, blue, standing in *pratyālīḍha* on Aparājita, adorned with *nāgas*, having four arms, with two hands displaying the *bhūtaḍāmaramudrā* in front of his chest, the second right hand holding a *vajra* and the second left hand displaying the *tarjanīmudrā* and holding a *pāśa*.

Chapter 15

Folio 126v (fig. 22): An unidentified blue female *krodha*. She stands in *pratyālīḍha* on a lotus, which is however unfinished. She has a third eye and long hair that falls in a broad mass, and is naked except for jewellery made of bone beads. She holds her main hands at her breast, the left hand holding a *kapāla*. Her raised left hand holds a *khaṭvāṅga*. The attributes of the three remaining hands have become virtually indiscern-

⁷ The lateral faces cannot be clearly discerned, but comparison with representations of other many-headed deities in this manuscript shows that the lateral heads are always very narrowly drawn.

ible. She is possibly holding a *pāśa* in her raised right hand, and *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* in her two middle hands.

Folio 127r (fig. 23): Tārodbhavā Kurukullā, red, seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana* on a red lotus, her upper right hand holding a *śara*, the second one displaying the *abhayamudrā*, and her left hands holding the *dhanus* and a red *padma*.

Chapter 16

Folio 132 is missing.

Folio 133r (fig. 24): Vajravārāhī, red. She dances in *ardhaparyāṅka*, has the head of a sow behind her right ear, and holds a *kartrikā* in her right hand and a *kapāla* in her left hand.

The leaves from the end of Chapter 17 are missing; however, since the depictions of the following leaves correspond to those of the Piṇḍikramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala as described in the Niṣpannayogāvalī, Chapter 2 (Bhattacharyya 1972, Sanskrit text p. 5-7) (see pl. XXIII), one may conjecture that the series began with Akṣobhya and Sparśavajrā on the leaves at the end of Chapter 17.⁸ It may be taken as certain that all thirty-two deities of the Akṣobhyamaṇḍala were depicted in the second half of the manuscript: twenty-four have been preserved and eight are missing; however, the latter can be supplied iconographically from the context. The illustrations in the manuscript follow those described for the *maṇḍala* from the inner to the outer circles, beginning in each case in the east or south-east.

All the deities of the first, second and third circle sit in *sattvaparyāṅkāśana* on a double lotus and have three faces in various colours (described below in the following order: centre – right – left) and six arms (described in the following order: centre [i.e., at the breast] – right and left hand, then the right and left hands from top to bottom); the “family” symbol is always held in the principal right hand. All are decorated with jewels.

⁸ The description of the Akṣobhyamaṇḍala in the Niṣpannayogāvalī is based on the first chapter of the Guhyasamāja Tantra. In this chapter five Buddhas, four *prajñās* and four *krodhas* are described. “For the human performance the full set of 32 deities is stipulated in the case of the Akṣobhyamaṇḍala in the Niṣpannayogāvalī” (Wayman 1977: 126).

First Circle of the Piṇḍīkramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala

Chapter 18

Folio 143v or 144v (fig. 25): East: Vairocana, white; faces: white, blue and red; holding *cakra* and *ghaṇṭā* in the centre, with his right hands *padma* and *vajra*, and with his left hands *khaḍga* and *ratna*.

Folio 144r or 145r (fig. 26): South-east: Locanā, identical.

Chapter 19

Folio 151v (fig. 27): South: Ratnasambhava, yellow; faces: yellow, blue and red; holding *ratna* and *ghaṇṭā* in the centre, with his right hands *padma* and *cakra*, and with his left hands *khaḍga* and *vajra*.

Folio 152r (fig. 28): South-west: Māmakī, blue; faces: blue, white and red; the same attributes as Ratnasambhava.

Chapter 20

Folio 158v (fig. 29): West: Amitābha, red; faces: red, blue and white; holding *padma* and *ghaṇṭā* in the centre, with his right hands *vajra* and *cakra*, and with his left hands *khaḍga* and *ratna*.

Folio 159r (fig. 30): North-west: Pāṇḍarā, identical.

Chapter 21

Folio 163v (fig. 31): North: Amoghasiddhi, green; faces: green, blue and white; holding *viśvavajra* and *ghaṇṭā* in the centre, with his right hands *padma* and *cakra*, and with his left hands *vajra* (instead of *khaḍga*) and *ratna*.

Folio 164r (fig. 32): North-east: Tārā, green; identical (here the *khaḍga* has been eliminated in the depiction).

Second Circle of the Piṇḍīkramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala

The four female deities personifying the objects that are perceived by the senses:

Chapter 22

Folio 167v (fig. 33): South-east: Rūpavajrā (sight), white; faces: white, blue and red; holding a mirror at her breast, with her right hands *padma* and *cakra*, and with her left hands *khaḍga* and *ratna*.

Folio 168 is missing but probably represented Śabdavajrā (hearing) in the south-west.

Chapter 23

Folio 170v (fig. 34): North-west: Gandhavajrā (smell); red, faces: red, blue and white; holding a *gandhaśaṅkha* at her breast, with her right hands *padma* and *cakra*, and with her left hands *khadga* and *ratna*.

Folio 172r (fig. 35): North-east: Rasavajrā (taste), green; faces: green, blue and white; holding a *rasapātra* at her breast, *padma* and *cakra* with her right hands, and *khadga* and *ratna* in her left hands.

The number 171 is missing in the foliation; the text of folio 172r continues that on folio 170v.

Third Circle of the Piṇḍikramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala

Eight Bodhisattvas which are like the lords of their own families (*ete 'ṣṭau svakuleśasamāḥ*) (cf. Bhattacharyya 1972, Sanskrit text p. 6):

Chapter 24

Folio 173v (fig. 36): East: Maitreya in the form of the white Vairocana, with one exception: with his left hand at his breast he holds a *nāgakeśara* flower together with its branch marked with a *cakra*.

Folio 174 is missing but probably represented Kṣitigarbha in the form of Vairocana.

Chapter 25

Folio 177v (fig. 37): South: Vajrapāṇi in the form of the yellow Ratnasambhava.

Folio 178r (fig. 38): South: Khagarbha in the form of the yellow Ratnasambhava.

Chapter 26

Folio 181v (fig. 39): West: Lokeśvara in the form of the red Amitābha.

Folio 182r (fig. 40): West: Mañjuhoṣa in the form of the red Amitābha.

Chapter 27

Folio 188r (fig. 41): North: Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin in the form of the green Amoghasiddhi.

Folio 189 is missing but probably represented Samantabhadra in the form of Amoghasiddhi.

Circle of Protection of the Piṇḍīkramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala

This circle comprises ten *krodhas* in the four gates and the intermediate directions, one at the zenith and one in the nadir. They all stand in *pratyālīḍha* on a double lotus in an aureole of flames.

Chapter 28

Folio 197v (fig. 42): East: Yamāntaka, blue; faces: blue, white and red; holding in his right hands *daṇḍa*, *aṅkuśa* and *vajra*, and in the left hands a red *padma* and a *ghaṇṭā*; the lowest left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* at his breast.

Folio 198r (fig. 43): South: Prajñāntaka, white; faces: white, blue and red; holding in his right hands a white *daṇḍa*, *pāśa* and *vajra*, and in his left hands *aṅkuśa* and *ghaṇṭā*; the lowest left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* at his breast.

Chapter 29 is missing, but it can be presumed that the final leaves of this chapter displayed the red Padmāntaka in the west and the blue Vighnāntaka in the north.

Chapter 30

Folio 210v (fig. 44): South-east: Acala, blue; faces: blue, white and red; holding in his right hands *khadga*, *vajra* and *aṅkuśa*, and in his left hands a red *padma* and a *ghaṇṭā*; the lowest left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* in front of his breast.

Folio 212r (fig. 45): South-west: Ṭakkirāja, blue; faces: blue, white and red; displaying the *vajrahūṃkāramudrā* at his breast and holding with his right hands *khadga* and *cakra*, with his left hands *ghaṇṭā* and *pāśa*.

The number 211 is missing from the foliation; the text of folio 210v continues on folio 212r.

Chapter 31

Folio 217v (fig. 46): North-west: Nīladaṇḍa, blue; faces: blue, white and red; holding with his right hands a blue *daṇḍa*, *khadga* and *paraśu*, and in his left hands *ghaṇṭā* and *pāśa*; the lowest left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* at his breast.

Folio 218r (fig. 47): Zenith: Uṣṇīṣacakravartin, blue; faces: blue, white and red; his two upper hands execute the *uṣṇīṣamudrā*, with his remaining right hands he holds *cakra* and *khadga*, and with one left hand a red *padma*; the remaining left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* at his breast.

Chapter 32

Folio 218v (fig. 48): North-east: Mahābala, blue; one blue face only; holding with his right hands *khaḍga*, *cakra* and *vajra*, and with his left hands a red *padma* and a *ghaṇṭā*; the lowest left hand displays the *tarjanīmudrā* at his breast.

Folio 219 is missing but it is likely that the end of the very short Chapter 32 was inscribed on this folio, together with the colophon and a depiction of the blue Sumbharāja at the nadir.

While the sequence of the text on folia 217 and 218 is correct, it is probable that the images of Uṣṇīṣacakravartin and Mahābala were reversed. The correct sequence of images according to the Niṣpannayogāvalī would be: Nīladaṇḍa in the north-west (folio 217v), Mahābala in the north-east (folio 218r instead of 218v), Uṣṇīṣacakravartin at the zenith (folio 218v instead of 218r) and Sumbharāja at the nadir.

REMARKS ON MISTAKES IN THE TEXT AND FOLIATION

The numerous mistakes that can be seen in these folia permit the drawing of conclusions in regard to the manner in which they were created, i.e., the division of labour involved in the making of the manuscript.

Of special interest in this connection is the only preserved leaf without illustrations (see pl. XXII). It contains text in *gauḍīya* script on the recto side (fig. 49) and on the reverse a text in Nepalese writing (fig. 50). This latter text contains the dates 588 and 563 of the Nepalese Era, corresponding to the years 1468 and 1443 CE and thus to the reign of King Yakṣa Malla, who is also mentioned in the text.⁹ The text on the recto side, which lacks a page number, comes from Chapter 3 of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā.¹⁰ However, while copying the text the scribe omitted a line. On noticing his mistake he evidently attempted to rectify it by scraping off what he had written and squeezing the missing

⁹ I thank Kashinath Tamot (Nepal Research Center, Kathmandu) for this information. Heeramaneeck 1966 (catalogue no. 117, p. 106 and 108) mentions an unillustrated fragment and gives a dating of N.S. 354 (1234 CE). It is unclear whether this fragment is identical with the folio discussed here (presently in a private collection) and the date a misreading, or whether a second unillustrated folio existed, the whereabouts of which are now unknown.

¹⁰ I thank Toru Tomabechi (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna) for the reading of this text.

text into the limited space available. This was obviously unsuccessful and so the leaf was set aside and later inserted at the end of the manuscript. The blank reverse of this leaf was then used for writing a post-colophon after the manuscript had been brought to Nepal.

In this case the mistake was noticed quickly; there are, however, passages where mistakes were noticed at a much later stage. For example, on folio 103v (fig. 16) it is evident that some of the text, which was written before the manuscript was illustrated, was painted over when the pictorial image was added. In the fourth line on the left a correction has been inserted, evidently after the addition of the pictorial image because the correction is written over the painted edges of the illustration. This mistake would seem to have been discovered only at a later stage of proof-reading.

On the extant leaves the foliation displays frequent errors from Chapter 19 onwards: in Chapters 19 and 20 it contradicts the sequence of the text. Of the two leaves at the end of Chapter 19, the first bears the numeral 151 (see fig. 27), and on the following leaf the numeral 152 has possibly been corrected to 158. At the end of Chapter 20, the numeral 152 can be clearly read on the first of the two leaves (the number on the left is unclear), and on the following leaf the numeral 159. From the sequence of the text it is obvious that one digit of each of these pairs of numbers must be wrong. Three times the three numbers on the verso side are not identical: 143 – 144, 144 – 145 and 167 – 168. Folio 167 displays the correct number in the right-hand margin, but the number 168 can be seen in the left-hand margin and beside the string-hole. This latter cannot be correct, as the text of the following Chapter 23, which terminates on folio 170r, occupies more than two folia. The numbers 171 and 211 are missing in the foliation. A possible explanation for these errors may be sought in the fact that the numbers were written over the paintings or decoration in the margins, that is, at a point when two stages of the production, i.e., the writing of the text and the addition of paintings, had already been completed; it must have been a frequent occurrence for leaves to have been taken out of their original context and subsequently put back in the wrong order.

STYLISTIC DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE MANUSCRIPT

It is obvious that at least three different artists or groups of artists worked on this manuscript.

Group 1: folio 1-83

Group 2: folio 86 up to the end of Chapter 16

Group 3: Chapter 17 up to the end.

From folia 86 and 87 onwards the style of the illuminations differs considerably from that of the previous leaves. The hand of another artist is clearly recognisable. The outlines of the bodies are drawn more stiffly, with less fluidity; the oversized toes are striking, and the heads tend to be drawn as ovals, rather than the rounded shapes used in the previous leaves. The lotus leaves of the throne have not only a strong outer golden outline but also a second, inner contour line, resulting in an almost lattice-like effect. The lateral lotus leaves are not as pointed and the rounded contour of the throne is emphasised more. The tendril elements on either side of the heads are rounded rather than projecting as points. The cloth of the cushions is patterned. The horse-shoe arch lacks the yellow and blue contours. In general, it may be said that on these later leaves it is the graphic rather than the painterly element that predominates.

The composition is more or less identical in the case of both groups in the first part of the manuscript (up to Chapter 16). The deities are seated on a lotus throne against back cushions. A horse-shoe arch separates the red background around the deity from the dark blue background of the picture which is often decorated with leaves and blossoms. There is little change to this pictorial scheme except of course in the case of the depictions of the *krodhas*, who are surrounded by an aureole of flames. There are numerous variations in the execution of the details.

Stylistically, the rendering of the figures in the second part of the manuscript – with the illustrations depicting the Piṇḍīkramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala – differs only minimally from that of the second group in the first part, but what is wholly new here is the introduction of architectural elements as a frame for the figures. Both the lateral pillars and the arches are covered in decoration drawn in gold on a black background and give the impression of finely-chased goldsmith's work. Besides the tendril motifs there are also fabulous beasts on the pillars, together with medallions depicting animals and humans. The background is now black; at the bottom are tendrils and at the top plants (palms and banana trees) and birds can be seen. The artist of this part employed the same pronouncedly graphic style as the artist of the second group of illustrations in the first part of the manuscript, but was in addition eminently gifted in the execution of the extremely intricate and imaginative ornamentation that dominates the second part of the manuscript.

AN ATTEMPT AT DATING AND LOCALISATION

As the folio with the colophon has not been preserved, the only way to assign a temporal and geographical location to this manuscript is to compare the motifs used in the illustrations. A prominent motif in this “Manuscript in Five Collections” are the richly decorated trefoil arches resting on two equally ornate pillars. This decoration gives the impression of finely-chased goldsmith’s work. Related decorative forms can be found in the paintings of a small group of Pāla-period manuscripts, which, however, seldom contain a colophon and thus offer little in the way of points of reference for a secure dating or localisation.

I know of only one other, almost identical, type of arch (the pillars are not visible); it is employed in the illustration of an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Acc. No. F.1930.88).¹¹ The decoration is astonishingly similar: light-coloured vegetal tendrils and medallions with representations of animals and plants stand out against a dark background.

The most helpful evidence for a dating of our manuscript is provided by two leaves of a Pañcarakṣā manuscript in the LACMA (M.79.9.9a and b) which, according to its colophon, was donated in Year 17 of the reign of Madanapāla by Vikramamāna, the son of Rudramāna, a vassal of Madanapāla. This regnal year corresponds to the year 1160 CE. On leaf “a”, the decoration of the trefoil arch – although in connection with an architectural superstructure – closely resembles that in the “Manuscript in Five Collections”: the arch is decorated with medallions containing plant and animal motifs. Here again, the decoration is executed in a light colour against a dark background (Pal 1993: 66f. and 364).

The same decorative forms are still being used in an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript in the Asiatic Society, Mumbai, that was executed in Year 39 of the reign of Govindapāla. This regnal year corresponds to the year 1200 CE.¹² Thus it seems likely that the “Manu-

¹¹ One leaf is reproduced in Pal – Meech-Pekarik 1988: fig. 18. No colophon has been preserved. The authors date the manuscript to the twelfth century and conclude that it was painted in Bihar.

¹² For the problem of the dating of this manuscript see Gorakshkar – Desai 1987. Black and white reproductions of all the illustrated folia are to be found in Gorakshkar – Desai 1987: pl. I-X, colour illustrations in Kulkarni – Desai 1998: pl. 8-11. Saraswati (1978: 51, no. 24) reads the regnal year of Govindapāla as Year 32.

script in Five Collections” indeed originated in the second half of the twelfth century, as was already proposed for some of its folios.

Although no place of origin is mentioned in the colophon of either of the comparable manuscripts, the iconographic programme also allows conclusions to be drawn as to the manuscript’s place of origin. In most of the illustrated manuscripts from Bihar and Bengal known to date and in the first part of this manuscript, the images of the deities that appear can at most be subsumed into small groups. By contrast, an extremely complex self-contained programme was chosen as the basis for the decorative scheme for the second part of this manuscript: the second chapter of the Niṣpannayogāvalī. Written during the reign of Rāmapāla, its author, Abhayākaragupta, became abbot in Vikramaśilā towards the end of his life (Bühnemann 1991: XIV). It is tempting to conjecture that the programme for the second part of the “Manuscript in Five Collections” was worked out within the sphere of influence of his work – that is, at the monastery of Vikramaśilā – but this has to remain a hypothesis until a colophon is found.

Appendix I

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

1966

Nasli M. Heeramaneck, *The Arts of India and Nepal*. The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts (Pratapaditya Pal for the book illuminations).

No. 117, p. 106-108: Leaves from an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript, Nepal, N.S. 354 (1234 CE); 14 illustrated leaves and one unillustrated fragment. No figures.

1981

Handbook of the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection. New York: The Asia Society.

1979.53.1-4, p. 27: Four leaves from a manuscript of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, Nepal, twelfth century. Black and white figures of the four leaves.

1988

Pratapaditya Pal — Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations*. Hurstpierpoint: Ravi Kumar Publishers and Richard Lyon – Chimera Books.

Fig. 21 (black and white) and pl. 10 (colour), p. 72: Four leaves from the Asia Society (Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection). Prajñā-

pāramitā manuscript, probably from the time of Rāmapāla. Bihar, twelfth century.

1990

Susan L. Huntington – John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree. The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy*. Seattle – London: The Dayton Art Institute in Association with the University of Washington Press.

No. 60, p. 191-194: Six leaves from a Buddhist manuscript, from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, The Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.a-f. Eastern India or Bangladesh, c. twelfth century. Central images reproduced in colour and the leaves as a whole in black and white.

1993

Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Painting. A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection. Volume I: 1000-1700*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

M.72.1.24a-c, p. 68-70: Three leaves from a Prajñāpāramitā manuscript, from the Nasli and Alice Heerameck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, Bihar 1150-1200. Illustrations in black and white: all three folia complete, central image of leaf “a”, central and marginal images of leaves “b” and “c”.

1994

Denis Patry Leidy, *Treasures of Asian Art*. The Asia Society’s Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection. New York – London – Paris: The Asia Society Galleries – Abbeville Press Publishers.

1979.53.1-4, p. 68-71: Four leaves from an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript, India, Bihar or Bengal, about 1151-1200. Reproductions of all four leaves in colour.

2001

Joseph M. Dye III, *The Arts of India*. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. London: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts – Philip Wilson Publishers.

No. 65, p. 190-192: Six pages from an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.1-6. Pāla Dynasty, Bengal or Bihar, 1150-1200. Illustrations of all six leaves and all central images in colour.

2003

John C. Huntington – Dina Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss. Buddhist Meditational Art*. Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio. Chicago: Serindia Publications.

No. 134, p. 436f.: Three leaves from an Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā manuscript from the Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1995.241. Eastern Bihar, India, or Western Bangladesh, c. 1160 to 1180. Illustrations of all three leaves and the central images in colour.

The attempts in these publications at iconographic interpretation of the deities depicted are unsuccessful, especially as concerns the second part of the manuscript. This can be explained by the fact that without knowledge of the iconographic context identification is virtually impossible.

Appendix II

LIST OF FIGURES AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE PRESERVED FORTY-EIGHT LEAVES

Plate I

- Fig. 1 Folio 1v, detail: Prajñāpāramitā. Private Collection.
Fig. 2 Folio 2r, detail: Tārā. Private Collection.

Plate II

- Fig. 3 Folio 20v, in the center Tārā. Private Collection.
Fig. 4 Folio 38v, detail: Hevajra. Private Collection.
Fig. 5 Folio 39r, detail: Ṭakkirāja. Private Collection.

Plate III

- Fig. 6 Folio 42v, detail: Tārā. LACMA, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.72.1.24a (Photograph © 2007 Museum Associates / LACMA).
Fig. 7 Folio 43r, detail Siṃhanāda Lokeśvara. Private Collection.

Plate IV

- Fig. 8 Folio 56v, in the center Avalokiteśvara Khasarpaṇa. Private Collection.
Fig. 9 Folio 71v, detail: Raktalokeśvara. Private Collection.
Fig. 10 Folio 72r, detail: Avalokiteśvara. Private Collection.

Plate V

- Fig. 11 Folio 83v, in the center Vajrasattva. The Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1995.241 (Photograph © The Art Institute of Chicago).

Fig. 12 Folio 86v, detail: Maitreya. Private Collection.

Fig. 13 Folio 87r, detail: Vajrapāṇi. Private Collection.

Plate VI

Fig. 14 Folio 95v, in the center Vajratārā. Private Collection.

Fig. 15 Folio 96r, detail: Bodhisattva. The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, 1979.53.3 (Photograph © The Asia Society, New York).

Plate VII

Fig. 16 Folio 103v, detail: Bodhisattva. The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, 1979.53.2 (Photograph © The Asia Society, New York).

Fig. 17 Folio 104r, detail: Bodhisattva. Private Collection.

Plate VIII

Fig. 18 Folio 114v, detail: Bodhisattva. Private Collection.

Fig. 19 Folio 118r, detail: unidentified male. Private Collection.

Plate IX

Fig. 20 Folio 121v, detail: Hevajra. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.1 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Fig. 21 Folio 122r, detail: Bhūtaḍāmara. The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, 1979.53.4 (Photograph © The Asia Society, New York).

Plate X

Fig. 22 Folio 126v, detail: unidentified female. Private Collection.

Fig. 23 Folio 127r, detail: Tārodbhavā Kurukullā. Private Collection.

Plate XI

Fig. 24 Folio 133r, detail: Vajravārāhī. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.2 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Fig. 25 Folio 143v or 144v, detail: Vairocana. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.3 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Fig. 26 Folio 144r or 145r, detail: Locanā. Private Collection.

Plate XII

Fig. 27 Folio 151v, in the center Ratnasambhava. Private Collection.

Fig. 28 Folio 152r, in the center Māmakī. Private Collection.

Plate XIII

Fig. 29 Folio 158v, detail: Amitābha. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneeck Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.4 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Fig. 30 Folio 159r, detail: Pāṇḍarā. Private Collection.

Plate XIV

Fig. 31 Folio 163v, detail: Amoghasiddhi. The Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1995.241 (Photograph © The Art Institute of Chicago).

Fig. 32 Folio 164r, detail: Tārā. Private Collection.

Fig. 33 Folio 167v, detail: Rūpavajrā. Private Collection.

Plate XV

Fig. 34 Folio 170v, in the center Gandhavajrā. Private Collection.

Fig. 35 Folio 172r, in the center Rasavajrā. Private Collection.

Plate XVI

Fig. 36 Folio 173v, detail: Maitreya/Vairocana. The Asia Society, New York, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, 1979.53.1 (Photograph © The Asia Society, New York).

Fig. 37 Folio 177v, detail: Vajrapāṇi/Ratnasambhava. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneeck Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.5 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Fig. 38 Folio 178r, detail: Khagarbha/Ratnasambhava. LACMA, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneeck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.72.1.24b (Photograph © 2007 Museum Associates / LACMA).

Plate XVII

Fig. 39 Folio 181v, in the center Lokeśvara/Amitābha. The Art Institute of Chicago, Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1995.241 (Photograph © The Art Institute of Chicago).

Fig. 40 Folio 182r, in the center Mañjuḡhoṣa/Amitābha. Private Collection.

Plate XVIII

Fig. 41 Folio 188r, detail: Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin/Amoghasiddhi. Private Collection.

Fig. 42 Folio 197v, detail: Yamāntaka. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Paul Mellon, 68.8.114.6 (Photograph: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts).

Plate XIX

Fig. 43 Folio 198r, detail: Prajñāntaka. LACMA, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.72.1.24c (Photograph © 2007 Museum Associates / LACMA).

Fig. 44 Folio 210v, detail: Acala. Private Collection.

Plate XX

Fig. 45 Folio 212r, detail: Ṭakkirāja. Private Collection.

Fig. 46 Folio 217v, in the center Nīladaṇḍa. Private Collection.

Plate XXI

Fig. 47 Folio 218r, detail: Uṣṇīṣacakravartin. Private Collection.

Fig. 48 Folio 218v, detail: Mahābala. Private Collection.

Plate XXII

Fig. 49 Folio from Chapter 3, recto side, text only. Private Collection.

Fig. 50 Folio from Chapter 3, verso side. Private Collection.

Plate XXIII

Fig. 51 The Piṇḍīkramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala, according to Raghū Vira – Lokesh Chandra 1966 (no. 43): “The 32-deity Guhyasamāja Akṣobhyavajra as handed down by Mar-pa of Lho-brag”.

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Fig. 1: fol. 1v, Prajñāpāramitā



Fig. 2: fol. 2r, Tārā



Fig. 6: fol. 42v, Tārā



Fig. 7: fol. 43r, Siṃhanāda Lokeśvara



Fig. 14: fol. 95v, Vajratara



Fig. 15: fol. 96r, Bodhisattva



Fig. 16: fol. 103v, Bodhisattva



Fig. 17: fol. 104r, Bodhisattva



Fig. 18: fol. 114v, Bodhisattva



Fig. 19: fol. 118r; unidentified male



Fig. 20: fol. 121v, Hevajra



Fig. 21: fol. 122r, Bhūtaḍāmara



Fig. 22: fol. 126v, unidentified female



Fig. 23: fol. 127r, Tārodbhavā Kurukullā



Fig. 24: fol. 133r, Vajravārāhī



Fig. 25: fol. 143v or 144v, Vairocana



Fig. 26: fol. 144r or 145r, Locanā



Fig. 27: fol. 151v, Ratnasambhava



Fig. 28: fol. 152r, Māmāktī



Fig. 29: fol. 158v, Amitābha



Fig. 30: fol. 159r, Pañḍarā



Fig. 31: fol. 163v, Amoghasiddhi



Fig. 32: fol. 164r, Tārā



Fig. 33: fol. 167v, Rūpavajrā



Fig. 36: fol. 173v, Maitreya/Vairocana



Fig. 37: fol. 177v, Vajrapāṇi/Ratnasambhava



Fig. 38: fol. 178r, Khagarbha/Ratnasambhava



Fig. 39: fol. 181v, Lokēśvara/Amitābha



Fig. 40: fol. 182r, Mañjuṣośa/Amitābha



Fig. 41: fol. 188r, Sarvanivāraṇaśikha/Amoghasiddhi



Fig. 42: fol. 197v, Yamāntaka



Fig. 43: fol. 198r, Prajñāntaka



Fig. 44: fol. 210v, Acala



Fig. 45: fol. 212r, Takkirāja



Fig. 46: fol. 217v, Nīladanḍa



Fig. 47: fol. 218r, Uṣṇīṣacakravartin



Fig. 48: fol. 218v, Mahābala

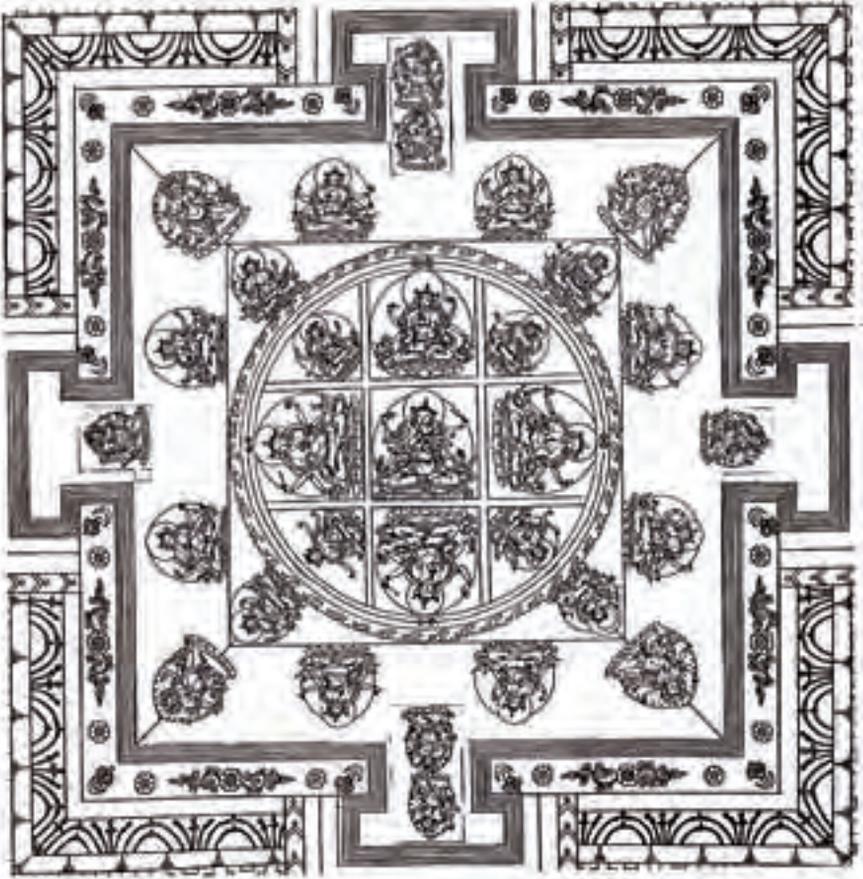


Fig. 51: Piṇḍikramoktākṣobhyamaṇḍala

