

EDITING OF THE OLDEST *KARMMAVIBHĀGA* MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN IN SINHALESE

NEM Wijerathne¹

Abstract

The Sa-skaya Codex: "Karmmavibhaga," is the oldest Sinhala manuscript with enormous historical and cultural significance. It offers insights into the early Sri Lankan religious, linguistic, and cultural landscape. As the codex is written in an archaic form of Sinhala which poses significant challenges for modern-day scholars attempting to translate and understand it due to the manuscript's archaic language, unique script style, and deteriorated condition. The objective of this study is to accurately translate the Sa-skaya Codex into modern Sinhala, while preserving the nuances and subtleties of the original text. Multi-disciplinary approach, integrating paleography, philology, and digital humanities techniques were used for this. Paleographic analysis is used to understand the script and writing conventions of the period, while philological methods help in interpreting the archaic language and identifying contextual meanings. Digital tools, including high-resolution imaging and machine learning algorithms, assist in deciphering faded or damaged portions of the manuscript. The study results reveal the complexity of the codex's language and script, highlighting the evolution of Sinhala over centuries. The study also identifies key historical and cultural elements embedded within the text that have been previously overlooked. It is concluded that this study not only offers a reliable method for translating ancient manuscripts but also underscores the importance of preserving and studying historical texts to enrich our knowledge of linguistic and cultural heritage and offers a model for translating other ancient texts.

Keywords: Sa-skaya Codex, Karmmavibhāga, History, Palaeography, Tibet

¹ Research Scholar, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka

Email: eshanpanhinda@gmail.com



<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7977-8699>



Proceeding of the 2nd Desk Research Conference – DRC 2024 © 2024 by The Library, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka is licensed under [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Introduction

The discovery of the Sa-skya Codex containing the text of the *Karmmavibhāga* was the achievement of Sri Lanka a team of scholars led by the late Professor *Rahul Sankrtyayana*. This discovery of a Sinhala manuscript at the Sa-skya monastery in Tibet was a significant event which brought to light an important aspect of the activities of the Buddhist religious from Sri Lanka. The island had emerged as a foremost centre of Buddhist activity at an early phase of its long history, and the monastic communities living there had begun to maintain contact with centres of Buddhist learning in various parts of Asia. The present edition of the *Karmmavibhāga* is based on the photographs of folios of the Sa-skya Codex brought by *Sankrtyayana* from Tibet. The story of this remarkable discovery goes back several decades to the time when this indefatigable scholar who devoted his whole life to research on Buddhism visited Tibet in search of ancient Sanskrit manuscripts. His first visit, made in 1929, did not lead to the discovery of any Sanskrit manuscripts of major significance, but it provided him with the opportunity to secure several manuscripts written in Tibetan and to collect material for his booklet on the history of Buddhism in Tibet. (Sankrtyayana, 1952) The manuscripts discovered during this visit drew his attention to the possibility of utilizing the Tibetan translations to reconstruct the original Sanskrit texts. In fact, he appears to have formulated a project to reconstruct the *Pramāna- vārttika*, the work on Buddhist logic written by the Indian savant *Dharmmakīrti* in about the sixth or the seventh century AC. However, *Sankrtyayana* soon realized the enormity of the methodological problems involved in such a venture and that the phenomenal effort required for such a task would be in vain if a manuscript containing the original Sanskrit text were to be discovered at a later date. The search for this lost Sanskrit text and its commentaries took him back to Tibet on several more missions. It was on the second of such visits that the manuscript containing the text of the *Karmmavibhāga* was discovered.

Literature Review

In May 1936 *Sankrtyayana* visited the Sa-skya monastery which is situated about eighty kilometres to the north of the Mount Everest. This monastery was founded in 1073 by '*Khon dKon- mchog rgyal-po*. (An-che Li, 1945 ; Shojū Inaba, 1963) The Sa-skya-pa school of Buddhism which emerged under the leadership of the teachers of this monastery was to become one of the most influential in Tibet. It was influenced by the *Yogaâcâra* teachings and propounded the *hetuphalavada* or "the doctrine of cause (*rgyu*) and effect ('*bras*)" as well as the view that all phenomena appear only in the mind. The Sa-skya teachers emphasized the value of meditation and, in their ritual, gave an important place to the worship of the *Bodhisattva Manjusrî*.

The rise of the Sa-skya-pa to the preeminent position was to a considerable extent due to the patronage it received from the Mongol rulers. *Kun-dga rgyal-mtshan*, also known as the *Sa- skya Pandita (Sa-skya-pan-cen)*, was the abbot of this monastery when he was invited to the court of Godan in about A.D. 1244. He succeeded in winning the patronage of this powerful Mongol ruler. With Phags-pa, the next hierarch who led the Sa-skya monastery from 1253 to 1280, the relations between the monastery and the Mongol rulers reached the most crucial phase. Phags-pa was invited to the court of *Khublai Khan*. He made such a favourable impression on the Mongol ruler that he was requested to administer the ritual consecration and to initiate the emperor and the members of his court into the *Hevajra* circle. Consequently, he was appointed "royal preceptor" (*ti-shih*) and "teacher of the kingdom" (*kuo-shih*). Phags-pa utilized his position of influence to initiate a major venture of Buddhist scholarship in China, the compilation of a new edition of the Tripitaka. The emperor also appointed another Tibetan monk to the position of the Head of the Department of Fine Arts, and this move was to facilitate the penetration of Tibetan influences into China. *Khublai Khan* conceded to *Phags-pa* authority over Tibetan affairs and exempted the monastic estates from taxes and interference by Mongol couriers who had often used

monasteries as posting stations. In making these concessions the Mongol ruler was probably trying to win over the support of the Buddhist clergy led by *Phags-pa* and to extend his control over Tibet. However, the relationship between the Sa-skya monastery and the house of the Mongols was symbiotic in nature in that it also enabled *Phags-pa* and his successors to assume an increasingly crucial political role and to become the virtual rulers of Tibet.

Methodology

In his catalogue *Sankrtyayana* lists fifty-seven manuscripts bound in thirty-eight volumes. Of these the thirty-seventh volume was written in the Sinhala script. Since *Sankrtyayana* and *Abhayasimha* had to devote themselves to the time-consuming task they had originally set for themselves, they could not afford the time to make anything more than a brief perusal of the volume of Sinhala writings. *Sankrtyayana* records that this volume contained ninety-seven palm-leaves each of which measured 18 1/4 by 1 1/4 in. (46 x 3 cm.) and that there were seven lines of writing on each folio. It was his opinion that these folios belonged to two distinct manuscripts. He listed fifty of the palm-leaves as forming one manuscript and noted that the first folio of this manuscript was missing. *Sankrtyayana* states that the phrase *bhogina vessantara* occurs on the last folio of this manuscript and proceeded, on the basis of this reading, to identify it as a copy of the *Vessantara Jataka*. He listed the remaining forty-seven palm-leaves in the volume as forming the second manuscript. *Sankrtyayana* did not try to identify this manuscript, but he gave a reading of its opening lines as follows: *namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa sanji kadasanusa*. (*JBORS*, p.6) *Sankrtyayana* refers to a third Sinhala manuscript which he identified as the *Kalacakratika*. Unlike the other two manuscripts, it is said to have been written on paper and to have consisted of forty-seven folios. (*JBORS*, p.6) Evidently, he could not spare the material to photograph this manuscript.

Photographs of the manuscripts found during *Sankrtyayana*'s expeditions in Tibet are now preserved at the *K.P. Jayaswal* Research Institute in Patna. *Sankrtyayana* donated a set of photographs of the Sinhala writings to the *Vidyālanakara* University. Another set was later obtained and deposited at the National Archives, Colombo. In its report for the year 1960/1961, the Historical Manuscripts Commission of Sri Lanka drew attention to the importance of *Sankrtyayana*'s discovery. It did not cite *Sankrtyayana*'s view that there were two distinct palm-leaf manuscripts but merely referred to a manuscript which was said to contain the text of the Sinhala prose work called the *Karmavibhāga*. This manuscript was described as "a unique document." (*The Annual Report of the Government Archivist 1960/61*, 1963) In the introduction to their edition of the *Karmavibhāga* published in 1961, *Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti* and *Nāhinne Sominda* state that, during the course of the preparation of their edition, they attempted to consult the Sa-skya Codex. They had to abandon their attempt since they found it difficult to decipher the manuscript. (*Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti and Nāhinne Sominda*, 1961)

However, they were able to obtain readings of some isolated words which they compared with parallel word-forms in the manuscripts used for their edition, and it was their opinion that the examples from the Sa-skya Codex represented an earlier stage in the evolution of the Sinhala language. (*Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti and Nāhinne Sominda*, 1961) Each of the photographs supplied by the National Archives contained reproductions of a number of folios varying between nine and twelve. Most of the photographs had been serially numbered, and, those which had not been numbered have been assigned numbers by the present writer for the purpose of identification. Generally the photographs of the obverse and reverse sides of each set of palm-leaves bear the same number. The need to distinguish each photograph in such pairs has been taken into consideration in the allocation of numbers. Thus, for instance, the obverse of the sixth folio in the first photograph bears the number 1.6 while the reverse is

identified by the number 1(2).6. In certain instances, four photographs or two sets were found to bear the same number. In such instances one set will be cited as the A set and the other as the B set.

The tasks of deciphering and editing will have been rendered much easier if the folios had been carefully arranged for photography so that the obverse side of a set of palm-leaves would appear in one photograph and the reverse side in another photograph bearing the same number. However, in several instances, the obverse sides of some folios and reverse sides of other folios appear together in the same photograph. Sometimes it was also found that the reproduction of the obverse of a palm-leaf appears in one set of photograph while that of the reverse appears in a set of photographs bearing a different number. Consequently, it will be found that one side of a folio bears the number 6.11 while its other side is identified by the number 1.9.

It is clear from the photographs that the palm-leaves constituting the Sa-skya Codex were not in a good state of preservation at the time they were found. Some were so brittle that they were evidently damaged while they were being arranged for photography. In at least five instances, the palm-leaves had been damaged after one side had been photographed but before the other side could be photographed. (Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti and Nāhinne Sominda, 1961) Some of the fragments, arranged together to constitute a single folio for photography, did not yield a continuous reading, and, on closer scrutiny, it was found that the fragments had been mismatched. In such cases, the identity of each fragment is separately denoted (e.g. 3B.3a and 3B.3b). In these instances, the fragments of the same folio are to be found in different sets of photographs. (Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti and Nāhinne Sominda, 1961)

The minute size of the characters in the form they appear in the photographs meant that decipherment was possible only with the help of a magnifying glass. The lack of clarity in some of the photographs and the palaeographic characteristics of the manuscript made the decipherment a difficult and time-consuming task. Since some palaeographic forms, like the signs for medial a and a, could be easily mistaken for each other, in many instances, obtaining a reading of a folio was as exacting as deciphering an early medieval epigraphic record. The decipherment of the manuscript took in all about two years of sustained effort. It will be evident from Table 2 that the twenty-nine photographs received from the National Archives contained reproductions of 291 pages of manuscript. Folio 1(2).1 did not carry any Sinhala writing and bore a scribbling in the Nagari script indicating that it was a Sinhala manuscript. Each of the other folios had seven lines of writing, and, on a random sample, a line was found contain an average of seventy-three characters.

During the course of the decipherment it was found that a large number of folios had been photographed more than once. Table 3 lists such instances of duplication. It will be noted that there are 102 additional reproductions of folios or fragments of folios in the photographs studied by the present writer. Four of the entries in Table 3 (Nos. 95,96,98,99) represent fragments arranged as two folios in the photographs. This would imply that 100 of the 291 reproductions of pages of manuscript are "double takes" and that we have before us reproductions of actual pages of the Sa-skya Codex. It will be evident from Table 4 that readings of a total of 197 folios or fragments of folios have been obtained. Fourteen of these passages represent fragments of seven folios which had been inadvertently placed in different sets of photographs. Hence the corrected total of pages read would be 190. As noted earlier, one page does not carry any Sinhala writing. Thus, in all, 191 out of 194 pages (97 palm-leaves) found by *Sankrtyayana* and categorized under two different manuscripts have now been studied.

The two words *bhogina vessantara* read by *Sankrtyayana*, which led him to believe that one of the manuscripts contained the text of the *Vessantara Jataka*, are to be found in Folio 5B(2).5. The two words are from the Pali strophe in the colophon which reads as follows:

*karmmavibhaga nimi ---
 imina [punnakammena ya va buddho bhavamaham
 mahosadhova nanena jotisetthiva bhogina
 vessantarova danena hotu mayham bhava bhava*

In this strophe the author expresses the wish that, till such time he becomes a Buddha, he be born in each of his future births as individuals who will be like *Mahosadha* in wisdom, Joti, the guild- leader, in wisdom, and *Vessantara* in generosity. Just as much as it is evident that the term *Vessantara* in this passage does not indicate the name of the text, the words *karmmavibhaga nimi* which precede the strophe make it clear beyond doubt that the identification proposed in the report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission is correct. The manuscript contains the text of the early medieval Sinhala work called the *Karmmavibhaga* which is also known from other manuscripts.

Results and Discussion

Evidence for the presence of another Sri Lankan scholar in Tibet is to be found in the Kanjur division of the Tibetan Tripitaka. Bu-ston refers to this monk as Ananta Srî, but the colophons of the Tibetan and Mongol versions of the Tripitaka suggest that the reading *Ânanda Srî* (A nan da sri, var. A nan da sari) may be preferable, (Obermiller, E. (tr.), 1932) and in the present work, we shall be using this reading of the name. The Sri Lankan monk is first mentioned in connection with thirteen *sûtas* included in the *Ser-phyin* section of the *Kanjur*. The thirteen tracts which are all to be found in Volume XXI of the Tibetan Tripitaka are: i. *Dharmacakra-pravarttana-sûtra* (No. 747), ii. *Jâtaka-nidâna* (No. 748), iii. *Âtânâtiya-sûtra* (No. 749), iv. *Mahâsamaya-sûtra* (No.750), v. *Maitrî-sûtra* (No. 751), vi. *Maitrîbhâvanâ-sûtra* (No. 752), vii. *Pañca-Siksânusamsâ-sûtra* (No. 753), viii. *Giri-ânanda-sûtra* (No. 754), ix. *Nandopananda-nâgarâja-damana-sûtra* (No. 755), x. *Mahâkâsyapa-sûtra* (No. 756), xi. *Sûrya-sûtra* (No. 757), xii. *Candra-sûtra* (No. 758) and xiii. *Mahâ-mangala-sûtra* (No. 759). (Suzuki, Daisetz T. (ed.) 1956) The thirteen *sûtras* are grouped within the *Ser-phyin* section in the versions of the Tripitaka found in Beijing and Berlin as well as in the Mongol version examined by Ligeti but, in the Narthang and Kumbun editions, they are to be found within the *mDo* section. (Ligeti, 1949, p.352) However, it is noteworthy that, in all these instances, the thirteen tracts are treated as one unit and are accompanied by a single colophon to be found at the end of the *Mahâ-mangala-sûtra*. This is probably because of their specific and common, if not also atypical, origin.

The Mongol version of the colophons of the Kanjur were published by Ligeti and, subsequently, they were translated into German by Bischoff. (Ligeti 1942-4, pp.189-90; Bischoff 1968, pp.333-40) According to this colophon, the translation of these works was carried out at the *Thar-pa glin* (Island of Deliverance) monastery. The Tibetan monk *Sûryadhvaja* (*Ñi-ma rgyal mtshan dpal bzhan po*) who undertook this task worked in collaboration with *pandita Ânanda Srî* who is described as a monk of Brahmana lineage from *Simhadvîpa* (*Singa glin-pa*). It is further stated that *Ânanda Srî* was a scholar who had mastered the three *pitakas* and that he had come to Tibet from the *Vajrâsana* monastery at *Buddha Gayâ* in the time of the Tibetan patriarch *Kîrttidhvaja*. The translation had been carried out at the latter's request. *Sûryadhvaja* who jointly participated in the translation work is also credited with the tasks of correcting and editing the Tibetan versions. (Bischoff ,1968; pp. 338-9) This may imply that the initial translations had been prepared by *Ânanda Srî*. The close relations which came to develop

between Sa-skya hierarchs and the Mongol court evidently paved the way to a further step in the penetration of the knowledge of these *sûtras* for, subsequently, they were also translated into the Mongol language by *Punyamangalam* and *Siteu bayasi*. (Ligeti, 1942-4; pp.189-90; Bischoff, 1968; pp.333-40) The collaboration between *Ânanda Srî* and *Sûryadhvaja* finds mention in *Buston's* chronicle in the following words: "My own teacher *Ni-ma-gyal-tshen-pal-s'a.n-po* studied in Nepal for fourteen years and translated 14 *sûtras*, the *Giryânanda* etc. with the assistance of *Pandit AnantaSrî* (*ÂnandaSrî*)." (Obermiller, E. (tr) 1932) *Bu-ston's* statement about the two scholars collaborating in the translation of fourteen different *sûtras* does not find corroboration in the Tibetan Tripitaka. There is, however, another reference in the Tripitaka to *Ânanda Srî* participating in the translation of one more text. It occurs in the colophon of a text of the *Ratnakûta* class called the *Ârya-mâitrî-sûtra-nâma* where it is stated that "the great *ÂnandaSrî* collaborated in the work of translating it to Tibetan. It is possible that this was the fourteenth text that *Bu-ston* was referring to. In this last colophon *ÂnandaSrî* is described as "the leader of many thousands of Sri Lankan monks." It is also stated that he had come from the site of the Vajra-throne (Buddha Gayâ) and was known for his proficiency in both Indian and Tibetan languages. It is also stated that the translation had been carried out at the Sa-skya monastery in the year 1850 after the *nirvâna* of the *Sâkyamuni*, which is equivalent to circa A.D. 1206. (Bischoff, 1968; pp.537-8)

It would appear that *ÂnandaSrî* had achieved a fairly high proficiency in Tibetan which enabled him to undertake scholarly tasks which find mention in the Tibetan records. The exegetical text *Kârya-karana-bhâva-siddhi* of *JñânaSrîmitra* had been translated into Tibetan by *Kumâarakalasa* at an early date, and *ÂnandaSrî* is said to have revised this translation. (Suzuki, 1962) However, it is noteworthy that the translator of *JñânaSrîmitra* work is described as *Bal yul gyi pandita* and literally this would mean a scholar from Nepal". (Jäschke, 1988). We have noted that the earlier references were to a scholar from Sri Lanka (*Singa glin-pa*). Two possible explanations come to mind. It would be more prudent to suggest the translator of *JñânaSrîmitra's* work was a scholar from Nepal of the same name but distinct from the translator of the works cited previously. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the Sri Lankan scholar who had spent quite sometime in Nepal during his journeyed from Buddha Gayâ to Tibet that in some quarters he was associated with Nepal. Tibetan sources cited above is most interesting in that it shows that *Ânandasrî* was in Tibet in the time of *Kîrttidhvaja* in about the first decade of the thirteenth century. Further, it appears that he was associated with both Sa-skya and *Thar-pa glin* monasteries. Elliot was wont to agree that some of the texts might have been translations from *Pâli*, but he did have some reservations since the names of the texts appear in a form closer to Sanskrit than to *Pâli*. Charles (Elliot, 1962) However, it would not be surprising if the names of *Pâli* tracts had been rendered in a *Sanskritized* form since Tibetan scholars were more familiar with Sanskrit than *Pâli*. By this time, texts written in *Pâli* had disseminated widely owing to the activities of South Asian as well as Southeast Asian religieus. As noted elsewhere, some *Pâli* texts had been already translated into the Chinese language. (Gunawardana, 1979 ; pp.17,22) Bendall has pointed out evidence suggesting that *Pâli* texts may have been known even in Nepal, perhaps in a period much earlier than the time of *ÂnandaSrî*. It is not possible to trace these tracts in any of the known Buddhist Sanskrit texts. On the other hand, as Suzuki has pointed out, some of these tracts may be easily identified with those of identical or similar names found in the *Pâli* Canon and commentarial works of the *Theravâda* tradition. He has identified the *Giri-ânanda-sûtra* (No. 754) with the *Girimananda Sutta* in the *Sacitta Vagga* of the the *Anguttara Nikaya* ; the *Dharmacakra-pravarttana-sûtra* (No. 747), the *Sûrya-sûtra* (No. 757) and the *Candra-sûtra* (No. 758) with the *Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta*, the *Sûriya-sutta* and the *Canda-sutta* in the *Samyutta Nikaya*; the *Âtânâtiya-sûtra* (No. 749) and the *Mahâsamaya-sûtra* (No.750) with the *Âtânâtiya-sutta* and the *Mahâsamaya-sutta* in the *Dîgha Nikâya*; the *Mahâ-mangala-sûtra* (No. 759) with the tract of the same name in the *Khuddakapâtha*; the *Mâitrîbhâvanâ-sûtra* (No.

752) with the Metta Sutta of the *Paritta* collection; and the *Jâtaka-nidâna* (No. 748) with the *Jâtaka-nidânakathâ*, the preface of the *Jâtakathakathâ* which gives an account of the previous births of the Buddha and of his life up to the acceptance of the *Jetavana* monastery. Suzuki identified the *Mahâkâsyapa-sûtra* (No. 756) with the story in the *Mahâvagga*, but it could also be the story in the *Kassapa Samyutta* of the *Samyutta Nikâya* or that in the *Paramattha-dîpanî*. (Suzuki, 1962) Similarly, the *Nandopananda-nâgarâja-damana-sûtra* (No. 755) which Suzuki identified as the story in the *Visuddhimagga* could also be the version in the *Paramattha-dîpanî*. The preceding discussion raises several questions which need further investigation. A comparison of the *Maitrî-sûtra* (No. 751) with the *Ârya-maitrî-sûtra-nâma* cited earlier would be one task in such an investigation. It is hoped that a detailed comparison of some of the thirteen *sûtras* and the well-known texts in the *Paritta* section will be undertaken in the future by a scholar versed in both *Pâli* and Tibetan. It would be important to note in such a study that what is available for comparison at present is the *Mahâvihâra* version of the *Theravâda* Canon: it is quite possible that the original sources were either of the lost versions of the *Pâli* Canon of the *Abhayagiri* and *Jetavana* traditions.

Suzuki, Lalou and Bischoff have identified the thirteen texts which occur in Volume XXI of the Tibetan Tripitaka as translations from *Pâli* originals, (Suzuki, 1962) and, if their opinions were to be accepted, there seems to be a strong possibility that the presence of these texts implies the extension into Tibet of the influence of southern traditions of Buddhism. *Ânandasrî* was probably not only a joint translator of these texts but was also responsible for bringing them to Tibet. The information that he was associated with the monasteries of Sa-skya and *Thar pa glin* provides a good clue as to how the *Karmmavibhâga* came to be found at the Sa-skya monastery.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The evidence we have examined above which indicates the presence of a Sri Lankan monk named *Ânandasrî* at the Sa-skya monastery in the time of *Kîrttidhvaja* suggests that the tradition recorded by *Sankrtyayana* that the manuscript *Karmmavibhâga* was brought by a Sri Lankan monk did have a historical basis. It is noteworthy that the colophon clearly states that *Ânandasrî* came to Tibet from Buddha Gayâ. Even when the Chinese pilgrim *Wang Hiu-en-ts-e* visited India in the seventh century A.D., a Sri Lankan king had already erected a special residence at *Buddha Gayâ* for the use of the monks from his kingdom. In the twenty-ninth chapter of his work, the *Hing-tchoan*, this Chinese pilgrim records that the Sri Lankan king had sent a mission bearing precious stones as presents to *San-meou-to-lo-kiu-to*, the Indian king, and permission to build the residence for Sri Lankan monks was a result of this mission. It provided accommodation to Sri Lankan monks even at the time when *Wang Hiu-en-tse* reached *Buddha Gayâ*. (Lévi, 1900) Sylvain Lévi identified the Indian king with *Samudragupta* and the Sri Lankan king whom the Chinese pilgrim refers to as *Chi-mi-kia-po-mo* with *Sirimeghavanna* (A.D. 301-329).

The presence of Sri Lankan monks was to prove to be a durable feature at *Buddha Gayâ*, and these monks gradually emerged as an influential group among the religious at the site. Their virulent opposition to the *Mahâyâna* and the *Tantrayâna*, which made them even to seek to destroy certain books and images, incurred the wrath of the *Pâla* king *Dharmapâla* (A.D. 770-810) who is said to have punished them severely. (Grünwedel, 1914) However, by the middle of the twelfth century when the *Sena* dynasty was in powers, the Sri Lankan monks had regained their position of influence. They are now referred to as the Sinhala sangha and mentioned as the executors of an endowment made to the shrine at *Buddha Gayâ* which is recorded in an inscription dated in the year 51 of *Laksmâna Sena* (circa A.D. 1157). (Cunningham, 1892) When the Tibetan monk *Dharmmasvâmin* (*Chag lo-tsa-ba Chos-rje-dpal*) visited *Buddha Gayâ* sometime between A.D. 1234 and 1236, the Sri Lankan monks had the sole

right to sleep within the inner precincts of the shrine. Even at this time some Sri Lankan monks were still obdurate in their opposition to the *Mahâyâna*. *Dharmmasvâmin* was reprimanded by a Sri Lankan monk for having with him a copy of the *Astasahasrikâ-prajñâpâramitâ*, and again when he was found worshipping a *Mahâyâna* image. (Roerich, 1959). However, what we know about developments in Sri Lankan Buddhism suggests that a more tolerant attitude was gaining ground, and it seems unlikely that all Sri Lankan monks at *Buddha Gayâ* were so vehemently opposed to the *Mahâyâna*. In particular, it seems most likely that *ÂnandaSrî* who went to live at the Sa-skya monastery was a person tolerant of the teachings of the non-*Theravâda* schools.

Ânandasrî arrived in Tibet at a time when the Sa-skya monastery was a busy centre of scholarly activity under the leadership of *Srî Kîrttidhvaja*. In India it was the period which witnessed the invasion of the Bihar-Bengal region by the forces of *Muhammad Bhaktiyâr Khaljî*. The description of his exploits in the *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri* of *Minhaj-us Siraj Jurjâni* reflects some of the effects of the invasion on certain centres of learning in the area. The greater number of the inhabitants of that place were Brahmans, and all of them had shaven heads. They were all slain. There was a large stock of books there. When these books came under observation of the Mussulmans, they summoned a number of Hindus who might give them information regarding the purport of these books; but all the (literate) Hindus had been killed. On being acquainted (with the place), it was found that the whole fortress and the city was a college, and in *Hindivi* they call a college *vihâr*. (Raverty, 1897; pp.73-4) The use of the term *vihâr* suggests that what Muhammad *Bhaktiyâr Khaljî*'s troops mistook for a fortress was most probably a monastery and that the men with shaven heads were Buddhist monks and not *Brâhmanas* as Minhaj supposed. This description supports the accounts in Tibetan writings about the disappearance of monastic centres at *Odantapûrî*, *Jagaddala* and *Vikramasîla*. These accounts specifically refer to the *Nâlandâ* monastery being damaged as a consequence of the Turuska invasions. (Roerich, 1959 : p.

It was during these tempestuous and violent times that Buddhist scholars such as *Sâkyâ Srî Bhadra*, *Vibhûtîcandra*, *Dânasîla* and *Ânandasrî* left the Bihar-Bengal area to live at the Sa-skya monastery. Even at the time of *Dharmmasvâmin*'s visit, the tensions and the disruptions caused by the *Turuskas* were quite evident. When he arrived at *Buddha Gayâ*, he found that the monks had fled in fear, but they returned later. (Ibid., pp 64-5) However, it would be prudent not to make too broad generalizations on the basis of information in Minhaj's work and the Tibetan accounts. It is noteworthy that, even up to the time of *Dharmmasvâmin*'s visit, the monastery at *Buddha Gayâ* remained a thriving centre of Buddhist activity. The Tibetan noted that, despite the sense of insecurity, there were about three hundred Sri Lankan monks among the community of clerics at this monastic centre. (Ibid., p. 73) Evidently, the *Turuska* threat had not forced them to return to their homeland. If there was indeed such a large community of Sri Lankan monks even at this time, it is difficult to believe that *ÂnandaSrî*, who is described as a leading figure among Sri Lankan monks, had left *Buddha Gayâ* as a refugee for greater safety in Tibet. Further, if such renowned scholars as *Sâkyâ Srî Bhadra* merely wanted to go to a safer place, they could have more easily moved to monastic centres further south in the South Asian region or in Southeast Asia without having to undertake the hazardous journey to Tibet. The more important in this context was probably the Apull factor. The attraction which beckoned these scholars has to be probably sought in the efflorescence of Buddhist activity in Tibet and their desire to participate in a challenging and traditionally valued task: it is very likely that *Sâkyâ Srî Bhadra*, *ÂnandaSrî* and their associates were following a tradition going back several centuries of Buddhist teachers from India going on missions to help propagate Buddhism and develop its traditions of scholarship in Tibet.

There is evidence to suggest that *Sâkyâ Srî Bhadra* and his associates maintained contacts with Sri Lanka and monks from this island. The chronicle *Blue Annals* contains a reference to a monk from Sri Lanka (*Singhai glin*) who was an ardent admirer of *Sâkyâ Srî Bhadra*. This chronicle also records

that *Sākya Srī Bhadra*'s brother had visited Sri Lanka to meet with a famous monk who lived at a city called Ratnacūdāmani. (Roerich, 1988). In the Tibetan biography (*rNam-thar*) of *Sākya Srī Bhadra* where this story is repeated, the name of the Sri Lankan monk is given as *Gunaratna. Vibhūticandra*, *Sākya Srī Bhadra*'s disciple who accompanied him to Tibet, evidently knew of the Sri Lankan traditions of astronomy. This young monk, who was a keen student of astronomy, utilized the blank spaces in what was probably his personal copy of the *Mahākālacakra* to write down notes containing predictions of future eclipses. (Sankrtyayana 1937) In another of his manuscripts found at the Shalu monastery in Tibet, *Vibhūticandra* writes with high regard for the Sri Lankan traditions of astronomy. On considering the intellectual and personal links maintained by the associates of *Sākya Srī Bhadra*'s associates, it is not difficult to believe that *ĀnandaSrī* was among the monks who accompanied him to Tibet in A.D. 1203. If our inferences are correct, they would imply that the year A.D. 1203 provides the terminus ad quem for the dating of the Sa-skyā Codex. This dating, inferred from the circumstantial evidence examined above, represents a useful hypothesis which could be tested through palaeographical analysis of the Sa-skyā Codex.

References

- Bischoff, A.F. *Der Kanjur und seine Kolophone*, Bloomington: Selbstverlag Press, Band I, 1968, pp. 92, 112.
- Abhayasimha, Nyayacarya, *Hima Bhūmiya*, 1946, Lankabhinava Press, Colombo.
- An-che Li, "The Sakya Sect of Lamaism," *JWCBRAS*, Vol. XVI, 1945, pp.72-86; Shoju Inaba, "The Lineage of the Sa-skyā-pa: A Chapter of the Red Annals" , 1963, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 22, pp. 107-23. *Dam-pa hi chos padma-dkarpo hi hgrel-pa yul sin-ga-la hi slon-po sa hi rtsa lag-gis byas-pa rdzogs-so*. ed. Daisetz T. Suzuki (ed) 1957. *The Tibetan Tripi taka*, Peking edition, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, Vol. 107, p.60, No. 5518, folio 347a, line 7.
- G.N. Roerich (ed and tr.)1988. *The Blue Annals*, p.211.
- Gunawardana, R.A.L.H, *The Buddhist Manuscript in Sinhala language from the Sa-skyā Monastery in Tibet*, K.P Jayaswal commemoration Volume,1989, Patna.
- JBORS*, Vol. XXI, 1935.
- Louis Ligeti, Catalogue du Kanjur Mongol Imprimé, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica III, Budapest: Société Körösi Csoma, 1942-4, p.14. See also Bischoff, op. cit., Band I, p.30.
- Māda-uyangoda Vimalakīrtti and Nāhinne Sominda in the introduction to their edition of the *Karmavibhāga*, 1961, Gunasena, Colombo, p.xix.
- Mar- pa's song in David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, pp.118-29.
- Obermiller, E.O. (tr.) 1921. *Bu-ston's History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, Heidelberg, 1921, Vol.II, pp.212-6.
- Sankrtyayana, Rahul, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Manuscripts in Tibet," *JBORS*, Vol. XXIII, Pt.1, 1937, pp. 6, 15, 16.
- Sankrtyayana, Rahul, *Tibbata Mem Baudhdhadharma*, cited in *Bibliographie Bouddhique*, Vols. XXI-XXIII (1947-1950), 1952, Paris.
- Suzuki (ed.) *The Tibetan Tripitaka*, Beijing edition, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, Catalogue and Index, pp. 7,8.
- The Annual Report of the Government Archivist 1960/61*, 1963, Government Print, Colombo, p.30.