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## The Epsilon 1 Manuscript in the Wellcome Library, London\*

The Epsilon 1 manuscript in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London is an illustrated copy of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* (hereafter abbreviated as AsP). It was acquired by Dr. Paira Mall, who worked for Sir Henry Wellcome in India between 1911 and 1921. The manuscript is mentioned in the library catalogue (Wujastyk 1985: 2, 3) and has been iconographically described (Kim 2006: 60-71). It was assumed that the manuscript was written during the reign of Vigrahapāla III (1051-1075) as his name occurs in the colophon. However, doubt has been cast on this attribution owing to the script used (*bhujimol*) and the unusual iconographic composition of the illustrations. This paper will attempt to present the most exact documentation possible of this manuscript in order to clarify its origins.

The manuscript is completely preserved and comprises 208 palm-leaf folios (from the talipot palm) measuring ca. 55 x 6 cm. It contains six illustrated folios (fig. 1-6), each with three illuminations. Each page of text has six lines inscribed in Nepali *bhujimol* script. Written continuously, the text on each page is divided into three blocks by way of blank strips around the two string-holes. The script makes a very uniform impression; there are only a few later additions (in a very fine Nepali script) and corrections (parts of the text that have been scraped off and rewritten). The manuscript is foliated in the margins, with letter numerals on the left-hand side and figure numerals on the right. These numerals correspond only partially to those in the tables compiled by Bendall (1883, appendix) and the Royal Asiatic Society, London (unpublished); while a number of numerals are new, they are deployed consistently. On folios 1-161 they have been written in the same style, possibly by the same hand, as the main text. From folio 162 on, the numerals on both sides are scribed with a finer pen-stroke than the characters of the text but the same figures are used.

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\* I thank Dr. Nikolaj Serikoff, Asian Collections Librarian at the Wellcome Library, who supported me during my visits to the Wellcome Library, and Mrs. Anna Smith from Wellcome Images who provided me with photographic material.

The ends of the chapters are marked by rosettes which are occasionally replaced by a *siddham*. As a rule, two black rosettes extending over two lines of text are added (fig. 5). Occasionally the manuscript is decorated with rosettes that extend over three lines of script (fig. 4); sometimes the rosettes are red instead of black, and in some cases the black rosettes are embellished with red dots, or red and blue leaves. The red used here is a brick red that differs from the red of the illustrations; that is, the rosettes were probably not painted by the artist who executed the pictures. According to the *śloka* numbers given at the end of each chapter, the text should have a total of 8,335 *ślokas*. The numbers at the end of the second and sixteenth chapters, however, must have been written incorrectly; in the case of the second chapter the number should be 242 rather than 342, and in the case of the sixteenth chapter 235 instead of 325. This would give an overall total of 8,145 *ślokas*. This variance is within the normal range for AsP manuscripts.

In the initial part of the manuscript, hook-like symbols can be seen at the string-holes. Occasionally in the first half of the manuscript the number 3 (in 13, 23, 33, 43, 83 and 113) in the left-hand margin is decorated with an *utpala* (fig. 11) or a tiny creature with a tail and extended limbs (fig. 12).

Two illustrated folios are at the beginning of the first chapter, two at the end of the eleventh chapter, i.e., around the middle of the text, and two at the end of the last chapter, Chapter 32. The illustrations occur in the case of each pair on the verso of the first folio and the recto of the next. Into each of the three blocks of text on these six folios an illumination has been inserted. The margins and the sections around the string-holes are decoratively painted.

The text begins on folio 1v and ends on folio 208r. On both folio 1r and folio 208v are brief lines inscribed in fine, small Nepali *akṣaras*. On folio 1r (fig. 13) one reads: *prajñāpāramitā buddhabhāṣita* || “Prajñāpāramitā, spoken by the Buddha” and on folio 208v (fig. 14): *śrīmaṇidharivajriṇīmahāpratisare rakṣa 2 māṇ* || “O thou jewel-bearing and *vajra*-holding Śrī Mahāpratisarā protect, protect me”.

The two wooden covers are almost certainly later additions. In contrast to the folios of the manuscript, each has four string-holes, indicating that they were originally intended for a different manuscript. The paintings on their interiors are very poorly preserved but it is obvious that they are in a wholly different style than the illustrations in the text (fig. 15, 16).

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATED LEAVES

On folios 1v and 2r (the beginning of the first chapter) are depictions of the five Tathāgatas and Prajñāpāramitā. All are seated in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana* in front of an upright cushion, with an aureole surrounding the body and a nimbus surrounding the head.

## Folio 1v

Left (fig. 17): Ratnasambhava. He has a yellowish complexion, and holds his right hand in the *varadamudrā* while his left hand lies in his lap. His red robe covers his left shoulder.

Centre (fig. 18): Akṣobhya. He has a blue complexion, and performs the *bhūmiśparsamudrā* with his right hand while his left hand lies in his lap. His red robe covers his left shoulder.

Right (fig. 19): Amitābha. He has a red complexion and has his hands in the *dhyaṇamudrā*. His yellow robe covers both his shoulders.

## Folio 2r

Left (fig. 20): Vairocana. He has a white complexion and performs the *bodhyagrīvamudrā*. His red robe covers both his shoulders.

Centre (fig. 21): Prajñāpāramitā. She has a gold complexion and holds her hands in the *dharmacakramudrā*. Above both shoulders is a *padma* but without a book resting on it. She is dressed in a red top and a red skirt with a light-coloured scarf draped over her breast and left shoulder. She is wearing a rich display of jewellery: crown, earrings, necklace, an armband on each of her upper arms, bracelets and a belt. She is the only figure surrounded by a red body aureole rather than a light-coloured one like the Tathāgatas.

Right (fig. 22): Amoghasiddhi. He has a pale green complexion and holds his right hand in the *abhayamudrā* while his left hand lies in his lap. His red robe covers his left shoulder.

The colours of the nimbuses and the cushions differ (three cushions are gold and three dark-coloured). The background is dark-coloured except in the case of Akṣobhya, where it is red. These different colours were presumably chosen for purely aesthetic reasons.

The two central and final leaves show ten scenes from the life of the Buddha, and also images of Tārā and Avalokiteśvara. In all the scenes from the life of the Buddha, the Buddha and Māyā have gold complexions.

Folio 101v (end of Chapter 11)

Left (fig. 23): The Miracle of Rājagrha, the Taming of the Elephant Nālāgiri. Surrounded by a white body aureole, the Buddha stands turned to the right facing a small elephant, which – already tamed – seems to be looking at him. Behind the Buddha stands a dark-skinned monk.

Centre (fig. 24): The Miracle of Śrāvastī. The Buddha shows himself in multiple manifestations: at the centre the Buddha sits in the *vajrapar-yāṅkāśana*, his hands held in the *dharmacakramudrā*. The two repeated Buddha figures sit on separate lotus thrones, are somewhat smaller and are turned away from the main Buddha. The group is surrounded by a white aureole.

Right (fig. 25): Devāvatāra, the Descent from Trayastriṃśa Heaven to Earth in Saṃkāśya. The Buddha stands in a light-coloured body aureole, turned to the left. At his left stands Śakra, who is holding an umbrella over him; Śakra has an additional eye on his left upper arm. Brahmā stands to the right of the Buddha; of the four heads of Brahmā a further head in lost profile might be indicated to the right of his foremost head. The object in his right hand is probably a yak whisk.

The three pictures on this page are axially symmetrical.

Folio 102r

Left (fig. 26): The Birth of the Buddha. Māyā stands in the *tribhaṅga* pose, facing left. She seems to be looking at the child who is issuing from her right hip. She appears to be holding onto the boughs of a tree with her left hand but is not actually grasping them. The tree-top is spherical with red fruits or blossoms. On the left stands Śakra, identified solely by his crown. He faces right and holds a fish by the tail in his right hand, the body of the fish pointing downwards.<sup>1</sup> Beside him is a repeated figure of the Buddha.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a pair of Nepali book covers (Los Angeles County Museum of Art from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase M.77.19.1a-b), of which Tucci writes: “The two longest *pālaka* cover a ms. of the Prajñāpāramitā written under king Udayadeva about 1050” (Tucci 1949: 327, n. 12, with reference to Bendall, *Catalogue of the Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Chronological Appendix and S. Levi, *Le Népal*, vol. II: 194). Tucci does not mention an associated manuscript. Illustrated in Pal 1984: 193. Pal notes in his description: “Flanking the Buddha are the gods Brahma and Indra, the former with a basket of grain and the latter with a fish. Both fish and grain are auspicious symbols in Nepal and parts of India and are invariably present on special occasions, such as birth and marriage ceremonies.” Cf. also a book cover from a private collection (fig. 37). In both of these images the fish is held with both hands.

Centre (fig. 27): Māravijaya. The Buddha sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, his body surrounded by a light-coloured aureole. His right hand is in the *bhūmiśparśamudrā* while his left lies in his lap. His robe covers his left shoulder. There are no attendant figures.

Right (fig. 28): The First Sermon. The Buddha sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana* on a lotus throne, his hands in the *dharmacakramudrā*. To either side of him sits a light-complexioned monk turned towards him. Their robes cover both shoulders. The group is surrounded by a light-coloured aureole.

Folio 207v (end of Chapter 32, the last chapter)

Left (fig. 29): Madhudāna, the Miracle of Vaiśālī. The Buddha sits turned to the right and accepts honey from a monkey. The monkey appears again at the upper right, this time dancing. It was possibly depicted a third time falling into a well; the brushstrokes at the lower right might be intended to represent its hind legs. The figure of the Buddha is surrounded by a dark aureole.

Centre (fig. 30): Meditation under Mucilinda. Protected by the serpent Mucilinda, the Buddha sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, his hands in the *dhyanamudrā*. His robe covers both shoulders.

Right (fig. 31): Parinirvāṇa. The Buddha lies on a bed whose lower end extends into the strip between the double framing lines. Although this strip is otherwise painted red, the section containing the end of the bed has been left out, indicating that the red pigment was applied at a later date, i.e., after the drawing had been executed. A *stūpa* and two trees can be seen above, i.e., behind the bed, and a light-complexioned monk is squatting below, i.e., in front of the bed. He holds a blossom with both hands.

Folio 208r

Centre (fig. 33): The meditating Buddha. Herd boys poke him in the ears with sticks. The Buddha sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, his hands in the *dhyanamudrā*. This is the only depiction in which he wears a patchwork robe, which covers his body in a flat, patterned expanse of cloth. The two herd boys have thin moustaches and are dressed only in tiny loin-cloths.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On this motif, see Wujastyk 1984.

Left (fig. 32): Tārā. She sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, her right hand in the *abhayamudrā* at her breast. Her left hand lies on her thigh and holds the stem of an *utpala*. She has the same greenish complexion as Amoghasiddhi (Folio 2r right-hand side) and both are in *abhayamudrā*; while this *mudrā* does not occur very often in painted representations of Tārā, on stelas she is frequently depicted displaying this gesture as the attendant of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>3</sup> As Avalokiteśvara is represented on the right-hand side of the page they may be regarded as a pair. She wears jewellery on her upper arms and around her neck. The head has been obliterated. Her knot of hair falls over her right shoulder. Her dress is similar to that of Prajñāpāramitā, although her skirt is dark-coloured instead of red.

Right (fig. 34): Avalokiteśvara. He sits in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana*, his right hand in the *varadamudrā* while his left hand holds the stem of a *padma*. He has a reddish-brown complexion. He wears a red scarf on his upper body which is draped over his left shoulder but has no jewellery, so that only the *padma* identifies him as Avalokiteśvara. Another indication that this figure represents a bodhisattva is the long hair falling over the shoulders. Damage to the picture has rendered his hair-knot barely discernible.

#### THE SCRIPT AND ORGANISATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

In order to treat the problem of the attribution of this manuscript in more detail, it must first of all be pointed out that although the colophon states that it was written during the reign of Vīgrahapāla (III, c. 1051-1075 CE) by a scribe named Jīvadharma who was living in Nālandā, the manuscript is not written in the *gaudīya* script customary in Nālandā during the eleventh century but in Nepali *bhujimol* script. Bendall (1883: XXVI f.) is of the opinion that this script originated in Nepal in the twelfth century. His earliest example dates from 1165 CE (University Library of Cambridge Add. 1686). There are two earlier examples, both also dating from the twelfth century: a Pañcarakṣā manuscript from Year 53 of the reign of Rāmapāla (c. 1128 CE; National Museum New Delhi Acc. No. 67.560) and a Pañcarakṣā manuscript that according to its colophon was written in NS 255 (= 1135 CE) (San Diego Museum of Art, formerly Edwin Binney 3rd Collection Acc. No. 1990:156).<sup>4</sup> I do not

<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., Huntington 1984: pl. 137 and 138.

<sup>4</sup> According to the museum documentation, the manuscript dates from 1138 CE. However, the colophon gives NS 255, not NS 258. I thank Gergely Hidas for drawing this to my attention.

know of any earlier examples of Nepali *bhujimol* script.<sup>5</sup> The end of the reign of Vighrahapāla (III) predates the earliest example by over fifty years. To explain such an early date for a manuscript in Nepali *bhujimol* script one would have to assume that a Nepali was studying in Nālandā and copied the manuscript in his native script.

A more plausible explanation may be that the manuscript together with its colophon was copied in Nepal in the twelfth century. This would not be unusual, as demonstrated by a manuscript of Jinendrabuddhi's *Viśā-lāmalavatī Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* that can be dated on palaeographical grounds to the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. This manuscript was copied together with both Jinendrabuddhi's author colophon and the colophon of a scribe named Gahana, who notes that he copied the manuscript in Year 14 of the reign of Rāmapāla (c. 1089 CE).<sup>6</sup>

The script of the Wellcome manuscript has a number of features similar to the script of the New Delhi manuscript mentioned above, such the older form of *śa* (similar to the Tibetan *śa*), the older closed *tha*, and *ta* and *bha* written in a style that resembles their old-Bengali forms. The Wellcome manuscript's open-topped *dha* is, on the other hand, a development of the older form.<sup>7</sup> A number of elements in the Wellcome manuscript were adopted from its exemplar. The layout of the text in three blocks per page is certain to have been taken over, as is the arrangement of the illustrations: six illustrated folios each with three images, two at the beginning, facing each other; two in the middle (at the end of Chapter 11) and two at the end of the text. This layout is typical of Indian, particularly Bihari, AsP manuscripts. The addition of rosettes at the ends of the chapters might also have been adopted (fig. 7). Rosettes of this kind were common up to the reign of Nayapāla (c. 1034-1051) (fig. 8);

<sup>5</sup> The Nepali AsP manuscripts from 1015 (University Library of Cambridge Add. 1643) and 1071 (Kolkata, Asiatic Society No. A 15) are written in *gaḍḍīya*. The texts in Nepali *bhujimol* script added to the images would seem rather to date to the fourteenth century. Explanatory texts of this kind were often added to the illustrations at a later date, e.g., in the Pañcarakṣā manuscript RVI 69 from 1156 held at the Rietberg Museum, Zurich.

<sup>6</sup> The copy made by the scribe Gahana has not been preserved. The *codex unicus* of Jinendrabuddhi's work is comprised of two manuscripts from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries which together yield a complete text. The initial section is written in Nepali *bhujimol* script, the second part in proto-Bengali. (Steinkellner et al. 2005: XXVIII-XXXVII). I thank Karin Preisendanz, who drew my attention to this manuscript and advised me of other examples from later periods that substantiate the same procedural method.

<sup>7</sup> I thank Anne MacDonald for her support in analysing the script.

they were later gradually replaced by small drawings in square or rectangular fields displaying ornamental motifs, flowers, animals or monks. The decoration in the fields around the string-holes and page margins on the illustrated folios imitates Indian models but does so in a much simpler fashion; a small number of ornamental elements are drawn on a yellow background in black ink (fig. 9 and for comparison fig. 10).

I have been unable to find anything comparable to the occasional decorative elements near the numerals in either Indian or Nepali sources (fig. 11 and 12).

#### THE ICONOGRAPHY

The iconographic programme is extremely unusual for Nālandā and the third quarter of the eleventh century, and is thus another important piece of evidence for the hypothesis that the manuscript did not originate in this form in Nālandā during Vīgrahapāla III's reign. As already indicated, the model of the eighteen pictorial panels on six folios from the manuscript dating from the reign of Vīgrahapāla (III) was probably taken over in the Wellcome manuscript. In illustrated eleventh-century Bihari AsP manuscripts, pictorial panels are as a rule inserted on four folios (beginning and end, three pictorial panels on each of two facing folios) or, as in our manuscript, on six folios (an additional two folios after Chapter 11). Frequently the Eight Great Events from the Life of the Buddha (Birth, Sambodhi, First Sermon, Miracle of Rājagṛha, Miracles of Śrāvastī, Devāvatāra, Madhudāna, Parinirvāṇa) are found in the two outer pictorial panels of the first and last folios.<sup>8</sup> However, the iconographic scheme of the Wellcome manuscript differs fundamentally from the customary programmes for AsP manuscripts in eleventh-century Nālandā. After the depiction of Prajñāpāramitā and the Five Ta-thāgatas on folios 1v and 2r, the middle and last leaves contain ten events from the Life of the Buddha (the Eight Great Events, the meditation

<sup>8</sup> The following examples should be mentioned: (1) Four leaves from an AsP manuscript from Year 14 of the reign of Naṣapāla (ca. 1065), copied by the scribe Svamesvara from Nālandā (see Pal 1993: Appendix, p. 363, Nr. 3). Folios 1 and 184 are at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase M.72.1.20a,b, and Folios 2 and 183 in a private collection. For the publication of all four leaves and the identification of the text, see Allinger 2009: 255, 258 and pl. 24.2. (2) An AsP manuscript from Year 15 of Rāmapāla's reign (ca. 1090) copied by the scribe Ahunakunda Bhaṭṭāraka at Nālandā (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS.Sansk.a7(R), reproduced in full in Stooke 1948; for the colophon see Losty 1982: 31f., Nr. 5).



with the herd boys and the meditation under the serpent Mucilinda) as well as Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, who in this context seem almost like a stopgap.

The particularly unusual feature is the depiction of the Life of the Buddha in which two further events are added to the Eight Great Events. No other such instances from Bihar are known. The Life of the Buddha in the form of the Eight Great Events was depicted there either within the manuscript or on the covers, usually in the former and only rarely on the latter.<sup>9</sup>

This expanded rendering of the Eight Great Events (also found on stelas) that settled into a virtually rigid schematic type in India can be found in regions outside the Buddhist heartland of Bihar and north Bengal, on the one hand in the easternmost part of Bengal from around the late twelfth century (see Bautze-Picron 1992, and Allinger 2010 for the survival of this tradition in Tibetan thangkas)<sup>10</sup> and on the other hand in Nepal. Although there are almost no extant AsP manuscripts from Nepal with depictions of the Life of the Buddha within the manuscript,<sup>11</sup> they can be found with relative frequency on book covers. The covers lack for the most part their associated texts and therefore cannot be dated with any accuracy. In the book-cover images the scheme of the Eight Great Events is altered and/or expanded.

The book covers in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.1a,b) display eight events from the Life of the Buddha, seven of which are from the group of the Eight Great Events. The First Sermon is replaced by the Meditation under Mucilinda. On a pair of covers in a private European collection (fig. 35 and 36) fourteen scenes are depicted; that

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<sup>9</sup> Examples of depictions of the Eight Great Events on book covers are the Vredenburg manuscript (AsP, Victoria & Albert Museum, London I.S.4-10, 1958), of which Claudine Bautze-Picron has found photographs of the associated covers (Bautze-Picron 2009) and the AsP manuscript in the Fournier Collection (Béguin 1990:18-20).

<sup>10</sup> An example of this is provided by a thangka in the Zimmermann Collection: Scenes from the Life of the Buddha Śākyamuni (Pal 1991:144-148), where the following scenes are depicted in the lowermost row, from right to left: the visit of Asita, the return of Kaṅṭhaka, the Great Departure, the cutting of the Buddha's hair, the meditating Buddha with herd boys poking his ears with sticks, Sujātā bringing milk-rice and the meditation under Mucilinda.

<sup>11</sup> The AsP manuscript in the University Library of Cambridge, Add. 1643, dated 1015, represents an exception in that the Eight Great Events are depicted on the two final leaves, i.e., on folios 222v and 223r (Foucher 1900: 305f.). In a complete AsP manuscript in the Cleveland Museum of Arts, Acc. No. 1938-301.1 (according to the colophon NS 231 = 1111 CE), the Life of the Buddha is represented neither in the text nor on the covers.

is, to the eight main events are added the cutting of the Buddha's hair and the meditating Buddha with herd boys. There are also two scenes of veneration, Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda and a bodhisattva with a *padma* and his hands in the *dharmacakramudrā* at the breast – possibly another form of Avalokiteśvara. A single book cover in a private collection (late twelfth, early thirteenth c.) with the dimensions of a Tibetan book (58 x 18 cm.) and without string-holes, which was certainly painted by a Nepali artist, is divided into six panels depicting the Miracle of Rājagrha, the Meditation among the Herd Boys, the Meditation under Mucilinda, the First Sermon, the Miracle of Śrāvastī and the Parinirvāṇa.<sup>12</sup>

These examples demonstrate that it was entirely customary in Nepal to depict expanded forms of the Life of the Buddha, not only in terms of the number of scenes but with scenes containing multiple figures. This contrasts starkly with the almost formulaic depictions of the Eight Great Events in India. In the Wellcome manuscript the scenes are indicated in a very compressed form, in keeping with the Indian tradition, but following the Nepali model have been expanded with two extra scenes.

A further iconographic peculiarity of the Wellcome manuscript is the depiction of the Five Tathāgatas together with Prajñāpāramitā on folios 1v and 2r. Frequently on the first two leaves of AsP manuscripts the figure of Mañjuśrī teaching (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS.Sansk. a7[R]) or Amitābha is counterposed to Prajñāpāramitā (AsP manuscript in the Fournier Collection, Béguin 1990: 18-20).<sup>13</sup> In an AsP manuscript from Year 19 of the reign of Harivarman<sup>14</sup> (Varendra Research Museum at Rajshahi, Siddhanta 1979: 383f., cat. no. 689) Akṣobhya (fol. 1v) and Prajñāpāramitā (fol. 2r) face one another (Bautze-Picron 1999: pl. 13.32 and 13.33). This is the same contraposition as in the Wellcome manuscript. Thus, in these two manuscripts it is not teaching that is of central importance but the affiliation of Prajñāpāramitā to the family of Akṣobhya (Bhattacharya 1925: Sādhanas No. 151 and 153). Possibly this variant was preferred outside central Bihari regions.

The Five Tathāgatas are found on a pair of book covers (cover 2) belonging to an AsP manuscript in the Collège de France, Paris (SL68, Bautze-

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Kossak – Singer 1998: 134f., where the Meditation among the Herd Boys is wrongly identified as the Temptation of Māra.

<sup>13</sup> Claudine Bautze-Picron (2009: 4) associates the depiction of Amitābha as counterpart to Prajñāpāramitā with his role as teacher in Gandharan art.

<sup>14</sup> On the insecure dating for Harivarman's reign, see Bautze-Picron 1999: 188.

Picron 2008): at the centre is a seated Amitābha, with Akṣobhya and Amoghasiddhi on his left and Ratnasambhava and Vairocana on his right. They are flanked by four Prajñās. Cover 1 depicts eight Jātakas with Maitreya at the centre.<sup>15</sup> Representations of the Five Tathāgatas on the upper end of stelas are frequently found in Pāla-period Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, especially in the case of stelas dedicated to Tārā and Avalokiteśvara. Donaldson (2001: fig. 327 and 328) gives two examples of a Prajñāpāramitā with the Five Tathāgatas on the upper end of stelas, both dating to the eleventh century.<sup>16</sup> Another example can be found in the Malda District Museum, Bengal (M. Bhattacharyya 1982: pl. VIII, fig. 1).<sup>17</sup> These themes seem to have found their way into book illumination at a somewhat later date.

#### THE STYLE

The style of the illuminations in the Wellcome manuscript displays no similarities with twelfth-century Indian or Nepali book illumination. While the composition of the individual images is simple, they exhibit a skilful use of contour. Applied in unbroken expanses of colour, the palette is also simple, as is the drawing in the decorative panels. The closest stylistic similarities are with the AsP manuscript British Library Or. 14268 (Losty 1989: 142-149). It is also written in Nepali *bhujimol* script, which Losty dates on palaeographical grounds to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Losty assumes that the manuscript was written by a Nepali scholar and was then illuminated by a “Pāla-trained artist” who had fled from India. The colophon is incomplete and undated. At the beginning we read: “At this time in the Kali-era of tumult of many view-points ...”. Losty thinks that with this statement the scribe refers to unrest in India and Nepal at the end of the twelfth century, and tentatively concludes that the manuscript was copied in the last decade of the century. Péter-Dániel Szántó, however, has convincingly argued that the verse containing the reference to tumult has been copied in, and that it was actually composed by Haribhadra (eighth/

<sup>15</sup> Bautze-Picron (2008: 165, 166) dates the covers to the first half of the twelfth century on the basis of stylistic similarities with the Harivarman manuscript in Rajshahi (Bautze-Picron 1999) and the Pañcarakṣā manuscript from Year 13 of the reign of Madanapāla (= 1156; see Pal 1993: 66f.) and surmises that they were executed in north Bengal.

<sup>16</sup> In fig. 328 neither arms, nor the lotus or the book have been preserved, making this identification doubtful.

<sup>17</sup> I thank Petra Müller for drawing my attention to the images from Orissa and Gudrun Melzer for referring me to the image in the Malda Museum.

ninth c.).<sup>18</sup> Losty's specification of the date on the basis of his assumption of the scribe's own reference to political unrest must therefore be rejected.

The Or. 14268 manuscript contains six miniatures – in pairs on two facing pages – which occur at the beginning, at the end of the eleventh chapter and at the end of the text. On folios 1v and 2r (fig. 38 and 39) the Buddha is depicted sitting under a tree, once displaying the *bhūmi-sparśamudrā* and once the *dharmacakramudrā*. The image on folio 141v (fig. 40) depicts Prajñāpāramitā and that on folio 142r (fig. 41) possibly Tārā.<sup>19</sup> Depicted on the two final leaves are two bodhisattvas (fig. 42 and 43), possibly Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara. Neither figure has any attributes, that is, there is little convincing iconographic evidence for their identification, as in the case of the Avalokiteśvara of the Wellcome manuscript. The similarity of the two Buddhas with the Tathāgatas of the Wellcome manuscript is astonishing. The drawing of the faces, bodies and dress is almost identical, while the cushion and the body nimbuses display only minimal differences. The ornamental elements above the shoulders are different in terms of form but hardly at all in the type of drawing. In both manuscripts the palette of colours is extremely reduced and the outlines have been done in black. In eleventh-century India the latter were always executed in a reddish brown.

The two manuscripts are also very similar with reference to the script and the foliation. Thus, it may be assumed that both manuscripts were created in Nepal at some point during the late twelfth or early thirteenth century – as Losty's palaeographical analysis assumes for the Or. 14268 manuscript in the British Library. This would mean that the Wellcome Library manuscript is slightly later than has been assumed until now, but represents a very interesting exceptional case among the manuscripts from the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries that have come to light.

<sup>18</sup> See Szántó's blog "Thor bu: Curiosia Indo-Tibetica" for Tuesday, June 21, 2011 ("Woe unto you, scribes") at <http://tibetica.blogspot.com/> (last accessed August 17, 2012). I thank Anne MacDonald for this reference.

<sup>19</sup> Only the lower half of the body has been preserved; it is uncertain whether it is in fact a female figure. The green complexion of the figure is the main evidence supporting its identification as Tārā.

## APPENDIX ON PĀLA CHRONOLOGY

There are only relative data available on the chronology of the Pāla rulers and these change each time new discoveries are made. Susan Huntington (1984: 32-37) lists all the chronologies attempted up to 1984. Gouriswar Bhattacharya (1998) prefers a chronology without concrete dates, and gives only the dates of the rulers' reigns known thus far. In order to provide an approximate point of reference for the dates given in the colophons, I use Mukherji's chronology from 1999:

Nayapāla	1034-1051
Vigrahapāla III	1051-1075
Rāmapāla	1075-1128
Kumārapāla	1129
Gopāla IV	1129-1143
Madanapāla	1143-1175

Prior to Rāmapāla, his two brothers, Mahīpāla II and Sūrāpāla II, reigned briefly; Mukherji does not include them. In the meantime evidence shows that Sūrāpāla reigned for at least two years (Allinger 2006: 220).

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 Fig. 42 British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 291v © The British Library  
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Fig. 1: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1v



Fig. 2: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1r



Fig. 3: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 101v



Fig. 4: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 102r



Fig. 5: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon I, folio 207v



Fig. 6: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon I, folio 208r

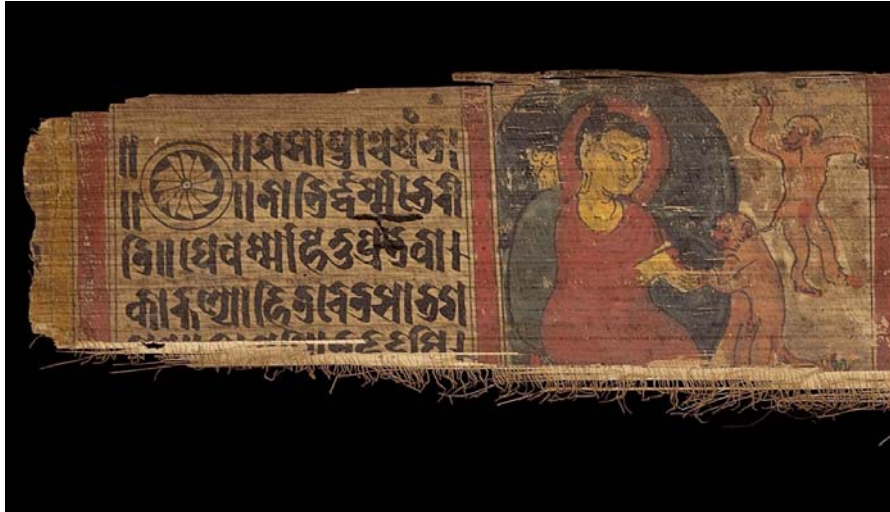


Fig. 7: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 207v, detail left side

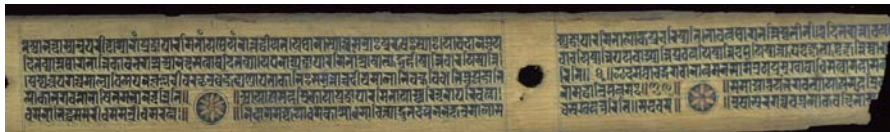


Fig. 8: Private collection, AsP ms. (Year 14 of the reign of Nayapāla), folio 183r

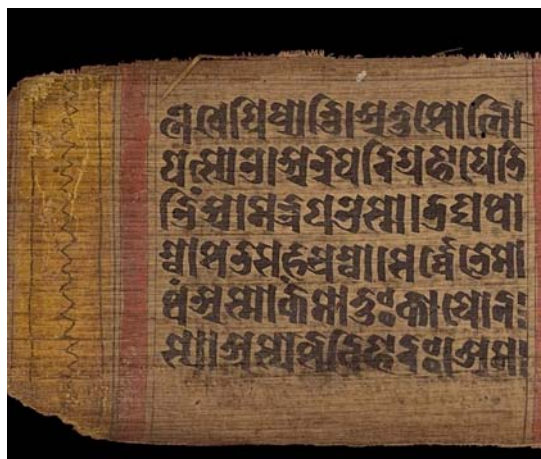


Fig. 9: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 102r, detail left side





Fig. 10: Private collection, AsP ms. (Year 14 of the reign of Nayapāla), folio 2r, detail right side

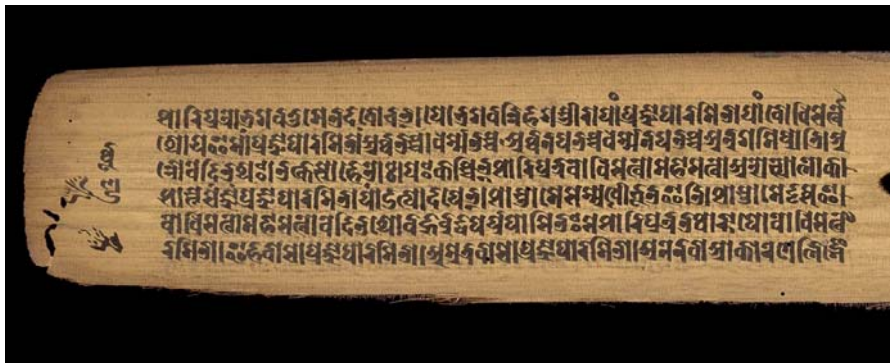


Fig. 11: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 73v, detail left side

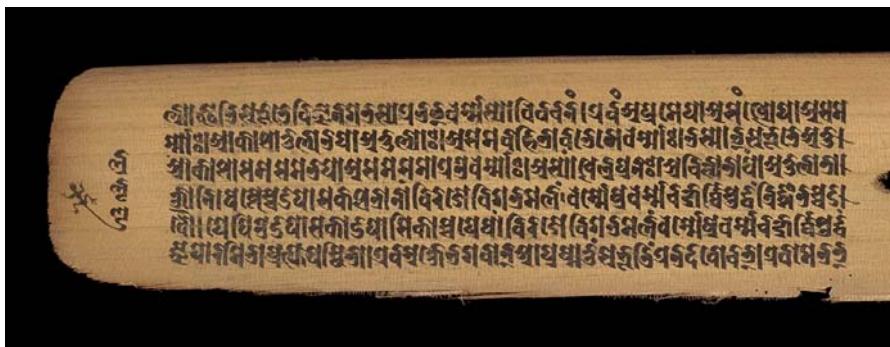


Fig. 12: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 113v, detail left side

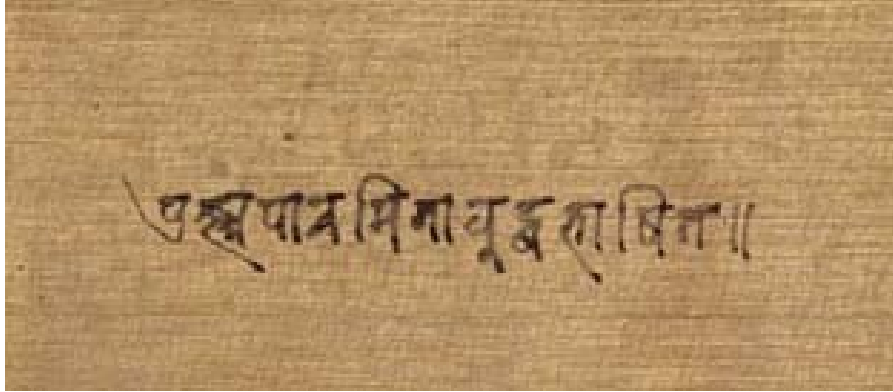


Fig. 13: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1r, detail

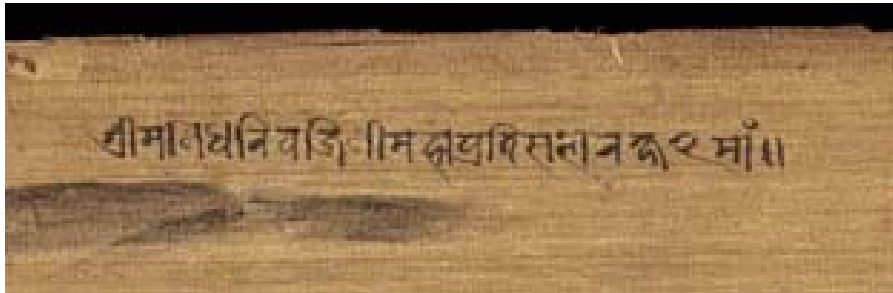


Fig. 14: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 208v, detail



Fig. 15: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, cover detail



Fig. 16: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, cover detail





Fig. 17: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1v, detail left side



Fig. 18: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1v, detail centre



Fig. 19: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 1v, detail right side



Fig. 20: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon1, folio 2r, detail left side



Fig. 21: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 2r, detail centre



Fig. 22: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 2r, detail right side





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Fig. 27: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 102r, detail centre



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Fig. 29: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 207v, detail left side



Fig. 30: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 207v, detail centre



Fig. 31: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 207v, detail right side



Fig. 32: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 208r, detail left side



Fig. 33: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 208r, detail centre



Fig. 34: Wellcome Library, Ms. Epsilon 1, folio 208r, detail right side



Fig. 35: Private collection, pair of manuscript covers, cover 1



Fig. 36: Private collection, pair of manuscript covers, cover 2





Fig. 37: Private collection, pair of manuscript covers, detail of manuscript cover I





Fig. 38: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 1v



Fig. 39: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 2r



Fig. 40: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 141v



Fig. 41: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 142r



Fig. 42: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 291v



Fig. 43: British Library, AsP Ms. Or 14268, folio 292r