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Ernst Steinkellner

Miszellen zur erkenntnistheoretisch-logischen Schule des Buddhismus XI: The Manuscript of Dharmakīrti's Vādanyāya

The *codex unicus* of Dharmakīrti's Vādanyāya has not fared well in our time. Safely preserved in Nōr monastery for many centuries, it was first seen by Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana on October 3, 1934¹ (cf. Sāṅkrtyāyana 1935: x). Sāṅkrtyāyana copied it by hand and took some photos, the negatives of which “did not come out all right” (ibid.). He therefore had to rely on his transcript for the edition that quickly followed in 1935. By 1987, however, this transcript seems to have become lost (cf. Much 1988: 12; 1991: xxiii). The photos are not only useless to a great extent, but are also incomplete, and were not used by Much for his 1991 edition.²

These photos, or perhaps photos of these photos (cf. Much 1991: xxiv), are kept in the National Archives in Kathmandu, identified as “Vādanyāyaprakaraṇa No. 5. 7376: photographs (partly blurred) of palm-leaf original”, and are also available, thanks to the Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation Project, in the Orientabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Reel No. B 25/16). Five sheets with seven recto or verso pages respectively are extant. The photos taken are unfortunately cut off on the top and bottom as well as on the sides. The information given by Much (1991: xxiv) can be improved: Sheet 1 with ff. 1a–7a (f. 1a being empty), sheet 5 with ff. 1b(?), 2b–5b, 6b(?), 7b(?), sheet 2 with ff. 8a–14a, sheet 3 with ff. 8b–14b, sheet 4 with ff. 15b–19b and f. 20a³ (the very end), and a back-cover with two illegible lines and four more short lines on the right side by two different hands.

¹ Communicated by Birgit Kellner in a lecture at the University of Göttingen in 2006.

² In his autobiography *Merī Jīvan Yātrā*, vol. 2 (Īlāhabād 1950), p. 276 (thanks to B. Kellner), Rāhula speaks of two manuscripts of the Vādanyāya; Gedūn Chōphel also notes a pair (“*rTsod rigs tshar legs pa gñis*” [1986: 27]). As of yet, however, there is no knowledge of a second manuscript. — Much's edition is based on Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana's edition of his transcript of the Nōr manuscript, his edition of Śāntarakṣita's commentary, numerous Sanskrit citations in mainly Buddhist, Jinist, and Nyāya texts, the Tibetan translation, as well as emendations proposed by Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana, Dvārikadās Śāstrī, and Erich Frauwallner (from his personal copy of Rāhula's edition).

³ Folio 20a has been paginated because it is the last page of the text (its pagination is clearly visible); its text continues without a break from the end of f. 19b.

Many of these photos are indeed quite bad but some are actually still partly legible (cf. tables 1 to 3). What is of importance is the fact that they clearly testify to the undamaged state of the manuscript at the time of Rāhula's visit.

The manuscript itself has survived in the meantime, if only just barely. It is now kept in the Potala collection to which it was transferred, possibly soon after 1959. It was listed by Prof. Luo Zhao in his catalogue (unpublished manuscript of 1984-1985, Potala vol. 1, p. 106, as no. 2 in bundle 31). Luo Zhao describes this codex as: "Palm leaf; 20 folios; 30.9 x 6.7 cm; the left side seriously damaged" and further notes: "An inserted tag says 'Nor, no. 2, 20 folios'. There is a Sanskrit title written with fountain pen and also a date '1934.10.6'. This is thought to have been written by Rāhula."⁴ The date may have been added after completion of the transcript.

Photos of the original manuscript were taken again in the late 1980s and photocopies of these are held by the library of the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) in Beijing (box 178, no. 2). These photos are of excellent quality but the state of the manuscript's deterioration already noted by Luo Zhao is shocking: not only is the respectively upper or lower part of the left-hand side of all leaves broken off but some wrinkling has occurred, and many areas have faded, possibly due to humidity, for the empty spots show a gradual disappearance of the *akṣaras* (cf. table 4). The manuscript damage must have occurred between 1934 and 1984.

The CTRC's photocopy consists of six sheets numbered 4-9. Plates 4 and 5 show seven folio pages, sheets 6 and 7 eight and sheets 8 and 9 five folio pages. Altogether there are 20 folios. Most of the pages have 9-10 lines; f. 1b has 11 lines. The lines contain roughly 65 *akṣaras*.

Notwithstanding the heavy damage, it is evident that these are photographs of the same manuscript that was seen and transcribed by Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana in *Ñor*. Folios and lines correspond consistently to the respective indications given in his edition, wherever they can still be identified. Whatever is left is in fact quite legible. If in the near future the *facsimile* of this manuscript will also be available to scholarship, as one would like to hope, it should be re-examined. After all, Rāhula had to make his transcript under considerable time pressure, and the edition was produced in haste because he wanted to quickly share his enthusiasm about this most valuable find.

⁴ Luo Zhao's Chinese translated by Vinītā Tseng.

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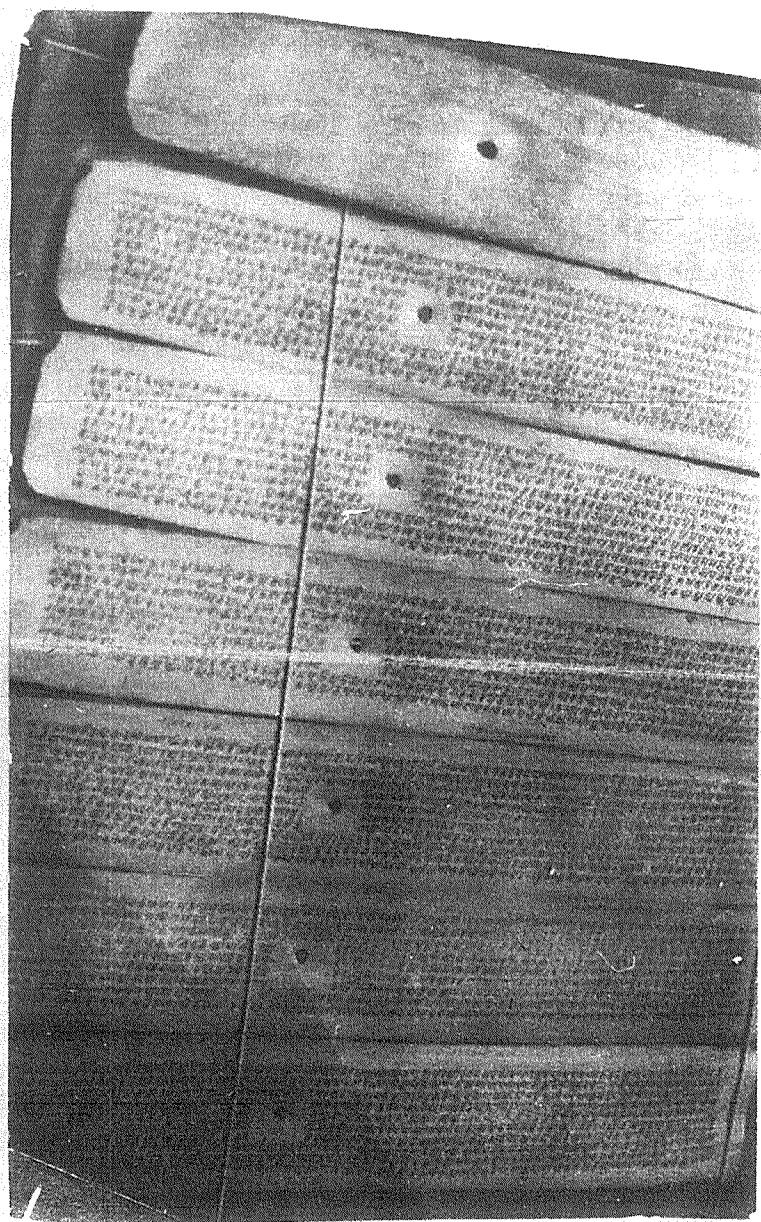


Table 1: Berlin 005 with ff. 1a-7a (National Archives, Kathmandu)

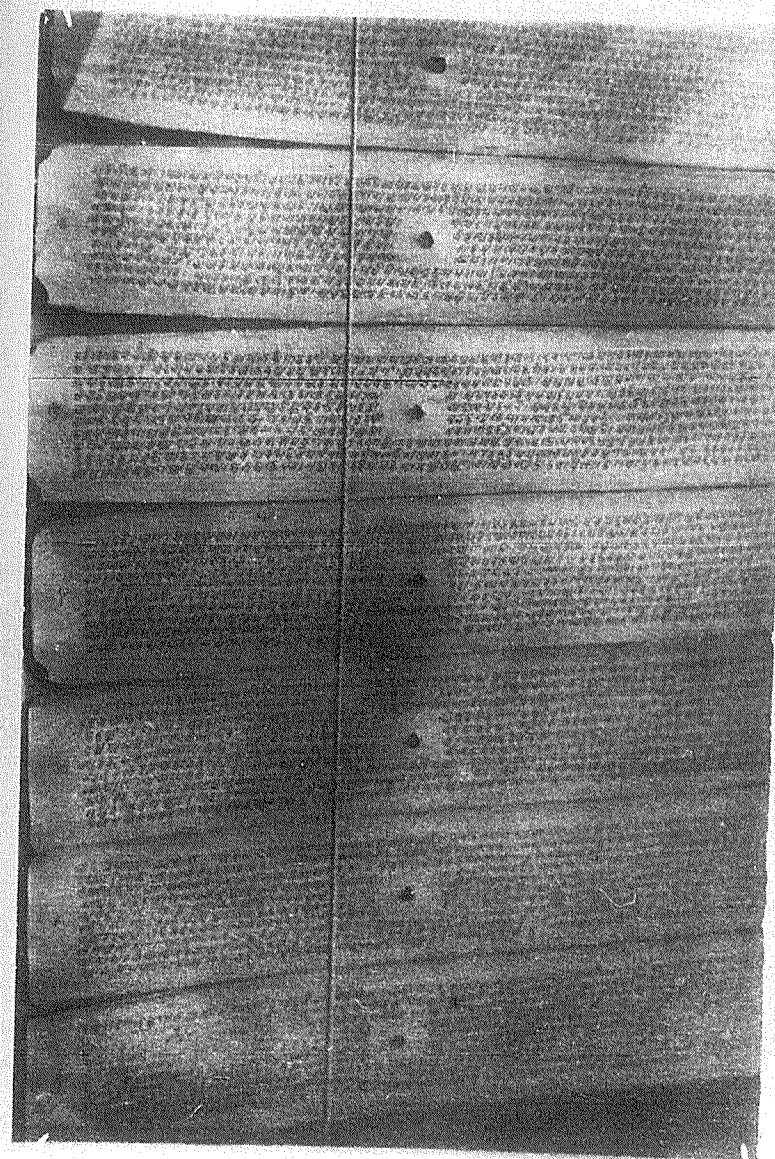


Table 2: Berlin 002 with ff. 1b-7b (National Archives, Kathmandu)

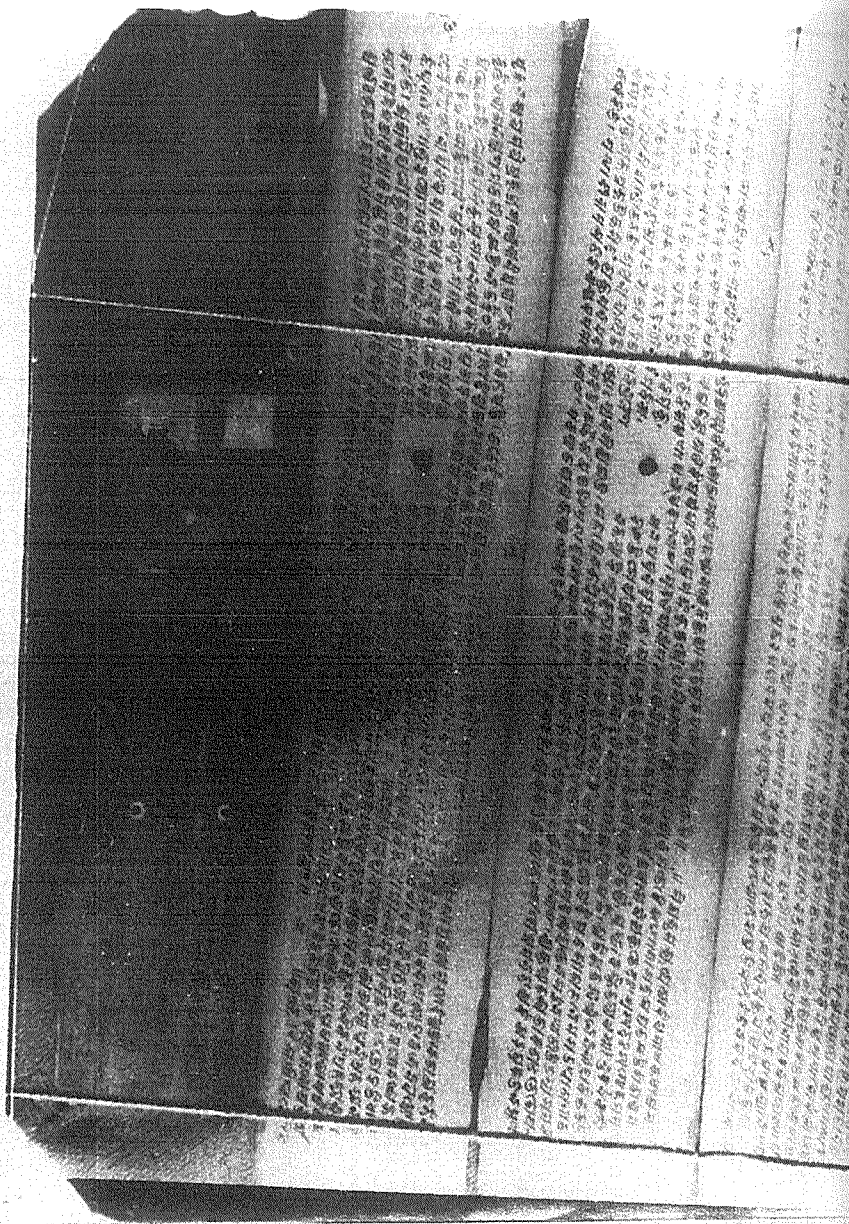


Table 3: Berlin 011 with ff. 18b, 19b, 20a and back cover (National Archives, Kathmandu)

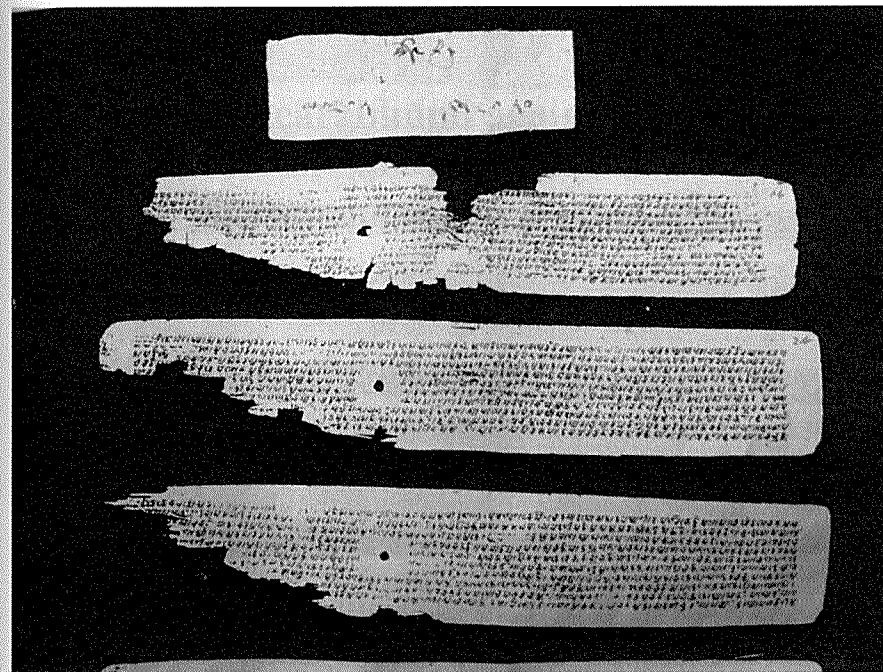


Table 4: China Tibetology Research Center, Beijing, box 178.2, with ff. 1b-3b