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The Dating of the Cambridge *Bodhisattvabhūmi* Manuscript Add.1702

Abstract: Cecil Bendall gave special attention to two manuscripts, Add.1049 and Add.1702, as the oldest manuscripts in the Cambridge collections. He reckoned that those two manuscripts had been produced in the 9th century. This article is an attempt to update the dating of the manuscript Add.1702, a manuscript of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* section in the *Yogācārabhūmi*, relying on the knowledge we have gained after Bendall first reported about those manuscripts. We are much better informed than Bendall was in the 19th century, in particular in areas such as the chronology of the Licchavis, the calendars used in Nepal, and palaeography. We also have access to a greater number of old written documents comparable to Add.1702. The result of this re-evaluation is that we should assign the manuscript to the mid-8th century CE, a little earlier than Bendall thought.

1 Introduction

Cecil Bendall showed a particular interest in Add.1702, an old palm-leaf manuscript from Nepal. It is one of the two manuscripts he thought to be the oldest in the Cambridge collections (he dated it to the 9th century). Since then, we have gained much more knowledge about the history of scripts in the Kathmandu Valley. It is perhaps about time that such new insights contributed to a re-evaluation of Bendall's initial assessment. The conclusion put forward here does not contradict his evaluation very much, but we may now be able to assign the oldest part of the manuscript to the 8th century, a little earlier than what Bendall thought.

2 Add.1702

MS Add.1702 is a manuscript in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi*. Bendall dedicated a chapter (pp. ixl–li) to that and another manuscript, Add.1049, in his *Catalogue of the Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Library, Cambridge* (1883). In the chapter entitled 'Excursus on Two MSS. of the IXth Century, ADD. 1049 and 1702,' he assigned the manuscripts to the 9th century. The manuscript is one of the rare artefacts containing the Sanskrit text of

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the *Yogācārabhūmi*. Unrai Wogihara used the manuscript in his edition of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Wogihara 1930–36).

Bendall (1883) discussed the age of the two manuscripts extensively. Add.1702 bears no date as such, while Add.1049 does include one, although the year is mentioned without specifying the era (he read the year as 252). Based on its archaic palaeography, he rejected the idea that the year was in the Nepāla Saṃvat, in which most other old Nepalese manuscripts are dated. As a consequence, Bendall assumed the era used there was that of Harṣa — which he considered to have started in 606 CE — and concluded that the year when Add.1049 was written was 857 CE.[1] Again, no separate mention of the date of Add.1702 is made. Bendall essentially treated the two manuscripts as coming from the same period. He acknowledged that one hand in Add.1702 is more archaic than the other (Bendall 1883, xliii), but nonetheless, no effort was made to evaluate the difference in time between the two hands or between the older hand of Add.1702 and the more modern one used in Add.1049. Understandably, this was due to the paucity of material available to him in the late 19th century. I speculate that, despite noticing that Add.1702 was possibly the more archaic of the two from a palaeographic viewpoint, Bendall did not think Add.1702 was created more than 57 years earlier than Add.1049, which would have meant dating Add.1702 to the 8th century. Another point of reference for him was the Paśupatinātha temple inscription that had been reported by Indraji and Bühler (1880). The two read the year of the inscription — there is no mention of the era — as 153 and ascribed it, again, to the Harṣa era. Bendall followed them on both counts.[2] Thus, according to Bendall, the inscription must have gone back to around 758 CE. Having compared the palaeographical features of the two documents separated by about a hundred years (the year 153 of the Paśupatinātha inscription and the year 252 of Add.1049), he probably considered the palaeographical difference between Add.1049 and Add.1702 not big enough to date Add.1702 closer to the inscription. This, I think, was the reasoning on the basis of which he assigned Add.1702 to the 9th century as well.[3]

1 Bendall mentioned a view expressed by Cunningham regarding the beginning of the Harṣa era and noted the possible range of the date of the manuscript to be 857–859 (Bendall 1883, xli).

2 The inscription is No. 81 in Gnoli 1956, No. 148 in Vajrācārya 1973, and No. 142 in Regmi 1983. Indraji and Bühler read the date as 153, but Gnoli (1956) read it as 159, and Vajrācārya (1973) and Regmi (1983) as 157.

3 Wogihara did not quite agree with Bendall's assessment and ascribed the manuscript to the late 8th or the early 9th century (Wogihara 1936, 6).

2.1 Things that have changed since Bendall's assessment

I do not see anything wrong in Bendall's observations or reasoning, given the state of knowledge at that time. But a few things have changed since he published his catalogue in the late 19th century. Most importantly, we have come to know many more Nepalese inscriptions and manuscripts. The most thorough collection of early (pre-Nepāla Saṃvat) inscriptions by Dhanavajra Vajrācārya (1973) includes 190 items. Bendall could only rely on the collection of Nepalese inscriptions by Indraji and Bühler published in 1880, where just 15 inscriptions are from the same time period.

One fruit that these discoveries have borne is the recognition of the Aṃśuvarman (or Mānadeva) Saṃvat (era). There have been controversies[4] surrounding the name and precise origin of this era, but now there is substantial agreement among historians concerned with Nepal that the same era was used in inscriptions by the Licchavis of the Kathmandu Valley from the beginning of the 7th century up to the 9th century — probably in between the use of the Śaka era and the Nepāla Saṃvat. This reckoning of years, started by Aṃśuvarman, commences on 14 March 576 CE[5] and was probably devised by dropping 500 from the previously used Śaka. Its oldest surviving use is in an inscription dated saṃvat (year) 29. There was also a change from the *caitrādi* system to the *kārttikādi* system and from the expired year (*āgata*) to the current one (*vartamāna*). The material that proved most helpful in establishing the epoch of this calendar was a manuscript of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* preserved at the Kesar Library, Kathmandu;[6] it records the day of the week, making the date verifiable.

Now, even if everything else stayed the same, Add.1049 would be thirty years older. We are also aware of three manuscripts whose dates are recorded in this calendar: that of the *Skandapurāṇa*, Add.1049 and the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*. Their palaeography will now be compared to that of Add.1072 below.

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4 See Petech 1988, 149 ff. and Malla 2005.

5 Petech 1988, 154.

6 For more on this manuscript and its colophon, see Regmi 1983, vol. 1, p. 162; vol. 2, pp. 162–3; vol. 3, pp. 250–51; Petech 1984, 29; Malla 2005, 7, Harimoto 2012, 87–8. The manuscript is often wrongly referred to as that of the *Sahottaratantra*, which is actually only part of the description of the manuscript's contents. Perhaps reflecting some awareness that the *Uttaratantra* (the 6th part) of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* was added material, the colophon of the manuscript refers to it as *sahottaraṃ tantram*.

2.2 The two hands of Add.1702

Bendall (1883, xlii) notes '[...] Add.1702 is undated, but is in two hands, one of which especially is even more archaic than that of the MS. just noticed [Add.1049].' The difference is easily noticed when two folios are compared, as in Figs 1 and 2.

The second hand (Fig. 2) may appear more recent because the top of the letters is more defined and appears to form a straight horizontal line. Letters having a more or less straight top line that appears to form a connected straight line are one of the most recognizable features of the Northern Brāhmī-derived scripts (or the descendant scripts of the Siddhamātṛkā, since it reunites the Northern scripts once again in the 7th or 8th century). Most letters have a closed top. On the other hand, the letters written in the first hand (Fig. 1) appear more independent, and many letters have an open top. Another reason why the second hand gives us the impression of being more modern is that it neatly packs letters together, making the top of the letters appear more connected. As we will see below, however, when we compare each glyph, we can see that these two hands use more or less the same corresponding glyphs.

In addition, as Bendall notes, the two hands change mid-folio, as shown in Fig. 3.[7] This indicates that the transition did not happen after centuries or decades, but more or less immediately. The first hand ended mid-text, and the second hand continued the writing from that point onwards. A change of hands mid-folio is unlikely to happen where a manuscript consists of original folios and replacements due to damage to the original folios, for instance. The two hands were most likely involved in the original production of this manuscript. Hence, even though one hand might appear more archaic than the other, we should not automatically assume that any significant gap in time existed between them.

Let us take a closer look at some of the letters now to illustrate the difference between the two hands. Table 1 compares some letters penned in the two hands. Those are the ones whose shapes vary more widely through the palaeographical history of Northern scripts.[8] I will compare them with the oldest dated manuscripts from Nepal below.

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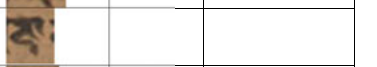
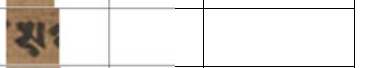
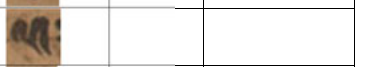
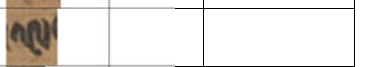
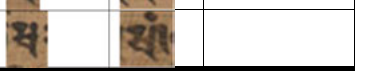
7 Bendall himself included a reproduction of this folio in his catalogue as plate 1.

8 Ye 2008 is a comprehensive study of palaeographical changes in Nepal from the 5th century to the early 8th century. As will be seen below, the period we are concerned with regarding Add.1702, namely, the late 8th century, is not covered.

Tab. 1: Two hands of Add.1702

	First hand	Second hand
i		
krā/kri/kra		
g		
c		
ja		
jā		
ṇa		
ṇā/ṇo		
ta		
thā/r(t)tha		
dhaḥ/dhā		
naṃ/ni/na		
pa		
bhi/bhā		
bhū		
ma/mā		
ya		
r		
lā/laṃ/la/lāṃ		
ṣ		

The glyphs I would like to call attention to are *g(a), c(a), th(a), dh(a), y(a)*, and *l(a)*:

- *ga* The consonant sign standing for *g* looks archaic in both hands. However, if we compare the two hands, we can see a later development in the second one in that it was starting to be written with three strokes rather than two.
- *ca* Note that the upper stroke of the wedge-shaped part is almost horizontal rather than going down, starting from the vertical line in both hands. The first hand even writes the stroke as slightly going up from the vertical line and may seem rather more archaic than the second one in that sense. In other old manuscripts that have been dated, the top stroke of the wedge-part goes down.
- *tha* The second hand writes this sign in two different ways. The difference is in the way the stroke inside the enclosing stroke is written. In one style, the second hand is not clearly distinguishable from the first hand: the internal stroke appears as a horizontal line that goes across. In the other style, it looks like a curved internal stroke, effectively a small semicircle touching the top line inside the enclosing stroke. As we will see below, this is how 9th-century scribes wrote the same sign in manuscripts.
- *dha* This appears almost identical in both hands, but one can see that the first hand wrote the curved part with two strokes, while the second did so with just one. The sign was generally written with three strokes in Northern scripts — top, vertical, and a curve connecting the left side of the top stroke to the vertical stroke — until more modern forms appeared. The first hand shows remnants of that writing style.
- *ya* The notable thing about *y* in this manuscript is that neither hand uses the old tripartite *y*. Both hands show signs of archaism, retaining some features of the tripartite *y* without quite having reached the more Devanagari-like *y* shape.
- *la* Both hands write *l* with some variations. The first hand writes it in a more archaic shape, one upward loop and a bottom one connected to the vertical stroke from the left, but it is conceivable that this archaic shape anticipates the two-loop *l* of modern Devanagari. The second hand, while still maintaining the one loop and a flat bottom in some variations, tends toward the two-loop sign. Moreover, the first loop does not reach the height of the top horizontal stroke, further strengthening the impression of the modern Devanagari *l*.

To summarize, both hands roughly appear to belong to the same palaeographical developmental stage, but the second hand shows some degree of new developments. Interestingly, such new features are found in signs that are written in more than one way. The scribe employing the second hand used both old and new styles, i.e., an established/traditional one (for him) and possibly a more "fashionable", modern style. At any rate, I do not think we should assume much of a gap in time existed between the two hands.

Having established that, I now would like to compare the writing with other examples whose dates are known to us.

3 Dated 9th-century manuscripts

The possible dated examples of writing are manuscripts and inscriptions. Since we are not always certain whether inscriptions and manuscripts of the same period shared the exact same palaeography, we would like to compare manuscripts to manuscripts if possible. The oldest dated Sanskrit manuscripts I am aware of are all from Nepal, and they are from the 9th century.[9] Older dated examples of writing are inscriptions. The oldest dated manuscripts are the following:

- A manuscript of the *Skandapurāṇa* from 811 CE (National Archives Kathmandu, 2-229, photographed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project as B 11/4);
- that of the *Pārameśvaratantra* from 829 CE (Cambridge University Library Add.1049.1);[10] and
- that of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* from 879 CE (Kesar Library Accession No. 699, photographed by the Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation Project as C 80/7).

All these manuscripts have dates in the Aṃśuvarman (Mānadeva) Saṃvat mentioned above, although only the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript specifies the calendar. They are dated to 234, 252, and 301 respectively. All of them have their own problems regarding the date and palaeography.

9 Not to be confused with 'the oldest manuscripts'. There are many more manuscripts that are older than them, but they are either not dated or the colophon (part) that mentions the date has been lost.

10 http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01049-00001/1

3.1 The three hands used in the *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript

The *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript records the earliest date among the three manuscripts. Figure 4 shows the page where the date is found.

This particular manuscript was written by at least three scribes. Figures 5, 6, and 7 show examples of the three different hands, which give quite different impressions at first glance, namely, the first hand being the best executed (esthetically most pleasing), the third appearing the least masterly, and the second in between. However, if we give them a closer look, the letter shapes that the scribes intended to produce are not much different. Nevertheless, the scribes had different ideas about how certain letters should be written. Table 2 shows some of the letters that display notable differences between the hands.

Tab. 2: Three hands of NAK *Skandapurāṇa* MS

	First	Second	Third
thā			
la(ṃ/ḥ)			
bhū			
ṇa/ṇi			
śa/śā			
‖			

Regarding the letter *th*, we can see that the first hand starts writing it with a counterclockwise outward spiral from top-left to lower-right where the loop is connected to the vertical stroke. The second and the third hands both appear to write the outside loop and the vertical stroke first and then the inside stroke. While they both appear to write the inside stroke as a loop that originates at the same point as the outside loop, the second hand writes it with stronger gravity from the bottom-left, and the third hand writes it almost directly from the top to the vertical stroke.

As for the letter *l*, the first and second hands retain the archaic form of the letter, while the third hand writes it in the shape closer to the later form (or simply more lazily).

The syllable *bhū* is written by the first hand as a combination of normal *bh* and the diacritic for the vowel *ū*, which could be attached to any other consonants. However, the syllable is highly stylized by the third hand. The way the second hand writes this syllable is in between: more stylized than the first hand, but not as much as the third hand.

We can distinguish the three hands by observing the distance between the top bar and the second horizontal bar for the sign *ś*. The second horizontal line is very close to the top bar in the first hand, but not as much in the second and third. The second and the third hands differ, in that the former writes the lower bar more or less horizontally, while the third hand gives the lower bar a slight downstroke from left to right.

The three hands differ in the way they write what we could call the double *daṇḍa*. The first scribe does not use it at the end of a stanza — he uses a single *daṇḍa* after every two *pādas*. The second hand writes a very distinguishable hook attached to the left of the first vertical stroke of the double *daṇḍa*, but the third hand only makes a triangular bulge to the left of the first vertical stroke.

I cannot draw any clear conclusions about the chronology from the observations made above. Based on the shape of the letter *ṇ* and *l*, I suggest that the third hand is the most recent one. What's more, since the first scribe made mixed use of the old style *ṇ* alongside the new style, the hand may be younger than the second hand. Thus, I tentatively propose the following sequence from the oldest to the youngest: (1) the second hand, (2) the first hand, (3) the third one.

We will now discuss the hand that records the date. This hand appears to be similar to the third hand, but its quality as handwriting is inferior to it. I suspect that it was produced as a replacement for the last folio, which got damaged. The scribe might have been an inexperienced calligrapher or trying to imitate an old style of writing he was not familiar with, or both. Hence, the date recorded by that hand is probably the date of the original, not of the time when it was written in the surviving folio. Accordingly, I am not going to assume that the palaeography found in this hand/folio was current in 811 CE; it is more likely that the earlier forms of writing found in that manuscript — the first or the second hand, especially the second one — were from that year.

3.2 The composite manuscript of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* in the Kesar Library

The *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript in the Kesar Library records a verifiable date on folio 209v (Fig. 8). Again, however, some considerations need to be made before

comparing its palaeography with that of Add.1702. The *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript was also written by several hands, as figure 9 shows. In this case, it is quite possible that the leaves that now form one bundle may not have been originally conceived as a single manuscript. First of all, the manuscript is not complete; many portions are missing. With regard to folio numbers, the foliation covers the range from 1 to 219, but many folios in between are missing. Furthermore, various folios exist that share the same number; we have two folios each numbered 112, 113, 167, 168, 169, 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, and 193, for instance. Even the contents found in folios with identical numbers are duplicated in other places. As an example, there are two folios numbered 167 and another two numbered 168. One pair numbered 167–168 contains a text that continues from the folio numbered 166 and proceeds to the folio numbered 169 (only one of which exists in each case). We find that the contents of the other pair of folios numbered 167–168 partially appear in folio 176 (there are no folios numbered 177–186). These two series of folios come from different manuscripts of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*. What makes matters even more complicated is that not all the folios with duplicate or alternate numbering[11] are written by the same hand; two different hands were involved, if not more.[12]

Now, the question is which hand is responsible for the date. In the case of the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript, I have postulated that the writing in which the date is written does not actually correspond to the date itself. I assigned the date to the older-looking writing found on different folios than the one recording the date. In the case of the Kesar Library *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript, I do not think such an assumption is necessary. That is, I consider the palaeography of the folio numbered 209 as indeed corresponding to the year 879 CE. This folio belongs to the main series of folios in the manuscript. The writing does not appear to be any different from what is found in the rest of the series. I see no reason to associate the date with the writing found in the other folios that do not share the same production backgrounds as the main series of the folios.

11 We could observe that the majority of folios are in a continuous sequence, but some of them break it. Some of the disruptions are clear because of the duplicate folio numbers, but not all the folios in the alternate series have a counterpart (i.e. folios with the same number) in the main series. Because of that, we cannot state that all the folios not found in the main series have duplicate folio numbers. The tell-tale sign of a folio *not* coming from the main series is the foliation itself: the folio numbers are written vertically in the main series of folios, but horizontally on the folios that do not belong to the main series.

12 See Andrey Klebanov, 'On the Textual History of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* (1): A Study of Three Nepalese Manuscripts', to be published in the proceedings for the conference entitled 'Asian Diversity in a Global Context' held in Copenhagen in 2009.

3.3 Palaeographical comparison between Add.1702 and other dated 9th-century Nepalese manuscripts

Having established which hands are responsible for the dates recorded in old dated Nepalese manuscripts, we will now compare the writing of Add.1702 with the hands that wrote those manuscripts. My overall impression is as follows: some letter shapes in Add.1702 appear to be just as archaic as those in the 9th-century manuscripts, while others look even more archaic than the same letters in the 9th-century manuscripts. (The remaining letter shapes do not appear significantly different in any of the manuscripts in question, and those similar shapes do not tell us much about their age — archaic or modern — as they were in use for a long period of time.) Those letters that attract my attention are *g*, *bh*, *m*, *y*, *r*, and *l*. Table 3 summarizes these comparisons:

Tab. 3: Comparisons of some letters between hands of Add.1702 and dated 9th century Nepalese MSS

	1st hand	2nd hand	811	829	878
g					
bh					
m					
y					
r					
l					

– *g* in Add.1702 is written in a different way than the same letter in the 9th-century manuscripts, in that its top and the right-hand vertical line are written in one stroke in Add.1702, while they are written with a separate top bar and downstroke in the 9th-century manuscripts. This one stroke, which first moves horizontally and then vertically, is common to both the older and younger hands in Add.1702. I see some variations in the way the hook at the bottom of the shorter vertical stroke on the left-hand side is written. The younger hand of Add.1702 and the oldest hand in the *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript write the hook in a similar fashion: they move the pen from the upper

left to lower right after drawing the vertical line. They may or may not completely lift the tip of the pen from the writing surface, but they clearly emphasize the short diagonal stroke. The scribes who worked on the other two 9th-century manuscripts may not have emphasized the last short stroke much, but they must have moved their pens slightly from the upper left to the lower right to produce the bottom hook. These may all be contrasted with the old hand in Add.1702, where the scribe simply moved the tip of the pen upward and to the left to produce the hook. It is these two features that make the old hand of Add.1702 appear quite archaic compared to the others.

– *bh* written by the first hand of Add.1702 shows an archaism in the circular movement of the pen the scribe used to produce the downward stroke of the letter. Other scribes used an almost straight line to produce the downward stroke on the right-hand side of the letter.
– A major difference in *m* is also apparent in whether its top is open or closed. With the exception of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript of 878 CE, all the others have the open-top *m*.
– As has already been noted above, *y* in Add.1702 is unique, being in between the archaic tripartite *y* and Devanagari-like *y*. All the dated old Nepalese manuscripts use the latter. I am not aware of this shape of *y* in Add.1702 being used anywhere else.
– The bulge toward the bottom of the vertical stroke in *r* is relatively inconspicuous in Add.1702. This is especially true of the first hand; it is almost a hook at the bottom. This gives the letter in Add.1702 a very archaic, Gupta-like appearance, in that it was an almost T-shaped letter with a small hook at the bottom of the vertical stroke.
– As noted above, the two hands write *l* differently in Add.1702. The first hand writes it in a more archaic manner, and the other one closer to modern Devanagari *l*. Now, if we look at the different versions of the letter in chronological order, we can clearly see how the letter developed; the first hand in Add.1702 is clearly in the earliest stage of development.

Thus, palaeographically, Add.1702 shows signs of being written before 811 CE. The archaism is slightly more pronounced in the first hand. Since the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript was written only ten years after the beginning of the 9th century, a manuscript made earlier than that could easily have been produced in the 8th century. I would like to assign Add.1702 to the 8th century on these grounds.

4 Comparisons with similarly dated inscriptions from Nepal

So far, I have compared the palaeography of Add.1702 with dated manuscripts from Nepal. Add.1702 appears to have been produced earlier than any of the surviving dated manuscripts, but we do not know how much earlier. Now I will turn to inscriptions.

It is reasonable to assume that the manuscripts we have looked at up to now can be dated in the same calendar, namely the continuation of the year-reckoning system started by Aṃśuvarman by dropping the hundreds (subtracting 500) from a Śaka calendar. These manuscripts recorded the year 234 (the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* manuscript), 252 (the Cambridge *Pārameśvaratantra* manuscript), and 301 (the Kesar Library *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript).[13]

There are two inscriptions that are of interest in the present context. We can be relatively certain that they record years in the Aṃśuvarman Saṃvat, and they are a little earlier than our dated manuscripts.[14]

4.1 The Paśupatinātha temple inscription of saṃvat 153/157/159

The first one is No. 81 in Gnoli's collection and 142 in Regmi's collection (Fig. 10). It is a famous inscription consisting of 35 stanzas found in the Paśupatinātha temple complex in Kathmandu and is significant in many ways.[15] This inscription was

13 Perhaps the last date also corresponds to the last year (or is very close to the last year) in which this system of year reckoning was used in Nepal. The Nepāla Saṃvat is essentially Śaka minus 800, which is Aṃśuvarman minus 300. I do not think there is any other manuscript or inscription that records a year later than 301 in the Aṃśuvarman Saṃvat.

14 There are other inscriptions that were written even closer to the dates of the dated manuscripts. Using Vajrācārya's numbering (1973), nos 174–179 are dated saṃvat 182 to 250. I have been unable to glean any useful information by comparing them palaeographically with Add.1702 due to their length (they are too short), the quality of published rubbings or photographs (they could have been badly damaged in the first place), and so forth. The year in Vajrācārya's 180 is variously read as 171 (Gnoli), 271 (Vajrācārya), and 272 (Regmi). I cannot make any meaningful observations regarding this inscription either, using published rubbings in Gnoli 1956 and Regmi 1983. If Vajrācārya or Regmi is correct, this inscription would be the youngest of those that record the year in the Aṃśuvarman Saṃvat. I do not expect to find inscriptions that record a year in that calendar later than 300. See the previous note.

15 One reason is that it describes the lineage of the Licchavis, and another is that some of the stanzas that express devotion to Śiva are ascribed to Jayadeva, the king himself.

known when Bendall compared its palaeography with Add.1049 and Add.1702. The year of this inscription was read as 153 by Indraji-Bühler, 159 by Gnoli and 157 by Vajrācārya and Regmi.[16]

A few things can be observed when we compare the writing in this inscription with that of Add.1702. One point is that the inscription uses both styles of the letter *ya* (see Table 4), the old tripartite one and the more modern one, typically when it is part of *yā* or other ligatures such as *ryā*.

Another set of letters that attract one's attention is the pair *ja* and *jā*. This pair is very noticeable when reading relatively old manuscripts written in northern Siddhamātṛikā-derived scripts. For example, Table 5 lists *ja* and *jā* from Add.1702 and the old dated manuscripts from Nepal. They look essentially identical. On the other hand, in the Paśupatinātha temple inscription, *ja* is written in a more archaic form that resembles roman capital 'E' and *jā* is written in a similar way to the same letter in old Nepalese manuscripts (see Table 4).

Tab. 4: *y* and *j* in the Paśupatinātha temple complex inscription of the year 153/157/159

ya	*yā*	*ryā*	*ja*	*jā*
				

Tab. 5: *ja* and *jā* in old Nepalese manuscripts

	Add. 1702 (1st hand)	Add. 1702 (2nd hand)	Saṃvat 234 (1st hand)	Saṃvat 234 (2nd hand)	Saṃvat 234 (3rd hand)	Saṃvat 252	Saṃvat 301
ja							
jā							

16 See Indraji-Bühler (1880, 183), Vajrācārya (1973, 548), Regmi (1983, vol. 2, 95), Gnoli (1956, 115, 119).

4.2 The Jñāneśvara inscription

Another inscription of interest is the one from the Jñānésvara (Gyaneshwar) area of Kathmandu. It is Vajrācārya's no. 150 and Regmi's no. 144. The date of the inscription has been lost, but it is likely to be close to the previous one. In the Jñāneśvara inscription, the *dūtaka* (messenger) is recorded as *yuvarāja* (Crown Prince) Vijayadeva, but the name of the king, who is usually mentioned before the *dūtaka*, is missing. The name Vijayadeva first appears simply as *bhaṭṭāraka* Vijayadeva in an inscription dated saṃvat 137. He is the *dūtaka* in that inscription, too, and the king is Jayadeva. Similarly, in another inscription dated saṃvat 148, Vijayadeva is *yuvarāja* and again the *dūtaka*. Jayadeva was still king in saṃvat 153/157/159, as we have seen above. By saṃvat 180, however, it appears that the era started to be referred to as that of "the kingdom of Mānadeva."[17] We do not know whether Vijayadeva ever became king, but it seems unlikely.[18] Whatever happened to him, the period in which Vijayadeva may have been crown prince was between saṃvat 137 — when he probably had not been designated *yuvarāja* yet — and 180. Thus the Jñāneśvara inscription also falls into that time window.

Again, I have difficulty reading this inscription from the rubbing published in Regmi (1983), but a few observations are possible nonetheless. One is that the new form of *ya* is used even without the diacritics for vowels or without being part of a ligature (see Figure 11). This indicates that the non-use of the old-style tripartite *ya*, as seen in Add.1702, does not necessarily mean that the writing was done later than saṃvat 157.

4.3 The pedestal inscription of the Lokeśvara image in Patan

The last inscription to which I would like to draw attention comes from saṃvat 180 (Vajrācārya's no. 172 and Regmi's no. 156). This is a three-line inscription, and again I have difficulty reading it from Regmi (1983)'s reproduction of the rubbing (Figure 12). Still, the writing in this inscription generally seems very similar to that of Add.1702. I do not find anything significantly different from the writing

17 Vajrācārya's 172/Regmi's 156: *rājye śrīmānadevasya varṣe śītyuttare śate*; cf. also the colophon of the Kesar Library *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript: *rājñi śrī[m]ānaeve pṛthusitayaśasi prodyadindu-prakāśe*... These references to King Mānadeva caused some controversy regarding how many kings named Mānadeva actually existed. I prefer the view according to which the reference to the name Mānadeva is intended as referring to the founder of the kingdom, the ancient Licchavi king, Mānadeva.

18 See Regmi 1983, vol. 3, 249.

in Add.1702 in this inscription, while there were a few points that distinguished Add.1702 from the Paśupatinātha temple inscription of saṃvat 153/157/159. Like the Jñāneśvara inscription above, this inscription does not use the old-style *ya*. Furthermore, the letter *ya* is written in a style somewhat similar to the unique *ya* of Add.1702, in that the stroke that comes from above creates an acute-angled corner by almost going up again rather than gently turning to the left, making a round corner. Table 6 shows all the instances of *akṣaras* that I can decipher as using *ya*. Compare them with those used in Add.1702 in Tables 1 and 3.

Tab. 6: *y* in Patan Lokeśvara pedestal

ye	***yā***	***yā***
		

By comparing it with the inscriptions, I find the writing in Add.1702 appears to be quite similar to the kind written in the 2nd century of the Aṃśuvarman Saṃvat (100s); certain features in Add.1702 point to the latter half of that century. This would allow the manuscript to be dated to the mid-8th century CE on palaeographic grounds.

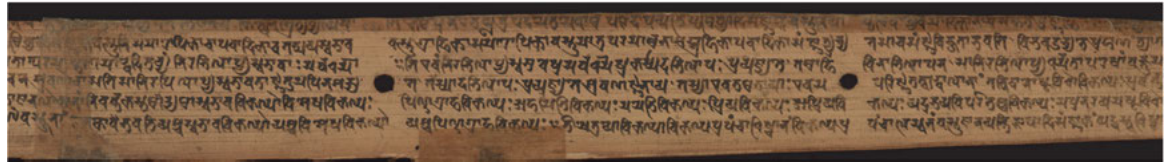


Fig. 1: The first hand of Add.1702.

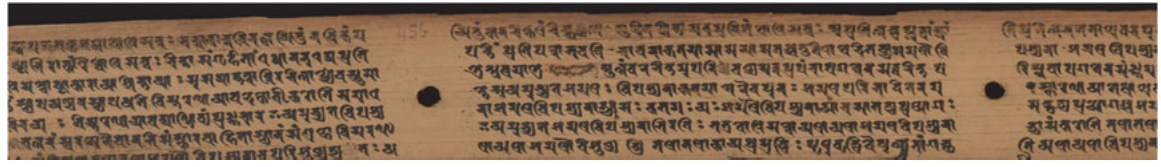


Fig. 2: The second hand of Add.1702.

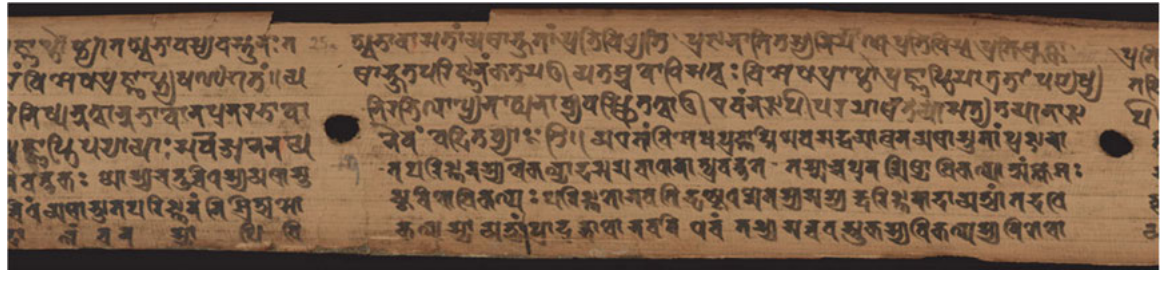


Fig. 3: Mid-folio hand change of Add.1702.

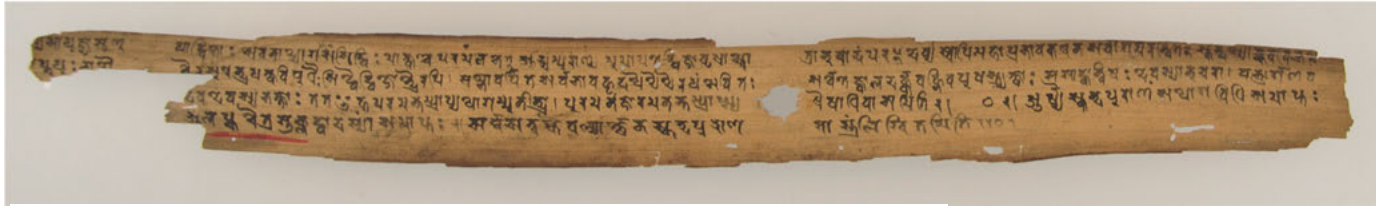


Fig. 4: Colophon page of the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* MS.

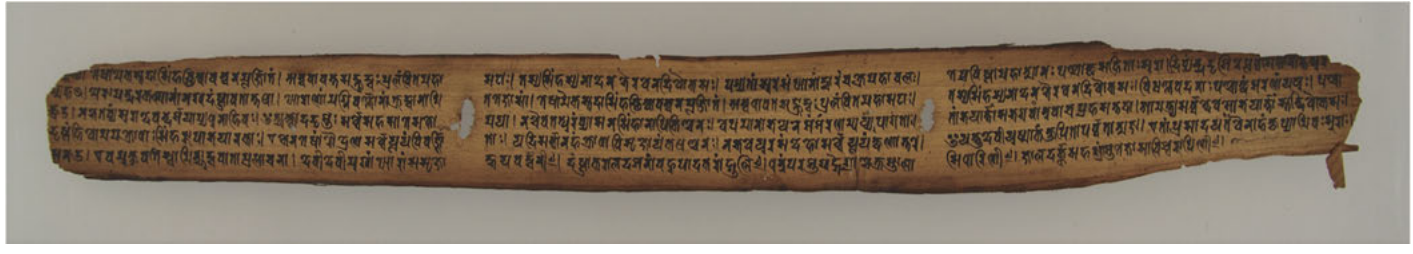


Fig. 5: A page written by the first hand of the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* MS.

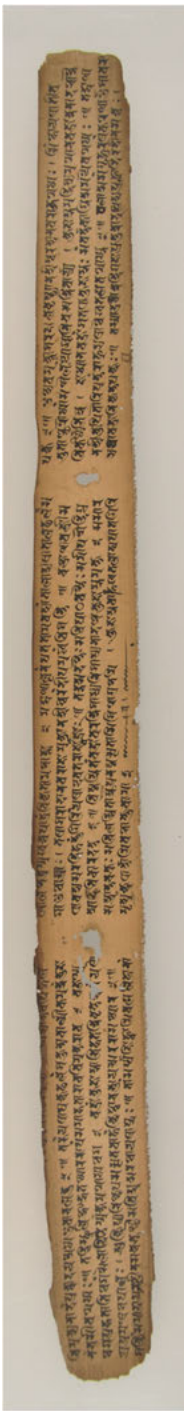


Fig. 6: A page written by the second hand of the NAK *Skandapurāṇa* MS.

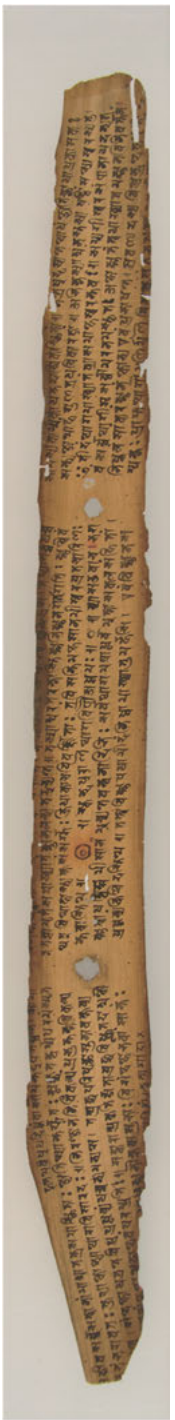


Fig. 7: A page written by the third hand of the NAK Skandapurāṇa.

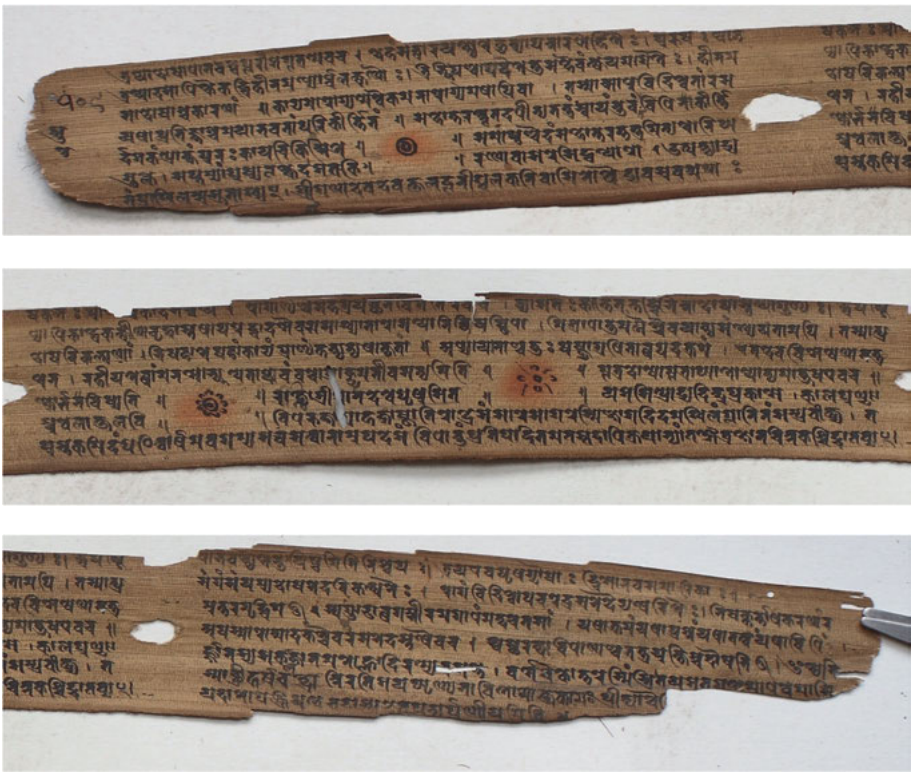


Fig. 8: Folio 209 verso of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript in the Kesar Library (acc. no. 669). The colophon starts in the middle of line 5.

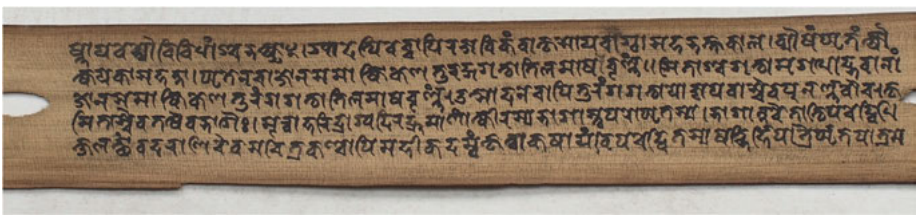


Fig. 9: Folio 192 recto of the Kesar Library *Suśrutasaṃhitā* manuscript.

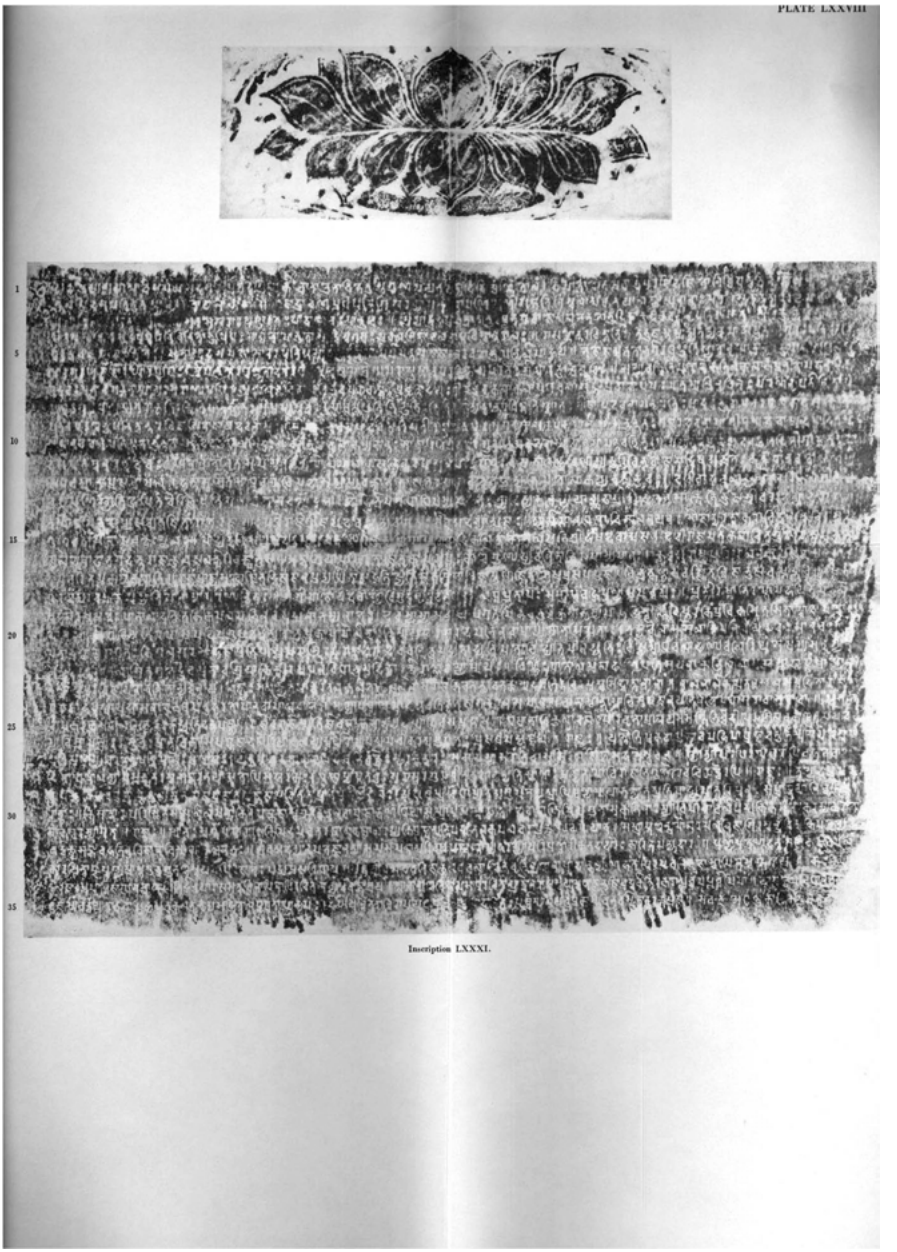


Fig. 10: Paśupatinātha temple inscription Regmi 1963, vol.3.

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