

# A Study on Scholarly Activities in the Last Period of the Vikramaśīla Monastery: Quotations in Ratnarakṣita's *Padminī*

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## Introductory Remarks

In the history of Buddhism, there were several institutions, i.e., monasteries, such as the Nālandā and the Vikramaśīla. However, it is said that Indian Buddhism had been slowly declining around the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the movement of unifying Buddhist theories<sup>2</sup> had been attempted by Abhayākara Gupta,<sup>3</sup> one of the most eminent monks in the history of the Vikramaśīla monastery, and by his contemporaries, who all had to face an impending crisis of the fall of Buddhism. At that time, even though being in their declination, there were still quite a huge number of Buddhist monks living and studying at the Vikramaśīla and other monasteries. It also appears that the monks of these monasteries had already been in cooperation with one another, as in the case of modern institutions and universities.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> This paper is a revised and abridged version of KURANISHI 2013 and KURANISHI 2015 published in Japanese.

<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for the decline of Indian Buddhism was the rise of Islam in northern India.

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this movement is to compete against the other religions like Hinduism and Islam.

<sup>3</sup> This kind of attempt can be found in most of his works, e.g., *Vajrāvalī*, *Niṣpanna-yogāvalī* and so forth.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, DUTT 1961: 352–353 reports, “An interesting feature of these establishments under the Pālas is the existence of a system of co-ordination among them. Evidently, all of them were under State supervision. ...It is said by Lama Tāranātha that the head of Vikramaśīla had control over Nālanda. ...It seems from the evidence

The *Padminī* by Ratnarakṣita (ca. 1150–1250), one of the popular monks in the last period of Indian Buddhism, is the largest commentary on the *Samvarodayatantra*, which is classified in the *Yoginītantra*. The aim of this short paper is to present and analyze some quotations in the *Padminī*, which will help us get a glimpse of scholarly activities in the last period of Indian Buddhism.<sup>5</sup>

## 1. Ratnarakṣita and his *Padminī*

### 1.1 On Ratnarakṣita

Ratnarakṣita was one of the most popular scholar monks at the Vikramaśīla monastery in the last period of Indian Buddhism. According to Tāranātha,<sup>6</sup> he was most likely ordained in the Mahāsāṃghika school. Sometimes he is compared with his contemporary colleague, Śākyaśrībhadra. Although both of them are equally knowledgeable, Śākyaśrībhadra had stronger knowledge of the Pramāṇa, while Ratnarakṣita had a mastery of the Mantranaya (i.e. Vajrayāna). They evacuated to Nepal before their monastery was invaded by the Muslim army in 1203. Tāranātha also relates that Ratnarakṣita prophesied this tragic incident two years in advance. After having moved to Nepal, he energetically taught many Nepalese and Tibetan disciples. Although his biography is still far from clear, his *floruit* could be placed in ca. 1150–1250, since Ratnarakṣita had already been one of the popular monks in the Vikramaśīla around 1200, i.e., the time of the end of this monastery, and also he taught Chag lo tsā ba (Dharmasvāmin) in 1226 in Kathmandu, Nepal.<sup>7</sup> After moving to Nepal, Ratnarakṣita seems to have been based there. Although it is said that he visited Tibet to teach, it is likely that he came back to Nepal and died there, since there is no record of his death in Tibet.

We can easily notice that Ratnarakṣita was much influenced by Abhayākaragupta, who was active at the Vikramaśīla monastery around 1100.<sup>8</sup> In

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that the different seats of Buddhist learning that functioned in eastern India under the Pālas were regarded together as forming a network, an interlinked group of institutions.”

<sup>5</sup> The situation in the last period of Indian Buddhism can be found not only in the Tibetan historical account, e.g. , the *Chos 'byung* (SCHIEFNER 1963: 191(12)-195(10)) written by Tāranātha, but also in the Muslim chronicle, the *Tabaqati Nasiri* (RAVERTY 1970: 551–552) written by Minhaj al Siraj Juzjani (1193-?).

<sup>6</sup> SCHIEFNER 1963: 192(4–8).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ROERICH 1959: iv-v; 6; 54, NAKAYAMA 1994: 239–240.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., BÜHNEMANN 1992 on the *floruit* of Abhayākaragupta.

fact, many passages from Abhayākaragupta's works<sup>9</sup> are incorporated into the *Padminī*'s sections on *abhiṣeka*, *pratiṣṭhā* and *homa*.

Moreover, Ratnarakṣita engaged in translating Abhayākaragupta's and his own works on the Mantranaya into Tibetan.<sup>10</sup> Taking this into consideration, it appears that Ratnarakṣita was well known as the best informant for Abhayākaragupta's teachings at that time.

## 1.2 On the *Padminī*

The *Padminī* is the most important commentary of the *Samvarodayatantra*, since it is the only one that is available in Sanskrit, the original language of the text. This text seems to give sufficient evidence to illustrate part of scholarly activities in the time of Ratnarakṣita, not only because he comments on the *mūlatantra* word by word, but also because he devotes much space to the arguments of several important Buddhist topics such as the acquisition of Buddha state, the efficacy of meditation and so forth. In these discussions, he displays a wide range of knowledge, using a good deal of quotations from the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya sources for his arguments. According to Tāranātha, Ratnarakṣita seems to have composed the *Padminī* while staying in Tibet, probably in order to teach not only the doctrine of the *Samvarodayatantra* but also the basics of Buddhism in general to Tibetan monks.

Little attention has so far been given to the *Padminī* in spite of its significance. In recent years, however, some articles dealing mainly with the *Padminī* have been published. Among them, TANEMURA/KANO/KURANISHI 2014 introduces a number of research materials available for editing the *Padminī*.

## 2. Quotations in the *Padminī*

Although Ratnarakṣita was a scholar monk, well known as an expert in the Mantranaya, his largest and most important work, the *Padminī*, quotes extensively from both the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya sources.<sup>11</sup> Thus,

<sup>9</sup>The sections on *abhiṣeka* and *pratiṣṭhā* of the *Padminī* follow the *Vajrāvalī*. The section on *homa* follows the *Jyotirmāñjarī*.

<sup>10</sup>See SHIZUKA 2012 on the list of Ratnarakṣita's works.

<sup>11</sup>Regarding several key topics, Ratnarakṣita mentions the differences and similarities between the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya. For instance, he tries to clarify that the Pāramitānaya also has the conception of great bliss (*mahāsukha*), one of the important doctrines of Mantranaya, by means of the several quotations from the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya in the thirteenth chapter: *mahāsukhamayatvam api*

from his discussions of topics such as the Buddha state (*Buddhatva*) in chapter one and the efficacy of the meditative practice of the sequence of generation (*Utpattikramabhāvanā*) in chapter thirteen, we can acquire valuable information about the trends of scholarly activities in his times.

Due to space limitations, the present paper will deal only with some important quotations that suggest interesting and significant contexts related to the other sources used by Ratnarakṣita.

### Explanatory notes:

- ▶ The following four manuscripts<sup>12</sup> are currently available:  
 T=Takaoka CA17, complete, paper, 49 fols., Nepal saṃvat 732  
 B=Baroda No. 78, complete, paper, 92 fols., Vikrama (?) saṃvat 1983  
 N=NAK 5/203=NGMPP B113/8, complete, paper, 230 pages, Nepal saṃvat 1044  
 R Ra=Tucci Collection 3. 7. 16, ch1–13, incomplete, paper, 35 fols.  
 Rb=Tucci Collection 3. 7. 26, ch18–33, incomplete, paper, 41 fols.  
 Since B, N, and R are basically apographs of T, I mainly consult T in this paper.
- ▶ Editorial apparatus are shown after each text, if necessary.  
 e.g., ◊caturaśīti-]N; caturśīti-TBRa.
- ▶ *Sandhis* are basically standardized.
- ▶ The names of each text and its author are underlined.

## 2.1 Pāramitānaya

### (1) Anantamukhanirhāradhāranī

na cintāṃ cintayec cintyāṃ acintyāṃ naiva cintayet |  
 cintyācintyāṃ na cintayet tataḥ prāpsyati dhāriṇīm || (*Padminī* Ch.13;  
 T23r9–10)

◊cintayec|em.; cintaye TBNRa. ◊cintyācintyān na cintayet|em. *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* (4.77: SCHNEIDER 2010: 188); cintaye na vicintaye TBNRa. ◊dhāriṇīm|var. *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* (*ibid.*) śūnyatām (Trs.) One should not consider any thought to be conceivable, [and] one should never consider [it] to be unperceivable. One should not consider [it] to be [at once] perceivable and unperceivable. He will then reach the essence (*dhāriṇīm*<sup>13</sup>).

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(23v1) *pāramitānaya pratipāditam*. According to its context, Ratnarakṣita, in short, contends that the conception of great bliss is the important stage of the *bhāvanā* taught in both the Mantranaya and the Pāramitānaya.

<sup>12</sup> See TANEMURA/KANO/KURANISHI 2014 on the manuscripts of the *Padminī* and the other research materials.

(2) *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*<sup>14</sup>

praśāntam acalam śreṣṭham vaśavarti samāsamam |  
avikalpasukham tasmād bodhisattvo dhigacchati || (*Padminī* Ch.13;  
T23v1)

(Trs.) Therefore, a Bodhisattva obtains a non-conceptualized bliss, which is calm, immovable, most splendid, powerful, equal and unequal.

Although both (1) and (2) are entitled as *Dhāraṇīs*, they could be classified as the Pāramitānaya texts, considering their contents. In fact, they are often quoted as Mahāyānic texts in several literatures.<sup>15</sup> The *Anantamukhanirhāradhāraṇī* has nine Chinese translations, and the oldest one was translated by Zhī Qiān (支謙) about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* was translated into Chinese by Dānapāla (施護)<sup>16</sup> and has a commentary written by Kamalaśīla.<sup>17</sup>

(3) *Catuḥśataka* by Āryadeva (Ch.12 v. 18)<sup>18</sup>

bījabhūtān anarthasya dṛṣtvā tīrthakarān bahūn |  
na bhavet kasya kāruṇyaṃ karmakāmeṣu jantuṣu ||<sup>19</sup> (*Padminī* Ch.4;  
T10v3)

<sup>13</sup>The *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* 4. 77 (SCHNEIDER 2010: 188) has *śūnyatām* instead of *dhāraṇīm*, probably due to fitting itself to the context.

<sup>14</sup>MATSUDA 1996: 99. This is also called the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*. For instance, Sthiramati's *Triṃśīkāvijñaptibhāṣya* (ad v. 23) mentions this title.

<sup>15</sup>The *Śikṣāsamuccaya* quotes a different verse of this text, while The *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* written by Vāgīśvarakīrti (4. 77) quotes the very verse. This verse, with some variants, seems to have been quite popular not only in the Pāramitānaya but also in the Mantranaya.

<sup>16</sup>Taisho654:『佛說入無分別法門經』(*Fó-shuō-rù-wú-fēn-bié-fǎ-mén-jīng*)

<sup>17</sup>Toh4000(123a3–145b5), Ota5510(146b6–174b1): *Āryāvikalpapraveśadhāraṇīṭīkā*.

<sup>18</sup>This verse is also quoted in the *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* written by Śāntarakṣita. (ICHIGO 1985: 330)

<sup>19</sup>The Sanskrit manuscript of the *Padminī* has *na bhavet kasyacit kāruṇyaṃ karmakāmeṣu jantuṣu*, which is hypermetrical. If we trust that this reading fits to Ratnarakṣita's intention, it might mean that no Bodhisattva shows compassion for non-Buddhists. If we emend *kasyacit* to *kasya* as this paper shows, Ratnarakṣita might have intended that a Bodhisattva is compassionate for everybody, even for non-Buddhists. In addition, the *Catuḥśataka* (Tib.) and all the texts quoting this verse except for the Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Padminī*, to my best knowledge, have *dharmakāmeṣu* (*chos 'dod pa*) instead of *karmakāmeṣu*. The variant, *dharmakāmeṣu*, which means those who are longing for *dharma*, namely Buddhists, is contrast to non-Buddhists (*tīrthakarān* in the *pāda* B). We are not sure which variant is the *Catuḥśataka*'s original reading. These variants could be caused by a transcriptional error because of the similarity of the scripts *dha* and *ka*, or by a deliberate change because of different implications.

◇kasya]em.; kasyacit TBNRa. ◇karmakāmeṣu]var. dharmakāmeṣu Tib., *Sadāmnāyānusārīnī* (Ms: 8r8–8v1), *Catuḥśataka* (Tib.), *Madhyamakālamkāravṛtti* (Tib.).

(Trs.) Having seen many non-Buddhists who are unfortunate seeds, who would not be compassionate for those who are longing for karma? The *Catuḥśataka* is one of the most important Madhyamaka texts written by the well-known Āryadeva. No original Sanskrit text of this verse is extant, although there are its tentative restorations from the Tibetan translation.<sup>20</sup>

(4) *Pramāṇavārttika* by Dharmakīrti (Ch.3 v. 285)<sup>21</sup>

tasmād bhūtam abhūtaṃ vā yad yad evātibhāvyaṭ |  
bhāvanābalaniṣpattau tat sphuṭākālpadhīphalam || (*Padminī* Ch.13;  
T22r3)

◇°ātibhāvyaṭ]var. *Pramāṇavārttika* °ābhibhāvyaṭ

◇°balaniṣpattau]var. *Pramāṇavārttika* °pariniṣpattau.

(Trs.) Therefore, [being] real or unreal, whatever is intensively meditated upon results in a clear and non-conceptual cognition when the power of cultivation is accomplished.

This is a well-known verse on the theory of Yogic perception.<sup>22</sup> The quotation has two variants: the current edition of the *Pramāṇavārttika*<sup>23</sup> has *abhibhāvyaṭ* and *bhāvanāpariniṣpattau* instead of *atibhāvyaṭ* and *bhāvanābalaniṣpattau* respectively. It is plausible that these variants were merely caused by transcriptional errors. In any case, however, these variants seem to have been preferred in several texts.<sup>24</sup> It is more than interesting that the texts which employ the above-mentioned variants are almost always categorized in the Mantranaya in this period. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that these variants had been intentionally adopted in Ratnarakṣita's times, due to fitting itself to the Mantranaya doctrine, which puts emphasis on the practice of meditation.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. BHATTACHARYA 1931: 157, VAIDYA 1923: 100.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. MIYASAKA 1972: 80. This verse is also identical with the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (1. 31, STEINKELLNER 2007: 28).

<sup>22</sup> This verse is referred to in both Buddhist and Śaiva texts. Cf. ISAACSON and SFERRA 2014: 267 n. 70.

<sup>23</sup> With regard to these variants, see ISAACSON and SFERRA 2014: 267 n. 70 as well.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Śrīdhara's *Sahajālokapañjikā* (Tucci SSCF 7: 7r1: see KURANISHI forthcoming), Mahāsukhavajra's *Padmāvāṭī* (NGMPP B31/7: 16v4–5), Rāmapāla's *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (ISAACSON and SFERRA 2014: 169).

## 2.2 Mantranaya

### (1) *Ātmasādhanāvātāra* by Jñānapāda

samantabhadram ātmānaṃ bhāvayann eva bodhibhāk |<sup>25</sup> (*Padminī*  
Ch.1: T3r7–8)

(Trs.) If one only meditates himself as the Samantabhadra, [he can] attain enlightenment.

Although the available Tibetan translation of the *Ātmasādhanāvātāra* is written in prose, what this quotation makes clear at once is that the original text should have been composed in verse.<sup>26</sup>

### (2) *Pratibhāsavajrodaya* by Anonymous

sukhadānaphalaṃ puṇyaṃ tannirodhād vṛthaiva tat |  
puṇyena labhyate saukhyaṃ saukhyāt puṇyam avāpyate |  
bodhicittaprasūtatvāt tat puṇyaṃ gaganopamam | (*Padminī* Ch.13:  
T23v4)

◇tat (pāda B) Jem.; tataḥ TBNRa.

(Trs.) A merit has the result of giving bliss. It (the bliss) [becomes] fruitless by shutting it (the merit) off. The bliss is obtained by the merit. The merit is obtained through the bliss. The merit is equal to the sky because it is produced from the *Bodhicitta*.

Neither Tibetan nor Chinese canons contain this text. Although the *Sarvavajrodaya* of Ānandagarbha has a similar name, it is completely different from the text in question. Regarding the title of *Pratibhāsavajrodaya* (*So sor snang ba'i rdo rje 'byung ba* or *So sor snang ba'i rdo rje 'char ba*), it is possibly related to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, just like the *Sarvavajrodaya*, since both names have 'vajrodaya', which is the important concept of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*. To the best of my knowledge, the other texts which quote this mysterious *Pratibhāsavajrodaya* with the text title are Abhayākaragupta's *Āmnāyamañjarī* (once, 6 *pādas*) and Jinadatta's *\*Guhyasamājatantrapañjikā* (nine times, 57 *pādas*).

The quotations in the *Padminī* and the *Āmnāyamañjarī* are not entirely the same, but both are quoted in the *\*Guhyasamājatantrapañjikā*. One possibility is to assume that both Abhayākaragupta and Ratnarakṣita just borrowed and reused the *Pratibhāsavajrodaya*'s verses quoted in the *\*Guhyasamājatantrapañjikā*, since Jinadatta was most likely active about

<sup>25</sup>Ratnarakṣita quotes the *pāda* CD only.

<sup>26</sup>This verse is also quoted in the *\*Guhyasamājatantrapañjikā* (Toh1847: 147r5–6) written by Jinadatta. Its Tibetan translation shows that the original is composed in verse.

the 11<sup>th</sup> century and his \**Guhyasamājatantrapāñjikā* seems to have been famous for quoting a variety of texts.<sup>27</sup>

(3) *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* by Nāgārjuna (Āryapāda)

anutpādeṭi śūnyeti nirātmēti ca dharmatām |  
yo bhāvayati mandātmā na tāṃ bhāvayati hy asau || (*Padminī* Ch.13;  
T22r1)

◇tām]em.; tān TBNRa.

(Trs.) He whose nature is dull and who meditates on the *dharmatā* as non-production, empty and selfless never [truly] meditates on it (*dharmatā*).

Ratnarakṣita quotes this verse with the name of Āryapāda, who is most likely equal to Ārya-Nāgārjuna, the founder of Ārya school of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. Then, Ratnarakṣita would have considered the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* a tantric text. This verse is quoted in several texts,<sup>28</sup> but all the texts available to us have *śūnyatām* instead of *dharmatām* in *pāda* B. Ratnarakṣita might have changed the expression intentionally, considering the context of the *Padminī*.<sup>29</sup>

(4) *Vajrasekharamahāyogatantra*

(1.2.236–237<sup>30</sup>)

catvāraḥ pudgalāḥ loke vidhāne 'pi na siddhyati<sup>31</sup> |  
kiñ cāpy abhiyujyante kalpakotiśatair api || Hypometrical<sup>32</sup>  
anutpāditacittā ca aśrāddho naiva siddhyati |  
vicikitsādhāraṇakaś caiva<sup>33</sup> ājñaptam na kariṣyati || Hypermetrical<sup>34</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For more details, see KURANISHI 2011a and KURANISHI 2011b.

<sup>28</sup> Abhayākara Gupta's *Munimatālaṃkāra* (Toh3903: 160r6–161r4) quotes this verse and some verses through the context. The *Amṛtakanikodyotanibandha* (LAL 1994: 150, 177) written by Vibhūticandra, who is a contemporary of Ratnarakṣita, also quotes this verse. Cf. ISAACSON 1999: 58 n. 15.

<sup>29</sup> The topic of this section is as follows: *dharmatāmātrañ cākāracakram apāśya taṭastham na sambhāvati yat kevalam bhāvanīyaṃ syāt | kevalam tadbhāvanā tat-tvārthabhāvanā naiva* (T21v11)

<sup>30</sup> KITAMURA et al. 2012: 71. (Japanese translation from the Tibetan translation)

<sup>31</sup> The word 'siddhyati', which is ungrammatical, should be kept here (*metri causa*).

<sup>32</sup> The possible emendation could be *kiñ cāpi abhiyujyante*. However, it might be unfavorable to divide between the two *pādas*.

<sup>33</sup> The classical sandhi is not applied here. Since CD *pādas* are hypermetrical and there are several possible emendations, the reading of the manuscript is kept. See also n. 34.

<sup>34</sup> Although there are several possible emendations to make it metrical, we cannot rule out that this hypermetrical reading is the original. One of possible emendations could

(*Padminī* Ch.13; T23v5–6)

(Trs.) [These] four kinds of people<sup>35</sup> in the world will not get accomplishment even if they perform rituals. Moreover, they would never make them ready [to get accomplishment] even if they perform for a billion *kalpas*.

One who does not produce a [*Bodhi*]citta and one who is impious will never get accomplishment, and one who remains skeptical will not do [Buddha's] order.

(2.1.296–297<sup>36</sup>)

aham eva svayaṃ vajrī vajrasattvo 'smy ahaṃ svayam |  
 ahaṃ vajro mahārājā ahaṃ vajrī mahābalaḥ |  
 ahaṃ yogīśvaro rājā vajrapāṇir ahaṃ ḍṛḍham | (*Padminī* Ch.17; T26v3)  
 (Trs.) I myself am the Vajra-holder. I myself am the Vajrasattva. I am the great king Vajra. I am the mighty Vajra-holder. I am the king, the lord of *yogins*. I am completely the Vajrapāṇi.

The latter is quoted in the *Padminī* Ch.17, which illustrates how to draw *maṇḍalas*. This quotation could also have been reused by Ratnarakṣita, since this chapter is virtually reproduced from the corresponding part of the *Vajrāvalī*. Moreover, several sentences of the other chapters of *Padminī*, especially related to *abhiṣeka*, *pratiṣṭhā*, and *homa*, are found in the *Vajrāvalī* too. Such a style of writing reminds us that Ratnarakṣita translated Abhayākaragupta's work, such as the *Vajrāvalī*, into Tibetan.

### 3. Closing Remarks

Needless to say, a work itself is to be seen as part of the author's scholarly activities and as a reflection of his in-depth knowledge. Above all, quoting from authorities like Sūtras (/Tantras) and works of previous scholars could have been one of the most effective ways for showing his education and for endorsing the logic of his arguments. Ratnarakṣita shows his scholarship

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be as follows: vicikitsādhāraṇakaś caivājñaptam na kariṣyati (kariṣyati should sound like having three syllables).

<sup>35</sup> KITAMURA et al. 2012: 71 suggests that the four kinds of people are mentioned in the second verse: (1) one does not produce a *Bodhicitta*, (2) an impious one, (3) a skeptical one, (4) one does not do Buddha's order. KITAMURA et al. translates the verses from the Tibetan. However, it is difficult to read like that in Sanskrit. Although it is difficult to say what is the four kinds of people, it is plausible that the four can be *pṛthagjanas*, *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, *bodhisattvas* newly entered to the [Mahā-]yāna (navayānasamprasthita), mentioned in the *Ratnaḡotravibhāga* (Ch. 1 v. 153, JOHNSTON 1950: 74).

<sup>36</sup> KITAMURA et al. 2012: 193.

thoroughly in his *Padminī*, even though this work is merely the commentary of a single Tantra. The quotations in the *Padminī* dealt with in the present paper could possibly intimate part of scholarly activities of both Ratnarakṣita and his contemporaries.

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