

On the Exact Date of the *Pañcarakṣā* Manuscript Copied in the Regnal Year 39 of Rāmapāla in the Catherine Glynn Benkaim Collection*

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The purpose of this paper is to establish the date recorded in the colophon of a *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript copied in the reign of Rāmapāla of the Pāla Dynasty. In the year 2010, Eva Allinger and Gudrun Melzer published an article dealing with the *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript in a private collection together with colour images of the last folio including the colophon and 12 illuminated pages.¹ Although Melzer presented an elaborate study of the colophon, she did not notice that the colophon offered clues to determine the exact date of the manuscript.

The *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript belongs to the collection of Catherine Glynn Benkaim, and is now entrusted to the Cleveland Museum of Art with the accession number 16.2014 as a promised gift to the same museum. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to investigate the original in Cleveland in August 2017.² Based upon the investigation of the original and the infrared images (Plates 2 and 4), the colophon on folio 89r4–v1 is transliterated as follows:

r4 ... || deyadharmo <'>yaṃ pravaramahāyānāyāyinaḥ paramopāsakasādhukaiśrī-
[thāva³-s](u)
r5 tacintokasya⁴ yad=atra puṇyaṃ tad=bhavatv=ācāryopādhyāyamātāpi | || tr-
pūrvamaṅgamaṃ kṛ ○ tvā sakalasatvarāser=anuttarajñāna □ phalāvāpta<ya> iti || ||
parame ○ śvaraparamabhaṭṭārakaparamasaugatamahārājādhirājaśrīmadrāmapāla-
de(vapravardhamāna)

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¹ For previous articles dealing with the manuscript, see Weissenborn (2012: 305). Hidas (2012: 80–81) consults the manuscript for his critical edition of the *Mahāpratisarā*.

² I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Catherine Glynn Benkaim, the owner of the manuscript, and Dr. Sonya Rhie Mace, George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, for arranging for me to investigate the original and for providing me with photographic material.

³ The two *akṣaras thāva* become quite decipherable in the infrared image (Plate 2), although they are unclear in the color image (Plate 1).

⁴ The name of the donor is Cintoka, the son of śrī Thāva or Thāba. There is no difference between *ba* and *va* in this script. For the script of the manuscript, see note 15 below. As Melzer points out (Allinger & Melzer 2010: 410–411), personal names ending in *-oka-* or *-okā-* are often found in colophons written in Eastern India. Moreover, in the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* compiled by Vidyākara, we find about 20 names of poets ending in *-oka-* (see Ingalls 1965: 599–604). According to Chatterji (1926: 653), this form is very common in Middle Bengali genealogical works. Colophons from the Pāla period indicate that the usage is much earlier than the historical period associated with Middle Bengali.

v1 vijaya⟨rā⟩jye samvat* 39 bhādradine 6 brhaspativāre titiyāyām tithau⁵ «uttara-phālgu ○ nīnakṣatre»⁶ sattarme li ○ khiteyaṃ bhaṭṭārikā pañcarakṣeyaṃ lekha-śrīvibhūtideveneti || ...

V1 *titiyāyām* is based upon the Middle Indic ordinal number *tīya-* (cf. CDIAL 5912) and clearly designates the 3rd lunar day, modifying *tithau*. In addition to the 3rd lunar day, the colophon records another date, the 6th day of the month Bhādra (*bhādradine 6*). Although Melzer gives no explanation of how to interpret the fact that two different dates are mentioned (Allinger & Melzer 2010: 388n12), the 6th day can be regarded as a solar day.⁷ The month of Bhādra represents here a lunar month and a solar month at the same time. The solar Bhādra is a solar month after the *Siṃha saṃkrānti* (the sun's entry into the zodiacal sign Leo) in Bengal.⁸ Moreover, the colophon records the day of the week as Thursday (*brhaspativāre*), and the *nakṣatra* as *uttaraphālgunī*.

Using the computer program *pañcāṅga* developed by Michio Yano and Makoto Fushimi and based upon the *Sūryasiddhānta*,⁹ we can find the exact dates meeting the following four conditions.

1. 6th solar day of the solar Bhādra (= Siṃha).¹⁰
2. 3rd lunar day of the lunar Bhādra.
3. day of the week: Thursday.
4. *nakṣatra*: *uttaraphālgunī*.

According to the chronologies proposed so far, the possible reigning period of Rāmapāla ranges from ca. 1057 to 1141.¹¹ In this period, only the following two possible

⁵ A cross-shaped mark indicating the placement of the marginal addition is observed between the *akṣaras thau* and *sa*.

⁶ Line v1 up to *lekhaśrīvibhūtideveneti ||* and the phrase *uttaraphālgunīnakṣatre* added above the line are probably traced later in Nepal. A Nepalese type of the vowel sign *-e* in *nakṣatre* can be explained by the later tracing in Nepal. Tracing of original text for restoration is very common in Nepal. In the infrared image, traces of the original upper horizontal line of the *akṣara tre* are observed (Plate 4). Passages written later in Nepal follow the traced part (for the details, see Allinger & Melzer 2010: 390). For the script of the manuscript, see note 15 below.

⁷ According to Sircar (1965: 223), the solar years are prevalent in Bengal.

⁸ According to Sircar (1965: 224n1), the solar months have the same names as the lunar months in Bengal as follows: Meṣa = Vaiśākha; Vṛṣabha = Jyaiṣṭha; Mithuna = Āṣāḍha; Karkāṭa = Śrāvaṇa; Siṃha = Bhādrapada; Kanyā = Āśvina; Tulā = Kārttika; Vṛścika = Mārgaśīrṣa; Dhanu = Pauṣa; Makara = Māgha; Kumbha = Phālguna; Mīna = Caitra.

⁹ For this computer program and the traditional Indian calendar, see Yano 2007.

¹⁰ According to Sewell & Dikshit (1896: 12), the following two dating systems of the solar calendar are used in Northern India. The Bengal rule: “In Bengal, when a saṃkrānti takes place between sunrise and midnight of a civil day, the solar month begins on the following day; and when it occurs after midnight, the month begins on the next following, or third day.” The Orissa rule: “In Orissa, the solar month of the Amli and Vilayati eras begins civilly on the same day as the saṃkrānti, whether this takes place before midnight or not.” Sewell & Dikshit say nothing about which rule was applied in Bihar and how far the respective rules can be traced back.

¹¹ See Huntington (1984: 32–37), Huntington & Huntington (1990: 542), Mukherji (1999: 62), and Kim (2013: 223).

equivalents of the date meet all the four conditions:

1. Thursday, August 1, 1090 CE corresponds to the 3rd *tithi* in the bright fortnight of the lunar Bhādra as well as the 5th or 6th solar day of the solar Bhādra.¹²
2. Thursday, August 2, 1117 CE corresponds to the 3rd *tithi* in the bright fortnight of the lunar Bhādra as well as the 6th or 7th solar day of the solar Bhādra.¹³

If we take the regnal year 39 into consideration, the former date would be too early and could be excluded because it would assume Rāmapāla's accession as early as in ca. 1052. Therefore, we are left with only one possible equivalent of the date, i.e. **Thursday, August 2, 1117 CE**. If the first day of each regnal year corresponds to the day of Rāmapāla's accession based upon a solar calendar, his accession should fall between August 3, 1078 CE (= 7th solar day of the solar Bhādra) and August 2, 1079 CE (= 6th solar day of the solar Bhādra). The last regnal year of Rāmapāla known so far is year 53 recorded in the colophon of a *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript in the possession of the National Museum, New Delhi (Banerjee 1969: 61–62, pl. 1b). The colophon records the date as follows: *samvat* 53 vaiśākṣyadine* (read *vaiśākṣhadine*) 16. The first day of the regnal year 53 should fall between August 4, 1130 CE (= 7th solar day of the solar Bhādra) and August 3, 1131 CE (= 6th solar day of the solar Bhādra). If the 16th day of the month Vaiśākha is a solar day based upon the Bengali solar calendar,¹⁴ the date should correspond to April 9, 1131 CE or April 10, 1132 CE. In conclusion, it is established that **the reign of Rāmapāla began in 1078/1079 CE and continued at least up to 1131 CE**.

Appendix

Instead of my reading *v1 sattarme*, Melzer tentatively corrects her reading *sutnarme* following *-nakṣatre* as *sukarme*, and regards it as a calendrical element *yoga* (Allinger & Melzer 2010: 388n14). However, the combination of the *nakṣatra* of *uttaraphalgunī* (146°40'–160°) and the *yoga* of *sukarman* (80°–93°20') is astronomically not possible at the beginning of August, when the sun is located around 125°, because the *nakṣatra* depends on the celestial longitude of the moon and the *yoga* depends on the sum (approximately 270°–285°) of the longitude of the sun and the longitude of the moon. The actual *yoga* on Thursday, August 2, 1117 CE, is not *sukarman*, but *siddha* (266°40'–280°). I would therefore suggest the word should be read as *sattarme* and regarded as a place name. Melzer reads the first *akṣara* as *su*, but I suppose that this is the edge of the vertical line written thicker rather than the vowel sign for *-u*. The ligatures *tna* and *tta* are very similar in shape in this script.¹⁵ Using the geographical information databases, *India*

¹² The day is the 5th solar day according to the Bengal rule and the 6th solar day according to the Orissa rule because a *Siṃha saṃkrānti* took place between sunrise and midnight on July 27, 1090 CE.

¹³ The day is the 6th solar day according to the Bengal rule and the 7th solar day according to the Orissa rule because a *Siṃha saṃkrānti* took place between sunrise and midnight on July 27, 1117 CE.

¹⁴ The numeral 16 suggests a solar day rather than a lunar day which does not go beyond 15.

¹⁵ The script of the manuscript is what is called “Rañjanā” in Nepal (Rājvaṃśī 1960: 8–14). This type of script was developed under the reign of Nayapāla of the Pāla Dynasty in the first half of the 11th

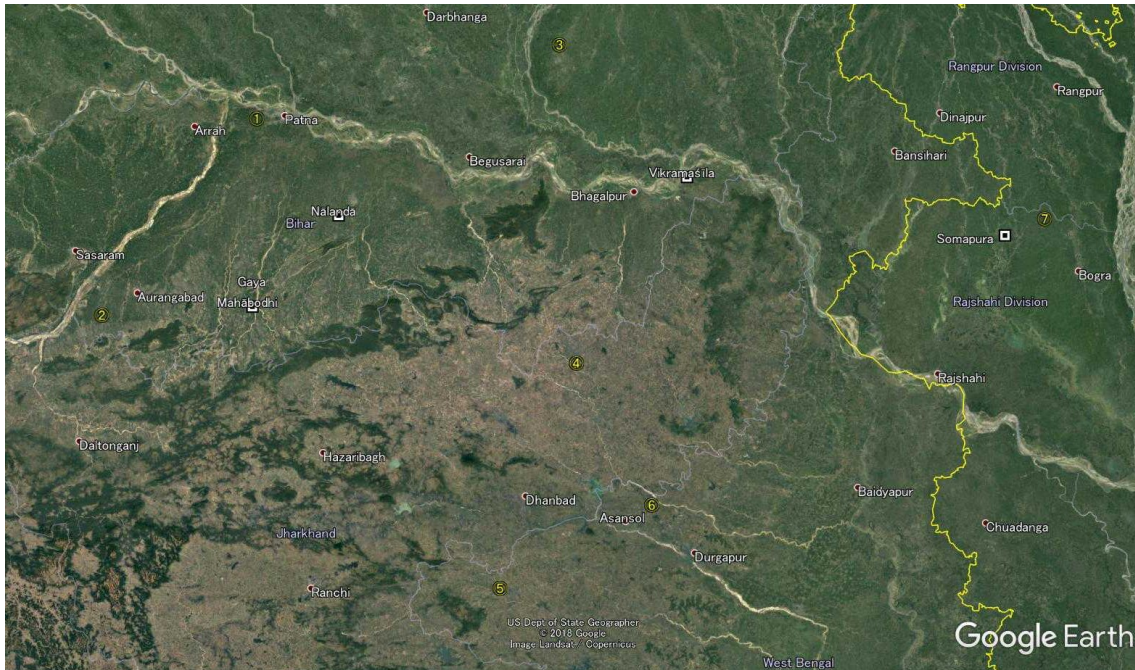
Place Finder and *Global Place Finder*, available on the internet and developed by the historian Tsukasa Mizushima, I have found seven villages named Sattar or Satar in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Bangladesh (Table 1 and Map 1). We cannot be sure that the manuscript was copied in any of the seven villages, but they can be selected as possible candidates for such a location. One final point should be made about the last consonant *m* in *sattarme*. As a tentative solution to this problem, I would like to suggest the omission of *grā*: *sattar*⟨*grā*⟩*me*.

Table 1. Villages named Sattar or Satar in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Bangladesh.

No	Village	Block	District	State/Division	Latitude	Longitude
1	Sattar	Maner	Patna	Bihar	25.594238	84.993892
2	Sattar	Nabinagar	Aurangabad	Bihar	24.639216	84.179252
3	Sattar	Satar Kataiya	Saharsa	Bihar	25.955440	86.604801
4	Satar	Deoghar	Deoghar	Jharkhand	24.430484	86.695270
5	Satar	Purulia I	Puruliya	West Bengal	23.351556	86.296710
6	Sattar	Jamuria	Barddhaman	West Bengal	23.750716	87.088199
7	Satar	Kalai	Joypurhat	Rajshahi	25.103896	89.188454

No: Numbers on Map 1. Latitudes and longitudes based upon *India Place Finder* or *Global Place Finder*.

Map 1



century CE (cf. Sander 1968: 172–173). Sander (1968: 171–177, Tafel 27–28) calls the script “Pāla-Schrift” and describes it on the basis of two block prints which the German expeditions excavated in Turfan. Saerji 2009 is very useful in deciphering the script.

Symbols Used in the Transliteration

◊	omission of (part of) an <i>akṣara</i> without gap in the manuscript
«»	insertion above the line
()	restorations in a gap
[]	damaged or unclear part of an <i>akṣara</i>
=	a division of an <i>akṣara</i> into two parts for convenience's sake
*	<i>virāma</i>
'	<i>avagraha</i>
	<i>daṇḍa</i>
	double <i>daṇḍa</i>
○	a string hole
□	a miniature
r	recto
v	verso
...	ellipsis

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Plate 1. Folio 89r. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.



Plate 2. Infrared photograph of folio 89r. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.



Plate 3. Folio 89v. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.



Plate 4. Infrared photograph of folio 89v. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.