A Note on the Kashmirian Recension of the \textit{Bhagavadgītā}: Gītā Passages Quoted in Bhāskara’s \textit{Gītābhāṣya} and \textit{Brahmasūtrabhāṣya}

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1. Introduction

In his publication of the BhG (K) text, SCHRADER has demonstrated the characteristics of the BhG (K), along with the possibility that “the vulgate of the \textit{Bhagavadgītā} was still unknown in Kashmir by the end of tenth century,”\cite{1} by which time Śaṅkara’s commentary on the BhG (V) could have reached the Kashmir region. Since SCHRADER’s publication, several scholars have worked on this regional recension of the BhG and discussed its value. BELVALKAR, an editor of the BhG, whose work is included in the so-called Poona Critical Edition of the \textit{Mahābhārata}, expressed skepticism about the peculiarity of the BhG (K). He has argued that it would be difficult to confirm that there was a version of the BhG that was particular to Kashmir.\cite{2} According to BELVALKAR, the differences between versions derive from a sectarian tradition where the \textit{pāthāntaras} (variant readings) of a sect teacher were kept unchanged by the followers, and have nothing to do with regional peculiarity.

BELVALKAR’s argument does not seem adequately supported, as he does not give sufficient examples. CHINTAMANI has demonstrated the insufficiency of BELVALKAR’s conclusion,\cite{3} discussing the peculiarity of the BhG (K) in greater detail and eventually agreeing with SCHRADER’s conclusion.\cite{4} In his 1965 article, VAN BUITENEN studied a passage in the BhG with reference to the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Bhāskara, and showed that the so-called BhG (K) was superior to the BhG (V).\cite{5} Although VAN BUITENEN’s conclusion needs to be thoroughly examined in the light of other examples,\cite{6} it provided another perspective on the discussion about the relationship between the archetype of the \textit{Gītā} text, the vulgate, and the Kashmirian recension. At the same time, VAN BUITENEN’s study of Bhāskara’s commentary on the BhG suggests that Bhāskara did play a very important role in the transmission of the BhG. Unfortunately the text of the BhGbh is now only available up to the middle of the ninth chapter, and we therefore have limited access to his text. We do have,
however, certain passages from the BhG that have already been lost but are quoted and preserved in the BSbh and the extant portion of the BhGb. In this paper, I will pick up and investigate these passages from the BhG and comment briefly on the issue at hand.

2. Bhāskara: The Commentator on the Kashmirian Recension of the BhG

There are several commentaries on the BhG (K). Among these, the most important in relation to Bhāskara is Rājānaka Rāmakaṇṭha’s commentary, called Sarvatabhadra. In the introduction to his edition of this, Chintamani referred to Bhāskara’s commentary on the BhG. The existence of Bhāskara’s commentary had already been posited by Sarma in 1933, but Sarma had only mentioned the possibility of its existence based on references to Bhāskara’s commentary in other literature, and did not know about the existence of BhGb manuscript when he published his article. 7) Chintamani, on the other hand, used “a fragmentary copy” of Bhāskara’s commentary on the BhG and clarified that Bhāskara “follows the Kashmirian recension in most of the place,” 8) After this, van Buitenen used a preliminary text of the BhGb and compared Bhāskara’s reading with the BhG (V). van Buitenen assumed: “Bhāskara had, besides Śaṅkara’s Vulgate, another text which must be considered a Vorlage of what now survives as the Kashmir version.” 9) Bhāskara’s text is considered to predate the so-called Kashmirian recension, as we will investigate in the following section.

Bhāskara’s commentary on the BhG, called Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇa, was published in 1965. The edition was prepared based on the two extant manuscripts from the libraries in Varanasi (= Ms V) and London (= Ms L). 10) For the most part, the edition is based on the codex unicus, either from Ms V or Ms L, and is full of editorial conjectures, especially in the first half, where the text has weak evidence and is based only on the highly corrupt Ms V. Therefore, as Shōshin points out, 11) this edition has to be carefully examined.

3. Variations within the Kashmirian Recension

As shown in the list of Chintamani, 12) Bhāskara’s reading of the BhG corresponds in some places to that of Rāmakaṇṭha (ca. 970), in other places to that of Abhinavagupta, and in other places gives another variation altogether. In some cases, his reading rejects the BhG (K) and follows the BhG (V). This fact deserves our keen attention, because it means that the so-called Kashmirian recension of the BhG contains many variants itself and is not

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always unified. For example, the reading of the BhG II.11ab varies among editions.

Poona  
Śaṅkara (vulgicate)  
Bhāskara  
BhG (KAg); (KR)  
BhG (KAy)  

In this example, Śaṅkara’s version reads “anvaśocas,” which was not adopted by Belvarkar in the Poona edition, Ānandavardhana (17c), one of the Kashmirian authors, follows Śaṅkara’s reading “anvaśocas” here, but does not follow the vulgate “prajñāvādāṁś ca bhāṣa” elsewhere. Bhāskara’s reading “anuśocas (m)s” agrees with that of the Kashmirian author, Rāmakanṭha and Abhinavagupta, while the reading “prajñāvādāṁś ca bhāṣa” corresponds to the vulgate. These uncertainties in the reading can be found scattered around these commentaries, suggesting that many different variants already existed at the time. In fact, on several occasions, Bhāskara introduces pāṭhāntaras. Here, I provide examples:

BhGbh ad II.19. (BhGbh: 52.)
apare tu pāṭhāntaram kurvanti “avināśino ‘prameyasya’ iti |

Here Bhāskara states “vināśino ‘prameyasya,” agreeing with the reading of the Kashmirian authors, but he also introduces vulgate readings as a potential variant and refutes them. His imagined opponent is most probably Śaṅkara, as we can see for example in the following case of III.22cd, where different commentators also diverge in their readings.

Śaṅkara (vulgicate)  
Bhāskara  
BhG (KAg); (KR); (KAy)  

Bhāskara’s text reads “vartāmy eva,” which is different both from the vulgate reading and that of Kashmirian authorities. The same passage, from another edition, is quoted by Bhāskara in his commentary on III.4.

BhGbh ad III.4. (BhGbh: 85.)
na ca jñānakarmano virodhit karmatyagō virodhasyāsiddhatvāt |  
kin na paśyasi bhagavantu 17) “varta eva ca karmanī” iti vadantu 18) |

Ritual activities are not to be abandoned on the ground that knowledge and ritual activities contradict each other, because there is no contradiction [between knowledge and ritual activities]. Why don’t you see the bhagavat that says “and I am still engaged in ritual activities”?
Here, Bhāskara refutes an opponent who insists that one should abandon ritual activities. It is very probable that the opponent here, as SHOSHIN presumed, is Śaṅkara. Bhāskara rejects his opponent’s view by quoting a passage from III.22 in the vulgate form, on which his opponent based his argument. These evidences show that Bhāskara knew Śaṅkara’s text and recognized the difference between it and the Kashmirian text.

4. Variants Caused by Errors and Mistakes

We have seen above that the uncertainty of the text of the BhG originates in the fact that the commentators already had access to several different versions of the text. At the same time, there may be other causes for the multiple variations of the readings found in the BhG. A possible cause for this is that errors and mistakes may have been made during transmission. The following is an example of such a mistake made by the editor of the BhGbh:

BhGbh ad II.41. (BhGbh: 65.)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nehābhikramā}
\; & \text{śti pratyāvāyo na vidyate} \\
\text{svalpaṃ apya asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt} & \text{|| BhG(K) II.41} \\
\text{atikrama} & \text{samśāradukkham yena buddhiyuktena karmanā so 'tikramaḥ} \\
\text{“abhikrama”} & \text{iti kecit paṭhanti}
\end{align*}
\]

This edition reads \textit{abhikrama} in the main text and reports a variant reading \textit{atikrama} in the footnote. This edition should have read \textit{atikrama} as in the Ms V, since the reading is not only attested by the \textit{pratīka}, but also by the commentary reporting a variant \textit{abhikrama}. We cannot know exactly why the editor adopted the reading \textit{abhikrama} in the main text. It is possible, however, that the editor’s judgment was influenced by the confused situation surrounding the textual transmission,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Śaṅkara (vulgate)} & \; \text{nehābhikramā}
\; & \text{śti pratyāvāyo na vidyate} \\
\text{BhG(KAv)} & \; \text{nehābhikramā}
\; & \text{śti pratyāvāyo na vidyate} \\
\text{BhG(KAg); (KR)} & \; \text{nehātikramā}
\; & \text{śti pratyāvāyo na vidyate}
\end{align*}
\]

As is shown above, the two Kashmirian authors agree with the reading \textit{atikrama}, while the other author agrees with the vulgate reading \textit{abhikrama}.

Just as SCHRADER reported that his sources were vitiated by the influence of the vulgate, our sources of the BhG, which have been transmitted through the hands of commentators, manuscript scribes, and editors, must have also been vitiated by the reading of the vulgate. With the case above regarding the variants “\textit{atikrama}” and “\textit{abhikrama},” we could reinves-
tigate the reading in the manuscript and other materials, and we could judge that the reading “abhikrama” in the edition of the BhGbh is simply a mistake. This is, however, not always the case with other textual variants. For example, Bhāskara quotes half of a śloka from the BhG XIII.61 in his BSbh.

BSbh ad I.2.6 (BSbh: 65.)

iśvaraḥ sarvabhūtanām hṛdy eṣa vasate 'ṛjuna |

The vulgate, as quoted by Śaṅkara in his bhāsyā, reads hṛdeśe 'ṛjuna tiṣṭhati. Very uniquely, some of our manuscripts read hṛdy eṣa vasate 'ṛjuna, which agrees with the reading of the BhG(K). According to the information from the editions and manuscripts, there are three variants of this passage.

Śaṅkara (vulgate), Dv (2), Ms Jai
BSbh (Dv), BhG (Av), Dv, Ms, Jd, SB
BhG (KAg); (KR), Ms Aw, IO, Ld, Mü

hṛdeśe 'ṛjuna tiṣṭhati
hṛdeśe vasate 'ṛjuna
hṛdy eṣa vasate 'ṛjuna

This might be a good example of how manuscript interpolation happens in the BhG(K). More precisely, if we suppose that the BhG(K) had been influenced by the vulgate, this interpolation must have occurred according to the following sequence.

hṛdy eṣa vasate 'ṛjuna

→ hṛdeśe vasate 'ṛjuna

→ hṛdeśe 'ṛjuna tiṣṭhati

If we see these interpolations or changes as caused by mistakes that occurred during manuscript transmission, Belvālkar’s observation: “a few others [= other readings] 23) are rejected by some of the Kashmirian writers and commentators themselves” should be carefully reconsidered, because it is very possible that these readings have not been “rejected” but instead influenced by the vulgate.

5. Concluding Remarks

Through comparing the BhG text and its commentaries, we can clarify that there is a variety of versions within the so-called Kashmirian Recension of the BhG. Bhāskara introduced a commentary on one of the versions of the BhG(K) in opposition to Śaṅkara’s reading of the BhG(V): we can know this from its references to the vulgate as a variant reading. Chintamani stated that “it is too well known that Kashmirian readings have not been adopted by any non-Kashmirian author.” 24) From this, it seems reasonable to assume
that Bhāskara was a Kashmirian. This conclusion has also been supported by RAGHAVAN and GOPALASWAMY AYENGAR. Unfortunately, we have not found any new evidence in this paper that would allow us to discuss whether Bhāskara was Kashmirian or active in the Kashmir region.

From limited examples that have been examined in the present paper, it is obvious that the BhG has suffered from contaminated textual transmission that was made more complex by the uncritical attitudes of commentators and careless mistakes by scribes and editors. Therefore, we should carefully reexamine the conclusions drawn by previous studies by closely investigating the BhG (V) and BhG (K). The edition of the BhGbh also urgently needs revising.

My sincere thanks are due to Prof. Lyne Bansat-Boudon for kindly reading my draft and correcting some mistakes.

2) BhG (KAv), introduction: 25.
6) VAN BUIJTELEN compared the first chapter of the BhG (V) and the BhG (K), where there is no commentary by Śaṅkara, saying “because I see little profit in arguing for one reading over another in the numerous cases where there is little to choose.” (VAN BUIJTELEN 1965: 108) The examination of other similar cases occurring in other chapters, however, would make his conclusion more convincing.
7) SARMA states in a footnote: “There is a rumour going about that a MS of Bhāskara’s Comm. exists somewhere in Kashmir.” (B. N. K. SARMA, “Bhāskara: A Forgotten Commentator on the Gītā,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 9 [1933]: 669, fn. 13.)  
9) BhG(KR), introduction: xxxi.
10) VAN BUIJTELEN 1965: 104.
12) SHOSHIN Kiminori 正信公章, “Bhāskara saku Bhagavadgitābhāṣya ni okeru Bhagavadgītā inyōku ni tsuite” Bhāskara 作 Bhagavadgitābhāṣya における Bhagavadgitā の用句について [Citation from the Bhagavadgītā in Bhāskara’s Bhagavadgitābhāṣya], *Indo shiisōshi kenkyū インド思想史研究* 1 (1981): pp. 7–8.  
13) CHINTAMANI compared the vulgate reading with readings recorded in the commentaries of Rājānaka Rāmakantha, Bhāskara, and Abhinavagupta, (BhG(KR), introduction: xliii–lxxxiii.)  
14) This edition reads anvaṣocas, which is the editor’s emendation probably influenced by the reading of the vulgate, Ms V reads anuṣocas which might be a corrupt form (dropping of anusvāra) of anuṣocams recorded in BhG (K).
15) The vulgate reads “anāśino,” while Ms V and edition read “avinaśino.” Bhāskara might have mistakenly quoted the text by adding the negative affix to his text “vināśino,” or a simply scribal error may have occurred during the transmission of the text. We must also bear in mind that the text here is based on a
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corrupt manuscript. 16) Editor supplies the word varam in parentheses after karmatyağa, which is not necessary. 17) Editor’s emendation. Ms reads bhagavatam 18) Editor’s emendation. Ms reads vaddatam 19) Shoshin 1981, pp. 14–15, fn. (9). 20) In his commentary on III.22, Bhāskara discusses this variant reading. According to this edition, Bhāskara reports variant readings in order to avoid “a loss of authentic readings.” Since the text in the single Ms is highly corrupt and very problematic, it will not be fruitful to investigate it further, although Bhāskara’s argument seems very important. ( Cf. BSbh: 95.) 21) See BhGbh: 65. 22) Schrader 1930: 2. 23) The comment in brackets is supplied by the present author. 24) BhG(KR), introduction: xxxi. 25) Nevertheless, most scholars are reluctant to accept the assumption that Bhāskara is Kashmirian: “The fact that Bhāskara’s Gītā text follows mostly readings designated Kashmirian is not enough to show that our Bhāskara was a Kashmirian.” ( V. Raghavan, “Bhāskara’s Gītābhāṣya,” Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens 12/13 [1968]: p. 282); “but this cannot be conclusive proof that Bhāskara was a Kashmirian.” ( T. K. Gopalaswamy Aiyengar, “Bhāskara on the Gītā,” in Gitasamikṣā, ed. E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma [Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara University, 1971], p. 53.)

〈Texts and Abbreviations〉
For the details of the manuscripts of the BhGbh (Ms V and Ms L) and the BSbh (Aw, IO, Jai, Jd, Ld, Md, Mü, SB), see Takahiro Kato, The First Two Chapters of Bhāskara’s Śārīrakamīmāṁsābhāṣya: Critically Edited with an Introduction, Notes and an Appendix. Online Publication, ULB Sachsen-Anhalt, 2011, URN: http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:4-9304.


(This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24820008.)

〈Key words〉 Bhagavadgītā, Kashmir Recension, Bhāskara, manuscript (s)

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