Textual Criticism in the Gopālikā of Parameśvara III
on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Sphoṭasiddhi

HARIMOTO Kengo

1. Introduction

Many of us, students of pre-modern South Asian civilizations, strive to learn more about the past based on written sources. In order for the information we gain from them to be accurate, we would like to have reliable texts. For that goal, we would prepare critical editions and practice textual criticism. It is yet difficult to summarize what textual criticism is or should be; ¹) I would hence like to make do with citing a fragment of Housman (1922): “... it [textual criticism] comprises of recension and emendation.” Conversely, if we see someone does recension and emendation, we may consider the person a textual critic, a philologist.

We do not always associate authors of pre-modern South Asia with the idea of textual criticism. Still, since textual criticism is “purely a matter of reason and of common sense” (Housman 1922: 68), we should not be surprised to find an author who wrote in Sanskrit and practiced textual criticism. What I intend to do here is to draw attention to a commentator who, to my eye, appears to have practiced textual criticism by comparing manuscripts and proposing readings that he thought were preferable.

2. The Gopālikā of Parameśvara III on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Sphoṭasiddhi

The Gopālikā (G in the following) is a commentary on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Sphoṭasiddhi (S), and its author, Parameśvara III (P) is a member of the celebrated Payyur family of Kerala who many consider to have flourished after 1400 CE. ²) One feature of the commentary is its very frequent mentions of variant readings. ³) Then, when I read the S with the commentary, I started to be puzzled by the fact that very often readings mentioned as alternatives were in fact preferable. ⁴)

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3. Preliminary Observations

3.1. How Parameśvara Introduces Variants

P uses the following expressions when he introduces variants: ... iti vā pāthaḥ “or the reading is ...” (pp. 12, 15, 20, 45, 101, 116, 165, 167, 174, 192, 232); ... iti pāthe “if the reading is ... [followed by an interpretation according to that reading” (pp. 15, 34, 87, 92, 96, 118, 150, 151, 178 × 3, 191, 218, 244); ... iti pāṭahaḥ “there is a reading ...” (p. 29); tathaiva kvacit pāṭahaḥ “exactly that reading is found somewhere” (pp. 57, 244); ... iti kvacit pāṭahaḥ “there is a reading ... somewhere” (p. 66); kvacit tu ... iti pāṭahaḥ “somewhere is the reading ...” (pp. 73, 89, 126, 154, 191, 237, 240); ... ity eva pāṭahaḥ “there is precisely the reading ...”5) (p. 74); kvacit pāṭahaḥ ... iti “somewhere is the reading ...” (pp. 106, 131, 152, 161, 162, 163, 166, 175, 190 × 2, 191, 195, 196, 198, 212, 224, 236, 242, 246); kvacit punar ... iti ... pathyate ... “but somewhere the reading is ...” (p. 123); tathaiva vā pāṭahaḥ “or the reading [should be] exactly that” (pp. 138, 200); anyah pāṭahaḥ ... iti “there is another reading: ...” (pp. 158); kvacit ... iti pāṭahaḥ “somewhere is the reading ...” (pp. 165, 241); kvacit ... iti “somewhere ...” (p. 166); kvacit tu ... iti grantho na ḍṛṣyate “however, the passage ... is missing somewhere”6) (p. 171); tathā ca kvacit pāṭahaḥ ... iti “similarly, somewhere is the reading ...” (pp. 67, 176); ... ity eva kvacit pāṭahaḥ, kvacit tu ... iti “only ... is the reading somewhere, but in another place is the reading ...” (p. 176);7) anyathā vā pāṭahaḥ ... iti “or the reading is different, namely ...” (p. 246); kvacit tu ... paṭhantī “they read ... somewhere” (p. 254).

The expression typeset in bold typeface above will be mentioned as possible typical expression to introduce suggestions for emendations below.

3.2. What Parameśvara does Not Report

Certain kinds of variants are never reported in the G although P most likely encountered them. First, no completely meaningless readings are mentioned. It is a fact that certain types of errors in manuscripts produce completely unintelligible series of letters. Such readings are never reported. Nor have I found a mention that he could not recover a meaningful reading from his sources.

Major deviations, such as a chunk of text missing or displaced, are not reported, either.8) The S is relatively a small text. So, this could be a testimony that the transmission of it was more or less stable.

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In addition, although I treat the first reading P mentions as his constituted text\(^9\) and call the readings subsequently introduced variants, I am not certain if he in fact preferred the first reading. Sometimes the interpretation of the first reading is long and seems forced, and subsequent variants are clearer, requiring no commentary or only short commentary. Those “variants” are at times preferable (hence the suspicion of conjectural emendations). He dismisses a reading only one time, as far as I could find, by calling it an *apapātha* “corrupted reading” from another reading (p. 191).\(^{10}\)

### 4. Classifications of Variant Reports in the Gopālikā

I classify P’s variant reports into four groups.

#### 4.1. Variant Readings of Texts Maṇḍana Quotes

P mentions variant readings of texts quoted by Maṇḍana. He reports that he knew different readings of Kumārila’s Ślokavārttika twice; those of Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadiya, 1st Kāṇḍa twice, that of Śabara’s Bhāṣya on the Mīmāṃsāsūtras once.\(^{11}\) In those cases, his sources of variants do not have to be those of the S. He could have been looking at manuscripts or commentaries of those texts, or for some, he could have already committed them to memory. He was at least looking at the Nyāyaratnakara and the Kāśikā commentaries on the Ślokavārttika (pp. 207–8). I do not discuss those readings any further here although I believe comparisons of readings Maṇḍana quotes against various other sources will yield interesting results.

#### 4.2. Variants with Sources

We may presume that variants P reports with regard to S came from S’s manuscripts or commentaries on it. Still, I would first like some confirmation. Here are a few examples of variant readings of the S that P most probably saw in his sources:

(1) We find the following on p. 89: *pūrve ‘pi varṇāḥ ... nāpratyāyakā iti; kvacit tu pratyāyakā iti pāṭah. P considers that the S had nāpratyāyakā but notes that he finds the reading without the double negative somewhere else. The editor, S. K. Rāmanātha Śāstri, adopts the first reading in his S but notes *pratyāyakāḥ, mūlam* in a footnote. This means his manuscript of the S had the reading P says is a variant. That is, there indeed was a manuscript lineage with that reading. Since there is very little semantic difference between the two readings, we may eliminate the possibility that the reading P first introduces was a result of P’s conjecture.*

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(132) Textual Criticism in the Gopālīkā of Parameśvara III on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Sphoṭasiddhi (K. Harimoto)

(2) On p. 131, we find prathamasamadhitigamād anupākhyātam iti vyāsena kvacit pāṭhāḥ for prathamasamadhitigamānupākhyātam of the constituted text of the S. Again, S. K. R. Śastri notes that his manuscript in fact reads what P says is a variant. P’s variant is corroborated by a manuscript. The difference is whether to read two words or one compound. Two readings do not cause much differences in the understanding of the text; if any, the variant reading is easier to follow. Thus it is unlikely that the reading P first mentions was conjectural.

Additionally, one may compare many examples like saṅgatisamvedanasamayasyeti vā pāṭhāḥ; arthas tu pūrvavat “or the reading is saṅgatisamvedanasamayasya; the meaning however is the same as [explained] before” regarding the first reading saṅgatisamvedanasamayataḥ (p. 12). The word in question is read with the preceding word purah “before” that can take the ablative or the genitive case. The meaning, “before the time of acknowledgment of understanding,” is the same (as P says). Since there is no reason to introduce a variant as an emendation, it is more likely that this indeed was a variant. This would be a sign of thoroughness of P as a philologist.\[12\]

4.3. Variants without Sources (Suggestions of Conjectural Emendations?)

Although P most probably had various sources for the text of the S, one expression perhaps signals that the alternative reading P mentions is not from a source but from his thought. The expression typeset in bold typeface in section 3.1 is the one (pp. 138, 200). After a paraphrase of the word P considers is in the root text, he says the paraphrase may be the reading. The reason why he did not adopt the reading as the root in the first place is probably because he did not see such a reading.

Here are two more examples of references to alternative readings that might be P’s suggestions to emend the text.

(1) saṃuccayavāṣayatvād iti vā pāṭhāḥ “or the reading is ‘saṃuccayavāṣayatvā’ (since [the knowledge] has a collection as its object)” (p. 174) in reference to the reading saṃuccitavāṣayatvāt “since [the knowledge] has collected phonemes as its object”: the latter (but introduced first) reading seems a little clumsy to yield the desired understanding (saṃuccitā varṇā vāṣayo yasya tasya bhāvas tatvam). Still, from the context, the preferred reading is this one that was introduced first. The expression, iti vā pāṭhāḥ (“or the reading is . . .”) attached to the alternative reading might also suggest that he did not see the reading anywhere.

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(2) kvacit tu na te 'sādhāraṇarūpenu ti pāthah (p. 240) in reference to the reading na tenāsādhāraṇena rūpena: The whole sentence reads bhave 'pi pratyutpatti varṇānaṁ na tenāsādhāraṇena rūpenārthaśya jñāpakāḥ ("Even if there is a difference every time phonemes are produced, [the phonemes] do not let the meaning known by that dissimilar nature"). The sentence is incomplete in that it has no subject but only the predicate (as seen by the fact that I supplied the subject in brackets). P says the subject of the sentence is varṇāḥ and it is understood by context. The word tena is not doing much, either. In the alternative reading, these two clumsiness disappear. This is a case where a superior reading is mentioned second.

4.4. Multiple Variants

At times, P mentions several readings for one place.

For example, we find kvacit pāthah jñāpakāṅgate ca jñāpakasamketakāla iti ... kvacit pāthah jñāpakāṅgam ca saṅketakāla iti on p. 250 of the edition. This is in reference to the reading jñāpanāṅgate ca jñāpakah saṅketakāle that he first introduces. P’s statement can be visualized as:

jñāpanāṅgate ca jñāpakah saṅketakāle niyogata āśriyeta
jñāpakāṅgate ca jñāpakasamketakāle niyogata āśriyeta
jñāpakāṅgam ca saṅketakāle niyogata āśriyeta

Immediately obvious is the repetition of graphically similar jñāpana and jñāpaka in the first two readings. None of the readings appears to be, despite P’s explanations, very comprehensible. What the context requires is something to the effect of "Also, if [the cause-effect relationship or the inherent difference of phonemes] is part of the informing process, it must be relied on at the time of forming a convention (what sequence of phonemes denotes what meaning)." Then the most desirable reading becomes jñāpanāṅgate ca saṅketakāle niyogata āśriyeta, i.e., the first reading without jñāpakah. We experience this sort of possible multiple readings when a correction regarding erroneously repeated text is present in a manuscript. Sometimes the nature of the correction is unclear. There are cases when such confusing corrections produce different readings in descendant manuscripts. I suspect that P was looking at such a case in his manuscripts and proposing different solutions. His kvacit does not have to be limited to real sources but it could be his thought.
5. Conclusion

Paramēśvara was aware that the text he was commenting upon was fluid and that various readings were possible. He probably witnessed that in various source materials regarding the text of the Sphotasiddhi, including manuscripts and commentaries. In addition, he applied his thought to determine how the text should be. We may very well call him a philologist. Unlike a modern philologist, however, he did not decide what really was the text Maṇḍana wrote. It is left to the reader which reading to choose. That is what Biardeau (1958) did. Still, readers should practice their common sense and reason to determine which reading to choose. Better yet, we should go back to (and find more) manuscripts of both the Sphotasiddhi and the Gopālikā. This seems particularly necessary given that the first one-third of the text of the Sphotasiddhi was never edited from its manuscripts; we only have an extracted text from the Gopālikā.

Notes


2) Its editio princeps is published as a part of S. K. Rāmanātha Śāstri, Sphotasiddhi of Ācārya Maṇḍana Miśra with the Gopālikā of Rṣiputra Paramēśvara (Madras: Madras Government, 1931). In its introduction the editor S. K. Rāmanātha Śāstri has a discussion on the Payyur family of Kerala.

3) In the following, I will obviously be relying on the published text of the G. I do not put particular faith in the edition, but I hope the general course of discussions will not be altered even when I get access to more raw material.

4) Cf. Biardeau’s edition that was based on the editio princeps (Madeleine Biardeau, La Demonstration du Sphota par Maṇḍana Miśra, Introduction, Traduction et Commentaire [Pondicherry: Institut Français d’Indologie, 1958]). She adopts many “variants” mentioned in the G in her constituted text of the S.

5) Should this be iti vā pāṭhah?

6) In this particular case, the “passage” in fact missing is just one word, niravadyam. Or we should emend the text to granthe “in the work” instead of grantho. P uses the word grantha in the sense of book in other parts of the G (e.g., pp. 262–65). This would mean that he learned the reading with the
word niravadyam from somewhere. A commentary that predates his is a possibility.

7) These two cases on p. 176 involve readings of the Śābarabhāṣya quoted in the S.

8) The only exception is the one about just one word noted in note 6.

9) This appears to have been the editing policy of S. K. R. Sāstri. First of all, as the Sanskrit introduction says (pp. ii–iv), the manuscript of the S was available only after p. 73 of his edition. The root text was extracted from the commentary up to the end of the Vṛtti on stanza 8. Even after that, Sāstri often goes against the reading in his sole manuscript of the Sphoṭasiddhi and chooses the reading either P interprets or he mentions first. See, e.g., pp. 82, 83, 86–88, 90–94, 99, 100–105, 108–110, 112, 113, 116–18, 124–34, 136, etc.

10) anyah pāthah "spaṣṭam padabhedena praṭiyete"ti, padabheda nety apapāthah (p. 191, l. 22).

11) Ślokavārttika: Sphoṭa 71 (p. 116); Sphoṭa 120 (p. 178); Vākyapādiya 1.87 (p. 158); 1.86 (p. 163); Śābarabhāṣya (p. 176). The numbering of the Ślokavārttika follows that in the Mīmaṁśā-Śloka-Vārttika of Kumārila Bhatta, with the Commentary Called Nyāyaratnakara by Pārtha Sārathi Miṣra, edited by Rāmaśāstri Tailanga, Chowkhambā Sanskrit Series, no. 3 (Benares: Chowkhambā Sanskrit Series Office, 1898–99). For the Vākyapādiya, Vākyapādiya of Bhartṛhari, with the Vṛtti and the Paddhati of Vṛṣabhadeva, edited by K. A. Subrahmanya Iyer (Poona: Deccan College, 1966).

12) Variants of this class may not affect the meaning of the text in question much. I believe, however, that reporting them as thoroughly as possible is important. For, as a whole, we gain knowledge about the quality of the text transmission: if it was more fluid or rigid.

13) The difference being referred to here is of the same phoneme, for example, rā, in rāja or jarā.

The opponent’s position is that there are differences between the rā in rāja and that in jarā.

14) "jñāpakā" ity atra arthād "varṇā" iti sidhyati. (p. 240, ll. 12–13)

15) For the supplied subject, see the next note.

16) The masculine gender of the word vācakah is problematic. In the next sentence, the same thing is referred to in the feminine case (enām). It is not impossible to interpret it (the first one referring to ānupūrṇaviviseṣa and the second ānupūrṇī) from the context or by following P’s interpretation (the first being kāryakāraṇabhāva and the second kāryakāraṇatā). Still, from the context, the singular subject (indicated by the verb āśrīyeta) should be samatthāpakhacittakāryakāraṇatā taṅkṛto vā svabhāvabhave dah in the preceding parallel passage (p. 248). Since these are two possibilities of what ānupūrṇī is, the feminine pronoun in the next sentence is reasonable.

〈Key words〉 Sphoṭa, philology, textual-criticism, commentary, Payyur family

(Part-Time Lecturer, University of Hamburg, PhD)