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A Textual Study of the *Lakṣaṇaṭīkā

Yonezawa, Y.

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Author: Yonezawa, Y.
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Chapter 2. The Style and Purpose of the *LṬ

This chapter attempts to answer the questions of how and for what purpose the *LṬ was compiled. In the previous chapter it was suggested that Śīlākara (sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas) brought the *LṬ MS to Tibet. Here I also speculate as to why this particular MS was carried back.

First of all, I briefly describe the writing style. Next, I hypothesize on the basis of certain textual features that the present MS of the *LṬ is a copy. This copy, I suggest, was made by Śīlākara/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas. Thirdly, I ascertain the chronology of the *LṬ with respect to the Candrakīrti translations of Pa tshab Nyi ma grags and Jayānanda. Finally, tentative answers to the above questions of how and why the text was composed are offered.

1 The Writing Style

In contrast to the commentarial treatises which they annotate, the notes included in the *LṬ are brief, consisting for the most part of glosses on select words or phrases.

Sāṅkṛtyāyana and dGe 'dun chos 'phel gave to the *LṬ the provisional titles of '*Lakṣaṇaṭīkā*' and '*dbu ma'i skor gyi 'grel pa*' (*Comments on the Madhyamaka Treatises*), respectively[1]. Because the original title of the *LṬ is unknown, the present study follows the provisional title[2] given by Sāṅkṛtyāyana.

1.1 The *LṬ as Lecture Notes

As stated above, the notes of the *LṬ mostly consist of glosses, word-divisions, and explanations of sentence structure, and so on. This writing style reminds us of the fragmentary MSS of Vairocanarakṣita's *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* and **Dharmadharmatāvibhāga-vivṛti* reported in Kano 2008[3]. The stylistic features of the six Yogācāra/Tathāgatagarbha commentarial works by Vairocanarakṣita (fl. 11th/12th century CE) are described by Kano as follows:

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[1] See 2.2 and 2.3.2 in Chapter 2 above (pp. 24–26, 27–29).

[2] Concerning a definition of the term *ṭīkā*, see the second chapter (*dvitīya-adhyāya*) of Rājaśekhara's (880–920 CE) *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* (Dalal & Sastry 1934: 5): *yathāsambhavam arthasya ṭīkanaṃ ṭīkā* | "A *ṭīkā* is an explanation [of certain parts of a text] as far as possible (i.e., a subcommentary)."

[3] See Kano 2005, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, and Ye, Li, and Kano 2013.

> ... they comment selected words from the root texts, providing synonyms, analyzing compounds and word formation, interpreting the syntactic construction of sentences, explaining canonical stories, and referring to variant readings of the root texts. The works seem to have been composed for personal use, like lecture notes prepared by a teacher or student, with words in the works being glossed so selectively that they do not convey so much as a general idea of the doctrinal content or background of the root texts[4].

This description about the glosses by Vairocanarakṣita can be applied to the *_LṬ_.

There were many Tibetan *lo tsā ba*s who went to India, studied under the guidance of Indian *paṇḍit*s, and, in collaboration with them, translated Indian texts into Tibetan. What we know of the MS's compiler (gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags), the MS's provenance (Vikramaśīla monastery), and its stylistic features, suggests that the *_LṬ_ was originally a collection of lecture notes taken by gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags.

1.2 The Teacher and the Student

Lecture notes presuppose a teacher and student(s). Most probably gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags' teacher was Abhayākaragupta, whose extensive and encyclopedic knowledge of Buddhism is known from his *MmA*[5], and who collaborated with sNur D[h]arma grags on a Tibetan translation of Candrakīrti's *ŚSV*. It could be imagined that the lecture was given while the Sanskrit MSS of the commentarial treatises were in hand, and the Tibetan student would have taken notes on the glosses to the words and phrases.

Furthermore, copying of the *VS* and the *VSS* might have been also guided by Abhayākaragupta, since Tibetan sources describe him as a great Vinaya expert[6].

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[4] Kano 2008a: 345.

[5] Ruegg 1981: 114-115.

[6] *BA*: ka 16b-17a.; Roerich 1949: 32-33.; Erb 1990: lxxxix.; Erb 1997: 28.

2 Textual Features of the *LṬ

In what follows I examine certain textual features of the MS which were not addressed in the previous chapter. More concretely, the issue of dittography, the change of script in folio 3a, and the length of time it would have taken to copy the MS are dealt with below. This investigation leads to a discussion of the circumstances under which the MS was carried to Tibet.

2.1 The Dittographies in the *LṬ

We come across two writing errors, dittographies in which whole passages are repeated (14a1–3 = 18b7–8 ad *MABh* and 16b6 = 16b6–7 ad *CŚṬ*)[7].

If the *LṬ is a collection of lecture notes, as seems probable, it is unlikely that this unintentional repetition took place during the lecture. In other words, the dittographies, amounting to one to three lines of the MS, were probably not caused by speech errors on the part of the lecturer or by writing errors of the student during the lecture, but most likely occurred as a result of visual errors on the part of a copyist. In other words, the dittography almost certainly proves that the present MS is not the autograph of the original collection of lecture notes, but rather a copy.

2.2 The Change of Script in the *LṬ

As discussed in the previous chapter, an Indian script is employed from the beginning of the first folio (1b) to the fourth line of the third folio (3a4)[8]. The Tibetan *dBu med* script follows from the next line (3a5). Let us look at the likely reason for this unique feature.

As far as the *LṬ MS is concerned, it can be assumed that the Tibetan author or scribe began to write the text in an Indian script, but soon switched to his accustomed Tibetan script. Two points support this presupposition. First, the script change took place in the middle of a sentence (line 3a4 ends with *kiṁ* and line 3a5 begins with *kartavyaṁ*). It hardly seems possible that a different person would have taken over as scribe in mid-sentence to write the Tibetan script. Secondly, several emendations are found in the margins next to the Indian script, while few are found in the part of the

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[7] See the Diplomatic Edition (II.2) below.

[8] See 3.2 in Chapter 1 above (p 33.).

MS where the Tibetan script is used[9]. This observation suggests that a single scribe who was more skilled at writing in Tibetan *dBu med* than in the Indian script changed over to *dBu med* in order to facilitate the process and avoid errors.

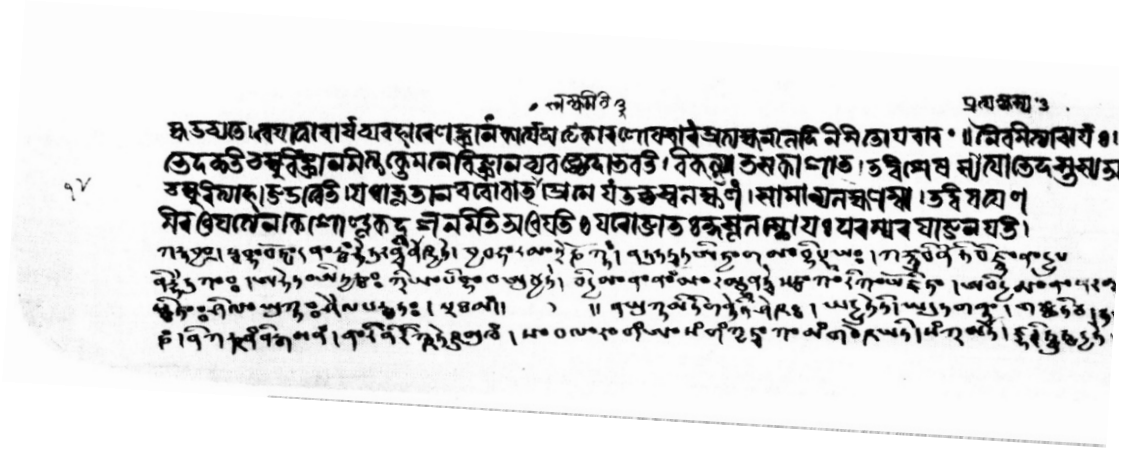

Figure 6. Left part of folio 3a of the **LṬ* MS

As the MS is almost certainly a copy, there are two possibilities. Either the compiler, Dharmakīrti (gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags) wrote the entire **LṬ* in an Indian script and the copyist started to replicate this before switching over to *dBu med*, or Dharmakīrti (gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags) himself switched over to *dBu med* soon after starting his note-taking, and the copyist replicated this switch. Although there is no definite proof, the former is more probable, since it is hard to imagine that it would have been necessary for the compiler to change the script.

2.3 How Long Did It Take to Copy the **LṬ*?

Let us estimate how long it took to copy the **LṬ* MS. Such an enquiry is helpful as it is otherwise usually difficult to get a sense of the time and effort that went into copying a manuscript. A standard of measure can be arrived at from a close look at the *Vkn* MS, which consists of 78 leaves, and the *JĀA* MS with which it is bundled, which consists of 32 leaves. Their colophons run as follows:

[9] See the Diplomatic Edition (II.2) below.

JĀA: *mahārājādhirājaśrīmadgopāladevarājye samvat 12 śrāmaṇadiṇe 30 likhitam idaṃ upasthāyakacāṇḍokeneti ||*[10]

"This was hand-copied by the [royal] servant Cāṇḍoka on the 30th day of the 5th month (Śrāvana = July/August) [in] the 12th year of the reign of the holy King Gopāla, the supreme king of kings."

Vkn: *śrīmadgopāladevarājye samvat 12 bhādradiṇe 29 likhiteyaṃ upasthāyakacāṇḍokasyeti ||*[11]

"This was hand-copied by the [royal] servant Cāṇḍoka on the 29th day of the 6th month (Bhādrapada = August/September) [in] the 12th year of the reign of the holy King Gopāla."

Here it is clear that the scribe Cāṇḍoka[12], immediately after copying the *JĀA*, began copying the *Vkn* and completed the task within one month. The text of the *Vkn* is written on 77 leaves (1a and 78b are blank; the folios measure 6.2 x 30 cm) each of which, except for 78a, contains 7 lines consisting of approximately 60 *akṣara*s. This amounts to a total of approximately 64,800 *akṣara*s. Accordingly, it can be concluded that Cāṇḍoka wrote approximately 2,160 *akṣara*s per day. When looking through both MSS, it seems that the scribe grew better at copying over time, for there are fewer errors in the *Vkn* MS than in the *JĀA*. At any rate, we can tentatively use Cāṇḍoka's writing speed as a standard of measure to estimate how long it took to copy the **LṬ* MS.

The **LṬ* MS, which measures 6 cm x 57 cm, consists of 18 leaves or 36 folios. The lines in each folio are as follows: 0 in 1a; 3 in 14b (1 folio); 4 in 10a (1 folio); 7 in 1b–2b (3 folios); 8 in 3a–7a, 10b–14a, and 15a–18b (25 folios in total); 9 in 7b–9b (5 folios). Since each line contains approximately 150 *akṣara*s, the total number amounts to approximately 40,000 *akṣara*s. On the basis of our calculation for the *Vkn*, we can estimate that the **LṬ* MS was written over approximately 18.5 days. However, this estimation does not take the script change into consideration. The fact that the Tibetan copyist switched from an Indian script to his accustomed Tibetan script suggests that the MS may have been written in less time than this.

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[10] SG on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature 2004: vol. I, 74-75.

[11] SG on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature 2004: vol. I, 60.

[12] His copies of both MSS are dedicated by Śīladhvaja, "who is no doubt to be identified as the well-known twelfth-century Tibetan visitor to India and translator Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan, a student of the *mahāpaṇḍita* Abhayākaragupta at Vikramaśīla." (Kapstein 2009: 70, n. 102.) See also Fussman 2007: 644–645.

2.4 The *LṬ as a Copy

Two questions now arise, namely, who copied the *LṬ* and when did the copying take place? In the following I attempt to answer these questions.

2.4.1 The Copyist

The copyist might have been Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas, who carried the MS to Tibet. Since his skill as a scribe of Tibetan MSS has been ascertained from the description in the *BA*[13], there is no difficulty in assuming that it was his hand that copied the MSS in India and that he then carried them with him to Tibet. Based on the brief description on the cover folio of the VS, 'written by Śīlākāra,' Sāṅkṛtyāyana seems to have identified this person as a scribe of the interlinear notes in the *VS* MS[14]. However, it seems probable that he was also responsible for copying the **LṬ* and the *VV* MSS. Concerning the *VV*, the additional notes, 'a disciple of Jo tsa mi' as well as the word *yathālabdham* in the *VV* colophon, might support this supposition[15].

This claim does not contradict the conclusion that the compiler of the **LṬ* was a Tibetan called Dharmakīrti or gNur/sNur D[h]arma grags. It is likely that his original lecture notes served as the exemplar for the copyist.

2.4.2 The Date of Copying

The change in the script, which would have facilitated the copying process, suggests that Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas had little time to copy the lecture notes. This situation would indicate that the copying took place at the end of his first stay in India, in 1136 CE at the earliest, or during his second visit.

During his second stay in India, he not only studied various treatises under the thirteen aforementioned teachers, but he also met Alaṅkāradeva, with whom he translated the *VSS*. Since the *BA* states that he "collected many man-loads of Indian books" at the end of his second visit[16], it seems certain that the copying would have been completed by this time. During his third visit, on the other hand, it is improbable

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13 See 4.6.1 in Chapter 1 above (pp. 18–22.).

14 See 2.3.1 in Chapter 1 above (p. 8–9.).

15 See 4.4 in Chapter 1 above (p. 17.).

16 See 4.6.1 in Chapter 1 above (p. 20.).

that he collected Sanskrit MSS to carry back with him, because his purpose at that time was to study the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

In sum, it is likely that Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas copied the **LṬ* at the end of his first stay or during his second stay in India. Although the specific year cannot be determined, it can be judged that the copying was completed by the middle of the 12th century CE.

3 The **LṬ* in a History of Tibetan Buddhism

Until Sāṅkṛtyāyana and dGe 'dun chos 'phel reported their findings, the MS of the **LṬ* seems to have been neglected in studies of Tibetan Buddhism. Based upon information about the two figures who were most responsible for popularizing Candrakīrti's treatises in Tibet at that time, namely, Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (1055?–1145? CE)[17] and Jayānanda (*fl.* late eleventh to early twelfth century),[18] we might speculate about the circumstances in which the MS of the **LṬ* arrived at Tibet.

3.1 Pa tshab Nyi ma grags

Born in 'Phan yul, north of Lhasa, Pa tshab studied in India for about 23 years (presumably from 1077 to 1100), mostly in Kashmir[19]. As a disciple and later a collaborator of Sūkṣmajana, Kanakavarman, Hasumati/Mahāsumati, Tilakakalaśa, Muditaśrī, and Jayānanda, he translated and revised several important treatises by Candrakīrti.

Pa tshab's work of translating thus took place chiefly in Kashmir and in two ancient temples (Ra mo che and 'Phrul snang) in Lhasa. Interestingly enough, although he studied in Kashmir and produced translations in collaboration with Kashmiri scholars, Pa tshab revised the *Pras* and the *MABh* on the basis of Sanskrit MSS from 'the eastern borderland' (*nyi 'og shar phyogs*)[20]. It seems possible to presuppose that Pa tshab also consulted MSS of the *CŚṬ* and the *ŚSV* from 'the eastern borderland' (*nyi 'og shar phyogs*).

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17 Concerning the date of Pa tshab Nyi ma grags, see Yoshimizu & Nemoto 2010: viii, fn. 15; and Yoshimizu 2016.

18 Ruegg 1981: 113–114; van der Kuijp 1993.

19 See Lang 1990: 132ff.; Ruegg 2000: 44-48. Concerning the length of his sojourn, see Yoshimizu 2016: ibid., esp. 647.

20 See Yoshimizu 2016: 654, fn. 36.

Pa tshab's translations were likely completed by around 1130 CE, since thereafter his fame was so well-established that students of Phywa pa Chos kyi seng ge[21] (1109–1169) left their teacher to study with him[22]. Nonetheless, it is uncertain when he obtained the Sanskrit MSS from 'the eastern borderland.'[23]

3.1 Jayānanda

Jayānanda, a Kashmiri monk, not only composed Madhyamaka treatises, but together with Pa tshab Nyi ma grags, the latter's student Khu mDo sde 'bar, and others also translated and revised the works of fellow Madhyamakas. His translation of Dīpaṁkaraśrījñāna's *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* (D 3961; P 5356)[24] was produced in collaboration with both Pa tshab Nyi ma grags and Khu mDo sde 'bar. Together with the latter, he revised the *sNga dar* translation of the verses of the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (*VV*, D 3828; P 5228) attributed to Nāgārjuna, and translated the *VP* (D 3830; P 5230), the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* (D 3461; P 5470), and his own *Tarkamudgara* (D 3869; P 5270). The so-called *Vaidalya-sūtra* (D 3826; P 5226) was translated by Ananta/Ānanda (probably Jayānanda) in association with Grags 'byor shes rab. This team is also responsible for translations or revisions of the following treatises attributed to Nāgārjuna: the *Akṣaraśataka* (D 3834; P 5234) with its *Vṛtti* (D 3835; P 5235), the *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdaya-Vyākhyāna* (D 3837; P 5237), and the **Abudhabodhaka* (D 3828; P 5228).

Jayānanda is said to have publicly debated with Phywa pa Chos kyi seng ge[25] on Madhyamaka subjects at gSang-phu monastery, and to have then left Central Tibet for the Ri bo rtse lha (Wutaishan) in Mi-nyag (the Xi-xia or Tangut country to the east of Tibet)[26], where he served as "National Preceptor" (*guoshi* 國師), "Lecturer in Exoteric

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21 See Taucher 1999: VII–IX; Pascale Hugon. "Materials for the study of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169)" http://www.ikga.oeaw.ac.at/PhyaPaChosKyiSengGe Accessed on 10th February, 2019.

22 See Ruegg 1981: 113–114; van der Kuijp 1993; Vose 2009: esp., 53–55.

23 Based on descriptions in the *BA* (Roerich 1949: 297), Erb presumes that Pa tshab revised the first two *bampo*s of the *ŚSV* translated by Abhayākaragupta and sNur D[h]arma grags around 1141 CE. (See Erb 1997: 30.)

24 Concerning the quoted Mahāyāna texts and the Tibetan text, see Mochizuki 2002 and 2004 respectively.

25 See Taucher 1999: VII–IX.

26 According to the colophon, Jayānanda's *MAṭ* (D 3870; P 5271) was composed near the rMa chu (Huang he) and the Ri bo rtse lha in Mi nyag. *MAṭ* D Ra 365a5-7, P Ra 443a1-5:

Buddhism," and "Director of the Sangha Office" during the reign of the emperor Renzong (仁宗; r. 1139–1193).[27] Since, as Vose notes, "Renzong initiated the office of Imperial Preceptor and staffed it with Tibetan monks after 1149," the public debate must have taken place before 1149 and so also before Phywa pa's abbatial tenure (1152–1169) [28]. Consequently, the *MAṭ* should be dated sometime after 1149 CE.

Although it is interesting to investigate whether Jayānanda was in a position to refer to Pa tshab's translations of the *MABh* and the *Pras* or not,[29] this topic is left untouched in the present study.[30]

3.3 The Situation when **LṬ* arrived at Tibet

In the first quarter of the 12th century CE, Pa tshab was back in Tibet and Jayānanda, it seems, was still in Kashmir. Consequently, they had no chance to learn of the existence of the **LṬ*. That the Tibetan translations of the *Pras* and the *VP* included in the Tibetan notes of the **LṬ* are different from Pa tshab's translation of the *Pras* and Jayānanda's

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longs spyod phun sum tsogs pa lha yi yul dang mtsungs||
chos rgyal gdung mi 'chad par 'byung ba'i me nyag yu||
chu bo rma yi dogs dang ri bo rtze lnga'i 'dabs||
rgyal po'i pho brang dpung gi tsogs bcas gnas pa yi||
khyad par mkhar sku zhes bya'i gtsug lag khang chen du||
kha che'i mkhas pa chen po rtsom mdzad de nyid dang ||
bod kyi lo {tsā bande} kun dga' grags zhes pas||
dbu ma la 'jug 'grel bshad don gsal zhes bya bsgyur||

An English translation based on P is found in van der Kuijp 1993: 191-192:

"The *Dbu ma la 'jug 'grel bshad don gsal* was translated,
By the great Kashmirian scholar, the author himself and,
The Tibetan translator, the venerable Kun-dga'-grags,
In the great temple called *Khyad par mkhar sku*,
The abode of the emperor's palace together with [his] host of troops [in],
Mi-nyag land, similar to the land of the gods, resplendent with wealth,
[And] of an unbroken family line of religious emperors,
[On] the shore of the Yellow River and [in] the vicinity of Five-Peaked Mountain [Wutaishan]."

27 See van der Kuijp 1993: 188; Ruegg 2001: 20; Vose 2009: 53–55; Kano 2016: 148–150.

28 See Vose 2009: 54; Kano 2016: 148, n. 55.

29 Cf. Yoshimizu & Nemoto 2013: xii.

30 Vose is of the opinion that Jayānanda did not have access to Pa tshab's translation of the *MABh*. See Vose 2009: 54; Vose 2010: 558.

translation of the *VP* confirms that neither Pa tshab nor Jayānanda was familiar with the **LṬ*.

We are not certain when Pa tshab consulted the Sanskrit MSS from the eastern borderland (*Nyi 'og shar phyog*) to complete his revisions of his own and others' Tibetan translations of Candrakīrti's treatises. However, it is at least certain that the consultation and revision did not take place in the time immediately after his returning Tibet, namely, in the early 12th century CE. Even though his revision of the *ŚSV* translated by Abhayākaragupta and gNur D[h]arma grags might have been conducted in his last days, it is not certain when he finished his revisions of the other Tibetan translations of Candrakīrti's treatises.

When Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas left Tibet for India for the first time, in 1127 CE at the earliest, Pa tshab Nyi ma grags might have completed his translations of Candrakīrti's treatises. When the MS of the **LṬ* arrived in Tibet, Pa tshab Nyi ma grags was in his last days. At this time, his fame seems to have been well-established in Tibet. Although there are no documents available that record that Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas had any personal contact with Pa tshab Nyi ma grags, he might have easily obtained information that Pa tshab had translated Candrakīrti's treatises.

Since Jayānanda seems to have been active in Tibet from 1120–1140 CE, it is probable that he too had already started his translation of the *VP* by the time the **LṬ* arrived in Tibet.

Although Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas may have intended to translate Candrakīrti's treatises when he copied the lecture notes at Vikramaśīla, it seems that after returning to Tibet he abandoned this idea upon learning about the translation projects led by Pa tshab Nyi ma grags and Jayānanda.

4 Answers to How and Why

The notes included in the **LṬ* are brief, and mostly consist of glosses, word-divisions, explanations of sentence structure, and so on. This writing style suggests that the **LṬ* might have been lecture notes originally taken by sNur/gNur D[h]arma grags under the guidance of Abhayākaragupta, most probably in order to prepare for the translation of Candrakīrti's *ŚSV*. The present MS of the **LṬ* seems to have been copied by

Śīlākāra/sTeng *lo tsā ba* Tshul khrims 'byung gnas, who then carried it with him to Tibet. He might have done so with the intention of translating Candrakīrti's treatises, especially the *Pras*, etc. However, such translations were not realized, most probably because upon his return to Tibet he learned about the similar translation projects of Pa tshab Nyi ma grags and Jayānanda.