

Towards a translation of the new edition of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*

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The [Suśruta Project](#) is producing a new [Sanskrit text edition](#) of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* based on the early Nepalese manuscripts. As we gradually transcribe and edit the manuscripts, we are producing this new translation of the classic work.

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Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1

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Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1

1 Now I shall narrate the chapter on the origin of this knowledge.¹

2 ²

3 Now, Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja, Suśruta and others addressed Lord Divodāsa, king of Kāśi, the best of the immortals, who was in his ashram surrounded by an entourage of sages.³

4 “O Lord, distress arose in our minds after witnessing people thrashing about with cries, assailed by the pangs of different kinds of pain, feeling helpless in spite of having friends, because of diseases arising from the body, the mind and external sources.

“To quell the illnesses of those who seek comfort and for the sake of prolonging the life of their bodies we desire the science of life (*āyurveda*) that is being taught. Welfare depends on it, in this world and in the one beyond. Therefore, O Lord, we have come to you as students for it.

5 The Lord said to them:

“Welcome to every one of you! My children, you are beyond reproach, and worthy to be taught.

28 Thus, living creatures and their strength, complexion (*varṇa*) and energy (*ojas*) are rooted in food. That (food) depends on the six flavours (*rasa*). Thus, the flavours depend on substance (*dravya*), and substances depend on medicinal herbs. There are two kinds of them (herbs): stationary and mobile.⁴

¹Dalhaṇa understands the word “knowledge (*veda*)” as specifically “medical knowledge.” He says that the word “longevity” (*āyur*) has been elided.

²At this point, later manuscripts and commentaries include the statement “as the venerable Dhanvantari stated.” The absence of this statement in the early Nepalese MSS is noteworthy.

³On these persons, see [HIML](#): IA 369 ff. Klebanov (2021) has discussed these authors in the context of an anonymous commentary on the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* that cites them.

⁴Suśruta sū.1.28 (Sharma 1999–2001: I, 21; [SS](#) 1938²: 7).

Abbreviations

- HIML Meulenbeld, G. J. (1999–2002), *A History of Indian Medical Literature*, 5 vols. (Groningen: E. Forsten), ISBN: 9069801248.
- SS 1938 Ācārya, Y. T. and Ācārya, N. R. (1938) (eds.), श्रीडल्हणाचार्यविरचितया निबन्धसंग्रहाख्यव्याख्यया निदानस्थानस्य श्रीगयदासाचार्यविरचितया न्यायचन्द्रिकाख्यपञ्जिकाख्यव्याख्यया च समुल्लसिता महर्षिणा सुश्रुतेन विरचिता सुश्रुतसंहिता (3rd edn., Bombay: Nirṇayasāgara Press); [HIML](#): IB, 313 edition cc.
- SS 1938² Ācārya, Y. T. and Ācārya, N. R. (2004) (eds.), महर्षिणा सुश्रुतेन विरचिता सुश्रुतसंहिता, श्रीडल्हणाचार्यविरचितया निबन्धसंग्रहाख्यव्याख्यया निदानस्थानस्य श्रीगयदासाचार्यविरचितया न्यायचन्द्रिकाख्यपञ्जिकाख्यव्याख्यया च समुल्लसिता (Vārāṇasī: Caukhambhā Kṛṣṇadāsa Akādamī); Reprint of the third, 1938 edition ([SS 1938](#)), with changed pagination.

References

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- Klebanov, A. (2021), ‘On the Textual History of the Suśrutasaṃhitā, (2): An Anonymous Commentary and Its Identified Citations’, in T. L. Knudsen, J. Schmidt-Madsen, and S. Speyer (eds.), *Body and Cosmos: Studies in Early Indian Medical and Astral Sciences in Honor of Kenneth G. Zysk* (Leiden, Boston: Brill), 110–39.
- Sharma, P. V. (1999–2001), *Suśruta-Saṃhitā, with English Translation of Text and Ḍaḷhaṇa’s Commentary Alongwith (sic) Critical Notes*, 3 vols. (Haridas Ayurveda Series, 9; Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati).

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āyur
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āyurveda
 the science of life, 2

complexion
 varṇa, 2

dravya
 substance, 2

energy
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flavours

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knowledge
 veda, 2

life, longevity
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ojas
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rasa
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śreyas

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substance
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the science of life
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varṇa
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veda
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welfare
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