

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

Jason Birch and Madhusudan Rimal and Dominik Wujastyk

Draft of 15th December 2020

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.

Contents

Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1

2

Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1

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

2 ²

3 Now, as is well-known, Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja, Suśruta and others addressed Lord Divodāsa, king of Kāśī, 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 different kinds of pain and injury (*vedanābhighāta*), 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 happiness and for our own purpose of prolonging life, we desire the science of life (*āyurveda*) that is being taught. Welfare, both in this world and in the next, depends upon it. Therefore, we have come to the Lord in pupillage.”

5 The Lord said to them:

“Welcome to you! My children, all of 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. See the discussion of Klebanov 2021.

³On these persons, see HIML: IA 369 ff. kleb-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

- Adriaensen, R. C. R., Barkhuis, R., and Ruijters, J.-L. (1984), ‘An English Translation of Suśrutasaṃhitā, Nidānasthāna 1, 1–39, Together with Gayadāsa’s Nyāyacandrikā’, in G. J. Meulenbeld (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Priorities in the Study of Indian Medicine* (Groningen: Forsten), 277–310.
- Emeneau, M. B. (1969), ‘Sanskrit Syntactic Particles – “kila, khalu, nūnam”’, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 11/4: 241–68.
- Klebanov, A. (2021), ‘On the Textual History of the Suśrutasaṃhitā (1): A Study of Three Nepalese Manuscripts’, to be published in *eJIM: Electronic Journal of Indian Medicine*, URL: <https://indianmedicine.nl>, accessed 09/09/2019.
- Sharma, P. V. (1999–2001), *Suśruta-Saṃhitā, with English Translation of Text and Dalhaṇa’s Commentary Alongwith (sic) Critical Notes*, 3 vols. (Haridas Ayurveda Series, 9; Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati).

Lexical Index

āyur

life, longevity, 2

āyurveda

the science of life, 2

complexion

varṇa, 2

dravya

substance, 2

energy

ojas, 2

flavours

rasa, 2

knowledge

veda, 2

life, longevity

āyur, 2

ojas

energy, 2

pain and injury

vedanābhighāta, 2

rasa

flavours, 2

śreyas

welfare, 2

substance

dravya, 2

the science of life

āyurveda, 2

varṇa

complexion, 2

veda

knowledge, 2

vedanābhighāta

pain and injury, 2

welfare

śreyas, 2