Andrey Klebanov A Translation of the New Edition of the

Abstract

The Suśruta Project is producing a new Sanskrit text edition of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* based on the early Nepalese manuscripts.¹ As we gradually transcribe and edit the manuscripts, we are producing this new translation of the classic work.

¹ MS Kathmandu KL 699, MS Kathmandu NAK 1-1079, and MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333.

Contents

The manuscripts and editions used in the vulgate editions	by
Yādavaśarman Trivikrama Ācārya	5
The sources of the 1915 edition	. 5
The sources of the 1931 edition	. 5
The sources of the 1938 edition	. 6
Evaluation	. 7
The 1939 edition	. 8
For the Bhānumatī	. 8
For the Suśrutasaṃhitā	. 10
Evaluation	. 10
Features of the manuscript transmission	12
Palaeographical features	. 12
Chart of characters	
Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1	13
Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 2	20
Literature	. 20
Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 16	13
Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 28	21
Kalpasthāna, adhyāya 1	22
Literature	
Manuscript notes	_
Translation	-
[Threats to the king]	. 24
Volumethāna adhrvārra	
Kalpasthāna, adhyāya 2	34
Introduction	
Translation	
The effects of poisons	
Symptoms of tuber poisoning	
Slow-acting poison	
The stages of toxic shock	. 43

Remedies for the stages of slow poisoning	44
The 'invincible' ghee	46
Curing the 'slow-acting' poison	47
Uttaratantra, adhyāya 16 (17 in the vulgate)	33
Literature	33
Translation	33
[Complications]	42
[Characteristics of the probe]	43
[Complications]	43
Uttaratantra, adhyāya 38	45
Abbreviations	- 7
Abbieviations	57
Index of Manuscripts	60
References	60
Glossary	76
On digital critical editions	67
	,

Kalpasthāna, adhyāya 2

Introduction

This section begins with several lists of poisonous plants. The Sanskrit names for these plants are mostly not standard or familiar from anywhere in Sanskrit or ethnobotanical literature. It remains a historical puzzle why these particular names are so difficult to interpret. However, we are not the first to encounter these difficulties. In the twelfth century, the learned commentator on the text, Dalhana, remarked,

In spite of having made the greatest effort, it has been impossible to identify these plants. In the Himalayan regions, Kirātas and Śabaras are able to identify them.¹⁰⁰

Dalhaṇa also recorded variant readings of these poison names from the manuscripts that he consulted of the lost commentary of Gayadāsa (fl. c. ce 1000). The identities of these poisons have been in doubt for at least a thousand years. Identifications have in many cases been equally impossible for us today.

One path for exploration in this situation is to attempt to reverse-engineer some identifications by considering the known toxic plants of India.¹⁰²

Translation

- 1 And now I shall explain what should be known about stationary poisons. 103
- 3 It is said that there are two kinds of poisons, stationary (*sthāvara*) and mobile (*jaṅgama*). The former dwells in ten sites, the latter in sixteen places.
- Traditionally, the ten are: root, leaf, fruit, flower, bark, milky sap $(k \circ \bar{\imath} r a)$, pith $(s \bar{\imath} r a)$, resin $(n i r y \bar{\imath} s a)$, the elements $(d h \bar{\imath} t u)$, and the tuber.
- In that context,

¹⁰⁰ After Suśrutasaṃhitā, kalpasthāna 2.5 (Su 1938: 564). From the view of Sanskrit authors, Kirāṭas and Śabaras were tribal peoples. The eleventh-century author Bhikṣu Govinda, however, cast his treatise as a dialogue with a Kirāṭa king called Madana who was a master of the alchemical art (HIML: IIA, 620).

¹⁰¹ See Wujastyk 2003: 80–81.

¹⁰² Valuable reference sources on Indian plant toxicology in general include Pillay 2013: chs. 10, 11 and Barceloux 2008: parts 1.II, 3 and 4.

¹⁰³ No reference is made to Dhanvantari (see Birch, Wujastyk, Klebanov, Parameswaran, et al. 2021). "Stationary" here is a term contrasted with "moving," and signifies plants as opposed to animals and insects.

- the eight root-poisons are:
 - 1. liquorice (*klītaka*)ⁱ, ¹⁰⁴
 - 2. sweet-scented oleander (aśvamāraka)ⁱⁱ, ¹⁰⁵
 - 3. jequirity $(gu\tilde{n}j\bar{a})^{iii}$, ¹⁰⁶
 - 4. aconite (subhangurā)iv, 107
 - 5. *karaṭā*, 108 and ending with
 - 6. leadwort (vidyutśi $kh\bar{a} \rightarrow agni$ or rakta-śi $kh\bar{a}$?) $^{\rm v}$, $^{\rm 109}$
 - 7. 'endless' (ananta)vi, and
 - 8. *vijayā*, 110
- the leaf-poisons include:
 - 'poison-leaf' (viṣapatrikā)^{vii},

104 Liquorice eaten in excess can be poisonous.

- 105 The roots of sweet-scented oleander are highly toxic, as are most parts of the plant (Pillay and Sasidharan 2019).
- 106 Jequirity does indeed contain a dangerous toxin called Abrin in its seeds and to a lesser extent in its leaves, but apparently not in its roots or bulb. Abrin is not harmful if eaten, but an infusion of the bruised (not boiled) seeds injected or rubbed in the eyes can be fatal (NK: # 6). The dose can be quite small.
- 107 The plant is usually called just bhangurā without the prefix su-"good."
- 108 This poisonous root cannot at present be identified. Similar-sounding candidates include <code>karkaṭaka</code>, <code>karaghāṭa</code> (emetic nut), and <code>karahāṭa</code>, but since this is a prose passage, there would be no reason to alter the word to fit a metre. Monier-Williams et al. (MW: 255) cite an unknown lexical source that equates <code>karaṭa</code> (mn.) with safflower (<code>Carthamus tinctorius</code>, L.), but this plant does not have a poisonous root.
- 109 The roots of both rose and white leadwort are very toxic.
- 110 Meulenbeld (1989: 61, n. 3) argued that our text read a masculine or neuter noun *vijaya*, which never signifies cannabis. However, unlike the vulgate, the unanimous readings of the Nepalese manuscripts give feminine *vijayā*. Nevertheless, even this form only started to signify *Cannabis sativa* L. after the end of the first millennium (Meulenbeld 1989; Wujastyk 2002; McHugh 2021). The *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu* gives a number of synonyms for *vijayā*, almost none of which have any poisonous parts (Suvedī and Tīvārī 2000: 5.77, 10.143). But one of them, *viṣāṇī* (also *meṣaśṛṅgī*), is sometimes equated with *Dolichandrone falcata* (*DC.*) *Seemann* (Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 518), a plant used as an abortifacient and fish poison (Nadkarni 1982*a*: #862). This identification is tenuous.
- Glycyrrhiza glabra, L.; see AVS 3.84, NK #1136
- ii Nerium oleander, L.; see ADPS 223, NK #1709
- iii Abrus precatorius, L.; see AVS 1.10, NK #6, Potter 168
- iv → bhaṅgura = ativiṣā? Aconitum ferox, Wall. ex Ser.; see NK #38
- v Plumbago zeylanica (or rosea?), L.; see NK #1966, 1967
- vi ?; see ?
- vii unknown; see?

Expected
(Pillay 2010):
Croton
tiglium, L.
= Naepala,
Jayapala,
kanakaphala,
titteriphala
(NL #720);
Calotropis
spp.;
Citrullus
colocynthus
(colocynthy;
Ricinus
communis
(castor):

Note about Gayī's edition.

- 'drum-giver' (lambaradā) viii,
- thorn apple (karambha)ix, and
- 'big thorn apple' (*mahākarambha*)^x;
- the fruits of items like: jequirity $(gu\tilde{n}j\bar{a})^{xi}$, rūṣkara $()^{xii}$, viṣa $()^{xii}$, and vedikā $()^{xiv}$, are
 - kumudavati (kumadavati)**,
 - renuka (?)xvi,
 - kurūkaka (?)^{xvii}
 - 'little bamboo' (*venuka*)^{xviii}, ¹¹¹,
 - thorn apple (*karambha*)^{xix},
 - 'big thorn apple' (mahākarambha)xx,
 - 'pleaser' (nandanā) xxi,
 - 'crow' $(k\bar{a}ka)^{xxii}$.
- the flower-poisons include those of:
 - rattan (vetra)^{xxiii},
 - wild chinchona (kādamba)xxiv,
 - black pepper ($vall\overline{i}ja \rightarrow marica$)^{xxv}.
 - thorn apple (karambha)xxvi, and

111 Not poisonous.

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viii unknown; see?
    Datura metel, L.; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132.
    Datura metel, L.?; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132.
    ; see
хi
xii ; see
xiii; see
xiv; see
xv unknown; see?
xvi ?; see Piper aurantiacum Wall. (NK: #1924) is not poisonous.
xvii?; see?
xviiiBambusa bambos, Druce?; see NK #307
xix Datura metel, L.; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132.
xx Datura metel, L.?; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132.
xxi ?; see?
xxii?; see?
xxiiiCalamus rotang, L.; see AVS 1.330, NK #413
xxivAnthocephalus cadamba, Miq.; see NK #204
xxv Piper nigrum, L.?; see NK #1929; Rā.6.115, Dha.4.85, Dha.2.88
xxviDatura metel, L.; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132.
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- big thorn apple (*mahākarambha*)^{xxvii};
- the seven bark, pith $(s\bar{a}ra)$ and resin $(niry\bar{a}sa)$ poisons are:
 - 'gutboiler' (antrapācaka)**xviii,
 - 'blade' (kartarīya)^{xxix},
 - wild mustard (saurīyaka)^{xxx}
 - emetic nut $(karagh\bar{a}_{\dagger}a \rightarrow karah\bar{a}_{\dagger}a? \rightarrow madana)^{xxxi}$,
 - thorn apple (*karambha*)^{xxxii},
 - wild asparagus ($nandana \rightarrow bahuputr\bar{a}$?) xxxiii , and
 - munj grass (*nārācaka*)^{xxxiv};¹¹²
- the three milky sap ($k \bar{s} \bar{t} r a$)-poisons are:
 - purple calotropis ($kumudaghn\bar{\imath} \rightarrow arka?$)***xxv, 113
 - oleander spurge (snuhī)xxxvi, and
 - 'web-milk' (*jālakṣīri*)^{xxxvii};
- the two element ($dh\bar{a}tu$)-poisons are:
 - 'foam-stone' (phenāśma)xxxviii, and

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xxviiDatura metel, L.?; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132. xxviiinknown; see ? xxixunknown; see ? xxx Cleome viscosa, L.? (cf. Rā.4.144); see AVS 2.116, NK #615 xxxiRandia dumetorum, Lamk.; see NK #2091 xxxiDatura metel, L.; see AVS 2.305 (cf. Abhidhānamañjarī), NK #796 ff., Potter 292 f., ADPS 132. xxxiiAsparagus racemosus, Willd.; see ADPS 441, AVS 1.218, NK #264, IGP 103, IMP 4.2499ff., Dymock 482ff. xxxiiSaccharum bengalense, Retz.?; see NK #2184 xxxvCalotropis gigantea, (L.) R. Br.; see ADPS 52, AVS 1.341, NK #427, Potter 63 xxxvEuphorbia neriifolia, L., or E. antiquorum, L.; see ADPS 448, AVS (2.388), 3.1, NK #988, IGP 457b xxxviinknown; see ? xxxviinknown; see ?
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¹¹² The bark of wild asparagus (Asparagus racemosus, Willd.) is toxic.

The name of this poison, *kumuda-ghnī*, means 'lotus killer'. In Sanskrit literature, the *kumuda* lotus is associated with the moon, since it blossoms by night. Since the sun causes this lotus to close, it is therefore an 'enemy' of the lotus. One of the chief words for the sun, *arka*, is also the name of *Calotropis gigantea*, which indeed has a milky juice which is a violent purgative, poison and abortifacient.

- orpiment (haritāla)xxxix;114
- the thirteen tuber-poisons are:
 - jequirity $(k\bar{a}lak\bar{u}ta)^{xl}$, 115
 - wolfsbane (vatsanābha)^{xli}
 - Indian mustard (sarṣapa)^{xlii}
 - leadwort $(p\bar{a}laka \rightarrow citraka)^{xliii}$
 - 'muddy' (kardama)xliv, the
 - 'Virāta's plant' (*vairāṭaka*)^{xlv},
 - nutgrass (mustaka)^{xlvi}
 - atis root (śṛṅgīviṣa)^{xlvii},
 - sacred lotus (*prapuṇḍarīka*)^{xlviii},
 - radish $(m\bar{u}laka)^{xlix}$,
 - 'alas, alas' (hālāhala)¹,
 - 'big poison' (*mahāviṣa*)^{li}, and

xxxiArsenii trisulphidum; see NK v. 2, p. 20 ff.

¹¹⁴ Dutt (1922: 38–42) conjectured that 'foam-stone' may be impure white arsenic obtained by roasting orpiment.

The much later (perhaps sixteenth century) alchemical *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of pseudo-Vāgbhaṭa (21.14) says that the *kālakūṭa* poison, here translated as 'jequirity', is similar to '*kākacañcu*' or 'Crow's Beak', which is indeed a name for the plant jequirity or *Abrus precatorius*, L., more commonly called *guñjā* (not to be confused with *gañjā*). The black seed-pod is described as having a 'sharp deflexed beak' in botanical descriptions, so the Sanskrit name is quite graphic and appropriate. The poisonous scarlet seeds of *A. precatorius* can have a distinct black dot or tip, which could perhaps be translated '*kāla-kūṭa*', or 'Black Tip'. The *Rājanighaṇṭupariśiṣṭa* (9.35) gives *kālakūṭaka* as a synonym for *kāraskara*, or *Strychnos nux-vomica*, L., whose seeds are notoriously poisonous.

xl Abrus precatorius, L.? Cf. RRS 21.14.; see AVS 1.10, NK #6, Potter 168.

xli Aconitum napellus, L.; see AVS 1.47, NK #42, Potter 4 f.

xlii Brassica juncea, Czern. & Coss.; see AVS 1.301, NK #378

xliii Plumbago zeylanica (indica? rosea?), L.; see Rā. 6.124, ADPS 119, NK #1966, 1967

xliv unknown; see?

xlv unknown; see?

xlvi Cyperus rotundus, L.; see ADPS 316, AVS 2.296, NK #782

xlviiAconitum heterophyllum, Wall. ex Royle; see AVS 1.42, NK #39

xlviiNelumbo nucifera, Gaertn.; see Dutt 110, NK #1698

xlix Raphanus sativus, L.; see NK #2098

l unknown; see Cf. Sodhalanighantu p.43 (sub bola) = stomaka = vatsanābha

li unknown; see?

• galls (karkaṭa)^{lii}. 116

Thus, there are fifty-five stationary poisons.

6 There are believed to be four kinds of wolfsbane, two kinds of *mustaka*, and six kinds of Indian *sarṣapa*. But the rest are said to be unique types.

The effects of poisons

7–10 People should know that root-poisons cause writhing (*udveṣṭana*), ranting (*pralāpa*), and delirium (*moha*), and leaf-poisons cause yawning, writhing, and wheezing (śvāsa).

Fruit-poisons cause swelling of the scrotum, a burning feeling and writhing. Flower-poisons will cause vomiting, distension ($\bar{a}dhm\bar{a}na$) and sleep ($sv\bar{a}pa$). The consumption of poisons from bark, pith ($s\bar{a}ra$) and resin ($niry\bar{a}sa$) will cause foul breath, hoarseness ($p\bar{a}rusya$), a headache, and a discharge of phlegm (kapha). 117

The milky sap ($k \bar{s} \bar{t} r a$)-poisons make one froth at the mouth, cause loose stool, and make the tongue feel heavy. The element ($dh \bar{a} t u$)-poisons give one a crushing pain in the chest, make one faint and cause a burning feeling on the palate.

These poisons are classified as ones which are generally speaking lethal after a period of time.

11-17 Symptoms of tuber poisoning

The tuber-poisons, though, are severe. I shall talk about them in detail.

¹¹⁶ Leadwort root is a powerful poison. Nutgrass is tuberous, but non-toxic. Atis has highly toxic tuberous roots. Neither sacred lotus nor galls are toxic. The 'alas, alas' poison (\$h\bar{a}l\bar{a}hala\$) is the mythical poison produced from the churning of the ocean at the time of creation: it occurs in medical texts such as the present one, and commentators identify it with one or other of the lethal poisons such as wolfsbane or jequirity. Agrawala (1963: 126) makes the intriguing suggestion that the word \$h\bar{a}l\bar{a}hala\$, possibly to be identified with Pāṇini's hailihila (P.6.2.38), may be of Semitic origin, although his evidence seems uncertain (Steingass (1930: 1506a) cites Persian \$hal\bar{a}hil\$ 'deadly (poison)' as a loan from Sanskrit). Mayrhofer 1953-72: iii.585 also cites a claim for an Austro-Asiatic origin for the word.

¹¹⁷ At 1.2.6 (Su 1938: 11), Palhaṇa glosses hoarseness (pāruṣya) as vāgrūkṣatā, "a rough, dry voice."

¹¹⁸ At 6.54.10 (Su 1938: 773), Dalhaṇa glosses loose stool (viḍbheda) as dravapurīṣatā, "having liquid stool."

lii Rhus succedanea, L.; see NK #2136

With jequirity $(k\bar{a}lak\bar{u}ta)^{lii}$, there is numbness and very severe trembling. With wolfsbane $(vatsan\bar{a}bha)^{liv}$, there is rigidity of the neck, and the faeces, and urine become yellow.

With sārṣapa ($s\bar{a}rṣapa$),¹¹⁹ the wind becomes defective ($v\bar{a}tavaigunya$), there is constipation ($\bar{a}n\bar{a}ha$), and lumps (granthi) start to appear. With leadwort ($p\bar{a}laka \rightarrow citraka$)^{lv}, there is weakness in the neck, and speech gets jumbled.¹²⁰

With the one called 'muddy' (*kardama*)^{lvi}, there is a discharge (*praseka*), the faeces pour out, and the eyes turn yellow. The 'Virāṭa's plant' (*vairāṭaka*)^{lvii} causes pain in the body and illness in the head. Paralysis of one's arms and legs and trembling are said to be caused by mustaka (*mustaka*).¹²¹

With great aconite (*mahāviṣa*) one's limbs grow weak, there is a burning feeling and swelling of the belly.¹²²

-> ativișa

- 16a With puṇḍarīka (puṇḍarīka), one's eyes go red, and one's belly becomes distended. 123
- 16b With mūlaka ($m\bar{u}laka$), one's body is drained of colour and the limbs are paralysed.¹²⁴

Look up the ca. reference.

- 119 *Sārṣapa* would normally mean "connected with mustard," and excessive consumption of mustard oil can be harmful. However, the *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu* (156) gives *rakṣoghnā* as a synonym for *sarṣapā*. This can be *Semecarpus anacardium*, L.f., which has some poisonous parts.
- 120 The verse in the Nepalese version ends with a plural verb that does not agree with the dual of the sentence subject.
- 121 The substitution in MS NAK 5-333 affecting 15cd is caused by an eye-skip to the word *viṣeṇa* in 2.17. *Mustaka* commonly refers to Cyperus rotundus, L.; the root is used in āyurveda but is not poisonous. However other dictionaries list *mustaka* amongst serious poisons, for example *Rājanighaṇtu* (22 v. 42) and *Rasaratnasamuccaya* 16, v. 80. However, its ancient identity is still doubtful.
- 122 The poisonous root great poison (*mahāviṣa*) is not clearly identifiable, although *viṣa* is commonly aconite. Verse 6 above notes that there are several kinds of aconite.
- 123 The word <code>pundarīka</code> very commonly means sacred lotus, Nelumbo nucifera, Gaertn. The entire plant is edible and cannot be the poison intended here. Singh and Chunekar (1972: 252) noted that this poison is unidentified and that it is also listed as a poison in <code>Carakasam-hitāci.23.12</code>.
- The word *mūlaka* very commonly means the radish, *Raphanus sativus*, L. The root is edible and cannot be the poison intended here. Singh and Chunekar (1972: 317) noted that this

liii Abrus precatorius, L.? Cf. RRS 21.14.; see AVS 1.10, NK #6, Potter 168.

liv Aconitum napellus, L.; see AVS 1.47, NK #38, Potter 4 f.

lv Plumbago zeylanica (indica? rosea?), L.; see Rā. 6.124, ADPS 119, NK #1966, 1967

lvi unknown; see?

lvii unknown; see?

- 17a With hālāhala (*Aconite*), a man turns a dark colour (*dhyāma*), and gasps. 125
- With atis root $(\acute{s}r\acute{n}g\bar{\imath}visa)^{lviii}$, one gets violent knots (granthi) and stabbing pains in the heart. 126
- 18a With markata (*monkey*), one leaps up, laughs, and bites. 127
- Experts have said that one should know that the thirteen highly potent tuber-poisons, which are mentioned here, have ten qualities (*guṇa*).

19b-20a The ten are:

- dry (*rūkṣa*),
- hot,
- sharp,
- rarified (sūksma),
- fast-acting,
- pervasive (vyavāyin),
- expansive (vikāsin),
- limpid (viśada),
- · light, and
- indigestible.
- Because of dryness, it may cause inflammation of the wind; because of heat it inflames the choler and blood. Because of the sharpness it unhinges the mind, and it cuts through the connections with the sensitive points (*marman*). Because it is rarified it can infiltrate and distort the parts of the body.¹²⁸
- Because it is fast-acting it kills quickly, and because of its pervasiveness it

lviii Aconitum heterophyllum, Wall. ex Royle; see AVS 1.42, NK #39

poison is unidentified.

¹²⁵ Identification of \$halahala\$ is uncertain. It may simply be a mythical poison, or its specific identity may have been lost over the centuries. Late \$nighantus\$ identify it as \$stomaka = vat-sanābha\$, i.e., \$Aconitum napellus\$, L. (Sodhalanighantu p.43). Dalhaṇa on 5.2.17 (Su 1938: 564) interprets our "gasps" as "the man laughs and grinds his teeth." But this gloss is probably displaced and intended to apply to verse 2.18.

¹²⁶ Singh and Chunekar (1972: 407) noted that *vatsanābha* and *śṛṅgīviṣa* are two different varieties of poisonous Aconites that are difficult to distinguish.

¹²⁷ Singh and Chunekar (1972: 299) said of *markaṭa*, "an unidentified vegetable poison." Cf. Suvedī and Tīvārī 2000: v.36 for synonyms that lead to the non-toxic jujube tree.

¹²⁸ We read the active *vikaroti* with Dalhana against the transmitted passive *vikriyeta*, since it must be the parts of the body that are distorted, not the poison.

affects one's whole physical constitution (prakrti).¹²⁹ Because of its expansiveness it enters into the humour (doṣa)s, bodily constiuents ($dh\bar{a}tu$)s, and even the impurities. Because it is limpid it overflows, and because it is light it is difficult to treat. Because it is indigestible it is hard to eliminate. Therefore, it causes suffering for a long time.

Any poison that is instantly lethal, whether it be stationary, mobile, or artificial, will be known to have all ten of these qualities.

Slow-acting poison

- A poison that is old or destroyed by anti-toxic medicines, or else dried up by blazing fire, wind, or sunshine, or which has just lost its qualities by itself, becomes a slow-acting poison $(d\bar{u}_{\bar{s}\bar{i}}vi_{\bar{s}}a)^{131}$ Because it has lost its potency it is no longer perceived. Because it is surrounded by phlegm (kapha) it has an aftermath that lasts for a very long time.
 - 27 If he is suffering from this, the colour of his stools changes, he gets sourness and a bad taste with great thirst. Stammering and close to death, wandering about, he may feel faint, giddy, and aroused.¹³²
 - If it lodges in his stomach (āmāśaya), he becomes sick because of wind and phlegm; if it lodges in his intestines (pakvāśaya), he becomes sick because of wind and choler. A man's hair and limbs fall away and he looks like a bird whose wings have been chopped off.
 - 29a-c If it lodges in one of the body tissues such as chyle (*rasa*), it causes the diseases arising from the body tissues, that have been said to be wrong.¹³³ and it rapidly becomes inflamed on days that are nasty because of cold and wind.
- 29d–31 Listen to its initial symptoms (*liṅga*): it causes heaviness due to sleep, yawning, disjunction (*viśleṣa*) and horripilation (*harṣa*) and a bruising of the limbs

¹²⁹ Dalhaṇa on 5.2.22 (Su 1938: 565) explained this as "takes the form of pervading the whole body (akhiladehavyāptirūpam)."

¹³⁰ Dalhana specified that this refers to the ten qualities that are mentioned above (5.2.26 (Su 1938: 565)).

¹³¹ Dalhana cited this verse at 1.46.83 (Su 1938: 222) while explaining dūṣīviṣa.

¹³² Similar symptoms of slow-acting poison are described at 2.7.11–13 (Su 1938: 296) in the context of contamination dropsy (*duṣyodara*). This this may explain why the vulgate inserted reference to this disease at this point.

¹³³ The expression *ayathāyathoktān* "stated to be unsuitable" is hard to understand here, but is clearly transmitted in the Nepalese version.

(angamarda).¹³⁴ Next, it causes intoxication from food (annamada) and indigestion, loss of appetite (arocaka), the condition of having a skin disease (koṭha) with round blotches (maṇḍala),¹³⁵ dwindling away (kṣaya) of flesh, swelling of the feet, hands, and face, the fever called pralepaka, vomiting and diarrhoea.¹³⁶ The slow-acting poison might cause wheezing, thirst and fever, and it might also cause distension of the abdomen.

- These various disorders are of many different types: one poison may produce madness, while another one may cause constipation (\$\bar{a}n\bar{a}ha), and yet another may ruin the semen. One may cause emaciation, while another pallid skin disease (\$kuṣṭha).
- Something is "corrupted" by repetitively keeping to bad locations, times, foods, and sleeping in the daytime. Or, traditionally, "corrupting poison" (slow-acting poison ($d\bar{u}$ \bar{s} \bar{i} -v \bar{i} \bar{s} a)) is so called because it may corrupt ($d\bar{u}$ \bar{s} aya

34- The stages of toxic shock

In the first shock of having taken a stationary poison, a person's tongue becomes dark brown and stiff, he grows faint, and panics.

- In the second, he trembles, feels exhausted, has a burning feeling, as well as a sore throat. When the poison reaches the stomach ($\bar{a}m\bar{a}\dot{s}aya$), it causes pain in the chest (hrd).
- In the third,his palate goes dry, he gets violent pain ($\sin la u$) in the stomach ($\sin la u$), and his eyes become weak, swollen and yellow.
- In the fourth shock, it causes the intestines and stomach to be exhausted $(s\bar{a}da)$, he gets hiccups, a cough, a rumbling in the gut (antra), and his head becomes heavy too.
- In the fifth he dribbles phlegm (*kapha*), goes a bad colour, his ribs crack (*parśvabheda*), all his humours are irritated, and he also has a pain in his intestines (*pakvādhāna*).
- 39a In the sixth, he loses consciousness and he completely loses control of his bowels.

¹³⁴ Dalhana 5.2.30ab (Su 1938: 565) glossed "disjunction" as the loss of function of the joints in regard to movement.

¹³⁵ The last ailment could perhaps be ringworm.

¹³⁶ The *pralepaka* fever was described by Dalhana, at 6.39.52 (Su 1938: 675), as an accumulation of phlegm in the joints. Its symptoms are described in 6.39.54

39b In the seventh, there are breaks in his shoulders, back and loins, and he stops breathing.¹³⁷

Remedies for the stages of slow poisoning

- In the first shock of the poison, the physician should make the man, who has vomited and been sprinkled with cold water, drink an antidote (*agada*) mixed with with honey and ghee.
- In the second, he should make the man who has vomited and been purged drink as before;
- on the third, drink an antidote and a beneficial nasal medicine (*nasya*) as well as an eye salve (*añjana*).
- In the fourth, the physician should make him drink an antidote that is salt with a little oil. 138
- In the fifth, he should be prescribed the antidote together with a decoction $(kv\bar{a}tha)$ of honey and liquorice $(madhuka)^{lix}$.
- In the sixth, the cure (*siddhi*) is the same as for diarrhoea. And in the seventh, he perishes. 139
- In between any one of these shocks, once the above treatment has been done, he should give the patient the following cold gruel $(yav\bar{a}g\bar{u})$ together with ghee and honey, that will take away the poison.

Another difference at this point is that the Nepalese version also does not support the vulgate's passage on the crow's foot ($k\bar{a}kapada$) therapy (Wujastyk 2003: 145, n. 106). The same is the case at 5.5.24 (Su 1938: 575) and the clear description at 5.5.45 (Su 1938: 577), in neither of which is the therapy supported in the Nepalese version. This therapy seems unknown in the Nepalese version. Perhaps the therapy migrated into the *Suśrutasamhitā* from the *Carakasamhitā* (6.23.66–67 (Ca. 1941: 574)).

¹³⁷ Here at 5.2.24 (Su 1938: 566) Dalhaṇa glossed sannirodha as "complete cessation, i.e., of breath" (sannirodhaḥ samyaṅnirodhaḥ, ucchvāsasya iti śeṣaḥ). The manuscripts all read skanda where skandha must be intended; this confusion is known from Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (Edgerton 1953: 608).

¹³⁸ At 6.52.30 (Su 1938: 769) Dalhana noted that sindhu can be interpreted as salt (saindhava).

¹³⁹ The vulgate text here is quite different, recommending that the patient have medicated powder blown up his nose. It may be possible to detect the evolution of the Nepalese अवसी-देत् to the vulgate's अवपीडश्. The vulgate version is hard to construe, and we see Dalhaṇa struggling to interpret it in his commentary on 5.2.43ab (Su 1938: 566). This sternutatory is, however, recommended in the Nepalese version at 5.5.30ab (Su 1938: 576), for the seventh shock of poisoning by a rājimat (striped snake) snake. It is possible the text migrated from that location to this.

lix Glycyrrhiza glabra, L.; see AVS 3.84, NK #1136

- 45–46 A gruel (yavāgū) made of the following items in a stewed juice (niḥkvātha) destroys the two poisons: gourd (kośavatī), 40 wild celery (agnika), 41 velvet-leaf (pāṭhā), 42 'sun-creeper' (sūryavallī), 43 heart-leaved moonseed (amṛtā), 44 myrobalan (abhayā), 45 siris (śirīṣa) 46, and selu plum (śelu) 47 white siris (kiṇihi), 48 the two turmerics (haridrā), 49 and the two Indian nightshades (bṛhatī), 50 hogweed (punarnavā) (red and white), black cardamom (hareṇu) the three heating spices (tryūṣaṇa), 51 the Indian
 - 140 At 4.10.8 (Su 1938: 449) Dalhaṇa glosses kośavatī as devadālī and at 4.18.20 (Su 1938: 472) as kaṭukośātakī, vocabulary pointing to Cucumis cylindrica, Cucumis actangula or Luffa echinata (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 207, 121; Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 252–253).
 - 141 A plant often cited in Suśrutasamhitā, but rarely in Carakasamhitā (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 4). Dalhaṇa glossed it here, 5.2.45 (Su 1938: 566), as wild celery (ajamodā), Apium graveolens, L., but noted that others consider it to be moraṭa, Marsdenia tenacissima (Roxb.) Wight et Arn. There is considerable complexity surrounding the identification of moraṭa/mūrvā and related synonyms (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 314-316). Taking agnika as a short reference to agnimantha, often identified with Premna corymbosa, Rottl., might be plausible, since that is antitoxic or anti-inflammatory (Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 21; Nadkarni 1954: #2025; Warrier et al. 1994–6: 4, 348), but such a short reference is not known elsewhere.
 - 142 Cissampelos pariera, L., Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 366; Nadkarni 1954: #592; Singh and Chunekar 1972: 243–244; Warrier et al. 1994–6: 2.277.
 - 143 At 5.2.45 (Su 1938: 566) Dalhaṇa said that this plant has leaves like the *paṭola*, *Trichosanthes dioica* Roxb. Singh and Chunekar (1972: 280, 443) argued plausibly that this is a synonym for *arkapuṣpī*, *Holostemma ada-kodien*, (Roxb.) Schult., as Dalhaṇa also stated in 1.45.120 (Su 1938: 206), and the leaves of Holostemma and Trichosanthes are indeed strikingly similar. The appearance of the plant, a creeper with sun-like flowers, fits the name. But there remains much controversy about the identities of these candidates (e.g., Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 195–198).
 - 144 *Tinospora cordifolia*, (Willd.) Hook.f. & Thoms. (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 141–143; Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 38–40)Nadkarni 1954: #2472 and #624.
 - 145 *Terminalia chebula*, Retz. (Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 172; Nadkarni 1954: #2451; Singh and Chunekar 1972: 15).
 - 146 *Albizia lebbeck*, Benth. (Warrier et al. 1994–6: 1.81; Nadkarni 1954: #91; Singh and Chunekar 1972: 399–400).
 - 147 *Cordia myxa*, L. non Forssk. (Warrier et al. 1994–6: 2.180; Nadkarni 1954: #672; Singh and Chunekar 1972: 408, 413–414).
 - 148 Albizia procera, (Roxb.) Benth. (Nadkarni 1954: #93; Singh and Chunekar 1972: 98).
 - 149 haridrā and dāruharidrā Singh and Chunekar 1972: 465-466.
 - 150 Poison berry (*bṛhatī*), *Solanum violaceum*, Ortega, and yellow-berried nightshade (*kṣudrā*), *Solanum virginianum*, L. (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 277–278; Sivarajan and Balachandran 1994: 100; Nadkarni 1954: #2329; Warrier et al. 1994–6: 5.151, 164).
 - 151 Dried ginger (śuṇṭhī) Zingiber officinale, Roscoe.ADPS 50, NK #2658, AVS 5.435, IGP 1232,

lx Boerhaavia diffusa, L.; see ADPS 387, AVS 1.281, NK #363

lxi Amomum subulatum, Roxb.?; see PVS Caraka 2.734, AVS 1.128, NK #154

The 'invincible' ghee

There is a famous ghee called 'Invincible' (ajeya). It rapidly destroys all poisons and it is unbeaten. It is prepared with a mash (kalka) of the following plants: liquorice (madhuka)^{lxii}, crape jasmine (tagara)^{lxiii}, costus (kuṣṭha)^{lxiv}, deodar (bhadradāru)^{lxv}, black cardamom (hareṇu)^{lxvi}, Indian madder (mañjiṣṭhā),¹⁵⁴ cardamom (ela), and cherry (elavālu)¹⁵⁵ cobra's saffron (nāgapuṣpa)^{lxvii}, water-lily (utpala)^{lxviii}, white clitoria (sitā \rightarrow śvetā?)^{lxix}, embelia (viḍaṅga)^{lxx}, sandalwood (candana)^{lxxi}, cassia cinnamon (patra)^{lxxii}, beautyberry (priyaṅgu)^{lxxiii}, rosha grass (dhyāmaka)^{lxxiv}, the two turmerics,¹⁵⁶ the two Indian nightshade (bṛhatī)s,¹⁵⁷ Indian sarsaparilla

long pepper (*pippalī*) Piper longum, L.ADPS 374, NK #1928, and black pepper (*marica*) Piper nigrum, L.ADPS 294, NK #1929).

¹⁵² country sarsaparilla (*anantā*) Hemidesmus indicus, (L.) R. Br. ADPS 434, AVS 3.141–5, NK #1210 and black creeper (*pālindī*) Ichnocarpus frutescens, (L.) R.Br. or Cryptolepis buchanani, Roemer & Schultes AVS 3.141, 3.145, 3.203, NK #1283, #1210, ADPS 434.

¹⁵³ *Nymphaea stellata*, Willd. GJM 528, IGP 790; Dutt 110, NK #1726. Dalhana was aware of this reading 5.2.46 (Su 1938: 566).

¹⁵⁴ Rubia cordifolia, L. (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 289).

¹⁵⁵ Prunus cerasus, L. (Singh and Chunekar 1972: 58)

¹⁵⁶ Ordinary turmeric $(rajan\bar{i})^{lxxv}$ and Indian barberry $(d\bar{a}ruharidr\bar{a})^{lxxvi}$.

¹⁵⁷ poison berry (*brhatī*) lxxviii and yellow-berried nightshade (*ksudrā*) lxxviii

lxii Glycyrrhiza glabra, L.; see AVS 3.84, NK #1136

lxiii Tabernaemontana divaricata (L.) R.Br. ex Roem. & Schultes.; see GJM 557, AVS 5.232

lxiv Saussurea costus, Clarke; see NK #2239

lxv Cedrus deodara, (Roxb.ex D.Don) G. Don; see AVS 41, NK #516

lxvi Amomum subulatum, Roxb.?; see PVS Caraka 2.734, AVS 1.128, NK #154

lxviiMesua ferrea, L.; see NK #1595

lxviiNymphaea stellata, Willd.; see GJM 528, IGP 790; Dutt 110, NK #1726

lxix Clitoria ternatea, L.; see AVS 2.129, NK #621

lxx Embelia ribes, Burm. f.; see ADPS 507, AVS 2.368, NK #929, Potter 113

lxxi Santalum album, L.; see ADPS 111, NK #2217

lxxiiCinnamomum tamala, (Buch.-Ham.) Nees; see AVS 2.84, NK #

lxxiiCallicarpa macrophylla, Vahl.; see AVS 1.334, NK #420

lxxivCymbopogon martinii (Roxb.) Wats; see AVS 2.285, NK #177

Curing the 'slow-acting' poison

- Someone suffering from 'slow-acting poison $(d\bar{u}s\bar{\imath}vis\bar{\imath}a)$ ' should be well sweated, and purged both top and bottom. Then he should be made to drink the following eminent antidote which removes 'slow-acting poison': Take long pepper $(pippal\bar{\imath})^{lxxix}$, rosha grass $(dhy\bar{a}maka)^{lxxx}$, spikenard $(m\bar{a}m\bar{s}\bar{\imath})^{lxxxi}$, lodh tree $(s\bar{a}vara \rightarrow lodhra)^{lxxxii}$, nutgrass $(paripelava \rightarrow plava \rightarrow must\bar{a}?)^{lxxxiii}$, soda crystals $(suvarcik\bar{a} \rightarrow suvarjik\bar{a})^{lxxxiv}$, cardamom $(s\bar{u}ks-mail\bar{a})^{lxxxv}$, 'scented pavonia' $(toya \rightarrow b\bar{a}laka)^{lxxvi}$, and 'gold-chalk' ochre (kanakagairika). This antitoxin, taken with honey, eliminates 'slow-acting poison'. It is called 'slow-acting poison antidote $(d\bar{u}s\bar{\imath}vis\bar{a}ri)$ ', and there is no situation where it is not recommended.
- If there are any side-effect (*upadrava*)s, such as fever, a burning feeling, hiccups, constipation (*ānāha*), depletion of the semen, distension, diarrhoea, fainting, illness in the heart, bellyache (*jaṭhara*), madness, trembling, or others, then one should treat each one in its own terms, as well as using the anti-toxic medicines.
 - 'Slow-acting poison' is curable ($s\bar{a}dhya$) if caught immediately; it is treatable ($y\bar{a}pya$) if it is of a year's standing; but it cannot be cured in someone who has unhealthy habits or who is weak ($ks\bar{\imath}na$).

Thus ends the second chapter, called 'on the knowledge of stationary poisons', in the Procedures Section of Suśruta's *Compendium*.

lxxixPiper longum, L.; see ADPS 374, NK #1928

lxxxCymbopogon martinii (Roxb.) Wats; see AVS 2.285, NK #177

lxxxNardostachys grandiflora, DC.; see NK #1691

lxxxfiymplocos racemosa, Roxb.; see ADPS 279, NK #2420

lxxx Tiyperus rotundus, L.; see ADPS 316, AVS 2.296, NK #782

lxxx8odium carbonate; see NK 2, p. 101

lxxxElettaria cardamomum, Maton; see AVS 2.360, NK #924, Potter 66

lxxx Pavonia odorata, Willd.; see ADPS 498, NK #1822

¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁹ Desmodium gangeticum (L.) DC Dymock 1.428, GJM 602, NK #1192; ADPS 382, 414 and AVS 2.319, 4.366 are confusing.

¹⁶⁰ Sida cordifolia, L. ADPS 71, NK #2297.

Abbreviations

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HIML Meulenbeld, Gerrit Jan (1999–2002), *A History of Indian Medical Literature*, 5 vols. (Groningen: E. Forsten), ISBN: 9069801248.

KL Kaiser Library (n.d.).

MW Monier-Williams, Monier, Leumann, E., Cappeller, C., et al. (1899), A Sanskrit–English Dictionary Etymologically and Philologically Arranged, New Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press); 1970 reprint. NAK National Archives of Kathmandu (n.d.).

NCC Raghavan, V. et al. (1949–), New Catalogus Catalogorum, an Alphabetical Register of Sanskrit and Allied Works and Authors, 39 vols. (Madras University Sanskrit Series; Madras: University of Madras); v.1: revised edition, 1968.

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NK Nadkarni, K. M. (1982a), Dr. K. M. Nadkarni's Indian Materia Medica, with Ayurvedic, Unani-tibbi, Siddha, Allopathic, Homeopathic, Naturopathic & Home Remedies, Appendices & Indexes ... in Two Volumes, ed. A. K. Nadkarni, 2 vols. (3 ed., revised and enlarged by A. K. Nadkarni, Bombay: Popular Prakashan), ISBN: 8171541429, URL.

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Index of Manuscripts

The numbers after the colon refer to pages in this document.

Kathmandu KL 699: 2 NAK 5-333: 40

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Glossary

'gold-chalk' ochre	- intoxication from	contamination dropsy
- kanakagairika: 47	food: 43	- duṣyodara: 42
'invincible'	antidote	country mallow
- ajeya: 46	- agada: 44	- balā: 47
'sun-creeper'	antra	country sarsaparilla
- sūryavallī: 45	- gut: 43	- anantā: 46
	arocaka	crow's foot
abhayā	-loss of appetite: 43	- kākapada: 44
- myrobalan: 45		curable
Aconite	balā	- sādhya: 47
- hālāhala: 41	- country mallow: 47	cure
ādhmāna	be exhausted	- siddhi: 44
- distension: 39	- sāda: 43	
agada	beggarweed	dark colour
- antidote: 44	- aṃśumatī: 47	- dhyāma: 41
agnika	bellyache	decoction
- wild celery: 45	- jaṭhara: 47	- kvātha: 44
ajamodā	black creeper	delirium
- wild celery: 45	- pālindī: 46	- moha: 39
ajeya	black pepper	dhātu
- 'invincible': 46	- marica: 46	- bodily constiuents:
akhiladehavyāptirūpam	bodily constiuents	42
- takes the form of	- dhātu: 42	- body tissue: 43
pervading the whole	body tissue	- element: 34, 37, 39
body: 42	- dhātu: 43	dhyāma
āmāśaya	bṛhatī	- dark colour: 41
- stomach: 42f	- indian nightshade:	discharge
amrtā	46	- praseka: 40
- heart-leaved	- indian nightshades:	disjunction
moonseed: 45	45	- viśleṣa: 42
aṃśumatī	- poison berry: 45	distension
- beggarweed: 47	bruising of the limbs	- ādhmāna: 39
ānāha	- aṅgamarda: 43	doșa
- constipation: 40 , 43 ,	- angamaraa. 43	- humour: 42
_	cardamom	dried ginger
47 anantā	- ela: 46	- śuṇṭhī: 45
- country	cherry	dry
sarsaparilla: 46	- elavālu: 46	- rūkṣa: 41
aṅgamarda	chest	dūṣī-viṣa
- bruising of the	- hṛd: 43	- slow-acting poison:
G		
limbs: 43	chyle	43 dūsīvisa
añjana	- rasa: 42	dūṣīviṣa
- eye salve: 44	constipation	- slow-acting poison:
annamada	- ānāha: 40, 43, 47	47

$dar{u}$ ṣ $ar{i}$ viṣ $ar{a}$ ri	horripilation	- dwindling away: 43
- slow-acting poison	- harṣa: 42	kṣīṇa
antidote: 47	hṛd	- weak: 47
duṣyodara	- chest: 43	kṣīra
- contamination	humour	- milky sap: 34, 37,
dropsy: 42	- doṣa: 42	39
dwindling away		kṣudrā
- kṣaya: 43	indian madder	- yellow-berried
•	- mañjiṣṭhā: 46	nightshade: 45
ela	indian nightshade	kuṣṭha
- cardamom: 46	- bṛhatī: 4 6	- pallid skin disease:
elavālu	indian nightshades	43
- cherry: 46	- bṛhatī: 45	kvātha
element	indian sarsaparilla	- decoction: 44
- dhātu: 34, 37, 39	- sārivā: 47	
expansive	indian sarsaparillas	limpid
- vikāsin: 41	- sārive: 4 6	- viśada: 41
eye salve	intestines	liṅga
- añjana: 44	- pakvādhāna: 43	- symptoms: 42
	- pakvāśaya: 42	long pepper
gourd	intoxication from food	- pippalī: 46
- kośavatī: 45	- annamada: 43	loose stool
granthi		- viḍbheda: 39
- knots: 41	jaṅgama	loss of appetite
- lumps: 40	- mobile: 34	- arocaka: 43
great aconite	jaṭhara	lumps
- mahāviṣa: 40	- bellyache: 47	- granthi: 40
great poison		
- mahāviṣa: 40	kākapada	mahāviṣa
gruel	- crow's foot: 44	- great aconite: 40
- yavāgū: 44f	kalka	- great poison: 40
guṇa	- mash: 46	maṇḍala
- qualities: 41	kanakagairika	- round blotches: 43
gut	- 'gold-chalk' ochre:	mañjiṣṭhā
- antra: 43	47	- indian madder: 46
	kapha	marica
hālāhala	- phlegm: 39, 42f	- black pepper: 46
- Aconite: 41	kiṇihi	markaṭa
haridrā	- white siris: 45	- monkey: 41
- turmerics: 45	knots	mash
harşa	- granthi: 41	- kalka: 46
- horripilation: 42	kośavatī	milky sap
heart-leaved moonseed	- gourd: 45	- kṣīra: 34, 37, 39
- amṛtā: 45	koṭha	mobile
hoarseness	- skin disease: 43	- jaṅgama: 34
- bāruena: 00	keana	maha

- delirium: 39	- sāra: 34, 37, 39	- indian sarsaparillas
monkey	poison berry	46
- markaṭa: 41	- bṛhatī: 45	sārṣapa
mūlaka	pralāpa	- sārṣapa: 40
- mūlaka: 40	- ranting: 39	sārṣapa
mūlaka	praseka	- sārṣapa: 40
- mūlaka: 40	- discharge: 40	selu plum
mustaka	puṇḍarīka	- śelu: 45
- mustaka: 40	- puṇḍarīka: 40	śelu
mustaka	puṇḍarīka	- selu plum: 45
- mustaka: 40	- puṇḍarīka: 40	siddhi
myrobalan		- cure: 44
- abhayā: 45	qualities	side-effect
3 13	- guṇa: 41	- upadrava: 47
nasal medicine		siris
- nasya: 44	rājimat	- śirīṣa: 45
nasya	- striped snake: 44	śirīsa
- nasal medicine: 44	ranting	•
niḥkvātha	- pralāpa: 39	- siris: 45
- stewed juice: 45	rarified	skin disease
niryāsa	- sūkṣma: 41	- koṭha: 43
- resin: 34, 37, 39	rasa	sleep
	- chyle: 42	- svāpa: 39
pain	resin	slow-acting poison
- śūla: 43	- niryāsa: 34, 37, 39	antidote
pakvādhāna	ribs crack	- dūṣīviṣāri: 47
- intestines: 43	- parśvabheda: 43	slow-acting poison
pakvāśaya	round blotches	- dūṣī-viṣa: 43
- intestines: 42	- maṇḍala: 43	- dūṣīviṣa: 47
pālindī	rūkṣa	stationary
- black creeper: 46	- dry: 41	- sthāvara: 34
pallid skin disease	41	stewed juice
- kuṣṭha: 43	sāda	- niḥkvātha: 45
parśvabheda	- be exhausted: 43	sthāvara
- ribs crack: 43	sādhya	- stationary: 34
pāruṣya	- curable: 47	stomach
-hoarseness: 39	saindhava	- āmāśaya: 42f
pāṭhā	- salt: 44	striped snake
- velvet-leaf: 45	salt	- rājimat: 44
pervasive	- saindhava: 44	sūkṣma
- vyavāyin: 41	sāra	- rarified: 41
phlegm	- pith: 34, 37, 39	śūla
- kapha: 39, 42f	sārivā	- pain: 43
pippalī	- indian sarsaparilla:	śuṇṭhī
-long pepper: 46		- dried ginger: 45
nith	47 sārive	sūrvavallī

- 'sun-creeper': 45	turmerics	water-lily	
svāpa	- haridrā: 45	- utpala: 46	
- sleep: 39		weak	
śvāsa	udveșțana	- kṣīṇa: 47	
- wheezing: 39	- writhing: 39	wheezing	
symptoms	upadrava	- śvāsa: 39	
- liṅga: 42	- side-effect: 47	white siris	
g 42	utpala	- kiṇihi: 45	
takes the form of	- water-lily: 46	wild celery	
	1 . 1 . 6	- agnika: 45	
pervading the whole	velvet-leaf	- ajamodā: 45	
body	- pāṭhā: 45	writhing	
-1.1.1.1.1	vidbheda	- udveṣṭana: 39	
akhiladehavyāptirūpam:	-loose stool: 39	- ua veșțana. 39	
42	vikāsin		
three heating spices	- expansive: 41	yāpya	
- tryūṣaṇa: 45	viśada	- treatable: 47	
treatable	- limpid: 41	yavāgū	
- yāpya: 47	viśleșa	- gruel: 44f	
<i>tryūṣaṇa</i> - three heating	- disjunction: 42	yellow-berried nightshade	
	vyavāyin - pervasive: 41	- kṣudrā: 45	
spices: 45	- pervasive. 41	- <i>k</i> şaara. 45	

Todo list

añjana	20
Cf. Arthaśāstra 1.21.8.	25
I'm still unhappy about this verse.	28
Mention this in the introduction as an example of the scribe knowing	
the vulgate	28
fn about sadyas+	28
Bear's bile instead of deer's bile.	29
punarnnavā in the N & K MSS	30
śrita for śṛta	30
explain more	31
Medical difference from Sharma.	31
example where the vulgate clarifies that these should be used separ-	Ü
ately; appears to be a gloss inserted into the vulgate text	31
The two uses of prāpta are hard to translate. prāptā $h \rightarrow k$ sipram is an	
example of the vulgate banalizing the Sanskrit text to make sense of	
a difficult passage	32
$\sqrt{\text{vyadh}}$ not $\sqrt{\text{vedh}}$ (also elsewhere and for the ears), causative optative.	32
opposite of the vulgate Same as As 1.8.89 (As 1980: 79)	32
Medical difference.	32
Expected (Pillay 2010):	
Croton tiglium, L. = Naepala, Jayapala, kanakaphala, titteriphala (NL	
#720); Calotropis spp.;	
Citrullus colocynthus (colocynth);	
Ricinus communis (castor);	35
Note about Gayī's edition	35
-> ativiṣa	40
Look up the ca. reference	40
where is cutting with a knife related to removing bile or phlegm	33
maṣī burned charcoal. Find refs.	33
find ref	39
Check out these refs	40
or a dual?	44

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