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WRITTEN BY A RAJASTHANI SCRIBE

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A VARIANT NĀGARĪ SCRIPT
AS IN A MANUSCRIPT FROM BIJNOR DISTRICT, U. P.,
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By

STEPHAN HILLYER LEVITT

There is in the collection of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, which collection is currently housed in the Rare Book Room of the Library of the University of Pennsylvania, a manuscript the colophons of which are in Old Rajasthani. This manuscript was catalogued as MS. M4 in Stephan Hillyer Levitt, "A Descriptive Catalogue of the Indic and Greater Indic Manuscripts in the Collection of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania," in *The Library Chronicle* 44.2 (Winter 1980), pp. 97-152+10 plates. The scribe of this manuscript was named Lārepāce, son of Sahibrāj, grandson of Rahimat, a resident of the village of Aullyāpur. The present writer has not been able to locate this village. The manuscript was written for a person named Seḍhmal Khatrī (variantly, Seḍhmiḷ, Khatrī) of Najībābād, who was an agent of Bindarāban Bhavānidās. Najībābād is listed in *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol. 26, *Atlas*, new rev. ed. (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1931) as being in Bijnor District, U. P., not very far from Hardwar. The manuscript is dated the 3rd day in the month of *Hārī* in the year *Samvat* 1858, which year would be A. D. 1800-1801. The manuscript was donated to the University Museum by Dr. Max Uhle in 1897.

The manuscript contains two texts.

The first is a Braj translation of aphorisms by Cāṇakya on *rājanīti*, or the conduct of kings. On the basis of a comparison of this text with a manuscript from the Nāgarīpracāriṇī Sabhā in Kāśī, the text here is the *Cāṇakyaśāstra* of Senāpati who was a member of the entourage of Govindasimha. See Nāgarīpracāriṇī Sabhā, Kāśī, *Hastalikhita Hindī Pustakoṃ kā Samkṣipta Vivaraṇa* (Kāśī : Nāgarīpracāriṇī Sabhā, 2021 [A. D. 1964-1965]), vol. 1, p. 290 and vol. 2, p. 589.

The second text is in Hindi, and is the *Rukmiṇī māṅgala* of Rāmalalā to which there are added at the end of the text a number of verses by Kabīr, Senābhāga, Sūrdās, etc.

The colophon of the first text reads :

ayau om 5. pothi likhi larepace nai sahibraj ke beje nai rahimat kapotha vatanai auliyapur kakikaralavala. samvat 1858 miti hari sudi 3 barchant charabari kadin supuraṇa hoī. patiyale bica haveli apani bica likhi mahalā is iākā bhāu sameke arajām gahū 2½, dhule 4½, mūgi 3½, muṭha 4, guḍa 1¾ + 2, sakar ½ + 2, chāu ¼ + 1, tel ½ + 7, take 21 + 25, pake 16, pothi likhai sedhmal khatri nai najibabai nai gumastā bimdarāban bhavanīdās kā.

The colophon of the second text reads :

pothi lekhatāu rukmaṇimaṅgala kī. larepace nai likhi. likhai sedhmil khatri nai varani kekaralekā. pācā samvat 1858 miti hari sudi sapuraṇa ho ikādasī vāle din din aibār.

The manuscript is signed "Lady William Bentinck" at the end. Lord William Bentinck, of course, was Governor-General of India from 1827-1835. He died in 1839. The India Office Library was not able to trace any specimen of Lady William Bentinck's handwriting in their collections. They suggested, though, that Lady William Bentinck would probably sign one of book as "Mary Bentinck," noting that she was Lady Mary Acheson, 2nd daughter of 1st Earl of Gosford. On the other hand "Lady William Bentinck" would be the correct formal style of address for the wife of a younger son of a duke, and this form would probably be used on the fly-leaf of a manuscript. They noted that the inscription was not in Lord William Bentinck's hand, of which a sample was sent to me. I note, though, that the way in which the "B" and "t" are drawn is very similar – though they are probably correct that the hand is different. A copy of my inquiry was forwarded to the Keeper of Manuscripts at the University of Nottingham Library since Lord William Bentinck's private papers form part of the Portland Collection, which is now at the University of Nottingham. They never responded to me, though.

The manuscript is bound in book form in tooled leather with design on the front and back covers. The leather is colored. Gold leaf is used for part of the design. A flap on the right hand side of the manuscript comes from the back to close around the front. The front and back covers are now separate from the pages of the book. The folios are scored, the lines for the text being ruled in black and continuing for three and one-half folios after all text has ended. Five lines, alternating red and black, are ruled to the right and left of the text. Double *daṇḍa*-s parts of colophons, names of sections, and occasional refrains are in red. Mistakes are usually covered over with red. Both manuscript and cover have worm holes, but these do not interfere

with reading the text. On the bottom of the spine there is pasted a piece of paper that reads, "Marathi MS." "Lady William Bentinck" is written upside down on the last folio. On the verso of the folio following this there is a list in two columns.

The script of this manuscript is unusual.

Despite several attempts with different contacts in India, I have been unable to find out the name of this script.

The script is written without a top, or "head," as in *Devanāgarī*, *Jainanāgarī*, or *Nandināgarī*, for instance. Rather, it is comparable to *Kaithī* script.

In the manuscript at hand each page is scored with 8 or 9 thin black lines, and the 4 to 9 lines of text on each page are written below each line. The text often continues, usually for a few words only, into the outer margins of the folios though, running from either top to bottom or bottom to top. In these instances, there is clearly no rule over the syllables.

The script is not shown in George Abraham Grierson, *Handbook of the Kaithī Character*, 2nd rev. ed. (Calcutta : Thacker, Spink and Co., 1899). Nor is it shown in George Abraham Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, 11 vols. in 19 (Calcutta ; Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1903-1928), in Charles Fossey, ed., *Notices sur les caracteres étrangers anciens et modernes* (Paris : Imprimerie Nationale, 1927), in the appendix on paleography at the end of vol. 2 of Louis Renou and Jean Filliozat, *L'Inde classique : manuel des études indiennes*, 2 vols. (Paris : Payot, 1947 [i. e. 1949] - 1952), or in V. Kannaiyan, *Scripts In and Around India* (Madras : The Superintendent, Government Museum, 1960). Similarly, it is not shown in David Diringer, *Writing* (London : Thames and Hudson, [1962]); in David Diringer, *The Alphabet ; a Key to the History of Mankind*, 3rd ed. completely revised with the assistance of Reinhold Regensburger 2 vols. New York : Funk and Wagnalls, [1968]), in Germany (West) Bundesdruckerei, *Alphabete und Schriftzeichen des Morgen- und des Abendlandes*, 2. von Fachwissenschaftlern überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage (Berlin : Bundesdruckerei ; Weisbaden : Kommissionsverlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), in Hans Jensen, *Sign, Symbol and Script ; an Account of Man's Effort to Write*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed., trans. from the German by George Unwin (New York : G. P. Putnam's Sons, or in Peter T. Daniels and William Bright, eds., *The World's Writing Systems* (New York and Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1996). It is not among the South and Southeast Asian scripts

described in the U. S. Library of Congress, Processing Department, *Cataloguing Service Bulletin* 64 (February 1964), 76 (October 1956), 88 (January 1970), and 90 (September 1970). And it is, of course, not covered by Johann Georg Bühler, *Indian Paleography*, ed. by John Faithfull Fleet as an appendix to *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 33 (Bombay : Bombay Education Society's Press, Byculla, [1901]), which only covers paleography in South Asia through about A. D. 1300. Nor is it covered by Ahmad Hassan Dani, *Indian Paleography* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1963), the scope of which book is limited to the 8th century A. D. "when the writing had developed into proto-regional scripts. The later growth of the regional scripts ...requires a volume by itself." Of note, though, is that our script does in fact appear to be akin to the Gujarati and Bihari scripts, especially perhaps Bhojpuri. See David Diringer, *Alphabet*, fig. 17. 18, for instance, for the Bihari scripts. As one can see, however, from comparing the script as in the manuscript in question with George Abraham Grierson, *Handbook*, plates 2 and 28, for instance, it is different from Bhojpuri and the other varieties of *Katthi* script described.

I present here a charting of the script of this manuscript. Also shown is a reproduction of a sample page from this manuscript different from those reproduced earlier with the cataloguing of the manuscript in Stephan Levitt, "A Descriptive Catalogue..." The script was read in large part with the help of Dr. Swatanira Pidara at the University of Pennsylvania in 1973. A few questions remained, though, regarding a few of the consonants and regarding a number of the conjunct consonants. A transcript of the manuscript of the *Cāṇakyaśāstra* of Senāpati in *Devanāgarī* script housed in the Nāgarīpracārīṇī Sabhā, Kāśī was obtained, however. The readings of this manuscript were used to ascertain for sure the few consonants in question and a number of the conjunct consonants, such as *ccha*, *dya* and *sva*.

Of note is that there are dialectical differences between the two manuscripts. Thus, the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *vādhava*, the manuscript here will read *vādhapa*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *dīpaku*, the manuscript here will read *dīvā*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *turata*, the manuscript here will read *turati*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *māmasa*, the manuscript here will read *māmasi*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *guṇavān*, the manuscript here will read *gunavān*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *nokā*, the manuscript here will read *nahūkā*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *taji*, the manuscript here will read *tajahu*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *jiu*, the manuscript here will read *jya*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *vidiā*, the manuscript here

will read *vidyā*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *suāmibhakta*, the manuscript here will read *svāmabhagte*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *amrita*, the manuscript here will read *avrati*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *sopriā*, the manuscript here will read *supirīyā*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *prathama*, the manuscript here will read *pirthama*.

There are also errors due to orthographic confusions which can be seen in the two manuscripts. Thus, the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *pitra*, the manuscript here reads *mitra*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *sitru*, the manuscript here reads *mitra*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *se tāpu*, the manuscript here reads *saṁtāpa*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *rasavajī*, the manuscript here reads *rasavatī*. There are as well occasional transpositions of syllable. Thus, the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *khanere*, the manuscript here reads *kharana*. To be kept in mind here is that I am working from a transcript of the *Devanāgarī* manuscript. Errors not in the original *Devanāgarī* manuscript may have crept into the transcript, and this in part may be reflected here.

In the manuscript here, “*r*” is usually written as a full syllable, “*ra*,” even though the vowel is not pronounced. Thus, *svarga* is written **svaraga*, *dharmā* is written **dharama*, *durjana* is written **durajana*. Similarly, both “*r*” and the consonant before it are written as full syllables even though the “*r*” may be taken together with the preceding consonant. Thus, *krodha* is written **karodha*, and the *Devanāgarī* manuscript will read *śravaṇa* while the manuscript here will read *sravana*, written **saravana*. Sanskrit vowel “*r*” is almost always realized in our manuscript as “*ir*.” Thus, while the *Devanāgarī* manuscript has *vida*, the manuscript here has *virḍha*, written **viradha*; while the *Devanāgarī* manuscript has *prathama*, the manuscript here has *pirthama*, written **pirathama*; while the *Devanāgarī* manuscript has *mirga*, the manuscript here has *mirga*, written **miraga*. The number of instances in which “*r*” is written as part of a conjunct consonant are comparatively few in this manuscript, though as can be seen from the chart of conjunct consonants this does occur at times.

Occasionally, more than one form for a word is found in our manuscript. Thus, for the word *brāhmaṇa* in the *Devanāgarī* manuscript, the manuscript here has the forms *bāhmaṇa* *birahmaṇa*, and *bāmmaṇa*; and for the form *brahman* in the *Devanāgarī* manuscript, the manuscript here has *btranimam*.

The manuscript here occasionally omits an *adhyāya* break and instead continues numbering the verses in sequence with the verses of the preceding

adhyāya. Eventually, though, it corrects itself. Very occasionally the position of a very few verses are transposed in the two manuscripts. In one instance, the manuscript here omits a verse.

In a few instances, there seem to be true variant readings. Thus, the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *meka*, the manuscript here reads *sreshṭa*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *jiva te*, the manuscript here reads *cautha ke*; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *bhānājana*, the manuscript here reads *gunājana*.

On the whole, though, the readings of the two manuscripts are close to one another. Often, the reading of one manuscript will clarify the reading of the other manuscript. The manuscript here is especially of help with regard to this.

A few orthographic problems remain, though. Most of these instances are in the second text, for which it was not possible to obtain a second manuscript. Of the individual ligatures which are problems, each of these occurs once in the second text. Of the conjunct consonants which are problems, each of nos. (2) through (5) similarly occurred only one or two times each in the second text. These probably are ligatures for (2) *nya*, (3) *vya*, (4) *mya*, and (5) *tya*, but we cannot be sure without comparing the manuscript of the text in question with another manuscript of the same text, or working thoroughly on the text itself. The questionable point here is the dot being drawn within the character instead of below it.

Of the conjunct ligatures, no. (1) is probably *rna*. It occurs twice in a form *kī[]no*. The *Devanāgarī* manuscript has in one of these locations *kīno* and in the other *krīto*. Both are probably forms of the verb “ to do, to make,” Sanskrit \sqrt{kr} , and the sense of the verses would seem to indicate this. It also occurs twice in a form *i[]nmai* and once in a form *i[]nte*, where the *Devanāgarī* manuscript has respectively *unmai* and *unte*.

The character for *ṣa* occurs in our manuscript only once in the first text. This character in this manuscript standardly is used for the character for *kha*. The character for *ya*, it is to be noted, is similar to *gha* in *Gurmukhi* script but with a dot below it. The character for *sha* is written as *sa*, but with three dots over it as in Arabic script. It is used for both *śa* and, in the conjunct ligature *śnta*, for *ṣa*. It can be seen in such forms as *śatra*, for *śatra*; and *iṣṭa*, for *iṣṭa*. Such conjunct ligatures as *śṭa* and *ṣṭa* both sometimes represent Sanskrit *ṣṭa* in this manuscript, it can be noted. Thus, the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads fully articulated *isata*, while the manuscript

here reads *ishṭa* ; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads fully articulated *dusaṣa*, while the manuscript here reads *duṣṭa* in one location, *dushṭa* in another ; the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads fully articulated *gosaṣa*, while the manuscript here reads *gushṭa*. Such eonjuncts as *kṣa* sometimes come in the manuscript here from writing, for instance, *kṣaka* while the *Devanāgarī* manuscript reads *kaṣaka*.

It is hoped that the presentation of the charted material here will prove to be helpful for work with other manuscripts as well.

Vowels and Diphthongs

a 3)

ā 3))

i 2

ī 2)

u 3) 3) 3)

ū 3)

e 2

ê 2) 2)

ai 2

o 3)

ô

au 3))

Vowel Modifications

ka ɸ

kā ɸ|

ki ɸ

kī ɸ|

ku ɸ

kū ɸ ɸ

ke ɸ

kai ɸ

ko ɸ|

kau ɸ|

Auspicious Syllable

om 2

Consonants

| | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|-------|
| ka | १ ७ ७) | da | २ २ |
| kha | ५ | ra | ३ ३ |
| ga | १) २) | dha | ७ |
| gha | ६ ६ ६ | na | १॥ १॥ |
| ṅa | | ta | १ |
| ca | ५ ५ | tha | २५ |
| cha | ६ ६ ६ | da | ६ |
| ja | १) | dha | २५ |
| jha | ६ ६ | na | २५ २५ |
| ṇa | | pa | ५ |
| ṭa | ८ | pha | ५ |
| ṭha | ७ | ba | ८ ९ |
| | | bha | ९ |

ma H H H

ya ५

ra ॐ ॐ

la ॢ ॢ

la ॢ

va ५ ५

sha ॥

sa ५

sa ॥

ha ॢ ॢ

h

m . , O online

Problems

(1) ५

(2) ॥

(3) ॥

Conjunct Consonants

ktā ॢ

kya ५ ५

kra ॢ

khya ५

gta ॢ

gya ५ ५

gra ॢ

ccha ५ ५ ५

॥

| | | | |
|------|------------|-------|------|
| chra | ६ | pta | ५ |
| jya | २५ | pra | ५ |
| tya | ५६ | bra | ४ |
| nya | ३५ | bhya | ६५ |
| tya | २५ ५ २५ २५ | mya | २५ |
| tra | ३ | lta | ३ |
| thya | २५ | lya | २५ |
| dya | ६३ | vya | ५६ २ |
| dhya | २५ | sḥta | ६ |
| dhra | ५ | sta | ६ |
| nma | ४ | sra | ६ |
| nya | २५ | sva | ६५ |
| nra | २ | hma | ४ |

| haya फ़ | Numbers |
|----------|---------|
| hwa ह | 1 १ |
| Problems | 2 २ |
| (1) ग | 3 ३ |
| (2) न | 4 ४ |
| (3) द | 5 ५ |
| (4) ल | 6 ६ |
| (5) प | 7 ७ ७ |
| | 8 ८ ८ |
| | 9 ९ ९ |
| | 0 ० |

