

The Suśruta Project

The textual and cultural history of medicine in South Asia based on newly-discovered manuscript evidence

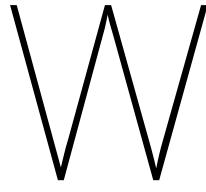
Posts published on February 14, 2025, from sushrutaproject.org. Printed on February 14, 2025 using

[Print My Blog](#)

Day one of this project!

April 10, 2020

Categories: Announcements



Welcome to this brand new website! We just heard the news about our project funding yesterday (April 9, 2020). As we get started, you will find reports and news here about our progress. The project will start in earnest after September 2020. We look forward to keeping you interested and stimulated with discoveries about Ayurveda, Suśruta, South Asian manuscripts and the history of medicine.

Pandit Project

October 1, 2020

Categories: Announcements

Tags: panditproject

We are collaborating with the Pandit Project as a place to keep track in a structured and relational manner of works, authors and especially manuscripts. Here is the [Pandit Project entry for the Suśrutasamhitā and its commentaries.](#)

New article by Andrey Klebanov in press

October 3, 2020

Categories: New publications

In a new article that is to be published in the [eJournal of Indian Medicine](#) in the near future, researcher Andrey Klebanov does a deep dive into the Nepalese manuscripts of the *Suśrutasamhitā*. Andrey has kindly shared a draft of his article with me in advance of publication, and I have his permission to report on some of his critical findings.

His research focusses on three manuscripts that are preserved in Kathmandu, Nepal, in the Kaiser Library and in the National Archives of Kathmandu, the same manuscripts that are the focus of this Suśruta Project:

- [MS Kathmandu KL 9/699](#) (Klebanov's "K")
- [MS Kathmandu NAK 1/1079](#) ("N")
and
- [MS Kathmandu NAK 5/333 \(= 5/334\)](#) ("H")

The critical study of these manuscripts had only just begun, and there is much still to discover. But already Andrey reports important differences from the well-known printed editions of the *Suśrutasamhitā* (henceforth SS).

First of all, Andrey does not call the version of the SS a "Nepalese" version as such. Rather, it seems that these manuscripts preserve a version of the SS that was current in north India during the first millennium, perhaps especially in Bengal or elsewhere in eastern India. That version has disappeared elsewhere, but these very old Nepalese manuscripts bear witness to it.

Andrey's remaining conclusions can be summarized as follow:

- The colophon of K shows that it was produced for a particular family.
- The MSS may all derive from a version that was written by a Nepalese scribe who added Buddhist invocations to the text.
- Manuscripts K and H preserve, in addition to the SS, a dictionary of herbal medicines called the *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu*. This important and semi-legendary work is known only from these manuscripts. (It was published in 2000 by [Svedi and Tivari](#).)
- The earliest known commentators on the SS, such as the famous [Jejjāta](#) (fl. 650-750), were aware of this early version of the SS.
- The commentator [Cakrapānidatta](#) (fl. 1075) had before him a version of the SS much closer to the Nepalese MSS than the commentator [Dalhana](#) (fl. 1150). Similarly, the author [Mādhavakara](#) (fl. 700) too appears to have used this version, although this needs deeper study.
- MS K, dated to 878 CE, predates all the main commentators except Jejjāta.
- This version of the SS preserves archaic features of the text and of Indian medical theory that were otherwise

lost. For example, the well-known 5+1 structure of the SS (five sthānas plus the Uttaratantra) is strongly emphasized, with colophons calling the work “the SS plus the Uttaratantra.”

There is much more information and discussion in Andrey Klebanov's article, and we eagerly await publication. Watch this space.

SS.1.1.0–1.1.3

October 25, 2020

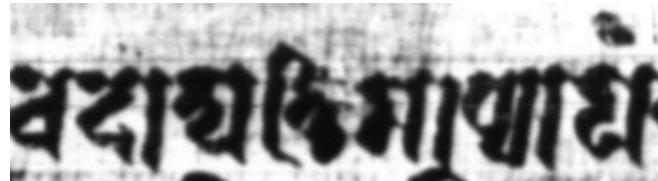
Categories: Textual notes

SS.1.1.0

The opening scribal invocation of KL 699 dedicates the work to *Kamalahasta* “him with the lotus hands.” This is an honorific title used for the Buddhist Padmapāṇi or [Avalokiteśvara](#).

SS.1.1.1

MSS K originally read ādhyāyam, but a scribe corrected it to adhyāyam. N reads the ungrammatical ādhyāyam.



MS N

Perhaps N was copied from K before the correction was made in K?

SS.1.1.2

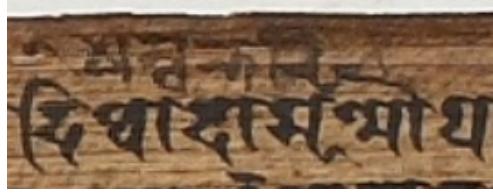
The expression “yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ || 2 ||” “As Reverend Dhanvantari said,” is present in the Ācārya 1931 vulgate and most printed editions but is absent in MSS K, N and H. This is important for the history of the text, since it removes a layer of divine narration from the work.

SS.1.1.3

The reading of MS K omits reference to Dhanvantari. It may be translated:

“ Now, then, Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja, Suśruta and others addressed Reverend Divodāsa, king of Kāśī, the best of the immortals, surrounded by groups of sages, who was in his ashram.

- In MS K, a later scribal hand has added “dhanvantari” faintly in the margin above “divodāsam aupa”:



MS KL 699 f.1v

"Dhanvantari" is also omitted in MS N but is present in H. This reading with "dhanvantarim" is normal in the vulgate editions. This is a second case where the early Nepalese MSS remove Dhanvantari from the narrative frame.

The above two readings distance this part of the work from Dhanvantari. As has shown, the only section of KL 699 to associate itself with Dhanvantari is the Kalpasthāna, which deals predominantly with toxicology. If this is the oldest form of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, then references in other texts to "the followers of Dhanvantari" (Skt. *dhanvantarīyāḥ*) might be references not to surgeons but to poison specialists.

- The list of speakers includes [Bhoja](#), a pre-500 CE author of a *Bhojasamhitā* (see HML IA, 690-691). Bhoja is omitted from the vulgate editions.

References

An Ancient Pandemic Story

December 6, 2020

Categories: Announcements, New publications

Earlier this year, Dominik Wujastyk was interviewed for the Bangalore-based [Scrolls & Leaves](#) podcast series curated by the science journalists Mary-Rose Abraham and Gayathri Vaidyanathan. He spoke about the description of epidemic disease in the *Carakasaṃhitā*, the sister treatise of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*.

“ Atreya, the renowned teacher of Ayurveda, is walking with his pupils on the banks of the river Ganga in Kampilya. Ominous signs of an epidemic shadow the grandeur of the ancient kingdom. Atreya explains to his students how an epidemic arises from degraded environmental conditions. And he points to their cause: the unrighteous actions of a particular group of citizens. Sanskrit scholar Dominik Wujastyk of the University of Alberta in Canada, narrates this compelling tale from one of the oldest Ayurvedic texts. It's a story of surprising resonance with our current global situation.

— *Scrolls & Leaves* website

Listen to the full podcast [here](#).

An unknown early commentary on the Suśrutasamhitā

December 8, 2020

Categories: Announcements

A new article by Andrey Klebanov has recently appeared in the Festschrift to Prof. K. G. Zysk . Klebanov studies a manuscript in the Government Oriental Manuscript Library in Chennai that is titled simply “A commentary on Suśruta” (*Suśrutavyākhyā*). The manuscript is [MS Chennai GOML R 3422](#) and has 220 pages. The Chennai MS is a transcription of an [older MS](#) described as no. 7 in the collection of V. N. Narayanan Nambudiri Vaidyamatam Tiruthala post, made in the year 1920-1921. [Ashtavaidyan Vaidyamadham Valiya Narayanan Namboodiri](#) was an eminent Keralan physician who lived from 1882 to 1959.

While discussing the *Compendium of Suśruta*, the commentary often “makes use of a debate-like dialectic approach, which routinely utilizes complex nested arguments” that include methodological discussions about the very process of writing a commentary. “Commentators do not learn the sūtras directly from their original composers,” argues the anonymous author, noting that, “sūtras do after all have multiple meanings, so it is legitimate for commentators to propose several different interpretations.”

Another special feature of this commentary is that it bristles with citations from named medical authors. Klebanov lists twenty such authorities, starting with Bhoja, who is quoted most often. (This Bhoja is an ancient pre-Suśruta medical authority whose work is lost.)

This anonymous commentary includes other lively and complex discussions on various aspects of Āyurvedic doctrine and practice.

References

An anusvāra and the goals of editing

December 16, 2020

Categories: Announcements, Textual notes

We have a reading ([SS.sū.1.10 ... upaśamakaraṇārtham](#)) where the final -m is an anusvāra in the earliest witnesses, K and H (in “Orthographic variants”, switch off “filter final anusvāra variants”). We want our edition to represent the earliest known transmission of the work. Scribal usage of daṇḍas is variable and not a determining editorial factor. And the next akṣara is a ka, so there’s really no grammatical reason to change -ṁ to -m, unless we assume the speaker is pausing between these sections of text (so there’s *samhitā*, P.6.1.72). On the other hand, this is clearly a series of separate statements about the contents of the eight divisions of medicine; today we might represent it as a bulleted list. So perhaps we can assume a pause, and -m is not wrong. In short, the grammatical case doesn’t help us make a decision.

Reading this morning about [HyperStack](#), I noticed the section-heading “2.1 The real Patrick”. In our case, this would be “The Real Suśruta.” The idea of recovering an original authorial voice is a commonplace in textual criticism. Paraphrasing the HyperStack statement, “The Suśruta Project aims to give society as direct access as possible to the historical Suśruta.” We can’t do that, of course, since the *Suśrutasamhitā* has many authorial layers . What we can do, more modestly, is provide direct access to the early version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* preserved by the Nepalese manuscripts.

But the question remains, not just what the earliest manuscripts say, but what do we think their archetype read?

Ḍalhaṇa and the Early ‘Nepalese’ Version of the Suśrutasamhitā

January 4, 2021

Categories: Announcements

Based on a collation of several Nepalese manuscripts of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, [a provisional critical edition of the first chapter](#) will be important evidence for future scholarly appraisals of this medical classic. The so-called Nepalese version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* is older and more rudimentary than the rendering of the text in modern printed editions, such as those of Trivikramji Acharya and others . In many instances, the printed editions have additional words and phrases that appear to have been added to a simpler version of the work, like the one preserved by the Nepalese manuscripts. This observation is consistent with the main conclusions of published studies on this early version by Wujastyk , Harimoto () and Klebanov ().

Generally speaking, the standard vulgate edition of the *Suśrutasamhitā* by Yādavaśarma Trivikrama Ācārya presents the version of the work that was commented on by Ḍalhaṇa, a Brahmin physician who is generally ascribed to the twelfth century CE . As Wujastyk notes :

“ Yet, for all its shortcomings, like many vulgates, Ācārya’s edition is enormously valuable, and represents what almost all scholars since 1915 have treated as the text of this classic work.

A striking feature of Ḍalhaṇa’s commentary is that he notes many variant readings of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that were known to him at the time. If Ḍalhaṇa was active in the latter part of the twelfth century, he lived at least several centuries after the composition of the early version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* in the Nepalese manuscripts, because one of these manuscripts ([MS Kathmandu KL 699](#)) is dated to the ninth century . Therefore, it is worth asking whether Ḍalhaṇa knew of this early ‘Nepalese’ version of the *Suśrutasamhitā*.

There are enough clues in Ḍalhaṇa’s commentary on the first chapter of the *Suśrutasamhitā*’s first part, called the *Ślokasthāna*, to provide a preliminary answer. Several of his comments strongly suggest that he knew a rendering that was similar to, but probably not the same as, the version preserved by the Nepalese manuscripts in question. I shall discuss four of these clues.

Bhoja

One interesting point of difference between the text on which Ḍalhaṇa commented and that of the Nepalese manuscripts is the names of the principal sages who ask Lord Divodāsa, the best of the gods,

to teach them Āyurveda. According to the version of the text adopted by Ḏalhaṇa (1.1.3), the sages were Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Pauṣkalāvata, Karavīrya, Gopurarakṣita, Suśruta and others. However, in the Nepalese version, their names are Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja, Suśruta and others.

<i>Sages</i>	<i>Dalhaṇa's recension</i>	<i>Nepalese manuscripts</i>
Aupadhenava	✓	✓
Vaitaraṇa	✓	✓
Aurabhra	✓	✓
Puṣkalāvata	Pauṣkalāvata	✓
Karavīra	Karavīrya	✓
Gopurarakṣita	✓	✓
Bhoja	✗	✓
Suśruta	✓	✓
others	✓	✓

Authorities of the Suśrutasamhitā

The significant difference between both lists is the inclusion of Bhoja in the latter, a sage whose teachings on medicine were recorded in a lost text called the *Bhojasamhitā*. However, Ḏalhaṇa was aware that Bhoja was among these sages, even though Bhoja's name is absent in the version on which he commented. For Ḏalhaṇa says, 'by the word "others", Bhoja and so on.'

In other words, Ḏalhaṇa believed that Bhoja was also present among the sages who asked Divodāsa to teach Āyurveda, which suggests that he had probably read a version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that, like Nepalese one, included Bhoja's name in this list.

Variant reading 1

Among the many variations between the vulgate and Nepalese version, there are two instances in the first chapter where Ḏalhaṇa notes variant readings that occur in the Nepalese version. In 1.1.21cd, he comments on the sentence, 'I (i.e., Divodāsa) returned to earth to teach the section about surgery along with the other sections.'

However, when commenting on this passage, Ḏalhaṇa notes a significantly different rendering of this statement that so happens to be the same as the Nepalese version: ‘Having understood surgery, the best of the great knowledge systems, I (i.e., Divodāsa) returned to earth to teach it here.’

Variant reading 2

Also, in 1.1.22, Ḏalhaṇa comments on the phrase ‘in this treatise’ (*asmin śāstre*) but notes the alternative reading, ‘here, in this treatise’ (*tatrāśmin śāstre*). The second reading is the same as that of the Nepalese version.

Sixty methods or definitions

The last example demonstrates that Ḏalhaṇa knew a rendering of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that was similar but not exactly the same as the early Nepalese version. In fact, it appears that he knew a version which had been modified by someone in an effort to make sense of an enigmatic remark in the Nepalese text.

The remark in question occurs in the following definition of surgery in the Nepalese version:



Among , the one called surgery has the goal of extracting various grasses, wood, stone, dust, iron, soil, bone, hair, nails, discharge of pus, malignant wounds and foreign bodies inside the womb, and of determining the application of surgical instruments, knives, caustics and fire by means of sixty definitions.

The version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* on which Ḏalhaṇa comments does not mention the ‘sixty definitions.’ However, Ḏalhaṇa notes the variant reading ‘by sixty methods’ (*ṣaṣṭyā vidhānaiḥ*), which follows the words ‘the goal of extracting’ (*uddharanārtha*) and which he understands as referring to a group of sixty treatments for two kinds of sores (*dvivraṇīya*). These sixty treatments are listed and discussed in the first chapter of Suśruta’s section on general medicine (*cikitsāsthāna*). Ḏalhaṇa notes that the list begins with the reduction of food intake (*apatarpaṇa*) and ends with protective measures (*rakṣāvidhāna*).

The Nepalese version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* reads, ‘by sixty definitions’ (*ṣaṣṭyābhidhānaiḥ*), instead of ‘by sixty methods,’ and it follows the words, ‘the goal of determining’ (*viniścayārtha*), instead of ‘the goal of extracting’ (*uddharanārtha*). As far as I am aware, a list of sixty definitions of surgical instruments, knives, caustics and fire is not clearly seen or indicated elsewhere in the *Suśrutasamhitā*. The absence of such a list of definitions probably prompted someone to change the word ‘definitions’ (*abhidhāna*) to ‘methods’ (*vidhāna*), and to reposition the phrase so that it could be construed with ‘malignant wounds’ (*duṣṭavrāṇa*) in the compound ending with the ‘the goal of extracting’.

Since the Nepalese manuscripts read ‘by sixty definitions’ (*ṣaṣṭyābhidhānaiḥ*), it seems likely that this reading was original, and was later changed to ‘by sixty methods’ (*ṣaṣṭyā vidhānaiḥ*) by someone who was

unaware of the sixty definitions. It seems that this change was made before the time of Ḏalhaṇa, and he may not have known the reading 'by sixty definitions' (*ṣaṣṭyābhidhānaiḥ*). Therefore, he had access to a rendering of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that was very similar to, but not the same as, the version preserved by the Nepalese manuscripts.

The likelihood that Ḏalhaṇa knew a version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that was similar to the Nepalese one raises further questions. Why did he choose to prefer and comment on another version of the text? Was the Nepalese version less prevalent than other versions in the twelfth century or in the region he inhabited, or did he comment on the version taught to him by his guru? Or did he prefer an augmented version of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, or is his rendering of the text his own compilation of several different versions, which included one similar to the Nepalese? Perhaps further research on Ḏalhaṇa's commentary and the complex history of the *Suśrutasamhitā*'s transmission will answer these questions.

Footnotes

Suśrutasamhitā (Nepalese version) (*atha khalu bhagavantam amaravaram ṛṣigāṇapariṇyttam āśramastham kāśirājāṁ divodāsam aupadhenavavaitaraṇaurabhrapuṣkalāvatakaravīragopurarakṣitabhojasuśrutaprabhṛtaya ūcuḥ*).

Nibandhasaṅgraha (of Ḏalhaṇa) 1.1.3 (*prabhṛtiśabdena bhojādayaḥ*).

Nibandhasaṅgraha (of Ḏalhaṇa) 1.1.21cd (*śalyāṅgam aṅgair aparair upetam prāpto 'smi gām bhūya ihopadeṣṭum anye salyam mahacchāstravaram gr̥hītvā iti paṭhanti*). Cf. *Suśrutasamhitā* (Nepalese version) (*śalyam mahacchāstravaram gr̥hītvā prāpto 'smi gām bhūya ihopadeṣṭum*).

Nibandhasaṅgraha (of Ḏalhaṇa) 1.1.22 (*anye tu tatrāsmiñchāstre iti paṭhanti*).

Suśrutasamhitā (Nepalese version) (*tatrāsmiñchāstre iti paṭhanti*).

Suśrutasamhitā (Nepalese version) (*tatra śalyan nāma vividhatrṇakāṣṭhapāṣāṇapāṃsulohaloṣṭāsthibālanakhapūyāsrāvaduṣṭavraṇāntargarbhaśalyoddharaṇārtham yantraśastrakṣārāgnipranidhānaviniścayārthañ ca ṣaṣṭyābhidhānair iti*).

Nibandhasaṅgraha (of Ḏalhaṇa) 1.1.8.1 (*uddharaṇārtham ity asyāgre ṣaṣṭyā vidhānaiḥ iti ke cit paṭhanti, vyākhyānayanti ca - apatarpaṇādyai rakṣāvidhānāntair dvivraṇīyoktair ity arthaḥ*).

Bibliography

Who was Bhoja?

January 6, 2021

Categories: Announcements

The Nepalese manuscripts of the *Suśrutasamhitā* include Bhoja as one of the great, ancient authorities of Ayurveda. The [recent post by Jason Birch](#) discusses this point. In this post I would like to give some information about this figure in medical history. The remarks below are based on the research of Meulenbeld .

Date

First, this authority is nothing to do with the famous eleventh-century Paramāra king, Bhoja of Dhārā. The Bhoja of the *Suśrutasamhitā* obviously preceded the physical manuscript [Kathmandu KL 699](#), dated 878 CE, that mentions the name. But it is likely that this Bhoja may be datable to an earlier period still, when the text of the *Suśrutasamhitā* was being compiled. Since the text was compiled over a long period and in several discrete steps, it is hard to be more precise about the date. Bhoja preceded the commentators Jejīṭa (c. 650 – c. 750), Indu and Tīsaṭa (fl. c. 900-1000), who quote him, and Meulenbeld lists almost fifty later authors who also cite or refer to Bhoja's work.

Work

The ancient medical author [Bhoja](#) composed a work of his own that may have been similar to the *Suśrutasamhitā* and possibly even one of its sources. Bhoja's work is widely quoted by later authors including, especially, the learned commentators Cakrapāṇidatta (fl. c. 1075) and Ḟalhaṇa (b. 1150). It is sometimes referred to as a *samhitā*, or as a *tantra* and according to the *Vāgbhaṭamāṇḍana* it was divided into the same *sthānas* as the *Suśrutasamhitā*. The quotations from it suggest that it was written in verse mixed with prose and may have been in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and a king (like the *Suśrutasamhitā*). The quotations also suggest that Bhoja's text included material on *śalya* and *śālākya* as well as general Ayurvedic topics. There may have existed different versions of Bhoja's treatise, since shorter and longer versions (*bṛhad-*, *vṛddha-*, *mahā-*, *kṣudra-*) are referred to.

Bhoja's work is referred to as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Muslim medical authors in India, for example in the *Ma'dan al-shifa'-i Sikandar-shahi* and the *Ganj-i bad-awurd* .

Finally, the name Bhoja referring to a medical authority is also known from Buddhist sources, where however he is characterized as a specialist in toxicology and the treatment of snakebite.

References

Fragments of a lost manuscript

February 13, 2021

Categories: Announcements, Textual notes

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has in its collection eight pages of a lost Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript that support extracts of the *Suśrutasāṃhitā*. The MS is accessioned as MS Los Angeles LACMA M.87.271a-g, and images are posted on [the LACMA website](#).

The folia were generously donated to LACMA by Emeritus Professor and Mrs. Thomas O. Ballinger. Prof. Ballinger (1911-1998) spent his professional life at the University of Oregon and travelling in Asia and Africa as an educator. During a visit to Nepal during 1955-1957, working with the U.S. Aid Program, he contributed to the founding of Tribhuvan University and other institutions of learning. It was at this time that he collected Nepalese artefacts, including the MS now at the LACMA ().

Paintings

Two of the folia contain miniature paintings. This is an extraordinary feature of these folia, as illustrated medical manuscripts are almost completely unknown in South Asia (). The images in question are not medical, but Buddhist. Mr Madhusudan Rimal has confirmed that the paintings were added to the MS after the completion of the writing, since the paint overlaps substantial portions of the writing area. It is possible that the paintings were added a long time after the MS was written, as a way to enhance the items for sale. It is also possible that these folios come from more than one original manuscript.



[MS Los Angeles LACMA M87-271, ma-44975.tiff.](#)

The raised fingers in ma-44975.tiff could conceivably be kartari-mukha, scissor-face, maybe suggesting surgery or healing. But other aspects of the iconography strongly suggest that this is the Buddha receiving reverence and not a reference to the medical content of the surrounding text.



[MS Los Angeles LACMA M87-271, ma-44978.tiff.](#)

I am grateful to my friend and colleague Jeremiah Losty who suggested that ma-44978.tiff might be an image of Bhaisajyaguru, the Medicine Buddha, with a pot between his hands. He noted further that enthroned Buddhas are not meant to incline their heads listening, but that Nepalese iconography can be non-standard. Mr Deepro Chakraborty suggested that the six-armed goddess may be Vasudhārā, one of the few goddesses with this iconography and a figure especially associated with Newar Buddhism and a bringer of abundance and prosperity.

Extracts

The following preliminary notes on these folia reference the TIFF files downloadable from the LACMA website.

Image file ma-44975.tiff

This folio carries part of *Suśrutasamhitā* 6.47. This is a chapter about countering the effects of excessive intoxication (*madātyaya*).

Folio begins, Su.6.47.51cd : pibenmāgadhikonmiśram tatrāmbho himaśītalam//

Folio ends, Su.6.47.60 : dhārāgrhe pragalitodakadurdinābhe klāntah śayīta salilānilaśītakukṣau//
Su.6.47.61 gandhodakaiḥ

A translation of this chapter can be read in : 3, 289-301.

See [digital copy at archive.org](#). A better and more modern translation is that of . Verses 51-61 correspond to verses 34-37 (pp.296-8) in Bhishagratna's tr.

Image file ma-44977.tiff

folio ends: śārīrasthānam samāptam iti

This is the end of Su.3.

Dr Andrey Klebanov notes further that,

“ The content of the folios, however, is rather peculiar. Apart from other things, it is interesting that the colophon in ma-44977, which — as you note — seems to conclude the śārīrasthāna, actually contains a little more (exciting) information. After the puṣpikā in the fourth line it reads (something like):

※ suśrute candraṭene bhiṣaktisaṭasūnunā pāṭhaśuddhi kṛtā tanre ṭīkām ālokya yeyaṭīm /
āyurvedasauśru++ rvedaśāstraśārīrasthānam samāptam iti // ※

(It's metrical that's why I set it in this way. "yeaṭī ṭīkā" should be, I guess, Jejjāṭa's ṭīkā.)

It is likely, moreover, that ma-44979, which contains some text roughly identifiable as Śā 2, belongs to the same MS as ma-44977, because of the matching numbers of lines, akṣara-s in a line as well as the general shape of akṣara-s. Other folios are likely to be written by other scribes (perhaps, by at least two other scribes), so that they may not necessarily belong to the same MS as ma-44977 and ma-44979.

personal email of 17 April 2019

This reference to the author [Candrata](#) (fl. ca. 900) and his "Critical edition" (*Pāṭhaśuddhi*) of the Suśrutasamhitā is an important discovery and requires further research. (On the *Pāṭhaśuddhi* see .)

Image file ma-44978.tif

Line 4 has: athāto mūtradoṣapratīṣedham vyākhyāsyāmaḥ// vāta...<next line>ṣṭhīlā vātabastiṣṭathaiva
ca/

I.e., Su.6.58.3, omitting the "dhanvantari said" phrase.

This chapter deals with forms of strangury ([Bhishagratna 1916: 3, 361 ff.](#)).

Footnotes

1 [MS description at PanditProject](#).

2 The overview photograph ([view 1](#)) lacks one page, which is however shown in "View 2." The folio in "View 9" is an unrelated Sri Lankan manuscript.

3 Currently a research assistant on this project.

Bibliography

Published!

March 8, 2021

Categories: Announcements

It is a pleasure to announce that [the paper discussed in an earlier blog post](#) has now been published:

Lecture at the National Institute for Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

March 19, 2021

Categories: New publications

SANSKRIT LANGUAGE & ITS TRADITIONS

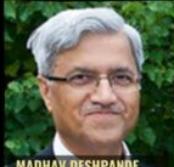
A Journey through its History and Contemporaneity

AN ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LECTURE SERIES

20 January to 28 April, 2021 (every Wednesday)

SCHEDULE

10.30 AM IST



20 Jan 2021 Indian traditions on the Vedas and Sanskrit

MADHAV DESHPANDE is Professor Emeritus, Sanskrit and Linguistics, University of Michigan; Senior Fellow, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, and Adjunct Professor NIAS

MADHAV DESHPANDE

3 Feb 2021 Sociolinguistics of Sanskrit

10 Feb 2021 Sanskrit Grammarians: From Pāṇini to Patañjali

17 Feb 2021 Forms of Vernacular Sanskrit

27 Jan 2021 Sanskrit: A Historical Linguistics Approach

24 Feb 2021 Sanskrit in the South: Vernacular in Sanskrit, Sanskrit in Vernacular, and the Strange and Beautiful Case of Maṇipravālām
3.30 PM IST



DAVID DEAN SHULMAN, Professor, Department of Asian Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is an Israeli Indologist, poet and peace activist, known for his work on the history of religion in South India

3 MAR 2021 Hinduism and the History of Dharmaśāstra
7 PM IST



PATRICK OLIVELLE is Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair Emeritus in the Humanities, University of Texas, Austin



24 MAR 2021 The Method of "Neti Neti"
5.00 PM IST

DIWAKAR ACHARYA is Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Oriental Institute / All Souls College, Oxford

31 MAR 2021 The Arthaśāstra and the Statecraft Tradition
7.00 PM IST



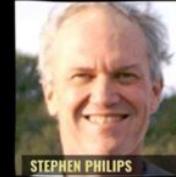
MARK MCCLISH is Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Religious Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

7 APR 2021 Panini's Ashtadhyayi from Computational Perspective
10.30 AM IST



AMBA KULKARNI is Professor & Head, Department of Sanskrit Studies, University of Hyderabad

21 APR 2021 Epistemology in Classical India
7.00 PM IST



STEPHEN PHILIPS is Professor of Philosophy and Asian studies at the University of Texas at Austin



10 MAR 2021 Indian Inscriptions: Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Everything Between: The Grand Paradox of Indian Epigraphy
9.30 AM IST

RICHARD SALOMON is William P. and Ruth Gerberding University Professor Emeritus, Department of Asian Languages & Literature, University of Washington, Seattle



17 MAR 2021 Healing the Mind and the Body: The History of Ayurveda
9.00 AM IST

DOMINIK WUJASTYK is Singhmar Chair in Classical Indian Society and Polity, Department of History and Classics, University of Alberta, Canada.



28 APR 2021 Reality of the Past and the Future: In Vasubandhu, Kashmir Naiyāyika Bhāsarvajña and Kashmir Shaiva Abhinavagupta
10.30 AM IST

ARINDAM CHAKRABARTI is Professor and Director, Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at MānoaNirmal K. and the first Augustina Matto Endowed Chair in Classical Indic Studies at Stony Brook, NY

Organised by NIAS Consciousness Studies Programme
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES
NIASCONSCIOUSNESSPROGRAMME@NIAS.RES.IN



The NIAS in Bengaluru is running a lecture series entitled “Sanskrit Language & its Traditions”. As part of this series, Dominik Wujastyk recently contributed a lecture on the History of Ayurveda. In the [last part](#) of the lecture, Prof. Wujastyk introduced and discussed the Sushruta Project.

To

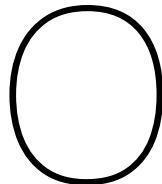
A conspicuous filling sign in proto Bengālī manuscripts

April 12, 2021

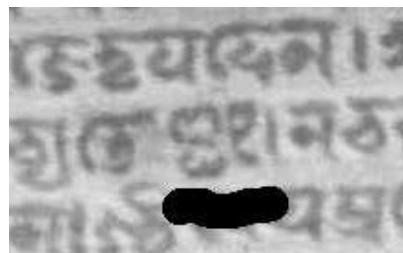
Categories: Textual notes

by Birgit Kellner (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

This document is kindly contributed by Birgit Kellner, who composed it on 13 November 2017, with input from: Patrick McAllister, Yasutaka Muroya, Markus Pastollnigg, Cristina Pecchia, Serena Saccone, Ernst Steinkellner, and Toshikazu Watanabe.



In Dharmottarapradīpa ms fol. 3a (Tucci photographs 1939/Ngor monastery; earlier photographs taken by Sāṅkṛtyāyana probably in 1936), the following two signs can be found in the middle of a line:



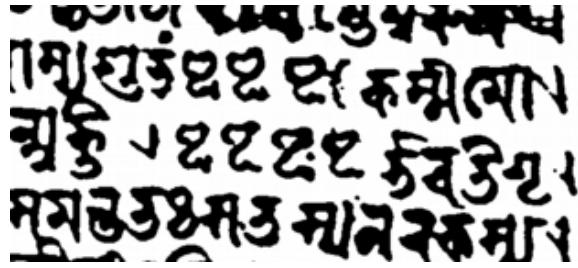
These signs are not recognizable as *akṣaras* in the (proto-Bengālī or Vihārī) script. The text is meaningful and syntactically well-formed without them (there is no Tibetan translation which would lend additional support, however). They may have been added at a stage after the ms was already written. It is not 100% certain that both signs are the same, even though a certain similarity in shape is apparent.

Similar signs have been found in other mss, and published in *akṣara* lists. Steinkellner discusses them briefly in the introduction to his edition of the Hetubindu (2016, p. xvi). Based on the evidence assembled so far, I am inclined to interpret such signs as a particular kind of „filling sign“, used to indicate that the space in question is not to be filled by writing – in other words, the signs indicate „nothing was left out here, there is no further text to be supplied“. These signs as gathered below vary somewhat in their graphical shape; I am wondering whether they were originally devised on the basis of some *akṣara* representing an abbreviation for a particular word, and then later acquired an ornamental form (esp. in the Apohasiddhi ms.).

There may be different causes for the empty space filled by such signs. There might have been minor material flaws in the palm leaf (Steinkellner 2016: xv, referring to Isaacson), such that the scribe did not consider it proper to write in that place. The scribe might also have difficulties identifying the writing on his exemplar, leaving space empty where actually something should have been. Moreover, it is also conceivable that whoever added these signs first deleted mistaken *akṣaras* in the place that then became

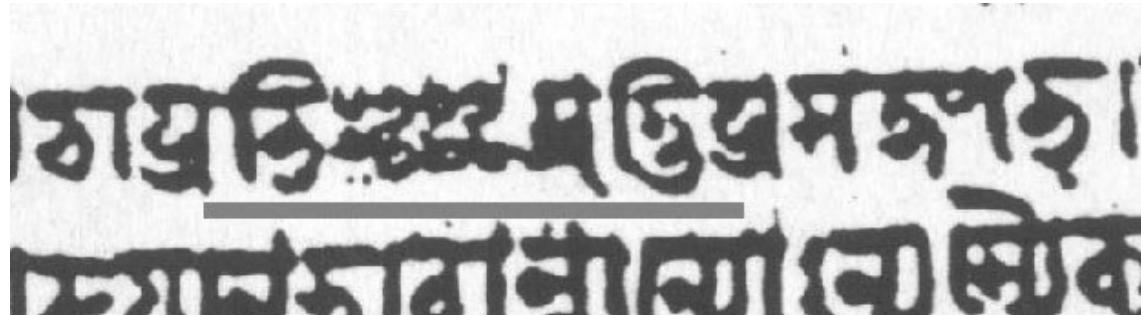
empty, and was filled to prevent others from mistakenly adding something in again. There is no consensus in the literature so far; some seem to assume that these signs were written by the scribe in the process of writing, while others appear to think they were added later, when the ms was already written.

Saddharmaśmṛtyupasthānasūtra fol. 31a; this is an example from the third chapter that is currently being worked on by M. Demoto-Hahn. Daniel Stuart also noted the presence of the sign in the second chapter; in the introductory remarks to his diplomatic transcription he describes the sign as indicating an „erasure, and a space upon which the scribe then found it impossible to write“ (Stuart 2015, pt II, p. 3).



Potala ms of the Hetubindu, referred to as a „filling sign“ by Steinkellner (2016: xvi), used four times in the later part of the ms (20a4, 23b5 twice, 24a1;). There are also numerous small empty spaces in the ms of one or two *akṣaras* in extent. For this ms therefore the question arises – currently unanswered – why in some instances a „filling sign“ was used whereas other spaces were left empty.

Pramāṇaviniścayatīkā 3, fol. 85a1 (e-mail Watanabe 09-11-2017), two signs in a place in the middle of *cāprati-pattiprasaṅgāt* where no *akṣaras* are missing, judging from the flow of the Sanskrit text and the Tibetan translation. Watanabe writes: „Since this passage (*sarvasyaiva jñānasya jñeyasya cāpratipattiprasaṅgāt; shes pa dang shes bya thams cad mi rtogs par thal bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro //*) is the commentary on PVin 3 60,1 (*sarvāpratipattiprasaṅgāt*) and no *akṣara(s)* should be inserted between “cāprati” and “(p)atti”, the signs here mean a kind of gap-filling sign (probably the exemplar had some gap or broken part).“



Apohasiddhi, ms. G4711 Asiatic Society, Kolkata (e-mail McAllister 09-11-2017), three such signs in a row. McAllister called them „spacing signs“, on the assumption that the scribe wanted to indicate spaces where, for some reason, no *akṣaras* should be written.



Katrin Einicke lists such signs in „Korrektur, Differenzierung und Abkürzung in indischen Inschriften und Handschriften“, Wiesbaden 2009:

p. 265: „Überschreibung des vollständigen Zeichens“, esp. MS “New3(1000!)_1” (Newari script).

Newārī

New3(1000!)_1	New3(1000!)_11	New10.1(1119)_24	New14(1661)_3

p. 294: „Überbrückung nicht beschreibbarer Stellen im Material“, esp. MS “New13(1393)_2” (Newari script).

Newārī

New10.3(1119)_15	New13(1393)_2

Kouda, Ryō: The Script of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and the *Jñānālokālamkāra* Palm-leaf Manuscripts. In: Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature (ed.): *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa and Jñānālokālamkāra : Transliterated Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and Chinese Translations (Parts I-III)*, Part I: Introduction to *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* and *Jñānālokālamkāra*, Tokyo 2004: Taisho University Press, 91-113. On p. 111, rubric „cancellation“:



Four akṣaras erased 44a3

Footnotes

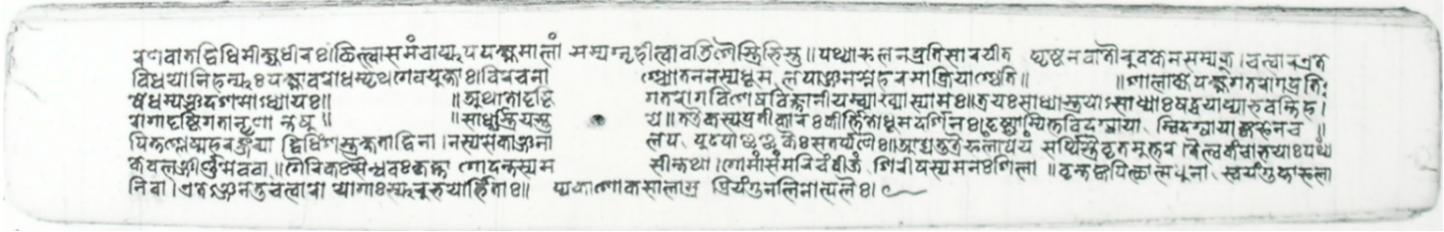
- 1** Steinkellner 2016: xv, n. 10 suggests introducing the name „vihārī“.

NAK 5-333 and the so-called conspicuous filling sign

April 12, 2021

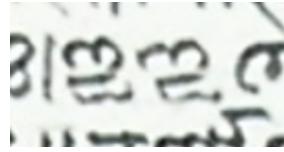
Categories: Textual notes

In one of the Nepalese manuscripts on which this project is based, the fifteenth-century Nepalese MS, [MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333](#), there are mysterious characters at a few places. For example, on folio 371v:



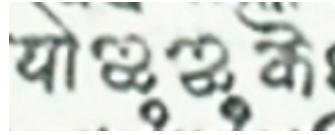
Fol. 371v

they are the two similar characters on the fifth line from the top, in this enlargement:



Fol. 371v

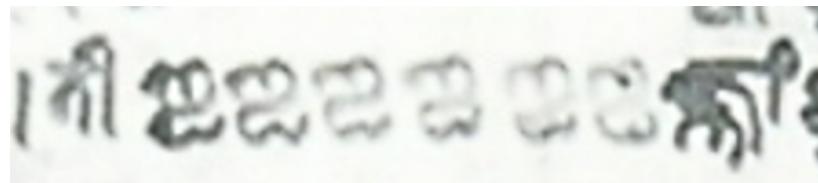
and another example



Fol. 371r

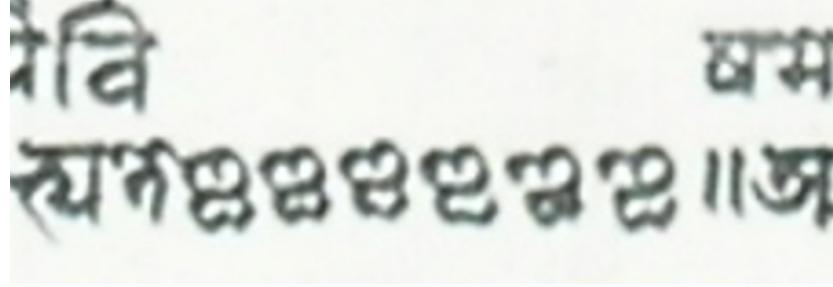
Here, the surrounding word is pāke.

On folio 385v we have a line of them across the bottom side of a string-hole space:

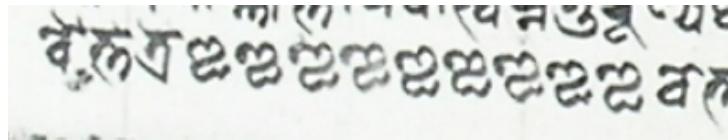


Fol. 385v

And on 396r we have another line in the same setting below a string-hole:



Fol. 396r



F. 407r, not below a string-hole.

These symbols are not letters, since they don't contribute to the surrounding text, but interrupt it. I have wondered whether they are the scribe expressing that his archetype has a string-hole at this place, perhaps, but I don't see the symbols often enough for that. They occur rather rarely, every ten folios or so. The scribe uses other signs to mark missing or illegible akṣaras in his exemplar. He uses other signs to mark section or chapter endings. He uses other signs to fill up an unwanted space (like contemporary "this page deliberately empty") or as an end-of-line hyphen. He uses other signs for exuberant decoration:



NEWA
FLOWER
U+1145A

After posting a query about this symbol to the [INDOLOGY](#) forum on 11 April 2021 , Prof. Birgit Kellner kindly sent us her observations of this and similar symbols in early Bengali-script manuscripts and permitted us to share them as [a blog post on this site](#). That the sign occurs in our fifteenth-century Nepalese MS shows that the sign was known by scribes beyond the Bihar/Bengal area.

For a general study of this (p. 265) and similar signs, see .

Unicode representation

Following the Unicode Newa script encoding , we initially considered provisionally encoding this filling character as

<g ref="#thaayjaayekaa">

which is in fact defined in the unicode standard as follows:

```
<encodingDesc>
  <charDecl>
    <glyph xml:id="thaayjaayekaa">
      <localProp name="thaayjaayekaa" value="NEWA GAP FILLER"/>
      <mapping type="PUA">U+1144E </mapping>
    </glyph>
  </charDecl>
</encodingDesc>
```

This NEWA GAP FILLER character U+1144E displays as:  The Unicode standard notes that this FILLER character can be represented by a variety of different visual glyphs. Further useful discussion and examples in the context of the Unicode standard are given by [\[link\]](#). See especially figures 42, 43 and 50.

But none of these representations is quite the same as our “conspicuous filler” glyph. So we have decided, rather, to encode it locally as,

```
<g ref="#newa-old-gap-filler"/>
```

This is correctly interpreted by [Saktumiva](#) and a custom character is provided in the font used by Saktumiva, [Pedantic Indic](#).

Bibliography

Scribal Symbols for Inserting Letters and Words in the Oldest Nepalese Manuscript (KL-699) of the Suśrutasamhitā

June 11, 2021

Categories: Textual notes

Apart from preserving an early, unpublished version of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, manuscript KL-699 may be one of the oldest dated Nepalese manuscripts to have survived. It is written in the so-called transitional Gupta script and comprises of at least four codicological units. This means that KL-699 is rich material for the study of palaeography, and more specifically scribal conventions, in South Asian manuscripts from the end of the first millennium onwards, as is evident in a recent publication of Bhattacharai.

This note is a preliminary attempt to record the various symbols used by the scribes of KL-699 to insert text and marginal notes. Although some portions of the text have not been corrected (e.g., folios 200r–219v), insertions occur on most of the folios, which makes this scribal practice a salient feature of KL-699.

Crosses, vertical dashes, downward-facing arrows (i.e., “crow’s foot”) and the lucky mark (*svastika*) have been used to mark insertions. These symbols have been catalogued by Einicke, who notes that in the Newārī script the *kākapada* is most often used for insertions, but dots and crosses are also common. In the case of KL-699, most corrections and insertions were not done by the original scribes, but by later hands who deleted and added letters, words and even verses to the original text. The writing of these later hands can be recognised by differences in the ink and strokes, which are lighter and thinner than the original writing of the folios, as seen in Figures 3, 5-9, as well as their use of letters peculiar to subsequent versions of Newārī script.

Generally speaking, the insertions of the original scribes are marked by vertical dashes and crosses, whereas the more recent ones by *kākapadas*, crosses and *svastikas*. Therefore, within the microcosm of KL-699, changes in scribal conventions are apparent, which raises the question of whether such conventions changed over time – a question that can only be answered by a broader historical study of Newārī manuscript material.

Vertical Dashes

When vertical dashes are used, a dash is inserted above the text to indicate where the additional letters should be read, and dashes are then also placed before and after the additional letters, which are usually written below the line of the text or in the bottom margin. Examples of such insertions by the original scribes is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

In Figure 1 the letter *da* has been added in the bottom margin to the words *bastiviklekṛṇ mūtram* to

render the correct reading *bastivikledakṛṇ mūtram*.

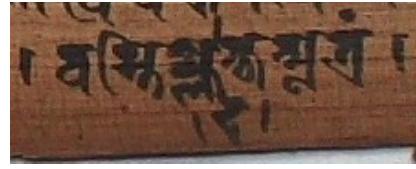


Figure 1: Ms. KL-699, folio 14r, line 7 and bottom margin

A similar use of vertical dashes can be seen in figure 2, where the letter *ca* has been inserted between lines 6 and 7 to produce the correct reading of *pariṣecayec ca*.

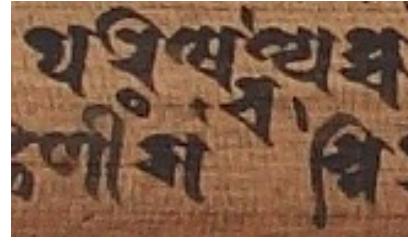


Figure 2: Ms. KL-699, folio 113v, lines 6-7

Crosses

Crosses can be used to insert letters but are more often used to insert words. Like vertical dashes, one cross is placed above the writing at the point at which the letter or words should be read, and a cross is placed either side of the additional letters or words. In figure 3, a scribe in a more recent hand has added *yathā* in the bottom margin and indicated with a cross above line 2 that it should be read between the words *hi* and *parā*. The same scribe had corrected *parā* to *purā*.

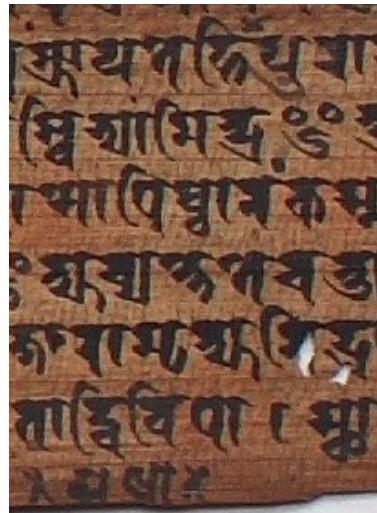


Figure 3: Ms. KL-699, folio 2r, lines 2-7 and bottom margin

An example of the use of a cross in what is probably the hand of the original scribe is shown in Figure 4, where the letter *ta* has been added to *pace nasyakam* to yield *paceta nasyakam*.

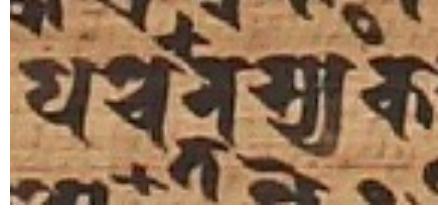


Figure 4: Ms. KL-699, folio 167r, line 4

Crow's Foot (*kākapada*)

More recent hands often use crow's feet to insert letters or words. A downward-facing arrow resembling a crow's foot is written above the original text to indicate where the additional letters or words should be read, and the additional text is placed either directly below the line or in the bottom margin. Also, in KL-699 *kākapadas* are sometimes placed before and after the additional words. Figure 5 shows a typical example of this, where the letters *vāta* have been added to the original text to yield the reading *śītoṣṇavātavarṣāṇi*.

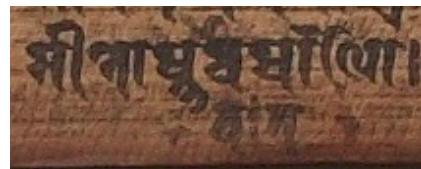


Figure 5: Ms. KL-699, folio 6v, line 7 and bottom margin

Alternatively, a *kākapada* may be placed above a line of text and the letters below it without symbols before or after the additional letters, as seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6: Ms. KL-699, folio 2r, line 2

The Lucky Mark (*svastika*)

There are several instances in which *svastikas* have been used to indicate an insertion, and in each case this symbol marks the addition of a larger portion of text, such as the hemistich of a verse. The use of *svastikas* as an insertion sign in manuscripts has been noted by Bhattacharai (2020: 168, n. 351, who cites Thaker 2000: 146). However, this sign does not appear to have been used by the original scribes of KL-699. For example, in Figure 7, a *danda* between the verses of the original text has been changed into a *svastika* to show the intended location of the following hemistich:

Upon the arising of a humour and when a disease has spread, the physician should not apply medicines in the form of snuffs, etc., .

doṣocchraye naiva ca viplute gade dravyāṇi nasyādiṣu yojayed bhiṣak

This additional hemistich has been placed in the bottom margin with a well-formed *svastika* in front of it and a somewhat deformed one at the end.

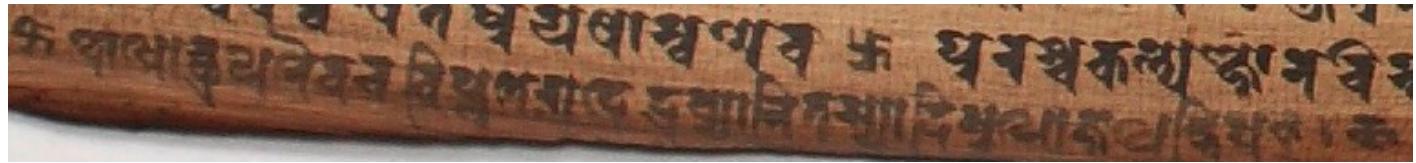


Figure 7: Ms. KL-699, folio 167r, line 7 and bottom margin

Svastikas have been used in a similar way to insert a verse on folio 17r and in this case, as well as 167r (Figure 7), the inserted text has been added by a more recent hand.

Combinations of Crosses and Kākapadas

Crosses and *kākapadas* were used most frequently to mark insertions in KL-699. Sometimes, both are used together by later hands. In Figure 8, for example, a *kākapada* above the original text indicates where one should read the additional words *pratanum sūcyā*, which are enclosed with crosses.



Figure 8: Ms. KL-699, folio 15v, line 7 and bottom margin

A further interesting variation on the use of these symbols is found on the first folio, where the word *dhanvantari* was added by a later hand to the list of sages who are taught medicine by Divodāsa, the king of Kāśi, at the beginning of the work (i.e., Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja and Suśruta). The general absence of Dhanvantari in the Nepalese version has been discussed by Wujastyk (2013) and Klebanov (2021). In this instance, as shown in Figure 9, *dhanvantari* was written in the top margin and bracketed by crosses at either end. Its intended place within the original text is indicated by a *kākapada* pointing upwards from below the line.



Figure 9. Ms. KL-699, folio 1v, line 1 and top margin

These observations are not based on a systematic study of the codex but on portions of the codex so far used to transcribe and edit the text.

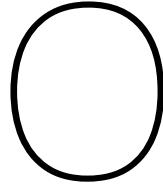
'In der Newārī-Schrift herrscht zwar das Häkchen vor, jedoch sind auch andere Formen, wie z.B. Punkte oder ein Kreuz, geläufig.'

Further Insight into the Role of Dhanvantari, the physician to the gods, in the Suśrutasamhitā

July 11, 2021

Categories: Announcements

by Jason Birch and the Suśruta researchers



One of the most salient differences between the Nepalese version and the printed editions of the *Suśrutasamhitā* is the frame story of the narration. The Nepalese version casts Divodāsa, the King of Kāśī, as the first to expound this system of medicine to Suśruta whereas more recent renditions of the text assert that it was the ancient sage Dhanvantari. In other words, more recent versions of the *Suśrutasamhitā* have reframed the narrative and the origin of its teachings

In the printed editions, each chapter begins with the phrase 'as the sage Dhanvantari declared' (*yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ*). This phrase is absent in the Nepalese manuscripts, except at the beginning of the first chapter of the fifth book called the *Kalpasthāna*, which attributes guidelines for safeguarding food and drink to Dhanvantari. As Andrey Klebanov has noted, by the time of the medieval commentators Cakrapāṇidatta (10th c.) and Ḟalhaṇa (12th c.), this phrase had been moved to the beginning of the first book, thus casting Dhanvantari as the progenitor of Suśruta's medicine .

Klebanov concludes that the change in the frame story suggests that the less structured state of the Nepalese version is most likely to be original .

Yet, the question remains as to why Dhanvantari appears for a fleeting moment at the beginning of the fifth book in the Nepalese version of the *Suśrutasamhitā*. A recent research seminar of the Suśruta Project may have uncovered the origin of this attribution and a possible pathway to its diffusion throughout the entire work.

A careful reading of the introductory passage of the fifth book reveals that the phrase 'as the sage Dhanvantari declared' was probably not authorial. In other words, the phrase was likely added sometime after this passage was initially composed because the narrative immediately reverts to Divodāsa, the king who here teaches Suśruta the art of protecting a king from poison:

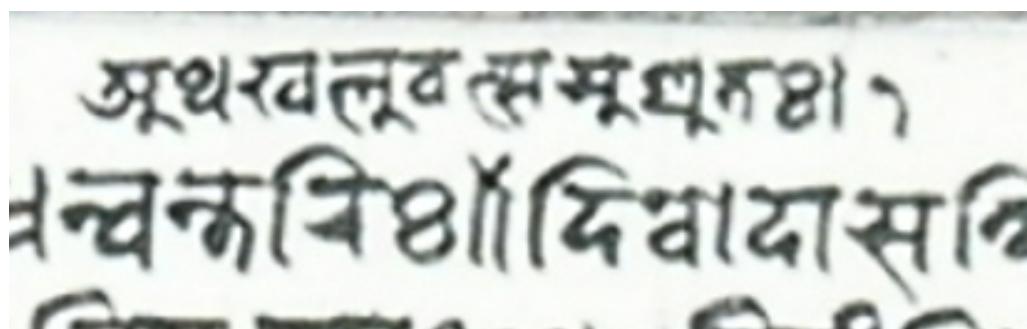
“ And now I shall explain the procedures for safeguarding food and drink, as the sage Dhanvantari declared. Divodāsa, the king of the earth, was the foremost supporter of religious discipline and virtue. With unblemished instruction he taught his students, of whom Suśruta was the foremost.

The above reference to Dhanvantari seems somewhat out of place because this passage is followed by sections on the threat of poison to the king and the type of physician a king should employ, before eventually addressing the problem of poisoned food and drink. It is more likely that the author intended the fifth book to begin with the verse on Divodāsa, thus affirming the frame story established in the first book as follows:

“ Now, as is well-known, 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. ‘We have come to you in pupillage.’

Therefore, it is possible that after the fifth book was composed someone decided to change the text to attribute its content to Dhanvantari rather than Divodāsa.

A clue to the origins of this attribution to Dhanvantari is provided by the scribe of one of the more recent manuscripts of the Nepalese version (MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333), which has the following remark added in the folio's top margin:



“ ‘Now, as is well-known, Vatsa Suśruta’

The scribe of MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333 appears to have recognised that the comment on Dhanvantari at the beginning of the fifth book derives from a chapter in the first book in which Dhanvantari does indeed teach Suśruta guidelines for food and drink (*annapānavidhi*). This passage appears in the Nepalese version as follows:

“ Now, we will teach the chapter on guidelines for food and drink. Having formally greeted Dhanvantari, Suśruta said, ‘Lord, it was said earlier that the root of beings is food therefore, please teach me the guidelines on food and drink.’

Spoken to thus, the Lord Dhanvantari said, ‘Now, my dear Suśruta, as is well-known,’

The above passage may have inspired someone to change the beginning of the fifth book by reasserting that Dhanvantari was responsible for the teachings on food and drink.

Therefore, this passage may have been the kernel, so to speak, of an attribution to Dhanvantari that eventually spread throughout the *Suśrutasamhitā*. From the forty-sixth chapter of the first book, the attribution spread to the beginning of the fifth book, then to the beginning of first book in Cakrapāṇidatta and Ḍalhaṇa’s recensions and finally, as seen in current printed editions, to all six books.

The inclusion of Dhanvantari at the beginning of Suśruta’s fifth book in the Nepalese version points to the rise of this sage’s status within Suśruta’s tradition during the ninth century, from what appears to have been an initial role as the progenitor of teachings on food and drink to ultimately the founder of its entire medical system. Dhanvantari’s growing status is also foreshadowed at this time by the beginning of the *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu*, a lexicon of technical terms in the *Suśrutasamhitā*, which is appended to the oldest Nepalese manuscript of this work, MS Kathmandu KL 699 . This lexicon begins with a narrative in which Suśruta asks Dhanvantari to explain the various names of medicines:

“ The medical students, the foremost of whom was Suśruta, formally asked Dhanvantari, who emerged with nectar and was the very best of the supporters of religion.

Footnotes

- 1 This post was written by Jason Birch and its findings are the result of a discussion by participants at a reading session of the first chapter of the *Kalpasthāna*, which was led by Dominik Wujastyk and attended by (in alphabetical order) Harshal Bhatt, Jason Birch, Deepro Chakaborty, Andrey Klebanov, Madhu Parameswaran, Madhusudan Rimal and Devyani Shenoy.
 - 2 *Suśrutasamhitā, Kaplasthāna* (Provisional edition of the Nepalese version) 5.1–3:
athāto'nnapānarakṣākalpaṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ || yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ || divodāsakṣitipatis
tapodharmabṛtāṁ varah | suśrutapramukhāñ chiṣyāñ śāsāshatasāsanah ||
 - 3 *Suśrutasamhitā, Ślokasthāna* (Provisional edition of the Nepalese version) 1.2: atha khalu bhagavantam
amaravaram ṛṣigāṇaparivṛttam āśramasthaṁ kāśirājam divodāsam
aupadhenavavaitaraṇaurabhrapuṣkalāvatakaravīragopurarakṣitabhojasuśrutaprabhṛtaya ūcuḥ ||
bhagavantam upasannāḥ smaḥ śiṣyatveneti ||
 - 4 MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333, 324r, top margin: *atha khalu vatsa suśruteḥ* |
 - 5 NAK 5-333, 98v line 6 – 99r line 3–4 athāto ‘nnapānavidhim adhyāyam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ || dhanvantarim
abhivādya suśruta uvāca || bhagavan prāgabhihitam prāṇinām mūlam āhāro tasmād annapānavidhim
upadiśatu me bhagavān ity uktah provāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ || atha khalu vatsa suśruta || Cf. Ācārya
1938: 214: athāto ‘nnapānavidhim adhyāyam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ ||1|| yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ ||2||
dhanvantarim abhvādya suśruta uvāca – prāgabhihitah ‘prāṇinām punar mūlam āhāro tasmād
annapānavidhim upadiśatu me bhagavān ity uktah provāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ – atha khalu vatsa
suśruta! yathāpraśnam ucyamānam upadhārayasva ||3||
 - 6 Sauśrutanighaṇṭu 2cd–3ab: dhanvantarim dharmabṛtāṁ variṣṭham amṛtodbhavam || suśrutapramukhāḥ
śiṣyāḥ papracchur bhiṣajo bṛhśam |
-

Congratulations to Harshal Bhatt

August 3, 2021

Categories: Announcements

We offer our sincere congratulations to our project Research Assistant, Harshal Bhatt, on his appointment as Assistant Professor at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. For the next eleven months he will be teaching Sanskrit language and Siddhānta Kaumudi.

Notes on the scribe of NAK 5-333

August 8, 2021

Categories: Announcements

There is evidence that the scribe of MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333 was copying an exemplar closely connected with MS Kathmandu KL 699, but that he or a later scribe was influenced by readings we now associate with the vulgate transmission (as represented by most twentieth-century printed editions).

This blog post will gather instances of this and will be updated periodically as more are discovered.

The text numbering below is that of the vulgate transmission represented in the edition by .

Evidence

- SS 1.15.44cd: In a marginal gloss, the scribe of NAK 5-333 corrects KL 699's "ity upadiśyate" to the vulgate "ity abhidhīyate".
- SS 5.1. 37: The scribe of NAK 5-333 corrects KL 699's "madhuḥ" to the vulgate "madhu".

References

New project publication

August 21, 2021

Categories: Announcements, New publications

ACADEMIA | Letters

Further Insight into the Role of Dhanvantari, the physician to the gods, in the Suśrutasamhitā

Jason Birch, University of Alberta

Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta

Andrey Klebanov, University of Kyoto

Madhu Parameswaran, VPSV Ayurveda College Kottakkal

Madhusudan Rimal, University of Alberta

Deepro Chakraborty, University of Alberta

Harshal Bhatt, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Devyani Shenoy, University of Toronto

Vandana Lele, Independent scholar, Baroda

most salient differences between the Nepalese version and the printed

‘*śāti* is the frame story of the narration. The Nepalese version

‘*śāti* to expound this system of medicine.’

We are pleased to announce a new open access project publication, “Further Insight into the Role of Dhanvantari, the Physician to the Gods, in the Suśrutasamhitā.”

- <http://doi.org/10.20935/al2992>

Another project publication

October 27, 2021

Categories: Announcements, New publications

ACADEMIA | Letters

Ḍalhaṇa and the Early ‘Nepalese’ Version of the Suśrutasamhitā

Jason Birch, University of Alberta
Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta

Andrey Klebanov, University of Kyoto
Madhusudan Rimal, University of Alberta
Deepro Chakraborty, University of Alberta

Harshal Bhatt, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda
Vandana Lele, Independent scholar, Baroda

We are pleased to announce a new open access project publication, “Ḍalhaṇa and the Early ‘Nepalese’ Version of the Suśrutasamhitā.” See <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3733>

Based on a collation of several Nepalese manuscripts of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, a provisional critical edition of the first chapter will be important evidence for future scholarly appraisals of this medical classic. The so-called Nepalese version of the *Suśrutasamhitā* is older and

Ayurveda Practitioners Association, UK

December 8, 2021

Categories: Announcements



The Winter 2021 issue of the Newsletter of the [APA](#) has just appeared.

The Compendium of Sushruta

Professor Dominik Wujastyk



<https://sushrutaproject.org/> website homepage

Editor's note:

A few months back I was lucky enough to catch an introductory workshop by Professor Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta, Canada. In the podcast, Professor Wujastyk was elaborating on his recent work with *The Compendium of Sushruta*. As someone with a keen interest in the historical side of Ayurveda, I found the talk both fascinating and enlightening. For those who following the work of Professor Wujastyk little more needs to be said here, for those unaware of his work, a great place to start would be the above website. The following text has been lifted from <https://sushrutaproject.org/> with the kind permission of the author.

The Compendium of Sushruta is a world-classic of ancient medicine, comparable in age and importance to the Greek Hippocratic Corpus and the Chinese *Huangdi Neijing*. It is a long and substantial treatise written in the Sanskrit language. It presents a systematic, scholarly form of medicine for diagnosing and treating the many ailments that patients presented in South Asia two thousand years ago.

As one of the founding treatises of Ayurveda, the indigenous medical system of India, the Compendium of Sushruta still informs indigenous medical practice in India and Ayurvedic complementary and alternative medical practice internationally. The *Compendium* is perhaps most famous amongst historians of medicine for its passages describing remarkable forms of surgery. These techniques were used in South Asia and beyond: the *Compendium*'s method of couching for cataract circulated in China in the seventh century and a form of facial plastic surgery described in the *Compendium* was witnessed by British surgeons in India in the eighteenth century and subsequently formed the historical basis of of facial reconstruction as practised even today.

Note to “Doṣas by the Numbers”

January 22, 2022

Categories: Textual notes

In my recent publication “Doṣas by the Numbers: Buddhist Contributions to the Origins of the Tridoṣa-theory in Early Indian Medical Literature with Comparisons to early Greek Theories of the Humours” , I cited *Suśrutasamhitā*, Sūtrasthāna 1.24 (2) as follows, based on the vulgate edition of :

“ *śārīrāḥ tv annapānamūlā vātapiṭṭakaphaśoṇitasannipātavaiṣamyanimittāḥ*

But bodily (unbalances) that have their roots in food and drink result from an imbalance of wind, bile, phlegm, blood, and their simultaneous corruption.

On the [website of the Suśruta Project](#), there is another version of the passage based on a ninth-century manuscript from Nepal:

“ *śārīrāḥ tv annamūlā vātapiṭṭakaphaśoṇitavaiṣamyanimittāḥ*

But bodily (imbalances) that have their roots in food result from an imbalance of wind, bile, phlegm, blood

The Nepalese version provides a shorter version, where *pāṇa*, “drink,” and *sannipāta*, “simultaneous corruption,” are not present. This harmonizes with *Suśrutasamhitā* Sū.21.3-4, where four *doṣas* are mentioned. Not only is the Nepal version the most acceptable reading, but it is more apparent that Suśruta offers a version of the *doṣas* that includes four pathogenic agents rather than three or five. A number with blood as the fourth is a version which pointed out is very old. Moreover, the connection with digested food and the fourth *doṣa* as blood (śoṇita) bring this formulation of four pathogenic agents closer to the formulations of the four humors of in early Greco-Roman medicine (e.g.,).

References

On ambiguous nasals

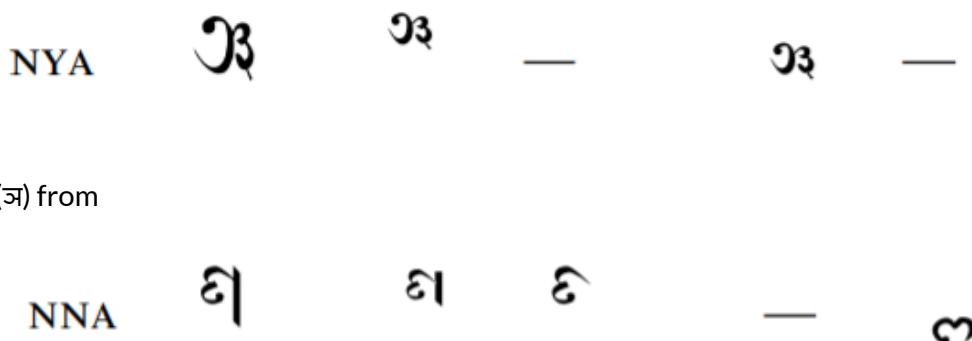
March 11, 2022

Categories: Announcements

Scribal Conventions

While transcribing the sixth chapter (*adhyāya*) of the *Sūtrasthāna* of the *Suśrutasamhitā* from an old handwritten manuscript in Newari script, MS [Kathmandu NAK 1-1079](#), I came upon the conjunct consonants *ñc*, *ñj* (Devanāgarī ञ्च ञ्ज), etc. Samples are given in the figure below. These conjunct consonants seemed to me to have an initial *ɳ* (ण, the retroflex nasal) instead of the expected *ñ* (ञ, the palatal nasal).

I then referred to the rendering rules for depicting conjunct consonants in Newari script in a well-researched article “Proposal to Encode the Newar Script in ISO/IEC” by Anshuman Pandey [\[PDF\]](#). Pandey gives illustrations of how the consonant *ñ* (ञ) is written when it is part of a conjunct consonant and similarly what the consonant *ɳ* (ण) looks like in a conjunct consonant.

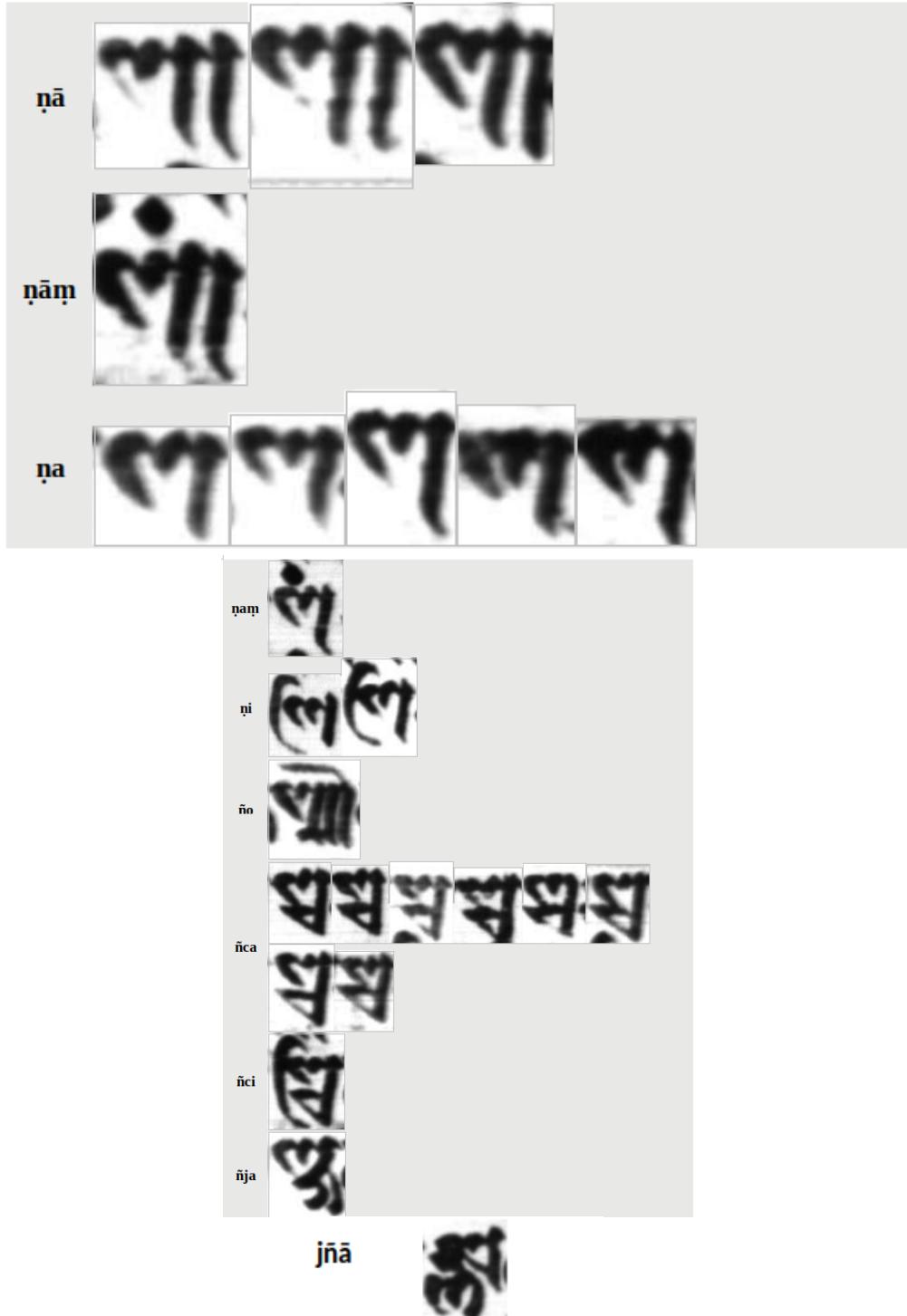


ñ (ञ) from



ɳ (ण) from

Based on this and seeing the exact similarity in the instances of *ñ* and *ɳ* in the manuscript that I was transcribing, I came to the understanding that the scribe has used the consonant *ɳ* in the place of *ñ* at all places where *ñ* is expected in a conjunct consonant.

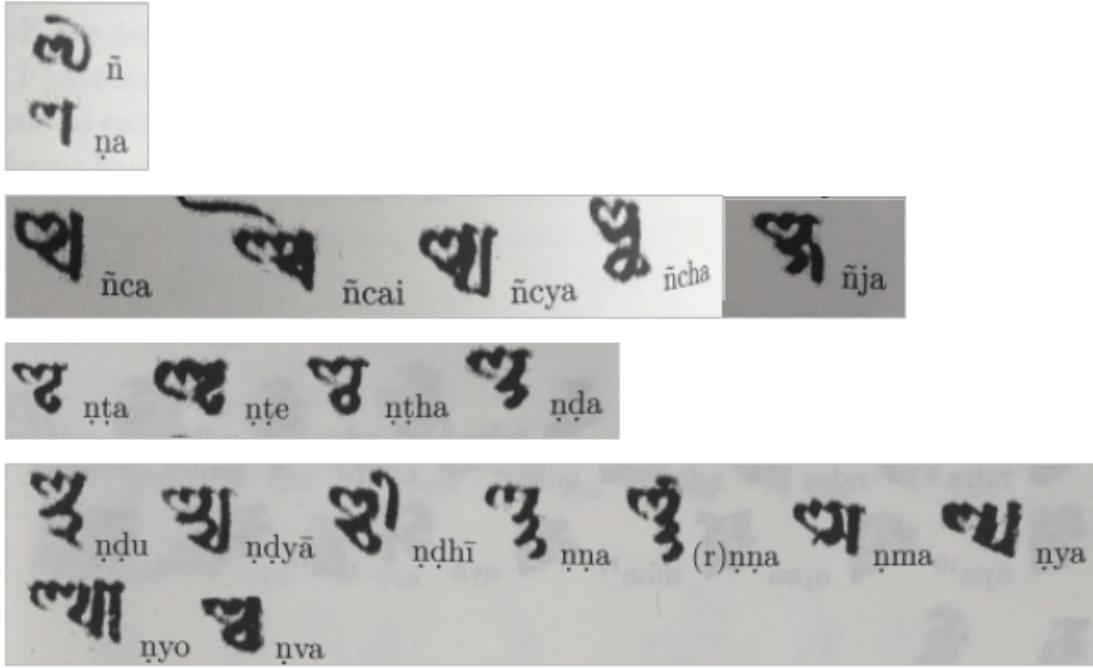


I would like to clarify that I do not think that the scribe actually understood the words *pañca* as having a retroflex nasal consonant instead of a palatal nasal consonant and wrote it as *pañca* for that reason. However, I am of the opinion that it was a convention among scribes to denote the consonant *ñ* as *ɳ* in conjunct consonants. It cannot be denied that the *ɳ* and *ñ* are exactly the same when in a conjunct consonant. There is no characteristic in the depiction of *ñ* when used as an initial consonant in a conjunct consonant that shows that it is a different consonant from *ɳ*. In the same way, there is no characteristic in the depiction of *ɳ* when used as an initial consonant in a conjunct consonant that shows that it is a different consonant from *ñ*. The reader can only tell that it is *ɳ* or *ñ* by the next consonant in the conjunction.

In the conventions for writing ñ in Newari script, this character:



is used. However, Csaba Kiss's paleography chart has quite a different character for denoting ñ .



From Csaba Kiss's paleography chart in

Thus, given that there are two very different ways of writing ñ, it is possible that the scribes denote ñ in this second way. But here also, in case of conjunct consonants, it is not possible to identify whether the initial consonant is ñ or ñ simply by that consonant. Both of them look exactly the same when appearing as the initial consonant in a conjunction. We have to take into account the next consonant in order to correctly identify the previous consonant.

Regarding the question as to whether the consonant in a conjunction be transcribed as ñ or ñ, I think that the consonant should be transcribed as ñ where ñ is expected and as ñ where ñ is expected. I think that it was just a scribal convention to write ñ and ñ in the same way when in a conjunct consonant. Thus, assuming and accepting that the scribes were well acquainted with the differences between ñ and ñ, and that it was their convention to denote them in the same way in a conjunct consonant without any separating characteristic to identify them as different from each other, it lies on the reader of the manuscript to differentiate the instances of ñ and ñ in a conjunct consonant as understood from the other consonant in the conjunction.

In conclusion, I would say that immaterial of the method of writing ñ in a manuscript, when dealing with conjunct consonants we have to depend on the other consonant in order to identify whether the consonant in consideration is ñ or ñ.

References

Footnotes

- 1** For example: If the next consonant is *c* then the previous consonant is *ñ*, and if the next consonant is *th* then the previous consonant is *n*.

- 2** I am grateful to Deepro Chakraborty for drawing this reference to my attention.

Manuscripts beyond this project

April 10, 2022

Categories: Announcements

This Sushruta Project is focussed on the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, MS Kathmandu KL 699, and the two other witnesses that are textually close to it (NAK 5-333 and NAK 1-1079). This project does not have the resources to explore a wider field of manuscript witnesses to the text, but we remain interested in this question. It would be especially valuable to find further witnesses of the old Nepalese Version, or manuscripts that reveal some intermediate stage of the transmission between the ninth century and [Dalhana](#) in the twelfth century, whose version appears to be more or less that reproduced in printed editions from the eighteenth century onwards.

According to the published catalogues available to us, there survive at least 220 manuscript witnesses to the *Suśrutasamhitā*, although most of these only support parts of the whole text. At some point, they all need to be studied. Test-collations of selected adhyāyas will help to establish their positions in the transmission. While the Sushruta Project does not plan to undertake this work, preliminary research will likely contribute to deepening our awareness of the wider field of witnesses. This work is now possible because the Sushruta Project has nearly completed the task of transcribing the three available witnesses of the Nepalese version, thus enabling comparative work.

First, some *Suśrutasamhitā* manuscripts have been *scanned* and made public. Where such scans are known to us, they are signalled in the relevant [PanditProject entries](#). Checking the readings of an adhyāya or even just a few verses of ready-scanned manuscripts can give some rapid, if shallow, information about that witness's relationship to the tree of transmission and historical weight, in the sense of the old slogan of textual criticism: "manuscripts must be weighed, not counted" .

Second, some *descriptive catalogues* give excerpts from the manuscripts they describe, and these very short excerpts can in some cases give similar information. In particular, the simple check on whether the "*yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ*" phrase is included in adhyāya beginnings can already provide an important clue to the witness's position .

A comprehensive archive of scanned manuscript catalogues is available via the [INDOLOGY website](#).

This blog post will provide a growing list of such evaluations.

1. [MMS Kolkata ASB G. 4384](#)

At the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Described by (Biswas #0170). Contains adhyāyas 1-9 of the *Uttaratantra*.

Beginning:

श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

अथात्:(त) औपद्रविकमध्यायं व्याख्यास्यामः ॥

विंशाध्याय(अध्यायानां) शते विंशे यदुक्तमसकृन्मया ।

वक्ष्यामि बहुधा सम्यगुत्तरेस्मिन्निमानिमे(र्थानिमानिति) ॥१॥

इदानीं तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि तंत्रमुत्तरमुत्तम्(मम) ।

निखिलेनोपदिश्यते यत्र रोगाः पृथग्विधाः॥२॥

शालाक्यशास्त्रविहिता^१ विदेहाधिप्र(प)कीर्तिः ।

ये च विस्तरशो^२ दृष्टाः कुमाराबाधहेतवः ॥३॥

End :

तदिदं बहुगृहार्थं चिकित्साबीजमीरितं(तम्) ।

कुशलेनाभिपन्नं तद्व्युधापि३प्ररोहति ॥

तस्मान्मतिमता नित्यं नानाशास्त्रप्रदर्शिना^४।

सर्वमु(मू)ह्यमगाधार्थं शास्त्रमागमबुद्धिना ॥

Colophon :

इत्युत्तरेनिबंधसंग्रहेशालाक्यतंत्रे एकोनविंशोध्यायः ॥ इति नेत्ररोगनिदानं
चिकित्सा च ॥ ठ॥

Post-Colophon :

ॐ नमः शिवाय ॥ ठ ॥ ठ ॥ ठ ॥

The manuscript omits the Dhanvantari attribution. Verses 1 and 2 above have a mixture of readings from Nepalese and vulgate branches. Verse 3 reads with the Nepalese version. Thus, this manuscript may be a witness to the Nepalese version, at least in several of its readings, and deserves further study.

2. MS Ramtek KKSanskUniv M 1887

This manuscript covers only the *sārīrasthāna*. It omits the Dhanvantari phrase. It begins:

“ athātah sarvabhūtacimta sārī kyāmsyāmaḥ sarvabhūtānām kāraṇām akāraṇām santv
arajastamolakṣaṇām...

The Dhanvantari phrase is also not present at the beginning of other adhyāyas.

Thus, this manuscript may be a witness to the Nepalese version. However, a cursory examination of some passages shows that vulgate readings are present too. It may be that the presence or absence of the Dhanvantari phrase has its own history independent of the variant text of the Nepalese version.

References

Footnotes

- 1** I am grateful to Jason Birch for suggesting the ideas in this post during discussions in April 2022.
-

Long-term data security

April 20, 2022

Categories: Announcements

We are all working very hard on transcribing manuscript data for this project and we're making great progress. We are using tools like [Saktumiva](#) to manipulate that data in ways that produce the intellectual results we seek. But the data itself is probably the most valuable outcome of this project at this point. It is not hard to imagine that many uses of the manuscript images and transcriptions may arise with future technology that we have not yet imagined. Furthermore, cloud services, websites, DNS registrations, and even universities are not secure, long-time hosts for project data.

The scientists are ahead of us humanists on these issues, since their projects tend to generate vast amounts of data, compared with humanities work. Also, they have the resources to establish major services to protect their work in the long term. In particular, in 2013, CERN launched [Zenodo](#) as a free, open repository for all research data generated by European Union research. Since its launch, Zenodo has grown and diversified to host all research data in general.

Amongst the advantages of Zenodo are that it is, probably, "too big to fail." The backers of Zenodo are a healthy mixture of major governmental, institutional and research bodies dedicated to the long view of data protection and storage. It is easy to use. It allows for data versioning. It allows data to be embargoed or hidden at users' discretion (that is valuable, for example, when preserving manuscript images where copyright rights have not yet been negotiated), and it issues free DOI numbers for all uploads.

One further plus for Zenodo in the context of our Suśruta Project is that it provides seamless archiving for GitHub files.

Therefore, we have created a Zenodo mirror for the Suśruta Project [Github site](#). The mirror has the DOI [10.5281/zenodo.6471656](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6471656). It is public (CC license), permanent, and automatically updated whenever there is a [release](#) at the project's GitHub site.

We have also uploaded the manuscript images on which this project is based to Zenodo:

- MS Kathmandu KL 699: DOI 10.5281/zenodo.6474120
- MS Kathmandu NAK 5-333: DOI 10.5281/zenodo.6474130
- MS Kathmandu NAK 1-1079: DOI 10.5281/zenodo.6675574

These manuscript images are under restricted access. Permission to view the images must be obtained from the [National Archives, Kathmandu](#).

This adds one more layer of long-term security to the data of the Suśruta Project. It is our hope that future generations of scholars will continue to find innovative ways to discover new knowledge from this

project.

Footnotes

- 1** I am grateful to Dr Michael Willis for conversations that encouraged me to explore Zenodo.
-

NAK 5/333 is not a direct copy of KL 699: further evidence

May 3, 2022

Categories: Announcements

In his 2014 article, Kengo Harimoto determined that although the Nepalese manuscripts of the Suśrutasamhitā [KL 699 \(K\)](#), [NAK 1-1079 \(N\)](#) and [NAK 5-333 \(H\)](#) are closely related, none of them is a direct copy of another. K and H are dated to 878 AD and 1543 AD respectively. Based on palaeographical traits, Harimoto opines that N is younger than K but older than H (op. cit. p. 1087). Nonetheless, N and H are more closely related to each other than to K.

Harimoto's arguments

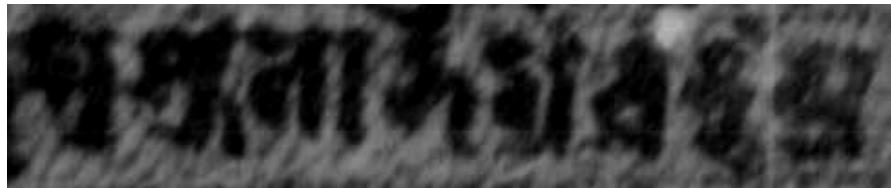
To support the argument that none of these manuscripts is a direct descendant of another, Harimoto provides the following evidence from *Sūtrasthāna* 1.12 (op. cit. 1089):

K (2r1) reads : *suśruto bhagavantam prakṣyaty asyopadiśyamānam*

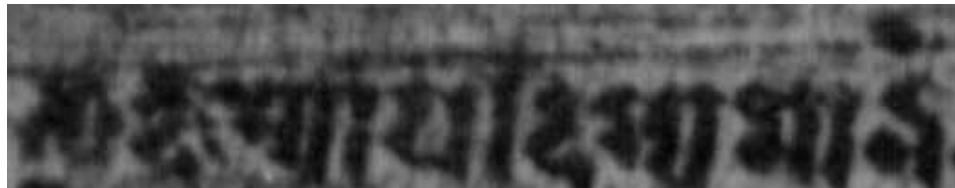


K 2r1

N (1v7-2r1) and H (2v2-3) read: *suśruto bhagavantam pratyakṣasatyopadiśyamānam*



N 1v7



N 2r1

H 2v2

H 2v3

K consists of the correct reading ...*prakṣyaty asyo*... while the conjunctive error of N and H suggest that N and H descend from a hyparchetype that is different from K.

As N is considered to be older than H, one can surmise that N was directly copied from K, and H was directly copied from N. But Harimoto gives another example, where the correct reading *ta ete* (*Sūtrasthāna* 1.26) is found in both K and H but N consists of a corrupt reading *ete* in which the pronoun *ta* (<*te*) is omitted. He, therefore, concludes that H was not copied from N. Another possibility, according to Harimoto, is that both N and H were copied from a hyparchetype which was a direct copy of K.

New evidence

Harimoto's preliminary remarks are based on his examination of "a very limited portion of the *Suśrutasamhitā*" (op. cit. 1091). However, as we have already transcribed a great part of the text from all these three manuscripts we now have more evidence that backs Harimoto's preliminary observations. In this blog post, I am giving a few more examples from the manuscripts K and H which suggest that the scribe of H did not have access to the manuscript K or at least to its main codicological unit. We, however, need to keep in mind that the codex K, as Klebanov points out, consists of at least four different codicological units. So, what is true for one codicological unit is not necessarily true for all others. However, the section examined here (*Uttaratanaṭra* 18 and 19) belongs to the largest codicological unit of K which even consists of the final colophon of the manuscript (op. cit. 12-13).

In the following examples from *Uttaratanaṭra* 18 and 19, the bold characters are omitted in H even though K contains them.

- *Uttaratanaṭra* 18.28: *ekāham vā dvyaham vāpi* (...*kāham vā* <space/>*hañ caīśām* in H)

H 376v5



K 169r1

- *Uttaratantra 18.45: tau tu tridhā prayujyete rogesu puṭapākavat / (...prayuñjīta... in H)*

नीकुद्धिधाययुज्जीव वामे युट्पाकवत् ॥

H 377r2

नोकुद्धिधाययुज्जीव प्रमात्रयुट्पाकवत् वा

K 169r3

- *Uttaratantra 18:64: adakṣinam dakṣinena kṣipet kānīnam añjanam /*

सूदक्षिणंदक्षिणेन दक्षिणानी मञ्जिन॑ ।

H 378r1

सावधा चाव
सूदक्षिणंदक्षिणा
सूदक्षिणंदक्षिणः

शावागानसाङ्गवत्तुर्वा
मक्षिण्यकामीमूर्धकानं ।
मक्षिण्यपादया । मग्ना

K 169v3

- *Uttaratantra 18:83: yuñjyād yathārtham etāni prthak prthag athāpi vā // (yuñjyād... in H)*

युञ्जायथार्थभिन्नानि । यथग्रथापिवा ॥

H 378v5

यस्तु याधावं प्राप्नोति घृष्णु द्विष्ठगृष्णा धिया ५

K 170r2

- *Uttaratantra 18.97: etad bhadrodayan nāma sadā vārhati bhūpatiḥ / (...<space/>rddati bhūpatiḥ in H)*

एव एव अद्य च वाताम् सदा द्विष्ठु यग्नि ४

H 379r6

परमङ्ग यादवाताम् वाताम् वाताम् वाताम् वाताम् वाताम्

K 170r7

- *Uttaratantra 19.4: uktam̄ purā kṣatajapittajaśūlapathyam̄ (uktā... in H)*

उक्ता वाक्तव्यिक्तजगृत्यपूल्यध्यं

H 380r1

उक्ते यथा कर्तव्याधिकरणात्मन्त्वात्

K 170v3

- *Uttaratantra 19.9: stanyapradosajanitah (stanyapra<space/>yajanitah in H)*

स्तन्ये यजनितः

H 380r3



K 170v4

- *Uttaratana 19.16: śukratadañjanan tu /*



H 380v3



K 171r1

Evidently, these are not examples of scribal errors because the scribe of H leaves space for the omitted characters. It is obvious that the manuscript or manuscripts that the scribe of H used for his copy consisted of either lacunae or glyphs illegible to the scribe in these places. These characters are quite clearly written in K. Therefore, H is not a direct copy of K.

Reference

Footnotes

1 I am thankful to Jason Birch for his valuable comments and suggestions about this blog post.

2 The chapter and verse numbers used here are according to the vulgate edition. Chapters 18 and 19 of the *Uttaratana* are actually chapters 17 and 18 respectively in the Nepalese manuscripts.

Suśrutasamhitā Cikitsāsthana 26: Vyājīkaraṇacikitsitam: Text and Translation from Nepalese Manuscript K

August 26, 2022

Categories: Textual notes

Introduction

This paper represents a preliminary edition and translation of *Suśruta Samhitā Cikitsāsthana 26*. The verses in the chapter are composed in anuṣṭubh metre and deal with potency-therapy (*vyājīkaraṇa*). In comparison with the vulgate edition (A), K covers verses 1 through the beginning of 27, of which only the first five *akṣaras* are found. The remainder of verse 27 through verse 39 is wanting. The abruptly truncated verse indicates that the chapter originally contained more text. Of verses 1-27 of A, K has a total of 22 verses, leaving the following to be found only in A: 2, 6, 8-9cd, 13cd, 14, and 16ab. The 22 verses make a unique version of the chapter 26. K's readings show characteristics that are also found in Mahāyāna Buddhist manuscripts from Nepal, such as sibilant and gender fluidity. The readings in A are sometimes mere metrical variations of K and overall represent embellishments and alternate interpretation of K that have occurred over time.

Text, translation, and notes

“ *athātah kṣīṇavalīyaṁ vyājīkaraṇacikitsitam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ/ 1 A 1*

vyājī-] vājī- A

Now we shall discuss the treatment by means of potency-therapy for him whose strength is diminished.

Discussion

D: *kṣīṇatā* is powerlessness (*hīnaśaktitvam*).

“ *yathovāca bhagavān dhanvantari/ A 2*

As the Lord Dhanvantari spoke.

Discussion

Wanting in K.

“ *kalyasyodagravayaso vyājikaraṇasevinah/
sarveṣv ṛtuṣv aharahaḥ vyāsvāyo na nivāritah// 2 A 3*

kalyasyo] kalasyo- K; aharahaḥ] aharahar A

For him who is healthy, whose age is advanced and who resorts to potency-therapy, daily coitus in all seasons is not prohibited.

Discussion

In a, K reads *kalasya*, “for him who soft/weak,” which could be possible. However, D reads *kalyasya* and glosses it as “without disease” (*rogarahitasya*). He glosses *udagravayasah*, “whose age is advanced,” as “young” (*taruṇasya*). It would appear that D has in mind a very young adolescent, whereas the mūla-text indicates that the man is old.

“ *strīṣv akṣaryām? mṛgayatām vṛddhānām ca rirāmsatām/
klīvānām alpaśukrānām strīṣu kṣīṇāś ca ye narāḥ/ 3 A 4*

*strīṣv akṣaryām? mṛgayatām vṛddhānām ca rirāmsatām] sthavirānām rirāmsūnām strīnām
vāllabhyam icchatām A; klīvānām alpaśukrānām strīṣu kṣīṇāś ca ye narāḥ] yoṣitprasaṅgāt
kṣīṇānām klībānām alpyaretaśām A*

*vilāsinām arthavatām rūpyaya uvanaśālinām/
nṛṇām bahupatiṇām ca yogā vyājikarā hitāḥ// 4 A 5*

bahu] vahvī K; bahupatīnām ca yogā] ca bahubhāryāṇām yogā A; vyājīkarā] vyākaro K, vājīkarā A.

Potency-therapy formulae are suitable for the : ...those who go with wild animals; who are old, who are lustful; those who are impotent; those who have little semen; those who are diminished in front of women; those who are sportive/wanton; those who are wealthy, handsome, and youthful; and those who have many wives.

Discussion

For verse 3, A reads much clearer: “who are old, lustful, desirous of women’s favour, diminished on account of their indulgence in women, impotent, and men with little semen....” For 3ab, it would appear that K is a corruption of another reading altogether. K’s *akṣaryām* is doubtful. It appears to be a feminine genitive plural from the stem *akṣarī/i*, which is not found in the lexicons. A replaces *akṣaryām mṛgayatām* with *vāllabhyam icchatām*, “desirous of women’s favour.” The reading *riraṁsatām* appears to be an unattested present participle form from the desiderative stem of the √*ram*, “to be or make content,” i.e. lusting after, lustful. The attested form is found in A.

“ *sevamāno yadaucityād vājīvātyarthavegavān/*

nārīs tarpayate tena vājīkaraṇam ucyate// A 6

Potency therapy is called that by which a man, when he habitually uses it, and being possessed of excessive impetuosity like a stallion, satisfies women.

Discussion

This verse is only found in A, and appears to be a later definition of potency-therapy. D states that it is a definition of potency-therapy and quotes this unidentified half śloka: *vājīvātibalo yena yāty apratihataḥ striyah*, “whereby, he, excessively strong like a stallion, goes, unrestrained, to women.”

“ *bhojanāni ca citrāṇi pānāni vividhāni ca/*
vācaḥsrotra 'nugāminyas tvaksukhasparśanāni ca// 5 A 7

-srotrō 'nugāminyas] -srotrānugāminyas A; tvaksukhasparśanāni ca] tvacah sparśanās tathā A.

Various kinds of foods and drinks, hearing the voice of a female companion, and soft touches on the skin,

Discussion

K's s for ś is indicative of Prakrit and vernacular readings or Newari scribal practices. The variations found in A tend to take the form of rephrasing of pādas rather than one word replacements. This is indicative of emendation. K's reading of pāda d is more explicit.

“ yāminī sendutilakā kāminī navayauvanā/
gītam śrotramohāri tāmbūlam madirāh srajaḥ// A 8

the night with a tilaka-like moon (i.e., a full moon), an amorous and fresh young woman, song that is charming to the ear, betal, wine/alcohol, garlands,

Discussion

This verse occurs only in A and extends the list of sexually arousing items, indicative of Kāmaśāstra literature.

“ gandhān manojñān rūpāni citrāṇy upavanāni ca/
manasaś cāpratīghāto vyājīkurvanti mānavam/ 6 A 9a-d

gandhān manojñān] gandhā manojñā A; ghāto] vāto K (? Chk mss)

scents pleasing to the mind, variegated forms, pleasure gardens, and a non-repressed mind make a man like a stallion.

taiś tair bhāvair ahṛdyais tu rirāṁsor manasi kṣate/
dhvajah pataty adho nṛṇāṁ klaivyaṁ samupajāyate// 7 A 9ef-10ab
dhvajah pataty adho nṛṇāṁ klaivyaṁ samupajāyate] dveśyastrīsaṁprayogāc ca klaibyaṁ
tanmānasam smṛtam/ A

But, in the case of a lustful man's mind that is impaired by various unpleasant states, men's impotency occurs when the flag (i.e., penis) falls down.

Discussion

K seems to have a complete verse, but A has something different in cd: "and because of sex with despicable women, impotency is considered to be mental." A inserts two pādas that move the topic from impotency as a problem of non-arousal to impotency as a psychological problem.

“ *annair amloṣṇalavaṇair atimātropasevitaiḥ/
saumyadhātuksayo drṣṭaḥ klaivyam tad aparam smṛtam// 8 A 10cd-11ab*

annair amloṣṇalavaṇair] kaṭukāmaloṣṇalavaṇair A; amloṣṇa-] amlvausṇa- K

Another kind of impotency is known when there is observed a diminished cool dhātu (= semen) because of sour, hot, and salty foods used in excess.

Discussion

In a, in place of *annair amloṣṇa-* in K, A has *kaṭukālmoṣṇa-*, "pungent, sour, hot."

“ *ativyavāyaśīto vā na ca vyājīkriyārataḥ/
dvajabhaṅgam avāpnoti sa śukhrakṣayahetukam// 9 A 11cd-12ab*

sa śukhra-] tac chukra- A

He, who indulges in excessive coitus and does not have recourse to potency-therapy, suffers decay/frustration of the penis because of the loss of semen.

Discussion

A's reading in d is based on metre.

“ *međhrarogeṇa mahatā marmacchedena vā punah/*
klaivyam caturthaṁ bhavati nṛṇāṁ puṁstvopaghātājam// 10 A 12cd-13ab

međhrarogeṇa mahatā] mahatā međhrarogeṇa A; marmacchedena] marmacachedena K (Ck MSS); klaivyam caturthaṁ bhavati] klaibyam etac caturthaṁ syān A; klaivyam] klivyam K (Ck MSS)

Moreover, a fourth type of impotency that destroys men's masculinity is caused by severe disease of the penis or by a cut at the marman-point.

Discussion

A's readings are based on metre.

“ *janman prabhṛti yaḥ klibaḥ klaibyam tat sahajam smṛtam // A 13cd*
balināḥ kṣubdhamanaso nirodhād brahmacaryataḥ/
saṣṭam klaibyam matam tat tu kharaśukranimittajam// A 14

khara-] sthira- A (Pā).

Impotency that begins at birth is known as congenital impotency. The sixth type of impotency, originating from harsh (old) semen, is believed to be caused by a strong man's disturbed mind, suppression , and celibacy.

Discussion

Đ glosses *balināḥ*, lit. "of a strong man;" as *atisthūlasya*, "of an excessively big (or clumsy) man;" *kṣubdhamanasāḥ*, "whose mind is disturbed," as *calacittasya*, "whose mind is unsteady;" *nirodhāt*, "because of suppression , " as *nirodhāt(d) vātamūtrādinām*, because of suppression of wind and urine, etc;" and he reads *kharam*(Pā: *sthiram*), "pungent/harsh (old) as *kāthinam*, "hard/stiff/harsh," while others read *paruṣam*, "hard, stiff".

These two types of impotency are found only in A and could well be supplementary information.

“ *asādhyam sahajam klaivyam marmacchedāc ca yad bhavet/
sādhyānām avaśṭānām kāryo vyājīkaro vidhiḥ// 11 A 15*

avaśṭānām] itareṣām tu A; vyājīkaro vidhiḥ] hetuviparyayaḥ A

Both congenital impotency and caused by a cut at the marman-point are incurable; for the remaining curable , a formula of potency-therapy should be used.

Comment

In c, A's variant appears to be based on metre; in d, it provides a different meaning: *hetuviparyayaḥ*, "contrary to the cause," which implies an allopathic approach to healing.

“ *vidhir vājīkaro yas tu tam pravakṣyāmy atah param/ A 16ab*

Hence, I shall describe the other type of potency-therapy formula.

Comment

This half-verse, found only in A, appears to result from a corrupt reading of the previous pāda in K (11d).

“ tilamāśavidārīnām śālīnām cūrṇam eva ca/
 rasair ikṣurasair vāpi maditam saindhavānvitam// 13 A 16cd-17ab
 varāhamedasā yuktām ghṛtenotkārikām pacet/
 tām bhakṣayitvā gaccheyuh puruṣāḥ ṣaṣṭhim aṅganām// 14 A 17cd-18ab

*rasair ikṣurasair vāpi] paṇḍrekṣurasair ārdram; saindhavānvitam] K saindhavānvita A ;
 yuktām] yuktām A ; gaccheyuh puruṣāḥ ṣaṣṭhim aṅganām] puruṣo gacchet tu pramadāśatam
 A; puruṣāḥ] puruṣāḥ K.*

*One should cook in ghee a utkārikā-cake the powder of sesame seeds, māṣa-beans, vidārī, and
 śāli-rice kneaded with soups or the juices of sugar cane, with the addition of saindhava-salt and
 combined with boar-fat. After eating it, men could go to sixty women.*

Comment

For 13c, A has *paṇḍrekṣurasair ārdram*, “moistened with the juice of *paṇḍra*-sugar cane.” Interestingly, D reads *rasair* in 13c and glosses it as *māṃsarasiḥ*, “meat soup.” Moreover, he understands the *saṃāsa* to be a *dandva*: *ikṣurasaiś ca*, “and with the juice of sugar cane,” precisely following K. He glosses *utkārikām* as *lapsikām*, “a kind of prepared food.” For 14cd, A has something different: *puruṣo gacchet tu pramadāśatam*, “a man could go to 100 women.” First, it puts the sentence in the singular number, and secondly, it increases the potency by increasing the number of women, both of which point to a perhaps later interpretation.

“ vastāṇḍasiddhapayasi bhāvitā na sakṛttilān/
 śiśumāravasāpakvāḥ tais tilaiḥ ṣaṣkulīśubhāḥ/
 yaḥ khādet ca pumān gacchet strīṇām śatam apūrvavat// 15 A 18cd-19

*vastāṇḍasiddhapayasi] vastāṇḍasiddhe payasi A; vastāṇḍa-] vastrāṇḍa- K ; sakṛttilān]
 sakṛttilām K; -vasāpakvāḥ] vasā pakvā K ; tais tilaiḥ ṣaṣkulīśubhāḥ] ṣaṣkulyas tais tilaiḥ kṛtāḥ A;
 -śubhāḥ] -śubhām K; pumān] pumām K.*

*If a man should eat delightful ṣaṣkulī-cakes, whose sesame seeds have been repeatedly
 steeped/soaked in milk boiled with goats' testicles or cooked with porpoises' fat, he goes to 100
 women as if his first.*

Comment

A has a slightly different reading in pāda d, without changing the meaning. D states that two formulae are indicated: one with goats' testicles and the other with the fat of porpoises. Each has milk as the *anupāna* or after drink.

“ *pippalīlavaṇopetau vastāṇḍau kṣīrasarpisi/
sādhitau bhakṣayed yas tu sa gacchet pramadāśatam// 16 A 20*

lavaṇopetau] lavaṇaupetau K , lavaṇopete D; vastāṇḍau] vastāṇḍe A; sādhitau] sādhite A.

He, who should eat two goat's testicles cooked in ghee and butter, with pippalī-pepper and salt added, could go to 100 women.

Comment

In a,b, and c, K has masculine dual, while A has neuter dual endings. The word *aṇḍa* is normally in neuter gender, but in K it is understood to be masculine (a characteristic of Buddhist Sanskrit). D explains that butter is made from milk, the small (*kaścit*) amount of *pippalī*-pepper and salt is added, and the after drink (*anupāna*) is cold water (*śītalajalam*).

“ *māṣapippaliśālīnāṁ yavagodhūmayos tathā/
cūrṇabhāgaiḥ samais tais tu ghṛte pūpalikāṁ pacet// 17 A 21*

-pippali-] -pippalī- A.

*tāṁ bhakṣayitvā pītvā ca śarkarāmadhuram payaḥ/
naraś caṭakavad gacched daśavārān nirantaram// 18 A 22*

ca] tu A.

One should make a pūpalikā-cake by cooking in ghee equal portions of the powder of māṣa-beans, pippali-pepper, śāli-rice grains, barley, and wheat. A man who eats and then drinks milk sweetened with sugar, goes like caṭaka-bird/sparrow ten times for coitus without interruption.

cūrṇam vidāryāḥ sukṛtam svarasenaiva bhāvitam/

sarpiḥkṣaudrayutam līḍhvā daśanāryo 'dhirohati// 20 A 23

cūrṇam vidāryāḥ sukṛtam] vidāryāḥ sukṛtam cūrṇam A; sukṛtam] sakṛtam K; -kṣaudra-] -madhu- A; -nāryodhirohati] -nāryo 'dhirohita K, -strīr adhigacchati A, strīr adhirohati A (var. Pā).

After licking well-ground powder of vidārī, steeped in its own juice and combined with ghee and honey, a man mounts ten women.

Comment

In d, K and A (var. Pā) are based on the same reading. D explains that the milk is the *anupāna*, which is not indicated in the text.

“ evam āmalakam cūrṇam svarasenaiva bhāvitam/
śarkarāmadhusarpirbhir yuktaṁ līḍhvā payah pibet/
etenāśītivarṣo 'pi yuveva parihrṣyati// 21 A 24-25ab

In the same way, after licking āmalaka (emblic myrobalan) steeped in its own juice with the addition of sugar, honey, and ghee, should drink milk (D as anupāna). By means of this formula, even a man of eighty years becomes excited like a young boy.

*pippalīlavanopetau vastāṇḍau ḡṛhasādhitau/
śiśumārasya vā khādet te tu vyājīkarau bhrśam/ 22 A 25cd-26ab*

*lavaṇopetau] lavaṇaupetau K, lavaṇopete A; vastāṇḍau] vastāṇḍe A; ḡṛhasādhitau]
ḡṛhasādhite A; khādet te tu] khādet tau K (-1); vyājīkarau] vājīkare A.*

A man should eat the two testicles of a goat or a porpoise's/ crocodile's eggs prepared /fried in ghee and combined/seasoned with pippalī-pepper and salt. The two are powerful potency therapies.

Comment

K again takes *aṇḍa* in the masculine gender. In c, the word śiśumāra can mean either a porpoise or a crocodile. Since the testicles of a porpoise are not obvious, it probably refers to the eggs (*aṇḍa*) of a crocodile.

“ *kulīrakurmanakrāṇām aṇḍāny evam tu bhakṣayet/
mahiṣarṣabhabastānāṁ pibec chukrāṇi vā naraḥ// 22 A 26cd-27ab*

-bastānāṁ pibec chukrāṇi vā naraḥ] wanting K.

In the same way, he should eat the eggs of crabs (i.e., roe), tortoises, and crocodiles; or he should drink the semen of buffaloes, bulls, and goats.

Comment

Part of c and all of d are wanting in K. D explains that for *kulīra*, others read *grīhacataka* (var. Pā *gramacataka*), “domestic sparrow;” *nakra*, “crocodile,” is a kind of fish (*matsyabheda*), colloquially known as *ghadiyāl*. He goes on to say that *aṇḍa*, “egg,” is a round support of life (*prāṇādhāro vartulah*), but not a little testicle (*muṣkah*); and because of the guru’s instruction the *aṇḍāni* are the testicles along with the scrotum (*tadādhārabhūtāny evāṇḍāni*). The eggs of roe of crabs are often served as a salty garnish in Asian cuisines.

Project milestone

September 1, 2022

Categories: Announcements

Today we completed the transcription of MS Kathmandu KL 699's text of the *Suśrutasamhitā*!

There is more to do – always. We have the *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu* yet to do, but that is not very long compared to the text of the main work. Work on the transcription of MSS NAK 5-333 and 1-1079 is well-advanced. And there's always proof-reading and double-checking everything. But today, we can celebrate a little.

For the technically-minded, I have updated all the files at Github and put out Release 2.0 of the files. This is also reflected at the Zenodo repository, [DOI](#).

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who has worked on this over the last two years: Madhusudana, Deepro, Jane, Vandana, Harshal, Devayani, Gauri, Paras, Jason, and Andrey.

Why critical editions matter. The Nepalese Suśrutasamhitā on Epidemics

October 3, 2022

Categories: Announcements

Vitus Angermeier, a [project associate](#), has recently published a blog post on his own project website that explores the Nepalese version's variant readings on the topic of epidemic disease. It is entitled, "Epidemics in Suśruta or: Why critical editions matter. An example from Ayurveda, Suśrutasamhitā." See the whole post at <https://epidemics.univie.ac.at/epidemics-in-susruta/> and the related conference slides at <https://doi.org/10.17613/3ee7-rx05>.

Index of plants

November 6, 2022

Categories: Announcements

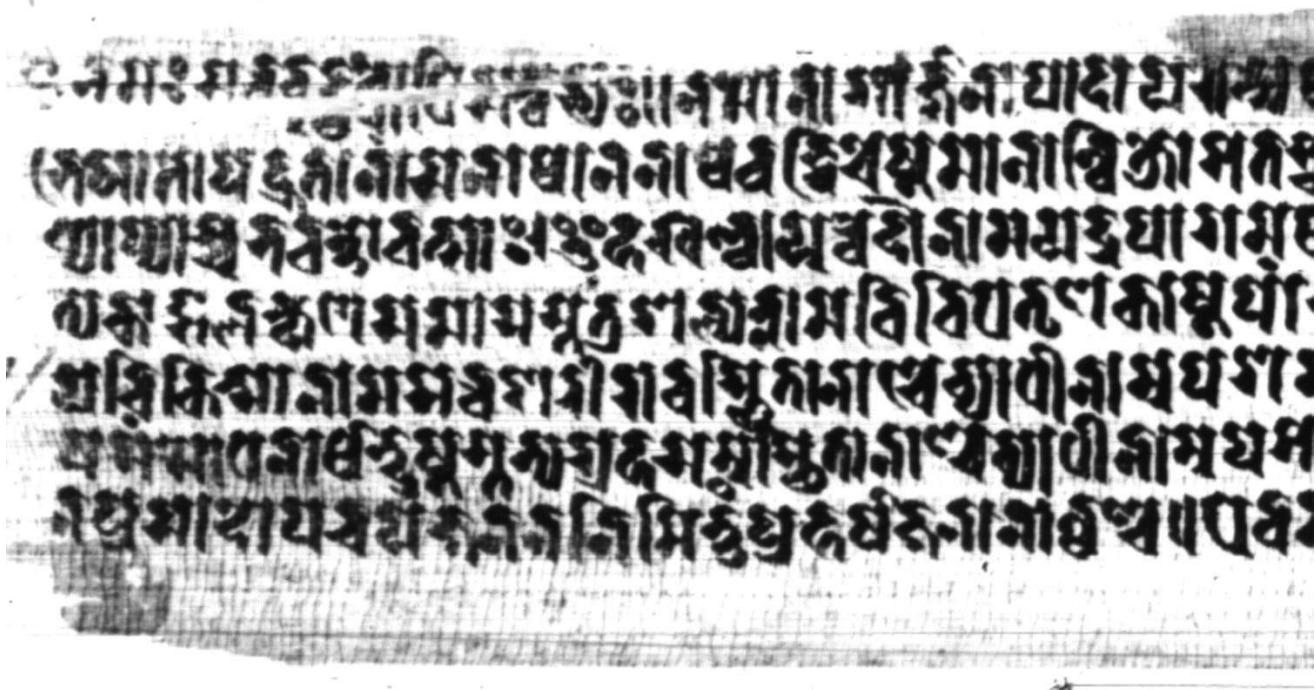
In our translation of selected chapters of the *Suśrutasamhitā* we are doing a lot of work on the names of Sanskrit plants. We want to present this simply for the reader, using common English plant names. But at the same time we want to make some of the complexity of our referencing and decision-making available in a glossary at the back of the book. For this, I have made use the Glossaries package written by Nicola Talbot. My macros for doing this and some examples of how it works can be read in my [blog post at Cikitsā](#).

Clarifying MS images with Upscaler

November 23, 2022

Categories: Announcements

A few days ago I became aware of the program [Upscaler](#). This is, "a free, open source app that leverages the power of artificial intelligence to upscale image quality." I tried it out on a fuzzy manuscript image from [MS Kathmandu NAK 1-1079](#), and I think the result is extremely promising.



Original

२. नमः सर्वज्ञामि तत्त्वं या जग्ना गीर्णा प्रादा प्राप्त्या
जग्नाताधिकानं शरणाधानं नावविश्वमानास्तिर्का मत्तु
ग्राह्यात् नवद्वायका अहं देवन्वाथवदो ग्रामयुपागम्भे
वक्ष द्विन्द्रियं यमाय प्रत्युत्तम्यग्रामविविपूलं काम्पुष्ठा
प्रस्त्रिकाग्रामप्रवृद्धाग्रीशवस्त्रिनाल्यग्रापीकाम्पुष्ठा
प्राम्पादनाप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्र
प्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्रस्त्रिप्र

After Upscaler

You may think that you can get this kind of result just by upping the contrast setting on your viewer. But what Upscaler does to the image becomes more apparent at greater magnifications:



The processing is quite slow, but highly worthwhile on a folio-by-folio basis if one is reading carefully. The processed image gives you a sense of the scribe's actual strokes.

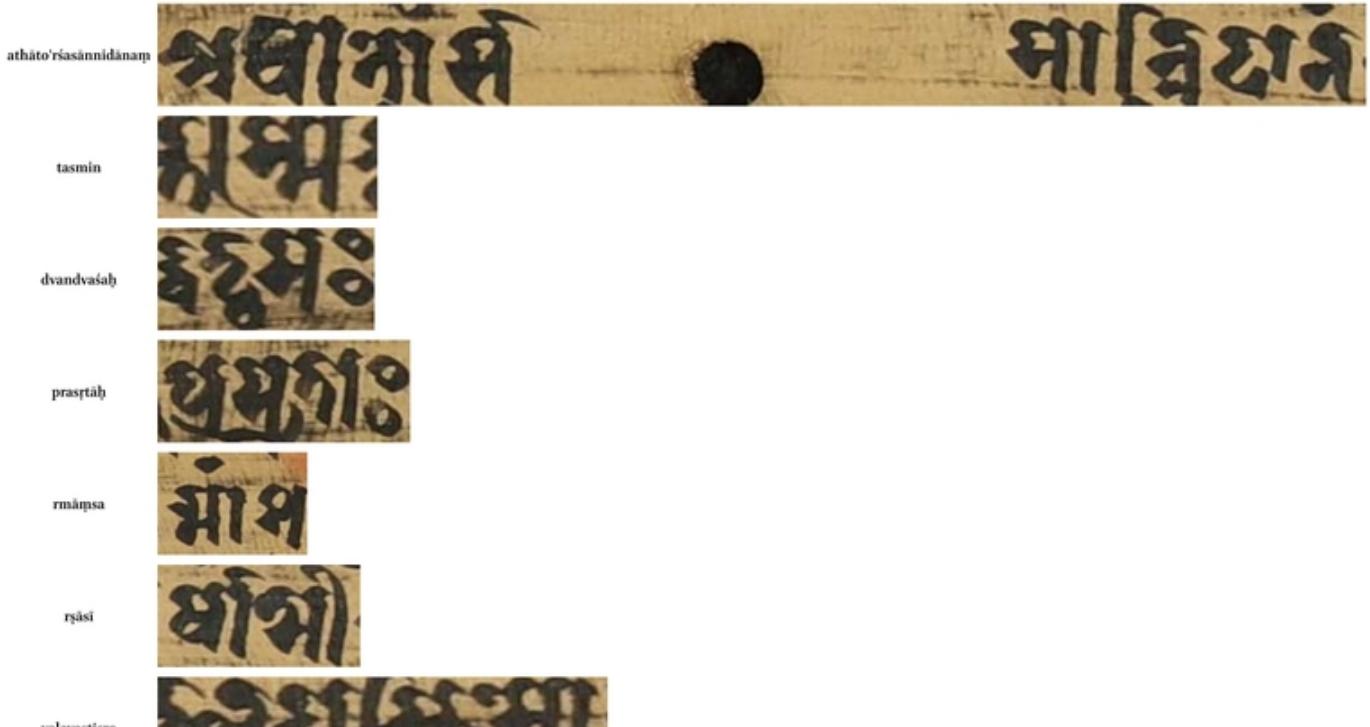
शकारः and सकारः (Ś and S) in MS Kathmandu NAK 1-1079

April 17, 2023

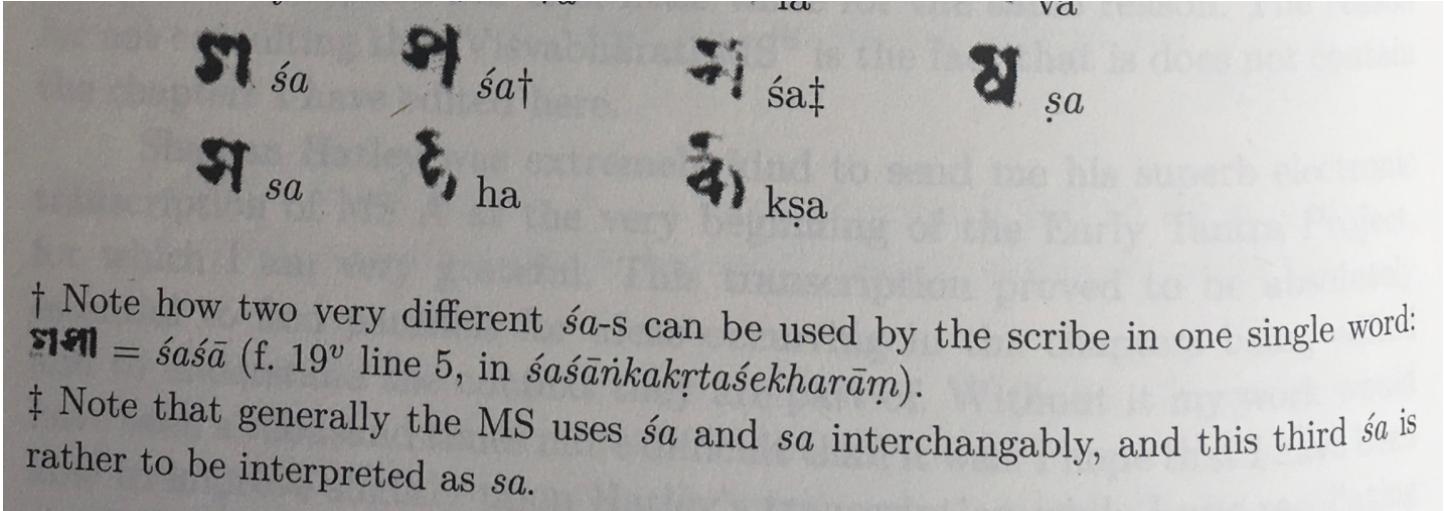
Categories: Announcements

Attentive followers of the Suśruta Project will recall the project publication that focussed on interpreting the writing of छ by early Nepalese scribes . Our project members are currently debating a similar issue about the letters श and स specifically in the handwriting of the scribe of MS Kathmandu NAK 1-1079 (siglum N). This manuscript has been dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century CE . Our question is, can we detect a difference in the scribe's writing of these characters? Does he routinely distinguish them, but sometimes make errors? Or does he simply not distinguish them at all? Our team is currently divided on this issue.

Here is a chart of instances that we are discussing, kindly provided by Harshal Bhatt:



One of our reference points is the discussion of MS Kathmandu NAK 3-370, a palm-leaf manuscript datable to 1052 CE . On p. 60, Csaba Kiss noted the instability of the orthography of these characters:



† Note how two very different *śa*-s can be used by the scribe in one single word:
सा॒सा॑ = *śaśā* (f. 19^v line 5, in *śaśāṅkakṛtaśekharāṁ*).

‡ Note that generally the MS uses *śa* and *sa* interchangably, and this third *śa* is rather to be interpreted as *sa*.

The discussion continues ...

References

ChrysoCollate 1.2

April 24, 2023

Categories: Announcements

In a post yesterday, the developer of ChrysoCollate announced an upgrade to the free collation program ChrysoCollate. This is an interesting alternative to Saktumiva, though it has none of the special Indological features that make Saktumiva so powerful and still the first choice for collating and editing Indian manuscripts. Note specifically that ChrysoCollate requires you to manually add the text of witness after the first. There are other points too that make it best for other types of working than the Suśruta Project.

 *I am pleased to announce the release of the new version 1.2 of ChrysoCollate.*

New features:

- Apparatus entries layout: multiple lines (now default) or single lines
- Improvement of the mouse wheel management (hold the shift button to change the axis)
- Possibility to switch from negative apparatus to positive apparatus for particular variant locations only
- Sensitive or not to: punctuation, u/v, i/j, ae/e, ti/ci
- In addition to lacunae ({lacuna} tag), it is now possible to notify absent readings (using the {absentia} tag) and automatically write them in the apparatus criticus and in the *traditio textus*
- Various discrete improvements and various bugs fixed (including the non-zero synchronisation point in the translation)

You can download the new version on the ChrysoCollate website: <https://cental.uclouvain.be/chrysocollate/>

Kind regards,

Sébastien Moureau

An AI view of editing Sanskrit texts

May 7, 2023

Categories: Announcements

I asked the AI "[Hugging Chat](#)" the following question:



Q: What is important when making a critical edition of a Sanskrit text?

A: When creating a critical edition of a Sanskrit text, it is essential to consider several aspects:

1. Verifying the source documents – Check the authenticity, reliability, and relevancy of each source document used in the editing process. Ensure that the texts are authoritative works, and their contents match what is known about the original author and piece.
2. Textual criticism – Analyze differences in wording, style, syntax, and other features across different versions of the same text. Determine which variant may be closer to the original form. Identify errors introduced during transmission via copying or translation, and determine whether these changes were deliberate revisions by scribes.
3. Understanding the historical context – Research the period tradition, and cultural background of the original text to better comprehend its meaning and purpose. This enables editors to identify linguistic idioms and clarify ambiguities arising from temporal or geographical gaps between readers and authors. Context illuminates nuances that could escape modern interpretation without specialist knowledge.
4. Collaboration and peer review – Involve scholars familiar with the relevant branch(es) of Indology, philology, Buddhism, Hinduism etc., who can verify the correctness of editorial decisions. Open discussions among experienced academics ensure that no crucial detail gets overlooked, and facilitates cross-checking facts against multiple sources (wherever feasible).
5. Transparency and documentation – Be explicit about choices made while creating the critical edition. Provide detailed explanations, references to earlier editions, and a list of consulted primary/secondary resources. These annotations enable users to assess the scholarly basis behind each decision and judge the accuracy of the final product themselves, rather than blindly relying upon editorial judgments.
6. Presentation format – Use consistent formatting, font styles, and layout elements to make the critical edition user-friendly. Different typography, colored fonts or boxes, headings, subheadings, and footnotes can help distinguish variant lines

This query was conducted using the program [Bavader](#) v.0.1.7.

Progress report for May 2023

May 20, 2023

Categories: Announcements

I am very pleased to announce that today that project members have completed the transcription of the Nidānasthāna from MS NAK 1-1079. That means we have transcribed all the evidence we have from manuscripts K, N, and H for the Nidānasthāna.

The transcribing situation now is as follows:

1. sūtrasthāna – nearly done
2. nidānasthāna – completed
3. śārīrasthāna – completed
4. cikitsāsthāna – completed
5. kalpasthāna – completed
6. uttaratantra – completed

Well done everyone!

Full details by adhyāya can be seen in the document "[Adhyāya transcriptions completed.](#)"

The transcriptions themselves can be viewed [on GitHub](#), and of course the collations and editions are at [Saktumiva](#).

The problem of “the original text” according to AI

May 20, 2023

Categories: Announcements

T asked [BAIChat](#), “In textual criticism, what are the theoretical problems surrounding the issue of and “original” text.”

“ *The issue of the original text is a central theoretical problem in textual criticism, and it raises several complex issues.*

Firstly, the concept of an “original” text assumes that there was a single, definitive version of the text that served as the author’s intended final version. However, this assumption may not be valid for many texts, especially those that were transmitted orally before being written down, or those that underwent significant revision or interpolation over time. Consequently, it can be difficult to determine which version of the text represents the original or authentic version.

Secondly, even if an original version of the text did exist, it is unlikely that any surviving manuscript or edition would be identical to it. This is because manuscripts are subject to copying errors, omissions, additions, and other changes that occur during transmission. As a result, scholars must use methods such as stemmatics and collation to compare different versions of the text and reconstruct the likely relationships between them.

Thirdly, the question of what constitutes an “original” text is complicated by the fact that many texts were produced collaboratively, with different authors, editors, scribes, and translators contributing to their creation. In these cases, it may be impossible to identify a single authorial voice or intent behind the text, leading to debates about how to interpret and represent the text in a critical edition.

Overall, the issue of the original text highlights the complexities involved in reconstructing the histories of literary works, and underscores the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which texts were produced and transmitted.

– BAIChat

As is common, this answer is impressive, but unreferenced and somewhat bland.

Progress report for June 2023

June 25, 2023

Categories: Announcements

I am pleased to report that a major project milestone has been reached. Last week we completed the transcription of all three Nepalese manuscripts of the *Suśrutasamhitā* that form the basis of our project.

All files have been uploaded to GitHub, and a “version release” of the files has been issued, version 3.0. This has also triggered the automatic deposit of the version 3.0 files [at Zenodo](#).

Full details by adhyāya can be seen in the document “[Adhyāya transcriptions completed](#).”

The transcriptions themselves can be viewed [on GitHub](#), and of course the collations and editions are at [Saktumiva](#).

What is next?

We are moving now to editing, proof-reading and translation. The current translation file can be [viewed at GitHub](#). It is an evolving draft document. The work specifically on the MS transcriptions includes checking word-spacing and checking the critical apparatus for integrity and accuracy.

The current project does not include funding for the transcription and editing of the *Sauśrutanighaṇṭu*, the index-dictionary of plant names. The text appears as part of MSS Nepal NAK 5-333, 1-1079, 1146 and KL 699 and was edited by K. S. Suvedī and N. Tivārī and published in 2000.

Publication in press

Another exciting moment for the project is the publication of our first monograph, *On the Plastic Surgery of the Ears and Nose: The Nepalese Version of the Suśrutasamhitā*. The book has been [announced on the publisher's website](#), and it is scheduled to appear this summer, perhaps as early as next month, July 2023.

Book publication

August 25, 2023

Categories: Announcements

We are delighted to announce the publication of this project's first book:

“ Wujastyk, Dominik, Jason Birch, Andrey Klebanov, Madhu K. Parameswaran, Madhusudan Rimal, Deepro Chakraborty, Harshal Bhatt, Vandana Lele, and Paras Mehta. 2023. On the Plastic Surgery of the Ears and Nose. The Nepalese Version of the Suśrutasamhitā. Heidelberg: Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.11588/hasp.1203>.

The book is available as a free Open Access PDF download and also as a physical printed book at a moderate price.

Media reports

On Thursday 24 August 2023, the book was reported in the Gujarati newspaper, *Gujarat Samachar*:



Instagram

Log In Sign Up

The Instagram post features a collage of three images. At the top left is the official seal of The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, with text indicating it was established in 1949 and accredited by NAAC. Below this are two photographs: one of Mr. Harshal Bhatt and one of Dr. Sweta Prajapati. A central graphic with a blue and yellow color scheme features a silhouette of a building and a raised fist, with the word "Pride" written in large letters. The caption text reads:

Congratulations to Dr. Sweta Prajapati, Director, Oriental Institute, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda & Mr. Harshal Bhatt, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit Pali & Pakrit, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, for their dedicated work on the critical edition of Suśrutasamhitā & Suśrasthaṇī. This project's success is a testament to their hard work and the support from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. We are proud to announce that their work has been published by the prestigious Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing House.

15W

mentor.universe Heartiest congratulations 🌟

359 likes August 25

Log in to like or comment.

Scribal uncertainty about Dhanvantari

September 26, 2023

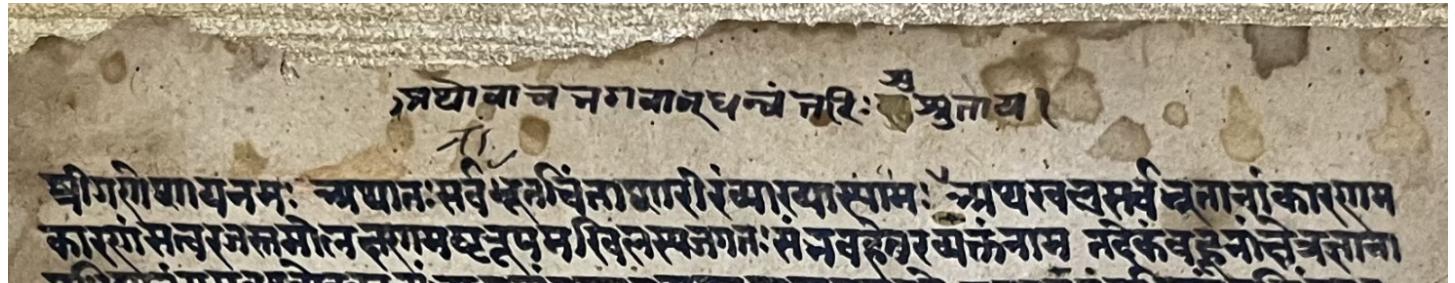
Categories: Textual notes

We have written before about the role of Dhanvantari in the Ayurvedic medical tradition transmitted in the *Suśrutasamhitā* (;)

Through the kind offices of Punjab University Library (PUL) and Mr Tancredi Padova (Universität Zürich), who was visiting Lahore, I have been able to examine some extracts of *Suśrutasamhitā* manuscripts held in the Woolner Collection at the PUL. These are:

- MS Lahore PUL Woolner 818 ([entry at PanditProject](#))
- MS Lahore PUL Woolner 120 ([entry at PanditProject](#))
- MS Lahore PUL Woolner 4495 ([entry at PanditProject](#))
- MS Lahore PUL Woolner 7082 ([entry at PanditProject](#))
- MS Lahore PUL Woolner 8063 (Nibandhasaṅgraha commentary; [entry at PanditProject](#))

While beginning to examine the images we have received, I noticed the following marginal addition in MS Lahore PUL Woolner 818:



This is the first folio of the Śārīrasthāna (cf. [edition](#)). The text begins as normal, up to "vyākhyāsyāmaḥ." The text continues, "atha khalu sarvabhūtānāṁ kāraṇām..." This is the same as the Nepalese version of the text. However, a different scribe has inserted the marginal gloss "athovāca bhagavān dhanvantariḥ suśrutāya", which is the reading of the vulgate text of the *Suśrutasamhitā*.

MS Woolner 818 was copied in 1825 CE. Here we see the tension that existed still at the start of the nineteenth century between versions of the *Suśrutasamhitā* and the scribal response to this tension. In this manuscript, the scribal emendation is obvious. But if this manuscript had been copied, no doubt the marginal gloss would have been inserted seamlessly into the new copy, cementing the vulgate reading of the work.

References

Candraṭa's editing of the Suśrutasamhitā

September 12, 2024

Categories: Announcements

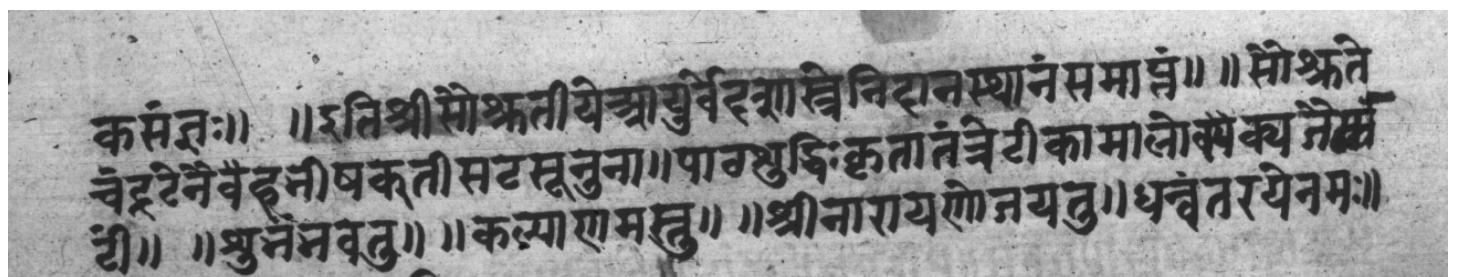
Candraṭa was a Sanskrit author on medical topics who lived in the period 900-1050 CE (Meulenbeld HIML IIA, 122-125). He is perhaps best known for writing a commentary on his father Tīsaṭa's treatise, *Cikitsākalikā*. But Candraṭa wrote several other works, and of most relevance to our project is his "Editorial Corrections to the Suśruta text" (*Suśrutapāṭhaśuddhi*). Candraṭa himself said that he wrote this work, in a verse included at the end of his commentary on the *Cikitsākalikā*:

“ cikitsākalikāṭikāṁ yogaratnasamuccayam/
suśrute pāṭhaśuddhim ca tritayam candraṭo vyadhat//

"I created the following three works: the commentary on the *Cikitsākalikā*, the *Yogaratnasamuccaya* and the *Suśrutapāṭhaśuddhi* ('Correction of the Text of the Suśruta')."

— MS Oxford Bodleian Library Fraser 21 (Aufrecht 1864: 358, entry no. 852), dated 1530 CE.

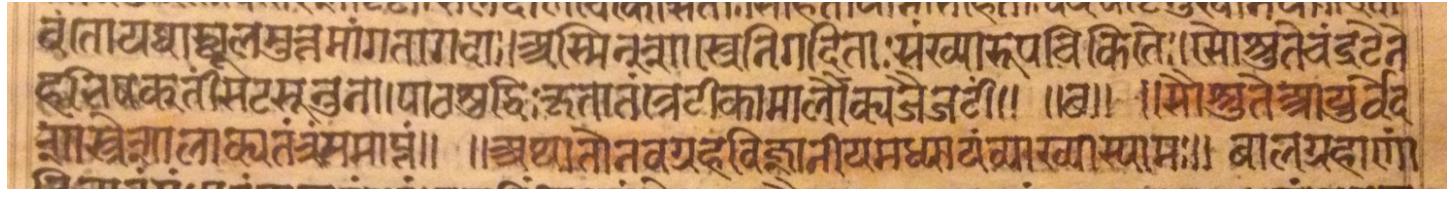
An authorial statement is also found in some colophons of the *Suśrutapāṭhaśuddhi* itself, as is shown on f. 59 of [MS London IOLR Taylor 1842](#) (Eggeling catalogue no. 2646):



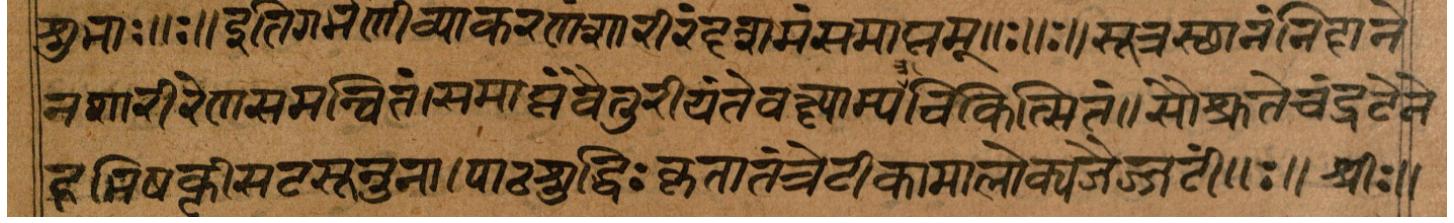
“ sauśrute cañdraṭeneha bhiṣaktīsaṭasūnunā /
pāṭhaśuddhiḥ kṛtā tamatre ṭikām ālokya jaijjatīm //

"The correction of readings (pāṭhaśuddhi) in the treatise of Suśruta was done by Candraṭa the son of the doctor Tīsaṭa, after studying the commentary of Jejjaṭa."

Another MS that has the same statement is [MS Bikaner Anup 4391](#) (Kunhan Raja Catalogue p. 337):



In an undated manuscript of the *Suśrutasamhitā*, Śārīrasthāna, from Kurukṣetra, we find the same text in a section colophon, but in a slightly expanded form:



“*sūtrasthānam nidānena śārīreṇa samanvitam / samāptam vai turīyam te vakṣyāmy atra cikitsitam // sauśrute caṃdraṭeneha bhiṣaktīsaṭasūnūnā / pāṭhaśuddhiḥ kṛtā tamtre ṭīkām ālokya jaijjatīm // ḥ // śrīḥ//*

“The sūtrasthāna has been completed, with the nidāna and śārīra sthānas, and I will explain the fourth, the cikitsāsthāna. The Correction of Readings (pāṭhaśuddhi) in the treatise of Suśruta was done by Candraṭa the son of the doctor Tisāṭa, after studying the commentary of Jejjāṭa.”

— [MS Kurukṣetra Jawaharlal Nehru Library 19786](#), f. 78v

The Kurukṣetra colophon above has the extra initial statement, “I will explain (vakṣyāmi).” It is not clear whose voice this is. Is it the scribe? But *vakṣyāmi* is normally an authorial expression, where a scribe would be more likely to say something like *likhyate mayā*. The second statement, which is the same as that of the London MS, is more straightforward: Candraṭa wrote *The Correction of Readings*. This sounds like a statement by Candraṭa himself. However, this raises the question of why the statement appears at the end of the Kurukṣetra manuscript, which contains only the *Suśrutasamhitā*, and does not include Candraṭa’s work. However, it is definitely of interest that the scribe of the Kurukṣetra manuscript was aware of Candraṭa’s work and thought of it as a relevant reference to raise in the context of a manuscript of the *Suśrutasamhitā*. This means that several centuries after Candraṭa, the *Suśrutasamhitā* was thought of as a work that he had corrected.

Bibliography

Andrew Mason interviews Dominik Wujastyk about the Suśruta Project

December 18, 2024

Categories: Announcements

In December 2024, I was interviewed by Andrew Mason, the researcher and publisher on South Asian alchemy and medicine and director of the [Netera publishing project](#).

Here's the interview:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gvUDqAabOM>

Podcast on the Kalpasthāna

February 12, 2025

Categories: Announcements

Here is a twelve-minute podcast episode about poisons in the *Suśrutasamhitā*. It was generated automatically by notebooklm.google.com. I uploaded the [PDF of the Kalpasthāna translation](#) from the Suśruta Project and notebooklm did the rest.

- [Podcast](#)