



# Puṣpikā

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**Volume 6**

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Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup>  
International Indology  
Graduate Research Symposium  
(Vienna, 2021)

**Vitus Angermeier**  
**Christian Ferstl**  
**Dominik A. Haas**  
**Channa Li**  
(eds.)



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Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> International  
Indology Graduate Research Symposium  
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Puṣpikā. Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions:  
Contributions to Current Research in Indology

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## Preface

एष पाण्डित्यशाखाभृत्युष्पिकाशुभसंचयः ।  
विद्यार्थियत्नसंजातो विद्यादेवीं प्रसादयेत् ॥

*eṣa pāṇḍityaśākhābhṛtṣupikāśubhasaṃcayaḥ /  
vidyārthiyatnasaṃjāto vidyādevīm prasādayet //*

May this beautiful collection of Flowers from the tree of scholarship,  
born from the students' efforts, gladden the Goddess of Learning.

We are delighted to present the sixth volume of the series *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India through Texts and Traditions*. This volume contains the proceedings of the twelfth International Indology Graduate Research Symposium (IIGRS 12), which was held in Vienna, Austria, 22<sup>nd</sup>–24<sup>th</sup> of July, 2021. The symposium was funded by the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and organised in collaboration with the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the University of Vienna. The IIGRS 12 faced unprecedented challenges in its organisation, as it was held in the middle of the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, during which travelling became extremely difficult and most academic events were either transferred to online formats or cancelled altogether. Despite these turbulences we received more than sixty submissions, of which we could accept only about a third. We committed ourselves to organising the symposium in a hybrid format and extended the schedule from two to three days in order to include as many promising early-career Indologists as possible.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For more details regarding the programme of the symposium, visit the IIGRS website: <https://iigrs.wordpress.com/historical-archive/programme-iigrs12-2021/>.

This *Puṣpikā* contains twelve peer-reviewed contributions by early-career academics as well as an article by Professor Jürgen Hanneder, head of the Department of Indology and Tibetology of the Philipps-Universität in Marburg, Germany. This article, which is based on his keynote, offers reflections on the German concept of young academics (“akademischer Nachwuchs”), a status in which many scholars were – and are – forced to remain for most of their lives.

We would like to thank all of our authors for their work – the fruit of their commitment is a collection of highly interesting and academically mature papers on a wide range of topics, including Sanskrit grammar and rhetoric, various forms of literature, premodern state politics, and the history of philosophy and religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. We also thank the reviewers of this volume for the time and expertise they expended to help our authors. Last but not least we thank Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing for including this volume, and the entire *Puṣpikā* series, in their programme.

*Puṣpikās* are in several respects more similar to journal issues than to individual books. Each contribution in this volume is published Open Access under a Creative Commons license and has its own digital object identifier and references section, which makes it possible to read and circulate it independently from the entire volume. Because the contents of the contributions are very diverse, we left it to the discretion of the authors to consistently follow whichever bibliographical style they felt is most appropriate. Moreover, instead of summarising the contents of each article, we refer the reader to the abstracts at the beginning of each contribution. To make it easier to identify and contact the authors, a link to the respective ORCID record is given in the asterisk footnote on the first page of their articles (instead of an affiliation, which in many cases changes quickly). Financial and other contributions from individuals and institutions, too, are acknowledged in this note.

*The editors*

Vienna, September 2022



## Cultivating Flowers

Dominik A. Haas and Vitus Angermeier\*

The proceedings of the annual International Graduate Research Symposium (IIGRS) have been published in the series *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions: Contributions to Current Research in Indology* since 2013. *Puṣpikā* was initiated as a peer-reviewed series that gives young scholars a platform for sharing the results of their research on pre-modern South Asian cultures. Five volumes have been published so far, all of them with Oxbow Books, a traditional academic publishing company based in the UK and the US. The volumes are available as hard copies and e-books, both versions at the same price (£28.00 to £38.00). After publishing these five volumes, Oxbow decided against continuing the collaboration – a change that made the publication of further volumes even more challenging than it already was.<sup>1</sup>

Due to its complex production process, each *Puṣpikā* – a Sanskrit word with the meaning “little flower” – is a delicate plant, easily disturbed by external influences. First of all, for each implementation of the preceding IIGRS, a reliable team of convenors has to be found, always in another European city. Then this team, generally consisting of graduate students or early-career academics, not only have to organise the event itself, but also turn into editors the moment the symposium is over. In contrast to many other collected volumes, each contribution in a *Puṣpikā* is reviewed

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1 For up-to-date information, see the *Puṣpikā* website: <https://iigrs.wordpress.com/proceedings-puṣpika/>.

individually by a reviewer approved by the Editorial Board of the series.<sup>2</sup> After organising the peer review, the team of editors have to meld the revised and collected papers into a book, which, too, has to be approved by the Editorial Board. In case the little *Puṣpikā* has developed thus far, a suitable bed is needed – a publisher willing to include such an exotic flower into their programme. If this bed disappears – because growing *Puṣpikās* is not profitable enough – or does not even exist anymore, the entire project is jeopardised.

As with most academic publications, the need of legacy publishing companies to maximise profit is most often disadvantageous to editors, authors, and readers alike. Editors and authors (or their institutions) often have to contribute to the printing costs, while they are also expected to take over much of the production process (proofreading, copy-editing, etc.). Prestigious publishers usually put high prices on their products, which is in conflict with the editors' and authors' desire for their works to be disseminated as widely as possible. It goes without saying that this practice is also not in the interest of the paying readers. In fact, as tax payers, those readers should ideally have free access to the results of the research – given that they are the source of funding for the researchers, their institutions, as well as the publishers' subsidies.

Digitization and the Open Access (OA) movement have made this free access possible. In the OA model, the individual reader does not pay (except, of course, in the case of printed works). Instead, the publication costs are borne by universities, libraries, scholarly societies, professional associations, or other scholarly institutions. While in the wake of this development a number of institutions have founded in-house publishing projects, many commercial publishers have started to offer OA as well. In order to compensate for the revenue losses resulting from the free availability of OA publications, however, some profiteering publishers have begun to calculate special fees – imposed on the authors or their institutions.

As a growing number of academic institutions – most of them in wealthy countries – demand that the publications of their employees

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2 For a list of the current members of this board, see <https://iigrs.wordpress.com/proceedings-puṣpika/>.



be OA,<sup>3</sup> they are willing to pay these fees. They even regularly schedule a special budget to finance the publishers. This also means that from a global perspective, only an elite few have access to the means to publish with prestigious publishers and make their work OA – an inarguably unequal and unfair situation.

While for modern academic publication projects, OA is virtually state of the art, it still is, in many cases, an exclusive endeavour. Not everyone can afford to make their work legally available to the public. To make OA truly open to all involved parties – not only the readers – it is necessary to make it fair, a publication model that has been termed Fair Open Access (FOA). What exactly FOA shall encompass is subject to open discussion, and may change over the course of time. A first step towards providing FOA principles was taken in 2017 by the Fair Open Access Alliance (FOAA, <https://www.fairopenaccess.org/>). In 2020, the Initiative for Fair Open Access in South Asian Studies (FOASAS, <https://foasas.org/>) was founded – a field concerned with a region of the world where many academic authors and readers do not have the means to overcome the high paywalls erected by profiteering publishing houses. To help scholars find FOA venues for their work, the Initiative's website curates lists of suitable publishers and journals. The Initiative's Manifesto, which until now has been signed by 140 scholars from the field, suggests a number of measures to realise FOA, specifying that these should be implemented whenever the circumstances permit (thus also recognising that there is not always an ideal FOA option).

Oxbow's termination of the collaboration was one such circumstance. It has given rise to the opportunity of transferring the entire series to an up-to-date publication model that is based on the FOA principles. For the present and all future volumes, the flowerbed of the *Puṣpikāś* will be Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing (HASP, <https://hasp.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/>). Funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Foundation), HASP is a full-fledged FOA publisher and does not charge excessive fees from authors for their work. All books are freely available on the internet and are generally published under Creative Commons license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>), which makes it possible

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3 Complying, for instance, with Plan S, a European initiative founded in 2018 by the cOAlition S (<https://www.coalition-s.org/>), whose aim is to implement OA on a large scale.

to disseminate them freely, while also reserving certain rights. We hope that through this collaboration, many more *Puṣpikās* will be able to blossom for all to see.



## “Akademischer Nachwuchs” – Reflections of a Veteran on a Strange Concept

Jürgen Hanneder\*

**Abstract:** The German idea of “Akademischer Nachwuchs”, that is, young academics, is part of a structure built into our universities and based on a hierarchical teacher-student relationship. We know from Indological history that right from the beginning the often unpaid assistants contributed no less to the field than their well-paid superiors, and we also know from recent history that attempts to change some of the basic parameters of this system for the better came to naught. The lecture combines general thoughts on the topic with some personal observations, and a few historical examples from the early days of our subject.

**Keywords:** junior academics, teacher-student relationship, German Indology

When the organizers of the 12th *International Indology Graduate Research Symposium* in Vienna kindly invited me to give a keynote speech, I wanted to say something hopefully motivating to this immensely active group of scholars, but also express my critical view of how we (especially in Germany) treat young scholars institutionally. This combination of personal experiences and views, garnished with historical details, proved to be a problematic format, and especially in an academic conference, since for half of my talk I could neither go into details nor reveal

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\* Professor of Indology and Tibetology, Philipps University of Marburg.

any sources. Apparently it touched a nerve, but sadly, the digital format of the conference, at least for those like myself not physically present in Vienna, prevented more private discussions of the topic.<sup>1</sup> The inclusion of the following version of my talk in the proceedings will reveal many of these flaws, for which I crave the readers' indulgence.

For a young academic, an election into a permanent, which is usually only a professorial position in a university, is a great relief, but I guess for most people it feels like a transition – if the comparison is allowed here – from *hīnayāna* to *mahāyāna*. Instead of caring for oneself one is suddenly entrusted with the care for a whole academic subject, and especially for the younger academics on whom – if all works well – the future of this academic subject will soon rest. For those who have suffered the long insecurity of academic employment themselves, often including phases of pseudo-employment and of factual unemployment, usually carefully veiled in the *curriculum vitae*, this is a personal matter, and there are not many occasions to reflect on it. The following is a humble attempt to make up for this. I am also hopeful that this stirring up of an often traumatic phase in many academic biographies will be of some use and may even remind those academics in power who entertain a more Darwinistic view of the problem that in a small subject like Indology we cannot simply trust that those who are excellent enough and deserve it will make their way.

## 1. “Akademischer Nachwuchs”

Let me start with some basic facts and explain, especially to an international audience, that my own experience as a student is limited to the United Kingdom for a couple of years, and Germany for many more years. But I have since seen many institutes and encountered a few academic traditions and cultures and so I hope that the following reflections, although based mainly on the situation in Germany, may have wider implications in one or the other respect.

In Germany the term for junior academics is “Akademischer Nachwuchs”, which would literally translate as “academic offspring”. As often with faded metaphors, we are not usually aware of or reflect on their im-

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1 Some participants continued the discussion online, for which see <https://homepage.univie.ac.at/vitus.angermeier/website/akademischer-nachwuchs>.

plications. The German term evokes the image of the head of an institute as a fatherly figure. Complementary to this terminology the doctoral supervisor is called *Doktorvater* – the “father” of the doctor (to be). This word and the concept has even survived the recent reflections on gender and language, so now even the term *Doktormutter* is used.

For understanding the context one has to know something about the organisational structure of German universities, which is based on what is often called an institute, although many other names are in use in different locations. The term denotes the organisational core structure of a small academic subject, as Indology, with a minimum of one professor and one “assistant”. Qualifications of these assistants may vary, they may be doctoral students, postgraduates or so-called “*Privatdozenten*”, an old term for the status of someone eligible for a professorship. There used to be versions of these posts that were permanent, occupied by the highly qualified that did not get a professorship, but since the last reforms these positions have a maximum duration, not dependent on the post, but only on the holder of the post, who cannot be employed longer than 6 years as a postdoc. This means that once one has passed this deadline, no German university will be able to employ you in a comparable position, that is, on the level of an assistant. In some universities this applies even to (German style) tenure track professorships, which means that having an assistant post in Germany precludes you from applying to one of the new tenure track professorships, an absurd example for the general rule that German regulations are so complex that no one can any more calculate the side effects of reforms and that sometimes the side effects are more severe than the initial problem.

In an institute you may find one or more professors and assistants, lecturers, students employed for a few semesters, as well as assistants working in research projects. The idea behind this structure is that the institute functions with the main professor as the head, who is responsible for and controls almost every detail. Legally this entails a strict hierarchy. No assistant can go to a conference, except in his or her free time, without consent of the head of the institute, and for getting funds for travelling to this conference one again needs the signature of the head of the institute. One can imagine that this allows for a wide range of relationships between head and employees, ranging from friendly support to strict control.

There can also be a hierarchy within institutes with more than one professor, with the result that in some conservative universities the main professor decides mostly everything, the others next to nothing. Actual practice depends of course on individual constellations, again ranging from the amicable institute climate to the unfortunately wide-spread ongoing conflict among the professors of one institute, but this is surely not limited to Germany.

The system seems to work on the assumption that someone eligible for a professorship, that is someone having a “Habilitation”, and claiming the status of a so-called Privatdozent, will get a permanent job soon and it is not crucial whether he or she receives an income up to then. This is perhaps one of the few instances in Germany, where no union and no court has ever intervened against – let me put it bluntly – forced unpaid labour. For the Privatdozent<sup>2</sup> is required for the continuance of his status to teach in the university, but for free. Already in the early nineteenth century Peter von Bohlen, whom some might know as the editor of the *Bhartrhariśataka*,<sup>3</sup> described the private life of a Privatdozent as dreary.<sup>4</sup> They were living like unsuccessful artists, always in need of some other income. One might assume in modern times social laws, a completely different system of contracts in the university, and other political and social developments would since have made a difference.

But in fact, almost two decades ago the German government made the situation much worse by discontinuing virtually all permanent posts below the professorial rank. It also raised the hurdles for employment by introducing a lower maximum age for being employed as a professor, and also rigorously enforced the rule that six years after Ph.D. one would be unemployable in Germany. In the same series of drastic reforms salaries of both professors and assistants were cut. The aim of this policy was publicly termed “the scrapping of a generation” (“Verschrottung

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2 The term derives from Latin *privatim*, which used to mean “private” lectures by professors, that is lectures with no fee.

3 Petrus a Bohlen: *Bartrharis Sententiae*. Berolini 1833.

4 “Das häusliche Leben eines Privatdocenten ist überall kein rosiges zu nennen, noch ist es eben ein vielbewegtes.” See *Autobiographie des ordentlichen Professors der oriental. Sprachen und Literatur an der Universität zu Königsberg Dr. Peter von Bohlen, herausgegeben als Manuscript für seine Freunde von Johannes Voigt*. Königsberg 1841, p. 62.

einer Generation”<sup>5</sup>), with the underlying suggestion that those who had not made it into a permanent position were probably not good enough.<sup>6</sup> It practically implied that nobody would care that a whole generation of scholars would stand no chance to get a job in Germany. This was a time, when virtually all German postdocs applied abroad. When a few years later even the press who had been applauding the reforms realized that this had been a nightmare for academics, they changed their position and wrote on the severe side-effects. Of course the government started a new initiative to reinvoke scholars that had fled, and of course declared it a success. Many had by then forgotten what had caused the exodus in the first place.

The whole story is today difficult to retrieve, since its facts are drowned in a sea, or perhaps better a swamp, of permanent reforms. German universities as a rule modernize all the time and believe that this defines progress. But in fact, as we all know from our study of Indian texts, time also unfolds in cycles. It is now after at least four reform cycles, for instance, that we in Marburg will have a “new” proper B.A. in Indology, in other words, we are slowly returning to the old system that was tested and that we should have never given up. But at the time resistance was no option, but could have cost you the job, so most people did not even try to protest.

But still I think there is too much readiness in universities to accept reform nonsense. Let me just give you one instance. In Germany modernization means internationalisation, and because of the post-war history of Western Germany, modern always means US American. The latest absurdity in my university is the institution of *tenure track commissions* – the English term is actually used in German. A *tenure track commission* makes sense, when you have tenure posts, but we have hardly any in our university, and none in our faculty, where we now have a commission. The commission in fact decides about a renewal of contracts with a maximum duration of two years, after which the person who is prolonged has reached his or her six years and is no more employable in a non-permanent university position. In other words, we are talking about the very opposite of tenure track. For those concerned this is

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5 The term was used in 2002 in several print media in Germany.

6 The slogan was “Mittelmaß im Mittelbau”.

simply adding insult to injury. The assistants were rightly annoyed, but it seems no one else noticed the absurdity. We requested the president to change at least the name, but have no hope that this will happen. Using wrong English terms is it seems a core of our strategy of modernisation.

Some of this may not apply to other academic cultures, which are in fact quite different around the globe. In some countries universities have no institutes in the German sense, people come to the university to teach, but they have no real office, so that there is no locus for the German-type institute structure. Other phenomena may be more comparable.

And with this I want to return from politics to the institute structure and especially the relations between professors and assistants. Despite all the necessary criticism I do not want to sound too negative. In fact, I have more often than not enjoyed the atmosphere of daily work in quite a few Indological institutes. Where else will you find people to talk with about your outlandish research projects? The institute family can be pleasant, and a sustaining team experience. In many cases it entails a most valuable support given by the head of the institute to the younger generation, something that is often beneficial to one's motivation, self-esteem, and also to one's career.

But unfortunately there are also other cases. The same structures can enable misuse, just think of the fact that the German Doktorvater functions as supervisor, examiner, and often even employer to his doctoral student. As the image of the family can suggest, this system may also imply that the academic offspring is under total control of the *pater familias*, and that loyalty is what is demanded and what matters. Working in such an environment can be a terrible experience.

But this is not at all specific to Indology, but a result of historical development of academic degrees in Europe from the Middle Ages,<sup>7</sup> when the important ingredient for a doctoral degree, which gave access to an aristocratic lifestyle, was the payment of a considerable fee. Sometimes a dissertation was required, sometimes not, sometimes it was written by

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7 For the following, see Werner Allweis: "Von der Disputation zur Dissertation. Das Promotionswesen in Deutschland vom Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert." In: Paul Kaegoein, Franz Georg Kaltwasser, Wolfgang Kehr, Richard Landwehrmeyer, Günther Pflug (ed.): *Dissertationen in Wissenschaft und Bibliotheken* München, New York, London, Paris 1979. I am grateful to Walter Slaje for this reference.



the “Doktorvater”. The idea that the doctoral student has to demonstrate his abilities in the written dissertation – and the new German practice of finding plagiarism mainly in the dissertations of politicians and then removing them from office – is comparatively new. The continuity with the old systems is much stronger in other, seemingly modern academic fields.

Up to ca. 1800 a dissertation was entered into bibliographies not under the name of the doctoral candidate. Today we smile about those thin dissertations, but they were only the basis for a *disputatio*, and they were not viewed as a work the candidate was supposed to write on his own. The “Doktorvater” was to redact and correct “his” dissertations and was considered responsible for the results. The German system varied even in the 19th century, where some candidates never wrote a dissertation – one thinks of the Indologist Otto Böhtlingk, who paid the required fee to the University of Gießen and received his doctorate without having been to Gießen even once.

According to our modern standards this is not the only absurdity involved in this system. Quite contrary to the practice in many other countries the dissertations had to be printed, which again had to be paid by the candidate. Since the “Doktorvater” had to invest a lot of time in these dissertations, he received remuneration from the candidate for his contribution to the thesis, especially where the contribution of the Professors were substantial the process practically meant that the Professors would publish their own research in these dissertations. This is also why we find Professors with 400 Dissertations bearing their name, a practice that died out in the humanities, but the enormous number of publications of some heads of institutes in, for instance, medicine, are probably an offshoot of this long-standing practice.

This close structure may serve to explain another public expression, and that is an academic group mentality, a tendency to think in academic schools. It is well-known that in the Oxbridge system a lot of emphasis is placed on the college as the real home of and formative force for the student. There is no counterpart of this in Germany, but we tend to have a strong concept of what it means to be a student of Prof. X. It seems students were often not exposed to different influences and so one assumed that being a student of X more or less defined one’s academic field, method and mentality.

As the anthropologist would expect, there are academic rituals reinforcing this group identity. One that many scholars are very happy to undergo is organizing or taking part in felicitation volumes, a practice extremely wide-spread in Germany, and by the way, also in India, where similar reverence of academic teachers is found. The group identity is a strange animal, it rears its head in fights about succession, appointments, and it may express itself in surrogate wars. Let us assume our Prof. X is in academic, and perhaps personal conflict with Prof. Y. What we almost automatically expect, and what often can be observed unfortunately, is that this is also a conflict of schools and that other members of group X may fight members of group Y.

It would not be difficult to find more recent examples, but for maintaining a more objective historian's view I shall limit myself to older examples.

## 2. The case Suhtscheck

There is a common notion that academical newbies should not be too brisk in their criticism, especially of those professors whose support they might need later. An example would be the well-documented case of Friedrich Suhtscheck,<sup>8</sup> an Austrian scholar of German Studies who wanted to prove in the 1930s that the Parzival legend was based on Persian sources. In the course of his research he met with considerable resistance – as is not uncommon in academic circles –, but also with encouragement. The whole matter was discussed in the press, which presumably boosted his confidence. In his writings he managed to insult many colleagues from varying fields of studies and also even ignored constructive criticism of specialists in fields he did not fully comprehend. Even the widow of the Indologist Karl Friedrich Geldner in Marburg had tried to moderate and wrote to him:

Permit me to give you some motherly advice. Refrain a little from too graphic expressions and accept scholars with other opinions, even if you can prove them wrong. I have a long experience in learned circles (I am a ward of Albrecht Weber)

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<sup>8</sup> The following is based on Walter Slaje: "Friedrich von Suhtscheck und das Päršī-walnāmā." In: ZDMG (1989) p. 93–103.

and know how easy it is for too impetuous gentlemen to block their own path.

Naturally these warnings did not have an effect. And thus it took half a century until at least some of Suhtschecks findings, some of which had found approval by specialists much earlier, found their place in academic history.

But the dilemma that one should be wise and hold one’s tongue applies not only to cases of younger academics with anger management issues. Even the most gentle postdoc or Privatdozent will at some point, that is after many years in the trade, fail to understand why he or she should still hold back.

Before introducing a few more cases, I want to mention that there is the notion that Indologists are easily irritated and like to quarrel about trifles, as a publisher once wrote about the conflict between Max Müller and Otto Böhtlingk.<sup>9</sup> In fact the practice at least in German Indology goes back to literary polemic exchanges between the German romantics and their classical counterparts. In particular, the literary scandal around the so-called *Xenien*, a collection of polemic verses written by Goethe and Schiller against the Schlegel brothers,<sup>10</sup> must have influenced August Wilhelm Schlegel who adopted a similar style of exchange later when he was one of the first Indologists. He even extended the genre of polemical verses<sup>11</sup> against other academics into Sanskrit verse.<sup>12</sup> Schlegel

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9 Agnes Stache-Weiske: “Da die Herren Sanskritisten zornige Leute sind ...”: Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Otto Böhtlingk und Max Müller aus Briefen und anderen Quellen”. In: *200 Jahre Indienforschung: Geschichte(n), Netzwerke, Diskurse*. Wiesbaden 2012, p. 69–94.

10 See Roger Paulin: *The Life of August Wilhelm Schlegel Cosmopolitan of Art and Poetry*. OpenBook Publishers 2016, p. 79 (“Goethe and Schiller on the Attack: The *Xenien*”).

11 On Schlegel and his polemical writings, see Günter Österle: “Romantische Satire und August Wilhelm Schlegels satirische Virtuosität”. In: *Aufbruch ins romantische Universum. August Wilhelm Schlegel*. Ed. Claudia Bamberg and Cornelia Ilbrig. Göttingen/Frankfurt 2017, p. 70–81.

12 For an example see the reproduction in Jürgen Hanneder: “August Wilhelm Schlegel und die Begründung der Indologie in Deutschland”. In: *Aufbruch ins romantische Universum. August Wilhelm Schlegel*. Herausgegeben von Claudia

sometimes talks of literary martial law,<sup>13</sup> which apparently means that despite the highly polemic quality of one's writings, one must retain a certain fairness and refrain from personal insults.

But this idea of a martial law of literary and academic exchange is not so far-fetched, as the next example, this time from German studies, shows.<sup>14</sup> Here one Privatdozent by the name of Eugen Wolff, in 1892 got into a fight with the Professor Eugen Burdach about what would later become the dichotomy between Literaturwissenschaft and Literaturgeschichte. It was a conflict between methods, but also one of a young scholar without a secure position, a Privatdozent, against one of the established big guns. This scandal has resulted in a very amusing resumé, which describes the conflict between the two scholars as a war with unequal weapons, in which the professor shoots with heavy calibre, whereas the Privatdozent, the postdoc, can only hit the air with a light sword:

In this peaceful war heavy shots were fired, especially in the form of president's speeches, against which even the most dashing strikes of battlesome post-docs proved impotent by nature.<sup>15</sup>

In other words: With heavy guns against light swords this was an unequal match. Burdach, the full professor, had publicly rejected the ideas of, as he said, greenhorns like Wolff, and called him trivial, dull, etc. A first repudiation by Wolff avoided all polemic, but was answered by Burdach with another barrage of insults. Wolff now stated that in the case of further insults, he would demand satisfaction. The whole conflict had apparently exploded quickly, but this result was unexpected, since academic duelling had already gone out of fashion by the time. In the end no

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Bamberg und Cornelia Ilbrig. Freies Deutsches Hochstift – Frankfurter Goethe-Museum 2017, S. 201.

13 “Alles ist dem literarischen Kriegsrecht vollkommen gemäß.” Letter to Georg Andreas Reimer (29.11.1841). See [https://august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2535?left=text&query\\_id=616b96b4decf6](https://august-wilhelm-schlegel.de/briefedigital/letters/view/2535?left=text&query_id=616b96b4decf6).

14 Dorit Müller: “„Lufthiebe streitbarer Privatdocenten.” Kontroversen um die theoretische Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft.” In: *Kontroversen in der Literaturtheorie / Literaturtheorie in der Kontroverse*. Bern: Peter Lang 2007, S. 149.

15 “Besonders in Form von Rektoratsreden fielen in diesem friedlichen Krieg schon Schüsse vom allerschwersten Kaliber, gegen die sich selbst die schneidigsten Lufthiebe streitbarer Privatdocenten naturgemäß als ohnmächtig erwiesen.”

duel was fought, and this was apparently the last attempt to fight a duel in German academia. But this is an interesting case, where personal and academic conflict were hard to disentangle.

Already in German Indology the first conflict, which was, as far as I can see, based mainly on personal insults, misunderstandings, or hurt pride, resulted in a division of the academic subject. If you wonder why in Germany Indology and Indogermanistik (Indo-German Studies) separated in the very first generation, it was the result of an appointment of Franz Bopp to the Berlin Sanskrit chair, a chair on which A. W. Schlegel, who had been only deputed from Berlin to Bonn, wanted to retain a claim. When Bopp was installed in Berlin, Schlegel's chances to return there were slim. From then on relations between Bonn and Berlin became uneasy and turned into a prolonged conflict. Students of Indology, who studied almost always in Bonn and Berlin, were wiser. They ignored the conflict, got along with both contenders, and ignored attempts to be drawn to one side. Only Christian Lassen, the successor of Schlegel, took Schlegel's side explicitly.

### 3. Schlegel and his students

It has to do with the German obsession with the “Goethezeit”, one of the formative times of German literature, that we know so much about Schlegel and his students. Schlegel was part of the romantic movement, especially later seen as the antithesis of the “Klassiker”. Letters from the time abound and thus we have the luxury of being able to reconstruct the lives and times of the early Indologists in an unexpectedly detailed manner.

The most extensive exchange of letters with students stems from the time that his main student Christian Lassen travelled to Paris and London for his own further studies, but also for collating manuscripts for his teacher's editorial projects, especially the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Their exchange of letters was published long ago,<sup>16</sup> and remains an interesting source that shows how supportive Schlegel was of his students, but also how difficult he was, when things did not go as he had imagined them. We have 230 pages of letters, an extremely rich source for reconstructing the

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16 *Briefwechsel A. W. v. Schlegel – Christian Lassen*. Ed. Willibald Kirfel. Bonn 1914.

teaching method, topics of supervision, but also international academic networks, the Indological situation in Paris and London and much more.

In 1824 Lassen writes from London that Baron Schilling, who had been sent to him by Schlegel, was taking up much of his time. But from the learned traveller Lassen learnt a lot about Buddhism, about Tibetan language and other topics. When abroad, Lassen was obviously flooded with further Indological information and during one of his travels he wrote together with Eugène Burnouf his famous essay on the Pali Language, which is now considered one of the seminal works of academic Buddhist Studies.

In his letters Schlegel patiently helps him with all sorts of questions about manuscripts, with many Indological details that non-Indological readers of these letters may not have understood. Lassen, on the contrary, helped Schlegel in academic as well as personal matters. When the social climate for Anglo-Indians in England deteriorated, the Anglo-Indian son of the eminent Indologist Colebrooke, who was in close contact with Schlegel, was sent to Schlegel for studying in Bonn and living in Schlegel's house. Here Lassen was asked to accompany him from London to Bonn, which he did.

But soon the letters center on one problematic topic: Lassen had a travel scholarship and payments by relatives to sustain him. When the latter stopped their payment he ran into financial troubles. Schlegel now increasingly scolded him for being not focussed on his main task, especially when he started sending him funds from his own pocket. Schlegel now adopts a double strategy of promising Lassen a career in Bonn, but also demanding more work. When he demands that Lassen return from Paris, and he does not comply, even Alexander von Humboldt, who was living in Paris and was a good friend of Schlegel, had to intervene and calm down Schlegel. In the end both scholars became rather close. Although we cannot reconstruct all details, Lassen during the end of his life must have had a stroke and could not speak enough for teaching. At this point students gravitated towards – as Haug writes – Marburg (Gildemeister), Berlin (Weber), or Tübingen (Roth). In that phase, in 1845, Lassen wrote to Ewald:<sup>17</sup>

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17 Briefe an Ewald. Aus seinem Nachlaß herausgegeben von R. Fick und G. v. Selle, Göttingen 1932, p. 162.

I will soon be all alone in Bonn [...] Gildemeister will go to Marburg, since his works on the Holy Robe have earned him an appointment in Marburg. Schlegel was always until his death an enlivening force in my existence. Even when engrossed with other works, he often returned to Indian Studies. In my last talks with him he talked to me about reincarnation.

So Lassen was a case, in which supervisor and student were estranged, but again found a common ground that lasted.

But also other famous students had their problems with Schlegel, especially the well-documented cases of Friedrich Rosen and Adolf Friedrich Stenzler. The second is a name every student of Sanskrit knows, since his brief Sanskrit grammar is a standard book that has survived and remained in use in many reworkings, but still goes under his name.

In general, relations were quite friendly and close, as the following letter by Schlegel shows, where he reports:

This letter was brought by Stenzler, who just arrived from London. He was ill and wishes to recover a little here. He visited me the day before yesterday with Brockhaus, and I kept the young folks here almost the whole forenoon. Stenzler has, as I think, developed very favourably. The more that he is now completely “debopped”: he mentioned even ridiculous mistakes that I had not yet spotted.<sup>18</sup>

Probably Stenzler knew how to heighten the mood of this teacher, but it seems that he avoided being drawn into the conflict.

And I wanted to mention Friedrich Rosen, an almost forgotten early Indologist, on whose biography we now have Rosane Rocher’s impressive monograph,<sup>19</sup> a pioneering work that has forced us to make some changes to the early history of Indology. Quite contrary to the endless

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18 The German original: “Diesen Brief brachte mir Stenzler, eben von London angekommen; er war krank und will sich hier etwas erholen. Er besuchte mich vorgestern mit Brockhaus, und ich behielt die jungen Leute beinahe den ganzen Vormittag bei mir. Stenzler hat sich, wie mich dünkt, sehr vortheilhaft ausgebildet; überdieß ist er nun ganz entboppot: er erwähnte selbst lächerliche Fehlgriffe, die ich noch nicht bemerkt hatte.”

19 Rosane Rocher with Agnes Stache-Weiske: *For the sake of the Vedas: the Anglo-German life of Friedrich Rosen 1805–1837*. Wiesbaden 2020.

works that are being written on Orientalism, works that live by the same few quotations one has heard again and again, this stands on a completely new ground. Rosen, who was part of a circle of students who studied, or were in contact, with both Schlegel and Bopp, found employment at the university of London, a university that was, unlike Oxford, open to non-Anglicans.

Now both Rosen and Stenzler ran into similar problems with Schlegel. Both travelled to Paris and London, were extremely helpful, but did not do everything Schlegel demanded, or not fast enough. And Rosen understandably did not want to take sides in some of the academic conflicts Schlegel cultivated with Oxford and London. So both made their path after breaking with or at least reducing contact with the towering figure of Schlegel.

#### 4. Lachmann

The final case of a complicated relationship between academic teacher and student is particularly absurd, since here academic truth has been the victim of the quarrel. It is from the field of textual criticism.

In textbooks for editing or textual criticism we find the idea that there exists an old or classical method to deal with the editing of texts. It is called the Lachmann method, since it was invented by the German Classical and modern philologist Karl Lachmann. Lachmann worked on Latin texts, on the Bible, but also on medieval and modern German texts. The method, as described in detail by later generations, since few people read Lachmann,<sup>20</sup> involves creating a genealogical tree of manuscripts which allows to attach more weight to certain constellations, that is, to agreement of certain branches of this tree and thereby identify the original version of a text.

The famous rival school is the school of Bédier, which after subjecting Lachmann's method to a rigorous criticism, advocates the use of what is called the "best manuscript". Often the Lachmann school was perceived as German, the Bédier school as French, although one wonders how and why that should matter.

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20 The obvious exception being Giovanni Fiesoli: *La Genesi del Lachmannismo*. Sismel 2000.



Without going into details of the theory the actual string of events was this: Bédier had proposed a stemma codicum, a genealogical tree of the transmission of a text he was working on and came up with a stemma with three branches. What happened then must have been highly annoying: Bédier’s teacher published an article demonstrating that Bédier’s stemma was wrong and that the real stemma had only two branches. The text-critical implications of this are potentially far-reaching, at least if one thinks that this method is to be applied mechanically. If in a three-branch stemma two branches agree, then this is the reading to be chosen. If there are two branches, with one reading per branch, the editor can choose either reading. What Bédier now did was to psychoanalyse his teacher: he tried to prove, not without good arguments, that editors preferred two-branch stemmas, because it allowed them more leeway. This was a devastating criticism, since it destroyed the semblance of objectivity that had surrounded this method.

The criticism spurned a long controversy that forced adherents of the method to rethink. But the whole topic had also an unusual personal note. A teacher demonstrating his pupil’s error publicly, which can be seen as a breach of the teacher-student relation, lead to the revenge of the pupil in trying to destroy not only the whole method, but also adding insult by calling the method adopted by his teacher the method of Lachmann. In a nationalistic French context this was an insult easily understood, but as so often, the context was soon forgotten. And the term “method of Lachmann” continued to be used, even when philologists explained in detail that Lachmann had not actually invented the method and that the actual methods of Lachman and Bédier are not that different.

The idea of a method of Lachmann is ultimately based on Bédier’s anger about his teacher. The supposed larger theoretical antagonism, the conflict between a German and a French school, and the charge that Bédier’s teacher really belonged to the Germans, was apparently staged as a revenge by an estranged pupil. In a sense Bédier’s teacher had overstepped a boundary: it is odd for a teacher, who is supposed to support his pupil, to refute him in public. But for some reason the idea that Lachmann had still somehow invented the stemmatological method was impossible to stop. It was like in the Woody Allen joke, where someone asks the doctor what he should do about a relative who thinks he is a chicken.

The doctor suggests: Have you tried telling him that he is not a chicken. “Oh, we cannot do that”, is the answer, “we need the eggs.” Until today authors on the theory of textual criticism need the “eggs”: without a method of Lachmann much of the ensuing theoretical edifice built upon it, or rather its criticism, would collapse.

## 5. Conclusion

Following our intuitive belief in progress we are usually convinced that these are bygone times and that the old professorial powers are a thing of the past. But in recent years critical observers of German academia in the press claimed that the old type Ordinarius professors – the German term evokes the system before the reforms of the late 60s – have reincarnated today as the so-called speakers of what is called a *Sonderforschungsbereich* (SFB). This is the largest and most prestigious type of research group and since it is funded by the central government via the DFG, its additional funding is highly welcomed by the administrations. The SFBs also serve as indicators of the university’s excellence – another concept that has become a modern German obsession. As a consequence those who succeed in establishing an SFB in their university are like mountaineers who have made the ascent to Mount Everest. They become revered and dominating figures in their universities, and – thus the analysis in the newspapers – wield unprecedented powers, not just over their own projects, but indirectly also over the other institutes involved.

This is a new brand of large scale projects that produce many post-doc positions and have thus altered normal career trajectories, often by creating a group of international nomadic scholars moving from one employment to the other. The development in Germany, characterized by an underfunded university on one hand and affluent top projects on the other clearly shows that there is a lot of money in the system, obviously enough to finance a large group of project workers, but also a large and labour-intensive superstructure with their spin doctors, who ensure that these projects are perceived as excellent, cutting edge, and whatever the current conventions on terminology demand (resilient, scalable, etc). Reading the resulting publications instead of the high-flying announcements often reduces their scope to normal size. And let us be honest: Only the naïve will actually have believed that every new project has

the potential to explode and recreate the whole academic field, or whatever the promise was. Those with more project experience know that it is enough if the project results are in time, represent solid research, and most importantly that the project reaches its goals without cutbacks. Of course, this is not the language used publicly. But when it comes to the treatment of “Akademischer Nachwuchs” a little more honesty might be necessary: “normal assistants” are often producing excellent works and not all working in “upper class” projects are research magicians. Still funding is withheld from the first, but readily poured into the other. Using some of these funds to create a career perspective for those postdocs, whose academic merits are indisputable, would not only be fair, it would also safeguard the survival of a small subject like Indology.






# Complete without Impediment: *maṅgala* in the Eyes of the Vaiśeṣikas from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Ge Ge\*

**Abstract:** This article revisits the discussion on invocation (*maṅgala*) as found in the major Vaiśeṣika commentaries dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are two different opinions regarding the purpose of performing a *maṅgala* before one starts to compose a scholarly work. One group of commentators argues that writing a *maṅgala* to pay homage to a certain deity or one's teacher will ensure the completion of that work, while the other group believes that performing a *maṅgala* will only remove obstacles from the path to completion. Varadachari (1962) has termed these two groups the "ancient school" and the "modern school" respectively. However, his observation does not include the opinion of Bhaṭṭa Vādindra (13<sup>th</sup> century CE), another commentator on the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*. Through a detailed examination of selected Vaiśeṣika commentaries, this article argues that the so-called dichotomy between the two groups reflects only a partial glimpse of opinions on the function/role of *maṅgalas* in the Vaiśeṣika commentarial tradition, thereby supplementing and rethinking the arguments proposed by Varadachari based on selected Vaiśeṣika literature.

**Keywords:** Vaiśeṣika, *maṅgala*, invocation, function

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## 1. Introduction

As a kind of front matter, we often see a dedication at the beginning of a book before its preface and main content. Similarly, there are usually *maṅgala* verses dedicated to, for instance, deities, at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of Sanskrit texts written centuries ago. This invocation or benediction is referred to as *maṅgalaśloka* or *maṅgalācaraṇa*.<sup>1</sup> It often consists of several verses and sometimes only a single word to convey an auspicious meaning.

The word *maṅgala* is commonly used for expressing auspiciousness in Indian literature. For instance, it is used as a euphemistic epithet for Mars (*maṅgāraka*) in Indian astrology, meaning “The Auspicious One” (Gansten 2009, 649). Besides, the term *maṅgalasūtra* refers to a sacred wedding necklace. Most frequently, however, *maṅgala*<sup>2</sup> serves as a salutation (*namaskāra*) in Indian scholastic corpora, especially at the beginning of a text.

It is hard to determine when the *maṅgala* stanza appeared, since different traditions such as the astrological tradition (*jyotiḥśāstra*), the rhetorical tradition (*alaṃkāraśāstra*), the grammatical tradition (*vyākaraṇa*), the philosophical traditions like Mīmāṃsā, the Buddhist tradition, and so on began to compose such stanzas at various times (Minkowski 2008, 5–10). Before the middle of the first millennium, it was not common to start a treatise with an invocation or a certain word such as *oṃ* that conveys auspicious purpose. For instance, there is no *maṅgala* stanza in the *Nyāyabhāṣya* by Vātsyāyana. Moreover, one cannot find any Vedic source about composing *maṅgalas* at the beginning of a work. This has been noted by Udayana in the *Nyāyavārttikatātparyapariśuddhi* (NVTP), where he says, “And there is no Vedic statement (*śruti*) such as ‘He who desires to complete the work he has started should make a salutation to the deity’, comparable to [the Vedic statement] ‘He who desires rain should perform the Karīri [sacrifice].’”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, commentators who

1 “Not translating too literally, at least not yet, ‘*maṅgalācaraṇa*’ means the recitation of an auspicious verse that invokes a deity” (Minkowski 2008, 2–3).

2 I will use “*maṅgala*”, “*maṅgala* stanza/verse” and “invocation” interchangeably to refer to the opening verses that convey auspiciousness.

3 NVTP p. 7, 16–18: *na cātra vṛṣṭikāmaḥ kārīriṃ nirvapet itivat prārabdhapari-samāptikāmo devatām namaskuryād iti śrutir asti.*

later started their works with *maṅgala* stanzas had to provide reasons for composing these stanzas. Also, they needed to explain the absence of *maṅgala* in the earlier works they commented upon.

In this regard, two major questions need to be answered:

1. From where did people obtain the tradition of composing *maṅgalas*?
2. What motivated them to compose *maṅgalas*?

The most common answer to the first question is that this tradition derived from the conduct of learned people (*śiṣṭācāra*).<sup>4</sup> For example, Vācaspatimiśra interprets the salutation to the desired deity as “something obtained through generations from the conduct of learned ones who are consistent” (*avigītaśiṣṭācāraparamparāprāptaḥ*) in the *Nyāyavārttikatātparyaṭīkā* (NVT).<sup>5</sup> The conduct of learned people is also acknowledged to be a source of *dharma* (Freschi 2014, 156–157). Therefore, the latter commentators and authors have a solid reason to observe the tradition of composing *maṅgalas*.

As it is widely accepted that a wise person does not do something fruitlessly,<sup>6</sup> people who composed *maṅgalas* naturally wondered about the possible result of paying homage to the deity. The result must have been positive, otherwise composing *maṅgalas* would have been useless. In this regard, commentators are divided into two schools according to Varadachari’s observation (1962). Among these two schools, the “ancient school” argues that the result of having a *maṅgala* is the completion of a work undertaken, while the “modern school” led by Gaṅgeśa (14<sup>th</sup> century CE) accepts the removal of impediments as the result thereof. It is note-

4 An encompassing observation on *śiṣṭa* is provided in Bowles (2007, 337ff).

5 NVT p. 2, 17.

6 This statement is akin to a kind of stereotyped opening in the Buddhist logico-epistemological tradition, when the commentator introduces the aim of the treatise being commented upon, “Since the wise (*prekṣāvāt*) do not start learning treatises without an aim” (Funayama, 1995, 1). It has been mentioned by the Vaiśeṣika commentators discussed in this article as well. For example, in the *Nyāyakandalī* by Śrīdhara, it is said that the salutation performed by wise men is not fruitless (p. 1, 10–11): ... *na tāvad ayam aphalaḥ, prekṣāvadbhir anuṣṭheyatvāt, “... to start with, this is not fruitless, since [salutation] is performed by wise men.”*

worthy that this division is not totally chronologically arranged. There are authors prior to Gaṅgeśa from other traditions such as Mīmāṃsā, Jainism, etc. who have held the “modern” view (Varadachari 1962, 32–34). Thus, Gaṅgeśa should not be regarded as the inventor of this idea but only as a major proponent, who has extensively propounded this view. Also, this modern view is not unanimously accepted by authors postdating Gaṅgeśa, for example, Śaṅkara Miśra (15<sup>th</sup> century CE).

This present article will examine the discussion of *maṅgala* preserved in the selected Vaiśeṣika commentaries including the ones that have been discussed by Varadachari such as the *Vyomavati*, as well as two commentaries on the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* attributed to Bhaṭṭa Vādindra (13<sup>th</sup> century), which were not considered by Varadachari sixty years ago. In addition, although Śrīdhara clearly expresses that the result of salutation is the cessation of impediments, he implies that the intended completion is expected to be brought out without impediment. Hence, the stance of Śrīdhara as an advocator of the “modern view” introduced by Varadachari (1962, 31) is debatable. Accordingly, I will consider the positions of these Vaiśeṣika commentators within the framework proposed by Varadachari, thereby re-assessing and improving this dichotomy of the “ancient” and “modern” schools of *maṅgala* in light of a broader examination of Vaiśeṣika literature.

## 2. Discussion of *maṅgala* in Vaiśeṣika literature

Neither the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (VS) by itself nor its earliest existing commentary, the *Candrānandavṛtti* (CV) by Candrānanda around the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE (Preisendanz 2011, 706), contains a *maṅgala* stanza. Indeed, Candrānanda did not even discuss the issue of *maṅgala* in the opening of his commentary.<sup>7</sup> In the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra composed an extensive commentary called *Tarkasāgara* (TS) on

7 According to He’s working hypothesis, Candrānanda should be placed around the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE (He 2017, 17). Even if we take this hypothesis into consideration, the *Praśastabhāṣya* composed in the same period already contains a *maṅgala* stanza. Additionally, Candrānanda should be aware of the *maṅgala* stanza at the beginning of the *Nyāyavārttika* composed by Uddyotakara, if he has knowledge of Uddyotakara (He 2017, 5). Either way, Candrānanda should not be totally ignorant of the composing of *maṅgalas*.



the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* with two *maṅgala* stanzas at the opening of the text.<sup>8</sup> The abridged version of the TS<sup>9</sup> does not have a *maṅgala* at the beginning of the text. These two commentaries both take the word *atha* (“now”) in VS 1.1.1 to indicate that salutation happens before the start of the *sūtra*. By the time of Śaṅkara Miśra (15<sup>th</sup> century CE), Gaṅgeśa’s theory of *maṅgala* already acquired fame. Nevertheless, Śaṅkara Miśra did not follow the theory of this giant figure. After composing three *maṅgala* stanzas at the beginning of the *Upaskāra*,<sup>10</sup> another commentary on the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, Śaṅkara Miśra penned copious interpretations of *maṅgala* and relevant issues thereof.

For the commentaries on Praśastapāda’s stand-alone exegesis of the Vaiśeṣika teachings, which is called the *Padārthadharmasamgraha* (PDhS), the expositions regarding a *maṅgala* are of necessity, since the opening verse in the PDhS is dedicated to the deity and the sage

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- 8 TS p. 1, 3–8: *praṇamya gaurīśam acintyaśaktim sarvajñam ajñānatamahpradīpam / kānādasūtrasya mayā nibandho vidhīyate śaṅkarakiṅkareṇa // mahādevopadiṣṭasya sūtrasyaitan nibandhanam / sevyatām sakalair arthayathārthajñānahetave //* “Having paid homage to the lord of Gaurī (i.e., Śiva), who has incredible power, who is omniscient, who is the light against the darkness [caused] by ignorance, the composing of the *sūtra* attributed to Kaṇāda is arranged by me, a servant of Śiva. Let the composition of the *sūtra* instructed by the great deity (*mahādeva*) be utilized by all for the purpose of achieving the goal (*artha*) and the knowledge relevant for this goal (*yathārthajñāna*).”
- 9 The authorship of this abridged version of the *Tarkasāgara* is undecided. This abridged commentary might be composed by Bhaṭṭa Vādindra or his followers (Isaacson 1995, 20–21; Thakur 2003, 132–37; Preisendanz 2011, 702).
- 10 Upa p. 1, 3–8: *ūrdhvbaddhajaṭājūtakraḍakrīḍatsurāpagam / namāmi yāminīkāntakāntabhālasthalam haram // yābhyām vaiśeṣike tanre samyag vyutpādito ’smy aham / kaṇādabhavanāthābhyām tābhyām mama namaḥ sadā // sūtramātrāvalambena nirālambe ’pi gacchataḥ / khe khelavan mamāpy atra sāhasam sidhim eṣyati /* “I salute Śiva (*hara*), who has the river of God (i.e., the Ganges) playing on the lap of [him, who has] a mass of matted hair bound upwards, who has a place on [his] forehead endeared by the beloved of the night (i.e., the moon). My salutation is always to both Kaṇāda and Bhavanātha, from whom I have become perfectly erudite regarding the Vaiśeṣika corpus. I, for my part, am walking like a trembling man by relying on the mere rope (i.e., the *sūtra*) in the sky, where there is no support; my boldness will reach success even in this situation.”

Kaṇāda, the legendary founder of the Vaiśeṣika tradition.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent commentators consequently commented on this *maṅgala* stanza by adding their understandings. Among these major Vaiśeṣika commentators, Vyomaśiva (9<sup>th</sup> century CE) is the first one who designated the word *atha* as an implication of salutation. Śrīdhara (10<sup>th</sup> century CE) claimed that salutation led to the removal of impediments, which was required by completion. Moreover, as the founder of the Navya-Nyāya tradition, Udayana (11<sup>th</sup> century CE) refined his explanation of *maṅgala* by adding a logical flair.

The aforementioned Vaiśeṣika commentators, except Candrānanda, discussed three major topics, though not every commentator treated all of them:

1. The absence of *maṅgala* in the VS 1.1.1: *atha* conveys the meaning of *maṅgala*.<sup>12</sup>
2. The result and purpose of paying homage to deities.
3. Paradoxical situations: (1) complete work without paying homage to deities (the “missing *maṅgala*”); (2) incomplete work with a salutation to deities (the “futile *maṅgala*”).

To sum up, except Candrānanda, all major Vaiśeṣika commentators between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE contributed to the discussion of *maṅgala*. Their opinions will be introduced respectively in the following discussion.

## 2.1 Vyomaśiva

In his examination of *maṅgala*, Vyomaśiva says that the word *atha* in VS 1.1.1 can only mean “being immediately after” (*ānantarya*). To be specific,

11 PDhS p. 1, 1–2: *praṇamya hetum īsvaram muniṃ kaṇādam anvataḥ / padārthadharmasaṅgrahaḥ pravakṣyate mahodayaḥ //* “Having paid homage to the cause [that is] the Lord, afterwards to the sage Kaṇāda, the compendium of the properties of the categories will be proclaimed as being of great prosperity.”

12 Candrānanda only understood *atha* in the sense of “the declaration of explaining Dharma immediately after these inquiries” (CV p. 1, 7–8: *ataḥ ebhyaḥ praśnebhyo ’nantaram dharmavyākhyānapratijñāyām athaśabda ānantaryam abhidhatte*, “Therefore, immediately after these inquiries, the word “now” refers to “the [state of being] immediately after” regarding the declaration of explaining Dharma”).

it stands for being immediately after the salutation but nothing else.<sup>13</sup> The word *atha* implies that the composer has already saluted the deity before starting the present work. In this regard, Vyomaśiva explains that the author of the commentary, i.e., Praśastapāda, first paid homage intended (*abhimata*) by the author of the *sūtra*, i.e., Kaṇāda, to the deity and then to Kaṇāda. This salutation is not made by Kaṇāda because it would be contradictory if he paid homage to himself.<sup>14</sup> Vyomaśiva then concludes: “Thus, in this manner, the completion of the treatise only takes place without impediment provided (1) there exists a specific merit (*dharma*), depending on the salutation of the higher and lower teachers, and (2) in the absence of the effects of demerit due to the blocking of it.”<sup>15</sup> Hence we can see that the completion of a treatise relies on salutation, which produces merit to remove impediments caused by demerit on the way to completion. However, Vyomaśiva has been challenged by a certain opponent who disagrees: “And this is illogical, since regarding [works] such as the *Kādambarī*<sup>16</sup> and so on, that treatise is not seen as

13 Vyo p. 12, 2–6: *athāto dharmam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* (VS 1.1.1), *yato 'bhyudayaniḥ-śreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmam* (VS 1.1.2) *iti [pūrva]sūtre athaśabdo 'py ānantarye var-tata ity anyasyāsambhavān namaskārānantaram iti labhyate*. “Now, therefore, we will explain Dharma (VS 1.1.1); Dharma is from which there is the accomplishment of prosperity and final liberation (VS 1.1.2).’ In the [previous] *sūtra*, the word ‘now’, however, functions as ‘being immediately after’. Since it is impossible to be something else, [the meaning] is understood to be ‘immediately after saluting [the deities etc.]’.”

14 Vyo p. 12, 6–7: *bhāṣyakāraś ca sūtrakārābhimataṃ parasya guror namaskāram anūdyāparasya namaskāram karotīti vyākhyeyaṃ, na tu kaṇāda eva, svātmani kriyāvirodhāt*. This also explains the absence of salutation in the VS by Kaṇāda. As Vyomaśiva explained here, Kaṇāda intended or admitted that the higher teacher should be paid homage to, although he did not compose any *maṅgala* in the VS.

15 Vyo p. 13, 8–9: *tad evaṃ parāparagurunamaskārāpekṣadharmaviśeṣe 'dharma-pratibandhāt tattatkāryāṅam abhāve bhavaty evāvighnataḥ śāstraparīsamāptir iti*. Regarding the understanding of *parāparaguru*, Udayana offers a relevant interpretation in the *Kiraṇāvalī*, p. 30, 7: *... gurutamagurutaragurukrameṇa praṇāmaḥ kriyata iti ...*, “... salutation is made in sequence to the most important and the more important teacher ...” The higher or the most important teacher refers to the Lord (*īśvara*), the lower or the more important teacher refers to Kaṇāda.

16 The *Kādambarī* is an unfinished *kāvya* work by the Sanskrit poet Bāṇa from the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. Although the author has paid homage to and praised the deities

completed even if salutation (*namaskāra*) exists. While for [works] such as the one starting with ‘in the case of knowing a thing through means of knowledge’ (i.e., *Nyāyabhāṣya* 1.1.1), even if [salutation] does not exist, [completion of that treatise] is experienced.”<sup>17</sup> This is exactly the problem of the “futile *maṅgala*”: The eventual completion of a certain work does not necessarily depend on *maṅgala* stanzas. How could one justify the existence of *maṅgala*? In this regard, Vyomaśiva answers: “Right. It is said that a cause is of necessity because the completion of a treatise is the result. Since nothing else can be [this cause], a specific merit is the cause. Some people think that this [specific merit] can either be [derived] from salutation or something else, [because] it is not fixed. Whereas other people [say that the specific merit] is specified by a specific means of obtaining. [But I think,] the specific merit as the cause is derived from nothing but salutation.”<sup>18</sup>

Vyomaśiva’s reply to the “futile *maṅgala*” is not very convincing, since he does not explain the reason for taking salutation as the only source of this specific merit. This answer is also least straightforward, one can only tentatively assume that the “futile *maṅgala*” does not produce any specific merit. A few lines later, he only adds vaguely: “And according to the transmitted tradition, it is commonly known that merit is produced by salutation.”<sup>19</sup> Apparently, the opponents are not satisfied. They remind Vyomaśiva by asking: “Then, how could a treatise be finished if there is no salutation?”<sup>20</sup> As mentioned before, the *Nyāyabhāṣya* is complete without any *maṅgala* stanza. To explain the problem of “missing *maṅgala*”, Vyomaśiva answers: “No, because even in this case, the existence of a cause is established through an existing result (i.e., the

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in the opening stanzas, the *Kādambarī* was only completed by his son Bhūṣaṇa after his death (Smith: 2009, xv).

17 Vyo p. 13, 9–11: *nanu cāyuktam etat. saty api namaskāre śāstrāparisamāpter adarśanāt kādambarīyādau. asaty api darśanāt pramāṇato ’rthapratipattau (Nyā. Bhā. 1.1.1) ity evam ādau.*

18 Vyo p. 13, 12–14: *satyam. śāstrāparisamāpteh kāryatvād, avaśyaṃ kāraṇaṃ vācyam ity, anyasyāsambhavād dharmaviśeṣaḥ kāraṇam iti. sa ca namaskārād anyasmād vā bhavatu, na niyamyata ity eke. anye tu sādhanaviśeṣād viśiṣyata iti namaskārād evopajāyate dharmaviśeṣaḥ kāraṇam iti.*

19 Vyo p. 13, 20: *namaskārāc ca dharmāḥ sampadyata ity āgamād vyāptigrahaṇam.*

20 Vyo p. 13, 15: *atha namaskārābhāve tarhi katham śāstrāparisamāptir iti?*

completion). Although there is no verbal salutation, the mental salutation is acknowledged.<sup>21</sup> Regarding the relationship between the mental salutation and the verbal one, Vyomaśiva supplements, “In this manner, the verbal salutation abounded with mental salutation is accepted to be the cause of completion, whereas the mental one is peculiar.”<sup>22</sup> This indicates that salutation expressed in words is filled with mental thoughts. Mental salutation is even more important than the verbal one, because it is the foundation of the verbally expressed salutation. Therefore, it can also be the case that a “futile *maṅgala*” is due to the absence of mental salutation.<sup>23</sup> This reply goes back to the previous paradoxical situation, for which Vyomaśiva does not provide a very plausible and well-grounded explanation.

What has happened after paying homage to the Lord and the sage Kaṇāda in the PDhS? Vyomaśiva says: “Thus in this way, after the salutation made for the higher and lower teachers, because either no obstruction is [caused] by hinderance or a student is endowed with mentioned characteristics, therefore, the PDhS not hindered by counteraction will be proclaimed precisely after.”<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of “characteristics of a student” implies that the practice of *maṅgala* is required for someone who wants to learn the PDhS.<sup>25</sup> Vyomaśiva is clear that the eventual outcome

21 Vyo p. 13, 15–16: *na, tatrāpi kāryasadbhāvena kāraṇasadbhāvasiddheḥ. vācikanamaskārābhāve 'pi mānaso namaskāro jñāyata iti.*

22 Vyo p. 13, 17–18: *tathā hi mānasanamaskāropacito vāciko namaskāraḥ parisamāpteḥ kāraṇam iṣyate, mānaso tu kevalo 'pīti.*

23 Vyo p. 13, 18–20: *ata eva kvacid vācikasadbhāve 'pi mānasanamaskārābhāvād aparisamāptir yukteti. tasya cābhāvaḥ kāryānutpādenaiva jñāyata iti.* “Only because of this, even if a verbal [salutation] exists somewhere, incompleteness [of a work] is reasonable due to the absence of mental salutation – its absence is only known by the non-coming into being of the result (i.e., completion).”

24 Vyo p. 13, 26–27: *tad evaṃ parāparagurunamaskārād yato 'ntarāyapradhvamṣo yato vā antevāsī yathoktalakṣaṇasampannaḥ, ato 'nantaram eva pratīpakṣakriyānantaritaḥ padārthadharmasamgrahaḥ pravakṣyata iti.*

25 “The student is endowed with stated characteristics” implies the common understanding that only a qualified student is eligible to study. For instance, in Candrānanda’s commentary on the VS 1.1.1 (p. 1, 10–11), it is said a student who has been equipped with advancement of good virtues can learn Dharma taught in the sūtra (*yasmād ayam śiṣyo guṇasampadā yuktas tato 'smai praśnebhyo 'nantaram dharmam vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*). Besides, the “mentioned characteristics”

of salutation is obtained through the removal of impediments by virtue of a specific merit produced by salutation. However, Vyomaśiva does not provide solid arguments for the problem of the “futile *maṅgala*” in the first place and thus leaves room for potential objections and further improvements.

## 2.2 Śrīdhara

Śrīdhara (10<sup>th</sup> century CE) composed two *maṅgala* stanzas at the beginning of the *Nyāyakandalī* (NK) on the PDhS.<sup>26</sup> He then explained that the homage paid to the deity and the teacher Kaṇāda in the PDhS followed the conduct of learned people (*śiṣṭācāra*). It is notable that this more detailed expression was not used by Vyomaśiva, who merely said merit produced by salutation is known from the transmitted tradition (see 2.1). Moreover, according to Varadachari’s analysis, Śrīdhara belongs to the modern school since he takes the removal of impediments to be the result of *maṅgala* (Varadachari 1962, 31). However, this assertion is not very conclusive, since Śrīdhara does not specifically deny that completion could be the result. Śrīdhara argues in the NK: “And the fruit of salutation is the cessation of impediments; firstly because [salutation] is performed by wise men, this [salutation] is not something fruitless; moreover, [something that has] another fruit [different from the cessation of impediments] would not be necessarily performed at the beginning of an undertaking,

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of a qualified student here can be the characteristics listed in the preserved beginning of the Vyo (p. 1, 7–8): ... *upajātaṃ śuśrūṣāśravaṇagrahaṇadhāraṇohā pohaṭattvābhiniveśavadantevāsinam āheti*, “... he talks to the student naturally endowed with ardent desire for the wish to study, listening, grasping, holding [the knowledge], the dialectic skills (*pros* and *cons*), [and] the truth (*tattva*).”

- 26 NK p. 1, 6–9: *anādinidhanam devam jagatkāraṇam īśvaram / prapadye satya-saṅkalpaṃ nityatrijñānavigrahaṃ // dhyānaikatānamanaso vīgatapracārāḥ paśyanti yaṃ kam api nirmalam advitīyam / jñānātmane vighaṭitākhilabandhanāya tasmai namo bhagavato puruṣottamāya //* “I resort to the deity who has no beginning and end, who is the cause of the world, who is the Lord, who has volition of the truth, who is in the form of threefold eternal knowledge. Those whose minds are fixed at one place through meditation, inasmuch as they are devoid of any movement see that one (i.e., the deity) who is completely pure [and] unique. There is the salutation to him whose nature is knowledge, who has been separated from all bondage, who is respectful, who is the best of men.”

because something with a different fruit is not aimed at; the intended full completion without impediment is then to be expected.<sup>27</sup> Then he refutes the idea that challenges the necessity of taking salutation as the means to conquer impediments.<sup>28</sup> Besides, Śrīdhara reaffirms that the cessation of impediments derives only from the salutation made at the beginning of the work by good people, since it is perceived that impediments are ceased.<sup>29</sup> In addition, he argues that nothing but the salutation, which is the producer of merit, suppresses the seed of obstacles.<sup>30</sup>

Doubtlessly, Śrīdhara is convinced that the cessation of impediments is the result of salutation. In this way, it is understandable that Varadachari has taken Śrīdhara to be one of the upholders of the modern view, like Gaṅgeśa. However, this does not mean that Śrīdhara is explicitly against the idea that completion could be the result of salutation, especially since he mentions that the very completion is desired if impediments are removed. For instance, Śaṅkara Mīśra briefly explains that the invocation is made for the deity in the *Nyāyalilāvātikaṅṭhābharāṇa* (NLK): “To teach students, he (i.e., Vallabha) composes the *maṅgala* stanza [beginning with] ‘master’, made by the desire to remove impediments regarding the thing that should be done. The salutation is to the ‘best of men’.”<sup>31</sup> Śaṅkara Mīśra does not claim that completion is the result

27 NK p. 1, 12–15: *phalaṃ ca namaskārasya vighnopaśamo na tāvad ayam aphalaḥ prekṣāvadbhir anuṣṭheyatvāt, anyaphalo 'pi na karmārambhe niyamenānuṣṭhiyeta avighnena prāripsitaparisaṃāptes tadānīm apekṣitatvāt, phalāntarasyānabhisamhitatvāt.*

28 NK p. 1, 15–17: *nanu kiṃ namaskārād eva vighnopaśama utānyasmād api bhavati? na tāvan namaskārād evety asti niyamaḥ, asaty api namaskāre nyāyamīmāṃsābhāṣyayoḥ parisamāptatvāt, yadā cānyasmād api tadā niyamenopādānaṃ nirupapattikam.* [Objection:] “Does the cessation of impediment only come from salutation or also from something else? [Reply:] First, there is no injunction that states “only from the salutation”. Also, since the *Nyāyabhāṣya* and the *Mīmāṃsābhāṣya* are complete even without salutation, then if [the cessation of impediments] is entirely derived from salutation, then the necessary perception [of this salutation] does not fit [in this case].”

29 NK p. 1, 18–19: *namaskārād eva vighnopaśamaḥ karmārambhe sadbhir niyamena tasyopādānāt.*

30 NK p. 2, 4: *sa hi dharmotpādakas tirayaty antarāyabījaṃ nāparaḥ.*

31 NLK p. 1, 7–8: *kartavyavighnanirācīkīrṣayā kṛtaṃ maṅgalaṃ śiṣyaśikṣāyai nibadhnāti nātha iti. tasmai puruṣottamāya namaḥ.*



or purpose of salutation evidently in this short explanation. He just explains that the salutation is made to remove impediments. This clearly contradicts Śaṅkara Mīśra's understanding of the same issue expressed in the *Upaskāra* (see 2.5). We can also take Śaṅkara Mīśra as a proponent of the modern view according to Varadachari's binary distinction based on this concise explanation in the NLK. On the other hand, we should also be cautious that this brief interpretation of the *maṅgala* verse in the NLK is not elaborated in detail. Hence it might be partial and not the complete intention of Śaṅkara Mīśra. In the same way, even though Śrīdhara clearly states that the result of salutation is the removal of impediments, he still implies completion is the desired outcome of the removal of impediments. Thus, whether Śrīdhara belongs to the modern school would be open to consideration given that completion is not entirely excluded from being the result of salutation.

With regard to the “missing *maṅgala*”, Śrīdhara explains that the salutation is performed but not written down in the text. He argues that even a clever barbarian (*mleccha*) would not start a work without saluting the chosen deity. Thus, the eminent Pakṣila Svāmin and Śabara Svāmin, who are knowledgeable or at least incomparable (*apara*), must have paid homage too.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, we can infer that these authors have composed *maṅgalas*, though we do not witness them in the treatises. As for the “futile *maṅgala*”, Śrīdhara ascribes the incompleteness to the absence of a distinguished salutation (*viśiṣṭanamaskāra*). The salutation performed in such works is not a specific one. Otherwise, these works would have been complete.<sup>33</sup> Śrīdhara does not specify the distinction of the salutation that brings a work to its end. Neither does he explain the assumed inadequacy of the salutation made in works like the

32 NK p. 1, 19–20, p. 2, 1–3: *na ca nyāyamīmāṃsābhāṣyakārābhyaṃ na kṛto namaskāraḥ kiṃ tu tac cānupanibaddhaḥ. katham eṣā pratītir iti cet. kartuḥ śiṣṭatayaiva astu vā tāvad aparāḥ prekṣāvān mleccho 'pi tāvad gurvārambhe karmaṇi na pravartate yāvad iṣṭān na namsyati yad imau paramāstikau pakṣiḥ śabarasvāminau nānutiṣṭhata ity asambhāvanam idam.* An English translation of this part with a discussion on the “missing *maṅgalaśloka*” has been published by Pascale Haag (2011, 228). See also Minkowski 2008, 14.

33 NK p. 2, 5–6: *ata eva kṛtanamaskārasyaṅpi kādambarāyāder aparisaṃmāptir viśiṣṭanamaskārābhāvāt tadavaiśiṣṭyasya kāryagamyatvāt.*



*Kādambarī*. Like Vyomaśiva, his explanation for the “futile *maṅgala*” is not clearly expressed.

### 2.3 Udayana

Udayana (11<sup>th</sup> century CE) brought the development of logic in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition to the next stage. His commentary on the PDhS is called *Kiraṇāvalī* (Kir), in which we find four *maṅgala* stanzas at the beginning and a brief discussion about these *maṅgala* stanzas.<sup>34</sup> Udayana’s expositions of *maṅgala* are succinct but in-depth with many new thoughts. First, he introduces the purpose of the invocation in the PDhS: “At the beginning of the treatise, he (i.e., Praśastapāda) first composes the *maṅgala* stanza [dedicated to] the higher and lower teachers (i.e., the Lord and the sage), inasmuch as it has been made physically, verbally and mentally obtained through generations of disciplined people (*sadācara*), to teach students.”<sup>35</sup> Udayana adds bodily performed salutation to the list of salutations, which is not found in the commentaries by Vyomaśiva and Śrīdhara. However, this added type of salutation conforms to the traditional practices such as bowing to someone or saluting someone with the hands folded together. The inclusion of physical and mental salutation implicitly solves the problem of a “missing *maṅgala*” regarding works that are complete without a *maṅgala*. If one does not see any invocation in a complete treatise, then the salutation has been done either physically or mentally by the author.

Except the newly added type of salutation, Udayana also regards the reinforcement of a treatise as one of the results of salutation, which is again new to Vyomaśiva or Śrīdhara. According to Udayana, the saluta-

34 Minkowski (2008, 16) claims: “Meanwhile there were other works without *maṅgalas* that nevertheless were complete, for instance Udayana’s tenth-century text on logic, the *Kiraṇāvalī*.” However, there are four *maṅgala* stanzas in this text (Kir p. 1–7). Among them, the first stanza is identical to the concluding stanza in Udayana’s *Lakṣaṇāvalī*. In this stanza, Udayana salutes the arising one, which symbolizes the sun or the rising deity who repels the darkness brought by ignorance. An English translation and a general introduction of this introductory part can be found in Tachikawa 2001. The following translations in the present article are mine.

35 Kir p. 8, 1–2, p. 9, 1: *śāstrārambhe sadācāraparamparāpariprāptatayā kāyavānmanobhiḥ kṛtaṃ parāparaḡurunamaskāraṃ śiṣyān śikṣayitum ādau nibadhnāti*.

tion to the supreme deity yields *maṅgala*. By virtue of the composed *maṅgala*, the commenced work without impediment is completed (*parisamāpyate*) and strengthened (*pracīyate*).<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the work is not only complete but also reinforced. Moreover, Udayana penned the reasons for the “futile *maṅgala*” such as in the case of the *Kādambarī*. In this regard, Udayana explains: “Since [salutation] has its root in the transmitted tradition (*āgama*), the deviation of its aim (*artha*) is not considered a fault. The reason [behind this situation is] that [salutation] is caused by a defective action, a defective agent, [or] a defective method.”<sup>37</sup> In this manner, a *maṅgala* must achieve those two results mentioned before, insofar as it is not impaired by defective factors which are the action, the agent and the method. A similar account is found in the *Nyāyasūtra* (NS) 2.1.58, when Gautama refutes the opponent who has questioned the validity of the Veda by illustrating three faults (NS 2.1.57).<sup>38</sup> The defect of action, agent or method is applied in the refutation to the first suggested fault, deception, mentioned in NS 2.1.57. In the case of the “futile *maṅgala*” in the *Kādambarī*, Udayana applied the same strategy to explain it: salutation is not futile, but there is something wrong with the other involved parts. This is also a new solution different from those of Vyomaśiva and Śrīdhara. Vyomaśiva does not clarify this “futile *maṅgala*” in detail, while Śrīdhara merely says that a distinguished salutation is missing.

For the “futile *maṅgala*” with unimpaired components, Udayana explains in the following way: “Even if [the action and the other two factors are] in good qualities, [the work is still incomplete,] because the cause of impediments is stronger. Then in this way, ‘what is the use [of *maṅgala*]’ should not be said, since the accumulated [salutation] is the cause to

36 Kir p. 20, 1–3: *tathābhūtā hi parameśvaranatir maṅgalam āvahati. kṛtamaṅgalena cārabdhaṃ karma nirvighnaṃ parisamāpyate pracīyate ca.*

37 Kir p. 20, 3–4: *āgamamūlatvāc cāsyārthasya vyabhicāro na doṣāya. tasya karma kartṛsādhanavaigunyaḥetukatvāt.* The same statement of “being rooted in the transmitted tradition” is found in the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (TC, p. 72, 3–4: *tad uktam āgamamūlatvāc cāsyārthasya vyabhicāro na doṣāyeti*), p. 72, 13 when Gaṅgeśa refutes the objection related to the issue of *āgama*.

38 NS p. 90, 9: *tadaprāmāṇyam anṛtavyāghātapanaruktadoṣebhyaḥ* (2.1.57). NS p. 91, 11: *na, karmakartṛsādhanavaigunyāt* (2.1.58).

ward off impediments [produced] by something more powerful.”<sup>39</sup> For instance, a blade of grass is unable to ward off the rain, but a huge bundle of the same kind of grass can achieve this aim.<sup>40</sup> If the opponent is dissatisfied with this reply and keeps questioning the existence of the cause of impediments, salutation still wards off that cause of impediments, which is perceived by default. Let’s take the king and his elephant troops as an example. If a king is not surrounded by enemies, he might not show respect to the chief of the elephants. But this is dangerous, because the enemies can show up anytime and the king needs the elephants to fight on the battlefield. Therefore, he must always maintain good relationship with the elephant troops, even if there is no enemy nearby.<sup>41</sup> Hence one must perform *maṅgala* to remove the impediments, even if they are not seen at the moment. Although Udayana’s exposition regarding the case of “futile *maṅgala*” is condensed, he offered his successors a deliberate solution to resolve this thorny problem. As we will see in the following, both Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra (in 2.4) and Śāṅkara Mīśra (in 2.5) are deeply influenced by Udayana.

## 2.4 Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra

### 2.4.1 *Tarkasāgara*

Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra (13<sup>th</sup> century CE) is the author of *Tarkasāgara* (TS)<sup>42</sup>, a commentary on the VS accompanied by extensive expositions on other relevant topics. The discussion of *maṅgala* starts at the beginning of

39 Kir p. 24, 1–3: *sādguṇye ’pi vighnahetūnām baliyastvāt na caivaṃ kim aneneti vācyam. pracitasyaśyaiva balavattaravighnavārāṇe ’pi kāraṇatvāt.*

40 Kir p. 25, 1–3: *na hi ghanavimuktam udakam ekas tṛṇastambo vārayitum na samartha iti tadarthaṃ nopādīyate sajātiyapracayasambalitasya tasya śaktatvāt.*

41 Kir p. 26, 1–4: *na ca vighnahetusadbhāvaniścayābhāvāt tadvārāṇe kāraṇam anupādeyam. yatas tatsandehe ’pi tadupādānasya nyāyyatvāt. anyathānupa-  
sthitaparipanthibhiḥ pāṛthivair dviradayūthapatayo nādriyeran iti.*

42 Isaacson (1995, 12–13) has thoroughly discussed the title of this commentary. Moreover, it is notable that the *Tarkasāgara* has been mentioned by Bhaṭṭa Rāghava, the disciple of Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra and the author of the *Nyāyasāravacāra* (NSV, edited by Jha 1979). In the concluding stanza of the NSV, Bhaṭṭa Rāghava paid homage to his teacher Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra and mentioned the name of this commentary (NSV p. 148: *tadvādīndrakṛtau tarkasāgare*).

the commentary after two *maṅgala* stanzas composed by the commentator himself.<sup>43</sup> Like the aforementioned interpretation of the first word in VS 1.1.1 given by Vyomaśiva, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra has followed the understanding of *atha* as “immediately after the salutation to the Lord” (*īśvarapraṇāmānantaryapara ity uktam*). Apart from that, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra tacitly understands the purpose of performing *maṅgala* to be the successful completion of a work in refuting the idea that the expression (*kathana*), that is, being immediately after the salutation to the deity, does not apply to the exposition of Dharma, which is vital to the VS, because the salutation to the deity is only for the very completion of the treatise.<sup>44</sup> How can one relate the teaching of Dharma to salutation? Bhaṭṭa Vādindra replies: “... because students are taught that the start of a treatise and so on should only be made immediately after the salutation to the chosen deity. Otherwise, students who start a treatise without saluting the chosen deity will be ones who start something fruitless. Since [they are] devoid of the assistance [named as] merit produced by salutation, which is the cause of completion (*parisamāpti*) and reinforcement (*pracaya*) of a treatise.”<sup>45</sup> Same as Udayana, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra also takes reinforcement to be a result of salutation and the salutation at the beginning of a treatise is made to educate students. In fact, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra must have been aware of Udayana’s work, since he also composed commentaries on Udayana’s *Kiraṇāvalī* and the *Lakṣaṇāvalī* respectively.<sup>46</sup> Hence, it is not very surprising that he is frequently in concurrence with Udayana.

Bhaṭṭa Vādindra continues to rationalize the salutation as the cause for the completion and the reinforcement of the treatise. First, the Veda etc. inferred from the conducts of learned people who are consistent is a means of knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, salutation derived from the same

43 See footnote 8.

44 TS p. 1, 12–14: *na ca dharmavyākhyānasyeśvarapraṇāmānantaryakathanam anupayogi, īśvarapraṇāmād eva granthaparisamāptisiddher iti yuktam.*

45 TS p. 1, 14–16: *iṣṭadevatānamaskārānantaram eva granthādyārambhaḥ kartavya iti śiṣyajñāpanārthatvāt, anyathā hi iṣṭadevatāpraṇāmam antareṇa grantham ārabhamāñāḥ śiṣyā granthaparisamāptipracayahetunamaskārajanyadharmākhyasahakārivirahāt viphalārambhā bhaveyuh.*

46 A detailed discussion of these two works is introduced by Isaacson (1995, 6–9).

47 TS p. 1, 17–18: *avigītaśiṣṭācārānumitavedādes tatra pramāṇatvāt.* The “inferred Veda (*anumitaveda*)”, which can be inferred from either the non-authoritative

source is justifiable. He then clarifies the “futile *maṅgala*” in a similar but more precise manner compared to Udayana. Bhaṭṭa Vādindra ascribes the incompleteness of the *Kādambarī* etc. to the imperfections of the body and so on of the agent, because the agent is one of the causes of completion as well. Therefore, even if the *maṅgala* stanza has produced merit that is conducive to the completion of the work, since the agent is hindered by physical problems or other imperfections, the work is eventually incomplete.<sup>48</sup> Bhaṭṭa Vādindra continues: “Since we not only think the merit produced by salutation is the cause of the completion of the treatise, but also [something] like the destruction of the physical imperfections of the agent [is the other cause of the completion], because the imperfections of the body etc. of the agent are truly destroyed by something invisible etc.”<sup>49</sup>

Hence, by examining the case of “futile *maṅgala*”, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra arrives at two essential causes for achieving the expected completion – the merit produced by the salutation and the destruction of the bodily imperfections etc. Even if a treatise, whose author is in good condition, is complete, the merit produced by the salutation remains to be a cause

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Vedic sources or the conduct of learned people, is contrary to the “perceived Veda” as stated by the Mīmāṃsakas (Brick 2006: 288). Regarding the salutation composed at the beginning of the text, although it is not seen in any “perceived Veda”, it is established through the “inferred Veda”. As I have already pointed out in the introduction, Vācaspatimīśra has also adopted a very similar description of the source of *maṅgala*, like this one made by Bhaṭṭa Vādindra, in the NVT (p. 2, 17, *avigītaśiṣṭācāraparamparāprāptaḥ*). However, he does not mention the Veda etc. but only something obtained from one generation to another. Udayana’s elaboration of this expression is not very helpful. He argues that the conduct of learned people is also just a means of knowledge, like perception, regarding the existence of the revelation. The reason is that the conduct of learned people must be rooted in something. Something that is not rooted in a means of knowledge is inapplicable to detach [itself] from the contradiction with something authoritative (NVTP, p. 7, 21 – p. 8, 1–2: *pratyakṣam ivāvigītaśiṣṭācāro ’pi śrutisadbhāve pramāṇam eva, nirmūlasya ca śiṣṭācārasyāsambhavāt. apramāṇamūlakasya ca pramāṇikavigānavirahānupapatteh.*).

48 TS p. 1, 18–19: *na, namaskārajanyadharmasattve [’pi] granthasamāptihetukarṭṭhadehādivaikalyāt.*

49 TS p. 1, 20–21: *na hy asmākaṃ namaskārajadharmamātram granthasamāptihetuh, api tu karṭṭhadehaviḅḅnanāśādir api karṭṭhadehādivaikalyasya ca bhāvenādrṣṭādivināśāt.*

of the completion of the treatise.<sup>50</sup> The point is, both causes are always necessary for the completion of the treatise. As for the problem of the “missing *maṅgala*”, such as in the case of the *Mīmāṃsābhāṣya*, Bhaṭṭa Vādindra explains in the same manner as Śrīdhara, “Also in this case, the absent salutation that is [performed] mentally, inasmuch as it is established by the Veda inferred from the conduct of learned people, is not ascertained in the case of being separated from the non-perception of something fit [to be perceived] (*yogyānupalambha*).”<sup>51</sup> Once again, even though one does not find any *maṅgala* stanzas in those complete works, it is only because he is unable to perceive the mental salutation.

#### 2.4.2 The abridged version of the TS

The *editio princeps* of the abridged commentary on the VS was entitled *Vyākhyā* (TSV) by Thakur and published in 1957. At that time, this commentary remained anonymous. Apart from the *editio princeps*, Isaacson prepared a new edition of its sixth and seventh Adhyāya with translations thereof in his unpublished thesis (Isaacson 1995, 57–139). In comparison with the TS, the discussion of *maṅgala* in this abridged version only partially summarizes the content that appears in the TS. The main body of the discussion largely conforms to the text documented in the Kir (see section 2.3). Whether the author of this abridged version is Bhaṭṭa Vādindra or not, this person demonstrates a good command of Udayana’s work.<sup>52</sup>

50 TS p. 1, 21–22: *na ca ta[rhi] karṭṛ[dr̥ṣṭa]hetusākalye granthasamāpter avyati rekadarśanāt na namaskārajanadharmasya granthasamāptihetutvam iti yuktam.*

51 TS p. 2, 1–2: *tatrāpi śiṣṭācārānumitavedapramāṇakamānasābhinamaskārābhāvasya yogyānupalambhavirahe niścetum aśakyatvāt.* The “non-perception of something fit to be perceived”, more frequently encountered as *yogyānupalabdhi*, is a means to cognize something that should be cognized. Preisendanz (1994, 417–422) has made a comprehensive observation on this term, in which we find that both Śrīdhara and Udayana discussed it in their works.

52 It would be helpful if we could investigate Bhaṭṭa Vādindra’s commentary on the *Kiraṇāvalī* to see his explanation of the *maṅgala* stanzas. Unfortunately, only two sections of his commentary thereon are available to us, see Isaacson 1995, 6–8.

To start with, the abridged version briefly repeats what has been stated in the TS.<sup>53</sup> Then, the text is parallel to the Kir (p. 20, 1–3, p. 24, 1–3, p. 25, 1–3, p. 26, 1–4) with a few variant readings.<sup>54</sup> However, these variant readings do not change the meaning of the text (see 2.3). Since the *editio princeps* is the only available edition where we can find a short discussion of *maṅgala*, it is difficult to decide if this part of the commentary is an interpolation or a reuse of the text. In short, as its content is only a combination of what has been addressed in the TS and the Kir, we do not find any new information about the understanding of *maṅgala*.

## 2.5 Śaṅkara Mīśra

As the latest Navya-Naiyāyika in the current list of commentators, Śaṅkara Mīśra (15<sup>th</sup> century CE) demonstrated some more intricate and technical lines of argumentation in his *Upaskāra*. In fact, according to Minkowski (2008, 15), it is Gaṅgeśa who brought the discussion and

53 TSV p. 1, 5–9: *athaśabda ānantarye. ānantaryamātravacanenāpy anena yat kiñcit pūrvavṛttaṃ [na] samarpaṇīyam, tasya dharmavyākhyānānupayogāt. kiṃ tv iśvarapraṇāmaḥ pūrvavṛttatayā samarpaṇīyaḥ, iśvarapraṇāmād eva cikirṣitakāryaparipūraṇopapatteh. na tadānantaryam vacanīyam iti cet? śiṣyaśikṣārthatvāt. iṣṭadevatānamaskārānantaram eva granthādyārambhaḥ kartavya iti.* “The word *atha* is used in the sense of ‘being immediately after’. Because it (i.e., *atha*) is inappropriate for explaining Dharma, whatever has happened previously should not be addressed by this word that merely [means] ‘being immediately after’ too. Rather, the salutation to the Lord should be addressed as the previous happening, since the salutation to the Lord brings out the fulfillment of the desired result. [Objection:] The state of being immediately after that [salutation] need not be said. [Reply: No, it should be there.] because [it is] for teaching students. The commencement of a treatise and so on should be made only immediately after the salutation to the chosen deity.”

54 The variant readings are marked in bold or added in brackets: TSV p. 1, 9–15: *kṛtamaṅgalenārabdhaṃ karma samāpyate pracīyate ca. āgamamūlatvāc cāsyārthasya vyabhicāro na doṣāya. tasya karmakartṛsādhanavaigūnyahetukatvāt. sādgūnye 'pi vighnahetūnāṃ balīyastvāt. na caivaṃ sati kim aneneti vācyam. na hi ghanamuktam (Kir: ghanavimuktam) udakam ekas tṛṇakadambo (Kir: stambo) vārayituṃ na samartha iti tadarthaṃ nopādīyate. sa-jātyapracayasamvalitasya tasya śaktatvāt. na ca vighnanahetusadbhāvaniścayābhāvād vāraṇakāraṇam (Kir: tadvāraṇe kāraṇam) anupādeyam. (Kir: yatas) tatsamdehe 'pi tadupādānasya nyāyyatvāt. anyathānupasthitaparipanthibhiḥ pārthivair dviradayūthapatayo nādriyeran (Kir: iti).*



analysis of *maṅgala* to a more advanced and philosophical level, since the controversial problems regarding *maṅgala* became pressing. In the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (TC), the first section titled *Maṅgalavāda* is solely devoted to the discussion of *maṅgala*.<sup>55</sup> As a leading and prominent figure in the heyday of Navya-Nyāya, Gaṅgeśa greatly influenced subsequent scholars, including Śaṅkara Miśra. Nevertheless, Śaṅkara Miśra did not follow Gaṅgeśa's understanding of *maṅgala*. He adhered to the ancient view upheld by his Vaiśeṣika predecessors. In contrast to Bhaṭṭa Vādiṅdra, who first examined the word *atha* that conveys the meaning of *maṅgala* and then depicted the scene when Kaṇāda received the knowledge taught by Śiva in the disguise of an owl,<sup>56</sup> Śaṅkara Miśra developed his argumentation in reverse order. After presenting the scene of how suffering students came to the sage Kaṇāda and the sage taught them the knowledge to answer their inquiry (Upa p. 2, 1–7, p.3, 3–4), Śaṅkara Miśra then started to explain the alternative meaning of *atha* in the sense of *maṅgala* at length.<sup>57</sup>

First, Śaṅkara Miśra argues that there must be a *maṅgala* in the Vaiśeṣika treatise because composing a *maṅgala* is part of the tradition handed down from people who are of good conduct (*sadācāra*). The composer of the treatise, who is a great sage, must have followed the tradition.<sup>58</sup> Then, Śaṅkara Miśra delves into the two controversial problems of the “missing” and the “futile” *maṅgala*, which had been hovering in the minds of the commentators for centuries. According to his explanation, people must practice *maṅgala* regardless of the fact that there are paradoxical cases. In the case of the “missing *maṅgala*”, the salutation

55 However, whether this section is originally a part of the TC remains controversial. See Śāstrī 1979, 23–24.

56 TS p. 2, 8–10: *upadiśanti hi [sāmpradāyikāḥ] kaṇādo munir ulūkaṅgeśadhāriṇaḥ parameśvarād dharmādisākṣātkāradharmopadeśaniyogam āsādyā vaiśeṣikasūtram aśūtrayad iti*. “Since [people who have preserved the tradition] teach [the following:] After the sage Kaṇāda received the injunction to teach Dharma made evident [in the form of] Dharma and so on (i.e., the categories introduced in the VS) by the Supreme Lord in the disguise of an owl, he composed the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*.”

57 Upa p. 3, 8: *yad vā athaśabdo maṅgalārthaḥ*. “Alternatively, the word ‘now’ has the purpose of *maṅgala*.”

58 Upa p. 3, 11–13: *katham anyathā sadācāraparamparāpariprāptakarttavayatākasya maṅgalasya vaiśeṣikaśāstram praṇayato mahāmuner anācaraṇaṃ sambhāvya*.



is conceived to be done in another life (*janmāntarīya*). In the case of the “futile *maṅgala*”, Śaṅkara Mīśra holds the same view as Udayana and Bhaṭṭa Vādindra: the component of that salutation is conceived to be defective (*aṅgavaiguṇya*).<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Śaṅkara Mīśra proposes another possible situation: if the result is not seen in this life, it can occur in another life, just like the sacrifice performed in want of a son (*putreṣṭi*) in contrast to the Karīrī sacrifice, whose result happens only in this life.<sup>60</sup> Śaṅkara Mīśra then states that the destruction of impediments for one who desires completion is like the unprecedented (*apūrva*) for one who desires heaven, because one wishes to work without impediment.<sup>61</sup>

59 Upa p. 3, 14–15, p. 4, 1–3: *na ca kṛtamaṅgalasyāpi phalādarśanād akṛtamaṅgalasyāpi phaladarśanād ananuṣṭhānaṃ na hi niṣphale prekṣāvān pravarttata iti vācyam. akaraṇasthale janmāntarīyasya karaṇasthale cāṅgavaiguṇyasya kalpanayā saphalatvaniścayāt.* Here, the explanation of “missing” and “futile” state of *maṅgala* is similar to Udayana’s in the NVTP p. 8, 2–3: *tathā ca saty abhāvaḥ karmakartṛsādhanavaiguṇyam avalambate. asati ca bhāvo janmāntarīyasukṛtasampattim.* “And thus, if there is [an auspicious practice like the salutation of deities], the absence [of completion] depends on the imperfection of action, agent, and means of obtaining, and if there is no [such practice], the presence [of completion] depends on the perfection of merit [produced] in another (i.e., earlier) life.” I thank Lidia Wojtczak and Karin Preisendanz for discussing this translation with me.

60 Upa p. 4, 4–7: *na caihikamātraphalakatvān na janmāntarīyānumānaṃ, putreṣṭivad aihikamātraphalakatvānupapatteḥ. kārīryyādau tu tathākāmanayaivānuṣṭhānād aihikamātraphalakatvam.* “And it is not correct [to say that], because there is a fruit precisely in this life, one cannot infer [the performance of a *maṅgala*] in another life, since being [endowed with] fruit merely [happens] in this life. Just like the sacrifice performed in want of a son, [this] is inapplicable to the fact of bearing fruit only in this life. By contrast, in the case of the Karīrī ritual etc., since the performance [of these rituals] is merely [carried out] by desire accordingly, there is the fact of bearing fruit only in this life.” In the summary of the *Upaskāra* by Karl H. Potter (Potter and Bhattacharyya 1993, 42), he translates: “No; for example, one performs a sacrifice for the rain, or the birth of a son, in this life, not the next, since that is the temporal reference of this desire; ...” This summarized interpretation seems to be misleading.

61 Upa p. 7–10: *atra ca samāptikāmo ’dhikārī svargakāma iva yāge tatrāpūrvaṃ dvāram iha tu vighnadhvaṃsa iti viśeṣaḥ. nirvighnam ārabdhaṃ samāpyatām iti kāmanayā pravṛtteḥ.* Gaṅgeśa has also described a group of opponents who hold an opinion akin to Śaṅkara Mīśra’s statement. Gaṅgeśa says: “By contrast, the others [think] the salutation is the primary thing; the completion of a com-

Next, Śaṅkara Mīśra excludes two other possible results of the *maṅgala*. The first one is the removal of impediments; the other is the destruction of sins (*durita*). For the first optional result, Śaṅkara Mīśra explains that the removal of impediments itself is not the aim pursued by men. Whereas the completion at hand is the aim of men, inasmuch as it is a means to obtain happiness.<sup>62</sup> In this regard, the removal of impediments is only an intermediate factor but not the eventual result of the *maṅgala*. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the refutation to the removal of sins, which is relevant to religious practices, has not been mentioned by the other Vaiśeṣika commentators. According to Śaṅkara Mīśra, there are three reasons to reject the removal of sins as the result of salutation:<sup>63</sup>

1. This is achieved by ritual penance (*prāyaścitta*) etc., but not through *maṅgala*.
2. If this were the result that leads to the completion, then the completion should be the result.
3. Moreover, the sins are removed by oblation of gold etc. However, it is rash to address these religious practices as *maṅgala*.

To sum up, *maṅgala* is irrelevant to the removal of sins. We can now safely conclude that *maṅgala* is the cause of completion. Up to this point, Śaṅkara Mīśra has covered all the issues that have been discussed rigorously by his predecessors in the Vaiśeṣika tradition together with his own elaboration and observation. And he is clearly an upholder of the ancient view, who accepts completion to be the result of salutation.<sup>64</sup>

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menced [ritual] action is the result by way of the unseen (*adr̥ṣṭa*). The one who is qualified is the one who has the desire for that [completion].” (TC p. 60, 2 – p. 61, 1: *anye tu maṅgalaṃ pradhānam, adr̥ṣṭadvārā ārabdhakarmasamāptiḥ phalam, tatkāmo ’dhikāri.*)

62 Upa p. 4, 10–12: *tasya svato ’puruṣārthatvāt samāptes tu sukhasāadhanatayā puruṣārthatvāt upasthitatvāc ca.*

63 Upa p. 4, 12–14, p. 5, 1–3: *kiñ ca duritadhvaṃsamātraṃ na phalaṃ tasya prāyaścittakīrtanakarmanāśāpāragamanādisādhyatayā vyabhicārāt, prārabdhaparīsamāptipratibandhakaduritadhvaṃsatvena phalatve samāpter eva phalatvocatitvāt. tatrāpi ca hiraṇyadānaprayāgāsānādijanyatvena vyabhicārāt teṣāṃ api maṅgala-tvābhīdhānaṃ sāhasam.*

64 Upa p. 5, 3–4: *kiṃ ca maṅgale sati samāpter avāśyakatvam ity evaṃ maṅgalasya kāraṇatā.*

### 3. Conclusion

Varadachari's sketch of the understandings of *maṅgala* is appealing. He provides us with an overall summary of several significant Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika authors introduced in his article who have shared their thoughts on the topic of *maṅgala*. However, since the dichotomy between the "ancient" and "modern" schools cannot be organized chronologically, it would be meaningful to focus more on the structure and aspects incorporated in each discussion given by different authors on this topic. The chart below presents a brief comparison of the major topics discussed by the Vaiśeṣika commentators in section 2:

	<b><i>atha</i> in VS 1.1.1 as the indication of salutation</b>	<b>The result of salutation</b>	<b>The "futile <i>maṅgala</i>"</b>	<b>The "missing <i>maṅgala</i>"</b>
Vyomaśiva	Discussed.	Completion.	(1) Implied lack of a specific merit produced by salutation; (2) salutation is not performed mentally.	Performed mentally.
Śrīdhara	Not discussed.	Removal of impediments. Completion is expected.	Lack of a specific salutation.	Performed but not written down.
Udayana	Not discussed.	Completion.	(1) Imperfection; (2) if no imperfection, the cause of impediments is stronger.	Not discussed in the NK.
Bhaṭṭa Vādindra	Discussed.	Completion.	Imperfection.	Done mentally.
Śaṅkara Mīśra	Discussed.	Completion.	Imperfection.	Done in another life.

In conclusion, almost all of these Vaiśeṣika commentators discussed in this article could be considered members of the ancient school defined by Varadachari, except for Śrīdhara, whose stance, which is still open to debate, appears to be that of the modern school. However, as I have

shown, the discussion of *maṅgala* in the history of Vaiśeṣika goes beyond a mere disagreement about the result of salutation. While the opinions of these commentators can be categorized into the dichotomy proposed by Varadachari, we also see that the individual interpretations of the purpose of *maṅgala* have been notably enriched and developed over the course of time spanning from Vyomaśiva to Śaṅkara Miśra. These commentators contributed their own thoughts and elaborations to the topic to counter the objections that continue to arise. For instance, we see that they gradually developed a better and more conclusive way to explain the precarious problem of the “futile *maṅgala*”, which raises a threat against whether it is even proper to compose a *maṅgala* in the first place. Moreover, new questions asked and answered in each discussion deepened our understanding of *maṅgala*. In their deliberation on the major issues pertinent to *maṅgalas*, these commentators have not only enabled the idea of composing *maṅgala* to be reflected upon in greater depth, but also enabled modern scholars to reach a more nuanced understanding of historical Vaiśeṣika attitudes on the function and purpose of *maṅgala* in the composition of a treatise.

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# The Relationship between *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* in Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra Literature

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**Abstract:** The Sarvāstivāda definitions of the three terms *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* are discussed in this paper. The characteristics of each term and the relationships between them are elaborated in the various Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra texts. My examination of these texts demonstrates that the Sarvāstivādins had more than one definition for these terms owing to the multiple meanings of *pada* and *vyañjana*. The term *pada* could mean a portion of a verse or a word. The term *vyañjana* could be interpreted as one single syllable or a complete expression resulting from the collection of phrases. These possibilities led to multiple layers of interpretation in the relationships between *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana*.

**Keywords:** *nāman*, *pada*, *vyañjana*, Sarvāstivāda dharma

## 1. Introduction

The set of *nāman* (*nāmakāya*), the set of *pada* (*padakāya*), and the set of *vyañjana* (*vyañjanakāya*) were *dharmas* and real entities (*dravya*) for the Sarvāstivādins. Discussing the nature and characteristics of these *dharmas*, the Sarvāstivādins, the Sautrāntikas, and the Yogācārins defined and elaborated on them in their own ways. This article aims to explore

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various definitions of these three terms – *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* – by reconsidering their characteristics and interrelationships as elaborated in various Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra texts.

Previous researchers have long considered various definitions of these terms. For example, based on the definitions contained within the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh), Theodore Stcherbatsky (also known as Fëdor Ščerbatsoj) explained in 1923 that in that treatise, the Sarvāstivādins define *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* as a word (*saṃjñā*), a sentence (*vākya*), and a syllable (*akṣara*) respectively.<sup>1</sup> In 1959, Padmanabh Jaini drew on the “pre-Vaibhāṣika” passages – that is, the passages earlier than the Sarvāstivāda texts – showing that *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* seem to have been used as a word, a sentence, and a syllable, respectively.<sup>2</sup> More recently, when investigating Saṃghabhadra’s (Zhong xian 衆賢) *\*Nyāyānusāra* (*Apidamo shun zhengli lun* 阿毘達磨順正理論, T1562), Collett Cox showed that Saṃghabhadra shared the definition of three *dharmas* with that of the Sarvāstivādins in the AKBh.<sup>3</sup>

However, several scholars have pointed out that these definitions require further investigation. In his study of the expression *vajrapada*, Ulrich Pagel states that the Buddhist texts sometimes use *pada* to mean a word and sometimes to mean a phrase.<sup>4</sup> Pieter C. Verhagen examined the various Tibetan interpretations of the three terms and discovered that *pada* is sometimes interpreted as a phrase and sometimes as a word by Tibetan scholars.<sup>5</sup> These two scholars, among some others, recognize that in the Sarvāstivāda traditions *pada* can either refer to a word or to a phrase, and this double meaning probably influences the understanding of Tibetan Buddhists.

In contrast to the research on *pada*, however, few studies have been devoted to investigating the potential multiple meaning in the Sarvāstivāda usage of the term *vyañjana*. As a result, the multiple layers of interpretation concerning these three *dharmas* have not yet been fully addressed in modern scholarship. To fill this gap concerning the term *vyañjana*,

1 Stcherbatsky 1923, 23–24.

2 Jaini 1959, 98–99.

3 Cox 1995, 377ff.

4 Pagel 2007, 6ff.

5 Verhagen 2001, 240–251.

the meanings of these three terms will be reviewed here. Moreover, the other definitions of these terms in other Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra texts will be explored. Beginning with exploring the Sarvāstivāda interpretation of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* as a word, a phrase, and a syllable, I will then examine another Sarvāstivāda interpretation of these three terms as a word, a phrase, and a complete expression resulting from the collection of phrases, before turning to investigate a Yogācāra elaboration of these three terms as a noun, a verb/adjective, and a syllable. By reviewing these variant uses of the three terms, it becomes clear that there were multiple layers of interpretation in the relationships between *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* in the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra traditions.

## 2. The Sarvāstivāda interpretation of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* as a word, a phrase, and a syllable

The *Kavisutta* in the *Samyuttanikāya* (henceforth SN) explains how the verse (*gāthā*) is composed. As a result, it has been used to justify one of the Sarvāstivāda definitions of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana*. The text runs as follows:

[Question:] What is the ground (P. and Skt. *nidāna*) of verses (P. and Skt. *gāthā*)? What is that which manifests (P. *viyañjana*, Skt. *\*vyañjana*) them?<sup>6</sup> On which are the verses based (P. *sannissita*, Skt. *\*samniśrita*)? What is the basis (P. *āsaya*, Skt. *\*āśraya*) of verses? [Answer:] The metre (P. *chando*, Skt. *\*chandas*) is the ground of verses. Syllables (P. *akkhara*, Skt. *\*akṣara*) are that which manifests them. Verses are based on names (P. *nāma*, Skt. *\*nāman*). A poet (P. and Skt. *kavi*) is the basis of verses.

*kiṃsu nidānaṃ gāthānam. kiṃsu tāsam viyañjanam. kiṃsu sannissitā gāthā. kiṃsu gāthānam āsayo ti. chando nidānaṃ gāthā-*

6 Bhikkhu Bodhi 2001, 130 translates *viyañjana* as constituting phrasing: “What constitutes their phrasing”. C. A. F. Rhys Davids 1917/1979, 54 translates the term as issuing [from a source; that is, *nidāna*]: “And what is it that issues from that source?” See also the definition of *vyañjana* in MW, 1029 as “manifesting, indicating” and in PWG 6, 1431 as “offenbar machend, bekundend”.

*nam. akkharā tāsam viyañjanam. nāmasannissitā gāthā. kavi gāthānam āsayo ti.*<sup>7</sup>

This passage describes four elements that contribute to the composition of a verse (*gāthā*): the first is metre; the second is syllables, which manifest (*vyañjana*) the verse and thus make recipients understand the meaning of the verse; the third element is the names or words (*nāman*), on which the meaning of the verse is based; and the fourth element is the poet, who decides the metre, the syllables, and the names.

It is noteworthy that the word *viyañjana* is in its singular form and the term *akkhara* is in its plural form in the Pāli phrase (*akkharā tāsam viyañjanam*). In this context, *viyañjana*, the Pāli form of the Sanskrit term *vyañjana*, is not used as a synonym for the individual syllable (*akṣara*) but is instead adopted to refer to the means/tool (*-ana* suffix) that manifests (*vy-añj*) the verse.<sup>8</sup> In other words, when syllables are collected to express a verse and thus a verse is manifested in an audible form, that collection of syllables becomes the tool of manifestation, *vyañjana*.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the Sarvāstivāda texts, however, cite this passage and interpret *vyañjana* as one single syllable. The earliest available Sarvāstivāda text that supports this interpretation is the *Apidamo fazhi lun* 阿毘達磨發智論 (T1544, translated by Xuanzang 玄奘, \**Abhidharmajñānaprasthānaśāstra*, hence *Jñānaprasthāna*). This text quotes two verses and explains the relationships between the verse (*gāthā*), *pada*, *nāman*, and *vyañjana* in the following way:

The Blessed One said as follows: “Not practicing any evil, following what is virtuous, purifying one’s own mind, those are the teachings of the Buddha”.<sup>10</sup> These [are] four *padas* ... [Ques-

7 SN, vol. 1, p. 36 (SN1.60 *Kavisutta*).

8 An anonymous reviewer suggested this interpretation. I am indebted to them for the improvement.

9 Interestingly, the *Apitan wufaxing jing* 阿毘曇五法行經, attributed to An Shigao 安世高, renders *vyañjana* as *ju* 具 (“tool”). See T1557.28.1001a28.

10 Dhammapada, 28 (DhP 183): *sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasampadā. sa-cittapariyodapanam etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ. Śarīrārthagāthā, 34 (cf. Uv 28.1): sarvaṇṇapāpasyākaraṇaṃ kuśalasyopasampadā. svacittaparyavadamanam etaṃ buddhānuśāsanam*. Nance 2012, 253 (fn. 2 of Appendix B) shows that the Tibetan version of the *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya* cites this verse: *sdig pa thams cad*

tion:] What are the set of *vyañjanas* (*duowenshen* 多文身)? Answer: The collection of syllables (*zi* 字, *\*akṣara*) are the set of *vyañjanas*. For example, the Blessed One said, “the metre (*yu* 欲, *\*chandas*) is the ground (*ben* 本, *\*nidāna*) of verses (song 頌, *\*gāthā*),<sup>11</sup> the *vyañjana* is the syllable, and verses are based (*yi* 依, *\*samniśrita*) on names (*ming* 名) and poets (*zheji* 造頌者, *\*kavi*)”.

如世尊說, “諸惡莫作, 諸善奉行, 自淨其心, 是諸佛教”。如是四句 ... 云何多文身? 答, 諸字衆是謂多文身。如世尊說, “欲為頌本, 文即是字, 頌依於名及造頌者”。<sup>12</sup>

Another Chinese translation of this text, the *Apidan bajian du lun* 阿毘曇八鍵度論 (T1543, translated by *\*Samghadeva*, or *Sengqietipo* 僧伽提婆 and *Zhu Fonian* 竺佛念), a variant translation of the *Jñānaprasthāna*, defines *pada* more clearly:

The Blessed One also said, “not practicing any evil, attaining what is virtuous, purifying one’s own mind, this is the teaching of the Buddha.” [In this verse,] “not practicing any evil” is the first *pada*, “attaining what is virtuous” is the second *pada*, “purifying one’s own mind” is the third *pada*, and “those are the teachings of the Buddha” is the fourth *pada*.

世尊亦說, 諸惡莫作, 諸善奉行, 自淨其意, 是諸佛教。諸惡莫作此一句, 諸善奉行此二句, 自淨其意此三句, 是諸佛教此四句。<sup>13</sup>

They describe *pada* as a portion of a verse (*gāthā*). In this context, *pada* has the same meaning as *pāda*.<sup>14</sup> The term *vyañjana* is explained as a

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*mi bya ste// dge ba phun sum tshogs par bya// rang gi sems ni yongs su 'dul// 'di ni sangs rgyas bstan pa'o.*

11 It is noteworthy that the translation by Xuanzang of the *\*Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā* (*Apidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論) takes *chandas* to mean “desire to compose verses” (此中欲者, 是欲造頌欣意愛樂. T27.1545.71b21). This is probably an etymological interpretation (*nirukti*) of the word and should be further studied in the future.

12 T1544.26.920b17ff.

13 T1543.26.774b8ff.

14 See also Jaini 1959, 98ff.

synonym of syllable (*akṣara*) because the Chinese phrase *duowenshen* 多文身 (the set of *vyañjanas*) is interpreted as *zhuzizhong* 諸字衆 (the group of many syllables). In other words, the Chinese character *duo* 多 corresponds to *zhu* 諸 (many), *wen* 文 to *zi* 字 (letters), and *shen* 身 to *zhong* 衆 (group).

This interpretation demonstrates that the three terms, *vyañjana*, *nāman*, and *pada*, are regarded as three different syntactic units in the *Jñānaprasthāna*. *Vyañjana* is a syllable and the smallest syntactic unit. A collection of *vyañjanas* constitutes *nāman* – that is, a name or a word – and a collection of *nāmans* makes up *pada* as a portion of a verse. Finally, *padas* create a verse.

Some of the Sarvāstivāda texts elaborate on this explanation by comparing these three terms with the explanations of Sanskrit grammarians. A typical example is found in one of the Chinese translations of the *\*Abhidharmahr̥daya*, the *Apitan xinlunjing* 阿毘曇心論經 (T1551, translated by \*Narendrayaśas, or Naliantiyeshe 那連提耶舍):<sup>15</sup>

*Pada* is the collection of names (*mingzi* 名字). ... It is like what the grammarians (*poqieluona* 婆伽羅那, *\*vaiyākaṛaṇa*) call a “sentence” (*yanshuo* 言說, *\*vākya*). *Vyañjana* is the appearance of the syllable.<sup>16</sup> *Nāman* is the name corresponding (*sui* 隨) to the object (*yi* 義, *\*artha*), like “cow”, “horse”, and so on. It is like what the grammar texts (*piqieluolun* 毘伽羅論, *\*vyākaṛaṇa*) call *pada*.

句, 名字集. ... 如婆伽羅那云言說. 味者, 字生. 名者, 隨義名也, 如牛馬等. 如毘伽羅論言句.<sup>17</sup>

In this quotation, *pada* (*ju* 句) appears twice. The first *pada*, as explained by the Sarvāstivādins, is defined as a synonym of *vākya*, which means a sentence. The second is *pada* as a synonym of *nāman*, which is generally

15 For an overview of the Hṛdaya texts, see Willemen, Dessein, and Cox 1998, 255ff.

16 While Xuanzang translated *vyañjana* as *wen* 文, many translators before him rendered this term as *wei* 味 (“taste”). This translation is possibly based on the usage of *vyañjana* or *byañjana* as meaning a sauce or condiment for food in the early Buddhist texts. See PTSD, 652: “Boiled rice with various kinds of curry and with various kinds of sauce (*odano anekasūpo anekavyañjano*)”.

17 T1551.28.86a14ff.

adopted by Sanskrit grammarians. For example, Pāṇini defined *pada* in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.14 as “a word with nominal declension or verbal conjugation” (*suptiñantam padam*).<sup>18</sup>

Similar definitions of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* are also found in the AKBh, the *\*Nyāyānusāra*, and many other Sarvāstivāda texts. Previous studies have investigated these definitions in various aspects. However, scrutiny of all available Sarvāstivāda texts shows that there were significantly different definitions of these three terms, on which I will elaborate in the next section.

### 3. The Sarvāstivāda interpretation of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* as a word, a phrase, and a complete expression

Some Sarvāstivāda texts define *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* not as a word, a phrase, and a syllable, but as a word, a phrase, and a complete expression consisting of phrases. This is possibly because of a different understanding of *vyañjana*. As seen in the passage of the *Kavisutta* quoted above, *vyañjana* means the tool that manifests a verse. *Vyañjana*, therefore, could be understood not as one single syllable, but as the collection of syllables that manifests a verse in audible form.

Some texts agree with this understanding and interpret *vyañjana* as a linguistic unit consisting of *padas*. For example, a variant translation of the *\*Abhidharmahrdaya*, the *Apitan xinlun* 阿毘曇心論 (T1550, translated by \*Saṅghadeva, or Sengqietipo 僧伽提婆 and Huiyuan 惠遠), follows this interpretation. This text explains *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* as follows:

*Pada* (ju 句) is a sentence (*suoshuo* 所說, *\*vākya*) [resulting from the] collection (*hui* 會) of *nāmans* (*ming* 名), like [the sentence] “oh, the conditioned are impermanent, namely [they] have the properties of arising and ceasing (*suoxing feichang wei xingshuai fa* 所行非常 謂興衰法, *\*anityā bata saṃskārā utpāda-vyayadharmināḥ*).<sup>19</sup> *Vyañjana* (*wei* 味) is what [results from]

18 Böhrtlingk 1887, 32.

19 The Sanskrit parallel is found in the *Udānavarga* (Berhard 1965, 96) and the *Mahāparinirvānasūtra* (Waldschmidt 1950–1951, 298): “Oh, the conditioned [fac-

the collection of *padas* (*juhuishi* 句會事), as explained in detail in verses (*ji* 偈, \**gāthā*) and sūtras (*qijing* 契經). *Nāman* (*ming* 名) is the collection of syllables (*zi* 字, \**akṣara*) and communicates a meaning (*shuoyi* 說義), like [the word] communicating [the meaning of] “permanence” (*chang* 常, \**nitya*).

句者, 名會所說, 如所行非常謂興衰法。味者, 句會事, 廣說如偈及契經。名者, 字會說義, 如說常。<sup>20</sup>

This interpretation of *vyañjana* is also found in some of the Yogācāra texts. For example, a similar explanation is also found in the Paramārtha’s (Zhendi 真諦) *Juedingzang lun* 決定藏論 (T1584), an alternative translation of the first half of the *Viniścayasamgrahaṇī* (ViSg) in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (YoBh). This text explains *vyañjanakāya* as the complete expression resulting from the collection of *nāman* and *pada*:

*Vyañjanakāya* (*weihehe* 味和合): [When] *nāmans* and *padas* are combined, and [when] syllables and the meaning are completely established, it is [called] *vyañjanakāya*.

味和合者: 名與句合, 字義具足, 是味和合。<sup>21</sup>

In short, these quoted texts prove that alternative explanations for the relationships between *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* existed in the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra texts. Two different interpretations of *vyañjana* caused two different definitions of the three terms; namely, *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana*. Some Sarvāstivāda Buddhists attempted to define *vyañjana* as the smallest syntactic unit, a syllable, and explained that *vyañjanas* constitute words and phrases. In contrast, other Sarvāstivādins and Yogācārins did not follow this definition; instead, according to their alternative interpretation, *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* have a different

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tors] are impermanent because they have the properties of arising and ceasing. They arise and cease. Their cessation is happiness” (*anityā bata saṃskārā utpādayayadharmiṇaḥ. utpadya hi nirudhyante. teṣāṃ vyūpaśamaḥ sukham*). The Pāli parallel is found in the DN II, 157 (*aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādavaya-dhammino. uppajjitvā nirujjhanti. teṣaṃ vūpasamo sukho*). See also Keng 2018, 480 fn. 13.

20 T1550.28.831a2ff.

21 T1584.30.1024c29ff.



relationship. When syllables are collected, words and phrases are manifested. When these words and phrases are ordered, a complete text is composed, which is called *vyañjana*.

#### 4. The interpretation of *nāman, pada, and vyañjana* as a noun, a verb/adjective, and a syllable

As seen above, the various interpretations of *vyañjana* led to various explanations of the relationship between *nāman, pada, and vyañjana*. However, *vyañjana* is not the only *dharma* which causes several definitions of the three *dharms*. The multiple definitions of *pada* also caused some variation concerning these three terms, with some Buddhists being aware of its conflicting definitions.

*Pada* means a “sentence” (*vākya*) in some Buddhist texts, but this term is defined as “a word with nominal declension or verbal conjugation” (*suptināntam padam*) by the Sanskrit grammarians. The *\*Pañcaskandha-bhāṣya* (PSkBh), one of the Yogācāra commentary texts, points out these two definitions and divides the term *pada* into two meanings:

It is explained that *pada* of [the Buddhist] treatise (*gtsug lag*) is also different from *pada* of the mundane world (*'jig rten*). Why? With regards to [the expression] “Devadatta boils rice (*lha sbyin 'bras tshos*)”, mundane people consider “Devadatta” to be one *pada*, “rice” also to be one *pada*, and “boils” also to be a word. [However,] in the treatise, “all the conditioned are impermanent” (*'du byed kun mi rtag*) is considered as one *pada*.

*gtsug lag gi tshig ni 'jig rten gyi tshig las kyang bye brag yod par ston to// ji lta zhe na lha sbyin 'bras tshos zhes pa la/ 'jig rten pa rnam lha sbyin zhes bya ba la yang tshig gcig tu lta/ 'bras zhes bya ba la yang tshig gcig tu lta/ tshos zhes bya ba yang tshig gcig tu lta la/ gtsug lag las ni 'du byed kun mi rtag ces pa la tshig gcig tu 'dzin te.*<sup>22</sup>

According to this explanation, *pada* conventionally means a word within a phrase, such as “Devadatta”, “boils”, or “rice”, but in the Buddhist treatise, it refers to a whole phrase like “Devadatta boils rice”. This ex-

22 D4068.90aff.

planation echoes my observation above that the *Apitan xinlunjing* 阿毘曇心論經 (T1551) also differentiated the usage of *pada* in Buddhist contexts from that in the context of Sanskrit grammar.

Nevertheless, some Buddhist commentators were not satisfied with this explanation and attempted to interpret the Buddhist term *pada* as a word. For example, Sthiramati attempted to define *pada* as a verb or an adjective in a sentence. He elaborated upon this definition in his commentary of the AKBh, the *\*Abhidharmakośaṭikā Tattvārthā* (Tattvārthā), as follows:<sup>23</sup>

... it is *nāman* because it illuminates the own characteristic (*rang gi mtshan nyid*, *\*svalakṣaṇa*),<sup>24</sup> like “the [visible] matter (*gzugs*, *\*rūpa*)” and “the sound (*sgra*, *\*śabda*).”<sup>25</sup> It is *pada* because it manifests the specific quality (*khyad par*, *\*viśeṣa*) related to activity (*bya ba*, *\*kriyā*), attribute (*yon tan*, *\*guṇa*) and time (*dus*, *\*kāla*).<sup>26</sup> [*Pada*] is a word with nominal declension or verbal conjugation (*sup dang ting gi mtha’ can*, *\*suptiṅanta*).<sup>27</sup> There, “what manifests the specific quality related to activity” is [the verb] like “[one] cooks (*’tshed do*)”, “[one] recites (*’don to*)”, and “[one] goes (*’gro’o*)”. “What manifests the specific quality related to attribute” is [the adjective] like “[one is] white (*dkar po’o*)” and “[one is] dark” (*naḡ po’o*). “What manifests the specific quality related to time” is [the verb in a tense] like

23 The Sanskrit manuscript of the quoted passage has not yet been discovered (see Matsuda 2013, 49). In the following footnotes, I document parallel sentences of the AKBh and the *Sphutārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (AKV) for a better understanding.

24 AKV, 182.31ff: “That which illuminates the own characteristic is *nāman*” (*tad evaṃ svalakṣaṇābhidyotakaṃ nāma*).

25 AKBh, 80.13: “For example, [*nāman*] is the [visible] matter and the sound” (*tadyathā rūpaṃ śabda ity evamādiḥ*).

26 AKBh, 80.15: “The specific qualities related to activity, attribute, and time are understood [by the *pada*]” (*kriyāguṇakālasambandhaviśeṣā gamyante*); AKV, 182.32ff: “It is said that *pada* is what illuminates the specific quality related to activity, and so on” (*kriyādisambandhaviśeṣābhidyotakaṃ padam ity uktaṃ bhavati*).

27 AKV, 182.3ff: “However, *pada* is included in the word with a nominal declension or verbal conjugation” (*padam tu suptiṅantaṃ padam ḡhyate*).

“[one] cooks (*'tshed do*, that is, the present form of the verb)”, “[one] will cook (*'tshed par 'gyur ro*, that is, the future form of the verb)”, “[one] cooked (*btsos so*, that is, the past form of the verb)”.<sup>28</sup>

... *rang gi mtshan nyid gsal bar byed pas na ming ste/ gzugs dang sgra zhes bya ba lta bu'o// bya ba dang yon tan dang dus dang 'brel pa'i khyad par ston par byed pa ni tshig ste/ sup dang ting gi mtha' can no// de la bya ba dang 'brel pa'i khyad par ston par byed pa ni/ 'tshed do// 'don to// 'gro'o zhes bya ba lta bu'o// yon tan dang 'brel pa'i khyad par ston par byed pa ni dkar po'o nag po'o zhes bya ba lta bu'o// dus dang 'brel pa'i khyad par ston par byed pa ni/ 'tshed do// 'tshed par 'gyur ro// btsos so zhes bya ba lta bu ste.*<sup>29</sup>

The Tattvārthā here defines *nāman* as what illuminates an object's own characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*). Syntactically, it appears as a noun such as “matter (*rūpa*)”, “sound (*śabda*)”, and so on, in a phrase. *Pada* is regarded as illuminating the object's specific quality (*viśeṣa*). It is explained as a predicate, verb, or adjective modifying the subject in the phrase. Jaini calls this the typical Yogācāra definition of *nāman* and *pada*.<sup>30</sup> Although the AKBh defines *pada* as *vākya* (“sentence”),<sup>31</sup> the Tattvārthā, a commentary of the AKBh, applies the Yogācāra definition and attempts to explain *pada* as a word with nominal declension or verbal conjugation.

## 5. Conclusion

Various understandings of the definitions of *nāman*, *pada*, and *vyañjana* are found in the Sarvāstivāda and Yogācāra texts, which are fundamen-

28 AKV, 182.28ff: “For example, ‘cooking, reciting, and going’, ‘dark, yellow, and red’, and ‘cooking, going to cook, and having to cook’ are understood as the specific quality related to activity, attribute, and time. This is *pada*” (*tadyathā pacati paṭhati gacchatīti kṛṣṇo gauro rakta iti. pacati pakṣyati apākṣid iti kriyā-guṇakālānām sambandhaviśeṣā gamyante. tat padam*).

29 D4421.tho252a3ff.

30 Jaini 1959, 97.

31 See fn. 1.

tally caused by the multiple meanings of *pada* and *vyañjana*. In some Buddhist texts, the term *pada* means a portion of a verse, and thus is used as a synonym of *pāda*. Because a portion of a verse consists of many words, some Sarvāstivāda texts interpret *pada* as a phrase or sentence (*vākya*), a collection of words. However, while some Buddhists were aware of the fact that *pada* means “word” in Sanskrit grammar, some simply stated that the Buddhist terminology is different from that of the Sanskrit grammarians. Others did not agree with this explanation and attempted to explain *pada* as a word.

The term *vyañjana* is also capable of carrying different connotations. It can indicate one single syllable, the basic linguistic unit to constitute words and phrases. Alternatively, this term can also be interpreted as a complete expression resulting from the collection of phrases. Therefore, some texts explain that *vyañjana* is the basic unit for *nāman* and *pada*, but other texts define *vyañjana* as the largest linguistic unit composed of the collection of *nāman* and *pada*.

## Abbreviations and primary sources

- AKBh            *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (Vasubandhu), edited by Prahlad Pradhan. Patna: K. p. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.
- AKV             *Sphutārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, edited by Unrai Wogihara. Reprint, Tokyo: Sankibo, 1971.
- Apidamo fazhi lun* 阿毘達磨發智論 (T1544).
- Apidamo pinlei zu lun* 阿毘達磨品類足論 (T1542).
- Apitan bajiandu lun* 阿毘曇八犍度論 (T1543).
- Apitan wufaxing jing* 阿毘曇五法行經 (T1557).
- Apitan xinlun* 阿毘曇心論 (T1550).
- Apitan xinlunjing* 阿毘曇心論經 (T1551).
- BHSD            *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.
- D                 *Derge Tanjur*
- Juedingzang lun* 決定藏論 (T1584).
- MPS             *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra: Text in Sanskrit und Tibetisch, verglichen mit dem Pāli nebst einer Übersetzung der chinesischen Entsprechung im Vinaya der Mūlasarvāstivādins, auf Grund von Turfan-Handschriften herausgegeben und bearbeitet. Teil I–III*, by Ernst Waldschmidt, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1950–1951.
- P.                 Pāli
- PSk Bh            \**Pañcaskandhabhāṣya* (D4068)

- PWS Sanskrit-Wörterbuch, by Otto von Böhtlingk and Rudolph von Roth. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1855–1875.
- Skt. Sanskrit
- Śarīrārthagāthā “*Śarīrārthagāthā, A Collection of Canonical Verses in the Yogācārabhūmi*, Part 1: Text”, *Sanskrit-Texte aus dem buddhistischen Kanon. Erste Folge: Neuentdeckungen und Neueditionen*, edited by Fumio Enomoto, Jens-Uwe Hartmann, and Hisashi Matsumura. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989, pp. 17–35.
- SN *Samyuttanikāya*, edited by Léon Feer, vol. I, London: Pāli Text Society, 1884.
- T *Taishō Shinshū Daiyōkyō*. Cite from CBETA (<http://www.cbeta.org/cbreader>).
- Tattvārthā \**Abhidharmakośaṭīkā Tattvārthā* (D4421).
- Uv *Udānavarga: Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden 10*, edited by Franz Bernhard, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965–1968.
- Za apitan xinlun* 雜阿毘曇心論 (T1552).
- Zhongshifen apitan lun* 衆事分阿毘曇論 (T1541).

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# The Philosophical Problem of the Grammatical Gender of Terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’, as well as the Gender of Terms Denoting Non-Existent Things

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**Abstract:** The Sanskrit grammarians’ theory of grammatical gender is mentioned for the first time in verses that form part of the *Mahābhāṣya* (composed *circa* 150 BCE). This theory would seem to implicate the three grammatical genders in a broader theory regarding the transformation of matter

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and, as such, is therefore readily applicable to all words referring to concrete objects, be they animate or inanimate. Its application to words referring to abstract things, however, is harder to construe: a small number of terms that refer to the ‘ultimate reality’ or ‘consciousness’, for example ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’, pose a particular problem in this regard. Here, the separate philosophical assertion that the ‘ultimate reality’ is permanent and does not undergo change stands in conflict with the grammatically gendered words (implicated, therefore, in ‘transformation’) used to refer to it. Non-existent things, such as the ‘hare’s horn’ (*śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*), which may also be expressed with terms in different genders, are likewise problematic in this way. In this article, I shall seek to explore these problems more fully before then presenting some solutions as posited by the grammarians themselves. I will start by outlining the grammarians’ theory of grammatical gender and shall then evaluate the solutions relevant sources offer as to why it may be justified for terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc., as well as ‘*śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*’, to also take a grammatical gender. Finally, I will consider how Bhartṛhari (fl. *circa* 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) comes up with an elegant solution to this problem by resorting to a theory of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems of thought.

**Keywords:** Sanskrit, Philosophy of language, Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadiya, Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya, Sāṃkhya/Yoga

## Introduction

In this article I investigate the philosophical problem presented for the traditional Sanskrit grammarians by the grammatical gender of terms referring to the ‘ultimate reality’ – terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ (masculine), ‘*citiḥ*’ (feminine) and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ (neuter). There are of course other words we could also add to these three, for example ‘*ātma*’ or ‘*brahma*’. Bhartṛhari (fl. *circa* 5<sup>th</sup> century CE<sup>1</sup>) – a Sanskrit grammarian of the Pāṇinian tradition whose work I will discuss in this article – considers all these terms to be synonyms;<sup>2</sup> we can therefore say that, for him,

1 Coward and Kunjunni Raja 1990, 121. The 5<sup>th</sup> century is widely accepted as the approximate date of Bhartṛhari. Sankaranarayanan and Kazanas, however, believe that Bhartṛhari lived around 300 CE (Sankaranarayanan 2006, 306; Kazanas 2007, 15–16).

2 This is at least the case within the framework of his gender discourse. But, of course, in a different context, for example in the opening verses of the



‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’ are just different names, or ‘verbal handles’, for what we may call the ‘ultimate reality’.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the history of philosophy, different systems of thought have had different conceptions of the ‘ultimate reality’. The first person within the early Sanskrit grammatical tradition to discuss this topic, at least implicitly, is Patañjali (fl. 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>4</sup>). It seems that for him, *vāk* – divine speech – is such an ‘ultimate reality’.<sup>5</sup> Patañjali belongs to the Vedic tradition in which Ṛgvedic poets associate *vāk* with *brahma* and the Upaniṣads speculate about *ātmā* or *brahma*, a hidden reality behind perceptible reality; a supreme reality or truth.<sup>6</sup> This is, ultimately, a monist world view: the *ātmā* or *brahma* is one, indivisible and all-pervasive. Bhartṛhari, by comparison, sets out at the beginning of his *Vākyapadīya* that for him, the *brahma* is the ‘highest reality’. There is nothing but *brahma*; it is one and indivisible and, for Bhartṛhari, the Veda is a means for reaching the *brahma*.<sup>7</sup>

However, as Bhartṛhari also points out, Vedic speculations do in fact provide support for dualist, as well as monist or non-dualist, systems.<sup>8</sup>

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*Vākyapadīya*, which are essential to the understanding of Bhartṛhari’s thought, his preferred term to refer to the ‘ultimate reality’ is ‘*brahma*’.

- 3 I borrow the term ‘verbal handle’ from Diwakar Acharya. It is his translation of the term ‘*vācārambhaṇam*’. See Acharya 2016. See also Olivelle 1996, 149–50.
- 4 Cardona 1976, 263 sq.
- 5 See, for example, Coward and Kunjunn Raja, p. 44–45.
- 6 These terms are polyvalent and have a history in Vedic texts before the Upaniṣads. Both ‘*ātmā*’ and ‘*brahma*’ are attested from the Ṛgveda. EWA, s.v. *ātmān-* notes ‘*Hauch*’, ‘*Seele*’, ‘*Selbst*’ (cf. KEWA ‘breath’, ‘soul’, ‘self’) and EWA s.v. *brāhman-* ‘*Formung*’, ‘*Gestaltung*’, ‘*Formulierung (der Wahrheit)*’ (KEWA does not include any English renderings, but the EWA entries may be rendered by ‘shaping’, ‘composition’, ‘formulation (of the truth)’). For more meanings, including examples, see PW 1, 621 and 5, 135. The development of the term ‘*ātmā*’ is perhaps particularly interesting. Acharya (2013) has shown that it made its way into the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* to replace the term ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ which is associated with the *brahma*. This passage (BĀU II.2.23), however, as Acharya argues, must be considered a later addition.
- 7 VP 1.1–5. See below, Part 2.
- 8 VP 1.8: *tasyārthavādarūpāṇi nīśritāḥ svavikalpajāḥ / ekatvināṃ dvaitināṃ ca pravādā bahudhāgatāḥ //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1965, 11: “Based on the explanatory comments and similar passages, conflicting views have been set forth by

In a non-dual system, since *ātmā* or *brahma* is all-pervasive, it is present in any form of being, even in pots, clothes etc. In a dualist system, by contrast, it stands distinct from perceptible, empirical reality.

It is specifically the dualist systems of early Sāṃkhya and Yoga that appear to have influenced both Bhartṛhari's, and possibly also Patañjali's, discourses on gender.<sup>9</sup> In the dualist Sāṃkhya and Yoga, there is, on the one hand, the 'empirical reality' or 'primary substance', *prakṛtiḥ*, and, on the other hand, *puruṣaḥ*, the 'ultimate reality'. The former is made of the three 'constituent or essential qualities', namely *sattvam* ('having brightness as its characteristic'), *rajaḥ* ('having action as its characteristic') and *tamaḥ* ('having stasis as its characteristic').<sup>10</sup> Because of the presence of

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the exponents of Monism and Dualism according to their own taste." For other translations, see Biardeau 1964, 37; Rau 2002, 6.

9 As to Patañjali, we do not find much evidence in the *Mahābhāṣya* that would help us to determine which early form of Sāṃkhya and Yoga he may have been familiar with. The traditional view, with Bhartṛhari in the first instance, is that there is no contradiction between Patañjali's explanation of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender (which I will briefly discuss in Part 1) and the worldviews of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Nāgeśa associates Patañjali, the grammarian, with Patañjali, the *ācāryaḥ* of the *śeśvarasāṃkhyāḥ*, the 'Sāṃkhya with God', i.e. Yoga. As to Bhartṛhari, it is not clear whether he knows Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikā* in the form handed down to us, which, according to Potter and Larson (cf. Larson and Bhattacharya 1987, 149), should be dated to 350–450 CE but, according to Frauwallner (1992, 95), to 450–500 CE. However, Bhartṛhari may have known Sāṃkhya texts that are now lost, such as the *Ṣaṣṭitantra*. On the latter, see, among others, Schrader 1914; Larson 1979, 135–38; Larson and Bhattacharya 1987, 124–28. Later commentators, for example Helārāja (fl. 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century CE) – one of the commentators of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* – even clearly state that the gender theory as it is described in the *Mahābhāṣya* is also accepted in the Sāṃkhya system. Cf. Helārāja *ad* VP 3.13.27 (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 145, l. 7). Modern scholars have discussed whether Patañjali was familiar with Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, for instance in the framework of research concerning Patañjali's notion of substance. Wezler (1985) analyses Patañjali's "*guṇasaṃdrāvo dravyam*" and possible affiliation with Sāṃkhya in detail. For a more general account, see Halbfass 1992, 90–91.

10 I borrow all these glosses from the author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* under YS 2.18: *prakāśaśīlam sattvam / kriyāśīlam rajaḥ / sthitiśīlam tama iti* / However, Simonsen's (1970, 193) observations are worth citing here: "If we confine ourselves to the physical world, we can say that *sattva* is the principle of that which is bright and light, *tamas* of that which is dark and heavy, and *rajas* is the principle of

*rajah*, there is always activity in everything. The *puruṣaḥ*, in contrast to *prakṛtiḥ*, is one, inactive and does not change; it is the ‘enjoyer’ or the ‘experiencer’ of *prakṛtiḥ*. In the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* we find the beautiful analogy of *puruṣaḥ* being the spectator of the performance of *prakṛtiḥ* on stage, like in a theatre.<sup>11</sup> Another important distinction that we will see in one of Bhartṛhari’s verses is ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’: *puruṣaḥ* is ‘conscious’ (*cetana*), *prakṛtiḥ* is ‘unconscious’ (*acetana*).<sup>12</sup>

Putting to one side the complexities arising from these dualist approaches to construing the ‘ultimate reality’ and its opposite, the common feature that different Sanskrit traditions attribute to the ‘ultimate reality’ of both monist and dualist systems is ‘permanence’: *puruṣaḥ*, *ātmā* etc. are always ‘permanent’, ‘eternal’ (*nitya*) and, crucially for our purposes, do not transform.<sup>13</sup> However, the meaning of grammatical gender is, according to the early Sanskrit grammarians, ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*), that is to say, ‘transformation’. In this view, each of the three grammatical genders reveals a different form of transformation in the designated object. The three transformations are: ‘increase’, associated with the masculine gender; ‘decrease’, associated with the feminine gender; and ‘continuous existence’, associated with the neuter gender. So, the question arises: if gender entails transformation, how is it possible that terms expressing the ‘ultimate reality’, which does not change, can also have gender?

A similar philosophical problem arises for the grammarians in the case of terms denoting things which do not, or cannot, exist in perceptible reality. The Sanskrit tradition often uses the ‘hare’s horn’, *śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*,

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movement. On the psychical plane: *sattva* – serenity, knowledge, *tamas* – dullness, sluggishness, *rajas* – unrest, passion. The constituents always appear together, they can never be entirely isolated, but a powerful preponderance of the one or the other is possible in a given situation.”

- 11 SK 59: *raṅgasya darśayitvā nivartate nartakī yathā nṛtyāt / puruṣasya tathātmānam prakāśya vinivartate prakṛtiḥ* // Trans. Simonsson 1970, 190: “Just as the dancing-girl after having given her performance in front of the audience retires from the dance, thus *Prakṛti* retires after having shown herself to *Puruṣa*.”
- 12 We see this distinction, for example, in verse VP 3.14.326 (ed. Rau) which I discuss below on p. 84.
- 13 There is, however, the Sanskrit tradition of the Jains, who consider that the *caitanya* also transforms. See, for example, Qvarnström 2012.

as a prime example of these, but many others are mentioned too, including ‘mirage’ (*mṛgatrṣṇā*), ‘sky-flower’ (*khapuṣpam*), the ‘barren woman’s son’ (*vandhyāputrah*) etc. The hare’s horn and all these other mental constructs may be named, but it is accepted widely that they do not exist. So, again, there is a question: how can something that does not exist transform?

In Part 1, I give a short overview of the early grammarians’ theory of gender.<sup>14</sup> Although this theory remains quite obscure, we can at least see briefly the most important terms and notions Patañjali uses in his discussion of the topic in the *Mahābhāṣya*. These are crucial to the understanding of the problem concerning the grammatical gender of terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’. I shall then analyse how the same discussion is taken up more than five centuries later by Bhartṛhari in his *Vākyapadīya*.

In Part 2, I present the explanation and solutions Bhartṛhari provides concerning the specific philosophical problem as to why ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’ can also have gender. I shall analyse a series of verses of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa*. The *Vṛttisamuddeśa* is an extensive chapter in the third part of the *Vākyapadīya* in which Bhartṛhari treats many different grammatical topics, gender being only one of them.<sup>15</sup> I will show that Bhartṛhari draws on Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory to resolve the problem concerning terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. Furthermore, I will argue that Bhartṛhari’s verses read as an insightful commentary of Patañjali’s gender discourse and add an ingenious solution to this problem.

In conclusion, I briefly comment on Bhartṛhari’s reception of Patañjali’s gender discourse, as well as the wider implications of the grammarians’ doctrine. I suggest that the two major implications are the incompleteness of the word and the ineffability of the real ‘ultimate reality’.

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14 I will include a comprehensive discussion in my thesis. In my forthcoming article “The Neuter Gender in Words and Things: Patañjali and Bhartṛhari on its Doctrinal, Semantic and Ontological Aspects”, I also include a more detailed analysis since this is necessary for the reader to understand the discussion of the neuter by these two authors.

15 For a general study of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa*, see Chaturvedi 2001.

## 1. Short outline of the grammarians' theory of gender

The first gender theory develops possibly in the time period between Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (circa 500 BCE<sup>16</sup>) and Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE<sup>17</sup>). However, our only witness of it is Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* itself, where Patañjali quotes the theory in the form of a *śloka-vārttikam* under the Pāṇinian rules *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64) and *striyām* (A 4.1.3).<sup>18</sup> Whilst several modern scholars have studied rule A 1.2.64 along with parts of the commentary it has received by Kātyāyana (fl. circa 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE<sup>19</sup>), the *vārttikakāra*, and subsequent explanations by Patañjali, rule A 4.1.3 has attracted less scholarly attention.<sup>20</sup> In Kātyāyana's extensive comments on A 1.2.64, in which he raises complex

16 See, for example, Deshpande 1979, 3; Jamison and Witzel 1992, 2; Cardona 1997, 1. Von Hinüber and Bronkhorst following von Hinüber, however, advocate for a date around 350 BCE (v. Hinüber 1990, 34; Bronkhorst 2007, 177). Von Hinüber assumes that there is evidence of coinage in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In response, Cardona (2013, 152–77) shows that the relevant terms do not refer to coins, and therefore cannot be used as evidence for von Hinüber's dating. Cardona concludes – based on other evidence – that Pāṇini may have lived as early as 500 BCE and no later than 350 BCE (ibid., 167).

17 Cardona 1976, 263 sq.

18 M I, 245, 24 and M II, 197, 27. As to the term '*śloka-vārttikam*', it is worth noting, however, that Patañjali himself does not use this term. Moreover, traditional scholars, for example Helārāja, tend to make no clear distinction between these *vārttika*-like statements and Patañjali's own commentary. After having quoted a *śloka-vārttikam*, Helārāja adds, for example, "*iti bhāṣye varṇitam*". Cf. Helārāja *ad VP* 3.13.1–2 (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 132, l. 12).

19 Cardona 1976, 267. Other scholars, for example Deshpande and Scharfe have suggested different dates. According to Deshpande (1979, 7; 1993, 17), Kātyāyana composed his work around 300 BCE. Scharfe (1977, 138) suggests a date after 250 BCE.

20 For translations of rule A 1.2.64, see, for example, Böhtlingk 1887, 19; Katre 1987, 48; Renou 1966, vol. 1, 38. The *Mahābhāṣya* under A 1.2.64 has been translated into English by Scharf (1996), into German by Strauss (1927b), and into French, including Kaiyaṭa's and Nāgeśa's commentaries, by Filliozat (1980). As to rule A 4.1.3, for translation see, for example, Böhtlingk 1887, 149; Katre 1989, 355; Renou 1966, vol. 1, 282. Strauss (1927a) has also translated the *Mahābhāṣya* under A 4.1.3 into German; and Feron's unpublished French translation also includes the commentaries by Kaiyaṭa and Nāgeśa.

issues, he mentions the important controversy between Vājapyāyana and Vyāḍi as to whether words denote the ‘generic form’ (*ākṛtiḥ*) or the ‘individual substance’ (*dravyam*).<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, Kātyāyana also brings up the question of gender.<sup>22</sup> Patañjali comments on Kātyāyana’s statement and introduces the quotations in verse form containing the grammarians’ theory of gender. These verses have not yet been attributed to any author. Kielhorn, who developed criteria to identify quotations within Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, does not attribute them to Kātyāyana.<sup>23</sup>

The general contexts in which Patañjali mentions the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender under the two rules – *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64) and *striyām* (A 4.1.3) – are different. Yet in both places he states that the grammarians cannot accept the ‘*laukikaṃ liṅgam*’.<sup>24</sup> This phrase literally means ‘worldly gender’, but it may also be paraphrased as the ‘common understanding of gender’. In his introductory remarks under the rule A 4.1.3, Patañjali quotes a verse which formulates a ‘common understanding of gender’: we recognise a female being on the basis of characteristic signs, such as female breasts and hair; a male due to characteristic signs such as male body hair; and a being whose characteristic signs are neither those of the male or the female we recognise as being neuter.<sup>25</sup> Such a description of the genders might be valid in the world, but Patañjali says that it does not work in grammar.

21 M 1, 242, 10 (vt. 35) and M 1, 244, 8 (vt. 45). For a more detailed discussion, see, for example, Matilal 1971, 106–09; Matilal 2005, 76–79 and 82–89.

22 M 1, 245, 6.

23 For Kielhorn’s most extensive study of the quotations within Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, see Kielhorn 1876. Additional studies are, for example, Kielhorn 1886a and 1886b.

24 M I, 245, 21–22; M II, 197, 25: *tasmān na vaiyākaraṇaiḥ śakyaṃ laukikaṃ liṅgam āsthātum /*

25 M II, 196, 4–5: *stanakeśavatī strī syāl lomaśaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ / ubhayaor antaraṃ yac ca tadabhāve napuṃsakam //* “The being characterised by breasts and long head hair is feminine, the being characterised by abundant body hair is known as masculine; and the being similar to both [i.e., in terms of being characterised by signs], provided that there is absence of ‘that’ [i.e., both feminine and masculine signs], is [known as] *napuṃsakam*.” The suffix called *matUP* (*-vat*, *-mat*) indicates a relation: y related to x, y pertaining to x, y in or on x. Moreover, depending on the context, the grammarians consider that this suffix has additional nuances of meaning. Patañjali quotes a verse that enumerates seven

In the long and complex discussion of rule A 1.2.64, Patañjali arrives by a different way at the conclusion that the grammarians cannot accept the ‘common understanding of gender’. The broader framework of this discussion is his detailed examination of the two views mentioned above: words denote either 1) the ‘generic form’ (*ākṛtiḥ*); or 2) the ‘individual substance’ (*dravyam*). Patañjali examines the first view regarding its compatibility with the fact that words have gender and number. As to their gender, he states that a class preserves its gender. This means that a term denoting a certain class does not change gender – its gender is fixed. Most terms referring to a class have only one gender while individuals belonging to that class may have different natural genders.<sup>26</sup> The grammatical gender might even be in contradiction with the natural gender of the individuals. Patañjali then states that, therefore, the grammarians cannot accept the ‘common understanding of gender’.

In order to corroborate this conclusion, Patañjali now quotes a statement that outlines the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender.

M I, 245, 24 (*śloka-vārttikam*)  
*saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau*<sup>27</sup>

*Samstyānam* (coagulation) and *prasavaḥ* (setting in motion) should be acknowledged as [the meaning of grammatical] gender.

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such meanings in his commentary under the rule A 5.2.94 (M II, 393, 15–16). In the examples such as breasts and hair, the *matUP* suffix may be associated with *bhūmā*, ‘abundance’, and *atiśayaḥ*, ‘pre-eminence’. A similar idea is expressed by *lomaśaḥ* containing the suffix *-śa-*, which also has the sense of *matUP*. I have chosen to render these additional meanings, although, of course, not all women have long hair and not all men have abundant body hair. Yet, the authors of this verse mention a general, noticeable tendency that male and female bodies are somehow distinct. For a translation of this verse into German, see Strauss 1927a, 85; and into French, see Angot 1993–94, 27 and Feron (unpublished), 92.

26 Kaiyaṭa gives the following examples to illustrate this: the phrase “*gāva imāḥ*” refers to a group of cows and bulls, even though the feminine grammatical gender is used; however, the phrase “*brāhmaṇā ime*” may refer to a group of male and female brahmins, although the masculine gender is used.

27 The parallel passage under the rule A 4.1.3 (M II, 197, 27) reads: *saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau svakṛtāntataḥ*. “In our own theory, *saṁstyānam* (coagulation) and *prasavaḥ* (setting in motion) should be acknowledged as [the meaning of grammatical] gender.”



In his commentary, Patañjali always provides a gloss after each quotation, often by replacing one term by a synonym. In this case, he just repeats the quotation to indicate that he has given a citation.<sup>28</sup> He then discusses the meaning of the terms ‘*saṁstyānam*’ (coagulation) and ‘*prasavaḥ*’ (‘setting in motion’) within and beyond grammar. The gist of his explanation is that, in grammar, *saṁstyānam* is something like ‘decrease’ and *prasavaḥ* means ‘increase’. The grammarians associate *saṁstyānam* with the feminine and *prasavaḥ* with the masculine gender. The neuter gender is not mentioned in this outline of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, and it is not until the *Vākyaṇḍīya* that Bhartṛhari analyses more extensively the semantic and ontological meaning that the grammarians associate with the neuter.<sup>29</sup>

The core idea of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, as Patañjali describes it in his *Mahābhāṣya*, is the association of the feminine and the masculine gender with two modes of transformation in ‘things’. In the passage below, Patañjali mentions the key notion of *pravṛttiḥ*, and it becomes clearer that it implies transformation of matter.

M I, 246, 2–7

- *styānam pravṛttiś ca /*
- *kasya punaḥ styānam strī pravṛttir vā pumān /*
- *guṇānām / keṣām / śabdaspārśarūparasagandhānām / sarvās ca punar mūrtaya evamātmikāḥ saṁstyānaprasavaguṇāḥ śabdaspārśarūparasagandhavatyāḥ / pravṛttiḥ khalv api nityā / na hi iha kaś cit api svasminn ātmani muhūrtam apy avatiṣṭhate / vardhate vā yāvad anena vardhitavyam apacayena vā yujyate / tac cobhayaṁ sarvatra /*
- [In grammar *strī* and *pumān* mean] ‘coagulation’ (*styānam*<sup>30</sup>) and ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*).

28 M I, 245, 25; M II, 197, 28: *saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau*.

29 I analyse the doctrinal, semantic and ontological meaning of the neuter as Patañjali and Bhartṛhari discuss it in the *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Vākyaṇḍīya* in more detail in my thesis as well as in an article due to be published in 2022.

30 Halāyudha’s *Abhidhānaratnamālā* (10<sup>th</sup> century CE) gives the term ‘*styānam*’ together with synonyms in the second half of verse II.276 (ed. Jośī): *śīnam styānam śṛtam pakvaṁ vilīnaṁ drutam ucyate* / The first term, ‘*śīnam*’ (‘coagulated’, ‘thick’, etc.) justifies a rendering of ‘*styānam*’ by ‘coagulation’. Modern dictionaries, for



- But of what is *strī* the ‘coagulation’? Or *pumān* the ‘coming forth’?
- [The answer is, it is ‘coagulation’ or ‘coming forth’] of the ‘constituent qualities’ (*guṇāḥ*). Of which? Of ‘sound’, ‘touch’, ‘colour’, ‘taste’, ‘smell’. And indeed, all things are essentially made up of these, that is the ‘constituent qualities’ related to ‘coagulation’ and ‘setting in motion’, and have ‘sound’, ‘touch’, ‘colour’, ‘taste’, ‘smell’. But ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*) is also permanent, because in this world nothing stands still in its own self even for a moment. Either it grows as much as it must grow, or it is bound to decrease. And both of these are everywhere.

Patañjali glosses the terms used in the *śloka-vārttikam* (M I, 245, 24), ‘*saṁstyānam*’, by ‘*styānam*’ (‘coagulation’, ‘increase in magnitude’, ‘thickness’, etc.) and ‘*prasavaḥ*’ by ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ (‘coming forth’, ‘moving onwards’, etc.). He then says that *styānam* (or *saṁstyānam*) and *pravṛttiḥ* (or *prasavaḥ*) are related to the five ‘constituent qualities’ (*guṇāḥ*), namely *śabdaḥ* etc. And all things are essentially made up of these five *guṇāḥ*. The same five ‘qualities’ are mentioned in the Upaniṣads, although not always in the same sequence. Patañjali then makes a statement about *pravṛttiḥ* that is key for our discussion. To paraphrase this passage: ‘transformation’ in the world – the ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*) – is permanent (or, at least, we perceive it to be so). Things do not ‘stand still’; they come into being, grow and disappear. In other words, they undergo change and transformation. Patañjali seems to allude to Yāska’s enumeration of six ‘modifications’ in his *Nirukta* (composed probably around 500 BCE<sup>31</sup>).<sup>32</sup> Both

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example, Böhtlingk and Roth’s Petersburger Dictionary (PW, s.v. *styāna* (vol. 7, p. 1275); s.v. *saṁstyāna* (vol. 7, p. 1815)) gives ‘*Gerinnen*’, ‘*Verdichtung*’ for both.

31 Sarup (1920–27, part 1: 1920, 54) holds the view that Yāska should be dated no later than 500 BCE. Cardona (1976, 273) discusses several points of view regarding the dating of Yāska compared to Pāṇini but concludes that the question cannot be resolved. Kahrs (1998, 13–14) accepts Cardona’s view. More recently, Cardona (2013, 99–100, fn. 95) writes that even though he considers that there is not enough evidence for an absolute determination, he is more inclined to accept that Yāska predates Pāṇini.

32 Nir. 1.2: *ṣaḍbhāvavikārā bhavanti vārṣyāyaṇiḥ / jāyate ’sti vipariṇamate vardhante ’pakṣiyate vinaśyati /* Trans. Sarup 1920–27, part 2: 1921, 6: “According to

types of transformation, *saṁstyānam* and *prasavaḥ*, occur everywhere, in all things. Patañjali therefore seems to suggest that in the realm of *pravṛtīḥ*, there are these two opposing forces.

Since the grammarians postulate that *pravṛtīḥ* is the general characteristic of gender and, more specifically, that the three types of transformation are the meaning of the three genders, the question is now: how can *puruṣaḥ*, which is not a product of *prakṛtiḥ* and does not change, be associated with transformation through grammatical gender? Similarly, how can a thing that does not exist, for example a 'hare's horn' (*śaśa-viṣānam*), be subjected to transformation? Patañjali does not address the question as to how it is possible that *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ*, which do not transform, may also be associated with transformation through grammatical gender. Bhartṛhari is the first author of the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition after Patañjali to deal with this issue in the third section of his *Vākyapadīya*, as I shall now go on to explore.

## 2. Bhartṛhari's solution to the problem pertaining to terms such as 'puruṣaḥ' etc.

Bhartṛhari takes up Patañjali's explanations of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender in both his *Liṅga-* and *Vṛttisamuddeśa*. In the former, we find a concise analysis of this theory as well as other perspectives on gender. It is in a short section of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa* where Bhartṛhari addresses the problem concerning the grammatical gender of terms such as 'puruṣaḥ', 'citiḥ' and 'caitanyaṁ'. It is important to note, however, that the broader context of his discussion is Patañjali's extensive commentary on Kātyāyana's comments as regards the Pāṇinian rule *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64). As I mentioned in Part 1, the *Mahābhāṣya* under this rule is extensive and contains many complex issues. As we shall see, Bhartṛhari therefore treats our problem concerning the grammati-

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Vārṣyāyaṇi, there are six modifications of *becoming*: genesis, existence, alteration, growth, decay, and destruction." Kaiyaṭa, commenting on Patañjali's statement, clearly states that the meaning of the term 'pravṛtīḥ' in this context is 'pariṇāmaḥ'. See *Pradīpa*, ed. Vedavrata, vol. 3, 448–49. Helārāja – whose commentary of the *Vākyapadīya* probably predates Kaiyaṭa's commentary of the *Mahābhāṣya* – also glosses the term 'pravṛtīḥ' by the term 'pariṇāmaḥ'. See ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 299, l. 11.

cal gender of terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. and its solution as a tangential topic within this broader, highly complex framework.

In verse 322 of the *Vṛttisamuddēśa*, Bhartṛhari concisely summarises the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, as Patañjali describes it in the passage discussed above. Bhartṛhari explicitly mentions that *pravṛtṭiḥ* is said to be the ‘general characteristic’ of gender.

VP 3.14.322 (ed. Rau)

*pravṛtṭir iti sāmānyam lakṣaṇam tasya kathyate /  
āvīrbhāvas tirobhāvaḥ sthitiś cety atha bhidyate //*

‘Transformation’ (*pravṛtṭiḥ*) is said to be its general characteristic.

It is differentiated into ‘appearance’ (*āvīrbhāvaḥ*), ‘disappearance’ (*tirobhāvaḥ*) and ‘continuous existence’ (*sthitih*).<sup>33</sup>

The term ‘*liṅgam*’, ‘gender’, itself is not mentioned in the verse, but Bhartṛhari refers to it by the genitive pronoun *tasya*.<sup>34</sup> To paraphrase this: gender has ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛtṭiḥ*), that is to say, ‘transformation’, as its general characteristic. ‘Transformation’ is differentiated into three

33 My translation slightly deviates from Subramania Iyer’s (1974, 273) which reads as follows: “The general characteristic of gender is said to be activity (*pravṛtṭi*) and it is diversified into appearance, disappearance and stay.” (This verse corresponds to verse VP 3.14.321 in his translation, corresponding to his edition published in 1973.) Subramania Iyer renders the term ‘*pravṛtṭiḥ*’ by ‘activity’. Although we find this rendering in any standard Sanskrit-English dictionary, such as Apte or MW, I suggest that translating the term ‘*pravṛtṭiḥ*’ by ‘transformation’ is preferable in this context. This follows Patañjali’s discussion of this term in his gender discourse (see above Part 1) as well as traditional commentaries on it, as I mentioned above in fn. 32. Furthermore, Rob Williams has pointed out to me that in Standard British English, ‘stay’ is not commonly used as a noun in this context and could be replaced, for example, by ‘stasis’. Subramania Iyer has translated the term ‘*sthitih*’ by ‘continuity’ in VP 3.13.13. See below, fn. 35.

34 Bhartṛhari uses the term ‘*liṅgam*’ in his previous verse VP 3.14.321 (ed. Rau): *sāmānyam ākṛtir bhāvo jātir ity atra laukikam / liṅgam na sambhavaty eva tenānyat pariḡrhyate //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 272 (verse VP 3.14.320 in his translation and edition): “The worldly conception of gender cannot apply to what is denoted by words like *sāmānya*, *ākṛti*, *bhāva* and *jāti*. Therefore, another has been adopted.”

modes, each corresponding to a gender: ‘appearance’ (*āvirbhāvaḥ*), ‘disappearance’ (*tirobhāvaḥ*) and ‘continuous existence’ (*sthitih*).<sup>35</sup> Bhartṛhari makes a clear reference to the passage of Patañjali’s commentary on *pravr̥t̥tiḥ* (M I, 246, 2–7, see above); however, he adds the notion of *sthitih*, which, according to him, the grammarians associate with the neuter.

In the following verse, Bhartṛhari relates *pravr̥t̥tiḥ*, expressed by gender, to speech in general.

VP 3.14.323 (ed. Rau)

*pravr̥ttimantaḥ sarve ’rthās tisṛbhiś ca pravr̥ttibhiḥ /  
satataṃ na viyujyante vācaś caivātra saṃbhavaḥ //*

Moreover, all things, being subject to transformation, are never unjoined from the three transformations. And speech is [only] possible as regards to them.<sup>36</sup>

Bhartṛhari reenforces the role of the three types of transformation (*pravr̥t̥tiḥ*) in things and its relation to speech: no ‘nameable’ object or ‘meaning’ can ever be separated from the three ‘transformations’ (i.e., *āvirbhāvaḥ*, *tirobhāvaḥ* and *sthitih*), and speech is possible only as regards to them. Bhartṛhari does not explicitly use the term ‘*padārthaḥ*’ (an ‘object expressed by a word’ or a ‘meaning expressed by a word’) in this verse. However, we understand that he refers to ‘nameable’ objects by the term ‘*arthaḥ*’, since this is where speech is possible. All ‘nameable’ objects always transform. Therefore, the three modes of transformation are always present in every being and thing.

35 We find the same triad in verse VP 3.13.13: *āvirbhāvas tirobhāvaḥ sthitīś cety anapāyinaḥ / dharmā mūr̥tiṣu sarvāsu liṅgatvenānudar̥śitāḥ //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 111: “The manifestation, disappearance and continuity are eternal properties found in all things and they are what is called gender.”

36 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 273; verse VP 3.14.322 in his translation and edition): “All objects are active and they are never devoid of the three kinds of activities and it is such objects that words express.” Again, Subramania Iyer uses the term ‘active’ to render the term ‘*pravr̥ttimantaḥ*’. As I have said earlier, I do not think this is the appropriate rendering here. Additionally, contrary to Subramania Iyer’s understanding, I think the ‘*ca*’ in the first half of the verse connects this verse with the previous one. I therefore render it by ‘moreover’.

In the next verse, Bhartṛhari introduces the problem pertaining to terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. However, he proceeds immediately to its solution rather than raising it as a problem.<sup>37</sup>

VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau)

*yaś cāpravṛttidharmārthaś citirūpeṇa gr̥hyate /  
anuyātīva so ’nyeṣāṃ pravṛttīr viśvagāśrayāḥ //*

And that which does not have transformation as its feature, [and is] experienced as having the form of consciousness, follows, as it were, the others’ all-pervasive transformations.<sup>38</sup>

In this verse, Bhartṛhari begins his explanation of why something that is not subjected to *pravṛttiḥ* can also have gender. The compound ‘*āpravṛttidharmārthaḥ*’ (‘the object the feature of which is not being the subject of transformation’) is a *bahuvrīhiḥ* and qualifies *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* which is ‘experienced’ as a form of consciousness. The passive structure without agent does not tell us who the agent of this experience is. It is unlikely that Bhartṛhari refers to the average person undertaking their ordinary business. Nevertheless, the Sanskrit tradition more broadly does elsewhere assume that some people with enhanced perception, yogis for ex-

37 In his introduction to verse VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau), Helārāja (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 300, l. 13–16) clearly states the problem and, thereby, contextualises the solution that Bhartṛhari provides: *tatra prakṛtes triguṇāyā rajasānavaratam astu pravṛtīśīlatā; tadvikārāṇāṃ ca bhogyātmakānām / yas tu bhoktā puruṣaś cetanaḥ, so ’tyantavidharmā bhogyajātān nirguṇaḥ prakṛtim anubhavan katham ātmā caitanyam citir iti līṅgaviśeṣaniyatābhīdhānaviśayatām anubhavatīty āśaṅkyāha* [“*yaś cāpravṛttidharmārthaś...*”]. “This being so (*tatra*), we accept that *prakṛtiḥ*, made up of three constituent qualities, as well as its products – [both *prakṛtiḥ* and its products] to be enjoyed – have the quality of incessantly being prone to transformation due to *rajaḥ*. But how does the enjoyer, *puruṣaḥ*, the sentient being – the characteristics of which are completely different from all things to be enjoyed, [and] which is beyond constituent qualities [i.e., *sattvam*, *rajaḥ*, and *tamaḥ*], experiencing *prakṛtiḥ* – become associated with expressions that are invariably connected to a particular gender such as ‘*ātmā*’, ‘*caitanyam*’, ‘*citiḥ*’? Having anticipated this doubt, [Bhartṛhari] says [verse VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau)].”

38 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.323 in his translation and edition): “As to the entity which is devoid of all activity and is understood as consciousness it seems to follow, as it were, the multiple activities of others.”

ample, can have a direct experience of the ‘ultimate reality’; we ought therefore to assume that this is what Bhartṛhari implies by using a passive structure here.<sup>39</sup> We may then say that it is the yogi who experiences ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ as a ‘form of consciousness’. This ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ follows, as it were, the ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ of others, that is to say, other objects which have ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ as their feature.

The compound ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’ (‘having a support everywhere’, which amounts to being ‘all-pervasive’) poses a logical problem in this verse. The term qualifies the ‘transformations’, but we would expect it to qualify *puruṣaḥ*, since only *puruṣaḥ* is truly all-pervasive. Nāgeśa, when commenting on Kaiyaṭa’s quotation of this verse in his *Pradīpa*, mentions both readings, ‘*viśvagāśrayaḥ*’ and ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’, but dismisses the latter as incoherent and repetitive.<sup>40</sup> If we adopt the reading *viśvagāśrayaḥ* – which I think is preferable – we may translate the verse as follows: “And that which does not have transformation as its feature, [and is] experienced as having the form of consciousness, the all-pervasive [*ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ*] follows, as it were, the others’ transformations.”

Bhartṛhari does not mention the reason as to why the *puruṣaḥ* seems to follow the *pravṛttiḥ* of other things. He presupposes familiarity with a Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory regarding the functioning of the mind.<sup>41</sup>

39 This is also Nāgeśa’s opinion, which he states in his commentary of Kaiyaṭa’s *Pradīpa*. Kaiyaṭa quotes verses VP 3.14.322–26 in his commentary. Nāgeśa therefore also comments upon certain terms of these verses. Commenting on the verb *grhyate*, he states (*Uddyota*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 2, l. 20): *grhyate yogibhir iti śeṣaḥ* / “Experienced, that is to say, [experienced] by yogis” or, more literally: “[to complete the passive structure with the verb] *grhyate*, [the term] ‘by yogis’ remains [to be supplied].”

40 *Uddyota*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 2, l. 21–22. According to the available print editions of Kaiyaṭa’s quotations of VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau) in his *Pradīpa*, his reading is ‘*viśvagāśrayaḥ*’, not ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’. Cf. *Pradīpa*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 1, l. 17; ed. Vedavrata, vol. 3, 449, l. 11.

41 I think it is worth pointing out in this context that Bhartṛhari draws on Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory consistently throughout his gender discourse. In verse VP 3.13.14, for example, he makes a clear reference to the three *guṇāḥ* of Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory by mentioning *sattvam*, etc. VP 3.13.14 reads: *sarva-mūrtyātmabhūtānāṃ śabdādināṃ guṇe guṇe / trayāḥ sattvādidharmās te sarvatra samavasthitāḥ* // “The three ‘essential qualities’ (*dharmāḥ*) that are *sattvam* etc. exist everywhere: in each and every *guṇaḥ* consisting in *śabdaḥ* etc., which make

Bhartṛhari will allude to this theory in the verse after next. Since suspension is an important feature of his style, I will follow his line of argument before attempting to unpack the complexities of his theory.

If it is as though the *puruṣaḥ* followed the *pravṛttiḥ* of other things, this *puruṣaḥ* appears to be like any other object that we may perceive in different forms, at different times and, by extension, in different spaces too. Bhartṛhari emphasises, however, that its ‘own form’ is not like this.

VP 3.14.325 (ed. Rau)

*tenāsyā citirūpaṃ ca citikālaś ca bhidyate /  
tasya svarūpabhedas tu na kaś cid api vidyate //*

Moreover, through this, it is divided into a ‘form of consciousness’ and a ‘time of consciousness’; but a division of its own form does not exist at all.<sup>42</sup>

To paraphrase the verse: through this process (*tena*), *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* is divided into different ‘forms of consciousness’ and different ‘times of consciousness’. But such divisions of its own, real form do not exist at all. Yogis may experience consciousness in different forms and may associate consciousness with the past, present and future. However, both dual and non-dual systems agree that the real *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* is always one and permanent. In other words, it cannot have different shapes, nor can it belong to certain times and places. All these distinctions are, therefore, merely a construct of the mind.

Verse 325 echoes what Bhartṛhari says about the *brahma* in the opening verses of his treatise: the *brahma*, without beginning or end, is imperishable and unalterable; it can, however, take different forms through existing things. In the second verse, Bhartṛhari says that while the *brahma* is one, it may appear as if it were divided; but this is only because it is the source of different ‘powers’ from which, in fact, it is not divid-

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up the essence of all things.” In this verse, Bhartṛhari explains the term ‘*guṇaḥ*’ that Patañjali associates with *śabdaḥ* etc. in the passage of his *Mahābhāṣya* (M I, 246, 2–7) discussed above on p. 76. I examine verse VP 3.13.14 in my article on the neuter mentioned earlier, and I will discuss it in more detail in my doctoral thesis.

42 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.324 in his translation and edition): “That is how the form and the time of the consciousness of the experiencer is diversified. It has no diversity of form of its own.”



ed. Time is one of these ‘powers’ which make it seem as if the *brahma* has parts.<sup>43</sup> Bhartṛhari mentions the six ‘modifications’, beginning with birth, which Yāska presents in his *Nirukta*.<sup>44</sup> It is these six modifications which form the source of the division of existence. Bhartṛhari however reiterates in verse 325 of his *Vṛttisamuddeśa* that the ‘ultimate reality’ is one and indivisible.

In the following verse, Bhartṛhari says that what we experience and name by the term ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ is not the real *puruṣaḥ*.

VP 3.14.326 (ed. Rau)

*acetaneṣu caitanyam saṃkrāntam iva drśyate /  
pratibimbakadharmeṇa yat tac chabdanibandhanam //*

The ‘consciousness’ (*caitanyam*) which is seen as though it is passed into unconscious things in the form of a reflection is the basis of words.<sup>45</sup>

In this verse, Bhartṛhari alludes to the belief in Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory that the *buddhiḥ* or the *cittam* is like a clear mirror in which all things are reflected, including the form that *puruṣaḥ* takes in the mind.<sup>46</sup> We also see comparisons with a precious stone, a clear crystal or a still surface

43 VP 1.1–3: *anādinidhanam brahma śabdatattvam yad akṣaram / vivartate ’rthabhāve-  
na prakriyā jagato yataḥ // ekam eva yad āmnātam bhinnaśaktivyapāśrayāt /  
apṛthakte ’pi śaktibhyaḥ pṛthaktvene va vartate // adhyāhitakalām yasya kāla-  
śaktim upāśritāḥ / janmādayo vikārāḥ ṣaḍ bhāvabhedasya yonayaḥ //* Trans. Su-  
bramania Iyer 1965, 1–5: “1. The Brahman who is without beginning or end,  
whose very essence is the Word, who is the cause of the manifested phonemes,  
who appears as the objects, from whom the creation of the world proceeds, 2.  
Who has been taught as the One appearing as many due to the multiplicity  
of his powers, who, though not different from his powers, seems to be so, 3.  
Depending on whose Time-power to which (though one) differentiations is at-  
tributed, the six transformations, birth etc. become the cause of all variety in  
Being.”

44 Nir. 1.2. See above, fn. 32.

45 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.325 in his trans-  
lation and edition): “That which is projected on the insentient forms of the In-  
tellect as a reflection, it is that which is the basis of the use of words.”

46 Helārāja refers to the *buddhidarpaṇaḥ*, the ‘mirror of the mind’, in his explana-  
tions of verses VP 3.14.324 and 325 (ed. Rau). See ed. Subramania Iyer 1973,  
p. 300, l. 19; l. 26.



of clear water, all of which reflect the shapes and colours of their surroundings.<sup>47</sup> It is also in this verse that Bhartṛhari makes the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious: the conscious ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ is seen as though it is ‘passed into’ in unconscious things (*acetaneṣu*). For this reason, Subramania Iyer’s rendering of the verse reads “projected on the insentient forms of the Intellect”, saying in a complicated manner that the *caitanyaṃ* is reflected in the *buddhiḥ*.<sup>48</sup> However, I think we should understand that *all* unconscious things are reflected by means of this mirror. This includes even non-existent things.

To paraphrase the core idea of the verse: it is the *pratibimbam*, the ‘reflection’ of the *puruṣaḥ*, not the real *puruṣaḥ*, that has a connection with words. We can only express the ‘reflection’, not the real *puruṣaḥ*, with words. Therefore, the reflection of the *puruṣaḥ* may also be associated with gender. In the same way, non-existent things go through the process of reflection in the mind and may therefore also be associated with transformation through their grammatical genders.

With this verse Bhartṛhari ends his explanation as to why terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ can also have grammatical gender. In his next verse, he returns to the general context by reaffirming that all words must have gender, except, of course, finite verbs and indeclinable forms.<sup>49</sup> With this sequence of verses, Bhartṛhari discretely fills a gap that Patañjali had left in his explanations of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’

47 For example, YS 1.41 mentions a ‘precious stone’, and YSBh *ad* 1.41 glosses this by ‘*sphaṭikāḥ*’ (crystal). Bhartṛhari himself uses the comparison of a reflection in clear water, albeit in a different context.

48 See Subramania Iyer’s translation above, fn. 45.

49 VP 3.14.327 (ed. Rau): *avasthā tādr̥śī nāsti yā liṅgena na yuyjate / kva cit tu śabdasaṃskāro liṅgasyānāśraye sati //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 275 (verse VP 3.14.326 in his translation): “There is no condition of an object which is not associated with a gender. Sometimes, when it is not taken seriously, it is only for the sake of the correctness of the words.” I think his “when it is not taken seriously” is somewhat unfortunate, because Bhartṛhari refers to cases in which there is no ‘support’ or ‘resort’ for gender. For example, this is the case in grammatical glosses of certain compounds. The grammarians gloss the compound ‘*kukkuṭāṇḍam*’ (hen’s egg) by the grammatical gloss “*kukkuṭasya aṇḍam*” (“the chicken’s egg”, lit. “the cockerel’s egg”). There is no ‘support’ or ‘resort’ for gender in the sense that the masculine grammatical gender is used in “*kukkuṭasya aṇḍam*” even though the female animal produces the egg.

of gender. In an oral culture that values conciseness in order to facilitate memorisation, we expect authors to leave certain issues unaddressed, particularly in an extensive work such as Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. It is therefore the role of a good commentator not only to analyse the source text but also to provide additional explanation where needed. Traditional and modern scholars do not actually consider Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* as a commentary on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. Yet Bhartṛhari maintains a close intertextual relationship with the *Mahābhāṣya*, especially in the third section of the *Vākyapadīya* which, in Cardona's words, "takes on aspects of a learned commentary on this work", i.e. the *Mahābhāṣya*.<sup>50</sup> The verses discussed above are, I suggest, one of these instances; they read as a lucid commentary of Patañjali's gender discourse – to which Bhartṛhari adds his ingenious solution to the problem regarding the grammatical gender of terms such as 'puruṣaḥ', 'citiḥ' and 'caitanyaṃ'.

## Conclusions and wider implications

In Part 1 of this article, I have discussed the most important aspect of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender as Patañjali explains it in his *Mahābhāṣya*: grammatical gender signifies transformation (*pravṛttiḥ*) in the things denoted by words. However, Patañjali remains silent regarding the implications this theory would have as regards at least two critical cases. One of these is the 'ultimate reality', which, although it is expressed by gendered terms, does not transform according to certain Sanskrit traditions. The other is non-existent things, such as the *śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*, the *mṛgatrṣṇā* and the *khapuṣpam*, which the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender also associate with transformation, even though something that does not exist cannot transform. Bhartṛhari is the first grammarian within the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition to address this issue and offer a solution.

In Part 2, I analyse the sequence of verses in which Bhartṛhari concisely summarises Patañjali's general point as regards the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender and how this theory of transformation also works for terms referring to the ultimate, unalterable and indivisible reality. By saying that it is the 'reflection' (*pratibimbam*) of the *puruṣaḥ*,

<sup>50</sup> Cardona 2009, 121.

not the real *puruṣaḥ* that has a connection with words, Bhartṛhari posits that the 'ultimate reality' is beyond the realm of speech. In other words, we can only express the 'reflection' with words, not the real *puruṣaḥ*. It is in this sense that the terms '*puruṣaḥ*', '*citiḥ*' and '*caitanyaṃ*' are mere 'verbal handles'. And 'verbal handles' must have gender, since in Sanskrit all words, except finite verbs and indeclinable forms, have gender. The real, 'ultimate reality', however, remains forever beyond the realm of language: it is 'literally' ineffable.

Bhartṛhari puts forward a powerful interpretative model as to how names are, in fact, incomplete: 'nameable' things – even the ultimate, highest reality – may be referred to by different 'verbal handles', and each name is, in Gonda's words, "a form or a mode of existence".<sup>51</sup> Many Vedic sources suggest that having several names bestows the bearer with power and auspiciousness. This principle of diversification and multiplicity of denominations may also be underlying the wide range of Sanskrit vocabulary for any 'nameable' thing. It is in the realm of language that not only words for things can be diversified, but realities too are diversified, and even the 'ultimate reality' itself, despite being one and indivisible, can also appear as though it were diversified and diversifiable. However, it is the mere reflection of the 'ultimate reality' which is diversified or projected, or, in Bhartṛhari's words, which follows, as it were, the *pravr̥ttiḥ* of other things. Grammarians of the commentarial tradition of the *Mahābhāṣya*, Kaiyaṭa and Nāgeśa, accept Bhartṛhari's elegant and lucid solution to one of the major problems implicitly left by Patañjali and refer to it in their commentaries.

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51 Gonda 1970, 14.

## Abbreviations

- A Aṣṭādhyāyī, see Böhtlingk, Katre and Renou.
- Apte Apte, Vaman Shivaram, *The practical Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Revised and enlarged edition. 3 vols. Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957–59. First published: Poona: Shiralkar, 1890.  
(I am using the online dictionary prepared by Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, University of Chicago: <https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/apte/>)
- BĀU *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*, see Acharya 2013.
- Ed. Rau Rau, Wilhelm, ed. 1977. *Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya: Die mūlakārikās nach den Handschriften herausgegeben und mit einem pāda-Index versehen*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 42.4. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- EWA *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindiarischen*, by Manfred Mayrhofer. 3 vols. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1991–2001.
- KEWA *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen: A Concise Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary*, by Manfred Mayrhofer. 4 vols. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1956–80.
- M Mahābhāṣya (including volume, page and line). *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, edited by Franz Kielhorn. 3 vols. Revised edition by Kashinath V. Abhyankar. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962–72. First edition: Bombay: Government Central Book Depot, 1880–85.
- MW Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit-English dictionary: Etymologically and philologically arranged with special reference to cognate Indo-European languages*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1899.  
(I am also using the online dictionary prepared by the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies, Cologne University: <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/2020/web/index.php>)
- Nir. Nirukta, see Sarup.
- PW [“(Großes) Petersburger Wörterbuch”] *Sanskritwörterbuch*. By Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolf Roth. Theil I–VII. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1855–75.  
(I am also using the online dictionary prepared by the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies, Cologne University: <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/PWGScan/2020/web/index.php>)

- SK *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, in: *Vācaspatimiśras Tattvakaumudī: Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik bei kontaminierter Überlieferung*, edited by Srinivasa Ayya Srinivasan. Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 12. Hamburg: Cram, De Gruyter, 1967.
- VP Vākyapadīya, see above under Ed. Rau; and below under Biardeau; Subramania Iyer.
- vt. *vārttikam* i.e., Kātyāyana's commentarial phrases of selected rules of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. Patañjali quotes Kātyāyana's phrases in his *Mahābhāṣya*. See above under M.
- YS Yogasūtra. *The Yogasūtra of Patañjali with the Commentary of Vyāsa*, edited and translated by Bengali Baba. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.
- YSBh Yogasūtrabhāṣya, see above under YS.

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- Bhārgavaśāstri, see Shri Bhargava Shastri Joshi.
- Bhartṛhari, see Ed. Rau (Abbreviated Works); Subramania Iyer.
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## Notes on the Manuscripts of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*

Shihong Zhao\*

**Abstract:** The *Alaṃkāraratnākara*, a treatise on Sanskrit rhetorics (*alaṃkāra*), is the only accessible work by Śobhākaramitra (Śobhākara for the sake of brevity), a Kashmirian Sanskrit rhetorician active in the middle or late 12<sup>th</sup> century. In order to understand Śobhākara's doctrine on Sanskrit rhetorics, a critical edition based on both the non-critical edition published in 1942 and other available manuscripts is required. This paper is devoted to an analysis of the physical features of the seven Sanskrit manuscripts of this text, serving as a preparation for the composition of the critical edition and as an attempt to help scholars understand the transmission history of this text. Among the seven manuscripts, **J<sub>A</sub>**, **J<sub>O</sub>**, **K<sub>O</sub>** and **P<sub>D</sub>** are presumably copies of an apograph because they all contain the reference to the same scribe. If only the selected sections of *anumāna* and *hetu* are taken into consideration, **J<sub>A</sub>**, **K<sub>O</sub>** and **P<sub>D</sub>** can form a separate group in the transmission of the text. **O<sub>x</sub>** and **V<sub>A</sub>** can form the second group based on the similarity of their features. **J<sub>O</sub>** and **P<sub>s</sub>** are difficult to group for the time being, but their positions in the stemma of manuscripts will be revealed after further investigations. The mysteries of the manuscripts of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* can be solved only after the relation between the witnesses is discovered, especially by collating other parts of the text and finding more similar connecting errors.

**Keywords:** *Alaṃkāraratnākara*, Sanskrit rhetorics, Śobhākara, manuscript studies

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## 1. Introduction

The *Alaṃkāraratnākara*, a treatise on Sanskrit rhetorics (*alaṃkāra*), is the only accessible work by Śobhākaramitra (Śobhākara for the sake of brevity), a Kashmirian Sanskrit rhetorician active in the middle or late 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Śobhākara is the key figure for understanding the scholarly polemics on different rhetorical theories and traditions in that very historical period, especially the scholarly interaction between him and two other Sanskrit rhetoricians: Ruyyaka (the author of the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*), the target of Śobhākara's criticism, and Jayaratha (the author of the *Alaṃkāravimarsinī*), who defends Ruyyaka's viewpoints against Śobhākara. Amidst those Sanskrit rhetorical traditions in Kashmir, Śobhākara was particularly concerned with clarifying the epistemological underpinnings of aesthetic theory.<sup>2</sup>

There is already a printed edition of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* published by Devadhar in 1942, which Parthasaradhy Rao (1992) follows as the basis of his analysis of the whole text. However, Devadhar's edition is not a critical one. Therefore, a critical edition based on it and other available manuscripts is required for further studies of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. This paper is devoted to an analysis of the physical features of the 7 Sanskrit manuscripts of this text, serving as a preparation for the composition of the critical edition and as an attempt to help scholars understand the transmission history of this text.

## 2. Information on the available manuscripts

Before analyzing each manuscript, it is necessary to introduce the structure of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. The treatise consists of individual *sūtra*s defining each rhetorical figure. The *sūtra* section is then followed by an auto-commentary discussing theoretical issues concerning the definitions of rhetorical figures, and examining both positive example verses and negative counter-examples. The whole section of the auto-commentary ends with verses summarizing the key ideas underlying these figures, which are called *saṃgraha* or *saṃkṣepa*. I will designate the auto-

1 On the active period of Śobhākara, see De 1960, Vol. 1, p. 309, and Vasudeva 2016, p. 495.

2 This is one of the topics of my PhD thesis.

commentary and *saṃgraha/saṃkṣepa* together as *vṛtti*. As the function of the *vṛtti* is to legitimize Śobhākara's own viewpoints, it also contains critical evaluation of the doctrines of other Sanskrit rhetoricians, especially that of Ruyyaka.

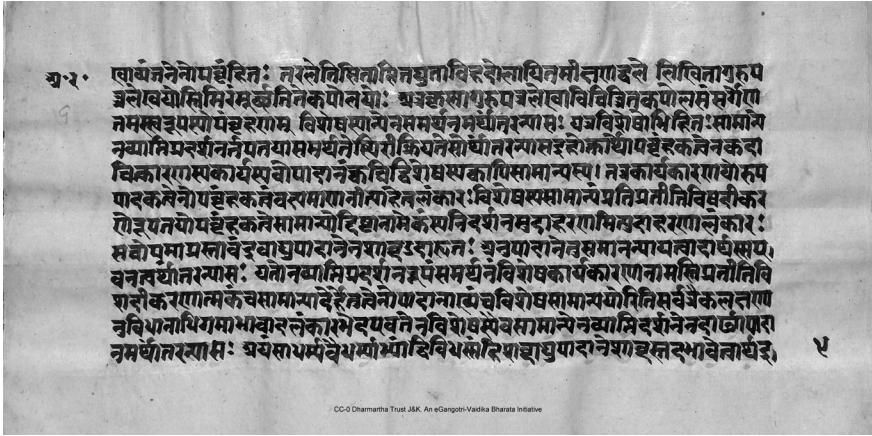
So far, I have collected photocopies of seven manuscripts of the *Alaṃkāratnākara*, designated as  $J_A$ ,  $J_O$ ,  $K_O$ ,  $O_X$ ,  $P_D$ ,  $P_\xi$  and  $V_A$ . Overviews are given as follows:

### 2.1 $J_A$ : MS preserved at the Raghunath Temple, Jammu

The title of this manuscript given on the cover is *Alaṃkāratnākaraḥ*. It is documented in Patkar (1973), pp. 266–267, index code 805 Gha. According to the information therein, its size is 35.5×19.2 cm and it consists of totally 128 folios, but folio 12 and 16 are missing. Each folio contains 12 lines, and each line contains 29 or 30 *akṣara*-s (syllables) (folios 1 to 6), or 36 *akṣara*-s (starting from folio 7). The manuscript is incomplete, and the pagination ends at 74, then a separate pagination starts and continues up to 54. It is a paper manuscript written in what can be called “Jammu-Devanāgarī” script (Picture 1). The final rubric reads *kṛtir mahopādhyāya-bhaṭṭatrayaiśvaramantraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ paṇḍitabhṭaśrīśobhākaramitrasya*. The colophon after the final rubric reads *śrīśrīvaśarmaputreṇa prajñālavavatā mayā ratnākaraḥbidhaḥ pauṣe laṃkāro likhitaḥ śubhaḥ*, so we know that the scribe is the son of a Śrīvaśarman, and he copied this text in Pauṣa month. The manuscript is well preserved and contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s. The date of copying is unknown, but we may suppose that it was produced in late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In  $J_A$ , *sa* and *ma* appear similar in many occasions, and we can only determine the correct one with the help of the context. In some cases, *pa* is also written in a similar way as that of *sa* and *ma*. The “Jammu-Devanāgarī” script with thick strokes also makes the identification of each letter more difficult. The sign of the vowel *e* and *o* can be misplaced in some cases, as in the sentence *anayoś ca hatverthasya yadāder upadānāc chābdam sādhanatvam*, where *hatverthasya* should be corrected to *hetvarthasya*. *Akṣara*-s of nasal consonants are in most cases replaced by *anusvāra*. Full stop of sentence is denoted by blank space in most places, as we can see in the first, second, eighth, ninth and twelfth lines

of Picture 1, and in the remaining cases denoted by single or double *daṇḍa*-s (vertical strokes denoting the end of a sentence). The omission of initial vowel is not denoted by *avagraha* or any other sign. When a line ends with an independent vowel *akṣara* which is the initial of an independent word, this vowel is denoted with a short vertical stroke on its lower right, as we can see at the end of the eighth and the twelfth lines.

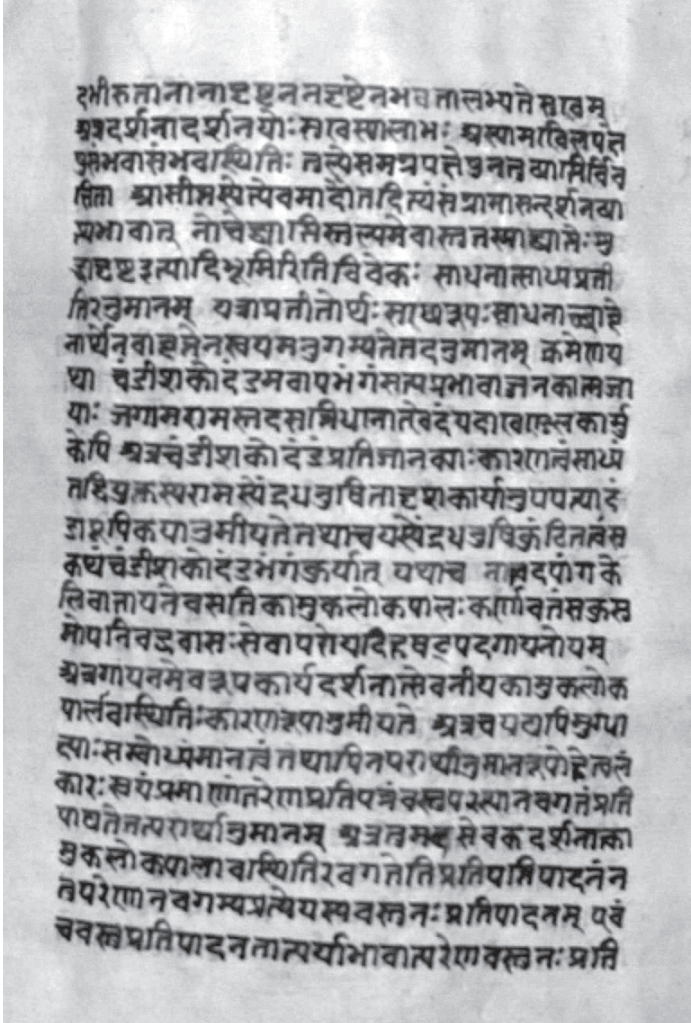


**Picture 1:** Folio 9v2 (83v) of *J<sub>A</sub>*. Content: The rhetorical figures of *samādhi* (promotion) and *arthāntaranyāsa* (poetical substantiation)<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.2 *J<sub>0</sub>*: MS preserved at the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur

The title of this manuscript given on the cover is *Alaṅkāraratnākara*. It is documented in Jinavijaya (1968), pp. 370–371, catalogue number 7043 E, deposit number 11105. According to the information provided by Jinavijaya, its size is 17.4×24.9 cm and it consists of totally 121 folios. Each

3 This term is difficult to translate. Gerow 1971 suggests the translation “introduction of another matter” or “apodixis”, but both do not thoroughly cover the extent of this figure. For Śobhākara, the core of this figure is a substantiation (*samarthana*) of a general case by means of a specific one, so only the appellation “substantiation” is not enough to fully describe it. Here I translate it as “poetical substantiation”, but it may be better to keep it untranslated. As a matter of fact, different figures of speech have different meanings for different authors, so it is impossible to find a translation that fits all versions of a single figure.



Picture 2: Folio 83r of  $J_0$ . Content: The ending of the section of *vyāpti* (universal pervasion), the definition and explanation of *anumāna* (poetical inference).



folio contains 24 lines, and each line contains 18 to 20 *akṣara*-s. The manuscript is complete. It is a paper manuscript written in Devanāgarī script. The final rubric reads *kṛtir mahopādhyāyabhaṭṭatrayīśvaramitraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ paṇḍitabhaṭṭaśrīśobhākaramitrasya*. The colophon after the final rubric reads *śrīśrīvaśarmaputreṇa prajñālavavatā mayā ratnākarābhidhaḥ poṣe laṃkāro likhitaḥ śubhaḥ*. The manuscript is well preserved and contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s. The date of copying is unknown, but Jinavijaya suggests that the text was copied in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The catalogue documents the name of the scribe as Śrīvaśarmaputra.

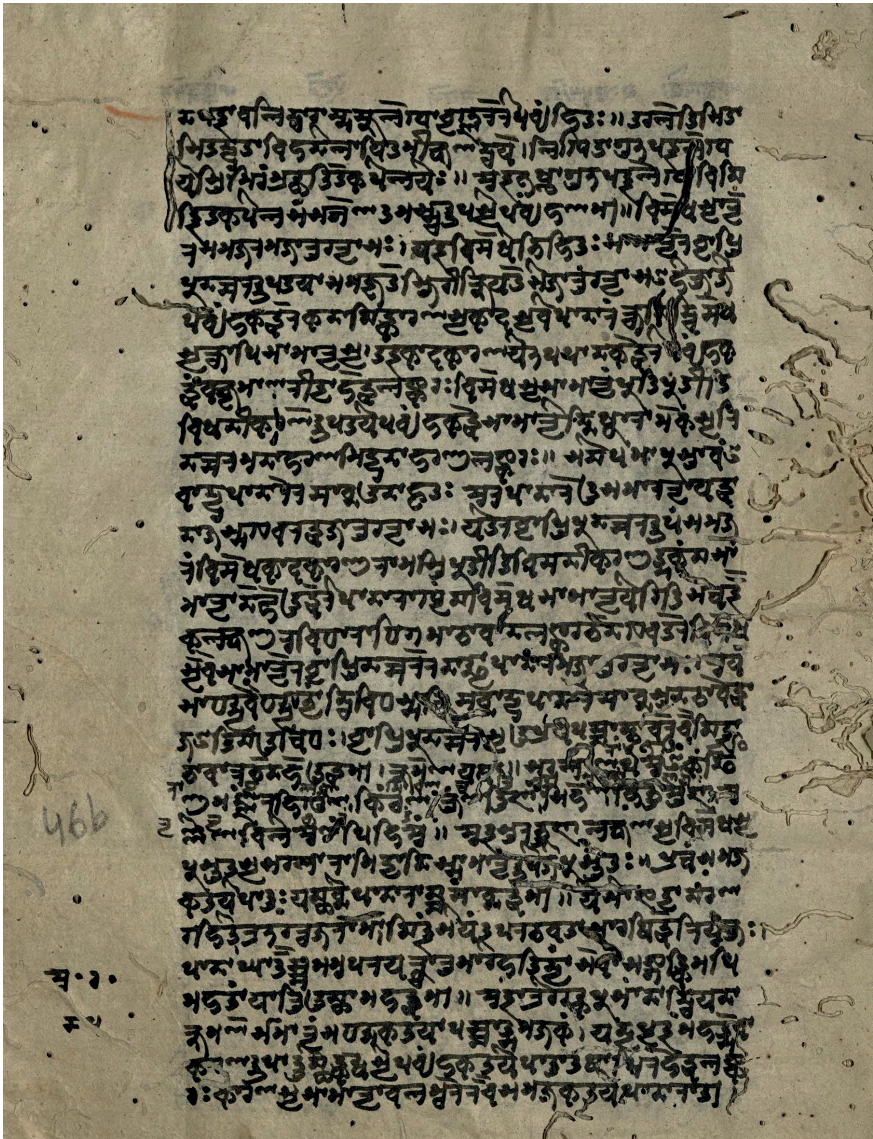
Like the situation in  $J_A$ , *sa*, *ma* and *pa* are also mixed up in  $J_O$ . The Devanāgarī script in this manuscript shows thick strokes, which also makes the identification of similar *akṣara*-s difficult (Picture 2). The sign of the vowel *e* and *o* can be misplaced in some cases. *na* and *la* can also be mistaken in some cases. *akṣara*-s of nasal consonants are in most cases replaced by *anusvāra*. Full stop of sentence is denoted by blank space. Omission of initial vowel is not denoted with *avagraha* or any other sign.

### 2.3 $K_O$ : MS preserved at the Asiatic Society, Kolkata

The title of this manuscript given on the cover is *Alaṅkāratnākarah*. It is documented in Shāstrī (1931), p. 429, catalogue number 4855, deposit number G 1553. Shāstrī mentions that “Yaśaskara wrote the Devī-stotra for illustrating each of the *sūtra*-s of Śobhākara; and Ratna-kaṇṭha in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century explained how a verse of the hymn explained a *sūtra*.”<sup>4</sup> According to the curator’s record and the information in the catalogue, its size is 17×25.5 cm and it consists of totally 72 folios. Each folio contains 30 lines, and each line contains 30 *akṣara*-s. The manuscript is complete. It is a Kāśmīrā paper manuscript written in mediaeval Kāśmīrī (Śaradā) script. The final rubric reads *kṛtir mahopādhyāyabhaṭṭatrayīśvaramantraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ paṇḍitabhaṭṭaśrīśobhākaramitrasya*. The colophon after the final rubric reads *śrīśrīvaśarmaputreṇa prajñālavavatā mayā ratnākarābhidhaḥ poṣe laṃkāro likhitaḥ śubhaḥ*. The manuscript was damaged by worms, as visible in the margins of the folio shown in Picture 3, and it contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s. The date of copying is

4 Shāstrī 1931, p. cccxxv.





Picture 3: Folio 46v from K<sub>o</sub>. Content: The ending of the section of *samādhi*, the definition and explanation of *arthāntaranyāsa*.

unknown, but seems old. For the time being, I can only roughly give the date of copying as the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This manuscript contains plenty of marginal notes. It may have been used for studying the *Alaṃkāraṭnākara*, since the marginal notes include quotations from the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*, auto-commentaries to its difficult phrases and words, corrections of *akṣara*-s, and partial *chāyā*-s (Sanskrit paraphrase) for the Prakrit verses<sup>5</sup>. Two *citrakāvya*-s (figurative poetry)<sup>6</sup> are drawn on the front cover, one being in the form of a sword, and the other in the form of a lotus. Two passages containing discussion on grammatical topics are written in the blank area between the two *citrakāvya*-s. *ḥihvāmūlīya* (the *visarga* appearing before the consonants *k* and *kh*) and *upadhmanīya* (the *visarga* appearing before the consonants *p* and *ph*) appear before *k/kh* and *p/ph* respectively instead of the normal *visarga*.

The two *citrakāvya*-s (Picture 4) are actually the first two examples of the rhetorical figure *citra* (pictorial poetry) in the *Alaṃkāraṭnākara*. I decode the text contained in them as follows:

*khaḍgabandha* (sword):

*sādarā pāpahaṇe saṃcārajitasārasā |*  
*sā rātu hāsabhāsā tu mukhapadmā rasāvahā ||*  
*sā durgā pātu vo dhairyadhūtadānavasāhasā |*  
*sārasābhamukhacchāyā jitasamṭatatāmasā ||*<sup>7</sup>

*padmabandha* (lotus):

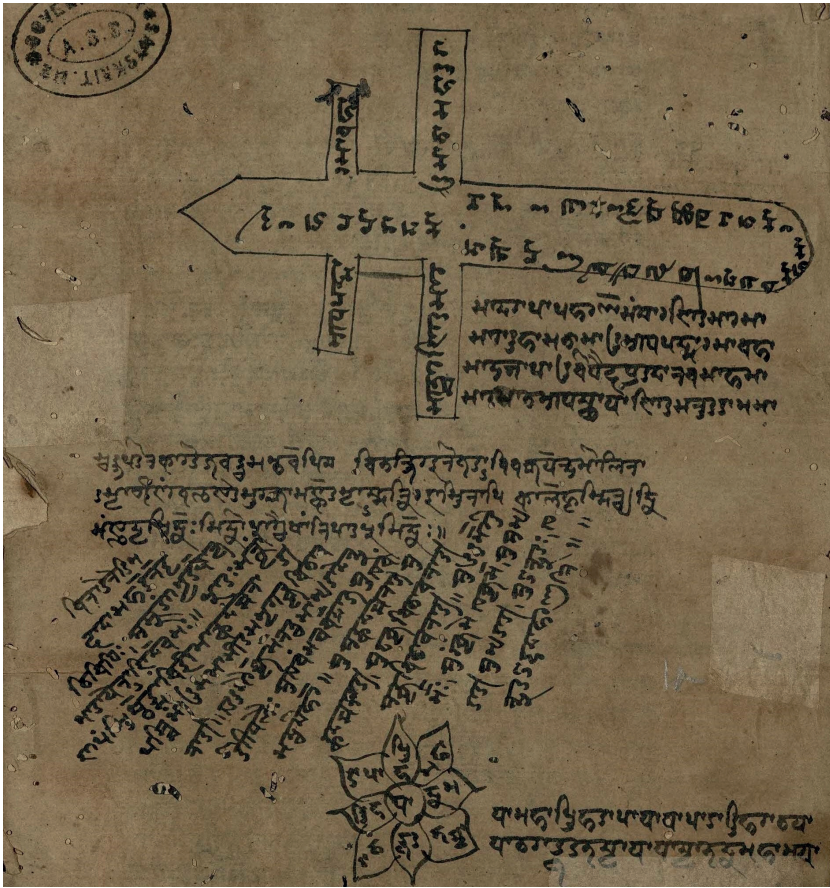
*yā mahāptihatāpāyā yā pātārtiharābhayā |*  
*yā bharāt kṛtarucyāyā yāñcāruddhamahāmayā ||*

5 The *chāyā*-s usually appear between the lines of the main text, as we can observe in Picture 3, but in some places, they appear in the margins.

6 This term has several alternative expressions: *citra*, *citrabandha*, *bandhacitra* or simply *bandha*. Lienhard translates it as *carmen figuratum* and observes its two characteristics: one is “limiting the number of phonemes (usually consonants) in a stanza to one, two or only a few”, the other is “arranging the syllables in a definite, predetermined order” (Lienhard 1984, p. 154). Battistini states that it “can indicate both word plays in general (riddles, palindromes, tongue-twisters) and pictorial stanzas in a narrower sense” (Battistini 2014, p. 21, Śobhākara 2). In this paper, *citrakāvya* is used to denote pictorial stanzas.

7 Śobhākara puts *pāda* c and d first in the *Alaṃkāraṭnākara*.





Picture 4: Front cover of K<sub>0</sub>.

As for the *khadgabandha*, first we need to rotate it by 90 degrees with its blade directed downward. We start from the *sā* in the center of the sword, then move upward and read *da rā pā pa ha ra ṇe* on the hilt; then start from the left tip of the longer cross-guard and read *sa ṅcā ra ji ta sā ra* and come back to the centric *sā*. In this way, we get the first *pāda*. The second step also starts from the centric *sā* and continues from the right tip of the longer cross-guard, reading *rā tu hā sa bhā sā tu*, then move to the left tip of the shorter cross-guard and read *mu kha pa dmā ra sā va hā* until the right tip. In this way, we obtain the second *pāda*. The third step starts again from the centric *sā*, then we read the left side of the

blade downward until the *sā* on the tip of the blade as *sā du rgā pā tu vo dhai rya dhū ta dā na va sā ha sā*. In this way, we get the third *pāda*. The last step starts from the *sā* on the tip of the blade and reading the right side of the blade upward as *sā ra sā bha mu kha cchā yā ji ta saṃ ta ta tā ma*, and finally ends at the centric *sā*. In this way, the fourth *pāda* is also obtained.

Leveille (2017) discovers the way of deciphering the lotus graph. According to the method he explained, we need to start from the *yā* in the center, then turn to the pedal on the top right with *ma hā*, next turn to the pedal on the top middle and read *pti ha*, next turn to the pedal on the top left and read *tā pā*, and next come back to the *yā* in the middle. In this way, we obtain the first *pāda* of the *padmabandha*. The second step also starts from the *yā* in the center, then we need to move back to the pedal with *tā pā*, but read it in an opposite direction as *pā tā*; next move to the pedal on the middle left and read *rti ha*; next move to the pedal on the lower left and read *rā bha*, and move back again to the *yā* in the center. In this way, we obtain the second *pāda*. The complete procedure of reading *akṣara*-s is given in Picture 5, though the position of each pedal is different from that in Picture 4.

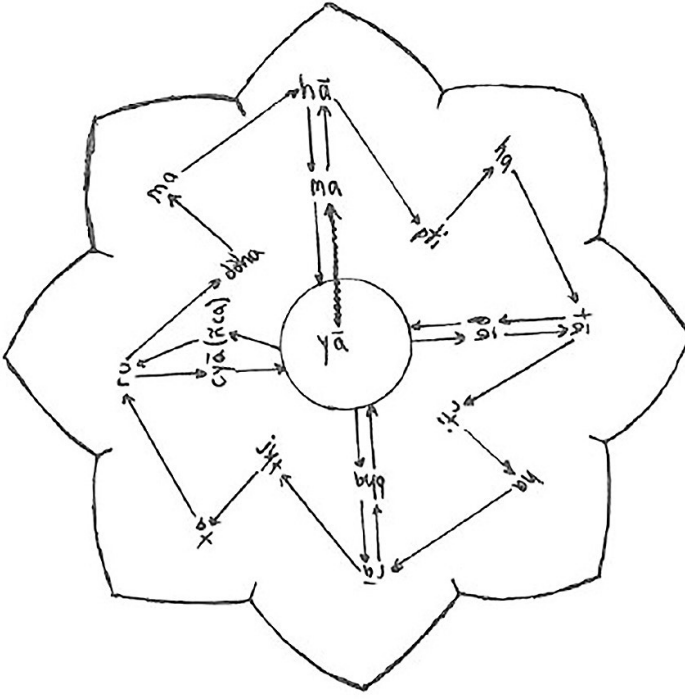
The two *citrakāvya*-s are constructed as separate verses, but they form one unified text. The whole text depicts a pious devotee to the goddess Durgā. In the following translation, I put the lotus-formed *citrakāvya* before the sword-formed *citrakāvya*, and place the second part of the sword-formed *citrakāvya* before the first part, as Śobhākara does in the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*.

Leveille only provides the translation of the verse contained in the lotus graph, which runs as follows:

She who kills misfortune by means of her auspiciousness  
 She who fearlessly removes pain with a strike<sup>8</sup>  
 She, the one who fully manifests the arrival of light  
 And she, the one who hinders great sickness by means of her  
 inclination<sup>9</sup>

8 Leveille's interpretation of *pātārtiharābhayā* is presumably as a compound: *yā pātānām ārtihare abhayā* (with *abhayā* as an adjective). This should be translated as follows: she who is fearless in the removal of suffering from calamities. One could also read *pātārtiharābhayā* as two words.

9 Leveille 2017, p. 18.



**Picture 5:** The order of syllables in the lotus-formed *citrakāvya* in Leveille 2017, p. 19.

I translate the verses contained in the sword graph as follows:

May Durgā protect you  
 She who through [her] firmness destroyed the impetuosity  
 of the Dānava-s  
 The lustre of whose face resembles the red lotus  
 Defeats the impenetrable darkness  
 She who is zealous to remove sin  
 She whose gait defeats that of the swans  
 She whose lotus-face, shining with a smile, brings gladness  
 May she give benefit [to you]

## 2.4 O<sub>x</sub>: MS preserved at the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, England

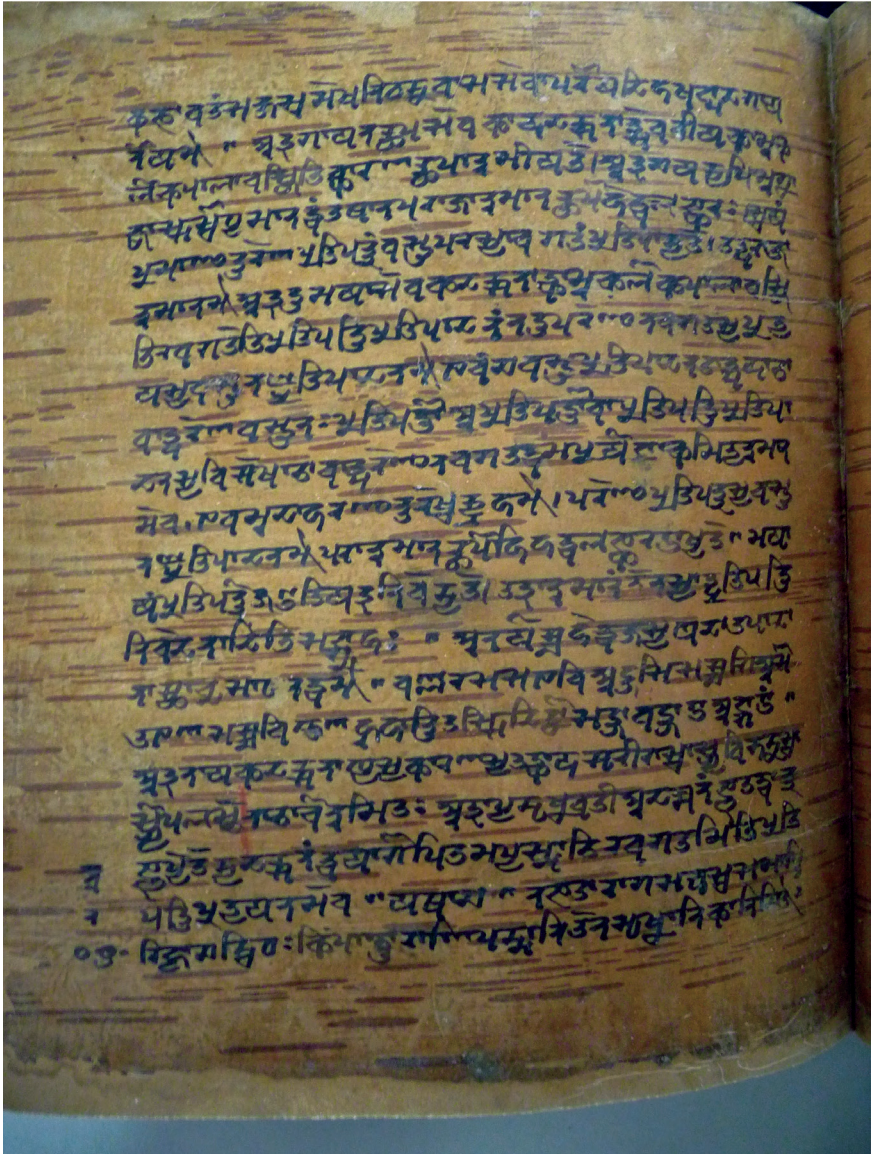
The title of this manuscript given on the spine is Śobhākareśvaramitra's *Alaṅkāratnākara*. It is documented in Winternitz and Keith (1905), pp. 142–143, catalogue number 1162 (1–5), shelf number MS Sansk d. 87. The manuscript forms the main part of a larger collection which consists of five different texts: a fragment of the seventh act of the *Abhijñānaśakuntala*; the *Alaṅkāratnākara*; a fragment of the *Kāmasūtra* and a commentary; a fragment of the *Śabdavyāparavicāra* of Mammaṭa; and part of the *chāyā* for the Prakrit verses in the *Alaṅkāratnākara*. This last section starts from the Prakrit verses under the twenty-fourth figure *pratīpa* to those under the sixty-eighth figure *udreka*. According to the information in the catalogue, the size of this manuscript is 8.75×9.625 inches (circa 22.2×24.5 cm). Folio number are written up to 163, but folios 1 to 41 are lost, and folio 79 is doubled, so it really consists of totally 127 folios. Several folios are seriously damaged. Each folio contains 21 lines, and each line contains 25 *akṣara*-s (Picture 6). The *Alaṅkāratnākara* starts from folio 49v and ends on folio 156r, and it is complete. The manuscript is made of birch bark and written in Śāradā script. The final rubric of the *Alaṅkāratnākara* reads *ḥrtir mahopādhyāyaṇḍitabhāṭṭa-trayīśvaramitraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ ṇḍitabhāṭṭaśrīśobhākareśvaramittrasya*. The colophon after the final rubric reads *iti śubhaṃ | śrīr astu || aśuddhatvam ādarśadoṣāt | śrīgaṇeśāya namaḥ || om namas sarasvatyai*. The manuscript is generally in good condition and it contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s of the *Alaṅkāratnākara*. The date of copying is written on the last line of folio 49r, which reads *saṃ 52 pau śuti 11 gurau*. This corresponds to January the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1677 A.D.<sup>10</sup> Winternitz and Keith give 1676 A.D. as the time of copying.

This manuscript has been discussed and analyzed in Vasudeva (2016). Judged from the handwriting style, the *Abhijñānaśakuntala* and the *Alaṅkāratnākara* seem to have been written by one hand, the *Kāmasūtra* and the *Śabdavyāparavicāra* seem to have been written by another hand, and the *chāyā* for the Prakrit verses was written by a third hand.<sup>11</sup>

10 Vasudeva 2016, p. 500. See Sewell & Bālkriṣṇa Dīkṣit 1896 and Sircar 1965 for the rules of date calculation.

11 See Vasudeva 2016, pp. 499–500; Winternitz and Keith 1905, p. 142.





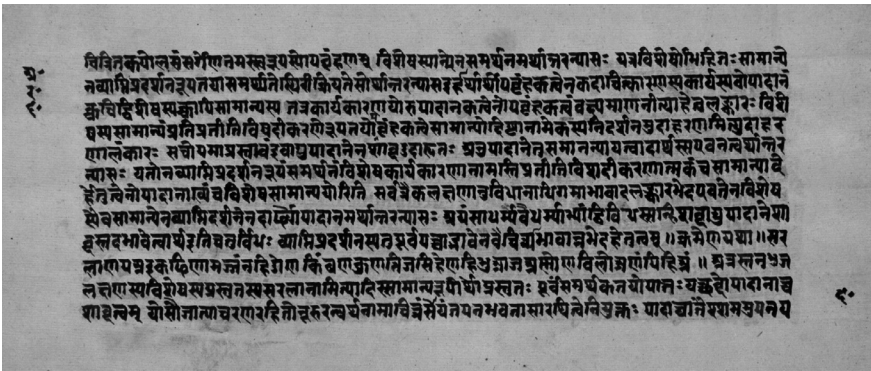
Picture 6: Folio 120v from O<sub>x</sub>. Content: The examples and explanations of *anumāna*.

*Jihvāmūlīya* and *upadhmānīya* appear before *k/kh* and *p/ph* respectively instead of the normal *visarga*.

2.5 P<sub>D</sub>: MS preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune

The title of this manuscript given on the cover is *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. It is documented in Gode (1936), pp. 15–16, catalogue number 227/1875–76. According to the information therein, its size is 14×6 inches (around 35.6×15.2 cm) and it consists of totally 94 folios. Folios 92 to 101 are missing. Each folio contains 12 lines, and each line contains 52 *akṣara*-s (Picture 7). The manuscript is incomplete. It is a paper manuscript written in Devanāgarī script. The final rubric reads *kr̥tir mahopādhyāyabhaṭṭatrayīśvaramantraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ paṇḍitabhaṭṭaśrīśobhākaramitrasya*. The colophon after the final rubric reads *śrīśrīvaśarmaputreṇa prajñālavavatā mayā ratnākaraḥbidhaḥ poṣe laṃkāro likhitaḥ śubhaḥ*. The manuscript is well preserved and contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s. The date of copying is unknown, but Gode believes that it is not old. I presume that the date of copying may be late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This manuscript is used by Devadhar as the main source of his edition. It also contains plentiful marginal notes. The *akṣara*-s *sa*, *ma* and *pa* may confuse readers and curators of the manuscript because of their similar appearance, but not as frequent as the conditions in J<sub>A</sub> and J<sub>O</sub>.



Picture 7: Folio 60v from P<sub>D</sub>. Content: The rhetorical figure of *samādhi* and *arthāntaranyāsa*.



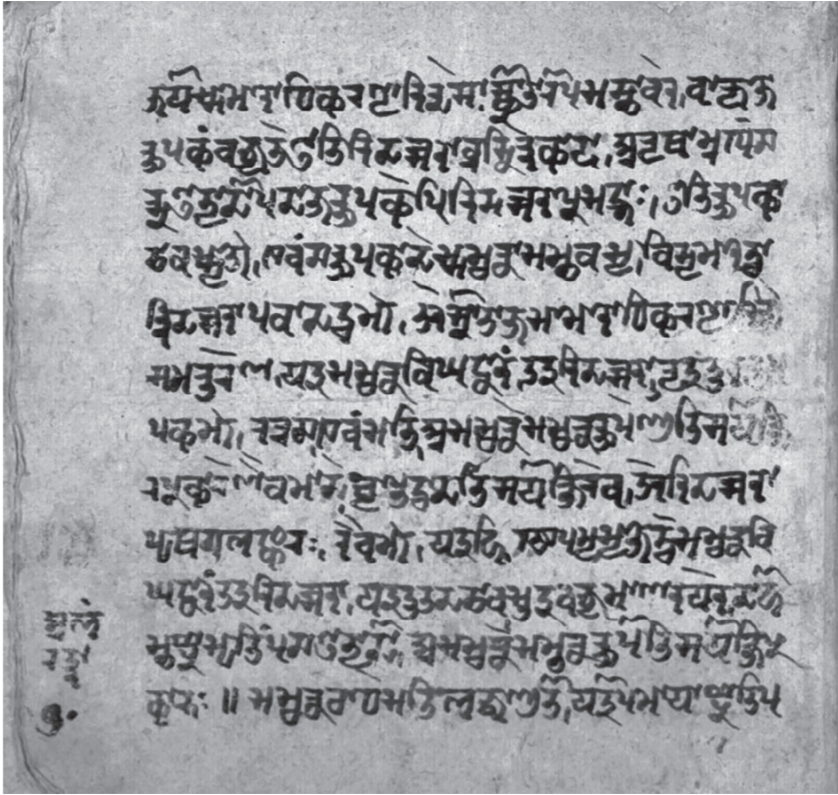
## 2.6 P<sub>5</sub>: MS preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune

The title of this manuscript given on the cover is *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. It is documented in Gode (1936), p. 15, catalogue number 227A/1875–76. The manuscript forms one part of a larger collection which consists of the following rhetorical treatises: *Alaṃkārasarvasva* (1v–110r), *Alaṃkārasarvasvasūtrāṇi* (110v–113v), *Alaṃkāraratnākarasūtrāṇi* (113v–117v), *Alaṃkāraratnākaraṣṭakāṅkṛtagāthāsaṃskṛtikaraṇam* (118r–134v), *Alaṃkāravimarśinī* (separate pagination 1v–255r), and *Alaṃkāraratnākara* (separate pagination 2v–23r). The *Alaṃkāraratnākara* in this collection is fragmentary, starting from the middle of the *vṛtti* of the first rhetorical figure *punaruktavadābhāsa* (“seeming tautology”) and ends with the first sentence of the *vṛtti* of the twentieth rhetorical figure *vinoda* (“relief of eagerness”). According to the information in the catalogue, the size of this manuscript is 7.25×7.25 inches (circa 18.4×18.4 cm). The manuscript is made of country paper and written in Śāradā script. The explicit reads *anyāsaṅgāt kautukavinodo vinodaḥ || asannihite ’nubhūte ’nanubhūte ’pi vābhilaṣyamāne rthe praticchanda*. The manuscript is generally in good condition, but some passages are comparably vague due to the fade of ink. All manuscripts in the collection are combined together with a leather cover. The date of copying of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* is not mentioned, but the explicit of the *Alaṃkāraratnākarasūtrāṇi* gives the date as *saṃvat 15 śrāvati aṣṭamyāṃ śanivāsare*. This era is presumably the *Saptarṣi* era widely used in Kashmir. Characteristically, this era does not indicate centuries. By using the *Pancanga* 3.14 provided by M. Yano,<sup>12</sup> we arrive at three possible dates: August the 2<sup>nd</sup> in A.D. 1439, August the 21<sup>st</sup> in A.D. 1639 and September the 1<sup>st</sup> in A.D. 1839. If one judges from Picture 8 given below, the last date seems the most probable.

The *Alaṃkārasarvasvasūtrāṇi* and the *Alaṃkāraratnākaraṣṭakāṅkṛtagāthāsaṃskṛtikaraṇam* were utilized by Devadhar for reconstructing the lost passages in P<sub>D</sub>,<sup>13</sup> but it seems that he was not aware of the rest of the whole collection. Two *citrakāvya*-s are attached after the explicit on the last folio (Picture 9), which are generally the same as those in K<sub>O</sub>.

12 <https://www.cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp/~yanom/pancanga/>.

13 See Devadhar 1942, p. iii.

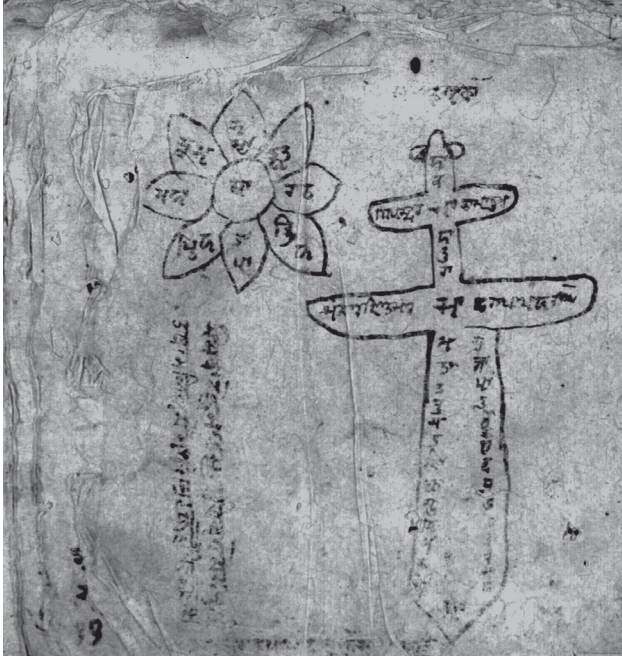


Picture 8: Folio 20v from P<sub>5</sub>. Content: The examples and explanations of the figure *nidarśanā* (negative illustration<sup>14</sup>).

2.7 V<sub>A</sub>: MS preserved at the Sarasvati Bhavan Library, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi

The title of this manuscript given by the curator is *Alaṅkāraṭnākarah*. It is documented in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts Acquired for and Deposited in the Sanskrit University Library (Sarasvati Bhavana), Varanasi, during the years 1791–1950*, Vol. 11, pp. 78–79, catalogue number 41264. According to the information therein, its size is 91×4, without unit of length. It consists of totally 253 folios, but folio 1

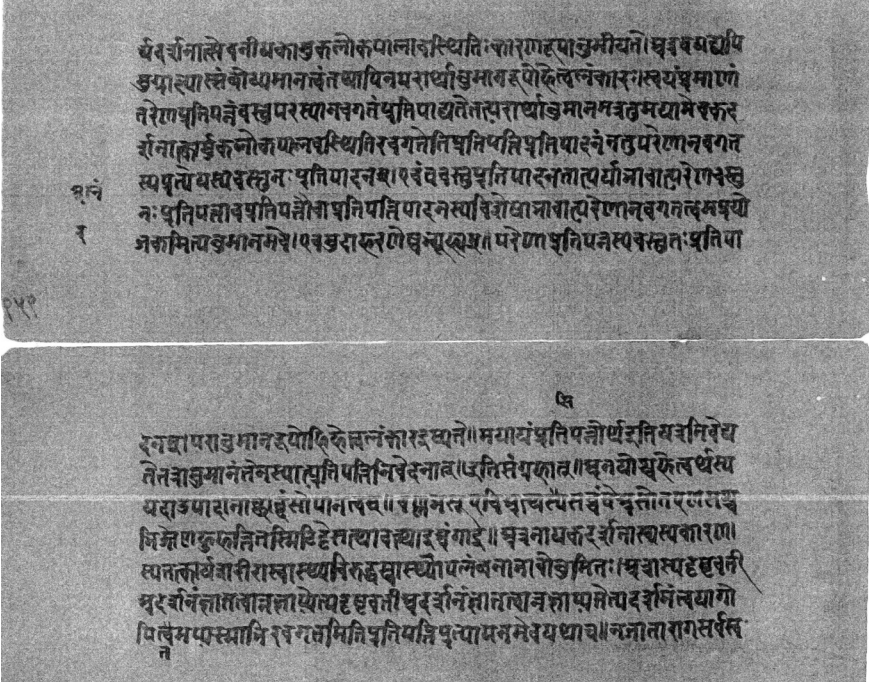
14 I follow the translation of this rhetorical figure in Gerow 1971, p. 202.



**Picture 9:** The last folio of  $P_s$ , containing the same two *citrakāvya*-s as in  $K_o$ .

and folios after 254 are missing. Each folio contains 7 lines, and each line contains 29 to 32 *akṣara*-s (Picture 10). The manuscript is incomplete. It is a paper manuscript written in Devanāgarī script. The explicit reads *vipphu || visphuritāratnena kaustubhena śobhā yasya taṃ visphuritaratnaśobham | vilāsenā pītam aṃbaram yasya taṃ vilāsapītāmbaram | sahavanamālayāmuṣyapattram ayyāvartate yas taṃ sava*, which is the *chāyā* and explanation for Prakrit verses in the *Alaṃkāratnākara*. The manuscript is well preserved and contains both *sūtra*-s and *vṛtti*-s, but some folios show traces of water stains. The date of copying is unknown, but we may suppose it to be late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This manuscript contains marginal notes and corrections. The *Alaṃkāratnākara* in this manuscript does not contain its first folio. Its final rubric on folio 237r reads *kṛtir mahopādhyāyapaṇḍitabhaṭṭaśrītrayaīśvaramitraputrasya tatrabhavataḥ paṇḍitabhaṭṭaśrīśobhākareśvaramittrasya*. After the *Alaṃkāratnākara*, I find the following additional contents: 6 verses praising Viṣṇu and Śiva (237v to 238r), a complete *sūtrapāṭha* of the



Picture 10: Folios 151v and 152r from V<sub>A</sub>. Content: The examples and explanations of *anumāna*.

*Alaṃkāraratnākara* (238v to 242r), and an incomplete *Alaṃkāraratnākare prākṛtagāthānām saṃskṛtikaraṇam* (“Sanskrit translation of the Prakrit verses given in the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*”) which ends in the middle of the commentary to a Prakrit verse under the rhetorical figure *vikalpa* (option from two opposite alternatives). I transliterate and translate the 6 praising verses as follows:

*yasyaikasyaiva doṣṇām jayati daśaśatī sāvayō dvāri rudraḥ  
 kāragāre surāṇām patir api ca śacī cāmaravyagrahastā |  
 kanyā tasyaivam ekā rajanīcarapater eṣa śuddhāmtam eko  
 bālo niḥśaṃkam asyāḥ praviśati ca namas tejase vaiṣṇavāya<sup>15</sup>  
 || 1 ||  
 (Metre: Sragdharā)*

15 This verse can be found in the *Alaṃkāravimarśinī*, within the commentary to the rhetorical figure *parikara* (entourage of attributes).



The unique one (i.e., Bāṇāsura), whose one thousand arms are triumphant, he at whose door Rudra together with retinue is [standing guard], he in whose prison [languish] the lord of gods (i.e., Indra) and Śacī, turning the chowrie in her hand; this lord of *rākṣasa*-s (i.e., Bāṇāsura) has one daughter (i.e., Uṣā); and one boy (i.e., Aniruddha) fearlessly enters her harem.<sup>16</sup> Homage to the glory of Viṣṇu!

*vajraṃ mālyati kuṭṭimaty atha sarinnāthaḥ phaṇī hārati*  
*śrīkhaṇḍaty analo marud vipinaty dhvāṃtaṃ tamīkāṃtati |*  
*pīyūṣaty apī kālakūṭam upalo ratnaty arir mitrati*  
*śvabhraṃ harmyati yady asau bhava bhavatpādāravindha(sic!)*  
*stutiḥ || 2 ||*

(Metre: Śārdūlavikrīḍitam)

Lightning is like a garland, the ocean looks like stucco (resembling milk-ocean because of white color), serpents act like [pearl] necklaces, fire resembles sandalwood, storm wind behaves like a swaying forest, darkness acts like the moon, even poison acts like nectar, rock looks like jewel, enemies act like friends, cliffs look like palaces. If, oh Śiva, this praise to your lotus-feet (*pādāravinda*) [is recited], then [these miracles will take place]!

*paryāṃke gahane vane sapavane kūle jale sīmani*  
*vyomni svairiṇi yāṃni<sup>17</sup> dhanvani phale mūle dale kandale |*  
*vyāle maṃtriṇi potriṇi dviradane kiṭe kva tena sthitis*  
*tenodgaccha kuto pi darśaya mukhaṃ śambho nibaddho ṃjaliḥ*  
*|| 3 ||*

(Metre: Śārdūlavikrīḍitam)

On a bed, in an abyss, in a forest, in the wind, on a shore, in the water, on the boundary, in the sky, in an independent process of going/independent invocation, in a fruit, in a root, on a leaf, on the cheek, in a tiger, in a minister/an enchanter,

16 The story of Uṣā, daughter of Bāṇāsura, and Aniruddha is narrated in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Skandha 10, Chapter 61–63. See also Mani 1975, p. 43.

17 Should be corrected to *dhāṃni*?

in a boar, in an elephant, in a worm: where do you not exist?  
Therefore, come forth from wherever you are and show your  
face, oh Śambhu! [My] hands are formed in salutation [to you].

*kaḥ śrīkhaṇḍataruṃ vihāya bhajate saktiṃ karīrāmtike  
kas tyaktvā pīkahumkṛtāni kurute kākadhvaniṃ karṇayoḥ |  
kaṃthe kācalalantikāṃ diśati ko nirmucya muktāvaliṃ  
hitvā tvāṃ śāsikhaṇḍaśekhara paraṃ lokaḥ śrayaty atra kam  
|| 4 ||*

(Metre: Śārdūlavikrīḍitam)

Who, scorning the sandal wood tree, enjoys being near the  
*karīra*-shrub?

Who, turning away from the cooing of cuckoos, gives ear to  
the sound of crows?

Who, discarding a pearl necklace, displays a necklace of glass  
beads on his neck?

Except you, on whom the whole world depends, oh you whose  
crown is the digit of the moon?

*āsvādagandhadhavalatvaguṇā yathaiva  
nābhedato na ca pṛthag ghanasārakhaṇḍe |  
nityas tathā paramadhāmani poṣphurīti  
ko py eṣa devagurumaṃtramayas taramgaḥ || 5 ||*

(Metre: Vasantatilakam)

This eternal, inconceivable wave consisting of gods, precep-  
tors and sacred words (*mantra*), shines forth repeatedly in the  
supreme domain, neither [three elements] in amalgam nor  
separately, just as the qualities of refreshing power (literally  
tasting), fragrance and whiteness [existing] in the wood of the  
camphor tree.

*ekayā dve viniścītya trīṃś caturbhir vaśīkuru |  
pañca jītvā vīditvā ṣaṭ sapta jītvā sukhībhava || 6 ||*

(Metre: Anuṣṭubh)

*ekayā prajñayā dve kāryākārye viniścītya trīn śatrumitra-  
madhyasthān catu*

Discriminating the two (Right and wrong) by means of the one (Intellect), bring under thy subjection the three (Friend, stranger, foe) by means of four (Conciliation, gift, disunion and severity), and also conquering the five (Five senses) and knowing the six (Treaty, war, etc.), and abstaining from the seven (Women, dice, hunting, harshness of *speech*, drinking, severity of punishment, waste of wealth), be happy.<sup>18</sup>

Discriminating by means of the one, *i.e.*, by intellect, the two, *i.e.*, right and wrong. The three [means] friends, stranger, and foe. [By means of] four...

### 3. Observations

Here I provide some observations concerning the relationship between these manuscripts according to my experience in making a critical edition of selected sections of the *Alaṃkāratnākara*.

#### 3.1 Similarity of $J_A$ and $J_O$

In comparison to other manuscripts, these two share similar readings in most passages. Both manuscripts mix up *sa* and *ma* on many occasions, and in some cases even mix them up with *pa*. As for the different readings between  $J_A$  and  $J_O$ , a number of them are due to the similarity of cursive writing of letters (e.g., *na* and *la*), wrong placement of vowel signs and the loss of *anusvāra*. The scripts used in these two manuscripts with thick strokes also makes the identification of each letter more difficult. It is possible that they come from one group of the transmission of the *Alaṃkāratnākara*.

#### 3.2 Common points of $K_O$ and $P_D$

Except for *akṣara*-s and ligatures with similar appearances, which have been pointed out by Slaje,<sup>19</sup>  $K_O$  shares in most places the same marginal

18 I use the translation and the interpretations given in Sternbach 1980, p. 1881. See there for its source.

19 Slaje 1993, pp. 43–45.

notes as those in  $\mathbf{P}_D$ . The content includes the explanation of the current text, the demonstration of other relating figures and Ruyyaka's opinion in the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*. I take the following two pictures (11 and 12) as examples:

As is visible in the two pictures, there are three different marginal notes to the main text. I transliterate them as follows (Picture 12):

*anyatra **saṅkhyāniyame pūrvam chekānuprāsaḥ** || (*Alaṃkārasarvasva* 4)*

***sarpa sarpa liṅga liṅga** ity atra arpa arpa iṅga iṅga iti **dva-yoḥ dvayoḥ svaravyanjanasamudāyayoḥ sāmīyam** || (*Alaṃkāraratnākara* 3)*

***vyañjanamātrasamudāyayor veti vāśabdodāharaṇam āha** | **kim vāṣpeti** atra binduvṛnde ity atra vyañjanamātrasamudāyayor va sāmīyam | na tu (Picture 11 reads tu na) vyañjanasamudāyayoḥ | yataḥ pūrvadvike ikāra ukārayoḥ svarayoḥ samudāyaḥ | dvitīyadvike ṛkāra ekārayoḥ iti svaravaisādrśyam | vyañjanadvayasamudāyasya tu na kiñcid sādrśyam | bindu ity atra yathā nakāra vakārayoḥ samudāyaḥ tathā vṛnda ity atrāpi anayoḥ eveti bhāvah ||*

Content in bold is directly quoted from the *Alaṃkārasarvasva* and the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. The first marginal note quotes from the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*, and the second and the third are commentaries to the rhetorical figure *chekānuprāsa* (alliteration of similar pair sounds) in the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. These notes imply that their author is probably a learned scholar well-versed in Sanskrit rhetorics. In addition, the readings in  $\mathbf{K}_O$  and  $\mathbf{P}_D$  usually agree with each other, though in some cases we observe differences such as wrong spelling of vowels or consonants. Therefore, on the basis of these two points, we can make a supposition that  $\mathbf{K}_O$  and  $\mathbf{P}_D$  form a separate group in the transmission of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*.

### 3.3 Features of $\mathbf{O}_X$ and $\mathbf{V}_A$

$\mathbf{O}_X$  is quite unique with regard to other manuscripts because of the following two features: firstly, it is the only manuscript made of birch bark, which means that it is comparatively old; secondly, it contains extra contents which can help improve the readings in Devadhar's edition and reconstruct lost passages therein, although it sometimes does not help





much and even makes mistakes. The common point of  $O_x$  and  $V_A$  is that when editing the sections of *arthāntaranyāsa*, *anumāna* and *hetu* (poetical reason), I find that  $V_A$  and  $O_x$  usually provide the best candidate readings to improve Devadhar's edition when these two manuscripts read the same or similar. This demonstrates the possibility that they come down to scholars from the same "ancestor". Therefore, they can also form a separate group in the transmission of the text. Here I take the last part of the section on *hetu* as the example.

In my critical edition, this passage should read *kvacit tu parimlānaṃ pīnastanetyādaṃ nāṭakādiṣu nūnam ityādyabhāve 'pi prakaraṇādivāseṇa svayaṃ parāmarśaniścayād anumānam eva | evaṃ ca na jātā rāgasarvasvetyādaṃ svaparāmarśaniścaye hetvalaṅkāro 'yukta iti ||*.  $O_x$  and  $V_A$  read exactly the same, except that  $V_A$  mistakes *pīnastanetyādaṃ* as *pīnastanetrādaṃ*.  $J_o$  reads basically the same, but with more minor mistakes.  $J_A$ ,  $K_o$ ,  $P_D$  and Devadhar's edition do not contain the content from *nāṭakādiṣu* to *rāgasarvasvetyādaṃ*.<sup>20</sup> The extra content here actually has a close connection to its previous context because there Śobhākara is explaining the difference between *anumāna* and *hetu*. For examples of *anumāna*, the use of words such as *nūnam* (now, at present) and *jāne* (I know) is optional, and the key point is that these examples must contain an ascertainment of one's own reflection (*svaparāmarśaniścaya*). If this ascertainment does not exist, such example can only be a case of *hetu*. The verse starting with *parimlānaṃ pīnastana*<sup>21</sup> does contain the ascertainment of the speaker's

20 The skipped portion is a "saut du même au même" from *pīnastanetyādaṃ* to *rāgasarvasvetyādaṃ* because both contain *-etyādaṃ*, which can easily cause eye skip. This is a good reason to consider grouping  $J_A$ ,  $K_o$ ,  $P_D$  together. I would like to appreciate the anonymous reviewer for his/her suggestion of the term "saut du même au même".

21 *Ratnāvalīnāṭikā* 2.13: *parimlānaṃ pīnastanaḥḥanaṣaṅgād ubhayatas tanor madhyasyāntaḥ parimilanaṃ aprāpya haritaṃ | idaṃ vyastanyāsaṃ ślathabhujalātākṣepavalanaiḥ kṛśāṅgyāḥ saṃtāpaṃ vadati nalinīpatraśayanam ||*

This bed of lotus-leaves, withered on both sides owing to the contact of her stout breasts and hips, green (in the middle), not having come in close touch with her slender waist, and with its arrangement disordered by the tossings and turnings of her drooping creeper-like arms, tells of the torment of the slim-bodied one. (Translated by Kále, 1925, p. 25 of the English translation section.)

reflection;<sup>22</sup> so is the verse starting with *na jātā rāgasarvasva*,<sup>23</sup> quoted in the main text of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*. Therefore, even though we do not find words such as *nūnam* and *jāne* in these two verses, they are definitely cases of *anumāna*, not of *hetu*. However, Devadhar's edition reads *kvacit tu parimlānaṃ pīnastanetyādau svaparāmarśāniścaye hetvalaṅkāro yukta iti*, which is a wrong analysis of the verse.

### 3.4 Features of P<sub>5</sub>

This collection of the six manuscripts is particularly valuable in that it includes the polemics among the three aforementioned texts, the *Alaṃkārasarvasva*, the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* and the *Alaṃkāravimarśinī*. However, as has been mentioned previously, Devadhar only utilized the *Alaṃkāraratnākarasūtrāṇi* and the *Alaṃkāraratnākaraṣṭāgāthāsamskṛtikaraṇam* in this collection to reconstruct the missing passages and improve the readings in the P<sub>D</sub>.

Consequently, an important point that has not been noticed by Devadhar is that if one carefully compares the subtly different handwriting, it is clear that this collection is made up of three sections, each copied by a different scribe. The *Alaṃkārasarvasva*, the *Alaṃkārasarvasvasūtrāṇi* and the *Alaṃkāraratnākarasūtrāṇi* form the first section, and they share a continuous pagination. The *Alaṃkāraratnākaraṣṭāgāthāsamskṛtikaraṇam* and the *Alaṃkāravimarśinī* can be grouped together as the second section due to their graphic similarity. The *Alaṃkāraratnākara* alone form the third section.

The first folio of the *Alaṃkāravimarśinī* provides us with a specific date of copying, *saṃ 6 āṣāḍha śuti 12 bhau re*, i.e., in the year 6 of the *Saptaṛṣi* era, on the twelfth day in the waxing fortnight of Āṣāḍha month, Tuesday. This corresponds to June the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1730 A.D. (June the 16<sup>th</sup> in Julian). This date is different from any of the three possible dates of copying given in the description of P<sub>5</sub> (August the 2<sup>nd</sup> in A.D. 1439,

22 The context is that the Vidūṣaka tells the king his analysis of the heroine's love-sickness according to the situation on her bed, and the king, already aware of the Vidūṣaka's speech and the situation on the bed, makes a detailed self-ascertainment. Therefore, it is a case of *anumāna* for Śobhākara.

23 *Alaṃkāraratnākara* 78, v. 419: *na jātā rāgasarvasvasamāptir iha ced vidheḥ | kim pāṇḍurāṇi padmāni tena sṛṣṭāni kānicit ||*.

August the 21<sup>st</sup> in A.D. 1639 and September the 1<sup>st</sup> in A.D. 1839). Therefore, I presume that the three sections were copied separately, then the combination of the three sections happened at some time after Devadhar produced his edition.

#### 4. Conclusion

On the basis of the above analyses and observations, it is clear that  $J_A$ ,  $J_O$ ,  $K_O$  and  $P_D$  all contain the reference to the same scribe: the son of Śrīvaśarman. I presume that the passage with the reference to the scribe was copied from an apograph by all these manuscripts or one of them is the apograph for the others, either directly or indirectly. As for  $J_O$ , however, it is not a copy of this apograph because it contains the extra part of the *anumāna* section skipped by the other three. Its position in the stemma of manuscripts remains unclear for the time being, but it is no doubt crucial for reconstructing the stemma. Therefore, if we only take the sections of *anumāna* and *hetu* into consideration,  $J_A$ ,  $K_O$  and  $P_D$  can form a separate group in the transmission of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara*.  $O_X$  and  $V_A$  can form the second group based on the similarity of features described above. Yet, to locate  $P_ṣ$  has not been an easy task so far, since its features deserve further investigations. I presume that since the *Alaṃkārasarvasva* and the *Alaṃkāravimarśinī* are transmitted together with the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* in the collection that includes  $P_ṣ$ , this collection was probably intended for studying the theoretical difference between all the three Sanskrit rhetorical treatises by organizing them together chronologically for remembrance and comparison. The mysteries about the manuscripts of the *Alaṃkāraratnākara* can be solved only after the relation between the witnesses is discovered, especially by collating other parts of the text and finding more similar connecting errors. This will be one of the goals of my future research.

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## In Pursuit of Love: A Historical Analysis of 'Feeling' in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī*

Mercy Dutta\*

**Abstract:** Emotions and their aetiology were a major preoccupation of the composers of Sanskrit creative literature (*kāvya*) of the first millennium CE. Among the many extant literary compositions of the period Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* occupies a distinctive position as being among the earliest examples of prose (*gadya*) in which the author worked with the popular technique of emboxed stories steeped in sentimentality. This paper will look closely at the *Kādambarī* to explore the emotional world shaped by the *kāvyas*. Divided into two sections, this paper will first look at the role of stories and storytelling in informing ways of navigating the emotional universe of the first millennium CE and consequently the construction of the 'feeling community'. Following this, the second section will analyse the attitudes towards love and its myriad facets in early India through Bāṇa's lenses. By assessing the interactions between early Indian creative literature, particularly the *kathā*, and society, this paper will argue that by the mid-first millennium CE love emerged as a primary emotion that informed interpersonal relationships and group affinities of the post-Gupta period.

**Keywords:** *kathā*, Sanskrit *kāvya*, emotion, love, storytelling, post-Gupta

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## 1. Introduction

The construction and formalisation of emotion norms have attracted the attention of historians intending to assess the emotional past. When evaluating the history of emotions the preliminary issue that emerges involves the definition of terms like ‘emotion’ and ‘feeling’.<sup>1</sup> However, not every society has terms and definitions equivalent to the western concept of ‘emotion’ or ‘feeling’. Additionally, as Margrit Pernau has noted, the question of what ‘emotion’ is varies over time and space and sometimes this analytical category may even be untranslatable.<sup>2</sup> This issue becomes pronounced in the case of early India<sup>3</sup> where no precise equivalent in philosophical and religious lexicons to the term ‘emotion’ exists.<sup>4</sup> Most often the terms used in the Indian context would only overlap with the western notion of emotions and would not be fixed categories, often behaving as a combination of cognitive, conative, or affective states.

As a consequence of the above condition any discussion of emotions and their location within the early Indian context invariably brings up the aesthetic theory of *rasa* propounded by Bharata in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. In his famous *sūtra* on *rasa*, Bharata pointed out that the meaning of a work comes into being only if it is imbued with *rasa*:

*na hi rasād ṛte kaścīd arthaḥ pravartate; tatra vibhāvānubhāva-  
vyabhicārisaṃyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ.*

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1 Antonio Damasio defined emotions as ‘bioregulatory reactions’ that promote those physiological responses that assist us to survive and sustain our lives, thereby ensuring our well-being. Feelings on the other hand are, ‘mental representation of the physiologic changes that occur during an emotion’. He states that feeling is the perception of an emotional state as enacted in the body. An essential part of this is the enactment of emotions is the perception of the valences, that is the experience of pleasure or pain which in turn sets into motion mechanisms of award and aversion that are integral to emotive behaviour. Antonio Damasio 2004, p. 50–52.

2 Margrit Pernau 2016, p. 25.

3 The term ‘early India’ here refers to what Romila Thapar defines as the ‘early part of pre-modern south Asia’ spanning the time period preceding 1300 CE. However, for the present paper I am looking at creative compositions written in the first millennium CE, more specifically between 300 and 800 CE.

4 Daud Ali 2021, p. 129.



No meaning precedes (from speech) without (any kind of) Sentiment. The Sentiment is produced from a combination of Determinants, Consequents and Transitory States.<sup>5</sup>

Bharata's precept provides us with a point of entry into the question of emotions and their location within early Indian culture. According to this theory, *rasa* (essence or taste) arises in a spectator through the experience of *bhāvas*, which are psychophysical and affective states. Over a period spanning almost two millennia this aesthetic theory underwent myriad developments, with Abhinavagupta<sup>6</sup> in the tenth century describing *bhāva* as a personal experience entailing the discernment of pleasure or pain.<sup>7</sup> However, the theory of aesthetics as forwarded by Bharata and later theoreticians is inadequate to understand how emotions functioned within society. The gamut of emotions that circulate within society in general and early Indian socio-cultural domains in particular are far larger than the finite list of eight (and later nine) emotion categories that aestheticians provide us with. The lacunae that emerge as a result of the lack of an all-encompassing theory of emotions and how they influence human behaviours and consequently group associations can be addressed through a meticulous investigation of other historical sources like the creative compositions. Besides, the *rasa* theory is simply one among the many approaches to the construction of emotions and norms of their expression and practice.<sup>8</sup>

Compositions of creative literature (*kāvya*) are among the most significant sources of investigation of the emotional lives of inhabitants of the past. I propose that these sources essentially perform a three-pronged function when it comes to the study of emotions dealt with in the texts and those in circulation outside of them. Firstly, they present to the readers a group of emotions that form the core of the theme around which the composition is constructed. These emotions help inspire in the reader a set of reactions which are either expressed or suppressed. They thus assist readers to make sense of and articulate their own emotional expe-

5 Translation by Manomohan Ghosh (1952, p. 192); see also Pollock 2016, p. 50.

6 Sheldon Pollock discusses in detail the theory forwarded by Abhinavagupta in his *Abhinavabhāratī* or the *New Dramatic Art*. For details see Pollock 2016, Ch. 4.

7 Sheldon Pollock 2016, p. xvi.

8 For details see Ali 2021, p. 131.

riences. Secondly, these texts either present to the reader the prevalent emotions recognised as socially sanctioned by members of the urban, literate community at the time when the text was being composed or the response of society to those emotions. This then helps us as historians to uncover ways in which emotions were perceived or constructed in the times. Thirdly, these texts help us make sense of the mental world of the author. Constructed through an intimate association between experience and circumstance, the authors' beliefs serve as a keyhole into the mediations that take place between existing social realities and the self. Therefore, in order to evaluate the emotional norms and frameworks prevalent in a society it is essential for the historian to take a close look at its literatures. In the case of early India, *kāvya*s straddle the space between the normative and prescriptive on one hand and creative and amusing on the other, serving as instruments of instruction and entertainment. In order to undertake a study of emotions and their aetiology in early India it is imperative to investigate these literary sources.<sup>9</sup>

This essay will evaluate the role of early Indian *kāvya*s using Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī* as a case in point to understand how they function as tools of emotional disciplining and simultaneously influence the construction of a repertoire of socially sanctioned emotions, among which love figured as a primary sentiment working in association with other sentimental categories in the construction of the early Indian 'feeling being' and consequently the 'feeling community'. In doing so, we will look at the various attitudes towards love. To this end the paper is divided into two sections. In the first section we will evaluate the role of stories in educating the urban elite about appropriate emotional comportment. I will argue that stories helped to establish emotional standards in society and in the case of early India, stories were extensively used to train members of the royalty and urban society in emotional refinement and

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9 The necessity to study the aetiology of emotion emerges in the light of varying ideas associated with the control and regulation of emotional states in early Indian religious, political, and literary compositions. Moreover, it was through the understanding of the factors that lead to the rise of emotions in individual and consequently in collective thought that socio-political institutions articulated norms for their regulation and navigation. Realising the root for the arousal of emotions helps the reader to understand the reason why they were shaped and how.

formalised emotional behaviour. The second section of the paper will evaluate the complexity of ‘love’ as an emotion category through the analysis of its many types and characteristics as constructed in *kāvya*s like the *Kādambarī*. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the author of the text in question, belongs to a long line of *kāvya* composers who dealt with love in their own distinctive ways, adding to the conceptualisation of love in early India. Using a wide expressive spectrum, Bāṇabhaṭṭa’s narrative prose story presents to the reader a network of human relationships hinged on love.

## 2. Stories and the practice of emotions

Every culture has its own set of stories and ways of narrating them. For historians studying emotions these stories serve as tools for instruction in feelings as they have the ability to restructure the cognitive responses to emotional stimulants, thereby modifying and refining one’s emotional skills. In 1984, Michelle Rosaldo argued that “feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by the stories we both enact and tell”.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, Vera Nünning argues that if we regard the brain as a cultural organ shaped by the cognitive responses that emerge out of daily life, then emotions experienced by reading fiction can cause these cognitive responses to be altered and shaped.<sup>11</sup> Stories help readers to comprehend the origin and locus of emotions and inculcate manners of emotional navigation and regulation. These stories also help readers to increase the repertoire of emotions and experience sentiments which they may not have felt earlier.<sup>12</sup> Historically, societies have concerned themselves with the composition and circulation of stories among their members, thereby crystalising a set of social standards through them. In this section we will look at the long tradition of composing and consuming stories imbued with emotions and their role in fashioning the early Indian emotional world.

The technique of using stories for instilling and implementing moral virtues, particularly the ability to distinguish between noble and improper emotions, acquired increased attention among early Indian so-

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10 Cited in Boellstorff/Lindquist 2005, p. 437.

11 Nünning 2017, p. 45.

12 Ibid., p. 49.

cio-political institutions. Certain stories and plots saw sustained interest among *kāvya* composers and were often reused as parts of larger narrative compositions. One such *kāvya* composer credited with incorporating older stories into a longer composition and introducing changes in its form and content was Bāṇabhaṭṭa who flourished in the seventh century CE during the reign of Puṣyabhūti king Harṣavardhana. Among his most influential compositions is the creative prose titled *Kādambarī*, a convoluted narrative of two pairs of lovers, Candrāpīḍa-Kādambarī and Puṇḍarīka-Mahāśvetā, spread across several lifetimes during which the heroes reincarnate multiple times before the final union with their beloveds. Bāṇa weaves the narrative carefully by employing the technique of emboxed story that was fairly popular in early Indian literary tradition while simultaneously introducing innovative techniques of word play and punning to take the story forward.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars of early Indian Sanskrit literature have pointed out that no form of creative prose from a time before the seventh century CE has been found, though Bāṇabhaṭṭa refers to the works of poet Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra in his *Harṣacarita*.<sup>14</sup> As a result Bāṇabhaṭṭa (along with Daṇḍin and Subandhu) is credited with refining the literary form of *gadya* (prose), composing his work based on popular stories. Two kinds of prose composition, viz., the *ākhyāyikā* (true story) and the *kathā* (fiction) were recognised. These two, as Siegfried Lienhard notes, were understood to be initially separate.<sup>15</sup> However, eventually they came to be unified in form. The *kathā*, unlike the *ākhyāyikā*, was defined as a delightful story, usually centred on love, and borrowed from earlier works which could be treated freely and originally. The *kathā* therefore relied on imagination and was supposed to be a continuous narrative.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, compared to the *ākhyāyikā*, the *kathā* is supposed to have dealt with much gentler themes. The following chart will help to outline the definition of the two forms of compositions as laid out by Bhāmaha.

13 Among the popular examples of emboxed stories are the *Vetālapañcavimśati*, the *Pañcatantra*, and the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Another instance of the use of the technique of emboxed stories by litterateurs was the *Daśakumāracarita* of Daṇḍin.

14 Lienhard 1984, p. 234.

15 Lienhard 1984, p. 229.

16 De 1924, p. 512.

	<i>ākhyāyikā</i>	<i>kathā</i>
1.	narrated by the hero	narrated by someone else on behalf of the hero
2.	contains true events	narrative is built on fiction
3.	hero can boast about his accomplishments	hero cannot boast about himself as it is a fictional story
4.	divided in chapters ( <i>ucchvāsa</i> )	a continuous narration without division into chapters or sections

It should be noted that this definition was criticised by Daṇḍin who believed that there existed no such sharp distinctions between the two forms of compositions. Daṇḍin in his *Kāvyaḍarśa* argues that *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* are two different terms for the same species of prose composition (*gadyākhyāyikā kathā*).<sup>17</sup> Literary critics like Rudraṭa in his *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*, too, have stated that the distinction between *ākhyāyikā* – dealing specifically with reality – and *kathā* – with imaginative compositions – does not always hold good. These attitudes towards the meaning of the two forms of literature suggest that the contrast between the two forms was rather narrow. Despite this, the variances in understanding the nature of the two forms of prose continued to persist and the latest descriptions of the distinctions are contained in Viśvanāthas *Sāhityadarpaṇa*. He notes in the sixth chapter (*pariccheda*) of his treatise that a *kathā* is usually written in *āryā* metre, sometimes *vaktra* or *apavaktra*, while the *ākhyāyikā* should contain a description of the poets' genealogy.<sup>18</sup> As Neeta Sharma points out, while Rudraṭa, Viśvanātha and others do not emphasise a sharp compartmentalisation of the two forms of prose, they definitely underline that the distinction between *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* lay in the fact that the latter provided a greater scope for a “free flight of fancy” with a focus on the issue of winning of the girl (*kanyā-lābha*) in opposition to the more valorous stealing of the girl (*kanyā-haraṇa*), which in turn assisted in the development of *śṛṅgāra rasa* within the composition.<sup>19</sup> This makes the *katha* assume the nature of an “invented love story” along the lines of a romantic fiction.<sup>20</sup>

17 Dixit 1963, p. 145.

18 Dixit 1963, p. 147.

19 Sharma 1968, p. 27.

20 De 1924, p. 516.

Neeta Sharma<sup>21</sup> goes on to argue that Bāṇa drew considerable inspiration from folktales and other traditions of storytelling to construct the *Kādambarī* since in his *kathāmukha* (Introduction) he refers to the composition as *atidvayī*, “second to none”.<sup>22</sup> While Bāṇa’s employment of the term may have been to emphasise the uniqueness of his work owing to it being unmatched in the way it is constructed, later scholars have argued that this was a reference to two stories that the author must have drawn his plot from, viz., the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇādhyā, the original text of which has not survived, and the tale of Vāsavadattā. Since the original *Bṛhatkathā* is now lost, scholars usually compare the story of the *Kādambarī* to stories present in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* by Kṣemendra (eleventh century CE) and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva (late eleventh to early twelfth century CE)<sup>23</sup>. David Shulman, on the other hand, identifies two sets of stories from which the plot of *Kādambarī* may have been inspired. The first is what Shulman calls the South Asian type story known as the Supplanted Bride present in a Kannada tale in which a princess tends to the body of her dead or dormant husband for twelve years. The second type of story represents a lovesick man whose fantasy of the beloved is so intense that he fails to notice her when she stands in front of him.<sup>24</sup> The existence of a category of romantic stories in early South-Asia that were periodically modified and employed in inventive ways indicates the prevalence of a long tradition of romantic love literature in which ideas of union, separation, and memory played a pivotal role. Moreover, this reworking must have led to the stories being imbued with new and contemporary emotional standards. If we take a close look at early Indian *kāvya*s, we find numerous references to how the narrative stories become enjoyable only if they contain the appropriate aesthetic

21 Sharma 1968, p. 90.

22 *dvijena tenākṣatakaṇṭhakaunṭhyayā mahāmanomohamalīmasāndhayā | alabdhavaidagdhyavilāsamugdhayā dhiyā nibaddheyam atidvayī kathā || (Kathā-mukhabhāga, verse 20, English translation by Śāstri/Malaviya, p. 23).*

23 Kale 1924, p. 39. In his *Harṣacarita* (v. 1.17), Bāṇa attests to his awareness of the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇādhyā. He makes a similar reference in the *Kādambarī* too. Scholars have pointed out that the story of king Sumanasa found in the Kashmiri versions of the *Bṛhatkathā* comes close to Bāṇa’s composition. For more details, see Sharma 1968, p. 91–103.

24 Shulman 2014, p. 286.

emotions. One such reference comes from Bāṇa himself who notes in his *Kādambarī* that a story when imbued with aestheticized emotions (*rasa*) is enjoyable just as a new wife who arouses pleasure in her husband:

*sphuratkalālāpavilāsakomalā  
karoti rāgaṃ hṛdi kautukādhikam |  
rasena śayyāṃ svayam abhyupāgatā  
kathā janasyābhinavā vadhūr iva ||*

Just as a newly married bride, looking delicately attractive on account of her charming (lit. ‘shining and throbbing’) and sweet voice and gracefully amorous sports, having approached (her husband’s) bed on her own account being impelled by a passionate desire, produces in the heart (of her husband) a deep sentiment of love along with curiosity or admiration, similarly a new plot or story, tenderly delightful with the graceful display of bright and set dialogues, and assuming itself the form of a regular composition on account of (the charm of) its (prevailing) sentiments, arouses in the heart (of the reader) joy or pleasure, which is enhanced by admiration and interest.<sup>25</sup>

Whether within the text or outside it, emotions were a serious preoccupation of the composers and consumers alike. Developments within literature concurrent with the rise of new political groups increasingly invested in the emulation and inculcation of socially sanctioned emotions led to stories of the aphorismic kind as well as *kāvya*s gaining increased popularity. Stories were employed for the purpose of moral instruction and behavioural disciplining of members of the urban elite society, as can be gathered from their application in training of royal princes or young maidens.<sup>26</sup> Bāṇa mentions in his *Kādambarī* that during their period of education, Candrāpīḍa and Vaiśampāyana were trained in

25 *Kathāmukhabhāga*, verse 8 (translation by Śastri/Malaviya, p. 10).

26 The most common example of the use of stories to train members of the royal domain, particularly princes, are the *Pañcatantra* and the *Hitopadeśa*. Patrick Olivelle dates the *Pañcatantra* to no later than the sixth century CE, stating that it must have been composed around 300 CE. The *Hitopadeśa* on the other hand is a later composition of Narayana belonging not later than 950 CE. A. N. D. Haksar (2007, p. 11) has pointed out that the earliest manuscript of the text was found in Nepal in 1373.



numerous arts among which was included the study of stories, dramas, and narratives.<sup>27</sup> Bāṇa was aware of the socio-political significance laid on the power of stories and their ability to bring about transformations within an individual's dispositions and beliefs. The following statement used by Bāṇa through the character of sage Jābāli will emphasise my argument:

*dṛṣtam āyusmadbhir idam antaḥkaraṇāpahāriṇoḥ kathārasa-  
syākṣepasāmarthyam. yat kathayitum pravṛtto 'smi tat pari-  
tyajyaiva kathārasāt kathāyām atidūram atikrānto 'smi.*

You see what power to transport, to carry away the heart, this charming story possesses. That which I planned to narrate I abandoned and because of the enchantment of the tale, let the telling get out of hand.<sup>28</sup>

As it appears from the above statement, stories can have a transportive impact on the listeners and were therefore held in serious regard. Immediately after this statement, Jābāli stops the narration, deferring it to an appropriate time. This appropriate time may be wee hours of the morning, after the king has finished all his duties for the day, or during

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27 Kale (tr.) 1928: 126. In the section titled *candrāpīḍasya sakalavidyākālāvagrahanam* Bāṇa states that the royal princes were trained among other things in *kathā*, *nāṭaka*, *ākhyāyikā*, *kāvya*, *mahābhārata*, *purāṇa*, *itihāsa*, and *rāmāyaṇa*. Early Indian literature displays an awareness of the distinction between narratives and stories. I believe that stories would usually be shorter, as seen in the case of the apologues like the *Nītipañcatantrākhyāyikā*, *Hitopadeśa* or the *Jātakas* while the narratives would be longer, comprising of recycled stories and sometimes divided into chapters (*ucchvāsa*) as in the case of the *ākhyāyikās*. As Siegfried Lienhard argues, classical Indian poetry has no corresponding equivalent to the European short story or novel but as can be seen in works like the *Daśakumāracarita* of Daṇḍin certain narrative compositions were essentially a collection of short stories fitted within a given or invented framework. Moreover, as we see in the post-Daṇḍin era, the focus of the narratives was not the central plot but the elaborate descriptions of the characters of the work, their locations, that is, the city, the hermitage, the forest, the ecological surrounding and so on. The emphasis now is on the ability to employ literary techniques that would make the composition increasingly visual and aural. See Lienhard 1984, Ch. 5.

28 Quoted in Shulman 2014, p. 283, translation by Layne (1991, p. 333).

the celebration of festivals like the Spring Festival (*vasantotsava*).<sup>29</sup> It is clearly outlined in the *Harṣacarita* that once the king had performed his daily duties and had dined and rested, he is to summon men to tell him stories. As Sheldon Pollock points out, a significant aspect of courtly activities was storytelling for amusement (*kathāvinoda*).<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the recitation of *kāvya*s or excerpts from it were among the popular activities taken up in a *goṣṭhi* (assembly) and it was there that many conversations must have revolved around questions of practice of emotions and their relevance in society. Bāṇa refers to having attended numerous *goṣṭhis* where the cultured folk would often meet to discuss music, poetry, dance, or even gossip.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, Bāṇa states that a poet should be interested in the multifarious nature of people's lives (*sarvavṛttāntagāmin*), that is, one who obtains the various accounts or narratives,<sup>32</sup> something that can be gathered from these social assemblies.<sup>33</sup> This statement of Bāṇa should be viewed in the light of his experience of association with people from all walks of life when he chose to rove the country during his youthful years.<sup>34</sup> Vātsyāyana mentions two kinds of *goṣṭhi*: the edifying one, and that of members indulged in immoral and ignoble works like gambling and drinking.<sup>35</sup> Bāṇa makes references to the noble kind of *goṣṭhi*, the *vidyā-goṣṭhi* which was a community that included the *pada-goṣṭhi* (of those skilled with words), the *kāvya-goṣṭhi* (preoccupied with poetry), and the *jalpa-goṣṭhi* (for free gossip). The *kāvya-goṣṭhi*

29 Recitation of stories and performance of dramas formed a significant part of festivals like the *vasantotsava*. References to it are found in the *nāṭikas* of king Harṣa, Bāṇa's patron.

30 Pollock 2003, p. 118–119.

31 Agrawala 1969, p. 3.

32 Agrawala mentions this term in the first chapter of his book. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

34 Towards the end of the first *ucchvāsa* of his *Harṣacarita*, Bāṇa states that he decided to leave his house and roam other lands out of curiosity. To quote: *gate ca viralatām śoke śanaiḥ śanair avinayanidānatayā svātatryasya kutūhalabahalatayā ca bālabhāvasya dhairyapratīpakṣatayā ca yauvanārambhasya śaiśavocitāny anekāni cāpalāny ācarann itvaro babhūva*. Also: *deśāntarālokanakautukākṣiptahṛdayaḥ satsv api pitṛpitāmahopātteṣu brāhmaṇajanociteṣu vibhaveṣu sati cāvicchinne vidyāprasange grhān nirgagāt*; see Sharma 1968, p. 30, fn. 1 and 2.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

dealt with poetic compositions which were presented before the patron as can be perceived from the imageries presented from king Śūdraka's court. It was in these locations that appraisal of cultivation of the right kind of emotions was undertaken. The emphasis on the appropriate time for storytelling and listening suggests that these were regarded as serious pursuits and aided in the construction of the 'feeling being'. A 'feeling being' is an individual who adheres to emotional norms established within society and whose behaviours and actions are determined but the same. This individual recognises the distinctions between socially sanctioned and interdicted emotions thereby functioning within society by adhering to the same. Through an engagement with stories the 'feeling being' comes to recognise a spectrum of emotions, categorising them as noble or pernicious. Within this spectrum love came to be viewed as a paradoxical sentiment, that is, while it was understood as being central to human relationships, litterateurs were also cognizant of its harmful effects. Hence, among other things, early Indian stories dealt with the issue of navigating different kinds of emotions. More importantly, stories narrated through the *kāvya*s outlined different kinds of love, as well as appropriate ways of their experience and expression.

Catherine Benton argues that in all cultures, stories act as "moulders of behaviour, maintainers of cultural values, and preservers of societal order".<sup>36</sup> Stories help to "reflect, form, and reinforce particular views of the world".<sup>37</sup> The practical uses of storytelling, for instance in seducing or winning over a girl, is outlined by Vātsyāyana in his *Kāmasūtra*. Stories referring to lovers meeting secretly after cheating people around them (*kaṭākhyaṇa*), folk stories and the associated events of the world with reference to explaining love (*lokavṛttānta*), stories of romance composed by poets (*kavikathā*) and stories dealing with men procuring wives of other men (*pāradārikakathā*) are narrated to girls with the intention of seducing them, the very act being made easier by helping them take a firm decision about whether they should associate themselves with the men romantically.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the acts of narrating and listening to stories became tools of sociability and played a major role in emotional

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36 Benton 2006, p. 5.

37 Ibid.

38 Varadpande 2007, p. 87.

moulding and disciplining. This was particularly true in the case of love and its myriad facets that were held to be pivotal to early Indian socio-political relationships with texts, normative and creative alike, extending prescriptions and interdictions relating to its practice. It is interesting to note that early Indian works of literature display formidable cynicism towards emotions, particularly love and attachment gone to an extreme, providing instances of crisis owing to unrestrained indulgence in sensual love and giving free reign to emotions so that they may overpower judgement and discretion.<sup>39</sup> Yet, these texts also present to us an underlying conceptual framework that cautions the readers regarding the dangers of repression of the feeling self. This is outlined through instances within literary narratives where separation from one's beloved visibly jeopardises the emotional and physical well-being of the central characters. For instance, when gone into the extreme, passionate love (*rāga*) may cause consumptive disease (*rājayakṣma*) and death (*mṛtyu*). Yet, heartbreak or prolonged separation could also cause madness (*unmāda*), loss of self, and consequently the destruction of the body (*dehapāta* or *dehatyāga*). Thus, the *kāvya*s lay importance on the fact that emotions are not to be annihilated but inculcated systematically in order to ensure the maintenance of harmony within the self and within society.

I propose that love occupied a primary position among the extant set of socially sanctioned emotions, and human relations were construed and constructed around the expression and cultivation of these in early India. The centrality of love and its myriad forms within the sphere of aesthetics as well as day-to-day human relations was becoming clear from the mid-first millennium CE. In this light, the *Kādambarī* helps us to recognize a crucial point within the literary and political history of early India when poets and litterateurs engaged increasingly with ways to construct and employ emotions within their compositions, causing its story to undergo transformations by acquiring nuances emerging from experiments in literary styles and techniques, and along with be-

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39 The ability of emotions to impair moral and psychological discernment is a preoccupation of numerous literary works beginning from the two epics to the aphoristic works like the *Śatakatrayī* of Bhartṛhari or other collections of *subhāṣitas*. The ability of emotions to cloud judgement becomes evident through numerous episodes where sages (*ṛṣi*) pronounce curses under throes of anger and once their dissatisfaction is assuaged, realise the impact of their action.

ing a preoccupation of the royal court it also gained attention outside the court, that is, among members of the city, and the hermitage where these texts were studied and discussed.<sup>40</sup> I suggest that the transition of a plot from the domain of folktales or popular stories to that of creative literature provided the opportunity for emotions to be restructured and restricted to fit the protocols of courtly behaviour and modes of thinking. Thus, just as archetypal characters were constructed to express and extend ideas of good behaviour, stock emotions were fashioned through the use of literary techniques to represent the prevalent emotional standards of the age.

Given that stories aided in the creation of a set of prescribed and proscribed emotions for emulation and practice, it can also be argued that they played a significant role in shaping the early Indian ‘feeling community’ (or: ‘communities’).<sup>41</sup> These ‘feeling community/communities’, which were social and political groups comprising of ‘feeling beings’, followed established emotional norms and adhered to appropriate codes of emotional expression, simultaneously determining and regulating emotional standards of their times. In early India the feeling community/communities comprised of people who partook in the exercise of composition and consumption of *kāvya*s as well as stories that constituted them. Thus, there existed a close association between the emotional world within the *kāvya*s and that of its composers and consumers. More

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40 I draw my argument from the idea that Bāṇa’s compositions would often be recited, read or heard outside the premises and structures of the court, too. Evidence for this comes from the *Harṣacarita* where Bāṇa is seen to be narrating his ‘story’ of visiting the royal court to members of his family at his house, and the *Kādambarī* in which the sage Jābāli narrates the story of Vaiśampāyana to his disciples in the hermitage.

41 The 1980s saw a rise in the idea that ‘communities’ are constructed rather than occurring organically. This concept was bolstered by the *Imagined Communities* of Benedict Anderson. Barbara Rosenwein’s research on emotional communities underlined that there existed numerous emotional communities which have certain ‘fundamental assumptions’ regarding rules of feelings and modes of expressions. However, Margrit Pernau further problematises the issue and argues for the use of the term ‘feeling communities’ for people within society who share feelings with fellow members. But the community does not simply create feeling but also makes use of them to strengthen their community. See Pernau 2017, p. 10–13.

importantly, given the vastness and complexity of *kathās* like the *Kādambarī*, they must have been read, heard, and discussed over multiple days. They would have been consumed in episodes rather than all at once. This in turn would have provided the reader(s) or listener(s) time to pause and reflect upon the emotional situations outlined by the author and respond to them by either accepting or rejecting the behaviours and actions of the characters within the narrative. In doing so, they would construct a framework within which ways of emotional expression and practice would be fixed. Thus I argue that complex narrative stories like the *Kādambarī* must have acted as significant tools to enhance one's sentimental repertoire and clarify different emotions and their functions in early Indian socio-political and cultural realms.

### 3. Attitudes towards love in *kāvya*s: A case study of the *Kādambarī*

Having underscored 'love' as the cornerstone of most social relationships of early India and serving a pivotal function in the functioning and upholding of social order, it is imperative to define what this 'love' is. Nevertheless, analogous to the problem of defining 'emotion', there is no specific term for love in early India. In fact, there was no specific theory about love as a complex set of feelings by ancient Indian thinkers. The concept of love included within itself both the sexual and sensual aspect as well as the sentimental. Analysing the common terms used in Sanskrit literature Minoru Hara pointed out that there were two preliminary aspects of love, the first being the volitional aspect denoted by *kāma* and the other the sentimental and affectionate aspect denoted by *sneha*. While *kāma* originally was used as a general term for desire or longing, it gradually began to be used as a reference for love between man and woman. While the all-consuming power of *kāma* as carnal desire is outlined in the *kāvya*s, counting it among the set of vices (*adharmā*), it is also understood as a cause for supreme delight (*uttamam sukham*).<sup>42</sup> From being a reference for 'desire' or 'intention', *kāma* gradually came to denote carnal desire. On the other hand *sneha* was separate from *kāma* as it lacked the violent intensity and had an affectionate an-

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42 Hara 2007, p. 5.

gle.<sup>43</sup> As a result, it is usually compounded with terms that express filial or friendly relations.

Based on the study of commentarial literature Hara pointed out that there existed a distinction (*bheda*) between *sneha* and *preman*. He discusses seven stages of love, the first stage being the desire to see the lovely being (*prekṣā*) and the final being union (*saṃyoga*). Between these two states existed the category of *preman*, the state of being incapable of enduring the pain caused by separation and yet sustaining through the distance. It is an intensified state that succeeds *sneha* and unlike *preman* had the tendency to gradually dissipate in the face of separation. Drawing from this, I propose that love in early India was a context-specific emotion. By this I mean that its nature and associated terminology varied depending on the kinds of relationships it mediated and their intensity. It was carefully constructed through a combination of specific prescriptions and proscriptions of gestural and verbal expression. Thus, new and complex forms of expressions of ‘love’ and ways to assess their valences emerged within Sanskrit literature of the first millennium CE.

The first millennium CE saw an overwhelming interest among literateurs, theoreticians, and aestheticians alike in the workings of love or the erotic sentiment (*śṛṅgāra rasa*). As Daud Ali notes, between c. 350–750 CE there emerged a “common political culture throughout the major regions of the subcontinent”.<sup>44</sup> Within it literature assumed a pivotal function, and within this literary and aesthetic structure, *śṛṅgāra rasa* was a central point of interest. Emerging from the permanent emotion (*bhāva*) of pleasure (*rati*), which was an *idée fixe* of the members of the urban realm, it became the foundation for affective relationships of the people of the court and city.<sup>45</sup> It was through the images and situations developed around the workings of this *śṛṅgāra rasa*, that is, in its state as the ‘erotic enjoyed’ (*sambhoga śṛṅgāra*) and erotic thwarted (*vipralambha śṛṅgāra*) that the dynamics of affective relationships were pronounced.<sup>46</sup> Moreover,

43 Ibid., p. 7.

44 Ali 2006, p. 20.

45 The combination of *rati* with other causes (*vibhāva*) and their effects (*anubhāva*), in association with ‘transient emotions’ (*vyabhicāribhāva*) as well as the eight involuntary states (*sāttvikabhāva*) created the *śṛṅgāra rasa*.

46 About *śṛṅgāra rasa* and its two kinds, see Pollock 2016, p. 53.



*śṛṅgāra rasa* dealt with that which was decorative and appealed to the senses as all those ‘lovely’ things do. Since the *rasas* within drama were named after their functions, the *śṛṅgāra rasa* was named so because of its nature of being radiant and lovely.<sup>47</sup> Thus, it was through the framework of *śṛṅgāra rasa* that members of the courtly domain were able to identify, inculcate, and practise sensual and sentimental love. Additionally, as Ali notes, *bhāvas* and the ensuing *rasas* informed and ‘pervaded’ the essence and meaning of literary compositions, often depicting the characters within them associating and affectively interacting with each other.<sup>48</sup> In this light, *śṛṅgāra rasa* buttressed the experience and expression of affectionate and erotic love by defining the ways of their construction within and mediated between characters in the creative compositions.

Given the emergence of a social and political system focussed on the importance of emotions and their cultivation through partaking in the literary exercise, we may analyse a significant statement made by Bāṇa in the *Kādambarī*. In the section called *Śukanāśopadeśa*, the royal prince Candrāpīḍa is advised by the minister Śukanāśa to be wary of the over-riding of emotions and affections by wealth and flattery.

*kiṃ vā teṣāṃ sāmpratam yeṣāṃ atinṛśamsaprāyopadeśanir-  
ghṛṇam kauṭilyaśāstraṃ pramāṇam abhicārakriyākṛūraika-  
prakṛtayaḥ purodhaso guravaḥ (...) narapatisahasrabhuktojjhi-  
tāyāṃ lakṣmyām āsaktir māraṇātmakeṣu śāstreṣv abhiyogaḥ  
sahajapremādrāhṛdayānuraktā bhrātara ucchedyāḥ.*

And what is proper to them (fit to be done in the eyes of those kings) whose authority (for action) is the dreadful treatise of Kauṭilya (...); who are deeply attached to Lakṣmī, enjoyed and the abandoned by thousands of kings; who are sedulously given to the study of such *śāstras* as consist of directions for killing; and to whom their (own) brothers, attached to them on account of their hearts being full of natural affection, are persons to be annihilated?<sup>49</sup>

47 Ibid., p. 52.

48 Ali 2006, p. 186.

49 *Kādambarī*, p. 179, 5–9, Kale’s translation p. 151.

The above statement highlights that while among the essential roles of the king was the maintenance of prosperity and justice within the kingdom at times even by resorting to ruthlessness, the advisory (*upadeśa*) section of *kāvya*s draws the spotlight to the responsibility of the king and his administrative apparatus to ensure the happiness and wellbeing of the subjects through affection. Such instances of counselling in the inculcation and practice of appropriate emotions, particularly of love emerge from other contemporary *kāvya*s like the stage plays (*nāṭaka*) of king Harṣavardhana. Affectionate love serves as one of the guiding tools for the use of volition and discretion when it comes to the exercise of political decisions. Both political administration and personal relationships were hinged on the recognition and application of appropriate emotional practices. As a text on statecraft, the *Arthaśāstra*, though not completely devoid of references to the use of emotions, is viewed by Bāṇa as cruel and unsympathetic towards loving attachment. Śukanāsa's instructive advice to Candrāpīḍa therefore presents to us a clear instance where royal princes and other members of the court were trained in moral emotions, affectionate love being one of them. In fact, what would distinguish Candrāpīḍa from other kings would be his ability to be sympathetic and loving. The ability to 'feel' love for family and subjects and act accordingly hence determined the moral high ground that ought to be achieved.

Daud Ali provides an interesting explanation for Bāṇa's criticism of the *Arthaśāstra*. He notes that texts like the *Arthaśāstra*, *Kāmasūtra* and *Pañcatantra* were most of the times seen out of place as many commentators described them as "amoral" or "Machiavellian". The reason for this, the scholar notes, may have been because they were perceived as texts that neither conformed to "religious morality", which forms an integral part of the Dharmaśāstras, nor did they adhere to ideas of "public good". These texts were perceived as despotic since they subjected the issue of pleasure to the interest of logic (*nyāya*) and that of polity (*nīti*) to the prince's ability to acquire and expand his kingdom. However, Ali counteracts this view by arguing that the acquisition of wealth and pleasure were constitutive of virtuous actions and therefore the norms outlined by these texts to acquire the same were in conjunction with the pursuit of other goals and virtues. These texts helped in attaining "a reflective

ethical capacity”.<sup>50</sup> However, there existed a persistent conflict between dhārmic<sup>51</sup> injunctions laid out by these texts and the practical ways of life. And it is likely that poets attached to the royal court like Bāṇa were trying to negotiate between these conflicts. Within the early Indian epic and *kāvya* traditions, authors have often pointed out instances when the overriding of emotions in the face of a moral challenge can lead to crisis and psychological and physical imbalance, the most common example of this being what Robert Goldman has referred to as Rāma’s ‘madness’ at the loss of his beloved wife Sītā. As in other literary compositions like *Rāmāyaṇa*, and in the *Kādambarī* too, we see a stress on emotionality over hyper-pragmatism.<sup>52</sup>

Throughout the *kathā*, Bāṇa alludes to the need for paying heed to one’s emotions instead of remaining strictly bound by social norms and thereby giving in to suffering. In fact, *kāvyas* reveal the existence of an alternative stream of thought that considered the expression and experience of emotions as undeniable constituents of self and society, divorced from the prevailing ascetical ideas of suppression of emotions like love through control over one’s senses. Thus, while the *Nāṭyaśāstra* discusses ten stages of love and states that if despite all efforts union with one’s beloved becomes unachievable,<sup>53</sup> the penultimate stage that comes about is *maraṇa* (death), Bāṇa paints a picture of love which even in its highest and final state is a reason for fulfilment and completeness:

*ekākinam api manmathādhiṣṭhitam, (...) śūnyāntaḥkaraṇam api  
hṛdayanivāsidayitam.*

Although alone, yet he was accompanied by (i.e. swayed by) the God of Love, (...) although with a vacant mind, yet there dwelt in it his beloved lady.<sup>54</sup>

50 Ali 2006, pp. 93–94.

51 I use the term dharmic to refer to the ethical and moral injunctions laid out in political and normative treatises.

52 Kālidāsa states in his *Abhijñānaśākuntala* that good kings “treat their subjects like their own children” (*prajāḥ prajāḥ svā iva tantrayitvā*, verse 5.5), that is, with affection, and that “riches do not make good men arrogant” (*anuddhatāḥ satpurūṣāḥ samṛddhibhiḥ ...*, verse 5.12).

53 Ghosh 1951, p. 465.

54 *Kādambarī* p. 240, 4–5; Kale’s translation p. 205.

Bāṇa draws attention to the potency of sensual love personified by Kāma, the flower-arrowed god of desire by stating that:

*nāsti khalv asādhyam nāma bhagavato manobhuvah*

Forsooth there is nothing which cannot be achieved by the mind-born God of love.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, in another passage Bāṇa outlines that while the influence and control of passionate love over the being of an individual, particularly women, has the potential to cause them to transgress the bounds of social norms and appropriate standards of behaviour, once someone is struck by the arrows of Kāmadeva there can be no censure or reproach since their actions now are commanded by him.<sup>56</sup> This idea is expressed when princess Kādambarī contemplates death because she is unable to bear the pain caused by separation from her beloved Candrāpīḍa and yet is tormented by the idea that she might bring dishonour to her parents, her friend Patralekhā states the following:

*kā cātra gurujanavaktavyatā yadā khalu kanyakām gurur  
iva pañcaśaraḥ samkalpayati mātēvānumodate piteva dadāti  
sakhivotkaṅṭhām janayati dhātrīva taruṇatāyām ratyupacāram  
śikṣayati.*

55 *Kādambarī* p. 245, 8–9, Kale’s translation p. 210.

56 Though *kāvya*s make it blatantly apparent that it is women who are privy to the forces of *kāma*, their actions and behaviours a consequence of their being under the sway of erotic, volitional love, Bāṇa’s composition presents to us a scenario in which the heroes too are under the absolute control of their emotional states. It is in this context that Bāṇa points out that nothing is impossible to achieve for the God of Love (*Kāmadeva*) for even young sages (*munikumāra*) trained to control their senses and be immersed in religious austerities and penance are not spared by the flower-arrows of the God. Thus, though similar notes may be found in other *kāvya*s, the context in which it is employed here is distinct. In fact, in the *Kādambarī* it is the two heroes who die owing to their emotional suffering. Puṇḍarīka tormented by his desire for Mahāśvetā and the inability to perform his duties as a young sage embraces death while Candrāpīḍa falls dead grieving upon realising that his friend Vaiśampāyana who is in fact Puṇḍarīka reborn died as a result of Mahāśvetā’s curse.

Where is the room for parents to blame here, when indeed, the five-armed god himself makes the proposal of a girl (chooses a husband for her) like an elderly person; gives consent like a mother; gives her away like a father; creates longing in her like a female friend; and teaches the ways and sports of love in youth?<sup>57</sup>

Statements such as the above become significant to assess the attitudes of early Indian poets and thinkers about the power of love and its location within the hierarchy of emotions. The multifarious ways in which love operates, that is, its ability to guide like elders, instruct about associated sentimental states such as longing like a friend, and guide in the ways of love becomes a criterium of evaluation within literary works. Thus, any act of misdemeanour or flouting of norms of social propriety are absolved through a recognition of the power of erotic love over one's being. Moreover, erotic love though viewed as an affliction is also stated to have a sentimental aspect. It is for this reason that love created by a combination of the two aspects is held as the cornerstone of marriage in early Indian didactic texts like the *Kāmasūtra*. More interestingly, unlike the *kāma* of the *Kāmasūtra* that is devoid of the ideal of monogamy, the love outlined in the text is question displays tendencies towards a monogamous union.

In the case of *Kādambarī* the centrality of the emotion of love emerges from Bāṇa's engagement with love of different kinds. He discusses friendship, romantic love, maternal and paternal love, love of the *prajā* (subjects of the ruler) for the *rājan* or *yuvarāja* (the 'young-king' or heir apparent of a kingdom) through complicated yet charming literary knitting. This reflects the sophistication in formalities associated with the maintenance of these relationships, particularly within the domain of the elites. At numerous instances Bāṇa draws our attention to filial and parental love, placing a greater significance on it compared to love between romantic partners. In a section of the *Kādambarī* titled *Śukajanmavarṇana*, Bāṇa draws our attention to what he refers to as the "extraordinary affection" of parents which according to him acquires the highest position in the hierarchy of kinds of love.

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57 *Kādambarī* p. 350, 4–6, Kale's translation p. 298.

(...) *dattvādhariḥkṛtasarvasnehenāsādhāraṇena guruṇāpatya-  
premnā* (...).

(...) exhibiting their great and unparalleled affection for their offspring, an affection that left behind love of every other sort.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the love between father and son is laid out in detail through symbols of attachment and separation. The idea is that separation from a person to whom one feels intense affection is always the reason for grief.

*divasam aśeṣam abhinavapitrviyogajanmanā śokāvegenāyāsya-  
mānahṛdayo duḥkhenātyavāhayat.*

He spent the whole day in sorrow, as his heart was tortured by heavy grief caused by his fresh separation from his father.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, the distinction between the different kinds of love becomes even more pronounced when we can identify that each kind of love has a set of sentimental states and emotional categories associated with them. Thus, in the case of paternal love there is a greater emphasis on sentiments of deference and subservience while in the case of romantic love we can observe references to sentiments of whole-hearted submission. The quote given below will make this argument clearer:

*garīyasī guror ājñā prabhavati dehamātrakasya. hṛdayena he-  
makūṭanivāsavyasaninā likhitaṃ janmāntarasahasrasya dāsya-  
patraṃ devyāḥ.*

The very weighty command of my father has power over my body alone. But my heart, which has a strong yearning for dwelling on Hemakūṭa, has written (as it were) a bond of slavery to the princess for a thousand births.<sup>60</sup>

This statement is particularly significant for it characterises two kinds of love pulling in different directions with the decision resting on the individual as to which emotions requires heeding. Thus, filial duty and

58 *Kādambarī*, p. 48,13–14, Kale’s translation p. 31–32.

59 *Kādambarī*, p. 192, 9–10, Kale’s translation p. 163.

60 *Kādambarī*, p. 331, 6–7, Kale’s translation p. 282.

deference wields a greater power over Candrāpiḍa causing him to return to Ujjayini though he is aware of his heart being under the power of princess Kādambarī.

Irrespective of the kinds of love being described, Bāṇa highlights that love in general and romantic love in particular emerges in the heart and is essentially an experience, or more precisely, a state or condition of mind (*avasthā*). Bāṇa underlined love as a state of experience that transcends the physical and the worldly sensations to be located within the space of the mind (*manas*). Love then is defined as an experience of the mind that may not be necessarily seen but only felt. In doing so, love is not limited to the domain of bodily and sensory experience but also comes to be understood as an experience that involves mental perception. It is thus constructed as an internal, private sentiment that cannot be described, shown, or proven, but only felt. For this he constructs the following statement:

*tatkālāvirbhūtenāvaṣṭambhenākathitaśikṣitenānākhyeyena sva-  
saṃvedyena kevalaṃ na vibhāvyaṭe kiṃ tadrūpasamṣpadā kiṃ  
manasā kiṃ manasijena kim abhinavayauvanena kim anurāge-  
ṇevopadiśyamānā kim anyenaiva kenāpi prakāreṇāham api na  
jānāmi katham katham iti tam aticiraṃ vyalokayaṃ.*

I gazed at him (...), being as it were instructed (to do so) by some (emotion) which was trained (to do its work) without being told (by anyone), and which cannot be described, but which is only perceptible to the person (who is so overpowered); it cannot be known exactly by what – whether his perfect beauty, or by (my) mind, or by the god of Love, or by (my) new youth, or by the Love (which I felt at the moment) or in some quite different manner – really, I do not know how it all happened.<sup>61</sup>

Bāṇa also emphasizes that love is heightened only when it is mutual. This can be confirmed by the instance when Mahāśvetā, on realizing her attraction to Puṇḍarīka, spells out the following statement:

*tayā tu tasyātiprakāṭayā vikṛtyā dviguṇīkṛtamadanāveśā tatṅṣa-  
nam aham avarṇanayogyāṃ kām apy avasthām anvabhavam.*

61 *Kādambarī*, p. 227, 2–5, Kale's translation p. 193.



And on account of that change in him, a change which was but too visible, my love-infatuation became doubled and immediately, I began to experience a strange state (of feeling) incapable of being described.<sup>62</sup>

Similarly, when Mahāśvetā is consoling Kādambarī, she states that the love between the latter and Candrāpīḍa cannot be diminished despite the distance because it is mutual, permanent and lasting till death.

*api ca yuvayor dūrasthitayor api sthiteyam idānīm kamalinī-kamalabāndhavayor iva kumudinīkumudanāthayor iva prītir āpralayāt.*

Moreover, this love of you two, even though you may be at a distance from each other, is now permanent, lasting till death, just like the bed of day-lotuses and their kinsman, the Sun, or like that of the bed of night-lotuses and their lord the Moon.<sup>63</sup>

In this passage as in many others in the text, the author uses the term *prīti* for love. This term delineates a graceful and joyous love that is essentially a positive emotional experience resting on the idea of fondness. Bāṇa outlines affection (*anurāga*) within friendship in great detail evident from the delineation of the relationship between Śukanāsa and Tārāpīḍa, Vaiśampāyana and Candrāpīḍa, Kādambarī and Mahāśvetā. Bāṇa states that Vaiśampāyana became Candrāpīḍa's best friend, his second heart and his true confidant. This friendship emerged as a result of the immense respect that Vaiśampāyana felt for Candrāpīḍa due to his acquaintance with the arts. Bāṇa states that the two were inseparable, with Vaiśampāyana following Candrāpīḍa like the day followed the hot-rayed sun. Similarly, Kādambarī displays extraordinary loyalty towards Mahāśvetā, even refusing to marry since her friend is grieving the loss of her lover. This is termed natural affection (*sahajaprema*). In fact, for the sake of friendship, Kādambarī is willing to accept disgrace and censure by refusing to marry.<sup>64</sup> This statement is tied up with the previous quote

62 *Kādambarī*, p. 229, 13–14, Kale's translation p. 195.

63 *Kādambarī*, p. 314, 5–7, Kale's translation p. 267.

64 To quote: *tvatpreṃṇā cāsmiṇ vastuni mayā kumārikājanaviruddhaṃ svatantryā-lamyāṅgīkṛtam ayaśaḥ samavadhīrito vinayo gurūvacanam atikramitaṃ na gaṇi-*

about misdemeanour under the influence of *kāma*. It underscores the power of love as an emotion to override social norms and expectations.

Through the text Bāṇa constructs two sets of star-crossed lovers who experience the same sentiment but in varying ways owing to differing sets of circumstances. There also exists an essence of mutuality in the kind of love that is presented in the *Kādambarī*. Bāṇa points out that while it is time and the merits of an individual that has the ability to produce uncontrollable love, in the cases of Mahāśvetā and Kādambarī love emerges spontaneously at first sight. This idea of love at first sight or even love emerging and continuing through the exchange of glances, what Minoru Hara calls “eye-love”<sup>65</sup> (*cakṣūrāga*) had sustained popularity among litterateurs both preceding and succeeding Bāṇa. However he underlines that,

*kāle hi guṇās ca durnivāratām āropayanti madanasya sarvathā.*

For, as a general rule, it is time (i.e., sufficiently long acquaintance) and merits (of the person loved) that produce (such) uncontrollable love.<sup>66</sup>

This is a particularly critical statement as it presents to us an attempt by composers of *kāvya* to distinguish between love which is spontaneous and has a likeness to infatuation (*moha*) as opposed to love that has evolved causing it to be deeper, firmer and not required to be consciously restrained.<sup>67</sup> Bāṇa, like *kāvya* composers preceding him, is aware of the distinction between infatuation (*kāmamoha*, *smaramoha*, *pramoha*) and attachment arising as a result of it and love (*pṛīti*, *anurāga*, *sneha*, *preman*, etc.) as distinct emotional categories.

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*to lokāpavādo vanitājanasya sahaṅbharaṇam utsṛṣṭā lajjā* (*Kādambarī*, p. 274–275). Layne’s (1991, p. 181) translation: “Out of affection for you I have in this manner assumed an independence that is most contrary to a young maiden and have accepted disgrace, disregarded modesty, disobeyed my parents, discounted gossip, and ignored bashfulness, which is woman’s natural ornament.”

65 Minoru Hara 2007, p. 92.

66 *Kādambarī*, p. 228, 9–10, Kale’s translation p. 194.

67 Princess Kādambarī speaks to herself thus, ‘*kiṃ kṛtam idaṃ mohāndhayā ...*’ (*Kādambarī*, p. 297,11; translation by Layne (1991, p. 197): “What is it I have done blinded by infatuation?”

## 4. Conclusion

Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* exemplifies the dynamic role *kāvya*s play as works of amusement (*vinodana*) as well as moral prescription and proscription, that is, instructions (*upadeśa*). Engagement with *kāvya* was a serious activity which, among other things, led to the explication of appropriate norms of emotional expression. These texts outlined a spectrum of emotions among which love and its various facets figured prominently. The varied kinds of love were hierarchised and shaped to be practiced by the 'feeling beings' who composed the 'feeling community'. In turn, these formalised emotions shaped the very 'feeling community' it emerged from. This circular process defines the early Indian emotional universe within which emotions were continuously gauged and subsequently assigned moral valence. Stories reused and incorporated within longer narrative *kāvya*s like the *kathā* surely would have played a pivotal role in this.

When read or heard these stories influenced behaviour and actions of members the early Indian urban society. These usually contained an implicit moral which would compel the reader or listener to dwell upon them and act accordingly. *Kāvya*s display a continuous and intensive engagement with human emotions, particularly with the different kinds of love, outlining that among the socially sanctioned emotions of early India, love serves as the foremost tool of sociability. It is important to note that given the length and complexity of Bāṇa's tale, it is unlikely that its reading would have been completed in one session or discussion. It must have required several days to finish reading or listening to the text and that would have drawn a long discussion or contemplation about its various parts. This in turn must have prompted a reflection upon and emulation of behaviours based on royal exemplars provided in the story. This complex piece of creative literature gives us an account of the ways in which the love of the differing kinds interacted and informed the socio-cultural world of early India. Love thus served as a driving force of human relationships within the court and the city and *kāvya*s like the *Kādambarī* helped emotionally navigate this complex world.

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# The *Harṣacarita* and Two Contemporary Epigraphic Texts: Reflections on the Polity of Kāmarūpa during the Reign of Bhāskaravarman

Devdutta Kakati\*

**Abstract:** The period from c. 300 to 700 CE witnessed the emergence of classical Sanskrit literary traditions, the biography (*carita*) in prose and the versified eulogy or panegyric (*praśasti*), mostly of rulers and occasionally of influential *brāhmaṇa* families. The earliest known *carita* was Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita*, "Deeds of Harṣavardhana". The seventh chapter (*ucchvāsa*) of the *Harṣacarita* entitled "The Gift of the Umbrella" (*chatralabdhi*) narrates a treaty sealed in common interest between the Kanauj ruler Harṣavardhana (606–647 CE) and Bhāskaravarman, a ruler of the Bhauma-Varman dynasty of Kāmarūpa, Assam (c. 600–650 CE). This paper attempts to situate the seventh *ucchvāsa* of the *Harṣacarita* vis-à-vis two significant copper plate inscriptions (both approximately dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE) issued by Bhāskaravarman himself and containing elaborate eulogies as preambles. Bhāskaravarman was eulogized in versified *praśastis* which were followed by the operative part of these royal

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epigraphic texts recording the grants of landed property (exempted from revenue) to *brāhmaṇas*. These compositions which shower praises on Bhāskaravarman will be analysed in order to compare the representations and political profiles of Bhāskaravarman in two different genres of court literature – the first in the form of a *carita* by Bāṇabhaṭṭa and the second in the form of *praśasti* in royal epigraphic documents. Our use of the three literary and epigraphic texts will reflect on the making of the monarchical state society in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE in the Brahmaputra valley.

**Keywords:** Sanskrit literature, epigraphy, panegyric, Assam, political history, polity

## 1. Introduction

Literary court compositions in ornate Sanskrit are inseparably linked to monarchy, captured particularly in biographies (*carita*) in prose and in versified eulogies or panegyrics (*praśasti*), mostly of rulers and occasionally of influential *brāhmaṇa* families, included in epigraphic texts as preambles to land grant charters. Three examples of these, all dated to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE – the *Harṣacarita* and the Dubi<sup>1</sup> and Nidhanpur<sup>2</sup> copper plate inscriptions – bear on Bhāskaravarman, a powerful 7<sup>th</sup> century CE ruler of Kāmarūpa in the Brahmaputra valley of the Indian subcontinent and a contemporary of Harṣavardhana of Kanauj (606–647 CE) and Śaśāṅka of Gauḍa (c. 600–625 CE). While the two copper plates on the one hand side are directly connected with Bhāskaravarman and his court as official and royal documents, the *Harṣacarita* on the other hand, though it speaks of Bhāskaravarman, too, puts its primary focus on Harṣavardhana, king of the court poet Bāṇabhaṭṭa.

The period from c. 300 to 700 CE on the Indian subcontinent witnessed the emergence of classical Sanskrit literary traditions pertaining to the past (*itihāsa-purāṇa* texts) in two broad forms: the *carita* and the

1 Edited by D.C. Sircar, “Dubi Plates of Bhāskaravarman”, in: *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXX (1953–54), pp. 287–304.

2 Edited by P.N. Bhattacharya, in: *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, No.13, and Vol. XIX, No. 19; see also Sarma 1981, pp. 1–43, Gupta 1967, and Pandey 1962, pp. 235–40.

*praśasti*.<sup>3</sup> Both are reckoned poetic compositions (*kāvya*) with an aesthetic appeal in ornate Sanskrit and highlight the life of charismatic rulers. The post-Gupta or “early medieval” period (c. 600–1300 CE) in the subcontinent saw a burgeoning of local and regional powers, many of which experienced a monarchical polity for the first time.<sup>4</sup> If families of obscure social origin aspired to be kings and did not belong to the *kṣatriya varṇa*<sup>5</sup> nor enjoyed a royal pedigree, then their genealogies (*vaṃśāvalī*) had to be constructed, thereby endowing them with the legitimacy to rule.<sup>6</sup> These genealogies, whether actual or fictional, were invariably linked to famous dynasties of yore or to legendary figures.

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- 3 The term *itihāsa* now stands for what is known as the academic discipline of History. The academic discipline of History emanates from the enlightenment in Europe and reached the subcontinent in colonial times. The Sanskrit term *itihāsa* (lit. “thus indeed it was”) is known at least since the time of the *Atharvaveda* and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. The term *purāṇa* (lit. “that which is old”) includes events and stories believed to go back to ancient times. Thus, the joint term *itihāsa-purāṇa* referred to that which was believed to have happened in the past. See Thapar 2013, pp. 55f.
- 4 The period from c. 600–1300 CE was connoted by R.S. Sharma as “early medieval” and witnessed the remarkable spread of the state at local and regional levels. See Sharma 2013 and Chattopadhyaya 1994.
- 5 The term *kṣatriya* drew on *kṣatra* (power) and the term *varṇa* has been defined as ritual status, which automatically accentuates hierarchy; henceforth traditionally the *kṣatriya varṇa* indicated the ruling clans (Thapar 2013, p. 74).
- 6 Sheldon Pollock specifically questions this theory of legitimation. He denounces the combination of legitimation theory and instrumental reason, which he takes to be the scholarly conventional wisdom in accounting for the Sanskrit cosmopolis, as “not only anachronistic but intellectually mechanical, culturally homogenizing, theoretically naive, empirically false, and tediously predictable”. He states that “legitimation” suggests a knowledge-ability on the part of rulers that is unavailable to people at large, who are therefore cultural dopes. As such they are induced to believe in ideas opposed to their interests that rulers know to be such. He argues that rulers could be just or unjust, true heirs or false, but there is no reason whatever to assume that they cared to secure the assent of their subjects one way or the other. In such circumstances, the process of legitimation would seem not only cognitively redundant but virtually unthinkable. See Pollock 2006, pp. 18, 33, 511–22. Pollock’s position has been questioned by David N. Gellner who states that the former’s own interpretations show royal elites using Sanskrit as a way to buttress claims to rank and privilege. Hence, Pollock’s objections against legitimation as an explanatory device will

In the great Indian epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* the genealogies were traced back to great heroes either of solar (*sūryavaṃśa*) or lunar (*candravaṃśa*) descent.<sup>7</sup>

*Caritas* and *praśastis* were traditionally used to write dynastic history and chronology highlighting the most charismatic political personalities as the principal subject matter of these compositions. An earlier form of praise is seen in the *Gāthānārāśaṃsī* of the Vedic corpus. These are oral compositions in praise of men or heroes and obviously not created by court poets.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, hero-stories in the *Mahābhārata* were composed orally and recited by the bards Vaiśampāyana and Ugraśravas Sauti. Similarly, these heroic narratives in the form of bardic compositions were not court literature and were not meant only for the royal and courtly audience.<sup>9</sup> However, these could be the precursors of later *carita* and *praśasti* compositions. The earliest known royal *praśasti* is that of Khāravala's Hāthīgumphā inscription (from Odisha), composed in Prakrit and palaeographically assigned to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.<sup>10</sup>

As stated above, both, *caritas* and *praśastis*, are eulogies composed in writing, for written documents, usually by poets in praise of their patrons who were mostly political figures. These Sanskrit compositions were connected with courtly life and culture and a new tendency from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE onwards extended the Sanskrit language to rituals for royal ceremonies. This began with the composition of the Juna-garh *praśasti* of Rudradāman (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) in Sanskrit. In the opinion of Daud Ali, "the co-appearance of inscriptions and literary texts between the second and fourth centuries of the common era is significant, representing not a 'revival' or continuation of a long-standing tradition, but, as Sheldon Pollock has argued, 'the inauguration of a new cultural formation'."<sup>11</sup> Pollock argued that Sanskrit became a public po-

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work only if he comes up with a more convincing alternative. See Gellner 2008, pp. 443–5.

7 There are also dynasties claiming to belong to a Brahmin lineage, for instance the Vākātakas and the Pallavas.

8 Macdonell & Keith 1912, pp. 445f.

9 Thapar 2013, pp. 157f.

10 Jayaswal & Banerji 1930.

11 Ali 2004, p. 79.

litical language in the post-Gupta period and came to form a cosmopolis – a cultural formation that transcended political boundaries and religious affiliations.<sup>12</sup>

The compositions of such eulogistic inscriptions were also seminal to the later *carita* literature, written as part of courtly literature emerging almost at the same time (the *Buddhacarita* on the life of the Buddha was composed by Aśvaghoṣa in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE). Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE was the first formal *carita* of a king and inaugurated a whole genre of literature. It marked the beginning of the classical Sanskrit prose composition of *carita* as a biography of a ruler-patron by the court poet. Both, *caritas* and *praśastis*, often presented elaborate dynastic genealogies (*vaṃśāvalī*) of the ruling house with maximum centrality to the reigning king which provided legitimacy and aided the upward mobility among ruling families. In fact, *caritas* and *praśastis* were used as validation of ruling authorities who, from c. 500 CE onwards, increasingly appeared in areas far from the Ganga valley and the north Indian plains – the cradle of the Brahmanical or Sanskrit civilizational matrix. This style marked the entrenching of monarchy in areas where it had been less familiar and sets the tone for describing the ideal king.

## 2. Kāmarūpa: historical and physical geography

This brings us to the land of Kāmarūpa<sup>13</sup> located in the Brahmaputra valley, which figures through a successive genre of literature by the early name of Prāgjyotiṣa. The *Mahābhārata* names Bhagadatta as a ruler

12 Pollock 1996. Pollock argues that a new medium, and a new cultural politics was inaugurated with the secularization of Sanskrit. The worldly transformation of Sanskrit made the language's enormous resources available for describing the world of human action; writing preserved its new products and made possible the dissemination of Sanskrit culture across vast reaches of Asia. The new order of culture and power, visible in the fragmentary inscriptional record of the new dynasties of western and northern India, set the fashion for an unprecedented way of using Sanskrit for political and literary ends that would dominate in the following centuries. See Pollock 2006, p. 89.

13 A possible explanation of the name Kāmarūpa is recorded in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* (c. 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century CE), as the kingdom where Kāmadeva (*Kāma*) regained his form (*rūpa*); see Barua 1969, p. 15.

of Prāgjyotiṣa/Kāmarūpa who had participated in the Kurukṣetra war on the side of the Kauravas.<sup>14</sup> The *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a logbook, by an anonymous mariner of the late 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, after describing the Gange (Ganges) country (the western part of the Ganga delta), mentions the land of Kirradai, inhabited by people named Kirradai (possibly a Mongoloid population) which had access to Thinae, i.e., China. Kirradai stood for the Kirātas (usually associated with the north-east including Prāgjyotiṣa/Kāmarūpa) who inhabited the north-eastern borderlands of the subcontinent, standing in close proximity to the south of China and the north of Myanmar.<sup>15</sup> “Kāmarūpa” is also mentioned as a frontier zone (*pratyanta*) in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>16</sup> The term frontier zone (*pratyanta*), applied to Kāmarūpa along with Davakā, is obviously used from the viewpoint of an assumed centrality of the Ganga valley where the stronghold of the Gupta rulers was located. Chronologically very remote, the *Kālikāpurāṇa* (c. 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century CE) states that Brahma, while once residing in this land, gave up one star from the constellation (or created this constellation; the name of the constellation is not specified), hence this place is called Prāgjyotiṣapura.<sup>17</sup> It is not surprising that etymologically, Prāgjyotiṣa (*prāk* meaning “east” and *jyotiṣa* meaning an “astral/luminous entity”) was understood in the sense of a land in the east where sightings of astral figures were more likely than in other areas. Kāmarūpa is also enlisted as one of the localities (*janapada*) in the eastern quarters (*prācyadeśa*).<sup>18</sup>

The above discussion is setting the stage for a closer look at the physiography of the region of Kāmarūpa. Comprising the western part of the Brahmaputra valley, Kāmarūpa is marked by the river Karatoya as its western border in literary sources ranging from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. In the Mikir hills, on the Shillong plateau and in the Bhutan Himalayas to the west, the Brahmaputra valley merges with the northern Bengal region. The Barak-Surma valley towards the south, which is

14 Sharma 1978, pp. 0.7f.

15 Casson 1989, p. 234; see also Chatterji 1951.

16 Ed. in Sircar 1942, p. 258.

17 Shastri 1991, p. 490.

18 On the significance of *janapadas* in the historical geography of early India, see Chattopadhyaya 2017.

contiguous to Tripura and accessible to the Noakhali-Comilla region in Bangladesh, is interlocked with the Brahmaputra valley in the rubric of networks and communication patterns.<sup>19</sup> This valley, lying within the girdle of the Eastern Himalayas, Patkai and Naga hills in the east, has always been in the prime focus of historical events, which is demonstrated by the provenance of most of the extant inscriptions assigned to the period of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE (labelled the “early medieval”).

### 3. Early state formation and the associated political culture in Kāmarūpa

The 7<sup>th</sup> century CE saw for the first time a protracted penetration of the state system in Kāmarūpa. The period from around 400–700 CE on the subcontinent has been designated by Romila Thapar as “threshold times” which carried on some processes from the earlier times, and at the same time witnessed many new features and traits which would consolidate and mature in subsequent centuries. Politically, it was a period that set-in motion the triumph of monarchy over non-monarchical polities (*gaṇasamgha*) and clan societies, often inhabiting forests, pastoral zones and other non-agricultural tracts. As complex state societies penetrated into the erstwhile pre-state situations, the process often accompanied the expansion of agriculture which formed the principal resource base of the emergent monarchical polity. The penetration of the hierarchical *varṇa-jāti* system into the simpler clan organization, closely following the formation of the monarchical state, invariably accorded primacy to the *brāhmaṇa* as the highest social group who was patronized by rulers in the form of perpetual and revenue-free grants of land. New kings of non-*kṣatriya* origin – and often without a dynastic pedigree – sought their roots among the earlier *kṣatriyas* for legitimation. In this endeavour the *brāhmaṇa*’s support was crucial and his assistance was recognised. Kings were careful to patronize the *brāhmaṇa*, who, as supplicants of royal favours, in their turn composed genealogies (*vaṃśāvalī*) for them to ensure their *kṣatriya* status. As legitimizers of kingship, they were rewarded with land grants. The nuclei of support for the king rested on these new settlements along with the extension

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19 See Barpujari 2007, p. 2, Kakati 2017, and Kakati 2019.

of the *varṇāśramadharmā*, the code of duties and obligations defined by one's social status and age and in accordance with one's caste and encapsulated social hierarchies, implicit in these settlements. The spread of Sanskrit legitimized a new Brahmanical order and dynasties whose origins were often obscure and who sought legitimacy by becoming patrons of sects that might not have been dominant, but had the potential to legitimize kings with an obscure pedigree.<sup>20</sup>

This leads us to the two coeval *praśastis* in question. They are parts of the Dubi and Nidhanpur copper plate inscriptions (both dated c. 7<sup>th</sup> century CE) which were issued by Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa himself. The copper plate inscription from Dubi which is located in Pathshala (Kamrup district, Assam) was issued from Prāgjyotiṣapura,<sup>21</sup> situated in the very heartland of the Brahmaputra valley,<sup>22</sup> while the inscription from Nidhanpur in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh was issued from Karṇasuvarṇa (Murshidabad district, West Bengal), the former capital of Śaśāṅka.<sup>23</sup> Bhāskaravarman was eulogized in versified *praśastis* which appeared as preambles to the operative part of these royal epigraphic texts recording the grants of landed property (exempted from revenue) to *brāhmaṇas* as pious acts of patronage by the ruler. It is well known that the *Dharmaśāstra* tradition lauds the custom of gift (*dāna*) and lays down the gift of land (*bhūmidāna*) as the gift par excellence. This is best exemplified in the *Anuśāsanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* which praises the gift of land (*bhūmidāna-praśamsā*). This is surely a didactic section added to the heroic *kṣatriya* narrative of the *Mahābhārata*. It is equated therein with the gift of gold (*hiraṇyadāna*) and cattle (*godāna*). This is closely associated with the glorification of making the gift or the act of *dāna* as the highest virtue in the present Kali age – typically upheld in the *Purāṇas*, especially the *Matsya*-, *Agni*- and *Varāha-Purāṇas*.<sup>24</sup> This implies that the Dubi and Nidhanpur land grant records were in con-

20 Thapar 2002, pp. 323–325.

21 Kāmarūpa was often explicitly equated with Prāgjyotiṣa. However, the location of Prāgjyotiṣapura has not yet been identified; see Shin 2018.

22 Sharma 1978, p. 10.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

24 Sharma 2013, pp. 272–274. For more discussion on *dāna*, see Kane 1941, pp. 837–888.



formity to the *Dharmaśāstra* norms. The ruler was the principal donor and also the ideal patron for endowing revenue-free landed property to *brāhmaṇas*.

This takes us to the epigraphic bearings on the formation of the territorial entity of Kāmarūpa which were conspicuously present in the two copper plate inscriptions under review here. During the reign of Bhāskaravarman (c. 600–650 CE), the Bhauma-Varmans (the dynasty to which he belonged) reached the zenith of their political power and territorial expansion in the region. The seventh chapter (*ucchvāsa*) of Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* ("Deeds of Harṣavardhana") titled "The Gift of an Umbrella" (*chatralabdhi*) narrates a treaty sealed in common interest between Harṣavardhana (606–647 CE) and Bhāskaravarman against their common enemy, Śaśāṅka (c. 600–625 CE), the ruler of Gauḍa.<sup>25</sup> The Nidhanpur copper plates issued by Bhāskaravarman indicate that immediately after Śaśāṅka's death, the core territory of Śaśāṅka was occupied by Bhāskaravarman, although for a brief period. One also has to take into consideration the expansion of Kāmarūpa to Śrīhaṭṭa (today's Sylhet) and its access to the sub-region of Samataṭa (today's Noakhali-Comilla area in the trans-Meghna zone of Bangladesh) which is contiguous to the Bay of Bengal. This is corroborated from the fact that Samataṭa yielded gold coins bearing the legend Śrīkumāra identified with Kumāra Bhāskaravarman.<sup>26</sup> Thus it can be postulated that after the death of Śaśāṅka, the smaller rulers of Samataṭa might have accepted the suzerainty of Bhāskaravarman in order to ensure the flow of trade from Kāmarūpa.<sup>27</sup> With this underlying of territorial control, it cannot but indicate that Bhāskaravarman's territorial possessions stretched from Karṇasuvarṇa in the west to Kāmarūpa in the east and to Samataṭa in the south. It comes with no surprise that Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* describes Bhāskaravarman as the "lord of Kāmarūpa" (*kāmarūpādhipati*).<sup>28</sup> This implies that Bhāskaravaraman's territorial control and possession

25 For a detailed discussion on Harṣa's campaigns against Gauḍa, see Bakker 2014, pp. 97–102. Since this paper focuses on the monarchical polity formation on Kāmarūpa during the reign of Bhāskaravarman, it is beyond the scope of the paper to discuss the enmity between Harṣa and Śaśāṅka.

26 Rhodes 2011, pp. 266f.

27 Chakravarti 2011, p. 16.

28 Cowell & Thomas 1897, pp. 216f.



of these areas were real and not merely an attempt to take or to formalise control in the area concerned by the grant.

Further, this geo-political entity of Kāmarūpa is demonstrated by the near contemporary Xuanzang's travel account from A.D. 629–645, which mentions the country of “Ka-mo-lu-po”.<sup>29</sup> The region later finds expression in the above mentioned *Kālikāpurāṇa*, an *Upapurāṇa* believed to have been compiled in Assam and narrating the legend of the creation of this region. This text stood as an emblem of the Brahmanical/Vaiṣṇava ideological model of kingship in the Brahmaputra valley in *prācyadeśa*, but now imbibing the political culture and social norms of the *madhyadesa* which we shall discuss further below. The land of Kāmarūpa therefore sees its emergence and consolidation from a frontier zone (*pratyanta*), according to the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta (4<sup>th</sup> century CE), to a distinct geopolitical entity by the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, marking the formation of monarchical polity there.

It has already been stated that in many kingdoms royal genealogies (*vaṃśāvalī*) were sometimes fabricated, in order to give legitimacy to the makers of the grant. As reflected for the first time from the *praśasti* sections of the two copper plates (the Dubi and Nidhanpur grants), the Varāha incarnation of Viṣṇu, Naraka, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta, came to be placed in the unilineal line of the sacred genealogy of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE Bhauma-Varmans of the Brahmaputra valley. This claim was not made in the earlier inscriptions of the time of Bhāskaravarman's ancestors, the Umācal and Bargaṅga inscriptions from about the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century CE respectively. The genealogical contents represented in these copper plates are more or less similar. Both inscriptions begin with the eulogies of Naraka, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta. This genealogy also stands in conjunction with the genealogy mentioned in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita*. What is of striking importance here is the genesis of the lineage from the Varāha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, the primaeval boar who is described to have rescued the earth goddess Pṛthvī.<sup>30</sup> By this analogy the ruler could be

29 Watters 1973, pp. 185f.

30 For the famous Varāha sculpture from Udayagiri, Vidisa, created during Chandragupta II's (375–415 CE) reign; see Singh 2009, p. 533. The symbolic power of the Varāha imagery has been explicitly discussed. The imagery of the earth being rescued by the boar acts as an article of faith and hope in the face of disaster and the fall of the existing order; see Bakker 2014, p. 247.

projected as the protector and rescuer from political calamity and/or from the non-observance of the Brahmanical *varṇāśramadharmā* ideals.

This genealogy can be seen against the backdrop of the *Kālikāpurāṇa* which introduces the region of Kāmarūpa with the legendary Naraka by presenting him in a metamorphic narrative. The narrative of Naraka begins with the circumstances leading to his birth through the union of Pṛthvī with Viṣṇu as Varāha. He was raised as the son of Janaka, the ruler of Videha where he imbibed human and *kṣatriya* qualities (*kṣatram bhāvaṃ ca mānuṣam*) till the end of his boyhood. At the age of sixteen he was escorted to the bank of the Ganga where Pṛthvī and Viṣṇu revealed themselves to him as his parents. All of them then entered the Gaṅgā whereby they were transported to Prāgjyotiṣa which was situated in the midst of Kāmarūpa. In Kāmarūpa he conquered the Kirāta chief and kingship under the tutelage of Viṣṇu. After years of his virtuous rule in Kāmarūpa his reign experienced a downfall when he befriended Bāṇa, the ruler of Śoṇitapura and a worshipper of Śiva. He adopted a demonic nature (*asurabhāva*) when he stopped worshipping *brāhmaṇas*, Viṣṇu, Pṛthvī and Kāmākhyā. Because of his loss of *nīti* (righteousness / ethics / right conduct / also perhaps: Brahmanical sacred norms) he was eventually killed by Kṛṣṇa.

The major thrust of the narrative was to ensure that despite the inevitability of Naraka being ultimately an *asura* (a demon), he was not born an *asura*. His divine qualities (*devabhāva*) were drawn from the fact that he was the son of Pṛthvī and Viṣṇu and had a close sibling relationship with Sītā. There is repeated emphasis on his human qualities (*mānuṣabhāva*) which guaranteed his survival and prosperity. Secondly, Naraka was associated with *madhyadeśa* (Videha) which was perceived as a part of civilized human space and not in a peripheral (*pratyanta*) country. The motif of the Gaṅgā provided initial purification of the profane land. Third, the text portrays the *asura* Bāṇa as the real villain who leads Naraka along the unrighteous path, thereby illuminating the hostility of a Brahmanical Purāṇic text with a strong Vaiṣṇava sectarian orientation against Śaivism.<sup>31</sup>

Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya proposes that the genealogical descent from Naraka in the *Kālikāpurāṇa* appears to be in conformity with a reg-

31 Kakati 2017, p. 235.

ular and familiar process in the context of local monarchical state formation in Indian history, particularly from the Gupta period onwards (4<sup>th</sup> century CE), to provide legitimacy to royal families in early Kāmarūpa like the Bhauma-Varmans (c. 4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century CE), Śālastambhas (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century CE) and the Pālas (c. 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century CE). The transformation of the Naraka story stands at a juncture of transition from pre-state to state society in Kāmarūpa. In the post-Gupta period (c. 600–1300 CE), the hilly regions of India and the comparatively remote regions far from the Ganga valley witnessed for the first time the transition to a complex state society. The *Kālikāpurāṇa* thus portrays Naraka not as an initiator of cultural transformation but as a passive medium by portraying his transformation.<sup>32</sup>

The genealogy in the two land grants reflects the high pedigree, real or imagined, of the ruling family of Bhāskaravarman. It does so by making use of the following narrative techniques. First, there is an allusion to the Naraka legend which is elaborated in Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* and again in the *Kālikāpurāṇa*. Second, the predecessors of Bhāskaravarman have been projected to have genealogical links to Bhagadatta of the *Mahābhārata* in order to establish a high pedigree of the royal family. Third, no less significant is the regular description of the king and his chief queen in the context of the birth of sons who would become future rulers. The recurrent enlisting of the chief queens (*devī*) underlines the excellence of descent, an unblemished genealogy and unbroken succession from both the parents' sides, upholding the law of primogeniture.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* eulogizes the forthcoming alliance between Harṣavardhana and Bhāskaravarman with that between Śiva and Kuvera, Daśaratha and Indra, Dhanañjaya (Arjuna) with Kṛṣṇa, and

32 Chattopadhyaya 2017, pp. 104–137.

33 In Indian courts, there was one proper queen as distinct from concubines, all of whom may have sons. The law of primogeniture qualifies heavily along with other considerations like capacity, virtue, health and personal predilections of the reigning monarch towards his sons. However, what distinguishes the claimant to the throne from his other half-brothers is not their patrilineages, which are identical, but their mother's patrilineages which are different and which determines their claims of superior status. When a chief queen is publicly recognized, a special claim is conferred on her sons; see Trautmann 1972, p. 9.

Duryodhana with Karṇa.<sup>34</sup> Hence Bāṇabhaṭṭa who was aware of the lineage of Bhāskaravarman portrayed this alliance as an ideal alliance by bringing in a flavour of the Purāṇic divinities and celebrated heroes of the two epics which in their turn underlined the legitimacy, heightened glory and pedigree of both the ruling houses.

The royal genealogy seems to have been effective in various ways. First, it asserted the reputation of Bhāskaravarman who sought for political alliance with Harṣavardhana. The genealogy of Bhāskaravarman was narrated by Haṃsavega, the emissary of Bhāskaravarman in the court of Harṣavardhana, when the envoy conveyed his master's wish to make friends with the latter. Second, it impressed the Chinese monk Xuanzang who visited Kāmarūpa in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. Xuanzang stressed the lengthy history of Bhāskaravarman's family and wrote that the king belongs to the old line of *Nārāyaṇa deva* and that the sovereignty over the country was transmitted in the Bhauma-Varman family for a thousand generations. Third, it legitimized the sovereignty of Bhāskaravarman. The Nidhanpur copper plate mentions that Bhāskaravarman has the power of splendour (*prabhāvaśakti*)<sup>35</sup> exhibited by the elevation of the rank obtained through the succession of the son of Vasumatī (Earth).<sup>36</sup> It denotes that the resource or his power was the lineage of Naraka. Such elaborate treatment of the genealogy of rulers became common from the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards, the time of consolidation of monarchical polity.

#### 4. The *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa on the Kāmarūpa ruler

This leads us to Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* which captures the historical ambience of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and Harṣavardhana's attempt to acquire sovereignty. The portrayal of Bhāskaravarman in the seventh chapter

34 Cowell & Thomas 1897, p. 218.

35 This is similar to a line in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, which has a discussion on the three *śaktis*: *evam utsāhaprabhāvamāntṛaśaktinām uttarottarādṛhiko 'tisamdhatte*. In this line (9.1.16), the power of a king is said to be derived from three sources (*śakti*): energy (*utsāha*), might (*prabhāva*, which, among other things, probably refers to the richness of a kingdom), and counsel (*mantra*); see the translation by Shamasastri 1951, p. 368.

36 Shin 2011, p. 178.

(*ucchvāsa*) of the *Harṣacarita* is marginal as he is not the principal focus of the composition but relevant to Harṣavardhana's political plans to cement an alliance with the Kāmarūpa ruler against their common rival, the Gauḍa ruler Śaśāṅka. The *Harṣacarita* states that Harṣavardhana was on a day's journey from Kānyakubja, today's Kanauj, in the course of his eastward expedition against Śaśāṅka. At this point Bhāskaravarman, who has recently risen in status, too, requests a treaty with Harṣavardhana through his emissary Haṃsavega, for he is also battling against their common enemy, the king of Gauḍa.

It is no wonder that Bāṇabhaṭṭa highlights the importance of the envoy Haṃsavega much more elaborately than the standardized epigraphic statement on the messenger (*dūta/dūtaka*) conveying the royal order of the land grant. Haṃsavega was supposedly offered a warm hospitality by Harṣavardhana. After all, Haṃsavega was involved in the cementing of a very crucial political alliance. Harṣavardhana accepted the alliance and this was reciprocal. The advantage derived by Bhāskaravarman through this alliance was that the Nidhanpur copper plate inscription was issued from Karnaśuvarṇa, which means that Bhāskaravarman captured Śaśāṅka and immediately exercised control of his capital, while the property transfer took place in Sylhet which was beyond the Kāmarūpa valley. The Dubi copper plate is already indicative of his firm control over Kāmarūpa, the core Brahmaputra valley. These episodes of alliance and friendship, whether actual or imagined, the accounts of which are recorded with poetic embellishments, underline the importance of a north-eastern ruler of the Indian subcontinent, situated on the fringes of the Ganga valley for the first time playing a major role in north Indian politics.

The alliance was accompanied by a large number of most selected gifts for Harṣavardhana. Among these the parasol (*ātapatra*) of Varuṇa called Ābhoga is singled out. The gift of the parasol, one of the insignia of royalty, highlights the ritual significance and indication of Bhāskaravarman's acceptance of Harṣavardhana's sovereignty. This was followed by a large variety of indigenous and non-indigenous goods fit for royal gifts. While the Ābhoga was an inheritance from Bhagadatta, other items were indigenous specialities of Assam. These included ornaments like crest jewels and pearl necklaces, quantities of pearl, shells, sapphire; finished products including silken towels rolled up in baskets of coloured

reeds, drinking vessels embossed by skilful artists, loads of Kārdaraṅga (a horse breed) leather bucklers with gold-leaf work and cases to preserve their colour, soft loin cloth, pillows of Samūruka (kind of a deer) leather and other kinds of figured textures, volumes of fine writing on leaves made from aloe bark, bundles containing sacks of woven silk, curved boxes of panels for painting with brushes and gourds to hold paints; indigenous items like bamboo tubes containing mango sap, cane stools, milky betelnut fruit; forest products comprising bundles of black aloe, black aloe oil, Gośirṣa sandal, camphor, scent bags of musk oxen, sprays made from the Kakkola plant, clove flower bunches, nutmeg clusters, cups of Ullaka juice, rings of hippopotamus ivory, encrusted with rows of pearls from the temples of elephants; animals which incorporated pairs of Kinnaras and mermen, orang-outangs, musk deer and female camara deer, pheasants, parrots, mynas and other birds, partridges in cages of coral, etc. A non-indigenous gift which stood out from the rest were heaps of black and white cowrie shells.<sup>37</sup> Cowries are not indigenous to the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent, nor are they locally available. They are clearly a marine product which was obviously procured from the sea coast of Bengal. Cowries form part and parcel of maritime transportation and possibly might have been transported from the Maldives.<sup>38</sup> The shells therefore stood out as suitable gifts even for a regional Kāmarūpa ruler. These gifts stood symbolic in the light of the forthcoming alliance which would cement this arrangement.

A close look at the nature of the *praśasti* will further make the study of polity formation in 7<sup>th</sup> century Kāmarūpa more palpable. Ornate court poetry follows the literary tradition and strategy of elaborately describing the challenges and hurdles the rulers had to face. By highlighting the degree of difficulties, which these rulers are portrayed to have overcome, the composers of *praśastis* and *caritas* actually glorify the deeds of the heroes, thereby enhancing the stature of the hero in question. This is first reflected in the Dubi copper plates where we find an allusion to two young sons of the Kāmarūpa king Susthitavarman, Supraṭiṣṭhitavarman and Bhāskaravarman, who were imprisoned by the Gauḍa enemy.<sup>39</sup> First,

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37 Cowell & Thomas, pp. 214f.

38 Basu Majumdar 2014, p. 596.

39 Sharma 1978, pp. 26f.

this could allude to the hostilities carried out by the Magadhan ruler, Mahāsenagupta (of the Later Gupta dynasty) who in his Apsad stone inscription claimed to have defeated Susthitavarman, the king of Kāmarūpa, on the banks of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) river. It is likely that Śaśānka of Gauḍa (c. 600–625 CE) started his career as a *mahāsāmanta* (a powerful subordinate ruler) under the later Gupta rulers. When Śaśānka became an independent ruler, he seems to have continued his erstwhile overlord’s enmity with Kāmarūpa, this time, however, as a Gauḍa ruler.<sup>40</sup> Whether it was Mahāsenagupta’s or Śaśānka’s hostilities, it would have implied a time of trouble in Kāmarūpa. Bhāskaravarman in the Dubi copper plate inscription acknowledged a period of political turmoil preceding his reign which might have caused a temporary loss of power followed by the abrogation of the existing grant. However, with the accession of Bhāskaravarman to power, political stability in Kāmarūpa might have been achieved for nearly half a century. In this context, the need for regranting an old land grant charter by Bhāskaravarman might be postulated, although the Dubi copper plate does not explicitly state the reason.

A striking parallel is Harṣavardhana’s accession to the throne followed by the composition of Bāṇabhaṭṭa’s *Harṣacarita*. Like Bhāskaravarman, Harṣavardhana, too, succeeded his elder brother to the throne. In both instances the law of primogeniture is not followed and the succession is passed from the elder to the younger brother. Harṣavardhana, originally a Puṣyabhūti ruler from Sthāṇīśvara, modern day’s Thanesar, is best known as a formidable ruler, having his seat of power at Kānyakubja in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab. Kānyakubja was originally the seat of the Maukharis with whom the Puṣyabhūtis had contracted a marriage alliance (the Maukharī king Grahavarman married Puṣyabhūti’s princess Rājyaśrī). Devagupta of Malwa (of the later Gupta dynasty), aided by the Gauḍa ruler Śaśānka, attacked the Maukharī kingdom, which led to the death of Grahavarman. This was followed by the murder of Rājyavardhana, the Puṣyabhūti king, by an act of treachery on the part of Śaśānka, as the *Harṣacarita* describes.<sup>41</sup> This again set the stage for

40 Chowdhury, 2018, pp. 530f.

41 Bāṇabhaṭṭa describes Śaśānka as a terrible “Gauḍa serpent” (*gauḍabhujāṅga*); see Cowell & Thomas 1897, p. 185.



Harṣavardhana to virtually usurp the power in Kānyakubja and become the master of Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab. Thus, it can be postulated that Harṣavardhana's usurpation of power in Sthāṇīśvara and Kānyakubja and the element of questionability of his accession to the throne might have impelled the composition of the *Harṣacarita* to justify his legitimacy to rule.<sup>42</sup> In fact, it was argued that one of the immediate reasons for writing the *Harṣacarita* was to legitimize the reign of the younger brother who might have been a rival of the elder, an act that challenged the sanctity of primogeniture.<sup>43</sup>

## 5. An overview of the Kāmarūpa polity in the light of epigraphic texts

This leads us to the typical features of a complex polity: a well-defined territory, subject population, administrative officers, resource mobilisation, urbanity and writing, replete with details of statecraft as reflected in the two coeval copper plate inscriptions.<sup>44</sup> A typical hallmark of the new type of political formation in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE is the custom of granting revenue-free landed property to religious donees (individual or institutional). This feature of the “threshold times” which was already experienced in the greater parts of the Ganga valley, Central India and the Deccan, was witnessed in Kāmarūpa during the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. The rapid increase of land grants in the early medieval times were actually instrumental in clearing hitherto uncultivable and unsettled areas into

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42 Though Bāna's description of Harṣa's consecration as chief of the army, after earlier having declined kingship, seems to follow a literary convention that has its basis in a mythic representation, Hans Bakker opines that the historical reality underlying Bāna's literary imagination was that Harṣa's sister had been captured, his brother killed and he was installed as commander of the army (*senāpati*) in Sthāṇīśvara. Henceforth he marched against Śaśāṅka. The eventual recovery of his sister, the dowager queen Rājyaśrī or 'Royal Glory,' which concludes the *Harṣacarita*, is Bāna's ingenious allegorical justification of King Harṣavardhana's ascension to the throne of Kānyakubja; see Bakker 2014, p. 87f.

43 Thapar 2002, p. 288.

44 While the two coeval copper plate inscriptions reflect features of a complex polity, we cannot be definite in asserting if it was actually models of complexity grafted to a geopolitical entity in formation.



sedentary agrarian settlements which in their turn would provide the vital resource base to the emergent local and regional polities, firmly rooted to their respective local or regional resource bases. The several instances of creations of *brāhmaṇa* settlements in a conquered territory by transporting them from the victor's core area ensured the presence of an influential loyal element in a new country.

The institution of the *brahmadeya*, land or villages given as a gift (usually tax-free) to specifically one or a group of *brāhmaṇas*, and the *agrahāra*, revenue free landed property in favour of a religious donee – *brāhmaṇa*(s), religious complexes, or administrative officials –,<sup>45</sup> introduced Sanskrit culture which included the norms of social organization as laid down in the Dharmaśāstras. These elements are apparent in the coeval inscriptions under study. These idealized Brahmanical piety as *varṇāśramadharmā* and *āryadharmā* with the ethos of *kṣatriya* valor, grants of revenue-free land to *brāhmaṇas* and the creation of Brahmanical settlements, the principle of *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* (free enjoyment of land by one who brings it under cultivation for the first time), benedictory praise of the giver of land and punishment to confiscators (*narake vasate*).<sup>46</sup> The Dubi copper plate records that Śrī Bhūti-varman (great-great-grandfather of Bhāskaravarman) presented a charter to certain *brāhmaṇas*. However, the earlier plates were damaged (*kṣata*) on all sides (*āsamantāt*). Hence Bhāskaravarman re-issued the charter for the same purpose to those very *brāhmaṇas* once again. The Nidhanpur copper plates similarly records the institutional re-granting of land to *brāhmaṇas* in the Mayūraśālmalāgrahāra of Candrapuri region/district (*viṣaya*) which had become liable to revenue because of the loss of the copper plates. Thus, the Brahmanical form of the kingship/rulership model is reflected in the texts. Besides, the agrarian expansion proceeded significantly in the peripheral area and the regional state formation seems to have reached a crucial phase during this period.

This leads to our subsequent discussion on the importance of the linkage between state power and the writing of records. The striking information in both the Dubi and Nidhanpur copper plate inscriptions is

45 See Sircar 1966, p. 61.

46 On *narake vasate*, lit. "he lives in hell," see Sharma 1978, p. 58. On the *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* see Sircar 1966, p. 58.

that Bhāskaravarman recorded the grants in favour of certain *brāhmaṇas* who had originally received the grant of land in Śrī Bhūtiavarman's time. The charters explicitly state that his grant was actually the regrant of an earlier one. This highlights the possibility of the existence of an admirably efficient practice of land transactions. As a result of this, an older grant of the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE (considering that Bhūtiavarman ruled in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE when he issued the Bargangā rock inscription) could be retrieved and reproduced in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE (almost a century later) even when such documents of land transfer belonged to the easternmost fringe of the Indian subcontinent. These are firm indicators of the monarchical state formation. The Nidhanpur copper-plate further records that the newly issued plates appeared different from the earlier record in terms of their letters (*bhinnarūpāṅy akṣarāṅi*) and as such they were not to be suspected as forged edicts (*kūṭṣāsāna*).<sup>47</sup> This may be an indication that there might have been instances of forged copper plate land grants from contemporaneous kingdoms. This in turn implies that copper plate land grant records had emerged as translocally accepted documentary proof of possession in land and revenue-exemption from the state. In other words, this cannot but indicate that the state machinery in Kāmarūpa, if not yet complex, was in the process of becoming complex by adopting models from elsewhere.

What is striking in the inscription from Nidhanpur, is its familiarity with the designations of a few high-ranking functionaries, usually encountered in the Ganga valley. During the “threshold times”, irrespective of the size of the territory of a ruler, the land grant charters usually enlisted a very large number of officers, often marked by their hierarchical gradations. These copper plates recording remissions from revenue in fa-

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47 Sharma 1978, p. 49. We can however still suspect the plates as forged, maybe the more so because this claim is made strongly. In certain instances, copper plates were replicated to replace lost genuine ones, and this action was sometimes considered legally valid. Historically, there have been documented instances where replaced copies of lost genuine originals were legally sanctioned. Richard Salomon has defined ‘forgery’ and ‘spurious’ to address the circumstances and intentions of such copper plate creators. He argued that in certain instances where the claims to land or other grants were legitimate and copies were made to represent the damaged or lost originals, the intention to deceive was “found in the presentation of the replacement as if it were the original”; see Salomon 2009, p. 111.

vous of the donees are also reliable indicators of the increasing demands of taxes by the ruling authorities. This speaks of the ensuing process of resource mobilisation which was indispensable for the monarchical polity, whether local, regional or supra-regional.<sup>48</sup> The Nidhanpur copper plate inscription records numerous royal functionaries involved in marking the boundaries of the land granted. However, it should be borne in mind that some of these functionaries, particularly those unnamed, might be fictional or mentioned by convention as they were expected to exist. The order of *mahārājādhirāja* Bhāskaravarman in respect of the grant was addressed to the present and future district officers (*viṣayapati*) and the various offices of the administration (*adhikaraṇa*). These were the *prāptapañcamahāśabda* (a subordinate title or epithet sometimes applied to a crown prince)<sup>49</sup> Śrī Gopāla who was the executor of the grant, the headman (*nāyaka*) of Candrapurī Śrī Kṣikuṇḍa, the dispute settler (*nyāyakarāṇika*) Janārdanasvāmi, the law officer (*vyavahārin*) Haradatta and the scribe or clerk (*kāyastha*) Dundhunātha, the master of treasury (*bhaṇḍāgārika*) *mahāsāmanta* Divākaraprabha, and the tax collectors (*utkheṭayitṛ*) Dattakārapūrṇa and Pūrṇa.<sup>50</sup> This may indicate the growth and consolidation of bureaucratic control in the early medieval period.

That the monarchical polity had consolidated in Kāmarūpa by the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE will be driven home by the reference to the aforementioned *prāptapañcamahāśabda* Śrī Gopāla, typically associated with a high-ranking vassal who was a subordinate ruler vis-à-vis the suzerain power of Bhāskaravarman. The higher rank of Bhāskaravarman is further clearly visible as he himself had a dependent ruler under him, *mahāsāmanta* Divākaraprabhā. This clearly brings into light the existence of at least two intermediaries or dependents under Bhāskaravarman. The other important and indispensable functionary, connected with the land transfer records, was the scribe or clerk (*kāyastha*). A literate person and someone with regular access to royal documents and records, the *kāyastha* occupied a special position in the court. Closely associated with him was the scribe (*lekhaka*) Vasuvarṇa who wrote the draft of the record

48 Chakravarti 2018, p. 879.

49 Sircar 1966, p. 257.

50 Sharma 1978, p. 49.

and who was clearly differentiated from Kāliya who was the brazier and engraver (*sekyakāra*) of the Nidhanpur cooper plate record.

Talking about political epithets, the genealogies evident from the Dubi and Nidhanpur copper plates mention fourteen generations preceding Bhāskaravarman. All the preceding rulers are listed and endowed with generic titles such as *nṛpa* and *rājan*. For that matter even Bhāskaravarman doesn't use any political epithet in the Dubi copper plate, but has himself called Śrī Bhāskaravarman. However, the Nidhanpur copper plate mentions the use of the political epithet *mahārājādhirāja* which suggests that the monarchical realm under him has grown strong in a period of a few years and his suzerain power is more exalted. As stated above, the Bengali sub-region Samataṭa had yielded coins bearing the legend Śrīkumāra, identified with Bhāskaravarman, which lends further veracity to this claim.<sup>51</sup> This means that after the death of Śaśānka, the smaller rulers of Samataṭa might have accepted the suzerainty of Bhāskaravarman.

## 6. Concluding remarks

To conclude, it can be stated that these two genres of Sanskrit compositions, the *praśasti* and the *carita*, are neither identical nor corroborative, but reflect both the formation of monarchical state society which drew upon the ideologies of the *varṇāśramadharmā*. The *praśasti* as well as the *carita*, which primarily dwell on the conquest of a ruler eclipsing his rivals, can also be read from the perspective of the emergence and consolidation of monarchical polity. The combined testimonies of the two *praśastis* and the *Harṣacarita* underline the importance of Kāmarūpa as an emergent regional power in the northeast area. Two crucial points from the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE are to be further noted in this context: first, Bhāskaravarman's role as a political ally of the new centre of power at Kānyakubja, which indicates that the monarchical realm polity under the Bhauma-Narakas had taken strong roots in the region, which grew from within and was not a result of the disintegration of the erstwhile Gupta realm; and second, Xuanzang's mention of the country of "Ka-mo-lu-po", which suggests that within a span of three centuries Kāmarūpa

<sup>51</sup> Rhodes 2011, pp. 266f.

had developed from a frontier ruler (*pratyanta-nrpati*) zone in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE to a historical supra-local stature by the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. This is clearly evident from the pre-eminence of the *brāhmaṇas* in the socio-political order, the elaborate genealogies of the ruling family, the growing number of state functionaries and the complex record keeping system.

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# Discussing Nyāya in Brajbhāṣā: On Six Categories of Reasoning in Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

Rosina Pastore\*


**Abstract:** This paper interrogates the representation of the instruments of reasoning (*tarka upāya*) in Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*, "The Drama of the Rise of the Wisdom Moon", composed in Brajbhāṣā in 1760 CE. How are Nyāya categories expressed in a dramatic mould? What is the context of their exposition and its aim in Brajvāsīdās's text which displays Vedāntic and *bhakti* leanings? First, I will introduce the context and the conceptual background of the discussion and then analyse the treatment of Nyāya in the drama through a close reading of the relevant text passages. My conclusions are provisional but make space for the possibility of Nyāya philosophy being treated in languages different from Sanskrit and in literary genres other than technical literature (*śāstra*).

**Keywords:** logic, Vedānta, philosophy, drama, vernacular, Braj, early modern

## 1. Introduction

Why do you not set about propogating Vedānta in your part of the country? There Tantrikism prevails to a fearful extent.

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\*  [orcid.org/0000-0002-6594-4577](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6594-4577). I wish to thank Gianni Pellegrini for discussing the questions I had about Nyāya when I was preparing my talk for the IIGRS 2021. All imprecisions and errors are nothing but mine.

Rouse and agitate the country with the lion-roar of Advaita-vada. Then I shall know you to be a Vedāntist. First open a Sanskrit school there and teach the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sutras. Teach the boys the system of Brahmacharya. I have heard that in your country there is much logic-chopping of the Nyaya school. What is there in it? Only Vyapti [pervasion] and Anumana [inference] – on these subjects the Pandits of the Nyaya school discuss for months! What does it help towards the Knowledge of the Atman?

With these words, addressed by Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) to a Bengali pupil, the self-fashioned Vedānta monk rejects any connection of Nyāya with the knowledge of the self.<sup>1</sup> It is striking that he seems to willingly dismiss the fact that for centuries Vedāntins of all extractions composed works dealing with questions of Logic. At the same time, he channels one of the main Vedāntic preoccupations, that is, that knowledge of the self (*ātman*) comes chiefly from the correct understanding of the teaching of Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtras*.<sup>2</sup> The intellectual perspective of modern Vedāntins like Swami Vivekananda and that of ancient and medieval Vedānta thinkers has received more scholarly attention since we know, for example, that Advaita (non-dualist) Vedāntins had to adopt the techniques and concepts developed in Navya Nyāya in order to counter the opposition of the Dvaita (dualist) Vedāntins. However, we are less aware of what took place in early modern times, especially from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>3</sup> The present article contributes to the study of the interactions of Vedānta and Nyāya in early modern times and especially attempts to look at Nyāya through unconventional sources, like Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka* (hereafter PcN). It is appropriate, therefore, to first introduce this work and the conceptual background of this study.

1 Cf. Vivekananda (1964), vol. 7, p. 256.

2 These are works that, along with the *Bhagavadgītā*, are recognized as the textual foundation of the philosophies falling under the denomination of Vedānta.

3 Except for Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16<sup>th</sup> c.), not much attention has been dedicated to later Vedāntins. On this, cf. Minkowski 2011.

## 2. Brajvāsīdās's *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

Brajvāsīdās (born 1730?), an author initiated in the Vallabha religious tradition and living in the Braj region of northern India, composed the *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*, “The Drama of the Rise of the Wisdom Moon,” in 1760 CE. The PcN is part of a literary tradition which is famous for the Sanskrit play *Prabodhacandrodaya* (PC), written by Kṛṣṇamiśra in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> The story (*kathā*) of the *Prabodhacandrodaya* was retold several times in Sanskrit, in North Indian regional languages (Brajbhāṣā, Avadhī), in Kharī Bolī Hindī, and in South Indian languages.<sup>5</sup> Kṛṣṇamiśra's drama was well known, but it was by no means the sole source of inspiration for the retellers of the *Prabodhacandrodaya kathā*. In the inception of his PcN, Brajvāsīdās declares that he drew not only from Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* (of which he had heard about) but also from a 17<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sufi retelling of the story, the *Gulzār-i ḥāl* by Banvālīdās, of which he possessed a manuscript copy (*kitāba*).<sup>6</sup>

From the philosophical and religious points of view, the PcN combines Vedānta and *bhakti*. Although Brajvāsīdās belonged to Vallabha's school of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta (Śuddhādvaita Vedānta), a careful examination of his PcN shows that the drama does not display specific elements pointing to it. This downplayed affiliation can be seen as caused by several factors. First by the fact that the *Prabodhacandrodaya* as a story tries to accommodate as many philosophical viewpoints as possible. Secondly, from the literary viewpoint several early modern authors composed works which can be seen as “sectarian”, displaying clearly a specific philosophical and religious perspective, as well as “non-sectarian” works, where doctrines associated with a discrete philosophical tradition are absent.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, scholars have demonstrated that from the 16<sup>th</sup>

4 Kṛṣṇamiśra's work was translated several times to English and other European languages like French, German, Italian and Spanish. For this paper I refer to the text edition and translation by M. Kapstein (2009).

5 The tradition of *Prabodhacandrodaya* retellings has been largely neglected in modern scholarship. Brajbhāṣā, Avadhī and Kharī Bolī Hindī retellings are the object of a general study by Agrawal (1962).

6 Cf. PcN 1.13–18. On the *Gulzār-i ḥāl*, see Cappello (2019) and Gandhi (2020).

7 One example is that of Nanddās (d. c. 1585), who was also initiated in Vallabha's tradition, and who composed not only religiously oriented texts but wrote

century onwards some ideological differences between Vedāntins started to become less important, leaving space to other preoccupations.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, the PcN aligns itself not so much with Vallabha's Vedānta but with Vedānta as conceived and expressed in other vernacular sources.

While Vallabha's doctrine centres on a personal god identified with Kṛṣṇa, the PcN presents the Absolute both impersonal and personal. The personal facet is necessary for the cultivation of *bhakti*, that is, creating a bond of loving connection with a god one can "see" and remember.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, for Brajvāsīdās the personal aspect of the divinity could be identified with the gods Kṛṣṇa as well as Rāma.<sup>10</sup>

On this point, and several others, the PcN is in line with ideas expressed in Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas*. This long poem, composed in 1574 in the North Indian regional language Avadhī, reads Rāma of Ayodhyā's story in a Vedāntic and *bhakti* light, by regarding the prince as the Supreme God.<sup>11</sup> When dealing with personified metaphysical concepts like Brahman, *māyā* (Illusion), *jīva* (the Individual Self), as well as the phenomenal world, the PcN reuses the text of the *Rāmcaritmānas* in sev-

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and also adapted compositions on literary theory. For his religiously-oriented works, see McGregor (1984), pp. 98f.; for those on rhetoric see *ibid.*, pp. 125f.

- 8 For example, according to Gianni Pellegrini, from the 16<sup>th</sup> c. there were attempts at bringing closer the Vivaraṇa and the Bhāmatī schools of Advaita Vedānta on some issues, like the ontological substratum of *avidyā*. See Pellegrini (2018), p. 605.
- 9 On Vallabha's (1478–1530) philosophical and religious ideas and writings, see Barz (1976) and Narain (2004). The term *bhakti* (from the Skt. verbal root *bhaj*) is not of easy translation and definition, yet it is of crucial significance for the Indian philosophical and religious landscape. For an overview of the meanings and practices associated with it, see Narayanan (2018). I deal extensively with the philosophical and religious conception of the PcN in chapter 4 of my doctoral thesis on *Vedānta, Bhakti and their early modern sources: A complete translation of Brajvāsīdās's Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka with a critical study of its philosophical and religious dimensions*, Université de Lausanne (2022).
- 10 Cf., for example, PcN 5.119.
- 11 The *Rāmcaritmānas* is held to be one of the fundamental works of the *bhakti* movement in North India up to this day. Cf. Lutgendorf (1991). The philosophical interpretations of Rāma's story were developed mainly in works such as the Rāma-related Upaniṣads and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, upon which Tulsī relied for his own retelling. See Vaudeville (1959).

eral instances. Therefore, philosophical inspiration for the PcN comes not only from the classical Sanskrit texts by Vedānta and the exegetical works by the Vedāntic philosophers but also from local language sources. The literary refinement of the *Rāmcaritmānas* and the popularity it enjoyed already in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries make it a literary and intellectual paradigm for the PcN.<sup>12</sup>

The indebtedness of the PcN to the *Rāmcaritmānas* in terms not only of *bhakti* but also of Vedānta contributes to current discussions about the “Greater Advaita Vedānta.” This approach seeks to enlarge the literary canon of Vedānta philosophies to texts composed in languages other than Sanskrit. It attempts to investigate the popularisation of Vedāntic philosophies, “to enrich and maybe complicate their intellectual history” through the additional investigation of genres different from commentaries or treatises.<sup>13</sup>

Allegorical dramas like the PcN dedicate significant space to philosophical reflections by blending poetry and learned discourse. Therefore, it is not possible to examine the PcN with exactly the same expectations as when reading a treatise (*śāstra*) on a particular topic. Still, it is possible to read the text in its own terms and determine what discourses were relevant to Brajvāsīdās, how he expressed them and, of course, its declared and implicit sources.<sup>14</sup>

The PcN, like many other 18<sup>th</sup>-century works in North Indian regional languages, shows an encyclopaedic tendency.<sup>15</sup> However, it contains what

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12 A comprehensive study of the influence of the *Rāmcaritmānas* on other early modern works is a desideratum. For an overview of some texts directly connected to it, see Bulcke (1999), section “Anya hindi Rām-sāhitya”.

13 This is exemplified by publications such as Allen et al. (2017) and Peterson (2020). While these scholars refer specifically to Advaita Vedānta, I believe that the study of all the schools of Vedānta philosophy – not only Advaita – could benefit from the insights derived from a broader range of sources and languages.

14 My contention here is nourished by Angelika Malinar’s research on philosophy in the *Mahābhārata*. The scholar argues for an inclusion of literary texts, like the epics, as an integral part of the histories of Indian philosophy. In addition, she observes that non-conventional philosophical works should not be approached with expectations of systematicity, but should be carefully regarded also in respect of the conventions of their distinct genres. Cf. Malinar (2017).

15 Cf. McGregor (1984), chapter IV.

may look like digressions which deserves closer scrutiny. For example, in the first act of the play Brajvāsī introduces king Viveka’s eight ministers as personifications of the eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*) of Pātañjala Yoga. To be sure, Brajvāsī’s reworking operates a bhaktification of the *aṣṭāṅga* list, while showing influences also from Haṭha Yoga and Purāṇic yoga. This extended exposition, absent in Kṛṣṇamiśra’s PC and in Banvālīdās’s Persian *Gulzār-i ḥāl*, gives a distinctly yogic flavour to the *bhakti* in PcN, which will be consolidated through other means in the following acts of the drama.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Nyāya in Brajbhāṣā

How does this affect Nyāya? This exploration is preliminary, insofar as my work does not treat Nyāya specifically and because of a gap in the research dealing with Nyāya in vernacular languages (*bhāṣā*) as well. The very existence of complete works dedicated to this field and composed in the regional literary languages of North India is in doubt. On the topic of vernacularisation, Sheldon Pollock has observed that “[b]oth *nyāya*, the *pramāṇasāstra* (along with the larger questions of epistemology), and *mīmāṃsā*, the *vākyaśāstra*, were entirely untouched by vernacularization. I have been unable to locate a single premodern work in either field in any regional language, except for the occasional and very late, almost certainly colonial-era, translation.”<sup>17</sup>

The case under discussion in this article – albeit preceding colonial times – could, indeed, be seen as a tiny exception to the rule. However, I would like to take another approach to the question: that of opening space for a possibility. Apparently Nyāya was never entirely “vernacularised”, but does that imply that such topics were not discussed at all in regional languages? Were they never commented upon, maybe orally?

After all, Nyāya scholars themselves debated about whether *bhāṣā* words possess expressive power, that is, if they communicate knowledge like Sanskrit. Pollock reports the debates among them: for some, like Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1625), *bhāṣā* held an equivalent signifying power to Sanskrit. On the contrary, Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1620–1630) opposed the

16 Cf. Pastore (forthcoming).

17 Pollock (2011), pp. 23f. See also pp. 28f.

use of *bhāṣā*, for in his view *bhāṣā* terms were “corrupted” and did not have the capability of conveying a meaning as effectively as Sanskrit.<sup>18</sup> But when the dominion of Sanskrit in the field of Knowledge systems was indeed “bent”, how was Nyāya affected?

#### 4. Nyāya in the *Prabodhacandrodaya Nāṭaka*

The PcN presents abstract concepts personified, like the two princes Viveka (discrimination) and Moha (bewilderment), half-brothers and enemies. Sacred texts are embodied as well, like Upaniṣad, the lost queen of king Viveka, and her daughter Bhagavadgītā. Therefore, there is also a character called Nyāyaśāstra or Taraka/Tarkaśāstra, which I translated as Science-of-Reasoning or, one could say, Debate, personified as a woman. The denomination points out that it is rightly the śāstric Nyāya, that is, related to its articulation in the technical literature, that is addressed in the PcN. In order to better understand the passages I will analyse, it is useful to be familiar with the PcN’s plot.

The PcN presents the soteriological process of freeing the ātman from its bondage by body and mind in order to recognise the relationship of unity/identity it entertains with the Brahman. A power struggle occurs between two parts of the same family: the first is the faction of Mahāmoha, Bewilderment, the second is the faction of Viveka, Discrimination. These two are the sons of king Mana (Skt. *manas*), Mind, and the grandchildren of Jīvātama Puruṣa (Skt. *jīvātman*), the Individual Self. Jīvātama Puruṣa suffers since his son Mana has forgotten him because of Mahāmoha. Moha and his party made up of Kāma (Desire), Lobha (Greed), Krodha (Anger) etc. can be destroyed if Viveka reunites with Upaniṣad and their twin children Vidyā (Knowledge) and Prabodha (Wisdom) are born. When king Mana remembers his father, the Individual Self Jīvātama Puruṣa, the latter will be able to meet Supreme Self (Paramātama Puruṣa, who never enters the scene) again. This will all take place thanks to the support of Viṣṇubhakti, Bond-with-Viṣṇu.

Among Viveka’s allies there is Nyāyaśāstra, who is described in the final 6<sup>th</sup> act of the drama. The first mention of it is found in the prologue to the act: Faith (*śraddhā*), allied with Discrimination, narrates to her

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18 Pollock (2011), pp. 29–36, cites these and other thinkers’ positions about this issue.



daughter Peace (*śānti*) what has happened in the war, and how their faction defeated Bewilderment's. However, she adds that Mana was seduced by the Siddhis (Supernatural Powers) deriving from yoga practice, and became Moha's victim again. Afterwards, she says that Nyāyaśāstra intervened and reminded the king of the troubles he went through because of Moha and how much difficulty it meant to get rid of him.<sup>19</sup> In this instance the role of Nyāya's character is positive, and her task is to provide an argument for Mana to reconsider his actions.

The PcN, however, is a Vaiṣṇava Vedānta text with the purpose of portraying Vaiṣṇava Vedānta as the best option for a spiritual seeker. For this reason, even schools of thought which were Viveka's allies throughout most of the drama, are criticised in the last part of the 6<sup>th</sup> act. When Viveka is reunited with Upaniṣad in the presence of Jivātama, the latter asks Upaniṣad where and how she spent the time separated from her husband. The queen reports of her consecutive encounters with three women: Yajñavidyā (Sacrificial Science), Mīmāṃsā (Hermeneutics) and, finally, Nyāyaśāstra. The narrative proceeds in this way: Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā interrogate Upaniṣad about her belief, and each time Upaniṣad states that she believes in the single eternal ocean of bliss that is Brahman.<sup>20</sup> After Upaniṣad's declaration, Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā reject Upaniṣad's views. At this point, Viveka intervenes and refutes the doctrines of Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā.

This pattern changes in the case of Nyāyaśāstra because Upaniṣad herself has something to say about her. She introduces Nyāyaśāstra without restating her own belief as in the two previous cases, while Viveka's intervention comes only later. This looks like a strategic move from the part of Brajvāsīdās since he creates a division of labour between Upaniṣad and Viveka. In the case of Yajñavidyā and Mīmāṃsā, the matter was the correct interpretation of Upaniṣad's words, while in the case of Nyāyaśāstra the value of *śabda* (authoritative testimony) in general – and *śruti* (revealed texts) in particular – is the first issue to be at stake, of clearly epistemological nature. Therefore, Upaniṣad will uphold the status of *śabda* among the means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and hence defend herself, before her husband takes up metaphysi-

<sup>19</sup> PcN 6.44f.

<sup>20</sup> For example, PcN 6.97f.

cal problems, rejecting Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in a more general fashion. While Viveka's arguments against the metaphysical views of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in the PcN largely resemble those of Kṛṣṇamīśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya*,<sup>21</sup> the extended presentation of the instruments of reasoning (*tarka upāya*) by the queen is entirely Brajvāsīdās's own creation.

Now let's take a close look at the description made by Upaniṣad. She says she arrived in Nyāyaśāstra's dwelling place and saw there many "people" sitting and "having a discussion".<sup>22</sup> Then she adds:

*vividhi bhāṁti dṛṣṭānta saji tarka aneka upāya /  
karata bāda vidyā vipula so meṁ dekhyau jāya // 6.110*

The numerous instruments of argumentation, embellished with various examples –  
I saw they were practising the multifarious science of debate (*bāda vidyā*).

*koī tahāṁ bāda ko karai /  
koī nigraha ko anusarai //  
jalpa vitaṇḍa soṁ koi arai /  
chala aru jāti koī vistarai //  
e ṣaṭa bheda nyāya ke kahe /  
tina kari ve saba jhagarata rahe //  
chaho bheda ke kahom̄ ju lakṣana /  
jānata hai saba loga bicakṣana // 6.111*

There someone has a discussion (*bāda*), someone practices [the points of] defeat (*nigraha*), someone sticks to dispute (*jalpa*) and trivial objection (*vitaṇḍā*); someone spreads intentional misinterpretation (*chala*) and false rejoinder (*jāti*). These are said to be six categories of reasoning (*nyāya*); they all keep fighting through them. I am going to describe the characteristics of the six categories, [for] all skilled people know them.

Why is the treatment limited to merely six categories (*ṣaṭa bheda*)? According to Sitansusekhar Bagchi, a sixfold classification of *tarka* – *ṣaṭtarka* or *ṣaṭtarkī* – was widespread in philosophical discourses, to the extent

21 Cf. Kṛṣṇamīśra (2009), pp. 260–265, for the Sanskrit text and translation of the whole passage.

22 PcN 6.109: *caracā karata jana*. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are mine.

that the term *tarka* became a symbol of the number six in chronograms. He remarks, however, that lists of five, ten or eleven categories are more frequent. The only major thinker supporting a sixfold configuration is Śrīharṣa, the well known Advaita Vedāntin from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the lists Bagchi discusses, also the shorter and longer ones, are by no means univocal in terms of their members. Although related to debate, what the philosophers explained as “sixfold *tarka*” is not the categories Brajvāsīdās speaks of. In their case, the six types of *tarka* point to a division of the modalities of debate: infinite regress, vicious circle, mutual dependence, etc.<sup>23</sup> For this reason, it seems that Brajvāsī was aware of the number six being associated with *tarka* as an idiomatic expression and that he wished to employ it, but referring to a selection of the core subject matter of Nyāya and not to a technical aspect of it.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the definitions of these categories which are given in a passage following the above quoted introductory stanzas strongly evoke classical Nyāya sources, among these the *Nyāyasūtras* (henceforth NS). After a relative decline in its popularity during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when several independent works were composed in the field of Nyāya instead, Akṣapāda’s influential text kept being commented upon by thinkers well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> The style of śāstric exposition is reproduced in the PcN by concluding the elucidation of each category with the formulaic phrase “this is called ‘x’ in Nyāya”. One instance of this is the description of *chala* (intentional misinterpretation):

*jori gāṁṭhakai artha anartha /  
lehiṁ banāya kaha na samarattha //  
āna ke pāchahi dūṣaṇa lāvai /  
nyāya madhya so chala kahavāvai // 6.116*

23 Apart from Śrīharṣa’s, Bagchi explores the classifications and related discussions by several other influential scholars, such as Udayana (10/11<sup>th</sup> c.). Cf. Bagchi (1953), pp. 151–183, for an overview. On how the nomenclature *ṣaṭtarkī* also denoted the six schools of philosophy, and its popularity, see Gerschmeier (2007).

24 Cf. NS 1.1.1; *hetvābhāsa* (lit. “semblance of a reason”, that is, a logically untenable reason) is absent from the list. The rationale of the omission is not explicit, but we know that the *bhāṣya* on NS 1.1.1 states that *hetvābhāsa* really is a kind of *nigrahasthāna* (point of defeat, defeat situation).

25 Cf. Preisendanz (2005).

Joining a meaning [with] a different meaning, they make up [something which does] not [possess] the same meaning [of what] was said. After that, they accuse [the one who spoke]; for [the Science-of-]Reasoning this is called intentional misinterpretation.

The term *anartha* could mean “lack of meaning”, but it seems more apt to translate it as “different meaning”, since, in line with NS 1.2.10 and 1.2.12, *chala* consists in a deliberate misunderstanding of the sense of a word in order to oppose the adversary. With respect to wording, the PcN seems to tend more towards that of verse 145 in Keśavamiśra’s *Tarkabhāṣā* (TBh), the well-known primer of Nyāya from the 13<sup>th</sup> century:

*abhiprāyāntareṇa prayuktasya śabdasyārthāntaram parikalpya  
dūṣaṇābhidhānaṃ chalam (...).*<sup>26</sup>

In particular one element allows to confirm the proximity of the two explanations: the intent of finding fault in the speaker’s words, indicated by both texts with the term *dūṣaṇa*. The phrase *lehiṃ banāya* of the PcN has the same sense of “making up”, or “inventing”, as the verb *parikalpya* in the TBh, but a similar expression (*kalpanā*) is found also in NS 1.2.12.<sup>27</sup> While Akṣapāda takes several other *sūtras* to exhaust the topic of *chala*, the PcN and the TBh do not delve into the distinct typologies of misinterpretation.

While we do not observe any unusual reinterpretation of *chala* by the author of the PcN, the case is different for the other members of the sixfold group. As a general difference with the pithy statements in the NS, the descriptions in PcN highlight the ideal social setting of debate by portraying the people engaged in discussion: two scholars (*paṇḍita doya*), self-conceited people (*jana abhimāni*), two people (*doya jana*), and people with little knowledge (*alpavidyā jana*). Unlike *chala*, the other categories do not simply restate the traditional view, but in some cases the purpose, as anticipated, appears to be re-establishing the primacy of *śabda*:

26 Cf. TBh, p. 243, translated by Iyer: “When someone uses a certain word (or words) in one sense and if the hearer were to find fault with it by construing it in a different sense, this practice is called *chala* or quibbling.”

27 For the meaning of *banā-* see the dictionary entry in Das (1965–1975), p. 3382. At the same time, the TBh and NS are still closer in diction than the PcN.

*paṇḍita doya baiṭhe ika ṭhāhīm /  
tatva vicārahīm āpusa māhīm //  
dehīm deha karai niravārā /  
nita anitta ko karai vicārā //  
pakṣa rahita śabdahi niravāhī /  
kahata nyāya meṁ bāda su tāhī // 6.112*

Two scholars sit together, they reflect together upon reality/truth. They deliberate [about] the body and the possessor of the body; they ponder upon [what is] permanent and impermanent. [When] they decide [according to] verbal testimony, [which is] impartial, this is called Discussion in [the Science-of]-Reasoning.

*Vāda* is a conversation where the two parties involved aim at the truth. This is in agreement with the definition of the first, the “honest” kind of debate in the NS.<sup>28</sup> However, if *sūtra* 1.2.1 specifies that it is a situation which involves the adoption of opposite sides (*pakṣa* and *pratipakṣa*) and that the truth can be established through any of the *pramāṇas*, this is not the advice given in the PcN. Using the language proper of the topic at hand, the PcN overturns the definition of *vāda* by singling out only one *pramāṇa*: testimony (*śabda*). It suggests that any debate should be solved by resorting to testimony, since it is assertive (*pakṣa rahita*, literally “without a side”), and doubt is apparently what should be avoided.

With *jalpa*, we find that the definition includes a different kind of critique and disapproval:

*paṇḍita doya ju caracā karahīm /  
nija nija jaya icchā mana dharahīm //  
nīrasa rasa kī svāda na jānaim /  
nyāya madhya tehi jalpa bakhānaim // 6.114*

Two scholars have a discussion, they fix the mind [on] the desire [for] one’s own victory. [Being] devoid of *rasa*, they do not know the taste of *rasa*. This is called Dispute in [the Science-of]-Reasoning.

28 Cf. also, for example, TBh 135: *tattvabubhutsvoḥ kathā vādaḥ* “Discussion is a debate between seekers of the truth”.

This description also follows what has been put forward in NS 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 with reference to the purpose of *jalpa*, which is victory (*jaya* in the PcN).<sup>29</sup> The second line of PcN 6.114 contains a familiar Vedāntic criticism made to *tarka*: it is “sapless” or “dry, dull” (*nīrasa*).<sup>30</sup> This reproach may seem conventional, but the term *nīrasa* is not simply a synonym for the Sanskrit term *śuṣka*, “dry”. It alludes to a broader theme in the PcN. In the text, *bhakti* is said to be the *eka rasa* or single essence in Brahman.<sup>31</sup> This *rasa* is said to be both *ānanda* (bliss) and *samatā* (sameness in the sense of equanimity).<sup>32</sup> Not tasting the *rasa* means not knowing Brahman on the one hand; on the other hand, the mention of *rasa* and its taste (*svāda*) implies an aesthetic and emotional dimension, typical of the *bhakti* presented in the PcN.

Upaniṣad, in fact, defends the status of scripture as the only means of knowledge, and what is more, subtly provides a *bhakti* perspective in her critique. This is also the case of *nigraha*:

*jahām doya jana ati abhimānī /*  
*samajhairṁ nahīṁ śabda kī bānī //*  
*apanohī haṭha saṭha ve ṭhānairṁ /*  
*aura na dukhai āpa dukha māne //*  
*kevala jhagarohī priya jāhī /*  
*kahata nyāya meṁ nigraha tāhī // 6.113*

Where two people, very self-conceited, do not understand the words of testimony, are intent only on themselves, the stubborn fools, and are not sad [for] others, [but] sorrowful [for] themselves – who like only fighting, is called [Point-of-]Defeat in [the Science-of-]Reasoning.

The first line evokes NS 1.2.19, where *nigrahashthāna* is defined as an occasion for defeat (*nigraha*) due to a mistake (*vipratipatti*) or a lack of understanding (*apratipatti*). Here, Brajvāsī refers to those who “do not understand” (*samajhairṁ nahīṁ*) to convey these two shades of meaning. He

29 Matilal (1998, pp. 2 and 56) calls *jalpa* a way to win “by wit or intelligence” or a “verbal fight”. See also *ibid.*, pp. 47ff.

30 Cf. *Brahmasūtra* 2.1.11 with Śaṅkara’s commentary in BSBh, pp. 321–323.

31 PcN 6.147.

32 PcN 5.118f., 6.22, 6.81, 6.97, and 6.101.

is more preoccupied to specify that the object partially or wholly misunderstood is the “words of testimony” (*śabda*). It is interesting to note that Upaniṣad primarily defends *śabda* as *śruti*, but at the same time *bānī* can also be translated in the sense of someone’s “saying, utterance”. In the vernacular cultural and literary universe the term *bānī* indicated the utterances of someone spiritually perfected and able to guide others.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, *śabda kī bānī* may be alluding also to the teaching or instruction of such an authoritative figure. The passage is, in fact, not devoid of moralising undertones and points beyond scriptural ignorance.

Brajvāsī adds a negative psychological dimension by saying that people who don’t grasp the significance of the *bānī* are egoistical and do not think about other people’s suffering. This second accusation can be seen as an elaboration of the attribute “very self-conceited” (*ati abhimānī*). This kind of recrimination was not new to the philosophical field: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī blamed those recurring to *jalpa* (sophistry) as *ahaṃkārīn* or arrogant debaters.<sup>34</sup> Vātsyāyana in his commentary to NS 2.1.69 delineates the profile of the *āpta*, the reliable source of knowledge for testimony, by mentioning that he has to possess a desire to communicate his experience to others. In this regard, other commentators or sub-commentators emphasised even more such a moral or ethical aspect of the *āpta*’s profile by adding compassion and unselfishness among other qualities.<sup>35</sup>

The disapproving tone of Brajvāsīdās’s statements, accusing people of being selfish and ignorant, is frequent, as it returns in the case of *vitaṇḍā* (trivial objection):

*jahām alpavidyā jana koū /  
kari abhimā āpa maim doū //  
caracā baḍī āpa maim ṭhānai /  
bāta na kachū yathāratha jānai //  
āpahi vara paṇḍita kari mānaim /  
tāhi vitaṇḍā nyāya bakhānaim // 6.115*

33 An example is the unrivalled status of *bānī* in the Sikh traditions. See Singh (2003), ch. 1. In the Hindī vernacular context, people are familiar with the *Kabīr vānī*, the utterances of the *sant* Kabīr (1398–1518). See Vaudeville (1982).

34 Cf. Pellegrini (2014), p. 8, n. 23.

35 Cf. Vācaspatī Miśra’s (10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> c.) *Nyāyavārtikatātparyaṭīkā* (NVTT), pp. 166f. Cf. also Ganeri (2001), pp. 35f.

When there are people with little knowledge, two behaving arrogantly with one another, when they are intent in big discussions with one another, [but] do not know anything as it is, and consider themselves to be the best scholars, then [Science-of-]Reasoning describes this as Trivial Objection.

The presence of such moral evaluations in the PcN is not only a matter of recreating traditional ways of confrontation but it appears to be especially developed and emphasized because of the *bhakti* facet of Brajvāsīdās's drama. The play opens with a verse of blessing (*maṅgalācaraṇa*) which is the first frame qualifying the PcN as a *bhakti* story. Of course, already Kṛṣṇamīśra's PC included *bhakti*, but the opening of the PcN and the subsequent verses make the PC story relevant for an 18<sup>th</sup>-century audience. In the PcN we find, in fact, an obeisance paid primarily to the *satsaṅga*, the company of fellow devotees. The qualities of the *sants*, the truth-knowers, are at the centre here: they are compassionate, merciful, and pure.<sup>36</sup> Crucial among their qualities is their unselfishness, their considering the good of others like their own.<sup>37</sup> Characterisations such as those of *nīgraha* and *vitaṇḍā*, therefore, exclude in this way the participation of any *sant* in their company. In this respect, that Nyāyaśāstra herself does not appear on the scene, but that people practising her science are portrayed in the PcN, may create a parallel between the social setting of debate and that of *satsaṅga*.

The characterisation of *jāti* (false rejoinder) displays a similar pattern of definition-cum-critique:

*praśna karai uttama jana joī /*  
*tāko uttara deya ju koī //*  
*tākari samādhāna nahim āvai /*  
*sunī tehi aura bahuta dukha pāvai //*  
*tāhi nyāya maim jāti su jānai /*  
*yom kari ṣaṭa bhedahi pahicānai // 6.117*

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36 PcN 1.6.

37 PcN 1.7.



A person that asks an excellent question,<sup>38</sup> [but] is not satisfied when someone answers him; [and] listening to [the reply] becomes even sadder – he who knows this as False Rejoinder in [the Science-of-]Reasoning, recognizes in this way the six categories.

The emphasis is put on the fact that upon hearing a false rejoinder, one becomes even sadder (*dukha*) than before. When she concludes her speech, Upaniṣad declares that she has ascertained that these six categories are baseless (*niradhāra*), because by constantly reflecting, she did not obtain any joy (*sukha*).<sup>39</sup> The elimination of *dukha* and the attainment of ultimate bliss is what the knowledge of the sixteen categories of Nyāya brings about according to NS 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. In this sense, Upaniṣad seems to point to the fact that Nyāya cannot truly accomplish what it promises. It seems clear, then, that Upaniṣad is not only making a case for *śabda* as the source for the knowledge of the Brahman, but also for joy and for the *rasa* of Brahman, which corresponds to *bhakti* and *ānanda*, devotion and bliss.

## 5. Conclusion

In Brajvāsī's PcN we find a treatment of Nyāya which is closely related to śāstric sources but where the language of discussion is Brajbhāṣā. At the same time, Nyāya is not only contrasted to a Vedāntic point of view but also to one of *bhakti*. Brajvāsī's interpretation could be termed a *bhakta's* response to Nyāya, where the topic is adapted to the *bhakta's* worldview in general and to that of the PcN story in particular.<sup>40</sup> The passage could

38 The adjective *uttama* could also be understood as referring to *jana*: “an excellent person”.

39 PcN 6.118: *bhalī bhāṁti kari ye chaho maim dekhe niradhāra / nahim sukha kahū te lahyo rahī bicāri bicāra //*. At the same time, *niradhāra* can also be understood in the sense of “defining, settling, ascertaining” (as a *tadbhava* corresponding to Sanskrit *nirdhāraṇa* instead of *nirādhāra*). Hence, the first line of the verse could be translated as: “I have ascertained these six [categories] properly”, by conflating the meaning of *dekhe* (I have seen / I saw) with *niradhāra*. Cf. Das (1965–1975), p. 2638.

40 This intellectual operation is not unknown in the realm of *bhakti*. For example, the Dādūpanthī Sundardās adapted motives of *rīti* and *kāvya* to suit his *sant*

be interpreted as a fruit of the encyclopaedic tendency of the text on the one hand; on the other hand, it may also be a witness of the author's awareness of a longstanding, critical engagement between Nyāya and Vedānta.<sup>41</sup>

The confidence with which Brajvāsīdās tackles Nyāyaśāstra in *bhāṣā* could mean that its realm was not left entirely untouched by vernacular language(s). In the case of PcN, the treatment of Nyāyaśāstra can also be considered a written trace of what took place orally, in the context of reading and explaining texts with the assistance of a teacher. Nothing prevents us to think that Nyāya texts were read in Sanskrit and their exegesis (and critique) took place in *bhāṣā*.<sup>42</sup> In this sense, maybe the relationship between forms of knowledge and the choice of language was not always as rigid as one would presume.

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- NS *Nyāyayasūtra of Gautama: a System of Indian Logic*, ed. and comm. Ganganath Jha, Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1939.
- NVTṬ *Nyāyavārtikatātṭparyāyikā of Vācaspati Miśra*, ed. Anantalal Thakur, New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1996.
- PC *Prabodhacandrodaya, The Rise of the Wisdom Moon by Kṛṣṇamiśra*, ed. and tr. M. Kapstein, New York: Clay Sanskrit Library, 2009.

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*bhakti* audience in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Cf. Rajpurohit (2021). The term *bhakta* is generally translated as “devotee”, but it is crucial to understand that in the PcN's worldview it means someone who establishes a loving relationship with a god, a bond which is not unilateral but shared with the god who loves him/her in turn. Such a relationship makes the *bhakta* participate in a larger community of people bound not to the world but to a god.

41 For an overview of mainly Advaita and Dvaita Vedānta involvement with Nyāya over the centuries, see Diaconescu (2012), pp. 265–277.

42 An intellectual operation which would not be unheard of, akin to the translation practices into Persian at the Mughal court. In that context, the translators worked with the help of *paṇḍits* in order to understand the meaning of the texts they sought to render in the imperial court's adopted official language. These conversations between the scholars often happened in *bhāṣā*, the language common to the two parties. See Truschke (2016), chapter 1.

- PcN Brajvāsīdās, *Prabodhacandrodaya Nātaka*, (editors not mentioned), Lucknow: Naval Kishor Press, 1875.
- TBh *Tarkabhāṣā of Keśavamīśra*, ed. and tr. S. R. Iyer, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia, 1979.

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## The Path to Salvation: A Key to Identifying the Religious Affiliation of the Original *Skandapurāṇa*

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**Abstract:** This paper proposes to analyse myths as narratives conveying doctrinal values and seeks to show that the conclusions drawn from this approach can complement the results of philological work. Focusing on the Sukeśa myth told in the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP), this study aims to reassess Kropman’s hypothesis according to which the whole Naraka cycle could be a later addition, probably issued from a Smārta authorship. To this end, all her arguments are reviewed and a new approach to myths, which is based on their comparison with doctrinal texts, is applied in order to identify doctrinal values conveyed within their stories and to determine the religious affiliation of their authors. As the two authorships suggested belong to the Brahmanical orthodoxy and to the Pāśupata religion, I first define their main disagreements, i.e., their respective paths to salvation. Then I investigate the two versions of the Sukeśa myth told in the SP by highlighting the promoted paths to salvation. This analysis shows that both versions endorse a soteriology close to Pāśupata values and offer a Śaiva solution to Brahmanic imperatives such as the obligation to have a son to save the lineage of the ancestors. Finally, I demonstrate that the path to salvation can be a key for the identification of

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the religious affiliation and the authorship and conclude that, even if it is not possible to affirm that the Naraka cycle is a later addition, it is very unlikely that the author of the second version of the Sukeśa myth was an orthodox Smārta Brahmin.

**Keywords:** purāṇic studies, soteriological path, salvation, son, Brahmanism, Pāśupata religion, mythology, hells, *naraka*

## 1. Introduction

The religious allegiance of the original *Skandapurāṇa* (SP) is still under debate. If its stories glorifying holy places (*Māhātmyas*) have been related to Pāśupata centers, all or part of the so called Naraka cycle (SP 35–52) could reflect orthodox values. This cycle is introduced by a traditional narrative framework which seems to glorify salvation through a son: One day, a pious Brahmin called Sukeśa found his ancestors clinging to a clump of grass and was enjoined by them to produce a son in order to save them from hell. The outcome, however, is out of the ordinary: Sukeśa saves his ancestors without having a son. This is an expansion of the story told to Himavat in SP 11.

The requirement of having a son is precisely the main point of difference between the Brahmanical and the Pāśupata soteriological systems. However, several scholars<sup>1</sup> assign a Smārta authorship to all or part of the Naraka cycle, even suggesting that the Sukeśa myth is a later addition based on its first version in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the SP.<sup>2</sup> This last statement is particularly interesting, because it would imply a change of religious affiliation of the text.

In order to assess the possibility of a change in the religious affiliation of the text, I suggest reexamining the arguments in favour of a Smārta authorship on the basis of a new methodology. By using the path to salvation promoted in the two versions as a key to identifying religious affiliation, I will demonstrate that the assignation of a Smārta authorship for the whole Naraka cycle is not justified.

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1 Bakker (2014), Bakker & al. (2014), Kropman (2019).

2 Kropman (2019), p. 113.

## 2. The religious affiliation and authorship of the text

The original *Skandapurāṇa* reveals unique material for research, since its text is available in several manuscripts which represent three distinct and mostly datable recensions. The work on the critical edition done since 1998 by the *Skandapurāṇa Project* (SPP) team<sup>3</sup> confirms an important special feature belonging to the whole purāṇic literature: its text has regularly been modified and was rewritten time and again. These modifications can be observed in the three recensions of the SP. Consequently, the SPP team assumes that the oldest recension of the text available does not represent the core of the original SP, and much of the research on the text is dedicated to finding clues to ascertain which part of the text belongs to the core of the SP and which does not.

Yokochi provides a reconstruction of the possible evolution of the text, which I will briefly summarise here.<sup>4</sup> The SP could have been composed at the end of the sixth or around the beginning of the seventh century CE.<sup>5</sup> At least two major events mark the history of its evolution and transmission. First, after its composition, sometime in the seventh century, the core of the SP split up into two versions called by Yokochi *alpha* and *beta*. The first one, the *alpha* version, is transmitted in the oldest manuscript available, S1, a Nepalese manuscript dated 810 CE. The second one, the *beta* version, is contained in two other Nepalese manuscripts, S2 and S3–S4, dated 800–850 and 900–1000 CE respectively.<sup>6</sup> Then, probably before 1100 CE, a major revision of the text in circulation took place giving birth to a “new” SP, a proto-recension more or less readable in the unique manuscript labeled R and dated to the year 1682,

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3 On the history of the project and its publications, see <https://www.universiteitleidennl/en/research/research-projects/humanities/the-skandapurāṇa-project#tab-1>

4 See Yokochi (2013), p. 57, and Bakker & al. (2014), p. 17.

5 On the respective dating of the SP, see Yokochi (2004), p. 25: between 550 and 650, and Bakker (2014), p. 137: from 570 to 620.

6 See Adriaensen & al (1998), p. 33–34.



and several manuscripts labeled A,<sup>7</sup> the oldest available representative of which, A7, is certainly contemporary to the manuscript R.<sup>8</sup>

These events, the splitting up into two versions and the revision of the SP text in circulation before 1100, point out that purāṇic texts as a whole could be seen as “work in progress” and that they contain several layers. The purāṇic textual layering leads to a multiplication of authors and of their intents. If the text has been rewritten in the course of time, each rewriting initiative certainly reflects a new editorial intent.

In the various volumes, the text-critical editors of the SP present the SP in different perspectives. On the one hand, the study of the different Māhātmyas points to a Pāśupata milieu.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the Māhātmyas, other clues making the case for a Pāśupata influence can be noticed, such as the use of connotative words or the lineage story of Pāśupata masters.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the SP is also defined as an orthodox work reflecting everything belonging to the brahmanical universe and having no particular sectarian agenda.<sup>11</sup> As the editors suggest that the chapters

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7 These manuscripts are labeled R and A from the colophon they respectively contain: the *Revākhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Ambikākhaṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa*. For further details on the SP colophons and recensions, see the paper and the appendix of Harimoto in Bakker (2004), p. 41–64 and p. 139–190.

8 On the dating of the manuscript A7, see Bakker and Isaacson (2004), p. 10–12, and Bisschop (2004), p. 54 (note 51). On the proximity of datings of the manuscripts R and A7, see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 94–96.

9 Bakker (2014), p. ix: “The Māhātmyas related in the text were not value-free. They served the interests of the Māheśvara or Pāśupata communities by providing them with an authoritative basis for the claims to holiness of the sites and institutions in their charge.”

10 For the use of, e.g., the word *pañcārtha*, see Bisschop (2004), p. 41: “The designation ‘Pañcārtha’ is significant, for this is the very name given to the Pāśupata doctrine in Kauṇḍīnya’s *Pañcārthabhāṣya* (cf. annotation ad SPs 130b), and indicates familiarity with the Pañcārtha tradition.” Bakker (2019), p. 295, affirms that the use of this term indicates that the author(s) of the *Skandapurāṇa* belonged to circles that were closer to the Lākula than the Mausula division.

11 See Bakker (2014), p. 7: “The *Skandapurāṇa* professes to be a staunchly orthodox work, which is shown, inter alia, by the nearly total neglect of anything outside the world of Brahmanism”; see also p. 151.

describing hells could have been composed by Smārta Brahmins<sup>12</sup> and as Kropman sees the so called Naraka cycle (chapters 35–52 of the SP) as a later addition, these chapters are a particularly interesting case for study in order to observe a possible change of authorship. For Kropman's hypothesis to be confirmed, it will be necessary to prove that the entire Naraka cycle bears the imprint of a strong brahmanical affiliation.

### 3. The Naraka cycle

This narrative cycle is embedded in a myth, the story of Sukeśa and his ancestors, which constitutes the frame for a prescriptive discourse which teaches the nature of the different hells and how to avoid falling into these hells.<sup>13</sup> The whole story is without parallels in any other *Purāṇa*. Thus it is a characteristic myth peculiar to the SP. The Sukeśa myth is told twice in the SP, once in SP 11 and again in SP 35. In both cases the main story is the following: One day, Sukeśa, a pure and abstinent sage (*vipra*), entered a cave because he had been frightened by a tiger. In the cave the Brahmin found some sages hanging on a clump of grass, overwhelmed with grief, who said they were his ancestors and they were about to fall into hell because of his abstinence. In order to save them from hell they urged him to produce a son. Nevertheless Sukeśa did not renounce his vow of celibacy, continued his practice of asceticism (*tapas*) and resorted to Śiva. Eventually he succeeded in saving his ancestors from hell thanks to the grace of Śiva.

The story is continued in the version of SP 35. Once his ancestors were saved, Sukeśa asked them about the nature of the hells, the length of their stay in each of them, and their arrangement. Chapters 37–50 of the SP are exclusively devoted to the description of the different hells, the lot of their inhabitants, and the list of faults leading to each of them.

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12 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 99 (note 362): "It may again indicate that these chapters on hells do not come from the Pāśupata environment of the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa*, but stem from an orthodox Smārta milieu."

13 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 8–9: "The overall framework of the Naraka Cycle is the story of Sukeśa (SP 35–51); it includes a description of the hells by his biological father, Suśarman (SP 37–50). Added to the story of Sukeśa is a sort of appendix, in which Sanatkumāra gives an account of those who do not go to hell (SP 52.1–25)."

After this systematic and horrific report, Sukeśa, overwhelmed with grief, decided to resort once more to Śiva by worshipping him in order to save all the inhabitants of the hells described before.

As the Sukeśa myth is focused on the salvation of his ancestors from hells and on the rescue of their inhabitants, this frame-story is closely connected to the content of the descriptive discourse of the chapters SP 37–50, and it seems that the chapters 35–51 constitute a perfectly coherent unity dealing with the question of the path of salvation.

For SP 37–50, the identity and the obedience of their authors defined by the editors is quite confused. First, they explain that the number of thirteen different hells is “not shared by other Brahmanical or non-Brahmanical sources” and that the concept of ‘elevations’ found in them “is not known from other Brahmanical literature on hells, but it may be related to that of the *utsadas* referred to in Buddhist Literature”.<sup>14</sup> On this point, they conclude on p. 10: “The presence of this unique concept may reflect Buddhist influence on this part of the text”. Secondly, relying on the fact that verse 46.10 specifies that the one who is attached to the cremation ground goes to the Raurava hell and noting a difference in style between the chapters describing the hells and the whole of the SP,<sup>15</sup> they suggest that the chapters on hells would have been composed by Smārta Brahmins.<sup>16</sup> Kropman (2019) retains only this last remark and goes one step further suggesting that the whole Naraka cycle, in addition to its being written by Smārta Brahmins, might have been added to the SP later and that it is not part of the core of the SP.<sup>17</sup> Her argument

14 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 9.

15 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 10. Cf. note 19.

16 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 10: “These chapters on hells do not seem to stem from the Pāśupata environment to which we believe the composers of the *Skandapurāṇa* themselves belonged. Their origin may rather be sought in a more orthodox, Smārta milieu”. This statement is repeated in several places, see Bakker & al. (2014), p. 99 (note 362) and p. 95 (note 343), and also Bakker (2014), p. 9, and Kropman (2019), p. 113.

17 Kropman (2019), p. 113: “Although Yokochi seems to think that the Vindhyavāsini cycle was written after the Naraka cycle, I see no reason to assume this. On the contrary, the Vindhyavāsini cycle being connected to the main story of the SP seems to me to be primary. The Naraka cycle as a whole is an interruption of the Vindhyavāsini cycle, just as the Andhaka cycle is an interruption of the main story. The editors have also noted the distinctly different style of the Naraka

is based on its absence within the table of contents detailed in SP 2, the so-called *anukramaṇikā*,<sup>18</sup> on the difference of style in which the Naraka cycle is written,<sup>19</sup> on the fact that this cycle interrupts the main story, and finally on the repeated narrative of the Sukeśa story in chapters 11 and 35. From this she concludes that the first instance of the Sukeśa story (SP 11) belongs to the core of the SP and must have been a source of inspiration for the composers of the Naraka cycle.<sup>20</sup>

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cycle and its non-śaiva character – all this makes it likely that it was not part of the original conception. A problem with this interpretation is that the Sukeśa story is already told earlier, in SP 11 – that is, in a chapter that is very much part of the main story. I think, however, that rather than proving that the Naraka cycle belongs to the same layer as the main story, SP 11 shows that this cycle was added later, for it is a repetition, an elaboration probably inspired by SP 11 (there are textual correspondences), which gave the redactors the opportunity to introduce the Naraka material.”

- 18 Kropman (2019), p. 99. One can doubt the validity of the argument of “presence or absence within the *anukramaṇikā*” to prove an additional feature of a chapter, since Kropman herself subverts it concerning the chapters SP 31–33. According to her, these chapters belong to the core of the SP and she explains their absence in the *anukramaṇikā* in this way (p. 120): “A difficulty for this theory is the omission of SP 31–33 in the list of contents; I can provide no better explanation than a possible loss of some *pādas* early in the transmission of the text – however, I would imagine that the omission of these crucial chapters would be problematic for any explanation of the *anukramaṇikā*.”
- 19 This argument is also found in Bakker & al. (2014), p. 10: “As support for this supposition we may mention in particular SP 46.10b, which lists one who is attached to the cremation ground among those who go to the Raurava hell. It seems hard to imagine that an author with a Pāśupata affiliation would have written this, in particular in the light of the positive references to cremation ground asceticism in other parts of the text. In general it is non-orthodox behaviour and knowledge that is condemned in these chapters, while there is comparatively little that reflects distinct Śaiva values. Why, one might be tempted to ask, does one not go to hell for acts like desecrating a *liṅga* or the like? The style of the Sanskrit text is also markedly different, with its lack of the *Skandapurāna*’s characteristic humour and spirit.”
- 20 According to Kropman’s (2019, p. 122f.) table, the core of the SP comprises SP 1, 3–25, 31.15–33, 34.1–61, 53–55, 58–59, 60.14–21, 60.72 to the end, 61–69, 72.1–142b, and 163–165. In a second phase, the chapters SP 2, 26–31.14 and 174–183 must have been added. All other chapters present in the available S recension (SP

According to the different assertions suggested by Kropman, the situation appears as follows:

- The Sukeśa story in SP 11 is original and belongs to the core of the SP whose composers seem to be close to the Pāśupata movement or to be influenced by their doctrine.
- The Sukeśa story and the Naraka cycle in SP 35–51 are recent additions introduced before the separation of the *alpha* and *beta* versions and were composed by Smārta Brahmins.
- The Sukeśa story in SP 11 is the source of its second version in SP 35.

Here we are faced with a particularly interesting scenario from which it would be possible to track down the different editorial hands through which the SP may have passed and to determine a possible change of its religious affiliation. Nevertheless, the validity of this scenario has as yet not been proved. In order to do so, we need to demonstrate that the story told in SP 11 can indeed be an inspiration for Smārta Brahmins, that is to say, that it contains some elements close to their beliefs, that the Sukeśa story retold in SP 35 also bears a strong brahmanical mark, and that the prescriptive discourse and its style suggest another editorial hand and can not have been composed by authors influenced by the Pāśupata doctrine.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Myths as doctrinal stories

Until now, the Pāśupata affiliation of the SP has been proved on the basis of philological clues evident in the text (e.g., the *pāśupatavrata* described in SP 33 or the presence of technical terms like *pañcārtha*) and by a comparison of the localities of the Māhātmyas mentioned with archaeological and epigraphic data. For my part, I propose a further method towards determining the religious allegiance of the SP, which is based on a comparative analysis of the myths and the doctrinal texts of each religious movement. I therefore assign to the myths a different function than the one generally attributed to them. If myths have the function of sanctify-

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34.62–52, 56–57, 60.1–13, 60.22–71, 70–71, 72.142c–162, 166–173) would be recent additions made in a third time but before the copying of the S recension.

ing a place or a practice, giving it an ancient past that justifies its present existence and status, they can also be seen as narratives conveying values, doctrinal notions or concepts, or as representations of behaviours to be followed. Besides, *Purāṇas* generally intertwine myths and ritual prescriptions. Thus, myths can be representatives of ideological and religious conceptions. To determine the religious affiliation of one myth, I suggest comparing the underlying beliefs and underpinning values of this myth with doctrinal texts.

Given that there is some conflict between Brahminical and Pāśupata affiliation for the chapters concerned in this paper, we need to exactly identify what the differences are between these two religious movements. Once the points of divergence are defined, we will be able to read the Sukeśa myth in the light of the doctrinal texts and the values of each possible religious affiliation — Brahmanical and Pāśupata — and see which of these doctrinal texts the respective version of the myth reflects, which values it puts forward. Reading a myth in this light hypothesises a doctrinal intent of the author, a religious message of the story, as well as an exegetic function of myths.

#### 4.2 Doctrinal texts embodying the Brahmanical Smārta views and the Pāśupata dogma

In the case of Brahmanism, the corpus of authoritative scriptures is quite vast. Generally speaking, it is the Vedic corpus, including the four *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads*. From a mythological point of view, it seems that the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is a frequent reference text since many purāṇic myths draw their inspiration from this text. In terms of behaviour, the Dharmaśāstra literature appears as a fundament. The most common and most often-quoted work, the *Manu-smṛti* (MS), could represent a very Smārta version of Brahmanism.

For Pāśupata Śaivism, the doctrinal reference texts are easier to identify as just a few have come down to us. Considering the date of the SP, the only possible reference texts are the *Pāśupatasūtra* (PS) and its commentary by Kauṇḍinya, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya* (PABh). Obviously, more texts must have been available at the time of composition of the

original SP,<sup>21</sup> but given that these texts are lost, I can only rely on the *Pāśupatasūtra* and its commentary. However, it is clearly established that these two texts had a very strong influence on all Pāśupata schools and that they were a source of authority even for various other Pāśupata schools such as Lākula, Kāpālika or Kālamukha.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at the ideological values of these two religious movements, one realises that Pāśupata Śaivism and Brahmanism are not diametrically opposed. Both share mutually accepted values such as:

- the organisation of society into *varṇas*;
- education according to the Veda; according to the PS, Pāśupata aspirants must come from a Brahmin caste and have received the teaching of the Veda;
- the approval of the authority of the Veda even if what is understood by this term may differ;<sup>23</sup>
- and the belief in the accumulation of *karman* and in the cycle of rebirths.

Finally, even if the Pāśupata observance was comprised of immoral and reprehensible behaviours from a Brahmanical point of view, the purification system of Pāśupata Śaivism is perfectly based on Brahmanical ethics.<sup>24</sup>

However, there is a very important and substantive difference between a Pāśupata disciple and a Smārta Brahmin. Pāśupata Śaivism rejects the most important basis of Brahmanism, that is, the efficiency of sacrifices. For Pāśupata believers, the fire-sacrifices and the worship of gods and ancestors are ineffective. For them, Śiva is the universal cause,

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21 As Bakker (2019), p. 295, states: “the author(s) of the *Skandapurāṇa* belonged to circles that were closer to the Lākula than the Mausula division”; it would be very interesting to have access to one of their doctrinal texts. Unfortunately, they seem to be lost.

22 The testimony of Kṣemarāja provides evidence of the recognition of the PS as an authoritative source and of the membership of the Lākula within Pāśupata Śaivism; see Sanderson (2006), p. 177.

23 Hara (1966), p. 107–108.

24 On the Pāśupata purification system, see Hara (2002), p. 57–66: “Pāśupata Concept of Purity”, and p. 104–138: “Transfert of Merit in Hindu Literature and Religion”.

and salvation from the cycle of rebirths does not come through fire sacrifices and ancestor worship. Only union with Śiva can bring salvation. Consequently, this means that, for a Pāśupata adherent, it is not necessary to have a son to obtain salvation, whereas orthodox Brahmanism teaches that a son is necessary to repay the congenital debt to the ancestors. This issue is precisely and in great detail dealt with in the *Manu-smṛti* and has produced an extensive corpus of treatises on inheritance.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, one of the main points of opposition between a Pāśupata disciple and a Smārta brahmin is the way by which they will obtain liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Therefore their soteriological systems are completely different.

### 4.3 The Pāśupata soteriological system

Since the above information is crucial for the rest of my demonstration, I will summarise very briefly how a Pāśupata disciple attains liberation according to the PS and Kauṇḍinya's commentary. A Pāśupata disciple obtains salvation only thanks to the grace of Śiva after following a five-step observance that enables him to gradually unite with the supreme God.<sup>26</sup> This five-step observance prescribes very specific behaviours such as the bath in ashes, the practice of dishonour or the frequentation of cremation grounds, which clearly distinguish these prescriptions from those of other religious currents that were contemporary to it.<sup>27</sup> When he obtains the grace of Śiva, the devotee becomes a *mahāgaṇapati*, a "guardian of a multitude of bound souls",<sup>28</sup> and acquires divine qualities.<sup>29</sup> With the exception of specific practices such as the bath in ashes or

25 On the congenital debt, see Kāṇḍe (1941), Vol. 2, part 1, p. 560f.

26 See PS 5.40 and Sastri (1940), p. 4, line 19, p. 6, lines 1f., and p. 143, lines 21–23.

27 Some of these specific Pāśupata practices are described in the SP. For example, chapter 32 contains an etiological myth for the bathing in ashes. As pointed by Bisschop (2004) p. 109, the court dishonour, although not detailed, seems to be mentioned in SP 122.81–84 by using an expression used in the PS (the given verse number refers to the *editio princeps* by K. Bhāttarāi (1988), *Skandapurāṇasya Ambikākhaṇḍa*, Śrīmahendrasaṃskṛtavaiśvavidyālayagranthamālā: Velajhunḍī).

28 Bisschop (2005), p. 536 and 543.

29 The divine qualities allow to be able to see, hear, think and know objects at a distance (PS 1.21), to be omniscient (PS 1.22), to be fast as thought (PS 1.23), ca-



the frequentation of cremation grounds, the general behaviour expected from the aspirant is fairly consistent with principles shared by other religions. These principles, described at length by Kauṇḍinya commenting on PS 1.9, are the abstinence from violence, from sexual intercourse, from trade, from theft, from anger, strict respect for the master, the purification of oneself, the obligation to eat lightly, and carefulness.<sup>30</sup> To perform the observance, no object is necessary except the body of the disciple, which he submits to transcendental gift, transcendental sacrifice and transcendental asceticism.<sup>31</sup>

As the main differences of the soteriological systems of Pāśupata Śaivism and of Brahminical orthodoxy have been established, it is now possible to search in the first version of the Sukeśa story which values are conveyed that would have justified Smārta Brahmins retelling this story in SP 35 and introducing the Naraka cycle into the SP.

## 5. Analysis of the first version of the Sukeśa story

### 5.1 Summary

The first version of the Sukeśa story is introduced in the frame story as an anecdote and can be summarised as follows:

While Himavat (the god-mountain) wishes for immortal fame, Kaśyapa tells him that this is attained through progeny. In order to illustrate his statement, Kaśyapa recounts an event once witnessed by him (SP 11.1–4). One day, while on his way to Vārāṇasī, he saw a pure and abstinent sage (*vipra*), who, be-

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pable of metamorphosis (PS 1.24) and devoid of sensations (PS 1.25). In addition to these qualities, the disciple united to the God gets certain properties, as to control everything and to be uncontrollable (PS 1.27f.), the possibility to submit everything and the impossibility of being submitted (PS 1.29f.), the possibility of killing and the impossibility of being killed (PS 1.31f.), the absence of fear (PS 1.33), the absence of disease and the imperishability (PS 1.34), and finally the absence of obstacles (PS 1.37).

30 Regarding these prescriptions, the *pāśupata* innovation lies not in the list of them but in the way they are organised; see Hara (2002), p. 67–75: “Pāśupata Concept of *ahimsā*”.

31 See Hara (2002), p. 47–55: “*atidāna*, *atijajana*, and *atitapas*”.

cause he had been terrified by a tiger, had entered a cave (SP 11.5–8). In the cave, the twice-born man found some sages hanging on a clump of grass and overwhelmed with grief. Tormented, he asked them why they were hanging upside down and how they could be freed (SP 11.9–10).<sup>32</sup>

They answered: “We are your fathers accompanied by our grandfathers and your maternal grandfathers, you have not made the pious act and we are tormented by your offence! This is hell, o illustrious one, it takes the form of a cave, and you are the clump of grass, we depend on you. As long as you live, we will remain in this state, o sage (*vipra*). Once you die, we whose minds are smeared with sins, will go to hell. If, after a marital union, you give birth to a progeny excellent by his qualities (*guṇa*), by this act, we will deliver ourselves one by one. O son, neither by another asceticism (*tapas*), nor by the fruit of pilgrimages, act according to our request, o you of great understanding, save your fathers from fear!” (SP 11.11–15)

The twice-born agreed, began to propitiate Vṛṣadhvaja (Śiva) and freed his ancestors from the cave, who thus obtained the status of attendants (*gaṇapas*) (SP 11.16). As for himself, he became an attendant (*gaṇapa*) dear to Rudra and was named Sukeśa (SP 11.17). Following this anecdote, Kaśyapa enjoins Himavat to practice asceticism (*tapas*), and then to beget a sublime and excellent progeny. Then he will attain glory (SP 11.18). Himavat practises asceticism until Brahmā appears. Himavat asks for a son, but is promised a daughter instead. He fathers three daughters on Menā: Aparṇā, Ekaparṇā and Ekapaṭalā, who practise severe asceticism, by which they sustain the worlds. Aparṇā is called Umā.<sup>33</sup>

32 The motif of the hanging ancestors is not an originality of the SP. For references to this narrative motif in other works, see R. Adriaensen, H.T. Bakker & H. Isaacson (1998), note 61 p.80.

33 This summary is based on the synopsis of the chapter SP 11 in Adriaensen & al. (1998), p. 81f. Consequently some sentences are identical to it, but I have added some details.

This story, introduced as an illustration for the statement that fame (*khyāti*) is obtained through progeny, urges Himavat to produce a son. For that, he performs asceticism (*tapas*), obtains a boon from Brahmā and finally fathers the Goddess. Therefore the first version of the Sukeśa myth can be seen as the triggering factor of the birth of the Goddess as the daughter of Himavat. This story is so closely linked to the main story of the SP that it seems impossible to consider it a later addition.

Consequently, we have to assume that this story was written by the first composers of the SP which were certainly influenced by Pāsupata beliefs. If Kropman's statement – that this story inspired SP 35 and that the latter is of Smārta religious affiliation – is valid, then one should find in Sukeśa's story told in SP 11 some elements in favour of Smārta values.

## 5.2 Brahmanical or Pāsupata values in SP 11?

As the main topic of the story is to save the fathers from hells and as its outcome is the birth of progeny, it seems that it could promote salvation through a son. Aside from that, some more elements are in agreement with the necessity to have a son to be saved:

- the fathers request a son to be saved and claim that this is the only solution,<sup>34</sup>
- the fact that Sukeśa has not yet produced a descendant is described as a fault,<sup>35</sup>
- the fathers stay hanging from the clump of grass above hell as long as Sukeśa lives, and after his death they will fall into hell: this matches

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34 SP 11.14f.: *yadi tvam dārasamyogaṃ kṛtvāpatyaṃ gunottaram | utpādayasi tenāsmān mucyema vayam ekaśaḥ || 14 || nānyena tapasā putra na tīrthānām phalena ca | tat kuruṣva mahābuddhe tārayasva pitṛn bhayāt || 15 ||*

If, after a marital union, you give birth to a progeny furnished with qualities (*guṇa*), by this act, we may be released one by one (14). O son, neither by another asceticism (*tapas*), nor by the fruit of pilgrimages, act according to this [request], o you of great understanding, save your fathers from the fear (15).

35 SP 11.11: *vayaṃ te 'kṛtapuṇyasya pītarāḥ sapitāmahāḥ | prapitāmahās ca kliśyāmas tava duṣṭena karmaṇā || 11 ||*

We are your fathers accompanied by our grandfathers and your maternal grandfathers, you who have not made the pious act and we are tormented by your offence!

the Brahmanical soteriological system and seems to reflect the consequence of the congenital debt;<sup>36</sup>

- the agreement of Sukeśa by the word *tathā* in SP 11.16 could be understood as the rupture of his celibacy vow;
- the injunction of Kaśyapa at the end of the story is: “produce offspring to obtain glory!”;<sup>37</sup>
- finally, the fact that Himavat fathers Umā suggests that one must produce an offspring to obtain glory and salvation.

This list gives the impression of agreement with the idea of salvation through a son, which could have been an inspiration for a later Smārta authorship. Nevertheless a more careful reading reveals that this is not the case and that the myth appears to bear a strong mark of a Pāśupata background.

Even though the fathers claim that they can obtain salvation only by a son, it is never said that Sukeśa breaks his celibacy vow. Moreover, it is only briefly mentioned that he resorts to Śiva.<sup>38</sup> Consequently Śiva appears as the supreme deity which permits to solve the problem. While this does not prove a Pāśupata authorship, it points to the idea according to which Śiva is the universal cause. If we consider the outcome of the myth, we notice that Sukeśa obtains not only his ancestors’ salvation by resorting to Śiva, but also acquires the status of *gaṇapa*.<sup>39</sup> This last favour

36 SP 11.13: *yāvat tvam jīvase vipra tāvad eva vyaṃ sthitāḥ | mṛte tvayi gamiṣyāmo narakam pāpacetasah* || 13 ||

As long as you live, we will remain in this state, o sage (*vipra*). Once you die, we whose minds are smeared by sins, will go in hell.

37 SP 11.18: *tasmāt kṛtvā tapo ghoram apatyam guṇavattaram | utpādayasva śailendra tataḥ kīrtim avāpsyasi* || 18 ||

Hence, after performing a sublime asceticism (*tapas*), father a progeny with the most of qualities, then you will obtain glory, o you the best of the mountains!

38 SP 11.16f.: *sa tatheti pratijñāya ārādhya ca vṛṣadhvajam | pitṛn gartāt samuddhṛtya gaṇapān pracakāra ha* || 16 || *svayaṃ ca rudradayitāḥ sukeśo nāma nāmataḥ | sam-mato balavāṃś caiva rudrasya gaṇapo ’bhavat* || 17 ||

After promising by saying ‘so be it,’ he strove to obtain the favour of the one who has a bull for a sign, delivered his fathers from the cave and made them attendants (*gaṇapa*). And he became himself a favorite of Rudra, called Sukeśa, a respected and powerful attendant of Rudra.

39 SP 11.16f. quoted in the above note.

is thought-provoking because it is precisely the aim of a Pāśupata disciple and his final status when he unites himself with Śiva.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, becoming a *gaṇapa* is not common in purāṇic literature but a specific feature of several myths of the SP.<sup>41</sup> In each of these stories, the status of *gaṇapa* is associated with a series of qualities which find a close parallel with the divine qualities obtained by a Pāśupata united with Śiva.<sup>42</sup> If we summarise the Sukeśa story, we find an efficient path to salvation: the worship of Śiva allows the one who performs it to obtain the salvation of his ancestors from hell, their promotion to the status of *gaṇapa*, and to become a *gaṇapa* himself. This procedure and its effects match the Pāśupata soteriological system more than the Smārta one.

The supreme position of Śiva as the only cause of salvation and the status obtained by his worshipper are no proof, but make it appear likely

40 PS 1.38: *ity etair guṇair yukto bhagavato mahādevasya mahāgaṇapatir bhavati*. “Thus endowed with this qualities of the Lord Mahādeva he becomes a lord of the great multitude” (translation Bisschop 2005, p. 538–543). On the exactly meaning of the term *mahāgaṇapati*, see Bisschop 2005, p. 536 and 543.

41 The result of the research on the word *gaṇapa* inside a vast corpus of purāṇic texts shows that the favour of the *gaṇapa* status occurs only in those stories which are shared by the *Skandapurāṇa* and other *Purāṇas*. I demonstrated elsewhere that the sentence including this favour is a stereotype phrase belonging to the SP and that it can be seen as a trademark of its authorship (on references to this stereotype sentence, see Adriaensen & al. (1998), p. 31 (notes 127f.); on the trademark, see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 237f., 242, 244, 248f., 273–5, 315, 339, 348, 351, 488f., and 830). The electronic texts I used to search for the term *gaṇapa* were those available on the GRETEL website in 2021 (<http://gretel.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretel.html#Pur>): *Agnipurāṇa*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, *Brahmapurāṇa*, *Devībhāgavatapurāṇa*, *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Kūrmapurāṇa*, *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Nāradaipurāṇa*, *Narasimhapurāṇa*, *Skandapurāṇa*, *Vāmanapurāṇa*, *Vāyupurāṇa*, *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, and *Viṣṇupurāṇa*.

42 It should be noted that the salvation obtained by Nandin (SP 20–22), Upamanyu (SP 34), Kāṣṭhakūṭa (SP 52) and Sukeśa (SP 35) is quite particular. While it reflects strong links with Pāśupata aspirations, these stories also include a very special dimension, namely the filial relationship. On this topic, see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), chapter 7, p. 207–310. For a detailed comparison of the favour offered by Śiva in the SP and the divine qualities of Pāśupata *sādhaka*, see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 248f. On the stereotypical feature of the expressions *amaro jarayā tyaktaḥ* and *sarvaduḥkhavivarjitaḥ*, see Adriaensen, R., Bakker, H.T., & Isaacson, H. (1998), p. 31.

that the first version of the Sukeśa myth was composed by a Pāśupata author. In any case, it is very difficult to admit that Smārta Brahmins would consider this story a glorification of their own soteriological path, and even more so because the outcome of the whole chapter is not the birth of a son, but the birth of Himavat's daughter, the goddess Pārvatī.

Indeed, if we consider that the message of the short Sukeśa story in SP 11 is an encouragement to produce offspring and that it reflects the belief of salvation by a son, we are faced with a major problem, namely the mismatch between the introductory myth and the events that follow it. The introductory question of the chapter is how to acquire glory or celebrity, and the answer – by perpetuity – is contained in the Sukeśa myth. By following the behaviour of Sukeśa, Himavat produces a descendant who is prophesied to bring glory. This descendant is none other than Umā-Pārvatī, that is to say, a daughter and not a son. Would it be possible that Smārta Brahmins accept that the power of salvation was given to a woman? This would be something totally unheard of and does not correspond to the brahmanical discourse.

But could the fact that a woman is capable of bringing supreme glory to her father be admissible from a Pāśupata point of view? In order to answer this question we need to consider the whole story of this woman, the goddess Pārvatī, in the SP. Her story in this text is quite particular. An exhaustive analysis is not possible in the present context, but I will briefly present some elements of it.

First, Pārvatī is originally an emanation of Śiva, born from his mouth and made of his ascetic energy (*tejas*) as it is told in SP 9.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, her existence is not the one of an independent deity: she is not outside of Śiva, but part of him, just like the whole of the universe. This perfectly fits the Pāśupata concept of the universe. In each of Pārvatī's births then, she claims that her sole goal is to be united with Śiva.<sup>44</sup> Her declaration of intent resembles the one of a Pāśupata disciple. Although the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī is celebrated in SP 13f., it seems that she really wins her status of a spouse of Śiva in chapter SP 162 after having performed several kinds of asceticism (*tapas*) and after having adopted the *aśoka*

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43 This story is original and very specific to the SP. See my analysis of the triple birth of the Goddess in the SP, in Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 311–332 (chapter 8.1).

44 See SP 10.3, 10.24, and 162.108.

tree as a son.<sup>45</sup> From this chapter onwards, she is permanently united with Śiva. Consequently, the final union of the goddess with Śiva has been gradually obtained by performing several kinds of asceticism. So the whole story of the goddess — her status as Śiva's emanation, the aim of her life, her behaviour to obtain Śiva and her final permanent union with Śiva — could be seen in terms of the stages within a Pāśupata's path to the final goal. Although the PS and the PABh reserve the Pāśupata observance to male disciples, epigraphical testimonies prove that it has been allowed to women, too.<sup>46</sup> As a result, if the story of Sukeśa intends to show an example of how to attain the Pāśupata way of salvation, the birth of Himavat's daughter is not inconsistent since she will be permanently united with Śiva. And the prophecy of supreme glory for Himavat is fulfilled through the union of his daughter with the Supreme God. Through a Pāśupata reading, the story of Sukeśa is consistent with the remainder of the chapter SP 11 and also with the SP as a whole.

The analysis of the religious values underlying the first version of the Sukeśa myth shows that, if the lamentation of his fathers appears to promote a salvation through a son, its outcome suggests a totally different strategy to escape from the hells. As for the application of this strategy to the case of Himavat, it confirms that the first version of the Sukeśa myth can in no way be an inspiration for Smārta Brahmins.

If, as Kropman suggests, the second version of the Sukeśa myth introducing the Naraka cycle and the entirety of that cycle are a later addition, probably issued from a Smārta milieu, then one should certainly observe either a change in the outcome of the story, or some inconsistencies between the first and the second versions, or at least an adaptation of the story so that it promotes Smārta values and salvation through the son.

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45 Three verses at the end of SP 162 affirm that by the adoption of the tree and through the supreme asceticism she performed the goddess really becomes the spouse of Śiva. The first one, SP 162.96, is told by a *gaṇa* belonging to the audience of the adoption ceremony; the second one, v. 162.103, is spoken by the Goddess, and the third one, v. 162.108, is uttered by Śiva himself. See Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 492–495.

46 See Sanderson (2013), p. 228f., and Bisschop & Griffiths (2003), p. 322 (note 36).

## 6. Analysis of the second version

Before a close reading of the second version, let's briefly review the different arguments put forward to assign another and later authorship to the Naraka cycle. According to Kropman,<sup>47</sup> these are:

- the Naraka cycle interrupts the main story;
- the Sukeśa myth told in SP 35 is a repetition inspired by its first version in SP 11 which is original as the textual correspondences show;
- the literary style used to describe the different hells appears different;
- the Naraka cycle forms a whole in which the retelling of Sukeśa's story give the opportunity to Smārta authors to introduce Naraka material.<sup>48</sup>

In my opinion, the fact that the Naraka cycle interrupts the narration of another cycle is not a decisive argument in the case of the SP, since much of the narrative construction of purāṇic literature rests on the nesting of stories following the principle of Russian dolls. I share Yokochi's opinion according to which linking passages and their inconsistencies could have been written during the composition of the text and are not necessarily a proof of a later addition.<sup>49</sup> The nesting of stories is an essential feature of a *Purāṇa* and the interruption of the main story by a minor one can be seen as natural.

Kropman argues that the repetition of the Sukeśa myth “rather than proving that the Naraka cycle belongs to the same layer as the main story, shows that this cycle was added later on.” For her, the textual cor-

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47 All her arguments are put together in a single paragraph in Kropman (2019), p. 113. See the paragraph quoted before in note 17.

48 Considering the Naraka cycle as an indivisible whole, Kropman attributes to all the chapters of this cycle a non-Śaiva origin, whereas the editors only propose a Smartā (or possibly even Buddhist) origin to the chapters describing hells.

49 The position of Kropman (2019, p. 112f.) disagrees with the one supported by Yokochi who argues that the Naraka cycle rather belongs to the original part. For Yokochi, the addition of some stories, like the story of the tiger Somanandin, could have been added during the process of composition and the inconsistencies observed could reflect the effort of the redactors to link two episodes with each other. Yokochi (2013), p. 46: “However, this does not necessarily mean that the relocation of the first part of these two chapters and its revision by adding the second part are secondary to the original composition of the *Skandapurāṇa*.”



respondences are the result of a later elaboration and are not original.<sup>50</sup> However, textual correspondences cannot prove anything. They could equally be the result of an original authorship as well as of a meticulous secondary elaboration of an original. Nevertheless if the second version goes back to a Smārta authorship, we should observe some differences with the first one, in particular on the topic of the path to salvation.

Moreover, Kropman's argumentation in favour of the distinguishability of original parts of the SP from later ones is based on their respective mentions within the *anukramaṇikā*, a list of contents which is found in chapter SP 2. However, she is forced to admit that the *anukramaṇikā* has been added in a second step,<sup>51</sup> that it does not always reflect the actual contents of the SP, and that some parts that she considers original are not referred to there.<sup>52</sup> It must be noted that the reference of an episode within the *anukramaṇikā* as a proof for its belonging to the original core cannot be a valid argument either.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, before adding a list of contents inside their work, the authors made use of narratological tools to advertise to the readers of their narrative agenda.<sup>54</sup> If we consider the first version of the Sukeśa myth from a narratological point of view, it can be stated that this story is a prolepsis of the second one.<sup>55</sup> Precisely Kaśyapa introduces the story he is about to tell Himavat as a vision he has obtained in the past by the power of his *tapas* (SP 11.4). So,

50 Kropman (2019), p. 113.

51 See the table in Kropman (2019), p. 122f.

52 See in particular Kropman (2019), p. 120, where she assumes the loss of a verse within the *anukramaṇikā* to maintain her theory.

53 The content of the *anukramaṇikā* still raises questions since some topics mentioned are not found in the manuscripts whereas others not mentioned are told in the SP. See Adriaensen & al. (1998), p. 43f. and 55.

54 These narratological tools are in particular defined by Genette (2014), p. 201–225. Among these tools, one can think about the choice of a suggestive title, a stereotypical introduction of the work telling the process of transmission coming back to the sage Vyāsa (see Bisschop 2021 and also Wattelier-Bricout 2020, chapter 6.1 on p. 171–185), the *incipit*, the statement of prophecies, various processes playing on the circularity of time (for an example of the spiral construction with overlaying rings, see Wattelier-Bricout 2020, p. 323–331, and Appendix K, p. 835–840).

55 A prolepsis qualifies the fact that an event which is to take place later in the narrative is told in advance.

the supernatural nature of a vision perfectly allows the narration of a future event. By introducing the first version as a vision, the authors seem to consciously use this as a tool to announce a second one. With this in mind, it appears that the first version participates in a programmatic function. Thus a narratological analysis makes it seem plausible that the two versions have been planned together. In this case, the first one is like a trailer of the second and it is true that the first one is shorter and does not give a lot of details, while the second one better explains how Sukeśa saves his ancestors and becomes a *gaṇapa* himself. To ascertain this idea, we should be sure that both narrations promote the same path to salvation and deliver the same religious messages.

One of the arguments argued by Kropman in order to assign a status of addition to the whole Naraka cycle is based on a remark made by the editors on the literary style employed in it. Actually the editors of volume 2B of the SP state that the chapters 37–50 could be attributed to another authorship because the “style of the Sanskrit text is also markedly different, with its lack of the *Skandapurāṇa*’s characteristic humour and spirit”.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, as only the chapters SP 37–50 seem to be written in a different style, this should not be an argument to assert that the whole Naraka cycle is an addition. That being said, this difference of style is only the result of the contents of these chapters and not attributable to another authorship. Indeed, by describing the torments endured in different hells, the authors cannot plainly maintain a humorous tone. Moreover, it seems to me that the vivid style noticed in several places by the editors is found inside the description of hells and its framework story, making the Naraka cycle a whole. Indeed, the description of the different hells is so horrific, overwhelming and tedious that it causes the grief of Sukeśa who decides to save the inhabitants from the hells the same way he saved his ancestors (SP 51). From a narratological point of view, the difference of style observed is both the result of the contents and of the narrative intent. In any case, this kind of observation cannot be a firm argument to attribute another authorship to a part of the text because it is based on a subjective point of view. Similarly, the remarks on stylistic differences made here and there should be based on a sys-

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56 See also Bakker & al. (2014), p. 11, on the second part of the chapter SP 52: “The style of this episode is literary and contrasts markedly the rather dull description of the hells, which reaches rock bottom in SP 50.”

tematic analysis of the vocabulary, of the grammar, and of the stylistic figures, and the results must be considered with caution because the SP, and purāṇic literature in general, frequently uses an imitative style borrowing expressions or similes from the vast epic corpus, and also because the second-hand authors of the SP care a lot about writing in the original style of the SP.<sup>57</sup> In my opinion, the mythological part (SP 35–36, SP 51) and the prescriptive and didactic part (SP 37–50) of the Naraka cycle could be seen as a whole from a stylistic point of view.

Although Kropman asserts that the Naraka cycle forms a whole without resorting to stylistic analysis nor narratological arguments, it is indeed very clear that the Sukeśa myth serves as a narrative framing the description of hells (SP 37–50). On the one hand, the hell description is only narratively possible because Sukeśa saved his fathers from hells and as a result, having stayed there some time, hanging above the hells, the latter are able to narrate what they saw. On the other hand, the end of this description is followed by an extension of the story of Sukeśa (SP 51) who, overwhelmed by the horror of the torments suffered by the infernal inhabitants, reiterates the procedure by which he managed to save his ancestors and succeeds in saving all of hell's residents. The narrative scheme employed makes the description of hells (SP 37–50) and the story of Sukeśa (SP 35 and 51) inextricably linked. The whole Naraka cycle seems to have a didactic significance and to follow a logical plan: first, Sukeśa illustrates how to save the fathers from hells. Secondly, he learns about the different kinds of hells and the torments associated with each one. Finally, he reasserts the power of the path to salvation chosen by him as he succeeds in saving all the infernal inhabitants.

Although all these chapters form a coherent whole with didactic value, this does not exclude the possibility that the description of hells (SP 37–50) could be inspired by an external source, whether Buddhist or Smārta. That being said, the didactic scope of the whole and the similarity between the two methods used by Sukeśa invite us to see the mythological part and the didactic part as working towards a same goal on the narrative level. The question then arises whether the details indicating a potential Smārta origin in chapters 37–50 are echoed in Sukeses's narra-

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57 I observed this meticulous care within the additional parts of the chapter SP 162 in which the authors use not only the same similes or vocabulary but also the same narrative construction; see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 48f.

tive. If so, it will be possible, as Kropman does without providing proof, to attribute a Smārta authorship to the whole Naraka cycle.<sup>58</sup>

To this end, I will first take a look at the context and the purpose of the introduction of the second version. Subsequently, I will search for elements of Brahmanical or Pāśupata values within SP 35 in order to determine the authors' religious affiliation.

## 7. The introduction of the second version

In the chapter SP 34, Pārvatī decides to leave Śiva after being teased by him. She arrives at an inaccessible mountain peak and begins to perform extreme asceticism (*tapas*). At this point, Vyāsa interrupts the narrative by asking the narrator Sanatkumāra what Śiva was doing during his separation from Pārvatī. Sanatkumāra then tells Vyāsa three successive stories: the myth of Upamanyu, the second account of the Sukeśa myth, and the myth of Kāṣṭhakūṭa. These three stories are linked by an identical outcome:<sup>59</sup> all the three characters named above have obtained Śiva's favour to become a *gaṇapa* surrounded by their family members in a magical place. Once Upamanyu has become a *gaṇapa*, Śiva goes to Sukeśa. Here begins chapter SP 35:

Sanatkumāra said:

Then, o Vyāsa, the divine Lord turned a brahmin (called) Sukeśa (and) solely devoted to truth and to asceticism also into a *gaṇapa*. (1)

58 The fact that the editors also suggest a Buddhist influence is totally neglected by Kropman. Indeed, to attribute a strong Buddhist influence to the whole Naraka cycle could be more convincing than a Smārta one if we consider how Sukeśa shows compassion, one of the most important Buddhist values, in chapter SP 51.

59 Bakker & al. (2014), p. 11–12: “The theme of Pārvatī's *tapas* thus serves as a narrative device to introduce three additional stories about Śiva's devotees and their asceticism. The outcome of their *tapas* is remarkably similar. Both Sukeśa and Kāṣṭhakūṭa acquire the status of Gaṇeśvaras and are provided with a magical mountain that can move at will (*kāmaḡa*). Their family members join them on this abode: Sukeśa acquires the Trikūṭa mountain for himself and his ancestors, Kāṣṭhakūṭa is joined by his parents on the heavenly Śveta mountain. Upamanyu's end result is also comparable. He receives a continent (*dvīpa*) for himself and his family, which is surrounded by an ocean of milk (*kṣīroda*) and can move at will.”

Vyāsa asked:

How could this brahmin enter the state of *gaṇeśa* (lord of troops)? By which kind of asceticism (*tapas*) did he satisfy the Lord in order to obtain the state of *gaṇapa* (master of troops)? (2)<sup>60</sup>

By this introduction, the authors announce more precisely the topic and the aim of this second version: the reader will learn how to become a *gaṇapa*. Therefore the introduction of the second narrative really promises the clarification and explanation of the outcome of the first one.

## 8. The second version

In order to carry out a detailed analysis of the retelling of the Sukeśa myth in the chapter SP 35, I give here an integral translation on which I will rely:

Sanatkumāra answered:

Once upon a time there was a brahmin, born in the lineage of Vasiṣṭha, who spoke the truth, who was pure, dedicated to pilgrimage and solely devoted to fasting (3). In a foreign country he once saw a terrible tiger standing in his way in a forest with opened jaws and armed with claws and fangs (4). At the sight of it and quickly leaving his way, the sage (*vipra*) entered a frightening forest that was empty of living beings (5). There he saw in front of him men holding on to a clump of grass and hanging from it, lamenting and extremely afflicted (6). Then, seeing these very afflicted twice born (*dvija*) men hanging with their heads down and crying, he asked them: “Who are you?”. And they answered thus (7): “All of us are your fathers with our heads down in this hell. We are clinging to the grass as we are relying upon you by your fault, o fool! (8) Men desire sons because they think they will be saved by them from hell. While you are that son, you will make us fall, unfortunate as we are!” (9) The sage (*vipra*) said: “You must escape (yourself)

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60 The text used is the one edited in Bakker, H.T., Bisschop, P.C., & Yokochi, Y. (2014) and is reproduced in the appendix to this paper; the translation is mine.

from this pit, o forefathers (*pitāmahāḥ*), with the help of all the meritorious deeds that I have performed since my birth, and the asceticism (*tapas*) that I have acquired by going on pilgrimage.” (10) The fathers replied: “We are not able to escape from this pit by means of (your) asceticism (*tapas*), nor by a sacrifice, or in any other way. Do as we tell you! (11) Make an offspring furnished with qualities and endowed with asceticism (*tapas*) come forth. Then we may escape from this pit, if you agree to do.” (12) The sage (*vipra*) retorted: “I have taken this vow: ‘I am chaste.’ I will not take a wife, but I will save my ancestors (13).” Then after dismissing them, he, overwhelmed with great pain, took refuge in Rudra. Then the fathers disappeared (14). When the fathers had thus disappeared, the twice-born remained feeding only on air (*vāyubhakṣa*), became like a piece of wood, a clod of earth or a stone (*kāṣṭhaloṣṭhopalibhūta*), and held his breath (15). Fixing his mind on Rudra, motionless, perfectly absorbed, he stood under the sky muttering “Rudra” in his heart (16). After a month, a big storm and heavy rain broke out, unbearable, with a terrifying sound, and destroying all creatures (17). He withstood the heavy rain without feeling either physical or mental suffering (18). In the seventh month, the venerable God appeared to him in the guise of Viṣṇu and said to this best of the twice-born: (19) “I am pleased with you, blessed are you, because of your *tapas*, o you who are virtuous! Choose the boon of your choice, o wise sage (*viprarṣi*)!” (20) When Sukéśa saw that Nārāyaṇa had come, he replied: “I desire only Śaṃkara’s favour, not yours.” (21) Viṣṇu retorted: “Enough of your obstinacy! Even the gods cannot see Hara, o wise sage (*viprarṣi*), so it is even less possible for ordinary men!” Sukeśa said: “Whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, I wish for a boon from Śaṃkara only, not from you Cakreśa (Viṣṇu) or anyone else, never! (23). Since even you, the gods, (including you, Viṣṇu,) have to honour and praise that god, it is really why he is called the utmost.” (24) Seeing his determination, Lord Hara was satisfied and said to him: “O best of sages (*vipra*), be my indestructible *gaṇapa* (25), immortal, free of old age, free from all sufferings, endowed with sovereignty, dear

among my people (26). And that divine mountain I have created, named Trikūṭa, provided with golden dwellings, moving at will, I give to you (27). And all these fathers on whose behalf you endeavoured to satisfy me, o son, are saved from the terrible hell by you, a good son, o sinless being, and are elevated to the status of *gaṇeśa* (28). They will become your servants, forever without suffering, they will be your *gaṇeśvaras*, following your wish (29). And you will be known as Sukeśa and you will live forever in full possession of the sovereignty<sup>61</sup> and of the eight qualities.” (30)

Sanatkumāra said:

Then, seeing his fathers accompanied by their loved ones saved from hell and furnished with the honorable status of *gaṇeśvara*, (31) he was delighted in his heart, bowed his head, and with folded hands and shining with joy he addressed Maheśvara with eloquence (32).

Sukeśa said:

“O lord, the status of *gaṇapa*, sovereignty, immortality, imperishability, as well as the excellent state to be free from old age have been obtained (33). These my fathers have been saved and have become *gaṇapas* by me. And by your grace I have obtained this mountain that moves at will (34). I wish that you Mahādeva, together with Umā and the Pravareśvaras, will always be well-disposed and clearly visible, o benevolent!” (35)

Sanatkumāra said:

Thus addressed by the magnanimous Sukeśa, the Lord spoke thus: “All this shall be (as you said), o *gaṇeśvara*! (36) Once you have resorted to this mountain with these your excellent ancestors, follow your own desired way, o my son, and protect the gods and *vipras*!” (37) After leaving the leader of *gaṇas* (*gaṇanāyaka*) Sukeśa, Mahādeva, accompanied by Umā, disappeared to the eyes of the world (38). As for Sukeśa, on this mountain in a town resembling heaven, he diligently asked his fathers about the nature of the hells. (39)

61 The sovereignty (*aiśvarya*) is defined by Kaṇḍinya as the acquisition of the six capacities described in the sūtras PS1.21–26. See Sastri (1940), p. 46, line 10.

Vyāsa asked:

Why, o Brahmā, did the *gaṇapa* ask his fathers? And how did the fathers of this learned one answer? (40) I wish to know about this from you truthfully, o father, in extenso or in summary, this good story that brings happiness to all.” (41)

Addressed in this way, the lord, son of the creator of the Suras (gods), the creator of the celestial car, the one who moves freely, sung the song that was made in the past, that destroys all sins, that connects to the world of the gods (42).

Thus ends the thirty-fifth chapter of the *Skandapurāṇa*.<sup>62</sup>

By asserting that this second version serves to introduce a part that would have been written by Smārta authors, Kropman’s hypothesis implies that we would be able to notice a change in the religious affiliation within the SP. In this case, one should observe in the second version a subversion of Pāsupata values in favor of brahmanical values.

## 9. Brahmanical values in SP 35?

As in the first version, the discourse of the ancestors seems to be based on orthodox values and to promote the path to salvation through a son. Indeed, the fathers’ laments expressing the suffering due to the lack of a son born from Sukeśa (SP 35.6) are those of all fathers who see their sons take the path of renunciation and celibacy. This is expressed very clearly in SP 35.9:<sup>63</sup>

Men desire sons thinking “they will save us from hell.” You are our son, you will make us fall, unfortunate as we are!

Although this verse directly refers to the semantic etymology of the word *putra* which can be found in a verse of the *Manusmṛti*,<sup>64</sup> it cannot

62 This translation is based on the text of the critical edition (Bakker, H.T., Bisschop, P.C., & Yokochi, Y. (2014), p. 227–234) that I have reproduced in the appendix.

63 See the Sanskrit text in the Appendix below.

64 MS 9.138: *pumṇāmo narakād yasmāt trāyate pitaraṃ sutaḥ | tasmāt putra iti proktaḥ svayam eva svayambhuvā ||*. “The Self-existent One himself has called him ‘son’ (*putra*) because he rescues (*trā*) his father from the hell named Put”; translation by Olivelle (2009), p. 165.



prove a Smārta authorship, since it clearly belongs to the proverbial material.<sup>65</sup> The knowledge of the *Manusmṛti* and its use as reference is not restricted to Smārta Brahmins. Quite the contrary, the *Manusmṛti* is even quoted in the PABh.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, two more details in the fathers' discourse prevent assigning a Smārta authorship to the whole Naraka cycle as Kropman asserts. First, the fathers claim there is only one way to save them. By this assertion, they also state the inefficiency of sacrifice.<sup>67</sup> Yet, it is one of the main controversial points opposing Smārta Brahmins and Pāśupata aspirants, the latter rejecting the practice of sacrifices and affirming their inefficiency. Consequently, it seems difficult to imagine that Smārta Brahmins have written the fathers' laments. The path to salvation requested by Sukeśa's ancestors also includes one peculiar detail: they want a son "furnished with qualities" (*guṇasaṃyukta*, SP 35.12). In a Pāśupata context, this requirement could take on a new significance because to be furnished with qualities is the state obtained when the disciple achieves the end of suffering.<sup>68</sup> This could be a clue for a Pāśupata authorship.

65 Brockington (1970), p. 224.

66 Sastri (1940), p. 31, translated in Hara (1966), p. 214: *kṛtsnām mahīm paryāyataḥ saśailavanakānanām | apamānāt param nāsti sādhanam manur abravīt ||*. "Manu has said that a man may wander over the whole earth with its mountains and forests and find no means of perfection better than scorn from others." Kauṇḍinya does not quote a verse in particular, but he relies on the authority of the sage Manu within his argumentation. So he shows he considers Manu an authoritative source. We could also add that in general, Manu is recognised as an authoritative source and is quoted in epigraphic documents regardless of the religious affiliation of the issuer of the gift or its recipient.

67 SP 35.11.

68 This state is described in the *sūtra* PS 1.38 (see the note 40 above). How this divine state is constituted of the acquired *guṇas* had been explained in the commentary on the *sūtra* PS1.26: *dharmitvaṃ ca* (PS 1.26). *atra guṇadharmeṇāyaṃ dharmī bhavati* (PABh 1.26.1). *yad etad darśanādyaṃ vikaraṇāntaṃ māheśvaram aiśvaryaṃ asyeśaprasādāt svaguṇasaṃvṛttaṃ tenāyaṃ guṇadharmeṇa dharmī bhavati* (PABh 1.26.2). Translation by Hara (1966), p. 243: "And the possession of a property (1.26). Here it is by a property (*dharma*) in the form of qualities (*guṇa*) that [the perfect one] becomes a possessor of a property. This sovereign power, beginning with seeing at a distance and ending with the being without instruments (PS 1.20–25) becomes his own qualities through the grace of God; and by this property in the form of qualities he becomes the possessor of a property."

Similarly, the loud and clear statement of Śiva's superiority of over all the gods in verses SP 35.22–24 seems to reflect another disagreement between Smārta Brahmins and Pāśupata devotees and appears in favour of a Pāśupata authorship.

The two statements found in the second version — that sacrifice is inefficient and that the supreme god is Śiva — seem to prohibit the attribution of a Smārta authorship to this second version.

## 10. Pāśupata values in SP 35?

If a Smārta authorship seems unlikely, this does not yet assure a Pāśupata authorship. It was pointed out above that SP 35 claims the inefficiency of the sacrifice and the superiority of Śiva. These two statements are in agreement with fundamental Pāśupata precepts. Now it is necessary to analyse the story in comparison with the Pāśupata doctrinal texts in order to assess if the way of salvation sketched in the Sukeśa myth matches the Pāśupata soteriological path. In order to do so, I will focus on the portrayal of Sukeśa, the triggering factor of the narrative, the place where the story takes place, and finally on the path to salvation chosen by Sukeśa.

In the preamble of the story, some details allow to consider Sukeśa a potential *sādhaka*<sup>69</sup>:

- Sukeśa is designated a *vipra* [sage] in SP 35.5b and 10. This word has a particular connotation in a Pāśupata context since Śiva represents this qualification.<sup>70</sup>
- Sukeśa is a Brahmin born in an illustrious lineage devoted to Siva's worship in the SP (v. 35.3a). A Pāśupata disciple must be a Brahmin as

69 The word *sādhaka* in the PS and the PABh refers to a Pāśupata worshipper undertaking the *pāśupata* observance.

70 PS 5.26 and its commentary in Sastri (1940), p. 126,1–3, translation by Hara (1966) p. 420): *atha vipra ity etad api bhagavato nāma. vipraḥ kasmāt? vida jñāne. vipratvaṃ nāma jñānaśaktiḥ. vyāptam anena bhagavato jñānaśaktiḥ kṛtsnam jñeyam ity ato vipra iti.* “Also A SEER is a name of the Blessed One. Why is he called a seer? The root *vid-* [in the word *vipra*] means knowledge. To be a seer means to have power of knowledge. He is called a seer, because everything that is knowable is pervaded by the Blessed One with his power of knowledge.”

it is stated in the commentary on *sūtra* PS 1.1,<sup>71</sup> and he must worship Śiva alone.<sup>72</sup>

- Sukeśa possesses some prerequisites expected from a disciple: he speaks the truth, he is pure, he is wandering and fasting (SP 35.3bd) and he holds the celibacy vow (SP 35.13). Among the commandments explained by Kauṇḍinya are: speaking the truth, purity, moderation in eating, and celibacy.<sup>73</sup>

From this description, Sukeśa seems to have the right profile of a Pāśupata disciple.

71 Sastri (1940), p. 4,17f.: *atra ataśśabdaḥ śiṣyaguṇavacane, yasmād ayaṃ brahmā-vartadeśajaḥ kulajaḥ paṭvindriyo vividiṣādīsampannaḥ śiṣyaḥ*. Hara (1966), p. 159: “Here the word ‘therefore’ (*ataḥ*) is used with the reference to the premise (*guṇavacana*) that lies in the pupil, viz. this is a pupil who was born in Brahmāvarta, who was born of a good family, who has unimpaired senses, and such qualities as the desire to learn etc.” Sastri (1940), p. 3,4–8: *tathā brāhmaṇagrahaṇāt striṭpratiśedhād indriyajayopadeśac ca uktaṃ hi. bādhiryam āndhyam aghratvaṃ mūkatā jaḍatā tathā. unmādaḥ kauṇyam kuṣṭhitvaṃ klaibyaṃ gudāvartapaṅgutā* [PABh 1.1.30]. (*evam*) *ādirahitaḥ paṭvindriyo brāhmaṇaḥ śiṣyaḥ*. Hara (1966), p. 155: “In like wise, the pupil, because of the statement that [he must be] a brahmin (PS 4.20), the prohibition of women (PS 1.13) and the specific mention of victory over the bodily organs (PS 5.7), must be free from such defects as are given thus: deafness, blindness, inability to smell, dumbness, numbness, madness, malformation of the arm, leprosy, impotence, obstruction of the bowels and lameness. He must be a brahmin possessed of keen senses.”

72 See PS 2.10 with PABh: *devavat pitṛvac ca* (PS 2.10). *katham iti. ucyate pūrvam asya brāhmaṇasya devayajane pitryajane cādhiḥkāro ’dhigataḥ. tasmāt tebhyo devapitṛbhyo bhaktivyāvartanaṃ kṛtvā ubhayathāpi maheśvare bhāvam avasthāpya yajanaṃ kartavyaṃ nānyasya. caśabdaḥ pratiśedhe. yat tat pūrvam devapitṛṣu kārakatvaṃ sambhāvitaṃ tat teṣu na vidyate. atas teṣāṃ yajanaṃ na kartavyam ityathaḥ. āha yady evaṃ tasmād ucyatāṃ devapitṛṇāṃ ko doṣaḥ yasmāt te na yaṣṭavyāḥ. rudre vā ko guṇaḥ yasmāt sa eva yaṣṭavyaḥ* (PABh 2.10.1–8). Hara (1966), p. 275f. translates: “As [to] the Gods and the Manes (2.10) How? Previously [before he has joined the Pāśupata order] a brahmin has known the office of sacrifice to the gods and to the manes. Accordingly, he is [now] to renounce his devotion (*bhakti*) to the gods and manes, place his affection (*bhāva*) on the Great Lord (Śiva) in both these ways, and sacrifice to him and none other. The particle AND here serves as denial [of the worship of these two]. [That is to say,] the relation which he previously assumed to gods and manes no longer subsists toward them. The meaning is that one should no longer sacrifice to them.”

73 On these commandments, see Hara (1966), p. 187–194.

After the description of Sukeśa's profile, the story begins with his fear of a tiger. This triggering factor considered within the whole SP is not insignificant. Indeed, there is another myth told in the SP where fear is the triggering factor: this is found in chapter 32 which is relating the Pāśupata initiation of the Gods. This chapter contains the etiological myth of the practice of "bathing in ashes"<sup>74</sup> and is without a doubt a Pāśupata story. It tells that after the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, the Gods surrender and go to Śiva to ask for mercy. The latter shows them the universe inside his own body. When they arrived in the eighth world contained in Śiva, the Gods are terrified first by a ferocious lion (SP 32.90–95) and then by a goddess named Kālakarṇī and produced from Devī's mouth (SP 32.100). In their fear the Gods enter a heap of ashes and by this way perform the *pāśupatavrata* of bathing in ashes. The comparison used in SP 32.103cd to describe the Gods' fear is interesting, because it also mentions the fear of the tiger.<sup>75</sup> According to this internal reference, we observe that the same fear is used as a triggering factor of the story in SP 35 and in a chapter which was without a doubt written by Pāśupata Brahmins.

Terrified by the tiger, Sukeśa enters a frightening forest empty of living beings and sees his ancestors there in a cave (SP 35.5 and 10). From an approach of storytelling, these details enhance the dramatic intensity. But the description of this place could also allude to the specific place of the third stage of initiation, the stage during which the union with God begins. According to PS 5.9, the aspirant should "reside in a deserted home or cave"<sup>76</sup>

Some details describing the path to salvation chosen by Sukeśa deserve our attention. First of all, Sukeśa does not break his celibacy vow and he chooses to resort to Śiva (SP 35.14). Thus he does not follow a brahmanical path because he does not produce a son. Next, the descrip-

74 The bathing in ashes is prescribed three times by day in the *sūtra* PS1.2: *bhasmani triṣavaṇaṃ snāyīta*, "One must bathe three times with ashes" (translation Hara (1966), p. 171).

75 SP 32.103cd: *na śekuḥ purataḥ sthātuṃ vyāghrān mṛgagaṇā iva*, "The gods, overwhelmed and about to be killed, could not stand firm, resembling a troop of deer in front of a tiger." For a synopsis of the whole chapter 32, see Bakker & al. (2014), p. 47.

76 PS 5.9: *śūnyāgāraguhāvāsī*.

tion of the asceticism (*tapas*) performed, as it was the case concerning the triggering factor for his story, features several internal references.<sup>77</sup> For example, eating wind is a kind of fasting mentioned in other descriptions of *tapas*: the goddess does it twice in SP 10.1 and SP 34.40–41, and Upamanyu does it in SP 34.72 as well as the father of Kāṣṭhakūṭa in SP 52.42. Physical immobility is one more defining feature of Śiva’s worship and of *tapas* performance.<sup>78</sup> And finally, Sukeśa holds Śiva in his heart and mutters “*rudra*”, the god’s name (SP 35.16). The muttering is also described in a performance of *tapas* by Nandin (SP 20.65 and 21.2).<sup>79</sup> These internal references prove neither the originality nor the additional character of the chapter SP 35, but show that the descriptions of asceticism to obtain the grace of Śiva in the SP are consistent and follow the same pattern.

In this pattern, the kind of *tapas* performed by Sukeśa contains some interesting details. For example, the duration of his *tapas* can be deduced from SP 35.19b, where it is said that it ended “in the seventh month” (*māse vartati saptame*), i.e., after six months. The duration of six months is also prescribed for the third stage in PS 5.12.<sup>80</sup> In this stage, the aspirant must have conquered his senses and be exclusively focussed on Rudra.<sup>81</sup> Then he must mutter the *gāyatrī* mantra, which is defined as containing different names of Rudra, and hold Rudra in his heart.<sup>82</sup> The way by which Sukeśa worships Śiva exactly matches this process (SP 35.16). The conquest of his senses is sketched in SP 35.17f.: while there is a terrible storm with a terrifying and unbearable sound breaking out destroying all the creatures, Sukeśa remains motionless. The change of his reaction is striking if we consider his reaction at the beginning of

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77 SP 35.15f.

78 The expression *kāṣṭhaloṣṭopalībhūtaḥ* (“he has become like a piece of wood, a clod of earth or a stone”) in SP 35.15c finds a parallel in SP 52.10.

79 The story of Nandin’s *tapas* is found in several *Purāṇas*, but the version told in the SP really seems to be the most complete and certainly the most ancient one. For a detail study of its different versions, see Wattelier-Bricout (2020), p. 234–243.

80 PS 5.12: *ṣaṇ māśān nityayuktasya*.

81 PS 5.11: *jitendriyaḥ*, and 5.10: *devanityaḥ*.

82 PS5.21: *ṛcam iṣṭām adhīyīta gāyatrīm ātmayantritaḥ*, 5.22: *raudrīm vā bahurūpīm vā*, and 5.25: *ḥṛdi kurvīta dhāraṇām*.

the story when he was in front of the tiger. His detachment indeed fits Kauṇḍinya's commentary on PS 5.18.<sup>83</sup>

The dialogue between Sukeśa and Śiva in the disguise of Viṣṇu (SP 35.22–24) is also significant. First, it demonstrates the determination of Sukeśa, which is one of the preliminary conditions of a Pāśupata aspirant.<sup>84</sup> Second, the words said by Śiva in the disguise of Viṣṇu highlight a key principle of Pāśupata believes: Śiva is the supreme god and all the gods are within him.<sup>85</sup> Third, the answer of Sukeśa proves that he has achieved perfect detachment. All he wants is a boon from Śiva whom he considers the supreme God and it doesn't matter whether he obtains something good or bad.<sup>86</sup>

And, last but not least, the outcome of the myth perfectly fits the description of the "end of suffering" (*duḥkhānta*) in the PS and the PABh. Indeed, if we precisely look at the boon granted by Śiva, it is possible to link step by step the benefits given with the description of the final state called *duḥkhānta*: the status of *gaṇapa* and *gaṇeśvara* (SP 35.25d and 29c) corresponding to PS 1.38 summarises the different divine qualities obtained. Sukeśa becomes indestructible, immortal and free from old age.<sup>87</sup> By giving Sukeśa a mobile mountain (SP 35.27), Śiva offers his devotee the capability to go anywhere without impediments (PS 1.37). Finally, by Śiva's grace, Sukeśa saves his ancestors from hell and offers them a kind of *duḥkhānta*, since they are "for ever without suffering" (*ni-*

83 PS 5.18 *godharmā mṛgadharmā vā*, "following the attribute of a bull or the attribute of a wild animal" (translation by Hara (1966), p. 405). Hara (1966), p. 406: "what is meant is their common attribute, which is the ability to bear the pain of opposites (heat and cold, etc.) whether this pain arises from oneself, (from the outside world, or from the fate)."

84 See Hara (1966), p. 156: "On the other hand [in this system the pupil's activity is] not for the purpose of merit (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*), sensual gratification (*kāma*) or perfect isolation (*kaivalya*) [as it is in other systems]" (*na tu dharmārthakāmakaivalyārthātreti*).

85 PS 2.11 and PS 5.26.

86 Once again, one can find a close parallel here with the commentary on PS 5.39 by Kauṇḍinya; see in particular the use of the words *kuśalā cākuśalā ca* in Sastri (1940), p. 139,17, tr. Hara (1966), p. 449.

87 Compare SP 35.25f. (text in the Appendix below) with PS 1.34: *akṣayaḥ*, PS 1.36: *amaraḥ*, and PS 1.35 *ajaraḥ*.

*tyaṃ duḥkhavivarjitāḥ*, SP 35.29b). When they are elevated to the status of *gaṇeśa* (SP 35.27f.) and designated as Sukeśa’s servants, the latter becomes a “lord of the great multitude of bound souls” as intended by the *sūtra* PS 1.38.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, when we read the Sukeśa myth with the help of Pāśupata doctrinal texts, we can arrive at a new understanding of the story. The description of Sukeśa makes him a potential aspirant. The location of the story and the duration of Sukeśa’s *tapas* evoke the third stage of the Pāśupata observance. The triggering factor, the fear of the tiger, links the story of the Gods in the SP with the Pāśupata initiation and makes obvious the transformation of Sukeśa into a being perfectly detached even in a tempest. The description of the *tapas* performed, in addition to the construction of an ascetic pattern specific to the SP, fits the perfect conquest of the senses prescribed in the Pāśupata observance. Viṣṇu’s test asserts the superiority of Śiva and consequently the inutility of sacrifices offered to the Gods and the ancestors. Finally, the outcome of the story offers to Sukeśa not only the salvation of his ancestors but also the divine qualities obtained by a Pāśupata aspirant when he reaches the end of suffering (*duḥkhānta*).

It seems that Sukeśa has satisfied the request made by his fathers at the beginning of the story (SP 35.12). Just as a Pāśupata aspirant is said to be born again when he obtains the supreme goal,<sup>89</sup> Sukeśa is reborn with the divine qualities obtained and he produces a new son for his ancestors and furnished with these qualities, too. The request of his ancestors was the same as in the first version of the myth (SP 11.14). Consequently, the path to salvation requested by the ancestors and the one performed by Sukeśa appear as one and the same. There is no inconsistency between the asking of a son for the former and the resort to Śiva for the latter, since the son should be a being furnished with the respective qualities thanks to the grace of Śiva.

By pointing out doctrinal values in the myth, it is possible to assert that the second version cannot be written by Smārta Brahmins. The path to salvation suggested in the two versions of the Sukeśa myth is to

88 See the translation of PS 1.38 and its glosses in Bisschop (2005), p. 543.

89 See PS 5.6 (*abhijāyate*) and Kauṇḍinya’s commentary thereon, in Hara (1966), p. 385f.



produce a son furnished with certain qualities and by resorting to Śiva alone. Consequently, the two narratives bear strong marks of Pāśupata affiliation. Even if this does not prove that the two versions belong to the core of the SP, it shows that they come from the same background influenced by Pāśupata doctrine, and potentially, from the same author.

## 11. Conclusion and outlook on further studies

After the comparison of the two versions of the Sukeśa myth, we can conclude that a Smārta authorship of the whole Naraka cycle and its status of being a later addition is not at all proved. Quite the contrary, it seems that a strong consistency unites the two versions of the Sukeśa myth which promote a specific path to salvation. Through a new methodology which searches within the myths for the religious values conveyed, it has been possible to highlight that the two versions are very close to Pāśupata doctrinal texts and share the same soteriological concept. Consequently, the path to salvation seems to be a key element for determining the religious affiliation of the SP.

Can we deduce from this whether the two versions have been composed both at the same moment and by the same author(s) or in different times by different authors belonging both to a Pāśupata milieu, that is to say, that one could be original while the second could be a later addition? Both these hypotheses seem possible, but neither could be firmly demonstrated to be valid since the chapters SP 11 and SP 35 share not only textual correspondences but also a narrative and dogmatic consistency. Given that SP 11 would have a programmatic function, it is very likely that SP 35 was composed with the initial composition. In any case, there is no firm evidence for this chapter to be a later addition. On the contrary, there are numerous internal references, including stories that are unique to SP and stories that belong both to what Kropman considers the core of the SP and what she sees as additional parts.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, it must be admitted that this kind of hypothesis is speculative and does not seem to be provable.

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90 The Sukeśa myth in SP 35 has textual correspondences *inter alia* with SP 10, 11, 33, 34.1–61, and 52 (original to the *Purāna* are: SP 1, 3–25, 31.15–33, 34.1–61, 53–55, 58–59, 60.14–21, 60.72–end, 61–69, 72.1–142b, and 163–165).



Without denying the existence of a core and several compositional layers of the SP,<sup>91</sup> the present case study suspecting the theory of two different authorships reveals that the two versions of the Sukeśa myth are consistent with each other and that they carry the same doctrinal message. This message has strong adherences with the Pāśupata doctrine, and even if it does not directly question the path to salvation of the Brahmanical orthodoxy, namely the production of a son, it gives it a completely different meaning to this path, one that is in line with the values defended by the PS and the PABh. If these stories do not reject the saving function of the son and his salvific power, an idea that forms the basis of Brahmanical doctrine and ancestor worship, they do not in any way support the practice of sacrifices, nor the idea that the son pays his debt by performing the ancestor worship. On the contrary, these stories seem to propose a serene resolution of the disagreement between Brahmanism and Pāśupata doctrine, a kind of compromise, by recognising the ability of the son to save his fathers from hells. Thus a man may, as in Brahmanism, desire a son to be saved. Just as in Brahmanism, this son is able to save the entire lineage of his ancestors. However, in order to achieve this, he does not have to make any sacrifices but follows a very specific path in which Śiva is the supreme god who grants his favor as the PS and the PABh claim. This salvation is also specific since it allows one to reach a state similar to that of the end of sufferings (*duḥkhānta*), a particular concept of the Pāśupata doctrine. The characteristics of this salvation are also identical to those of salvation obtained by other characters whose stories are narrated in the SP, for examples Nandin (SP 22.4–9), Kāṣṭhakūṭa (SP 52.121–126), Upamanyu (SP 34.110–114) or the sages Marīci, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Kratu, Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras in the present *kalpa*.<sup>92</sup> This consistency in the description of salvation could be seen as a reflection of a doctrinal intention underlying the composition of the SP, the aim of which would be the promotion of a particular form of Pāśupata Śaivism in a society suffused with Brahmanical convictions.

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91 The existence of a core of the SP different from the S recension is indisputable, since the manuscript S1 in certain chapters offers additional sentences in comparison with the manuscript S2. So the hypothesis of two versions, *alpha* and *beta*, seems perfectly justified.

92 Their names are given in SP 8.22–24, while the favor they obtained from Śiva is formulated in SP 9.22.

Where the Pāśupata manual, *Samskāraavidhi*, solves the problem of the ancestors by introducing a ritual forgiveness request during the initiation of a Pāśupata aspirant,<sup>93</sup> the SP offers the latter a way of conciliation between the Pāśupata path and the salvation of his ancestors by including them in the salvation path. Since listening to the SP is open to all Śaiva men and women, one might wonder whether this work would not be a tool for disseminating and converting to the Pāśupata doctrine by presenting the foundations that support it and showing its compatibility with social demands such as that of having a son.

To refine the identification of the religious affiliation of the Naraka cycle, three other stories integrated in it would deserve an exhaustive study from the point of view of the doctrinal message conveyed. First, the legend of the seven Brahmins (SP 36) is very interesting since this story is also found in the *Pitrkalpa* part of the *Harivaṃśa*. Saindon (1995 and 1998) has highlighted that the *Pitrkalpa* is a work glorifying salvation through a son and the cult of the ancestors. Although Yokochi (2000) has already laid down philological markers by comparing the versions of the legend of the seven Brahmins in the *Harivaṃśa* and in the SP, she has not questioned the message underlying these two stories. A study could elucidate if the version given in the SP promotes the ancestor worship or not. Then, two stories may confirm the hypothesis of a Buddhist influence on the Naraka cycle.<sup>94</sup> First, the salvation of the infernal inhabitants by Sukeśa (SP 51) could be a noteworthy case of study from a doctrinal point of view. Indeed, this story comes directly after the description of the thirteen hells (SP 37–50). The latter is so horrifying that Sukeśa is overwhelmed with compassion for all those who reside in hells. He then decides to save them from this suffering and resorts to Śiva's grace for this end. To the best of my knowledge, this myth has

93 See Acharya (2007), p. 40, verses 36cd–37.

94 Kropman's argument only takes into account the assumption of a Smārta authorship for chapters SP 37–50 and ignores the parallels with Buddhist literature mentioned in the notes 280, 285, 310, 317, 320 of the synopsis in (Bisschop & Yokochi (2014). As one can see by reading the glossary of hell terminology proposed by Van Put (2007) p. 213–221, the hells described in chapters SP 37–50 have similar names to those described in Buddhist literature and they also function in the same way with a system of elevations and the idea of increasing time spent in each one.

no parallel in Purāṇic literature. The mention of Sukeśa's compassion and his behaviour towards beings suffering in hells is reminiscent of the compassion shown by a Bodhisattva and his willingness to save beings from suffering.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, a second story closing the Naraka cycle could be analyzed from a doctrinal point of view: the myth of Kāṣṭhakūṭa (SP 52). This story also has no Purāṇic parallels and features the sacrifice of a son who offers his body to Śiva to save his dead parents. This self-sacrifice in turn evokes the fate of the hero of the *Nāgānanda* of Harṣa, whose story is inspired by the Buddhist corpus, which was composed in the same time as the SP and was very popular during that time.<sup>96</sup>

Therefore, in order to extend this study and to define even more precisely the underlying doctrinal discourse of the SP, one could now observe how the Buddhist narratives may have influenced the SP and how Buddhist doctrinal concepts coexist with those of the Pāśupata ideology in the SP.

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95 From a narratological point of view, I have presented some parallels of narrative construction between the SP and texts issued from the Theravāda Buddhism in a talk entitled “Usages et fonctions de la spirale narrative: des *Jātaka* aux *Purāṇa*” (see *Journée du monde indien 2022*, Journée d'étude, *Calenda*, published on June 3, 2022: <https://calenda.org/1001138>).

96 On the popularity and Buddhist origin of the *Nāgānanda*, see the introduction given in Skilton (2010).

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## Appendix: SP 35<sup>97</sup>

*sanatkumāra uvāca |*

*tataḥ sa bhagavān devaḥ sukeśaṃ gaṇapaṃ punaḥ |  
cakāra brāhmaṇaṃ vyāsa tapaḥsatyaparāyaṇam || 1 ||*

*vyāsa uvāca |*

*kathaṃ sa brāhmaṇaḥ pūrvaṃ gaṇeśatvam upāgataḥ |  
kenāsyā tapasā tuṣṭo gaṇapatvaṃ dadau prabhuḥ || 2 ||*

*sanatkumāra uvāca |*

*āsīd vasiṣṭhakulajo brāhmaṇaḥ satyavāk śuciḥ |  
tīrthayātrāsv abhirata upavāsaparāyaṇaḥ || 3 ||  
sa kadā cid videśastho vane 'paśyat pathi sthitam |  
vyāghraṃ vyāttānaṃ ghoram nakhadaṃṣṭrāyudham varam || 4 ||  
dṛṣtvā taṃ sa tadā vipras tyaktvā panthānam āśugaḥ |  
viveśa mahatīm ghorām aṭavīm prāṇivarjitām || 5 ||  
tatrāpaśyat sa purato vīraṇastambam āśritān |  
puruṣāṃl lambamānāṃś ca krandaṃmānān suduḥkhitān || 6 ||  
tān avākśiraso dṛṣtvā lambamānāṃs tadā dvijān |  
ke yūyam iti papraccha te caivam idam ūcire || 7 ||  
tava smaḥ pitarāḥ sarve narake 'sminn adhomukhāḥ |  
vīraṇe tvayi lambāmas tava doṣeṇa durmate || 8 ||  
putrān icchanti manujās tārayiṣyanti nas tv ime |  
narakād iti sa tvaṃ naḥ pātayiṣyasi duḥkhitān || 9 ||*

*vipra uvāca |*

*mayā tīrthābhigamanāt tapo yat samupārjitam |  
janmaprabhṛti yac cāpi mayā kiṃ cit kṛtaṃ śubham |  
tena yūyam ito gartād uddharadhvaṃ pitāmahāḥ || 10 ||*

*pitara ūcuḥ |*

*na vyaṃ tapasā śakyā na yajñenāpy ato 'nyathā |  
gartād asmāt samuddhartuṃ yad brūmas tat kuruṣva naḥ || 11 ||  
apatyaṃ guṇasaṃyuktam utpādaya tapoyutam |  
tato vyaṃ ito gartān mucyema yadi manyase || 12 ||*

97 The text is taken from the SP edition by Bakker & al. (2014).

*vīpra uvāca |*

*ūrdhvaretāham ity etan mayā vratam udāhṛtam |  
na dārān āhariṣyāmi tārāyīṣye ca vai pitṛn || 13 ||  
tataḥ sa tāms tadotsṛjya duḥkhena mahatā vṛtaḥ |  
jagāma rudraṃ śaraṇaṃ pitaro 'ntarhitās tataḥ || 14 ||  
pitṛṣv antarhiteṣv evaṃ vāyubhakṣas tadā dvijaḥ |  
kāṣṭhaloṣṭopalībhūto nirucchvāso 'vatiṣṭhata || 15 ||  
saṃdhāya sa mano rudre niścalaṃ susamāhitāḥ |  
hṛdayena japan rudrān ākāśe samatiṣṭhata || 16 ||  
tasya pūrṇe tadā māsi vātavarṣam abhūn mahat |  
sarvasattvapramathanaṃ duḥsahaṃ bhīmaśabdavat || 17 ||  
tena varṣeṇa mahatā naiva tasyābhavat tadā |  
duḥkhaṃ vāpy athavā bhaṅgaḥ samyag evāvatasthivān || 18 ||  
atha taṃ bhagavān devo māse vartati saptame |  
viṣṇurūpadharo bhūtvā provāca dvijasattamam || 19 ||  
tuṣṭo 'smi tava bhadraṃ te tapasānena suvrata |  
varaṃ varaya viprarṣe yas te manasi vartate || 20 ||  
sukeśas tu tato dṛṣṭvā nārāyaṇam upāgatam |  
abravīc chaṃkarād icche varaṃ na bhavato hy aham || 21 ||*

*viṣṇur uvāca |*

*alam etena viprarṣe nirbandhena haraṃ prati |  
devair api na śakyo 'sau draṣṭuṃ kim uta mānuṣaiḥ || 22 ||*

*sukeśa uvāca |*

*śaṃkarād eva cakreśa śubhaṃ vā yadi vāśubham |  
varaṃ kāmḥse na ca tvatto na cānyasmāt kathaṃ cana || 23 ||  
bhavanto 'pi hi taṃ devaṃ yasmāt sarve samāhitāḥ |  
arcayadhvaṃ stuvadhvaṃ ca tasmāc chreṣṭhaḥ sa ucyate || 24 ||  
tasya taṃ niścayaṃ jñātvā tutoṣa bhagavān haraḥ |  
uvāca cainaṃ viprendra gaṇapo me bhavākṣayaḥ || 25 ||  
amaro jarayā tyaktaḥ sarvaduḥkhavivarjitaḥ |  
aiśvaryaṇa ca saṃyuktaḥ priyo mama puraḥsaraḥ || 26 ||  
idaṃ ca matkṛtaṃ divyaṃ trikūṭaṃ nāma parvatam |  
bhavanaiḥ kāñcanair yuktaṃ kāmagaṃ te dadāmy aham || 27 ||  
yeṣāṃ kṛte ca tvam putra mām toṣayitum udyataḥ |  
te ceme pitarāḥ sarve suputreṇa tvayānagha |  
tāritā narakād ghorād gaṇeśatvam upasthitāḥ || 28 ||*



*kiṃkarās te bhaviṣyanti nityaṃ duḥkhavivarjitāḥ |*  
*gaṇeśvarās tavaiveme bhaviṣyanti vaśānugāḥ || 29 ||*  
*sukeśa iti nāmnā ca prathitas tvaṃ bhaviṣyasi |*  
*sadā cāṣṭagaṇaiśvaryasamāyuktaś cariṣyasi || 30 ||*

*sanatkumāra uvāca |*

*tataḥ sa dr̥ṣṭvātha pitṛṇ narakāt sasuhṛjjanān |*  
*tīrṇān gaṇeśvaratvena punaḥ pūjyena saṃyutān || 31 ||*  
*maheśvaram ḥṛṣṭamanāḥ śirasā prāñjalir nataḥ |*  
*uvāca harṣamāñāsyaś tadā vacanakovidāḥ || 32 ||*

*sukeśa uvāca |*

*bhagavan gaṇapatvaṃ ca labdham aiśvaryaṃ eva ca |*  
*amaratvaṃ tathākṣayaṃ tathaiṅvājaratā varā || 33 ||*  
*pitaras tāritās ceme gaṇapās caiva me kṛtāḥ |*  
*nagaś ca kāmagō hy eṣa labdho me tvatprasādataḥ || 34 ||*  
*icchāmi tvāṃ mahādeva somaṃ sapravareśvaram |*  
*sadā sumukham atyarthaṃ sudr̥śyaṃ caiva kāmada || 35 ||*

*sanatkumāra uvāca |*

*sa evam ukto bhagavān sukeśena mahātmanā |*  
*uvācaivam idaṃ sarvaṃ bhaviṣyati gaṇeśvara || 36 ||*  
*imaṃ giriṃ samāśritya sahaibhiḥ pravair varaiḥ |*  
*gaccha sveṣṭāṃ gatiṃ vatsa devān viprāṃś ca pālaya || 37 ||*  
*viṣṛjya taṃ mahādevaḥ sukeśaṃ gaṇanāyakam |*  
*jagāmādarśanaṃ somaḥ sarveṣāṃ eva paśyatām || 38 ||*  
*sukeśo 'pi girau tasmin nagare svargasam̐nibhe |*  
*narakāñāṃ sa tattvārthaṃ pitṛṇ papraccha yatnataḥ || 39 ||*

*vyāsa uvāca |*

*kim arthaṃ gaṇapo brahmaṃś tān pitṛṇ paryapṛcchata |*  
*kathaṃ ca pitaras tatra ācakhyus tasya dhīmataḥ || 40 ||*  
*etad vistaraśas tāta saṃkṣepād vā yathātatham |*  
*tvatto 'haṃ śrotum icchāmi hitaṃ sarvasukhāvaham || 41 ||*  
*sa evam uktaḥ suraśṛksutaḥ prabhur vimānakartā vigataprayojanaḥ |*  
*jagāda vākyaṃ suralokabandhanaṃ purākṛtaṃ duṣkṛtasarvanāśanam || 42 ||*  
*iti skandapurāṇe pañcatriṃśo 'dhyāyaḥ ||*




## Of Toothsticks, Dreams and Lizards: Omens in Jyotiḥśāstra, the Pāñcarātra- Saṃhitās and the Purāṇas

Dominique Marcel Baur\*

**Abstract:** Drawing from medieval Sanskrit sources this paper examines omens in Hindu religious literature in different contexts, such as kingship, initiation, astrology and present-day worship. In each of these contexts omens are represented in a unique way and the analysis of their particular references to a variety of concepts provides a fertile ground for cultural historical research. The existing terms for ‘omen’ in Sanskrit, i.e. *nimitta*, *adbhuta*, *utpāta* and *śakuna* are outfitted with different classifications, which makes them the appropriate starting point for this investigation. The directions of the compass and the practitioner’s body provide the conceptual background for a variety of omens, such as the cries of animals, the fall of the toothstick (*dantakāṣṭha*), the throbbing of limbs, dreams, etc. Omens are not only a part of the Indian scientific discourses in the Jyotiḥśāstra, they also serve as a means for negotiating social positions and for contesting human agency by contrasting it with non-human agents. The analysis of omens represented in various sources focuses on their functional as well as on their conceptual aspects in order to come to a well-rounded understanding of the omen as a cultural phenomenon.

**Keywords:** divination, human body, initiation, kingship, ritual

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## 1. Introduction

The prediction of future events by interpreting ominous signs<sup>1</sup> is a widespread phenomenon of Indian cultural history with multiple facets. It is not only a part of Indian astrology, but also a part of social and religious practice. Ominous signs can be traced back into Vedic times and are integrated in the works of Kālidāsa, in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata<sup>2</sup> and are also discussed in the religious writings of the Jainas, Tantric Buddhism, Tantric Śaivism, in the Āyurveda, the Purāṇas, the religious writings of the Pāñcarātras, the Gṛhya-Sūtras and of course in Jyotiḥśāstra. Although the ubiquity of ominous signs in classical and medieval Indian Sanskrit literature is striking, this topic has not received much attention in modern research.

The existing studies embedded their investigations on omens into a specific geographic area using an ethnographic approach (Thurston 1912, Diehl 1956), focused on a single text (Kohlbrugge 1938) or a single knowledge tradition (Pingree 1981), but none of them have attempted to systematically analyse omens from various textual sources as phenomena in their own right. Based on findings in the Purāṇas,<sup>3</sup> the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās and in the Jyotiḥśāstra, this paper provides a framework for the systematic analysis of omens in order to facilitate their placement within Indian belief and knowledge systems. A comprehensive analysis across all different areas mentioned above would require far more space. This paper therefore presents a method which connects omens to cultural patterns via in-depth and intertextual analysis, using the sources mentioned above with links to the Hindu tradition as examples, while maintaining that the method can also be applied on a larger scale.

Analysing the intertextual relations of omen sections in the Purāṇas and Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās and comparing the texts of both genres sheds

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1 When referring to a single sentence, e.g. “If a dog barks in the north, there will be rain”, I use the word ‘ominous sign’, but when referring to the whole series of – in this case: dog omens –, I use ‘omen’ or ‘portent’.

2 See Kane 1962: 743ff.

3 The Agni-, the Matsya- and the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa are categorised by some scholars as encyclopedic Puranas (Kane 1962: 842, referred to by Rocher 1986: 78 Fn. 62); Hazra holds that the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa is actually a Pāñcarātra work (Hazra 1958: 216).

light on the question of how specific areas, in this case kingship and initiation, make use of omens. What does this say about the function of omens in general? Why are some omens included in one area, but are missing in another? The Purāṇas, Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās and Jyotiḥśāstras are also places of knowledge production, where omens are integrated into a network of cultural concepts. Another question this paper deals with is how a detailed study of individual omens can help to foster a deeper understanding of their conceptual structures.

One methodological goal of this study is to retain, where possible, the emic terminology inherent in the texts of the Sanskrit traditions it investigates. Following this principle reveals patterns of knowledge that anchor ominous signs in the South Asian religious landscape. These two directions – analysing the omens’ functionality by comparing them in different text-genres and analysing their structure by investigating individual omens – allows to place omens in a practical as well as in a theoretical context. This program focus on kingship, sectarianism and science made it necessary to select the Purāṇas, the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās and texts of the Jyotiḥśāstra to represent these crucial areas of social life in medieval India.

I begin with an investigation of generic terms and classifications of omens given in different sources to show how they are located within Indian astrology and what the inherent patterns connected with them are. The next part takes up omens in a larger context, focusing on multiple, partially overlapping sets of omens, which are determined by their functionality within a specific group of texts. In the Purāṇas omens are linked to rules and duties related to the king (*rājadharma*),<sup>4</sup> while in the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās the omens are connected to ritual. In the Jyotiḥśāstra omens are integrated and classified within a system of general rules and archetypes, which serve as blueprints, similar to methods applied with regards to the Vedic ritual in the Paribhāṣa passages<sup>5</sup> of the Śrauta-Sūtras. The third part analyses omens based on a structural background given in the Jyotiḥśāstra. By employing general cultural concepts like the body, directions, references to ritual and so-

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4 For further readings on *rājadharma*, see Rangaswami Aiyangar 1941, Losch 1959 and Geslani 2018.

5 See Gonda 1977: 508.

cial positions, an analysis of omens such as the fall of the toothstick (*dantakāṣṭha*), dreams (*svapna*) and the house-lizard (*grhagodhikā/palli*) provides insights into their individual structure. The fact that an omen animal such as the house-lizard is represented as an icon for present-day worship is a curious case. It is integrated into the conceptual study of this paper in order to elucidate the development of this particular phenomenon underlining the relevance of omens even in India's contemporary religious landscape.

The texts selected for this paper are all to some extent related to the analysis of the house-lizard omen, which is presented towards the end of this paper. The connection to the Pāñcarātra is apparent by the fact that the temple in which the house-lizard became a part of worship follows the teachings of the Pāñcarātra, especially those conveyed in the Jayākhyā-Saṃhitā. The Purāṇas contain a rich collection of omens, among them animal omens, moreover they are ascribed to Vaiṣṇava teachings and served as sources for works of the Jyotiḥśāstra where they were systematically arranged. Although there is no doubt that this interconnectedness is important, it is also the engagement with the diversity of texts which shows that the methods used in this paper to analyse and contextualise omens can be successfully applied to other sources – and other phenomena of cultural historical interest. The omens mentioned in the title of this paper not only illustrate the diversity of ominous signs handed down by different traditions, but they also stand for very different ways in which omens can be represented in text and ritual, e.g. as being a part of military expeditions, as belonging to initiation ceremonies etc.

## 2. Coming to terms: What is an 'omen' in Sanskrit?

### 2.1 Indian Astrology

Indian Astrology as represented in the Jyotiḥśāstra is generally divided into three branches (*skandhas*): the calculation of planetary movements (*tantra/gaṇita*), horoscopes (*horā/jātaka*) and divination or natural astrology (*śākhā/saṃhitā*).<sup>6</sup> *Yātrā* as it is described in Purāṇas can be called a functional 'sub-genre' of natural astrology and is concerned with predic-

6 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 1.9, Pingree 1981: i.

tions in the context of starting a journey or a king's military endeavours. The methods of future-telling applied in *yātrā* and natural astrology can be roughly divided into two groups: in one group predictions are made on the basis of cyclic and fixed occurrences such as the lunar day (*tithi*), the week-day (*vāra*), the 30<sup>th</sup> part of the day (*muhūrta*), the moon's position and the asterisms (*nakṣatra*). The other group is formed by incidents which are accidental and in a broader sense unpredictable, and which are called ominous signs – among them the throbbing of limbs, the behaviour of birds and animals, dreams etc.<sup>7</sup> The earliest works on *yātrā* are the Ṭikanikayātrā, the Yogayātrā and the Bṛhadyātrā, all written by Varāhamihira in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup>

'Omen' does not only refer to sudden events, but also can be induced by an astrologer or priest on different occasions. Induced omens are sometimes part of an astrological 'sub-genre' called *praśna*, i.e. 'inquiry'. There, apart from creating and interpreting the horoscope, the astrologer (*vyōtiṣī*), actively induces ominous signs in order to receive answers to their client's questions<sup>9</sup>, mostly concerned with matters of every-day life, such as health, marriage, pregnancy and travel.

These two 'sub-genres' illustrate different 'modes' of astrological inquiry, which in practice were often carried out together. Before the king begins a *yātrā* the astrologer determines a number of factors, using *praśna* (e.g. horoscope).<sup>10</sup> But the fact that *praśna* can also be a part of *yātrā* still allows for a conceptual division that reflects a functional separation of omens into spontaneous and induced omens, an aspect which also plays a role when we investigate the Purāṇas and the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās. Indian tradition differentiates several classes of omens based on various criteria. A brief overview will provide us with a rough framework for further investigating some of their qualities.

7 Kane 1958: 478–480, Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 2.15.

8 Pingree 1981: 107.

9 Ibid. 110.

10 Geslani 2018: 136.

## 2.2 Classifying omens

The medieval sources explain the existence of omens in two ways. According to the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, deities cause extraordinary events when they are angry about human wrongdoings:<sup>11</sup>

*apacāreṇa narāṇām upasargaḥ*<sup>12</sup> *pāpasañcayād bhavati* /46.2a

“A portent occurs because of the accumulation of sins by misconduct of the people.”

*manujānām apacārād aparaktā devatāḥ srjanty etān* /46.3a

*tatpratighātāya nṛpaḥ śāntim rāṣṭre prayuñjīta* /46.3b/

“Offended by the misconduct of the people, the gods cast these (portents). In order to deflect them, the king shall perform *śānti* in his kingdom.”

(*Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*)

This interpretation leaves no doubt about responsibilities. The people’s bad behaviour causes the gods to cast the omens and the king is in charge of appeasing them with rituals. Here the deities use omens to communicate. Another interpretation holds that omens are showing the possible results of actions from previous lives:

*daive puruṣakāre ca dvaye siddhiḥ pratiṣṭhitā /*

*tatra daivam abhivyaktaṃ pauruṣaṃ paurvadehikam //*

“Fate and human effort – on these two rests success. Of these, fate is the manifestation of human effort undertaken in a past life.”<sup>13</sup>

(*Yājñavalkyasmṛti*)

11 I follow Kern’s edition of the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*. See also *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* 2.134.5 and *Matsya-Purāṇa* 228.5, which is quoted in *Adbhutasāgara* p. 5.

12 *Upasarga* can denote both, the actual incident, as well as the sign which indicates it; the context calls for the latter. In *Böhtlingk’s* and *Roth’s Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (vol. 1, p. 246) we find: “Widerwärtigkeit, Unfall, Ungemach”, but also “das Besessensein”, and “Verfinsterung (eines Gestirns)”, among other possible meanings. *Monier-Williams* (169c) is clearer: “Upa-sarga, as, m. addition; trouble, misfortune; a portent, a natural phenomenon supposed to forebode future evil, an eclipse; a disease [...]”.

13 *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.345, translation by *Olivelle* 2019: 111.

The quotation from the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā is shared by other sources and can therefore serve as representative for an ‘astrological’ position towards omens, while the Yājñavalkyasmṛti’s emphasis on human effort as primal cause for fate and therefore for whatever is foreboding it, may represent a more pragmatic view.<sup>14</sup> In both cases it is possible to influence the potential outcome (*phala*) by ritual action, which, as will be shown, is linked to omens in various aspects.

### 2.2.1 *Utpāta*

While the Gṛhya- and Śrauta-Sūtras hardly refer to *utpāta*,<sup>15</sup> the Purāṇas and medieval sources use this term more frequently. *Utpāta*, literally translated as ‘flying up’, describes an unusual or startling event and is generally defined as something which reverses the natural order (*prakṛti*).<sup>16</sup> It is often divided into three kinds: *divya*, *āntarikṣa* and *bhaumya*.<sup>17</sup>

*Divya* (‘celestial’ or ‘brilliant’) refers to unusual conditions of planets and *nakṣatras*, eclipses and comets. *Āntarikṣa* (‘belonging to the intermediate region’) are hurricanes, unusual clouds, twilight, meteors (*ulka*), fata morganas (*gandharvanagara*), unusual rain and rainbows. Earthquakes (*bhūkampa*) and unusual events involving water bodies are called *bhaumya* (‘earthly’).<sup>18</sup> According to the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā, *śānti*, the expiatory rite is effective for the three kinds of *utpāta* to varying degrees. While the effects of *bhaumya utpātas* are fully suspended, effects of *āntarikṣa utpātas* are merely attenuated, and *divya utpātas* can, according to Kaśyapa, not be altered, whereas according to Varāhamihira, generous gifts can prevent the predicted damage.<sup>19</sup> Since *divya utpāta*

14 For the positions of Manu and Kauṭilya towards ‘fate’ compared to Varāhamihira’s see Geslani 2018: 130.

15 Only Kauṣītaka-Gṛhya-Sūtra 3.9.2, see also Kane 1962: 741.

16 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā: 46.1: (...) *teṣāṃ saṃkṣepo ’yaṃ prakṛter anyatvam utpātaḥ*. In the Adbhutasāgara p. 5: *yaḥ prakṛtivyiparyāsaḥ sarvaḥ saṃkṣepataḥ sa utpātaḥ* (...) and Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa 64, I 2: *prakṛter anyathābhāvo yatra yatropajāyate, tatra tatrāpi jānīyāt sarvam utpātalakṣaṇam* (see also Kane 1962: 742).

17 Matsya-Purāṇa 229.6–9, Agni-Purāṇa 263.12–13, Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 46.2b; 4–5.

18 Kane 1962: 745.

19 Ibid. 746.



is the most powerful one, it has an eightfold effect: it affects the king himself, his son, his wealth, his means of transport (such as horses and elephants), the capital, the queen, the priest, and his people.<sup>20</sup> This list suggests that the *divya utpāta* is in a way most relevant for the king, which implies that the dimension of the omen corresponds to the social status of the person it affects. Another term, which clearly denotes a negative omen, is *vaikṛtya*. This term, just like *utpāta*, conveys the idea that whatever is unusual is most probably a foreboding of a negative event.

### 2.2.2 *Adbhuta*

The origin of this term is rather obscure: while Monier-Williams suggests that it might be a corrupted form of *ati-bhūta*, meaning “exceeding that which is”,<sup>21</sup> Tsuji holds that it could be derived from  $\sqrt{dabh}$  – *dabhnoti*, *dabhati* ‘to injure, deceive’, or from  $\sqrt{dbhu}$ \*, cf. *dabhra* ‘little, small, deficient’, suggesting it could be equated to Hittite *te-pu-* ‘petit, negligible’.<sup>22</sup> In the Ṛgveda *adbhuta* means ‘wonderful’ referring to the gods, but also to the future.<sup>23</sup> *Adbhuta* is paraphrased in Yāska’s Nirukta as *a-bhūta*, indicating something which has not happened before.<sup>24</sup> The Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa 67, which is titled “Adbhutaśānti”, relates seven kinds of *adbhuta* to different deities: Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Agni, Kubera, Viṣṇu and Vāyu.<sup>25</sup> In the Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa 57 and 62, too, earthquakes are ascribed to different deities,<sup>26</sup> linking for example smoke without fire to Agni and rainbows at night to Indra, which suggests a strong overlap with *utpāta*. As will be shown later, the connection with deities and their specific realms opens up different schemes of qualities attributed to them.

20 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 46.7; Matsya-Purāṇa 229.12–13.

21 Monier-Williams 1872: 19a, entry “*adbhuta*”; Boehtlingk 1855: 131.

22 Tsuji 1968: 176.

23 Kane 1962: 741.

24 Nirukta 1.6.; Adbhutasāgara p. 4: *tatra vṛddhagarga / abhūtapūrva yat pūrvaṃ yat pūrvaṃ jāyate nyathā / tad adbhutam iti proktaṃ naimittam syān nimittajam //*.

25 Kane 1962: 741.

26 Kohlbrugge 1938: 20–33.

### 2.2.3 Śakuna

In *śakuna* we find the most specific description of a group of omens. The word *śakuna*, which in the Ṛgveda<sup>27</sup> is used for a specific kind of bird or ominous bird, became a generic term denoting various kinds of animal omens. Here the aforementioned definition of reversing the natural order is applied, too: if, for example, wild animals enter a settlement, or if domestic ones are found in wilderness, this qualifies as ominous. Terms like *ruta* (cry of animals) and *ceṣṭitā* (behaviour/movement of animals) are also frequently used to describe animals as ominous and are subsumed under *śakuna*. Binaries like wild vs. domestic, diurnal vs. nocturnal, etc. often play an important role in these omens.

### 2.2.4 Nimitta

*Nimitta* is defined in the Amarakośa as “cause or prognostic sign”.<sup>28</sup> Whereas *utpāta* generally denotes an unlucky omen, *nimitta* is usually neutral, unless it is specified as *durnimitta*, *nirnimitta* or *aśubha nimitta*.<sup>29</sup> It is also the most common term used for ominous signs in the Pāncarātra-Saṃhitās, but *nimitta* associates neither with a specific set of omens, nor has it a fixed definition. The fact that unseen phenomena or a reversal of some sort is not included in their definition, opens this term up for more subtle kinds of omens. Another term similarly neutral and frequently used to describe something as ominous is the term *lakṣaṇa*.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.3 Summary: demarcation and fuzzy boundaries

What *utpāta*, *adbhuta* and *śakuna* have in common is that they are spontaneous. They encompass unusual, incidental events, which just happen by chance and which therefore are different from actively investigating the stars, planets and other phenomena in search for answers. *Nimitta* can also denote omens which are actively induced by a person looking

27 Ibid.: 804.

28 Ibid.: 743.

29 E.g. Parama-Saṃhitā 9.43.

30 Although Monier-Williams even presents a positive connotation: “a lucky mark, favourable sign” (Monier-Williams 1872: 857b).

for answers. These are in this sense closer to the calculations and observations of the stars and horoscopes conducted by ‘classical’ astrology. *Utpāta*, *adbhuta*, *śakuna* and *nimitta* are too broad to provide a frame for ‘sharper’ distinctions. At times they even merely denote something is an ‘omen’ in a general sense. Especially *utpāta* and *adbhuta* are used synonymously in the Purāṇas without any noticeable differentiation. Nevertheless these four terms can be used to indicate how omens are conceptualised in a text. Since these terms demarcate different domains, such as unusual natural phenomena in connection with deities (*adbhuta*) or in connection with the three worlds (*utpāta*), the behaviour of animals (*śakuna*) and omens which fit none of these description (*nimitta*), they tell us more about a text’s narrative on omens than about the nature of the omens themselves. Moreover these references link omens to a larger context of cultural significance. Categorising natural disasters and irregularities according to deities and the three worlds makes *utpāta* and *adbhuta* an interesting point of departure for further investigating the concept of nature (*prakṛti*) and its normative implications. These categorisations define the ‘normal’ by describing what is ‘abnormal’ and suggest a link of these phenomena to the moral judgement of human behaviour.<sup>31</sup>

### 3. Contextualising omens: their function in the Purāṇas and the Pāñcarātra

When looking at sources on omens in medieval religious literature, what catches the eye is that the Purāṇas and the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās have very specific preferences when it comes to the question what kinds of omens they describe. To show this I compare passages on omens in different Purāṇas and then in different Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās in the following section. This allows me to identify two different ‘sets’ of omens, one which is specific to the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās and the other specific to the Purāṇas. Driven by the fact that both genres not only limit themselves to describing certain kinds of omens, but also put them into a specialised context, it is clear that their specificity is motivated by a genre-specific

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31 See *Adbhutasāgara* p. 5: *atīlobhād asatyād vā nāstikyād vāpy adharmataḥ / narā-pacārān niyatam upasargāḥ prajāyate //*

functionality. This section will also shed some light on how associating omens with different deities and the three worlds mentioned above may have developed into a means of categorisation.

### 3.1 Purāṇas

Compared to the other Purāṇas, the Matsya- and Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa are those that deal with omens in the greatest detail and therefore I will use their passages as sources for my analysis.<sup>32</sup> The omen passages are partially identical or at least very similar in these two Purāṇas<sup>33</sup> and can be roughly divided into two sections in both of them. The first section<sup>34</sup> is ascribed to Garga,<sup>35</sup> while section two<sup>36</sup> is taught by Matsya/Puṣkara. The omens described individually in the first section are: anomalies in idols (*arcāvikāra*), of fire (*agnivaiḥṛtya*), of trees (*vṛkṣotpāta*), of rain (*vṛṣṭivaiḥṛtya*), of water bodies (*salilāśayavaiḥṛtya*), of birth (*prasavavaiḥṛtya*), of tools, utensils etc. (*upaskaravaiḥṛtya*) and of animals (*mṛgapakṣinavaiḥṛtya*). Before dedicating whole chapters to those individual omens, which would be defined above in 2.2 as *utpāta/adbhuta*, the first section is introduced by two chapters, one on *śāntis*, and one which serves as a summary of and an introduction to *adbhutas* themselves. Since for the Purāṇas *utpāta/adbhuta* is inseparably connected with *śānti*, the expiatory ritual for bad omens, a short look on how the Purāṇas are dealing with *śānti* will provide some useful insights.

After relating the three worlds to three kinds of *śānti* (*antarikṣa – abhayā, divya – saumyā* and *bhaumya*<sup>37</sup> – *amṛtā*), *śāntis* bearing the names of deities as well as *ṛṣis*<sup>38</sup> are connected to specific *adbhutas*. Each *śānti*,

32 Since the omen section in the Agni-Purāṇa roughly consists of the same content as the other two Purāṇas, only in reduced form, it is not included in this analysis. For a detailed comparison see Losch 1959: 231–234.

33 Numbers of chapters in this section refer to those in the Matsya-Purāṇa, if not mentioned otherwise. Corresponding chapters in the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa will be given in footnotes.

34 Matsya-Purāṇa 228–238, Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa 133–144.

35 For further readings on Garga see Geslani et al. 2017.

36 Matsya-Purāṇa 239–243, Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa 163–164.

37 *Bhaumya* is only in Viṣṇudharmottara 2.133.3.

38 Matsya-Purāṇa 228.13: *bhārgavī*; ibid. 228.17: *āṅgirasī*.

apart from averting the negative portent it is associated with, is also connected with specific benefits. The links of *śāntis* to the three worlds, as well as to different deities and *ṛṣis* exist side by side in the Purāṇas since there is no sign that the three associated *śāntis* are treated any different than the other *śāntis*. That for the Purāṇas neither the three worlds, nor a specific set of deities serve as an exclusive means for categorising *adbhutas* is also underlined by the chapter which follows the one on *śāntis* and which introduces *adbhutas*. Although Garga explains that the deities are sending the omens, other agents like celestial women and celestial spies can cause them as well.

Although neither the three worlds, nor the association of portents and *śāntis* to deities allows to combine omens into larger units and give them family names, an additional look at *śāntis* foregrounds the more practical side. The correlation of omens to the three worlds tells the astrologer how bad the situation is and how much time is left to counteract. The identity of the deity that has caused the omen is obviously relevant, because it indicates to the astrologer which *śānti* has to be performed. Here, instead of a merely theoretical order we encounter a practical guideline for choosing the right ritual at the right time.

After a short interlude of one chapter in the Matsya-Purāṇa which describes planet worship (*grahayajña*) and a longer interlude in the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa of 20 chapters dealing with various topics, like the king's enemies, Indra's banner etc., the second section in both Purāṇas deals with omens in *yātrā*. While both Purāṇas share an almost identical first section, their sections on *yātrā* are different. Chapters on the throbbing of limbs (*dehaspandana*) and dreams (*svapna*) found in the Matsya-Purāṇa are completely absent in the second *khaṇḍa* of the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa, but are dealt with in chapters 37–39 and 46 of the first *khaṇḍa* within the narrative of a story which tells the fight between Rāma and the demon king Sālva and therefore exemplifies a king's *yātrā*, although the omens are described in much lesser detail than in the relevant chapters of the Matsya-Purāṇa.

The two Purāṇas are very consistent in the way omens are described and categorised. Also consistent is the two-fold division between omens which require a *śānti* ritual and omens which are related to *yātrā*. It is the king's duty as head of the state to ward off any negative result prognosticated by ominous signs by performing the required *śānti* ritual as well

as to order and start a *yātrā* according to the prognostications. These two areas form the centre of the omen passages in the Purāṇas and their way of narrating omens in general. It also has been shown that for the Purāṇas the attribution of omens to the three worlds and their connection with deities is not a means in itself to organise different *adbhutas*, but may rather serve as a practical guideline.

Two features of the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa are particularly interesting: it contains chapters describing various omens within the narrative of a story in a style more reminiscent of an epic. It also includes a chapter about the forms of the sacrificial fire (*agnirūpa*), which is missing in the other Purāṇas, but which can be found in the Parama-Saṃhitā of the Pāñcarātra.

### 3.2 Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās

Among the Pāñcarātra texts the Jayākhyā,<sup>39</sup> the Kapiñjala<sup>40</sup> and the Parama-Saṃhitā<sup>41</sup> contain the most extensive passages on omens, which makes them especially suitable for this analysis. Since the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās are mostly concerned with topics related to their rituals it may seem obvious that ‘their’ omens are located within their own ritual complex. It is now the question what kinds of omens are applied, how they are contextualised and how this specific ‘set’ compares to the one in the Purāṇas.

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39 It was composed between 600 and 850 CE (K.V. Rajan 1967–68: 79f. referred to by Rastelli 1999: 27 and Gonda 1977: 54). The Jayākhyā-Saṃhitā is already mentioned in Utpalavaiṣṇava’s Spandapradīpikā (10<sup>th</sup> century) and is, together with the Sātvata- and Pauṣkara-Saṃhitā, one of the “three gems” (*ratnatraya*), also known as *mūlaveda* (Rastelli 1999: 24).

40 The Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā is not mentioned in Vedāntadeśika’s Pāñcarātrarakṣā (Schrader 1973: 20) and the only other Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitā referring to it is the Viṣṇu-Saṃhitā (ibid.: 7), which suggests that it is a later text. While not claiming to belong to the 108 Saṃhitās, it calls itself a compilation (*sāra*) of the relevant topics (ibid.: 24).

41 The Parama-Saṃhitā is first quoted in Yāmuna’s Āgamaprāmānya. It is one of the older Pāñcarātra texts (Schrader 1973: 23).

While all three texts describe the throw of the toothstick (*dantakāṣṭha*)<sup>42</sup> and dreams (*svapna*),<sup>43</sup> the Jayākhya-Saṃhitā omits the description of the fire omen (*agnirūpa*) which is contained in the Parama- and Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā. That the Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā is rather a compilation than a ritual handbook (see footnote 40) is underlined by the fact that it mentions a number of omens like water bubbles and the course of an arrow, which may have been added for the sake of completeness. During the initiation (*dīkṣā*) as an important rite of passage the observation of omens seems to be particularly common. Especially *svapna*<sup>44</sup> and the throw of the toothstick have a fixed place in the procedure of this ritual. After making the *maṇḍala* and offering ghee into the fire, the initiand is given cooked food. He then is made to clean his teeth with the toothstick<sup>45</sup> and has to sleep in the *cakra-maṇḍala*.<sup>46</sup> For the observation of dreams other occasions are mentioned. When a temple is consecrated (*sthāpane*), when one is dealing with important people (*puruṣeṣu mahatṣu*) and if one observes anomalies (*vikāreṣu*) one also should observe one's dreams.<sup>47</sup> The observation of the *agnirūpa* is not specifically mentioned for the *dīkṣā* but is described as common for fire-offerings in general.<sup>48</sup>

In all three texts we find that omens are linked with *dīkṣā* and either the *sādhaka*<sup>49</sup> or the guru is addressed. Predictions are made from the throw of the toothstick (*dantakāṣṭha*), the sacrificial fire (*agnirūpa*) and dreams (*svapna*). Together they form a set, cut out for the ritual purposes

42 Jayākhya-Saṃhitā 16.189–195; Parama-Saṃhitā 9.3–10; Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā 6.23b–24.

43 Jayākhya-Saṃhitā 16.207–215a; Parama-Saṃhitā 9.13–34a; Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā 6.25–28.

44 Parama-Saṃhitā 8.39: *vāsudevena saṃspr̥śya svāpayed darbhasaṃstare / cakṣuṣī rūpamantreṇa saṃspr̥śya svapnasiddhaye* // Having touched him with the Vāsu-deva-Mantra he (the *ācārya*) shall make him (the initiand) sleep on a bed of *darbha*-grass / having touched his eyes with the *rūpa-mantra* in order to receive a dream //.

45 Parama-Saṃhitā 8.37.

46 Parama-Saṃhitā 8.78–82.

47 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.33b–34a.

48 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.34b.

49 The *sādhaka* is the third of four stages in initiation for the Pāñcarātras (Rastelli 1999: 148).

of the Pāncarātras. The omens in this set are more static than those mentioned in the Purāṇas and they are, at least the *dantakāṣṭha* and the *agnirūpa*, not spontaneous, but induced omens. This could explain why *utpātas* and *adbhutas* are mostly absent in the Pāncarātra texts, except in the Viśvāmitra-Saṃhitā 19.4, where *utpāta* is mentioned once and the Ahirbudhnya-Saṃhitā describes *svapna* as a sign of a magical attack against the king,<sup>50</sup> which may indicate some fluidity between Purāṇas and Pāncarātra-texts. In general the omens represented in the Jayākhyā-, Parama- and Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā are embedded in the controlled environment of the ritual, where liminality and ritual purity play a crucial role.

After this short overview over the sections on omens in relevant text of the Purāṇas and Pāncarātra, a comparison of the sections on *agnirūpa* in the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa<sup>51</sup> and in the Parama-Saṃhitā<sup>52</sup> shall

50 Schrader 1973: 149.

51 Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa 2.20.1–6: *puṣkara uvāca / pradakṣiṇāvartaśikhas taptajāmbūnadaprabhaḥ / rathaughameghanirghoṣo vidhūmaś ca hutāśanaḥ /1/ anulomasugandhaś ca svastikākārasannibhaḥ / vardhamānākṛtiś caiva nandyāvartanibhas tathā /2/ prasannārcir mahājvālah sphuliṅgarahito hitaḥ / svāhāvamāne jvalanaḥ svayaṃ devamukhaṃ haviḥ /3/ yadā bhuṅkte mahābhāga tadā rājño hitaṃ bhavet / haviṣas tu yadā vahnur na syāt simisimāyitam /4/ na varjeyuś ca madhyena mārjāramṛgapakṣiṇaḥ / pipilikāś ca dharmajña tadā bhūyāj jayī nrpaḥ /5/ muktāhāramṛṇālābhe vahnau rājñāṃ jayo bhavet / tathaiva ca jayaṃ brūyāt prastarasya pradāyini /6/*

If the flame turns right, possessing the brilliance of pure gold, [sounding like] a thundering flood of chariots and being without smoke, /1/ following the natural direction, possessing a pleasant scent, with a form similar to a Svastikā, Vardhamāna, or Nandyāvarta (?), /2/ a clear flame, burning strongly without sparks, is right. If during the “*svāhā*” the burning offering itself /3/ enjoys the flame (*devamukha*), O excellent one, then there is well-being for the king. The offering and the fire should not tremble /4/ and neither cats, nor wild animals, birds or ants should pass through its centre, you expert of the Dharma, then the king will be victorious. /5/ Refraining from taking food at a fire, which annihilates obligation (?), begets victory for the kings. Similarly victory shall be predicted for the provider of the sacrificial grass. /6/

52 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.34cd–38ab: *agnikārye ca yady agnir vinā yatnena dīpyate /34cd/ śikhābhir ujalantībhir vartate vā pradakṣiṇam / hr̥dyam vā visrjed gandham rūpaṃ vā sumanoharam /35/ sampadas tasya vardhante sādhakasya na saṃśayaḥ / yadi homārtham ānīto naśyed vahnir akāraṇāt /36/ vipadas tasya jāyante sādhakasya na saṃśayaḥ / visrjed viṣṇuliṅgam vā durgandham vā hutāśanam /37/ yadi vā na pradīpyeta prasavyaṃ vā na tac chubham /38ab/*



give an impression how the two different genres deal with the ‘same’ kind of prediction in their unique ways.

In the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa the description of the signs of the sacrificial fire is limited to the positive ones that promise the king’s victory. Since we can infer that victory means defeating an enemy, it is safe to say that for the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa *agnirūpa* is a part of *yātrā* and the *rājadharmā*. The structure, too, is different from the Parama-Saṃhitā. There, after describing qualities, which forebode prosperity for the *sādhaka*, the negative ones are listed. This is a common pattern in the omen sections of the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās.

The Parama-Saṃhitā describes which signs indicate a positive and which a negative result, whereas the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa distinguishes between the presence of a positive sign and the absence of a negative sign (e.g.: “if not x, then it is good”) and thus avoids even mentioning a possible defeat of the king. In its description the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa is more detailed than the Parama-Saṃhitā. Where the Parama-Saṃhitā merely suggests that the fire should have a pleasant form, the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa explicitly names the different auspicious forms for the fire.

In the context of the Pāñcarātra the observation of the fire has developed in a different direction, away from the question about the king’s victory over his enemies, which has been the driving force behind the description of *agnirūpa* as it is found in the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa. Instead the inquiry is about the well-being and potential dangers in different areas of the individual’s life, which puts it in line with a more modern approach to the inquiry of omens.

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If at the *agnikārya* the fire is kindled effortlessly /34cd/ or turns to the right with blazing flames, or produces a pleasant scent or [has] a lovely form, /35/ [then,] the Sādhaka’s wealth increases without a doubt. If a fire brought for the sacrifice burns out without reason, /36/ [then,] without a doubt, misfortune occurs for the Sādhaka. If the fire produces signs of Viṣṇu (?) or a bad smell, /37/ or if it does not shine, or [turns] to the left, it is not good. /38ab/

## 4. Getting behind function: the conceptual aspects of omens

### 4.1 Abstraction and universality in the Jyotiḥśāstra

So far this paper has engaged with the questions of what categories and terms are used for the description of omens in Indian Sanskrit tradition and how omens are represented in relevant texts of the Purāṇas and the Pāñcarātra, determining their specific perspective on omens as functional and as being integrated into a ritual context. For obvious reasons the functional aspects of omens as determined in the Purāṇas and the Pāñcarātra-Saṃhitās can hardly be applied to the Jyotiḥśāstra in the same manner if the focus should remain on the social and religious significance of omens. The classifications applied in the texts of the Jyotiḥśāstra are not driven by functionality, but by attempts to provide a typology of omens as an integral part of the astrological knowledge tradition.

In the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā and in works like the Adbhutasāgara<sup>53</sup> and the Śakunārṇava<sup>54</sup> we find what is merely listed or embedded in stories by the Purāṇas, collected and reworked in a more systematic manner, containing general rules of application similar to those found in the ritual *sūtras*. The two following examples display the level of abstraction applied to form groups of omens in the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā:

*kākadvayasyāpi samānam etat  
phalaṃ yad uktaṃ rutaceṣṭitādyaiḥ /  
patatriṇo 'nye 'pi yathaiva kāko  
vanyāḥ śvavac coparidaṃṣtriṇo ye //*

“The aforementioned result [for a single crow] is the same for two crows regarding the cry, movement etc. Other birds too are [to be treated] like the crow, just like wild, tusked animals are similar to dogs.”<sup>55</sup>

53 Composed by Ballālasena in 1168, completed by his son Lakṣmaṇasena in 1200 (Pingree 1981: 78).

54 Also called Vasantarājaśakuna, composed in 1090 by Vasantarāja (Pingree 1981: 76).

55 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 95.57.

Here the crow and the dog are clearly defined as archetypes for other animals, which means that only the interpretation of the crow's behaviour has to be described, which then can be applied to any other kind of bird. That the crow omens serve as a blueprint for those of other birds can be intuitively understood, but what qualifies the omens indicated by dogs to be representative of those indicated by wild, tusked animals is a different question.

*dinmaṇḍale 'bhyantaravāhyabhāge  
phalāni vinyād grhagodhikāyāḥ /*

“The results of the house-lizard can be inferred [from its position] in the circle of the directions (*dinmaṇḍala*) within the quarters or in the spokes (...).”<sup>56</sup>

Here instead of employing an archetype as equivalent like in the aforementioned example, a general scheme based on directions valid for all *śakunas* is used to identify the results for a specific omen, in this case: the house-lizard. Both examples show how large groups of omens, which otherwise would have to be dealt with at length, are described by simple rules of abstraction. Since abstraction is a common method of Indian astrologers in medieval times to aim for a certain degree of universality, it is justified to follow their example by analysing the conceptual background of omens.

In order to map out the tangible world, omens are layered with different concepts, forming a nexus of relations, which then can be interpreted to determine possible results. The three universal concepts which are also applied in predictions made from omens are that of time, directions and the body. While these concepts are extensively dealt with on an abstract level in other areas of Indian astrology, it is undeniable that they also play an important role in the field of omens. But in this context they are generally dealt with in a more practical fashion.

## 4.2 Directions

The throw of the toothstick which, as described above, is a common omen in the context of the Pāñcarātra ritual, is used to indicate a result by its fall in one of the eight directions: a twig is used as toothstick and

<sup>56</sup> Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 88.47a.

it can be taken from different kinds of trees. While the Parama-Saṃhitā<sup>57</sup> only forbids using bent or knotted twigs, the Bṛhat-Saṃhitā<sup>58</sup> also forbids split or withered ones. The latter also ascribes positive results to different types of wood, whereas the Parama-Saṃhitā<sup>59</sup> simply lists which types are recommended for toothsticks. The Jayākhyā-Saṃhitā<sup>60</sup> prescribes different lengths for the toothstick used by the guru, brahmins, women and children. First the twig is chewed on one end, which after it becomes fibrous is used for cleaning the teeth. Then it is rinsed with water and thrown on the ground. Depending on the direction in which it falls, different events can be predicted. Also the flames of the sacrificial fire (*agnirūpa*)<sup>61</sup> and of the lamp (*dīpajvāla*)<sup>62</sup> create different results, depending on the directions they turn towards. Directions can even play a role in dreams where, for example, going to the south indicates death. That the directions generally imply different results can be described as one underlying concept in the interpretation of omens. Spatial orientation concerning ominous signs is mostly related to the eight directions commonly referred to by the western compass, but other divisions e.g. into 32 quarters are also possible.<sup>63</sup> The circle of the horizon, with its division into 32 quarters, links the directions to specific domains, professions or social positions and objects, e.g. an ominous sound in the quarter of the *mālākāra* (garland-maker) creates a result connected with this domain or profession.

Almost any scheme can be applied to the directions, mapping out all possible aspects of social life. Deities,<sup>64</sup> male and female gender,<sup>65</sup> different kinds of females,<sup>66</sup> social positions or professions bearing special

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57 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.4.

58 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 85.2.

59 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.3.

60 Jayākhyā-Saṃhitā 16.189cd–190ab.

61 Parama-Saṃhitā 9.34ff.

62 Kapiñjala-Saṃhitā 6.20, Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 84.

63 Bṛhat-Saṃhitā 86: 29–34.

64 Ibid.: 89.75–77.

65 Ibid.: 86.80.

66 Ibid.: 86.79.

significance are just a few examples for possible areas to be associated with directions.

### 4.3 Time and directions

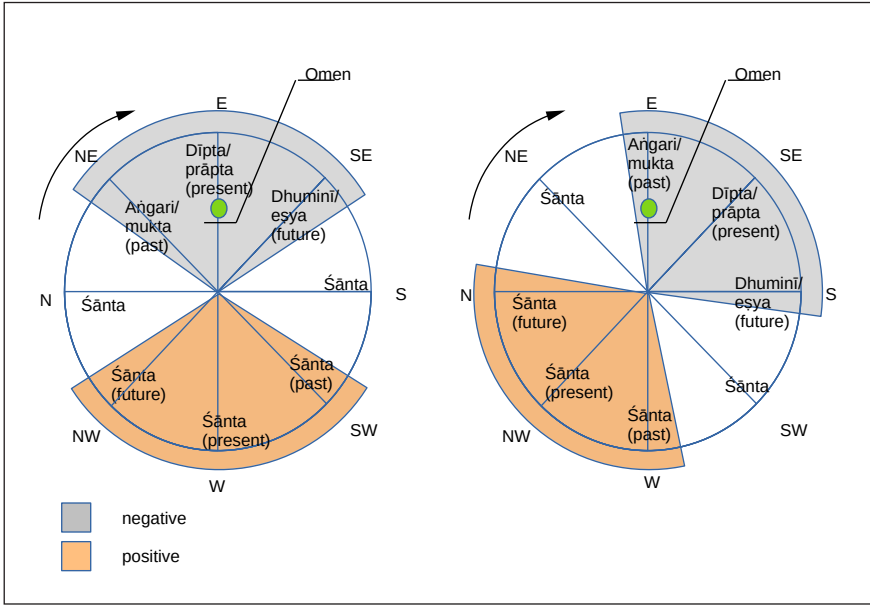
While, as we have seen, for some omens, like the toothstick, only the direction in which it falls is taken into account, the result of other omens such as the sound made by the house-lizard, which would be categorised as *śakuna*, has to be determined by both the time and the area in which it occurs. A common unit used for time in combination with omens is the *yāma* or its synonym the *prahara*. The 24-hour day is divided into eight *yāmas* (one *yāma* = three hours) and sometimes sunrise, sunset and high noon are also added and bear special significance.

In dream omens the *yāma*, during which the person has the dream, is often used to determine when the prognosticated result will occur.<sup>67</sup> The *yāma*'s positioning within the compass and therefore the combination of spatial with temporal units is relevant for the respective prediction of an omen's result. With each *yāma* the division of positive results in past, present and future rotates through each direction. After the eighth *yāma* the circle is completed. As an example: if a lizard cries in the first *yāma* in the east, the indicated result is negative in the present, while in the second *yāma* it indicates a negative result in the past (see the figure below).

In chapter 17 of Vasantarāja's *Śakunārṇava* we find a detailed description of the directions and their indications for the house-lizard. At different times of the day the cry of the house-lizard coming from the eight directions creates a different result. The description starts with the sunrise in the eastern direction and lists for each of the eight *yāmas* – four for the day, four for the night – the indicated result before moving on to the south-east and so on, until all eight *yāmas* for all eight directions are completed. This list does not divide the results into past, present and future, as it is done in the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, and is therefore more concrete and easier to handle, although its means of description is less elegant.

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67 See e.g. *Parama-Saṃhitā* 9.13b–14, *Matsya-Purāṇa* 242.17b–19.



#### 4.4 The body

Various ominous signs are related to the human or anthropomorphic body or figure. Dream omens (*svapna*) are often closely related to the body and we can distinguish some of them in particular:

- Dreams in which the body is smeared with various substances or is bathed in them, e.g. in blood or mud.
- Dreams in which the person consumes different substances, e.g. raw or cooked flesh, milk, yoghurt, soil, alcohol, etc.
- Dreams in which the person experiences severe bodily modification, e.g. grass or a tree growing out of the navel, having multiple heads or arms, having their head or limbs chopped off.<sup>68</sup>

The substances in a) and b) bear a specific significance, which determines if a dream omen is good or bad.

In various religious contexts the human body is related to deities and specifically to deities residing over specific body parts. This is the case

<sup>68</sup> E.g. in *Matsya-Purāṇa* 242.22: *drumatṛṇodbhavo nābhau tathaiva bahubāhutā, tathaiva bahu śīrṣatvaṃ phalitodbhava eva ca.*

in *nyāsa*, where deities are ritually ‘applied’ on the body by the use of specific mantras, as described e.g. in the *Jayākhyā-Saṃhitā*.<sup>69</sup> Another example is the *Vāstu-Śāstra*, which is concerned with topics revolving around house-building. There the *vāstupuruṣa*<sup>70</sup> is pinned to the ground by various deities, each one holding a specific body part. That it is not only the body as a whole which can hold significance for the interpretation of omens, but different parts of the body, is a common feature among a variety of omens, like pimples (*piṭakalakṣaṇa*),<sup>71</sup> the throbbing of limbs (*spandana*)<sup>72</sup> and the fall of the house-lizard (*pallīpatana*). In case of these three omens the right side of the body is seen as positive and the left side as negative. Often this relation is reversed for women. In all these omens are related to the human body. The description begins with the head and ends with the feet. While the body parts listed are basically the same for each omen, there are also differences. The results ascribed to the different body parts differ from omen to omen, too: for each omen the emphasis on specific areas of the body is slightly different, e.g. in *spandana* the area of the eyes is much more prominent than in *piṭakalakṣaṇa*.

In the *Muhūrtamārtaṇḍa*<sup>73</sup> the house-lizard no longer indicates future events by crying from different directions, but by falling on a person’s body, whereby the different body parts touched by the lizard indicate different results. This type of omen is, unlike *śakuna*, limited to the house-lizard and the chameleon, as the title of this passage, *pallī-saraṭha-prakarāṇa*, indicates. The lizard and the chameleon form a pair: the fall of the house-lizard indicates future events congruent to those indicated by the chameleon climbing upwards (*saraṭha-prarohaṇa*). The same combination of *pallīpatana* and *saraṭha-prarohaṇa* is described briefly in the *Dharmasindhu*.<sup>74</sup>

Based on the dates of the texts dealing with *pallīpatana* I argue that there is an actual conceptual change, and that the methodical prediction of future events by differentiating the possible areas of a person’s body that can come into contact with a house-lizard because it falls on that

69 Rastelli 1999: 140.

70 *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā* 53.44–54.

71 *Ibid.*: 52.

72 *Matsya-Purāṇa* 241, *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* 1.46.

73 Composed by Nārāyaṇa Daivajña in 1571.

74 Composed in 1790 by Kāśinātha Upādhyāya (Rocher (ed.) 1986: 278).

person is a later development. While Vasantarāja describes the house-lizard in the fashion of a typical *śakuna*, determining future events from sound, *yāma* and direction, the Muhūrtamārtaṇḍa uses its contact with different body parts for prediction.

#### 4.5 “Evolution” of an omen

Ritual actions to ward off any potential negative result indicated by the touch of the house-lizard have considerably changed over time. An extensive list of remedies is provided in the Dharmasindhu.<sup>75</sup> The person touched by a house-lizard or chameleon shall take a bath, drink the five products of the cow (*pañcagavya*) and observe clarified butter (*ājyam avalokya*). Offering an image of the lizard or chameleon and dressed in red, the person shall worship Rudra in a vessel (*kalaśa*), recite the Mṛtyum-jaya-Mantra, offer 108 or 1008 pieces of sesame into a fire fuelled by 108 pieces of Khadira wood uttering the Vyāhṛtis, perform the Sviṣṭakṛt sacrifice, ritually sprinkle water (*abhiṣeka*) and shall donate gold, clothes and sesame. The offering of a lizard figure on such an occasion has also been described by early-20<sup>th</sup>-century anthropologist Edgar Thurston:

“Sometimes a silver lizard is offered at temples, to counteract the evils which would result from a lizard falling on some unlucky part of the body, such as the kudumi (hair knot) of a female. The lizard, associated with the name of Siva, is regarded as sacred. It is never intentionally killed, and, if accidentally hurt or killed, an image of it in gold or silver is presented by high caste Hindus to a Siva temple.”<sup>76</sup>

The Varadarāja-temple in Kāñcīpuram in Tamil Nadu functions as a specialised institution, where touching a gold-coloured metal plate, which depicts a lizard with a sun and a moon with a small silver lizard, is said to have the power to remove the negative results of the contact with a house-lizard and even to grant *mokṣa*.<sup>77</sup> This, to my present knowledge,

<sup>75</sup> Rocher 1986: 278, Kane 1962: 792.

<sup>76</sup> Thurston 1912: 162.

<sup>77</sup> See: <https://www.astroved.com/articles/lizards-falling-on-the-head> (retrieved 27.11.2021); <https://astrolaabh.in/article/lizard-falling-body-parts/> (retrieved 27.11.2021).



is so far the only example where an omen has “evolved” from being a part of a larger category, in this case *śakuna* with directions as underlying concept, over *pallipatana*, where the body is used to discern future results to being depicted as an icon in a temple.

## 5. Conclusion

Omens are deeply rooted in the Indian tradition and as the medieval sources have shown, being present in rituals of kingship, religious initiation and science, they have permeated important areas of every-day life. Even today omens play a role in temple worship and it remains an ongoing task to document and analyse their relevance both in textual as well as in material sources. A closer look into the structure of ominous signs in Indian religious literature reveals how tightly they are connected with different modes of perceiving and organising the tangible world. A comparative and in-depth study can contribute to a further understanding of this important part of Indian religious culture. Functionality and connections with social structures, normative patterns attributed to deities, directions and every-day objects form a tightly knit network loading omens with meaning. Omens continue to operate as an integral part of astrology, complementing what is cyclic and calculable by providing an access to otherwise chaotic and unpredictable phenomena and making them meaningful. The combination of general rules and the wealth of specific information which is conveyed in the descriptions of omens allow us to get an idea how people in medieval India perceived and structured their environment. As the close environment is full of signs which have to be read and interpreted, nature itself becomes the equivalent of a text, by which human action can be judged and guided. More than being a means to allow the individual for a pleasant life, and to detect and avoid potential dangers, omens can function as active signifiers for negotiating human agency.

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# Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī and Svāmī Karapātrī: Two Competing Discourses on Icon Worship in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-Century India

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**Abstract:** *Mūrti pūjā*, or icon worship, is a widespread ritual practice in Hindu traditions. This article examines the intellectual debate on icon worship between the Ārya Samāja and Sanātānists emerging in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century India. Svāmī Dayānanda, the founder of the Ārya Samāja, believed that the Vedas – the only source of infallible truth – assert the existence of a single, formless God. Accordingly, he regarded icon worship as a “ridiculous” practice and its popularity as a sign of the decay of Hindu society. Svāmī Karapātrī, an influential 20<sup>th</sup>-century Indian scholar, disagreed with

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In this article, all the translations are mine unless otherwise stated. I considered the English translations of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* and of the *Satyārtha Prakāśa*, and checked them with the original. This also allowed me to look at how Svāmī Dayānanda’s works were later presented to a non-Sanskrit and non-Hindi speaking public. This was fruitful especially in the case of the *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*, where the English translation seems to slightly adjust some of Svāmī Dayānanda’s statements (see n. 24 below). I decided not to translate the Vedic mantras under scrutiny, as they come in the middle of a debate on their exegesis. I chose to adopt the translations of Kashyap and Whitney, so as not to fall under the exegetical influence of either Svāmī Dayānanda or Svāmī Karapātrī.

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Svāmī Dayānanda’s exegesis, and thus wrote the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (“The Night Jasmine of Vedic Meanings”), where he comments on and confutes the philosophical positions of the Ārya Samāja established in Dayānanda’s *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā* (“Introduction to the Commentary on the *Ṛg Veda*, etc.”). In this article, after introducing the characters of Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, there will follow an analysis of an excerpt from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, where Svāmī Karapātrī examines and discredits elements of Svāmī Dayānanda’s philosophical discourse on *mūrti pūjā*. This study contributes to contemporary scholarship on the colonial and post-colonial conflict between the Ārya Samāja and traditionalist groups.

**Keywords:** religious debate, Vedic exegesis, iconoclasm, Neo-Hinduism, traditionalism

## 1. Introduction

This article presents a case study of the long-standing debate between the Ārya Samāja and Sanātana Dharma<sup>2</sup> movements that originated in 19th-century colonial India. Already in the final decades of the 19th century, as a result of the Ārya Samāja reformist positions, traditionalist Hindu forces started organizing themselves into assemblies and associations, which were based on a plurality of regional caste-*sampradāya* nexuses, with the precise aim of defending their “orthodoxy” (Zavos 2001). The Ārya Samāja challenged the existence of these nexuses, questioning both the legitimacy of the caste system as a birth-based structure as well as the authoritativeness of epic and devotional (or *bhakti*) literature lying at the core of the *sampradāya* systems. In addition, one of the fundamental objectives of the Ārya Samāja campaign was the abolishment of *mūrti pūjā*, or icon worship, condemning the popularity of this practice as the sign of a decaying society.

Below is a presentation of some aspects of the intellectual debate revolving around icon worship as discussed by the traditionalist Svāmī Karapātrī, a highly influential figure in 20th-century India. Before turning to the debate on icon worship, an introduction to the life, ideologi-

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2 Sanātana Dharma is usually translated as “the eternal order”. For further details, see Tirtha (2016). For the historical implications of the usage of this term, see Halbfass (1990: 334–348).

cal orientations and programs of both Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī shall be presented.

Svāmī Karapātrī is the author of the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*, a treatise mainly dedicated to confuting Svāmī Dayānanda's positions as they are expressed in his *Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā*. Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes the philosophical justifications underlying Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion towards icon worship – for the Ārya Samāja, there is only one God, who is formless and never assumes any physical form whatsoever. For Svāmī Dayānanda, the Vedas are the only infallible source of every truth; therefore, everything contained in the four Saṃhitās is unquestionably the supreme law. Based on this premise, Svāmī Dayānanda argues that within the Vedas there are no injunctions to practice icon worship, but rather an explicit prohibition against it. Svāmī Karapātrī engages with Svāmī Dayānanda's controversial exegesis of the authoritative texts in an attempt to confute his positions. This debate provides a prime example of the intellectual tensions between reformists and traditionalists, which continue even today.

Some of the issues which arose between Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī are also debated in modern scholarship, for instance, whether or not icon worship was a practice also performed in Vedic times. The majority of scholars agree that in the Vedas there is no reference to *mūrti pūjā* as it is practiced in temples nowadays.<sup>3</sup> However, in the discourse between Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī, icon worship comes to signify simply the veneration of non-conscious entities, and the nuances implicit in this definition serve as the origin of the exegetical contrast between Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī. The present study does not intend to add data to the academic question regarding the presence of some form of *mūrti pūjā* in the Vedas. Instead, it intends to contribute to contemporary scholarship regarding the colonial and post-colonial era relationship and debates among the Ārya Samāja and traditionalist movements. In particular, this study has benefited from the works of John Nicol Farquhar, Wilhelm Halbfass, Kenneth Jones, Noel Salmond and John Zavos. This article also represents an attempt to broaden the academic understanding of the character of Svāmī Karapātrī in the context of 20th-century India; in this field, Gianni Pellegrini is a leading academic authority.

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3 For more details on the matter, see Banerjea (2016, chapters 2 and 3).



## 2. Svāmī Dayānanda and Svāmī Karapātrī

Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1824–1883),<sup>4</sup> widely known as having founded the cultural reformist movement Ārya Samāja (established in 1875), lived during the era of British domination of the subcontinent. He was born Mūla Śaṅkara in the town of Morvi located in the Kathiawar region of Gujarat. His father was Ambā Śaṅkara, a fervent devotee of Śiva, wealthy and eminent *brāhmaṇa*, landowner and money lender. Ambā Śaṅkara is portrayed as a rigid Śaiva *brāhmaṇa*, rigorous and inflexible, while Svāmī Dayānanda’s mother is depicted as a benevolent and sweet woman. Svāmī Dayānanda’s education was a traditional one; he was initiated with the sacred thread at the age of eight and, according to Lajpat Ray (1992), his early education was at the hands of his uncompromising father. Most hagiographies agree on the significant role that the inflexible Ambā Śaṅkara played in bringing about Svāmī Dayānanda’s uprising against the religious establishment.

According to the hagiographical accounts, one of Svāmī Dayānanda’s most important life events took place during the celebrations of Śivarātri. Following the common custom, Ambā Śaṅkara invited his son to keep the customary fast of Śivarātri and accompany him to the temple for the night celebrations, where devotees gathered around the icon of the god Śiva, spending the night making offerings and praying to the *śivaliṅga*. On this occasion, however, after many hours, all the devotees fell asleep, including Ambā Śaṅkara, and Svāmī Dayānanda was the only one who remained watchful. It was then, in the dead of the night, that he saw a mouse approaching the *śivaliṅga* and eating some of the food offerings. Svāmī Dayānanda was struck by this image: how could the almighty god Śiva let a little mouse approach him and steal his food? He could not believe that a piece of stone was the almighty god.

I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an Omnipotent, living God, with this idol, which allows the mice to run over its body, and thus suffers its image to be polluted without the slightest protest. (*SP*, Prasad 1981: 2)

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4 The biographical details are drawn from the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* and Farquhar (1915), Salmond (2006) and Lajpat Rai (1967).

Svāmī Dayānanda woke his father up, asking him how that icon could be the almighty God. His father was riled by this question and said that the icon was just a symbol through which they could venerate Śiva. During the *kali yuga*, he said, men could not directly perceive Śiva and the worship of the *śivaliṅga* was the only way to please God. Svāmī Dayānanda was not satisfied with his father's answer and asked permission to go home. There, despite his father's admonition to keep fasting, his mother fed him abundantly; the following morning he was severely scolded by his father for his conduct. It is said that from this moment on, Svāmī Dayānanda lost faith in his father as well as the strict orthodoxy he represented. This episode has been put forward as the beginning of Svāmī Dayānanda's aversion towards *mūrti pūjā*.

None could have foreseen that Dayanand's father's piously intended insistence upon his son's earning religious merit at the tender age of fourteen by observing the fast of Shivaratri, was to result in such a tremendous change in the mind of Dayanand turning him into the most virulent and successful opponent of image-worship of his times. (Rai 1992: 9)

According to Farquhar (1998: 104), it is difficult to believe in the authenticity of this story. Namely, that a 14-year-old boy could so spontaneously and vehemently challenge the well-established practice of icon worship. He argues that Svāmī Dayānanda was probably under the influence of the Sthānakavāsīs, a group of Jains who, breaking with the main Śvetāmbara sect in the 15th century, had given up icon worship; Svāmī Dayānanda's birthplace was under the direct influence of this religious group. The group was quite prominent at the time – the political establishment of Morvi being closely connected with the Jain sect. For Farquhar, it is not surprising that the young Mūla Śaṅkara may have been exposed to the Sthānakavāsīs iconoclast positions, and eventually elaborated on his aversion towards icon worship.

In 1846, Svāmī Dayānanda left the family home and started wandering in search of a teacher. He was initiated into the monastic order of the Daśanāmīs, allegedly by a guru known as Paramānanda, who gave him the name Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī. At a later date, Svāmī Dayānanda lost faith in the teachings of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, thus giving up the doctrine of identity between *brahman* and *ātman*. During his

wanderings, Svāmī Dayānanda not only came into contact with several Christian missionaries, but even engaged in many conversations with them (Farquhar 1998: 108). Around this time, probably influenced by his frequent meetings with the Christian missionaries, the founder of the Ārya Samāja came to believe in a personal god who is different from one's own self and also existent in the reality of the world, thus abandoning the Vedāntic notion that the world is an illusion of *māyā*.

In 1860, Svāmī Dayānanda finally met his master, Virajānanda, in Mathurā. Virajānanda taught him that all modern religious works were “worthless lies” (Farquhar 1998: 106) and that only the ancient treatises were truly authoritative and legitimate. It was Virajānanda who entrusted his disciple with the task to teach the Vedas, which “have long ceased to be taught in Bhāratvarsha” (Singh 1903: 77). In 1868, Svāmī Dayānanda started to promote his ideas publicly, engaging in public debates, publishing books and traveling from town to town delivering speeches. In 1872, he met the leader of the Brahma Samāja, Keśaba Chandra Sen; in 1874, he completed his *opus magnum*, the *Satyārtha Prakāśa* (*SP*) (“The Light of Truth”); and, in 1875, he founded the cultural reformist movement Ārya Samāja in Mumbai. Soon after, the headquarters of the movement moved to Lahore. Svāmī Dayānanda spent his last years working to expand his movement throughout North India. In 1883, he passed away at the age of 59.

Svāmī Dayānanda lived at a time of great distress in India. According to Halbfass, the British domination in India was not just a case of foreign domination, but rather “an encounter between tradition and modernity, i.e., an exposure to new forms of organization, to rationalization, technology, and a comprehensive objectification of the world” (Halbfass 1988: 217).

Paul Hacker identified the emergence of two opposing attitudes, which he called “Neo-Hinduism” and “surviving traditional Hinduism” (Hacker 1978). It is especially in 19th- and 20th-century India that these two attitudes manifest themselves into Neo-Hindu and traditionalist or Sanātana Dharma movements. These terms, however, do not imply homogeneous movements. Neo-Hindu groups, like Svāmī Dayānanda's Ārya Samāja and the Brahma Samāja, were not at all identical in terms of aims and programs. For instance, Svāmī Dayānanda strongly condemned Rammohan Roy for his xenophilia and how it influenced the

Brahmo Samāja social programs. Nonetheless, Neo-Hindu movements shared a tendency to reinterpret Hindu textual traditions in the light of Western influences.

Neo-Hinduism invokes the tradition, tries to return to it, and hopes to find in it the power and context for its response to the West. [...] More important than the fact that foreign elements have been added to the tradition is that basic concepts and principles of this tradition have been reinterpreted and provided with new meanings as a result of the encounter with the West. (Halbfass 1988: 220)

Similarly, traditionalist groups were far from being a united entity, yet they maintained “a certain unbroken continuity with the tradition” (Halbfass 1988: 220), particularly with the textual traditions as well as certain features of the establishment, including *mūrti pūjā*. In fact, while *mūrti pūjā* was accepted by most traditionalist movements, it was highly criticized by Neo-Hindu organizations like the Brahmo Samāja and Ārya Samāja.

While these categories are effective in framing the intellectual conflict which started in 19th-century India between the Ārya Samājīs and the Sanātana Dharmīs, Paul Hacker argues that these divisions were not mutually exclusive and that it was possible to find organizations as well as individuals who shared both Neo-Hindu and traditionalist characteristics.

The founder of the Ārya Samāja aimed to factually reinterpret Hindu religious traditions, and therefore commence a “vertical restructuring” (see Zavos 2001: 117) of the present Hindu establishment. Svāmī Dayānanda maintained the infallibility of the Vedas and that they are the source of every truth. In his opinion, Hindus had long forgotten the true meaning of the sacred hymns and, consequently, were living in a manner that did not correspond to Vedic principles. He believed that the Vedas portrayed a mythical past when Hindus, or – as he called them – the “Vedics”, were at the peak of their spiritual power and technological development. During this “golden era”, Hindus lived according to the true precepts of the Vedas, which made them capable of ruling the entire world. Svāmī Dayānanda’s goal was to retrieve the true precepts of the Vedas for his countrymen, thus restoring the Vedic “way of living”.

This would allow for a return to that ancient splendor, when Indians were not subjugated by a colonial power. Svāmī Dayānanda’s interpretation of the four Saṃhitās implied that the present religious and social establishment had to drastically change in order to realize this ambition. First, it was necessary to abolish the caste system as a birth-based structure and establish a merit-based caste system in its place. The annulment of the hereditary principle aimed to overcome people’s inertia, thus avoiding the economic and social consequences of a lazy and static society. Second, while Svāmī Dayānanda regarded the Vedas and a few other texts (such as the *Manusmṛti* and Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī*) as authoritative, he despised epic and devotional literature as being unreliable and the mere product of a decaying society that believed in the existence of many gods. In the eyes of Svāmī Dayānanda, *mūrti pūjā* was a superstitious practice, and its popularity among the Hindus the sign of a perishing society. Svāmī Dayānanda vehemently opposed this custom, believing that devotion to one god or another was the greatest obstacle for a united Hindu society. Svāmī Dayānanda’s reformist program was abhorred by those traditionalists who wished to maintain an unaltered establishment. As a result, when the ideas of Svāmī Dayānanda started circulating throughout the subcontinent, traditionalist forces felt the urge to respond.

The Aryas [...] had achieved an increasingly separate identity from the orthodox and traditional world around them. Their defense of this new lifestyle and aggressive condemnation of the old created an institutionalized opposition. (Jones 1976: 108)

Opposition by the upholders of *Sanātana Dharma* manifested itself in the formation of associations (*sabhās*), the organization of public debates and lectures, as well as the publication of books and journals. For instance, already as a result of Svāmī Dayānanda’s arrival in Lahore in 1877, traditionalist forces established a Sanātana Dharma Sabhā to oppose the spread of the Ārya Samāja (Jordens 1978: 166). The Bhārata Dharma Mahā Maṇḍala was a prominent organization founded in 1887 by Paṇḍita Dina Dayāla Śarmā, with the aim of working in the defense of “orthodoxy”.<sup>5</sup> Many of the debates between the Ārya Samājīs and the

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5 According to Zavos (2001), the Hindu world lacks a united center that supervises an “orthodoxy”, like that of the Pope for the Christians. Instead, in India,

Sanātānists revolved around *mūrti pūjā*, the extent of the Hindu canon and the caste system. In particular, Paṇḍita Śarmā fought vehemently against the iconoclasm of the Ārya Samāja, teaching “the people to retain their idols and live in orthodox fashion” (Farquhar 1998: 316).<sup>6</sup> In the late 1880s, the Sanātānists – despite not being a united front – began a prolific literary output directed towards the defense of their own orthodoxy. According to Jones, “the teaching, as well as the personality, of Swami Dayanand remained for Sanatanists a prime target of criticism” (Jones 1976: 111).

When Svāmī Karapātrī entered the debate (about 50 years after Svāmī Dayānanda’s activity), the ideological conflict between the Ārya Samājīs and Sanātana Dharmīs was still very much alive. Svāmī Hariharānanda Sarasvatī (1907–1982), also known as Svāmī Karapātrī, was born Haranārāyaṇa Ojhā in a *brāhmaṇa* family<sup>7</sup> (about 25 years after Svāmī Dayānanda’s death) in the village of Bhatni (Pratapgarh district, Uttar Pradesh). He started studying Sanskrit at a very early age; he first attended the local elementary school and then continued studying with Paṇḍita Nāgeśa Miśra in the Karpuri village. It is said that Svāmī Karapātrī was forced into marriage and, after the many attempts to escape the union, reached a compromise with his father, giving his word that he would not leave home until he had fathered a child. When the 17-year-old became the father of a baby girl, he left home to Prayag Raj, where he met his guru, Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, the future Śāṅkarācārya of the Jyotiṣapīṭha.

Svāmī Karapātrī then attended the Sāṅgveda, a prestigious school of Vedic studies in Narvar, where he studied Sanskrit grammar, Vedānta and other *darśanas* under the supervision of Svāmī Viśveśvarāśrama.

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there are local institutions based on a nexus of caste and *saṃpradāya*, forming several regional “frameworks of orthodoxy”. I add that the four *maṭhas* of the Śāṅkarācāryas stand as macroregional centers of “orthodoxy”, which supposedly supervise the quarters of the subcontinent.

- 6 During this time, even though they were not connected with one another, several Sanātānist organizations emerged all over India with the aim of defending “orthodoxy” (see Farquhar 1998: 316).
- 7 The following biographical notions are drawn from the volume edited by G. Pellegrini (2009), particularly from Marchetto (2009), as well as fieldwork notes collected in 2020 in Varanasi.

Subsequently, he left for the mountainous regions of Uttarakhand, where he lived as an ascetic for three years. This is where he started being called by the name of Karapātrī, meaning “one who uses their hands (*kara*) as a bowl (*pātra*)” – as he used to collect alms directly in his closed hands, in the gesture of a bowl, and eat from them. In 1931, returning from his ascesis, Svāmī Karapātrī came back to Narvar, where he completed his study of the six *darśanas*. He then moved to Varanasi, where Svāmī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī initiated him into the *daṇḍa samnyāsa* and gave him the name of Svāmī Hariharānanda Sarasvatī; yet, he became mainly known by the name of Svāmī Karapātrī.

Svāmī Karapātrī was a highly influential character of 20th-century India. He was a religious and social leader – a freedom fighter, actively working against British rule in India and, later on, a strong supporter of an “Undivided India” (*akhaṇḍa bhārata*). It appears that one of Svāmī Karapātrī’s main life goals was that of defending the religious tradition from the innovations of and attacks by Neo-Hindu groups, right-wing associations and groups (e.g., the *Rāṣṭrīya Svayamsevaka Saṅgha* and the *Viśva Hindū Pariṣada*), Christian missionaries and Marxists. Precisely because of his propensity to “preserve” the present religious and social establishment and actively work in the name of conserving *Sanātana Dharma*, he was given the title of *dharmasamrāṭa* (the emperor of *dharma*) by the monastic community in Varanasi.

Between 1935 and 1940, Svāmī Karapātrī founded two magazines: the monthly *Sanmārga* and the weekly *Siddhānta*, which became fundamental tools for spreading his teachings. Svāmī Karapātrī would organize *śāstrārthas* (symposiums or debates) on religious topics and relevant issues of Indian society. On several occasions, he also invited Ārya Samājīs to discuss different topics, such as that of *mūrti pūjā*. In 1940, he founded the cultural association *Dharmasamgha*, which also aimed to combat the spread of its adversaries, including the Ārya Samāja. Svāmī Karapātrī established several branches of the *Dharma Śikṣā Maṇḍala*, a school designed after the *guruśiṣyaparamparā* model. In 1948, he founded the *Rāma Rājya Pariṣada*, a political party that even won a few seats in the *Loka Sabhā* as well as the *Vidhāna Sabhās* (regional assemblies) of North India. To disseminate his ideas, he traveled all over India; he engaged in the revitalization of Vedic sacrifices that had been forgotten, probably with the further aim to obstruct the spread of the Ārya Samāja’s *havan*, a special



type of offering made into fire.<sup>8</sup> Svāmī Karapātrī was a prolific author of both religious and socio-political works. In 1982, Svāmī Karapātrī passed away in Varanasi at the age of 75.

### 3. *Vedārtha Pārijāta*: the intellectual arena of Svāmī Karapātrī

Svāmī Karapātrī wrote two major works refuting the positions of the Ārya Samāja: the *Vedasvarūpavimarśa* (“Considerations on the Nature of the Vedas”); and the *Vedārtha Pārijāta* (*VP*; “The Night Jasmine of Vedic Meanings”),<sup>9</sup> the latter being the primary textual source of this article. The *VP* is a Sanskrit work of two volumes, whose main portions consist of a complete analysis of Dayānanda Sarasvatī’s *Ṛgvedādibhāṣya-bhūmikā* (*RVBB*; “Introduction to the Commentary to the *Ṛg Veda*, etc.”). The *VP* was published in 1979, edited by Paṭṭābhirāmaśāstrī Vidyāsāgara, Mārkaṇḍeya Brahmācārī and Mīmāṃsācārya Gajānanaśāstrī Musalagāṃvakara, with a Hindi commentary by Vrajavallabhadvivedī Darśanācārya and published by the Śrī Rāghākr̥ṣṇa Dhānukā Prakāśana Saṃsthāna in Kolkata. While I am not aware of any earlier publications of the *VP*, as a whole or as separate issues, since Svāmī Karapātrī was the founder of two journals (the *Siddhānta* and the *Sanmārga*, the mouthpieces of his religious and social visions), it would not be surprising to find fragments of the *VP* published in these magazines. The first publication of the *RVBB* is dated around 1876–1877, and it is likely that Svāmī Karapātrī already expressed his opinion on Svāmī Dayānanda’s work in his magazines, which represented a much faster and far-reaching tool than the *VP*, though not being as in-depth and exhaustive.<sup>10</sup>

The *RVBB* was not initially published in one single volume, but appeared in 16 separate issues. The first volume was published in 1876 by

8 The Ārya Samāja *havan* differs from the Vedic *yajña*. In the *havan*, the oblations poured into the fire are not offered to the gods, but they are only for the sake of purifying the air. The mantras pronounced along with the offerings are only for exercise.

9 For indications on the symbolism of night jasmine (*pārijāta*), see Pellegrini 2016.

10 Due to the limited availability of the entire collection of *Siddhānta* and *Sanmārga*, I have been unable to thoroughly research journal articles providing a critique of Svāmī Dayānanda’s understanding of icon worship.



the Lajras Press in Varanasi, while the last two issues were published in 1877 by the Nirṇaya Sāgara Press in Mumbai. The *RVBB* was meant to be an introduction to a commentary on the Vedas that Svāmī Dayānanda wanted to compose. Unfortunately, he died before he could complete this work; nonetheless, the *RVBB* stands as a precious testimony of Svāmī Dayānanda’s philosophy. The *VP* of Svāmī Karapātrī was also conceived of as an introduction to a commentary on the Vedas that he likely composed as a response to Svāmī Dayānanda. Sadly, he also passed away before completing his work.

It is significant that Svāmī Karapātrī, before starting his project to produce a commentary on the Vedas, decided to write an exhaustive introduction where his task was to confute, word by word, Svāmī Dayānanda’s introduction to the four Saṃhitās. In fact, in the *VP*, Svāmī Karapātrī analyzes the *RVBB* almost *verbatim*, so as to completely undermine the credibility of Svāmī Dayānanda’s reading of the Vedas. In order to accomplish his task, Svāmī Karapātrī made the highly traditional choice of utilizing the Mīmāṃsā *darśana* for his argumentations. As Halbfass argues, the Mīmāṃsā is “a system whose apologetic motivation is straightforward and which, as a whole, represents an attempt to develop a comprehensive explanation and defense of the Vedic dharma” (Halbfass 1991: 367). The choice to adopt the Mīmāṃsā school of thought for the analysis of Svāmī Dayānanda’s positions clearly reveals Svāmī Karapātrī’s intent to defend and preserve the Vedas from the exegesis by the Ārya Samāja. For the most part, the *VP* is built around the same structure as the *RVBB*. In particular, Svāmī Karapātrī adopts the chapter structure of the *RVBB* in order to specifically quote the content and accurately analyze it in an ordered manner. Accordingly, Svāmī Dayānanda’s chapters on “The Falsity of *Mūrti Pūjā* and *Nāma Smaraṇa*” (*mūrtipūjānāmasmaraṇayor mithyātvam*) and “The Falsity of the Worship of the Planets” (*grahapūjāyā mithyātvam*) are systematized in Svāmī Karapātrī’s “Consideration on *Mūrti Pūjā*” (*mūrtipūjāsamarthanam*).

In the *VP*, while commenting upon his opponent’s reflections, Svāmī Karapātrī always seems to reach one of the following three conclusions: (1) Svāmī Dayānanda’s statements are false because they clearly contradict the Vedas and their auxiliary texts; (2) Svāmī Dayānanda’s statements are false because they are self-contradictory; or (3) Svāmī Dayānanda’s interpretations are false because they resemble the reason-

ing of a child. Below is an example of how Svāmī Karapātrī comes to the conclusion that Svāmī Dayānanda's positions on *mūrti pūjā* cannot be taken into consideration because they are both against the śruti and self-contradictory.

#### 4. The worship of the non-conscious (*acetana*): excerpts from the *Vedārtha Pārijāta*

Svāmī Dayānanda did not believe in the existence of many gods, but rather in a single godhead, whom he called Īśvara. For Svāmī Dayānanda, God is not to be worshipped by means of icons and images, but only spiritually, through prayers and singing. The study of the Vedas, good conduct and the performance of *havan* were also regarded as modes of worship. Svāmī Dayānanda's God is *nirguṇa* (i.e., devoid of the properties of matter, such as touch, smell, etc.) and also devoid of negative qualities, such as ignorance. At the same time, he is also *saguṇa* (i.e., endowed with positive qualities like knowledge and being almighty).<sup>11</sup> In the *SP*, Svāmī Dayānanda explains that God is always formless (*nirākara*):

Q: Is god corporeal or incorporeal?

A: Incorporeal; for had He been corporeal, He could not have been all-pervading, and absence of omnipresence in Him would have made the ascription of omniscience and other attributes inconsistent. For, a limited object has limited qualities, nature and action. Also, such a limited being cannot be free from heat and cold, hunger and thirst, disease, evil, mortification, separation, and other kinds of sufferings. These considerations lead us to the only conclusion that God is immaterial or formless. (*SP*, Prasad 1981: 211)

It appears that Svāmī Dayānanda's main argument against icon worship is that "God is always immaterial or formless"; consequently, the

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11 This interpretation of *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* as the "absence of negative qualities" and the "presence of positive qualities" applied to a divine entity resembles that of Rāmānuja. It strongly differs from Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's explanation of *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* as "devoid of qualities" and "endowed with qualities". This is another example of Svāmī Dayānanda's rejection of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's doctrine (the same doctrine he was instructed in when he took renunciation).

reverence of *mūrtis* is equivalent to the adoration of non-conscious objects (*acetana*), a practice that Svāmī Dayānanda condemns as superstitious. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī does not engage with the actual contents of Svāmī Dayānanda’s arguments, but rather confines himself to proving that Svāmī Dayānanda’s method of reasoning is factually wrong and self-contradictory.

We will now examine a few aspects of the discourse on *mūrti pūjā* as they are presented in the *RVBB*, and then commented upon in the *VP*. The discourse begins with the question of the presence or absence of injunctions to (*vidhi*) and prohibitions against (*niṣedha*)<sup>12</sup> icon worship within the Vedas. Svāmī Dayānanda argues that there are no Vedic injunctions to perform *mūrti pūjā*, but rather explicit prohibitions against it. Contrarily, Svāmī Karapātrī responds that there are no restrictions towards performing icon worship (referred as the worship of *pratimā*),<sup>13</sup> but rather exhortations to it. Moreover, Svāmī Karapātrī intends to prove that Svāmī Dayānanda’s position is fundamentally self-contradictory, and that Svāmī Dayānanda himself inadvertently enjoins the worship of the non-conscious (*acetana*). In his *RVBB*, Svāmī Dayānanda introduces a section titled, “The Falsity of *Mūrti Pūjā* and *Nāma Smaraṇa*”,<sup>14</sup> which reads, in part:

What is said in treatises as the Tantras, Purāṇas, etc., regarding *nāma smaraṇa* and icon worship, etc., is false, because there is no injunction (*vidhāna*) to these [practices] in the truthful treatises, like the Vedas, etc.<sup>15</sup>

12 The Vedas consist of five parts: injunction (*vidhi*), sacrificial formula (*mantra*), name (*nāmadheya*), prohibition (*niṣedha*) and explanatory passage (*arthavāda*). *Vidhi* is the most important as it enjoins the acts directly, while *niṣedha* are the prohibitory sentences turning people away from actions (see *AS*, the introduction by Gajendragadkar and Karmarkar (2016): xxvii–xxix).

13 According to Banerjea (2016: 36–57), since a relatively early date, the word *pratimā* referred to symbolic representations of divinities which were not associated with particular cults. Later, *pratimā* came to signify *arccā*, as the objects of regular worship (Banerjea 2016 [1941]: 39).

14 *mūrtipūjānāmasmaraṇayor mithyātvam* |.

15 *yac ca* – “*tantrapurāṇādigranthoktasya nāmasmaraṇasya mūrtipūjādīnām ca mithyātvam, vedādisatyagrānthe tasya vidhānābhāvāt* | (*VP*, p. 1616 and *RVBB*, p. 348).

Svāmī Karapātrī reports Svāmī Dayānanda's position only with the intention of contradicting it:

What is said here is vain, due to an improper understanding of the *śāstras*. This is because injunctions (*vidhāna*) to *mūrti pūjā* are seen in these and other Vedic statements: “Hey come! Stay in the stone. May your body be the stone”, [RV 2.13.4] “the desire of mentally speaking the name [of Viṣṇu]” [RV 1.156.3].<sup>16</sup>

While dismissing the argument that in the Vedas there are no injunctions to *mūrti pūjā* and *nāma smaraṇa* (the remembrance of the name of the gods) by simply quoting a few instances from the śruti, Svāmī Karapātrī focuses on the Vedic mantra used by Svāmī Dayānanda as proof of the prohibition against icon worship. Particularly, Svāmī Dayānanda takes the expression “*na tasya pratimā asti*” to be an interdiction against *mūrti pūjā*,<sup>17</sup> thus ultimately understanding *pratimā* in its later sense of “object of worship”. In his *RVBB*, Svāmī Dayānanda quotes from the *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* of the *Śukla Yajurveda* (ŚYV 32.3) and subsequently comments upon it.

There is none to compare with him. His name itself is great glory, Hiraṇyagarbha. “May he not destroy us.” “No one other than thee.” (ŚYV 32.3). (Kashyap 2012: 229)

God is all perfect, unborn and formless. The muttering of his name is to obey his will. Which brings great glory (and enables us) to perform the righteous deed and to speak truth. He is the birthplace, i.e., source of all luminaries, the sun &c. Before him all men pray, “May He not harm us”. He never assumes a

16 *ity uktam, tad api tuccham, śāstrānabodhāt | “ehy aśmānam ātiṣṭha aśmā bhavatu te tanuḥ”* “[viṣṇor] nāmacidvivaktana” *ity ādivaidikavākyeṣu mūrtipūjādividhāna-darśanāt* | (VP, p. 1616).

17 *tatra tu pratyuta niṣedho varīvartate | tad yathā – “na tasya pratimā asti yasya nāma madyaśaḥ | hiraṇyagarbha ity eṣa mā mā hiṃsīty eṣā yasmān na jāta ity eṣaḥ”* (yaj. 32.3) (RVBB, p. 348). The explanation of “*na tasya pratimā asti*” as a prohibitive statement against *mūrti pūjā* is perhaps one of Svāmī Dayānanda's strongest arguments. Even now, among the adepts of the Ārya Samāja, to quote this mantra is the fundamental argument for rejecting icon worship. In 2019, during a visit to the Pāṇini Kanyā Mahāvidyālaya in Varanasi, the young students of the school stated that they did not believe in *mūrti pūjā* since in the Vedas it is clearly stated that “*na tasya pratimā asti*”, i.e., there is no image of Him.

corporeal form because He is not born from any cause. He has no *pratimā*, i.e., representative, image, measure, weight, size or counterpart, because He is incomparable, figureless, unmeasurable, formless and all-pervading.<sup>18</sup>

After having made clear that Svāmī Dayānanda considers ŚYV 32.3 a direct prohibition against icon worship, Svāmī Karapātrī questions his rival’s consistency when, just a few lines after his explanation, Svāmī Dayānanda affirms that *pratimā* does not have the meaning of “icon”.

Question: In the Vedas, is there the word *pratimā*, or not?

Answer: There is.

Question: Then what is the reason for the prohibition [against *mūrti pūjā*]?  
*mūrti pūjā*]

Answer: It is not that icons (*mūrti*) are meant by the term *pratimā*.

[Question:] What then?

[Answer:] The [word *pratimā*] is meant as having the meaning of “measure” (*parimāṇa*).<sup>19</sup>

Svāmī Karapātrī accuses Svāmī Dayānanda of being inconsistent when he is giving two different meanings to the word *pratimā*: that of *mūrti* when it comes to interpreting a prohibition against icon worship; and that of *parimāṇa* (or “measure”) in the other Vedic passages.

[However,] this [assertion that *pratimā* does not mean *mūrti*] is clearly against [Svāmī Dayānanda’s] own words. [Here, for Svāmī Dayānanda,] the understanding of *mūrti* from the word *pratimā* is not possible, yet *parimāṇa* is understood. Then, how is it not self-contradictory to understand “*mūrti*” from the word *pratimā* in this mantra: *na tasya pratimā asti?* (ŚYV 32.3).<sup>20</sup>

18 Svāmī Dayānanda’s explanation of ŚYV 32.3 is not reported by Svāmī Karapātrī in the *VP*, but is clearly taken for granted. This translation is drawn from Parmanand’s translation of the *RVBB* (1981: 385).

19 *praśnaḥ – vedeṣu pratimāśabdo ’sti na vā? uttaram – asti | pra. – punaḥ kimartho niṣedhaḥ? u. – naiva pratimārthena mūrtayo grhyante | kiṃ tarhi? parimāṇārthā grhyante | (VP, p. 1616 and RVBB, p. 349).*

20 *iti svoktivistirodhasya spaṣṭam udiyamānatvāt | pratimāpādena mūrtigrahaṇam na sambhavati, parimāṇam tu bodhyata ity asyaivārthasyāsmād vākyāt pratīyamāna-*

Svāmī Karapātrī, therefore, concludes that “*na tasya pratimā asti*” cannot stand as a prohibition against icon worship.

Since there is no perception of statements prohibiting icon worship, the prohibition of icon worship is indeed not founded on authority.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, in order to reinforce his opinion that, in the Vedas, the word *pratimā* means *parimāṇa* or “measure”, Svāmī Dayānanda quotes and analyzes a mantra from the *Atharva Veda* (AV 3.10.3). Here, Svāmī Karapātrī points out, Svāmī Dayānanda is inadvertently prescribing some sort of *mūrti pūjā*.

Thou, O night, whom we worship as model (*pratimā*) of the year<sup>22</sup> – do thou unite our long-lived progeny with abundance of wealth.<sup>23</sup> (AV 3.10.3, Whitney 1905: 100)

The intelligent one worships [the night] as the measure (*parimāṇa*), *yām pratimām*, of the full year, *saṃvatsara*. We also

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*tvāt | ato “na tasya pratimā asti” (vā. saṃ. 32.3) iti mantre pratimāśabdena mūrti-grahaṇam kurvānasya tasya katham na svoktivilrodhaḥ? (VP, p. 1616).*

21 *mūrtipūjāniṣedhakavākyānupalambhāc ca mūrtipūjāniṣedho ‘prāmāṇika eva | (VP, p. 1616).*

22 The nights are the digits of the full year, representing Prajāpati. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (BU) 1.5.14, we read: *sa eṣa saṃvatsaraḥ prajāpatiḥ ṣoḍaśakalaḥ, tasya rātraya eva pañcadaśa kalāḥ, dhruvaivāsya ṣoḍaśi kalā; sa rātribhir evā ca pūryate ‘pa ca kṣīyate; so ‘māvāsyaṃ rātrim etayā ṣoḍasyā kalayā sarvam idaṃ prānabhṛd anupraviśya tataḥ prātar jāyate; tasmād etaṃ rātrim prānabhṛtaḥ prānaṃ na vicchindyāt, api kṛkalāsasya, etasyā eva devatāyā apacityai.* “This Prajāpati (Hiraṇyagarbha) has 16 digits and is represented by the year. The nights (and days) are his fifteen digits, and the constant one is his sixteenth digit. He (as the moon) is filled as well as wasted by the nights (and days). Through this sixteenth digit he permeates all these living beings on the new-moon night and rises the next morning. Therefore, on this night one should not take the life of living beings, not even of a chameleon, the adoration of this deity alone.” (BU, Mādhavānanda 1950).

23 *saṃvatsarasya pratimām yām tvā rātry upāsmāhe | sā na āyuṣmatīm prajāṃ rāyas poṣeṇa saṃ sṛja || (atharva. 3.10.3) (VP, p. 1616 and RVBB, p. 349).*

shall worship you as that (the night as the *pratimā*, *parimāṇa* of the full year).<sup>24</sup>

Svāmī Karapātrī here, for the sake of his argument, recalls that Ārya Samājīs do not perform icon worship because they believe it to be the veneration of “non-conscious beings” (*acetana*).<sup>25</sup> In this case, Svāmī Dayānanda’s explanation of AV 3.10.3 becomes problematic, as it resembles a prompting to the worship of the non-conscious (*acetana*). In fact, if one maintains that *mūrti pūjā* is a “wrong practice” mainly because it corresponds to the worship of the non-conscious, by urging the veneration of “the night” as “the measure” of the full year, Svāmī Dayānanda is caught approving of this “wrong practice”. “The night” here is a “measure” (*parimāṇa*) of the full year (*saṃvatsara*), the measure is a quality (*guṇa*), and the quality is a non-conscious entity. In his *SP*, Svāmī Dayānanda (*SP*, Prasad 1981: 113) reports from the Vaiśeṣikasūtra (*VS* 1.1.4) “the six categories of existence”: *dravya*, *guṇa*, *karman*, *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya*. It is through these “six categories of existence” that reality, *dravya* or substance, is manifested. The *guṇa*, one of these categories of manifestation, is of 24 types, among which, together with form (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), smell (*gandha*), touch (*sparsā*) and number (*saṃkhyā*), we also find measure (*parimāṇa*). In the *SP* (*SP*, Prasad 1981: 115), Svāmī Dayānanda writes that *parimāṇa* is “what shows weight, as light, heavy”. Therefore, even according to Svāmī Dayānanda, the measure, or *parimāṇa*, is one of the qualities inherent to *dravya*, which is indeed a non-conscious being. Consequently, *parimāṇa* itself, which is here “the night” that is “the measure” of “the full year” (*saṃvatsara*), is a non-conscious entity; and it would be absurd to conceive that a quality inherent in an insentient being is, in fact, sentient. Svāmī Karapātrī thus comments:

24 *vidvāṃsaḥ saṃvatsarasya yāṃ pratimāṃ parimāṇam upāsate vayam api tvā tām evopāsmāhe* | (*VP*, p. 1616 and *RVBB*, p. 349). The English translation of this verse by Parmanand (Sarasvatī, Parmanand 1981: 387) is as follows, “The learned hold (the night) as the measure (pratimā) of the year. May we also accept the night as such.” I believe that *upāsmāhe* is better translated as “worship”, and that this choice of the translator might have been a later attempt of “protecting” the consistency of Svāmī Dayānanda’s argument.

25 *ayaṃ abhiprāyaḥ – mūrtipūjācetanatvād eva mūrtenāṅgīkriyate sāmājikaiḥ* | (*VP*, p. 1616).

[...] in this mantra, the worship of the measure (or *pratimā*, that is the night) is accepted. But this is [the same] as worshipping the non-conscious (*acetana*), since everyone agrees that a quality (*guṇa*) in the form of a measure (*parimāṇa*) is a non-conscious entity.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, a full year (*saṃvatsara*) is only a specific time (*kālavīṣeṣa*) measured in one year. The measure (*parimāṇa*) is only a special quality (*guṇavīṣeṣa*) located in that (*saṃvatsara*). Both – *kālavīṣeṣa* (the specific time that is *saṃvatsara*, the full year) and *guṇavīṣeṣa* (the specific measure that is the night) – are non-conscious.<sup>27</sup>

After having demonstrated that the worship of the night as the measure of the full year is like the veneration of a non-conscious being, Svāmī Karapātrī expresses the doubt that Svāmī Dayānanda might have referred to the existence of a tutelary deity presiding over the time period as the real recipient of the worship. However, Svāmī Karapātrī concludes, this would also go against Svāmī Dayānanda's firm point that there are no divine entities in this world, apart from the formless Īśvara.

If it was accepted that some consciousness was presiding over the time of one full year (*saṃvatsara*), and that it had to be worshipped as a deity, then this alone would be a statement in contradiction with your own teachings.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, Svāmī Karapātrī wished to invalidate one of the fundamental arguments put forward by Svāmī Dayānanda against the institution of *mūrti pūjā*. Here, Svāmī Karapātrī wishes to prove that the iconoclast Svāmī Dayānanda himself is inadvertently enjoining the worship of the non-conscious when commenting on AV 3.10.3: is Svāmī Dayānanda enjoining the worship of the full year (*kālavīṣeṣa*), or is Svāmī Dayānanda

26 *param asmin mantre saṃvatsarasya pratimopāsanam aṅgīkṛtam | idam apy acetanāyaivopāsanam | parimāṇarūpasya guṇasya sarvair apy acetanatvāṅgīkārāt |* (VP, p. 1616–1617).

27 *saṃvatsaro 'pi varṣaparimitaḥ kālavīṣeṣa eva | tanniṣṭho guṇavīṣeṣa eva parimāṇam | ubhāv apy acetanāv eva |* (VP, p. 1617).

28 *yadi saṃvatsarakālādhiṣṭhātrī kācic cetanā devatopāsyatvenāṅgīkriyate, tadā tavāpasiddhānta eva syāt |* (VP, p. 1617).



enjoining the worship of the night as the quality (*guṇaviśeṣa*) located within the full year? Both these possibilities are problematic, since they are, in fact, a veneration of the non-conscious, which goes against Svāmī Dayānanda’s fundamental principles. Is Svāmī Dayānanda enjoining the worship of a tutelary deity residing within the full year? This would also be self-contradictory, as Svāmī Dayānanda clearly states that there are no gods, but only one: Īśvara.

## 5. Conclusions

In his preface to the translation of the *RVBB*, even Parmanand observes that Svāmī Dayānanda has often deliberately interpreted several Vedic mantras without referring to the traditional readings, thus generating new meanings and conclusions. However, Svāmī Dayānanda never suggested that he was producing new meanings of the Vedas, but rather that he was the one retrieving their true purport. Here, the scholarly debate revolves around one’s ability to prove their adherence to the ancient authoritative texts (*pramāṇa*) as well as the consistency of their own statements. In the *VP*, Svāmī Karapātrī aims at undermining both Svāmī Dayānanda’s adherence and consistency; consequently, invalidating the credibility of his discourse. First of all, in response to Svāmī Dayānanda’s argument that there are no injunctions to *mūrti pūjā* and *nāma smaraṇa* in the Vedas, but rather a prohibition against them, Svāmī Karapātrī accuses him of having misunderstood the textual authorities (*śāstrābodha*). After reporting a few instances from the Vedas (*RV* 1.156.3 and 2.13.4) that seem to disprove Svāmī Dayānanda’s statement, Svāmī Karapātrī accuses him of *svoktivirodha* (self-contradiction) and of *apasiddhānta* (inconsistency), when the founder of the Ārya Samāja first states that the word *pratimā* has only the meaning of *parimāṇa* (measure) and then interprets it in the sense of “icon”. In traditional scholarly debates, such accusations of inconsistency and self-contradiction are indeed reasons for losing a debate (*ŚM* 1.1.5). The case looked at in this article is an example of Svāmī Karapātrī’s method of defending the Vedas from Svāmī Dayānanda’s exegesis.

The *VP* is a Sanskrit composition supplied with a Hindi commentary written in a technical language following the argumentative principles of Mīmāṃsā. This work was not designed to reach the Hindu masses;

nonetheless, it entered and powerfully fueled the intellectual debate between Ārya Samājīs and Sanātānists. The *VP* was even added to the syllabus of certain Vedic schools, becoming part of the curriculum for obtaining the Ācārya degree. As mentioned above, the *RVBB* was supposed to be the introductory volume to Svāmī Dayānanda's exegesis of the Vedas. In the same way, the *VP* was also designed as an introduction to Svāmī Karapātrī's commentary on the four Saṃhitās. Even if neither of the two scholars could actually complete the task, their introductory volumes made a great impression on the intellectual community. In fact, the *VP* was followed in 1984 by a response from the Ārya Samāja with publication of the *Vedārthakalpadruma* by Viśudhānanda Miśra, published by the Sarvadeśika Ārya Pratiṣṭhāna in New Delhi. Again, in 1988, the *Vedārthakalpadruma* was followed by a Sanātānist response by the Purī Śaṅkarācārya Svāmī Nirañjanadeva Tīrtha with the *Vedārthapārijātabhāṣyavārtika*, published by the Govardhana Maṭha Śaṅkarācārya Pīṭha.

The existence of several publications as responses to each other reveals the importance of the debate. During a colloquium with Anand Mishra of the Banaras Hindu University (an expert on this field), he confirmed to me that the discourse between the Ārya Samāja and Sanātānists remains very much alive; nowadays, many of the Ārya Samāja positions have been silently accepted by the majority of Hindus, but the practice of *mūrti pūjā* remains as one of the few resistant Sanātānist badges in modern India.

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# Nāgas in Early Buddhism: A Heavenly Abode and an Unfortunate Birth

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**Abstract:** At early Buddhist sites on the Indian subcontinent, nāgas as cobra beings are depicted with a remarkable conception of bodily fluidity between human and cobra forms. Analysis of Buddhist visual narratives and textual accounts in Pāli and Sanskrit reveals their ability to take on the guise of a human, a defining feature that has been overlooked in previous scholarship which considers sculptures from the period before the Common Era. Examining their identities from the perspective of a Buddhist worshipper, I consider nāgas in visual representations with a status between animals, human, and divine beings, exploring how nāgas can inhabit heavenly places, yet remain confined to their unfortunate birth status as animals.

**Keywords:** Nāgas, Buddhism, Ancient India, fluidity, sculpture

At Buddhist monuments across the Indian subcontinent in the early centuries BCE, cobra beings called nāgas appear in stone carvings and painted images (**Fig. 1**). While in many of the relevant narratives human worshippers have already progressed on the path towards awakening, nāgas are confined to an unfortunate and limiting birth.<sup>1</sup> By looking

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1 See the recent discussion of the term “awakening” in: Bhikkhu Bodhi, “Awakening or Enlightenment? On the Significance of *bodhi*,” *Mindfulness* 12 (2021), 1653–1658; note that not all beings in the early Buddhist texts strive for awakening.

closely at nāgas in visual iterations with textual comparisons, noticing how beings with animal and supernatural qualities have the capacity to act as humans in different contexts, this paper will explore the complexities of their status in images. For certain nāgas who wish to seek awakening through human birth in early Buddhist sculptures, their fluid ability to transform bodily shape often expresses moral self-transformation in visual form.<sup>2</sup> In this article, I examine nāgas in narrative sculptures on stūpa railings from northern archaeological sites in South Asia between three main categories of visual representation, namely, as animals, as human beings, and as divine beings, considering how these types of depictions evolve over time through discourse between texts and images.<sup>3</sup>

Although unique as animals, nāgas are still born to unfortunate birth.<sup>4</sup> In early Buddhism, the level of an individual's rebirth is determined by wholesome or unwholesome actions within the chain of *saṃsāra*. The fortunate destinies for rebirth are as *devas*, *asuras*, or human beings; the unfortunate destinies are as ghosts, animals, and hell-beings.<sup>5</sup> A well-known passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* equates rebirth in hell or as an animal to be of the same unsuccessful status.

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2 For an in-depth study of different bodily forms, without a focus on narrative images, see Charlotte Gorant, "Nāgas in Early Buddhist Art: Fluidity and Framing Presence," in *The Long Arc of South Asian Art: A Reader in Honour of Vidya Dehejia*, edited by Annapurna Garimella, (New Delhi: Marg and Women Unlimited, 2022), 11-21.

3 Here I compare visual depictions of nāgas, in the three listed categories, from two distinct art historical periods – in the two centuries before the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, which is the primary focus of this article, and at the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, marked by a shift in representation of the Buddha from emblematic to anthropomorphic form.

4 Following the work of Reiko Ohnuma, *Unfortunate Destiny: Animals in the Indian Buddhist Imagination*, (Oxford: 2017), 5–23, especially 21; and Naomi Appleton, *Narrating Karma and Rebirth*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 24, 51–54; Kristin Scheible, *Reading the Mahāvamsa: The Literary Aims of a Theravāda Buddhist History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 67–94.

5 Certain early Buddhist literary traditions conceived of a 6 *gati* system; like the nāgas, the *asuras* are ambiguous beings, classified as evil bournes (*durgati*), yet very powerful. See for instance "gati" in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Jr. Buswell, and Donald S. Jr. Lopez. Princeton University Press, 2013, 315–316.

Monks, the poor, destitute, miserable person who misconducts himself in body, speech, and mind, upon the breaking up of the body after death, is imprisoned in the bondage of hell or in the bondage of an animal birth (*tiracchāna-yoni*).<sup>6</sup>

Birth in the world as a human is difficult to obtain and extremely rare. During the Buddha's own past lives, narrated in *Jātaka* stories, he accrued further merit through his actions until his final human life as Bodhisatta. Within the Buddha's recorded teachings, it is not until a person becomes a *sota-āpanna*, or "stream-enterer," that they can continue along the Buddhist path as a once-returner, non-returner, and finally an arhant towards achieving enlightenment.<sup>7</sup>

More than an animal, but not quite human, nāgas can shift form into the body of a human in Buddhist stories. In accordance with the Pāli *upasampadā*, the ceremony of vows to become a Buddhist monk, every individual must swear that he is a man and not a nāga. There is a story from the *Mahāvagga* that elucidates their mischievous nature, the *Tiracchānagatavatthu*, in which a nāga enters the monastery with the hope of becoming an ordained monk. The nāga is deeply disturbed by his nāga state, so he strategizes how he can be quickly freed from his nāga-birth while receiving the benefits of a human birth. The moment he takes on the guise of a human is indicated in the text when he approaches a monk "with the appearance of a young brahmin" (*māṇava-vaṇṇena*).<sup>8</sup> Though he initially fools the monks, he is discovered as being a nāga when he slips back into his coiled cobra form after he

6 Following Ohnuma's translation of *Āṅguttara Nikāya* 353, I have amended Ohnuma's translation of *yoni* as "realm" here to "birth." See Ohnuma, *Unfortunate Destiny*, 6; Pāli as found in *Āṅguttara-nikāya, Chakka-nipāta*, edited by R. Morris and E. Hardy, (London: Pali Text Society, 1885–1900), Part 3, 353; see also Appleton, *Narrating Karma and Rebirth*, 24.

7 *Silavanta-sutta, Samyutta-nikāya* 22.122, edited by Léon Feer, (London: Pali Text Society, 1884–1904), Part 3, 167–169; see for translation: Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 970–971. It must also be noted here that many *arhants* in early Buddhist discourses need not be *anāgamins* before realizing arhathood.

8 *Mahāvagga, Vinaya-Piṭaka*, 1.63, edited by Hermann Oldenberg, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1879–1883), 86–88; I.B. Horner, *The book of the disci-*



falls asleep at night. The Buddha instructs him to return to the nāga realm and observe *uposatha* days, the semi-monthly monastic assembly in which monks recite the rules of conduct, so that he may have a chance to eventually be reborn as a human.<sup>9</sup> The Blessed One tells the monks that there are two conditions for a nāga to revert to his own state: when he engages in intercourse with a *nāginī* or when he falls asleep with his guard down. Yet other depicted narratives show, as we will see, there are exceptions to these conditions.

In the *Erāpata-jātaka* inscribed from the stūpa of Bhārhut (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE), the artist has represented the nāga king taking on the form of a human during his nāga birth (**Fig. 2**).<sup>10</sup> The brāhmī inscription *erāpato nāgarāja* on the bottom railing confirms that the repeated figure with his hands clasped together in worship is indeed this nāga king.<sup>11</sup> The inscription to the right of the kneeling king in the center, *erāpato nāgarāja bhagavato vadate*, which translates to “Erāpata the nāga king worships the Blessed One,” identifies the tree and stone seat of the king’s veneration as a living Buddha.<sup>12</sup> Showing the nāga king in three separate scenes, the artist visually emphasizes Erāpata’s wish to transform morally through the depiction of physical transformation during his lifetime, depicting him in human form with a cobra hood during the final scene of worship. As in the text of the *Dhammapada*, the king in

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*pline* (*Vinaya-Piṭaka*), (London, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938–66), *Mahāvagga* Vol. IV, 110–111.

- 9 In the *Samyutta-nikāya*, it is stated that nāgas that are egg-born are inferior to nāgas born the three other ways; however, nāgas that are egg-born can observe *uposatha* and “relinquish concern for their bodies.” *Uposatha-sutta*, *Samyutta-nikāya* 19.3, edited by Léon Feer, 240–1; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 1020–21.
- 10 Here I defer to the inscription on the sculpture for the title of this narrative. In the Pāli text, the title is *Erakapattanāgarāja*; see *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* 14.3, edited by H.C. Norman, Vol. 3, (London: Pali Text Society, 1970), 230–236; see translation by: Eugene Watson Burlingame, trans. *Buddhist Legends*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard university press, 1921), 627–630.
- 11 H. Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1963), B36, 110.
- 12 Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, B37, 110; A separate donative inscription on the left records the pillar gift: *aya-isi-dinasa bhānakasa dānam*, “Gift of the venerable sage and reciter.” H. Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, A62, 39.

the Bhārhut sculpture approaches the living Buddha with reverence and cultivates faith (*pasāda*).<sup>13</sup> The artist indicates the Buddha through the empty stone seat and the tree, a common depiction before the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.<sup>14</sup>

While there are many representations of nāgas in different bodily forms at early Buddhist sites, this depiction of a nāga's body in different forms within a single sculpture is unique to Bhārhut. Nāgas are one of many types of beings found in early Buddhist sculptures along the railing of early Buddhist stūpas in Northern India whose architectural placement seems to suggest divine status. For instance, consider the pillar of Cakavāka nāga from Bhārhut (**Fig. 3**). At this early Buddhist stūpa, which no longer stands today, apart from the narrative reliefs depicting stories from the Buddha's past lives, are a unique set of inscriptions identifying *yakṣas*, *yakṣiṇīs*, *devatās*, and nāgas that are sculpted on the pillars of the surviving railing.<sup>15</sup> What is striking when comparing the different bodily forms of nāgas in sculptures, including life-size pillars, medallions, and other narrative scenes, is that the significance of fluidity in their bodily forms across different sculptures becomes clear. Rather than looking to individual sculptures of the nāga in a single frame, viewing this bodily fluidity within sculptures from the circumambulation

13 *Erakapattanāgarāja. Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* 14.3, edited by H.C. Norman, 230–236; Burlingame, trans. *Buddhist Legends*, 627–630. See the discussion of *pasāda* in Andy Rotman, *Thus Have I Seen: Visualizing Faith in Early Indian Buddhism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Part II, 63–88.

14 Vidya Dehejia, “Aniconism and the multivalence of emblems,” *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991), 45–66.

15 The size and status of this nāga on a pillar suggests divine status in this context. Vidya Dehejia has estimated that out of the remaining pieces from the site, a third of the sculpted materials (forty-nine out of eighty pillars) would have been devoted to “semi-divine beings” (Vidya Dehejia, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving Boundaries between Sacred and Profane in India's Art*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 75–98). See also: Anne Keßler-Persaud, “Yakṣas and Yakṣiṇīs,” in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online*, edited by Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar, and Vasudha Narayanan, accessed March 1, 2022.

pathway allows the bodily transformation of the nāga to unfold across time as the worshipper walks around the stūpa.<sup>16</sup>

Publications from the colonial era remain significant in art history because they serve as primary sources for archaeological research. There is a pervasive notion of a primitive spirit cult of serpent beings that were incorporated into a Buddhist orthodoxy and mainstream religious tradition, deriving from sources such as Jean Vogel's *Indian Serpent Lore: Or, The Nāgas in Hindu Legend and Art* and James Fergusson's *Tree and Serpent Worship*, which conceptualize nāgas as static animal-spirits.<sup>17</sup> This is not only a modern conception – Max Deeg has also shown from accounts of Xuanzang and Faxian that simplistic views of nāgas were also prevalent among Chinese travellers in the fifth and ninth centuries.<sup>18</sup> While scholars such as Paul Mus, who considered nāgas in the 6 *gati* system in *Les Voies de la Transmigration*, and more recently Reiko Ohnuma, who interprets the described actions and identities of nāgas in connection with their unfortunate birth, have explored the status of nāgas in greater depth, in art history it was often assumed that viewers at archaeological sites as well as the artists had a simplistic world view.<sup>19</sup> Without addressing their ability to take on the guise of a human as an

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16 Charlotte Gorant, “Nāgas in Early Buddhist Art”. Paul Mus noticed this hybridity in depictions too and briefly mentions this as follows: “Le SSU fournit une description de leur aspect hybride que répond exactement au témoignage iconographique...” Paul Mus, “Les Voies de la Transmigration et la folklore de l’Inde,” in *La lumière sur les Six Voies*, (Paris: Institut d’ethnologie, 1939), 170.

17 Jean Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore: Or, The Nāgas in Hindu Legend and Art*, (London: Probsthain, 1926); James Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship: Or Illustrations of Mythology and Art in India in the First and Fourth Centuries after Christ from the Sculpture of the Buddhist Topes at Sāñchī and Amāravatī*, (London: India Museum, 1873).

18 Max Deeg, “Der Buddha und die nāgas: Buddhistische Unterwerfungsmythen und Regenmagie,” *Hōrin* 15 (2008), 91–114; Max Deeg, *Miscellanae Nepalicae: Early Chinese Reports on Nepal: The Foundation Legend of Nepal in Its Trans-Himalayan Context*, (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2016), especially 73–76.

19 Paul Mus, *La lumière sur les Six Voies*, 153–183. The hierarchy of individual figures as simplistic comes from many frameworks, one example being the idea of perceptualism as the definition of art, in Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: The Study of Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, (London: Phaidon, 1960); For the

important part of their visual identity, this approach to nāgas fails to account for their dynamic role in early Buddhist art in the centuries before and after the Common Era.

However, interpreting sculptures with movement through the architectural spaces, as well as by looking at the sculptures throughout a site and within the surrounding landscape, has become an important practice. Robert DeCaroli has traced the names of nāgas inscribed on near life-size stūpa pillars to townships described in Buddhist textual sources, exploring their associations with locations in northern India and grounding them in historical landscapes.<sup>20</sup> Julia Shaw has considered the association of nāgas with agriculture, highlighting the placement of freestanding nāga sculptures within Central Indian archaeological landscapes near ancient dams within irrigation channels.<sup>21</sup> This study builds on the pre-existing scholarship with a study of nāgas through the lens of Buddhist worshippers at early stūpas in Northern India, beginning with the notion that depictions of nāgas in early sculptures would have been physically connected on a single railing during circumambulation. For this reason, representations of nāgas must be considered together rather than as isolated fragments.

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original critique, see Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History,” 73, no. 2 (June 1991), 62–62; Reiko Ohnuma, *Unfortunate Destiny*, 5–23.

20 Robert DeCaroli, *Haunting the Buddha: Indian popular religions and the formation of Buddhism*, (New York: Oxford University, 2004); and see also his take on their role at Ajanta in DeCaroli, “The Abode of the Nāga King: Questions of Art, Audience, and Local Deities at the Ajaṅṭā Caves,” *Ars Orientalis* 40 (2011), 142–161; DeCaroli, “Snakes and Gutters: Nāga Imagery, Water Management, and Buddhist Rainmaking Rituals in Early South Asia,” *Archives of Asian Art* 69, no. 1 (April 2019), 1–19. In a prior study, Richard Cohen argued for a local identity of nāgas with the depicted actions of the Buddha at Ajanta. Richard S. Cohen, “Nāga, Yakṣiṇī, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta,” *History of Religions* 37, no. 4 (May 1998), 360–400.

21 Julia Shaw, “Nāga Sculptures in Sanchi’s Archaeological Landscape: Buddhism, Vaiṣṇavism, and Local Agricultural Cults in Central India, First Century BCE to Fifth Century CE,” *Artibus Asiae* 64, no. 1 (2004), 5–59; Ronald Davidson has looked at a shrine from the 5<sup>th</sup> century: Ronald M Davidson, “Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature IV: A Nāga Altar in 5<sup>th</sup> Century India,” in *Consecration Rituals in South Asia*, edited by István Keul, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 123–70.

The question of which bodily form an artist has chosen to represent, and how each would have been perceived in the original site context as different forms of nāgas on a single railing, is at the center of this visual analysis. In most cases, a plot element or theme calls for the artist's visual representation of either a cobra or human body. Art historians have not yet studied varying depictions of how nāgas take on the bodily form of a human as narrated in early Buddhist texts. Through visual analysis of narrative sculptures, I will offer potential avenues to understand the reasoning for their bodily depictions in sculptures from the Northern part of the subcontinent, from the early stūpas of Bhārhut and Sāñcī, as well as comparisons from Gandhāra and Mathurā dated to the beginning of the Common Era.<sup>22</sup> I consider nāgas as unique in the animal world, in certain instances in which they could be almost human, and as divine beings guarding Sakka's heaven and with their own remarkable palaces, exploring the perplexing idea that nāgas can inhabit these heavenly places and take on human guise yet remain confined to unfortunate birth status.

## 1. Nāgas as unique in the animal world

It is not always clear why artists chose to depict nāgas in the body of a cobra in some scenes and in the body of a human with a cobra hood in other. Are nāgas depicted in sculptures like other animals? On the architrave of the east gateway and entrance to the stūpa at Sāñcī is a scene of animals, some of them composite, venerating a tree and a stone seat sculpted across the long horizontal frame (**Fig. 4**). On the far right of the frame, the sculptor has depicted a nāga and a large garuḍa bird. The nāga appears to be a focus of the image due to its size and position in the fore-

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22 For this purpose I follow the discussion of "aniconism" in the well-known essay by Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991), 45–66, and further take into account the significance of the anthropomorphic Buddha image as treated in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," *Art Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1927), 287–329. In a related context, Faure explores the idea of the emblem as more powerful than the anthropomorphic image and considers image theories in connection with Buddhist representations across traditions in Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (1998): 768–813.

ground and facing the viewer directly. Garuḍas are the sworn enemies and predators of nāgas. In the first centuries CE, as exemplified in an image from Gandhāra (**Fig. 5**), the tension between nāgas and garuḍas is explored as a visual depiction through their overlapping bodies, as well as the *nāginī*'s head clasped within the beak of the garuḍa bird.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis on the nāga's body in tension with the garuḍa's body coincides historically with the emergence of the anthropomorphic form of the Buddha in this period.

At Sāñcī, this nāga is represented with his cobra body while venerating the Buddha represented as a tree and stone seat. This unnamed nāga in the Sāñcī image has a full cobra body, with five individual heads, ribbed designs on its body, and a long coiling tail that extends beneath him. The nāga's individual heads are carved in high relief, appearing to peer outwards and extend to meet the glance of the viewer. The shadows underneath the faces of the nāga's heads emphasize this engagement with the gaze of the viewer. While the artist might have chosen to align his gaze with the other figures, this choice seems to highlight the body of the nāga and single him out as distinct. Yet the depicted nāga blends in with other composite and non-composite animals venerating the central tree and the stone seat.

Within the *Mañikaṇṭha-jātaka* from the Bhārhut railing, the viewer sees a conversation between the Bodhisatta's ascetic brother and a nāga king called Mañikaṇṭha (**Fig. 6**).<sup>24</sup> In the *jātaka* text as transmitted in

23 For further examples, see Rhi's examination of Gandhāran steles with nāgī/nāga depicted as human figure along with their enemy counterpart the garuḍa in the form of a bird, which differ from nāgas represented in bodhisattva turbans. Juhung Rhi, "The Garuḍa and the Nāgī/Nāga in the Headdresses of Gandhāran Bodhisattvas: Locating Textual Parallels," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 23 (2009), 147–158; discussion of the Sanghao image Fig. 2. Raven considers several sealings with garuḍa birds as context for Gupta gold coins with the garuḍa depictions. See especially the example of a *suparna*, or garuḍa, carrying a *nāginī* in human form in Ellen Raven, *Gupta Gold Coins with a Garuḍa-Banner (Samudragupta to Skandagupta)*, 2 vols., (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), sealing in Vol. 1, Pl. 19; coins with *garuḍadhvaja* in Vol. 2.

24 *Mañikaṇṭha-jātaka*, *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā* 253, edited by V. Fausbøll, 7 vols., (London: Pali Text Society, 1877–1896), vol. 2, 282–286; see translation: E.B. Cowell, *The Jātaka, Or, Stories of the Buddha's former births*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1895–1913), 197–199. For the iteration of the narrative in the *Vinaya*, see *Jātaka-*

Pāli, Maṇikaṅṭha, whose name means “jeweled-throat,” first encounters the ascetic while “going about in the shape of a young brahmin” (*māṇavaka-vesena vicaranto*).<sup>25</sup> Depicted in this sculpture is the brother seated in front of his ascetic home in dialogue with the nāga king in cobra form, wearing a large jewel across his neck.<sup>26</sup> However, since they become inseparable as friends, he feels comfortable enough “to forsake this [guise] form” (*attabhāvaṃ vijahitvā*), and to embrace the ascetic with his cobra body.<sup>27</sup> Whenever his friend came for a visit, the ascetic became afraid of being squeezed inside the cobra’s enormous coils.

The Bodhisattva, knowing of the ascetic’s attachment to his nāga friend and the nāga’s to his jewel, teaches the ascetic not to cling onto attachments. He instructs the ascetic to ask the nāga for his jewel, knowing that this will cause the nāga to return to the nāga abode because he takes pride in his jewel over their friendship. Maṇikaṅṭha takes the guise of a human in this image just as it is specified in the text, but unlike Erāpata, he never cultivates faith while visiting the ascetic and exhibits attachment as a facet of his unfortunate birth status. The artist’s visual representation of Maṇikaṅṭha shows how he inspires fear in his friend the ascetic.

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*aṭṭhakathā*, Vol. 3, Suttavibhangha (Part 1), 144–147; see also the translation as found in Horner, *Book of the Discipline*, vol. 1, 248–250.

25 *Maṇikaṅṭha-jātaka*, *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā* 253, vol. 2, 283; Cowell, trans. *The Jātaka*, 198.

26 Dehejia identifies this image as mono-scenic because the depiction of the conversation between Maṇikaṅṭha and the ascetic represents the whole story. See Vidya Dehejia, *Discourse in early Buddhist art: Visual Narratives of India*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997), 86.

27 *Maṇikaṅṭha-jātaka*, no. 253, vol. 2, further down on 283; Cowell, trans. *The Jātaka*, 198. Monika Zin considers this sculpture in a study of early sculptures of heavens, analyzing depictions and descriptions of heaven as distinctive from teachings on enlightenment. Monika Zin, “Pictures of Paradise for Good Luck and Prosperity: Depictions of Themes Irreverent for Enlightenment in Older Buddhist Tradition (with special reference to paintings of Ajanta),” in *Manusushma: Archaeology and Heritage*, edited by Vinay Kumar, vol. 1, (B.R. Publishing: Delhi, 2015), 125–147, as on 129.



## 2. Nāgas as almost human

An image from Sāñcī of the emperor Aśoka features a large group of nāgas with human bodies and cobra hoods venerating a stūpa, showcasing their human capacity for devotion (Fig. 7).<sup>28</sup> On the right side of the sculpture, which is located on the south toraṇa (gateway) of Sāñcī stūpa 1, emperor Aśoka appears riding towards the center on a grand chariot. A series of nāgas venerate the stūpa on the opposite side, shown in a detail on the left. The nāgas are depicted with full human bodies and cobra hoods as they just restored the relics back to humanity after they protected them in their abode for safekeeping after the enlightenment.<sup>29</sup> With nāgas of all different ages and sizes, the many figures together make what appears to be a nāga family. To the bottom right of this figure is a very small child nāga with hands clasped together in worship.

Together, the nāgas and Aśoka in this image demonstrate their newfound devotion to the true *dhamma* in worshipping the stūpa. The em-

28 Most scholars agree that in this sculpture the presence of nāgas with the depiction of a king makes this likely to be a version of the Rāmagrāma story which is contained in the *Aśokāvadāna*; however, it must be acknowledged that the written form is much later and that it is most likely that different oral versions of the story existed before. *Aśokāvadāna* 52, edited by Sujikumar Mukhopadhyaya (New Delhi: Sahiya Akademi, 1963); John Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 219–220. One portion of the relics is given to the nāga king of Rāmagrāma in the Pāli text of the *Mahāparinibbānasutta: Mahāparinibbānasutta, Dīgha Nikāya* 6.28, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Carpenter, (London: Pali Text Society, 1890–1911), 167; Maurice Walshe, trans. *Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikaya*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 277. The identification of Aśoka has been rightly disputed in related Sāñcī reliefs in Dieter Schlingloff, “Aśoka or Māra? On the interpretation of some Sāñcī reliefs,” in *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday*, edited by L.A. Hercus et al., (Faculty of Asian Studies: Canberra, 1982), 441–456.

29 Monika Zin suggests that perhaps nāgas as protectors of the relics could in part originate from observations of elephants and other animals congregating at abandoned shrines. Monika Zin, “The Buddha’s Relics and the Nāgas: An Attempt to Throw Light on Some Depictions in the Amaravati School,” in *South Asian Archaeology and Art, Volume 2: South Asian Religions and Visual Forms in their Archaeological Context*, edited by Vincent Lefèvre, Aurore Didier, and Benjamin Mutin, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 757–776.



peror's visit to the Rāmagrāma stūpa is described in the *Aśokāvadāna* after he has descended to the nāga realm.<sup>30</sup> At this point in the text, emperor Aśoka has just begun distributing the relics into eighty-four thousand parts to spread the Buddha's teachings, though the form the nāgas take is not specified. The text also recalls that the relics were stolen by the nāgas, and somehow despite this, the relics are not taken from the nāgas but left in their possession by Aśoka. In the image at Sāñcī, the community of nāgas worship alongside the emperor with human form at their own nāga palace abode. As with the story of Erāpata, the nāgas with anthropomorphic bodies and gestures in this scene worship in a way that appears almost human. The artist has in this Rāmagrāma stūpa image expressed the nāgas' ability to express devotion, like the humans who have a greater capacity for enlightenment, in their representation and transformation into human form.

### 3. Nāgas as divine beings

While nāgas are not always conceived of as divine in early Buddhist imaginaries, in the *Samyutta Nikāya* they are at times spontaneously born (*opapātikā*) like *devas*, and in sculptures their unique divine association is emphasized in various ways.<sup>31</sup> In an architrave at Sāñcī stūpa III, two large nāga figures are seated on opposite ends of Sakka. Sakka is seated at the center in the Vejayanta palace in Tāvatiṃsa (**Fig. 8**).<sup>32</sup> Their size and frontal position may indicate that they are guarding Sakka. More than an animal, less than the *devas*, these enormous nāga figures

30 In the *Aśokāvadāna*, Aśoka descends to the nāga world to see the Droṇa stūpa and leaves the relics there after worshipping. *Aśokāvadāna* 52; Strong, *Legend of King Aśoka*, 219–220.

31 I thank Alex Wynne for pointing me to this reference. Nāgas are described as being born in four ways: *aṇḍajā nāgā jalābujā nāgā saṃsedajā nāgā opapātikā nāgā*, “from eggs, from a womb, from moisture, or spontaneously.” *Suddhikasutta*, *Samyutta-nikāya* 29.1.3, edited by Léon Feer, 240; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 1020.

32 This reading of nāgas as guardians is supported in the textual narrative, as well as their size and frontal position on either side of Sakka. Nāgas as among the fivefold guards, as in *Kulavaka Jātaka*, *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā* 31, vol. 1, 198–208; Cowell, trans., *The Jātaka*, 76–83. Dehejia considers this image and generally the sculptures from Sāñcī stūpa 3 “non-narrative.” Dehejia, *Discourse*, 132.

have the bodies of humans with gargantuan cobra hoods behind them. Sakka sits as king of the gods in the center of the image with his wife Sujā seated in royal ease on the right, with his daughters, wives, and female apsaras directly on either side. Sakka's attendant Pañcasikha stands on the right-hand side, recognizable from his beluva-wood *viñā*, and perhaps his chariot driver Mātali stands on the opposite side.<sup>33</sup> The nāgas are represented directly above the river. As they are associated with water, the artist has also depicted small fish and other aquatic life flowing through the ripples of the heavenly water flowing below.<sup>34</sup> Nāgas in human bodies with enormous nāga hoods behind them sit while guarding the Vejayanta palace, demonstrating their divine role as one of the fivefold protectors of Sakka's heaven.

A narrative pillar at Bhārhut, which is inscribed *Vitura Punakiya-jatakam*, depicts key moments from the story of the yakkha Puṇṇaka's capture of Vidhura for the nāgas, and their reconciliation upon realizing an enormous misunderstanding (**Fig. 9**).<sup>35</sup> The narrative is organized topographically, with the scenes taking place in the nāga kingdom at the top of the pillar and the scenes that take place in human kingdoms at the bottom.<sup>36</sup> This follows the logic of the story since the nāga palace is only accessible through flying, and much like the nāgas, the yakkha Puṇṇaka possesses unique powers of soaring into the air to arrive there. As comparison with the Pāli text of the *Vidhura-Paṇḍitajātaka* reveals, the nāga king summons Vidhura because he mistakenly thinks his wife wishes

33 The attendants Mātali and Pañcasikha are identified from Pāli texts describing Sakka. Pañcasikha often carries a *viñā*. See for instance the *Sakka-pañha-sutta*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, 21; and the translation in Walshe, trans. *Long Discourses of the Buddha*, 323. For the *viñā* identification, see Bo Lawergren, "Buddha as a Musician: An Illustration of a Jātaka Story," *Artibus Asiae* 54, no. 3/4 (1994), 226–240, especially 232.

34 The river could be the Mandākinī river, as it is mentioned, for instance, in the *Sūkarika-avadāna*, *Divyāvadāna*. E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), 193–196; see for translation, Andy Rotman, trans. *Divine stories: Divyāvadāna*, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2008), 325–328.

35 Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions*, B55, 146.

36 Dehejia points out the topographical narrative format. For further discussion of narrative arrangement and the understanding of the viewer, see Vidya Dehejia, *Discourse*, on the knowing viewer in synoptic narrative 21–24, on this pillar 97.

him dead.<sup>37</sup> A knowing viewer would recall that the wise Vidhura, as Bodhisatta, realizes that the *nāginī* queen Vimalā did not wish for his heart but wished to hear his teachings.

At the very top left of the pillar, the yakkha Puṇṇaka meets the king's *nāginī* daughter Indratī whom he wishes to marry. Next, at the bottom, Puṇṇaka competes in a dice game to win and carry Vidhura to the court of Indratī's father. He then rises into the air, depicted in the middle scene of the pillar on horseback traveling the *nāga* king's court with the wise Vidhura holding onto the horse's tail. After he narrowly escapes death on the right, Vidhura preaches the *dhamma* to him on the left, and Puṇṇaka next flies on horseback taking Vidhura to the *nāga* palace. In their *nāga* palace in the second scene from the top, King Varuṇa and Queen Vimalā sit regally as Puṇṇaka arrives with Vidhura, accepting a powerful jewel from earlier in the story and the Bodhisatta's wisdom. The small, cobra hoods above their heads identify them as *nāgas*, even though in this scene they take the shape of humans on an exquisite throne. With the visualization of the *nāgas* in human form in this scene, the artist has depicted the *nāgas* as recipients of the *dhamma* within a palace in the sky, showcasing the *nāgas* as almost human with unique divine abilities.<sup>38</sup>

Comparison with a slightly later example from Sonkh in Mathurā also helps to demonstrate that so often the magnificent palaces of the *nāga* abode are depicted like those of a human king's royal court (**Fig. 10**). The entire *nāga* realm, much like the Tāvatiṃsa and other heavens, resembles human palaces to an almost indiscernible extent in visual form, yet it is known that it is accessed by supernatural abilities. Although the *nāgas* hold too closely to their attachments similarly to that of the gods, *nāgas* apart from Erāpata such as Muchalinda and Apalāla, convert after receiving the *dhamma* teachings just like human beings.<sup>39</sup>

37 *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka, Jātaka-aṭṭhakatha* 545, vol. 7, 266–287; Cowell, trans., *The Jātaka*, vol. 6, 126–156.

38 See also Monika Zin's discussion of this *Jātaka* at Amāravatī, in which Vidhurapaṇḍita's teaching is the main scene represented. Monika Zin, "Gandhara & Andhra: Varying Traditions of Narrative Representations (Some Observations on the Arrangement of Scenes Citing the Example of the Bodhisatta Crossing the River Nairājanā)," *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 22 (2018), 6–17.

39 DeCaroli, "Snakes and Gutters," 15; Deeg, *Miscellanae Nepalicae*, 97–100; Davids and Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts*, pt. 1, 80–81.

#### 4. Conclusion

It is only while seeing nāga representations together across bodily forms on the stūpa that their fluidity becomes visible as it would be for worshippers. The representations of nāgas in different bodily forms, often with small cobra hoods above their human bodies, demonstrate their power to transform and their complex identities. Could the visual representation of nāgas with human bodies and cobra hoods in images, especially in instances where their form is left ambiguous in the story, be an effort to showcase their in-between status? The ability of nāgas to transform embodies the contradictions true to their identities – that they are unique among animals, that they are *almost* human but never human-born, and that they are royal and divine beings in locations far from the viewer's own realm.

Whether or not worshippers truly believed that nāgas had the ability to take human form in their daily lives, they have that ability in Buddhist sculpted and textual stories; simply to say that nāgas take the form of humans as a pictorial device would be overlooking the significance of their full identities. Through their bodily fluidity connected across images on stūpa railings, as supernatural beings and animals that have the capacity to act and take on the guise of humans, nāgas by contrast reflect different aspects of the human experience. With their almost human capacity for suffering and devotion, divine embodiment in royal scenes and in heaven, as well as their ignorance resulting from animal status, nāgas recall different types of worshippers striving on the path through the physical manifestation of bodily and moral transformation in the presence of the relics.

## Images

All photographs are my own unless otherwise specified.



**Fig. 1:** Nāga, Sāñcī stūpa 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.



**Fig. 2:** Erāpata nāgarāja, Bhārhut stūpa, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.





**Fig. 3:** Chakravāka nāga, Bharhut stūpa, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.



**Fig. 4:** Animals worship, Sāñcī stūpa 1, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Photo by Biswarup Ganguly (CC BY 3.0), cropped. Source: <https://w.wiki/5rbs>.



**Fig. 5:** Three *garuḍas* holding a *nāginī*. Photo by Henry Hardy Cole in 1883. Rhode Tope, Sanghao, Gandhāra. 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries CE. Courtesy of the British Library.



**Fig. 6:** Mañikanṭha jātaḱa, Bharhut stūpa. 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. Photo by Vidya Dehejia.



**Fig. 7:** Nāgas venerate a stūpa, Sāñcī stūpa 1, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Photo by Anandajoti Bhikkhu (CC BY 2.0). Source: <https://flic.kr/p/SVVGJj>.



**Fig. 8:** Sakka's heaven and nāgas guarding. Sāñcī stūpa 3, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Photo by Anandajoti Bhikkhu (CC BY 2.0), cropped. Source: <https://flic.kr/p/Tbx56C>.





**Fig. 9:** Vitura Punakiya Jātaka. Bharhut stūpa, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.



**Fig. 10:** Nāga Court, Sonkh Tila, Mathurā, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Courtesy of American Institute of Indian Studies. Photo by Biswarup Ganguly, (CC BY 3.0), cropped. Source: <https://w.wiki/5rbv>.

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## On the Sources of the *Nāgakumārāvadāna* of the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*

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**Abstract:** In this paper, three kinds of Nāgakumāra narratives in the Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions are discerned: 1. *vālukā* ('gravel'); 2. *pravrajyā* ('going-forth'); 3. *mithyāprañidhāna* ('wrong-wish'). The 60<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (BAK) titled *Nāgakumārāvadāna* is identified as the less known *vālukā* story. By close reading of 11 verses in the *Nāgakumārāvadāna* while comparing with the parallel texts in the 55<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Karmaśataka* (KŚ) titled *Klu* and related passages in the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya Pravrajyāvastu* (MPV), I argue that the Nāgakumāra story in the BAK is textually more akin to KŚ than MPV. Moreover, I argue that Kṣemendra fully and actively utilized available sources ranging from KŚ to *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya-vastus* when producing a new tradition of Buddhist narrative literature, i.e., BAK.

**Keywords:** *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, *Nāgakumārāvadāna*, *Karmaśataka*, *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya Pravrajyāvastu*

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## 1. Introduction

As an exemplar of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist *belles-lettres*,<sup>1</sup> the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (hereafter, BAK) has long attracted scholars' attention. Its author Kṣemendra (ca. 990—after 1065) was born and raised in a noble Brahmin family in Kashmir and was educated in diverse Hindu studies, and his composition of the BAK had great influence upon mediaeval Buddhist literature.<sup>2</sup> For a long time scholars have been investigating the sources Kṣemendra used to compile this anthology of Buddhist *jātakas* and *avādānas*,<sup>3</sup> and have proved his close relationship with the Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions despite of a generally heterogeneous situation regarding textual sources.<sup>4</sup> This paper offers another case study investigating the sources Kṣemendra used. By focusing on the 60<sup>th</sup> chapter *Nāgakumāravadāna* (hereafter, NK), I argue that the Nāgakumāra story in BAK is textually more akin to the 55<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Klu*, of the *Karmaśataka* (Tib. *Las brgya tham pa*, hereafter, KŚ)<sup>5</sup> than to the parallel passages of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Pravrajyāvastu* (hereafter, MPV). Therefore, Kṣemendra possibly employed KŚ as his textual source when compiling BAK, a hypothesis already forwarded by Okano (2008) and Straube (2009), and this paper tries to add more evidence. Moreover, apart from NK, Kṣemendra substantially relied upon KŚ when compiling several other chapters of BAK, and he seemed to take a more than flexible approach to recreate a Buddhist narrative based on multiple sources.

1 Van der Kuijp (1996: esp. 401–402); Lin (2011: esp. 11–13).

2 For the latest studies with further references on Kṣemendra and his *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* in general, see Formigatti (2019); Straube (2015).

3 For an updated discussion on, as well as a complete bibliography of, the Buddhist narrative literature in the form of *jātaka* and *avādāna*, see Li (2019: 21n5 and n10).

4 As mentioned in Somendra's epilogue to BAK, Kṣemendra was assisted by a Buddhist *ācārya* named Vīryabhadra when compiling BAK, and the latter might be the informant Kṣemendra consulted for the Buddhist narrative sources. Cf. Formigatti (2019); Straube (2015); Straube (2009: 344–345).

5 The original Indic version of the KŚ is lost today, and we can only make use of its Tibetan translation, which already existed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD at the latest. KŚ has a close relationship with the Sarvāstivāda school and especially the Mūlasarvāstivāda school. See Feer (1891); Matsumoto (2001); Silk (2008b: 180); Karashima & Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (2015: 146–147, 311n231); Straube (2015); Jampal & Fischer (2020).



## 2. NK and the *Nāgakumāra* stories in the Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions

The NK story in BAK is a typical Buddhist *avādāna* narrating how an originally non-Buddhist living being grows faith in the Buddha and becomes a pious patron giving generous donations, and thereby obtains the final salvation. It relates that the protagonist Sudhana, a young Nāga (‘serpent’) prince, at first resorts to the Buddha’s refuge for the sake of a more urgent need, i.e., to pacify the destined calamity that Nāgas are born to suffer from the hot gravel falling on and blazing their bodies. The story teaches a lesson exactly based on this key plot point that, as summarized in the opening verse, only the Buddha’s refuge and moral precepts can save bodies and souls that are endlessly suffering either from afflictions or from hell fire.<sup>6</sup> As described in a nutshell in Somendra’s content verse, this story tells how to attain appeasement from the destined ‘wound’ (*vyadha*) as for Nāgas.<sup>7</sup>

The entire story goes as follows: The Nāga king Dhana lives in the sea with his family, but the daily falling of hot gravel tortures all the Nāgas living there (verses 2–3). One day, his beloved son Sudhana comes to consult him about the origin of this fated misery and an antidote (verses 4–6), and gets the reply that only Buddhist moral precepts (*śikṣāpada*) could save them from this fate (verses 7–13). Therefore, Sudhana sets out to the Jetavana Grove in Śrāvastī where the Buddha abides at that time. Once arrived, he is deeply struck when beholding the great marks of the Buddha’s appearance, and immediately pays sincere homage (verses 14–23). Afterwards, the Buddha bestows upon Sudhana the moral precepts and permits him to patronize the Buddhist communities (verses 24–26). Thereafter, because of his gener-

6 *iha kaṣaṭi śarīraṃ kleśarāśir narāṇāṃ dahati ca paraloke nārakaḥ krūravahniḥ | śaraṇagamanapūṇyaprāptiśikṣāpadānāṃ prabhavati na tu dehe duḥkhadāhaḥ kadācit ||* ‘Here (in this world), a heap of affliction harms the human body, and in the other world, the fierce hellish fire burns. However, the burning of sorrow might never come forth in the bodies of (those who) have the merits to go to (the Buddha’s) refuge and have (the powers) to obtain moral precepts.’ All quotations of the text of the NK in this paper are cited from Meng (2020) unless the source is stated separately.

7 Das et al. (1888–1918: xxxvi–xxxvii): *nāgaśāntim vyadhāc ca yaḥ; gang giṣ klu ni zhi bar mdzad.*



ous donations to the Buddhist communities and his meticulous service to the Buddha during the journey of the Buddhist community to the Kalandaka Grove in Rājagṛha (verses 27–31), Sudhana is prophesied to be reborn as a Pratyekabuddha named Supraṇihita in the future (verse 32).<sup>8</sup>

The NK was frequently identified by many scholars as the same story as the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Divyāvadāna* (hereafter, DIV) titled *Nāgakumārāvadāna* and its MPV parallel,<sup>9</sup> but in the tradition of the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, especially and perhaps only in the *Pravrajyāvastu*, there are three different stories in which a certain ‘Nāgakumāra’ is a protagonist, and the NK in the BAK only fits the first one (see **table 1**).<sup>10</sup> These stories tell several independent tales, and even though in MPV these Nāgakumāra narratives are collated together and shaped into one sequence of events in the form of the stories of the past (*atītavastu*) and the present (*pratyutpannavastu*), they might have different origins since each of them has parallel texts that are either fuller in content or earlier in date.

In the table below I summarize their general plots with three keywords: 1. *vālukā* (‘gravel’); 2. *pravrajyā* (‘going-forth’); and 3. *mithyā-*

8 For the latest critical edition of the Sanskrit text (based on the earliest Sanskrit manuscripts) and Tibetan translation (Derge 4155, Peking 5655) of the NK as well as the English and Chinese translations, see Meng (2020). For the introduction to the newly discovered Sanskrit manuscripts, see Liu (2019). The Sanskrit-Tibetan edition of the NK by Bhattacharya (1939: 137–151, 295–303) mostly repeated the text of the *editio princeps* of Das et al. (1888–1918). For a summary of the main plots of NK as well as a complete Japanese translation of the whole story, see Hikita (2007: 125–132).

9 Cowell & Neil (1886: 344–346); Vaidya (1999: 213–214); Hiraoka (2007: 1–50, 61); Vogel & Wille (2014: 147–211); Rotman (2017: 157–161, 386–388); Miller (2018: §§ 4.312–329). For the study on the relationship between DIV and *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, see Panglung (1981: xv–xvii); Hiraoka (1998: 419–420, 426, 431); Straube (2015); Sirisawad (2019: 34). According to Sirisawad (2019: 40–42n65), in the earliest manuscript (ca. 11<sup>th</sup> century) of DIV there seems to be no *Nāgakumārāvadāna* attested yet, thus we have no idea about its nature and the relation to the NK.

10 It seems that only Panglung (1981: 8, 10) distinguished three kinds of Nāgakumāra stories in MPV and equated the NK of BAK with its parallel passage of the Tibetan version of the MPV. Ware (1938) translated the first and second kinds of Nāgakumāra narrative based on Tibetan and Chinese texts but overlooked the parallel texts in NK and KŚ. Hikita (2007: 125) has already noticed that NK is very different from the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of DIV in content, but he does not write further on this issue.

*praṇidhāna* (‘wrong-wish’), and give their *loci classici* attested in MPV, DIV and BAK, as well as other parallel texts. As seen in **table 1**, the three kinds of *Nāgākumāra* narratives are: 1) *vālukā*, which tells the story of a *Nāga* who resorts to the Buddha to be rescued from the hot-gravel torture; 2) *pravrajyā*, by which it is regulated that the so-called phantom creature (*nirmita*, *sprul pa*, ‘an animal able to transform itself into a human being’) is not allowed to go forth as a Buddhist monk;<sup>11</sup> 3) *mithyāpraṇidhāna*, which relates the story of a young monk who makes an unwholesome wish to be reborn as a *Nāga* for revenge.

Nāgākumāra Stories	BAK	MPV			DIV	Other Sources
		Skt.	Tib.	Chin.		
Nāgākumāra 1 <i>vālukā</i>	§ 60	—	Eimer 1983, ii, pp. 247,17–249.3		—	T749 [XVII] 565c6–8 (?) <sup>12</sup> ; KŚ § 55, Derge 340 <i>ha</i> 189a5–193b5; RM <sup>13</sup>
Nāgākumāra 2 <i>pravrajyā</i>	—	Vogel & Wille 2014, pp.201–205	Eimer 1983, ii, pp. 249.4–255.15		—	Pali Vin. i, 86.36–88.3; T749 [XVII] 565c6–566a9 (?) <sup>14</sup> ; T1435 [XXIII] 154a27–b16
Nāgākumāra 3 <i>mithyāpraṇidhāna</i>	—	Vogel & Wille 2014, pp.162–165, 175–179	Eimer 1983, ii, pp. 302.1–306.25	T1444 [XXIII] 1037c23–1038b27	§ 24	T208 [IV] 533c19–534a7 (?)

**Table 1:** *Nāgākumāra* stories in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* traditions<sup>15</sup>

11 Vogel & Wille (2014: 98n13).

12 Rf. fn.21.

13 *Ratnamālāvadāna*: BNF N<sup>os</sup> 104–105 (ff. 269a1.2–272b1.4), Filliozat (1941: 74–75); Cambridge Ms. Add. 1615 (f. 7r1–6), (Formigatti and Cuneo: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01615/1>, last access: 28.09.2022); Tokyo University No. 34 (Matsunami New No. 027) (f. 215b4–7), Matsunami (1965: 12). This story is not yet collected in the critical edition of the *Ratnamālāvadāna*, cf. Takahata (1954).

14 Rf. fn. 21.

15 As for the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the MPV, I use the critical editions by Vogel & Wille (2014) and Eimer (1983) respectively, and here in the table I give the *locus classicus* of the text in their editions. As for the Chinese Tripiṭaka, I use

As we can see, only the Tibetan version of the MPV contains all three Nāgakumāra narratives, and furthermore arranges them into one coherent sequence of events with the insertion of two other episodes which are about: 1) a group of six disciples (*ṣaḍvārgika*) and 2) Saṃgharakṣita.<sup>16</sup> And, as Vogel & Wille (2014: 98) have mentioned, the Nāgakumāra narratives are taken to be the ‘frame story’ for the Saṃgharakṣita<sup>17</sup> story in MPV, with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgakumāra Stories to be the story of the present, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> the story of the past.<sup>18</sup> However, the Sanskrit version (Or. 11878A, British Library) of the MPV only contains the third *mithyāpraṇidhāna* story, which is parallel to the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of DIV, the Chinese version (T 1444) of MPV and an episode of a Chinese *avadāna*-anthology (T 208).<sup>19</sup> In a Turfan Sanskrit fragment (SHT 1030) we could locate the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the Nāgakumāra narratives of the MPV. And there is also a Kučā Sanskrit fragment (Pelliot Sanskrit: Numéro Rouge 12.2) which records the same story yet belonging to the Sarvāstivāda tradition.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the 2<sup>nd</sup> *pravrajyā* narrative is thematically more relevant to the *Pravrajyāvastu* context by which the phantom creature is

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the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. As for the Pali Buddhist text, I use the editions of Pali Text Society.

- 16 Panglung (1981: 8–10). The insertion of two episodes happens to be the chapters 23 and 25 of DIV. The Sanskrit manuscript Or. 11878A of MPV is incomplete, as ‘[t]he whole former part of the Nāgakumāravadāna and roughly the first quarter of the Saṃgharakṣitāvadāna have been lost in the original Sanskrit’ (Vogel & Wille 2014: 98), therefore we do not have the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of the Nāgakumāra stories in Sanskrit. Moreover, the Chinese translation of MPV (T 1444) available today is also incomplete, and the part lost is rather close to its Sanskrit counterpart, i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of the Nāgakumāra narratives as well as the former part of *Saṃgharakṣitāvadāna*, except that the Chinese text is a little bit fuller than the Sanskrit fragment. Cf. Kishino (2013: 15n38).
- 17 For the latest critical edition of the Sanskrit text (based on the earliest Sanskrit manuscripts) and Tibetan translation (Derge 4155, Peking 5655) of the *Saṃgharakṣitāvadāna* as well as the English and Chinese translations, see Meng (2020).
- 18 Cf. Panglung (1981: 8); Eimer (1983: i, 30). However, Vogel & Wille (2014: 98, 153) do not distinguish between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> of the Nāgakumāra stories.
- 19 To my knowledge, it seems that no scholar of DIV has equated the chapter 24 *Nāgakumāravadāna* of DIV to the story 10 of 眾經撰雜譬喻 (*Zhongjing zhuan za piyu*, T 208).
- 20 Vogel & Wille (2014: 201–205, 206–211).

forbidden to become a Buddhist monk, since we could also attest the same tale type in the Pali Vinaya text, in the Chinese translation of *Sarvāstivādivinaya* 十誦律 (*Shisonglü*, T 1435), and also in 佛說因緣僧護經 (*Foshuo yinyuan senghu jing*, T 749), which is another Chinese translation of *Nāgākumārāvadāna* and *Samgharakṣitāvadāna*.<sup>21</sup> As for the 1<sup>st</sup> *Nāgākumāra* narrative, it is less frequently found among the existing Buddhist literature than the other two stories, because we can only attest the complete version of the story in BAK (with its descendent version in RM)<sup>22</sup> and in KŚ, and even in the Tibetan MPV this tale is partially translated: here the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> *vālukā* narrative is taken as the introductory background for the 2<sup>nd</sup> *pravrajyā* narrative. Thus, it seems that in Tibetan MPV the 1<sup>st</sup> *Nāgākumāra* narrative breaks up half way and switches to the 2<sup>nd</sup> suddenly. And after comparing the openings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Nāgākumāra* narrative in Tibetan MPV, Pali Vinaya, T 749 and T 1435, we have reasonable doubts on the origin of the 1<sup>st</sup> in the Tibetan MPV (Cf. Appendix 1).

Anyway, the NK in the BAK only represents the 1<sup>st</sup> *Nāgākumāra* story instead of stories 2 or 3, and the KŚ, which is the fullest version of the 1<sup>st</sup> *vālukā* narrative, together with the abridged version in Tibetan MPV, might be its literary source, which I will prove in the next section. However, given the fact that Kṣemendra actively employed the MPV as the source for some chapters of BAK,<sup>23</sup> and when writing the 67<sup>th</sup> chapter *Samgharakṣitāvadāna* he closely followed the *Samgharakṣita* story in MPV which is located exactly in the same section as with all types of *Nāgākumāra* narratives,<sup>24</sup> it is quite puzzling that he chose this *vālukā*

21 Pali Vin. i: 86.36–88.3; Horner (1962: 110–112); Vogel (1926: 187–189); Warren (1953: 401–402). As for whether T 749 is cognate with MPV as belonging to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* traditions, it seems that Ware (1938) and Vogel & Wille (2014) both skip the question and take it for granted to use the T 749 for reference, but a simple glance of the text of *Samgharakṣitāvadāna* and partly of the *Nāgākumāra* stories in T 749 and Tibetan MPV would make it clear that T 749 is quite different from Tibetan MPV, and therefore it might belong to a different Buddhist school.

22 As for the relationship between BAK and the *Avadānamālā* genre in Nepal, see Okano (2005).

23 For example, chapter 19 *Śāriputrapravrajyāvādāna* and chapter 82 *Nārakapūrvikāvādāna*. Rf. Okano (2013: 162–186); Panglung (1981: 5–6, 10–11).

24 Cf. Meng (2020: 92–129).

version to write his only version of Nāgakumāra story instead of other options. Why did he not choose the *mithyāprañidhāna* story which seems more prevalent in the Buddhist literary world, more dramatic in story-plots, and more instructive in Buddhist ethics? Could it be possible that Kṣemendra actually did not have access to the full volumes of MPV, but instead only had certain stories derived from MPV available to him as separate texts?<sup>25</sup> This might be a question no one could answer now, but anyway, Kṣemendra composed his NK based on the 1<sup>st</sup> *vālukā* story, and in the following section I will compare his recomposed version with the possible source texts, the 55<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Klu*, of the KŚ and the incomplete version preserved in Tibetan MPV, so as to scrutinize the textual relation of NK, KŚ and MPV, as well as to better understand Kṣemendra's approach to representing his sources.

### 3. A comparative analysis of NK, KŚ and Tibetan MPV

#### 3.1 Verse 2

*dhananāmā samudrānte nāgo 'bhūd bahubāndhavaḥ |*  
*phaṅāratnojjvalālokakalitāpūrvavāsaraḥ || 2<sup>6</sup>*

‘Once in the sea there was a Nāga named Dhana living with many kinsmen. The splendid light of the gems on his serpent-hood impelled an unprecedented daybreak.’<sup>27</sup>

25 This leads me to a hypothesis precedent scholars have formulated that the original MPV Sanskrit manuscripts were already fragmental even during Yijing's period. Regarding the NK story here, I guess that Tibetan translators (and also Kṣemendra) perhaps also faced a fragmental MPV Sanskrit text, so much so that they had to make up a new opening to the 2<sup>nd</sup> *pravrajyā* story when realizing that this part was lost in manuscripts. And Kṣemendra also had to resort to KŚ for his sources. But this relates to a more important question of the origin of MPV, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

26 **2a** *dhananāmā*] ABC1C2ET(=Ed.): *tad yathābhūt R* || °ānte] AC1C2ERT(=Ed.): °āte B. **2b** *nāgo 'bhūd bahubāndhavaḥ*] ABC1C2ET(=Ed.): *nāgo dhanābhīdhāpurā R. 2c* *phaṅā*] ABR(=Ed.): *phaṅa A(a. c.)C1C2ET || °ojjvalā°*] A(°ojjv{ā}lā°)(=V): °ojjvalā° BC1C2ERT(=Ed.). **2d** °*kālitāpūrvavāsaraḥ*] ABC1(°k{ā}litā°)C2ER: °ka li ta pū rbba ba sa raḥ T.

27 *rgya mtsho'i mthar ni nor zhes pa'i || klu ni gnyen mang ldan pa byung ||*  
*gdengs ka'i rin cen rab 'bar gyis || snang bas sngon med nyin mor byas ||*

This is the second verse of the NK, which begins the whole story. It is clear that only in KŚ<sup>28</sup> we could locate the parallel sentence ‘a nāga king called \*Vasu lived in the great ocean’ (*rgya mtsho chen po’i nang na klu’i rgyal po dbyig ces bya ba zhig gnas te*),<sup>29</sup> yet Tibetan MPV simply starts describing Nāgas’ hot-gravel disaster directly without a detailed background.<sup>30</sup> Here in the NK we learn that the Nāga family live ‘in the sea’ (*samudrānte*; *rgya mtsho’i mthar*), which is corroborated by KŚ.<sup>31</sup> And

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2a mthar ni]: mtha’ ni CD. 2c rin cen] δEap: rin chen β | gyis]: gyi CD. 2d nyin mor byas] δEap, cf. deJ.: nyin mo byas β.

- 28 Derge *ha* 189a5–b1: *klu zhes bya ba ni | gleng gzhi mnyan du yod pa na bzhugs te | de’i tsho rgya mtsho chen po’i nang na klu’i rgyal po dbyig ces bya ba zhig gnas te | des klu’i thabs zlar bab pa las chung ma blangs nas | de de dang lhan cig rtse zhing dga’ la dga’ mgur spyod do || de nas phyi zhig na bu khye’u zhig btsas te de’i btsas ston rgyas par byas nas | bu ’di’i ming ji skad gdags zhes ming ’dogs par byed de | bu ’di dbyig gi bu yin pas na | ’di’i ming dbyig bzangs zhes gdags so zhes zer ro || de nas bu dbyig bzangs ’o ma dang zho dang mar dang zhun mar dang mar gyi nying gu rnams kyis bskyed bsrings nas | de cher skyes te ’gro nus par gyur to.* ‘When the Blessed One was in Śrāvastī, a nāga king called \*Vasu (dbyig) lived in the great ocean. When the time came for him to marry he took a nāga wife, and they enjoyed themselves and coupled. One day she gave birth to a child, and at the elaborate feast celebrating his birth they asked, “What name should we give this child?” And they named him, saying, “Since this is \*Vasu’s child, his name will be \*Vasubhadra (dbyig bzang).” Young \*Vasubhadra was reared on milk, yogurt, butter, ghee, and milk solids, and he grew up, and learned to get around’ (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: § 4.112, bold script and modified by Xiaoqiang Meng).
- 29 While Jamspal and Fischer (2020) reconstructed the name *dbyig* as \**Vasu*, the French translation of KŚ by Léon Feer (1891: 228–229) reconstructed it as \**Nidhi*; and the son’s name *dbyig bzang* here is reconstructed as \**Vasubhadra*, but Feer reconstructed it as \**Bhadranidhi*. In NK the names are *Dhana* (*nor*) and *Sudhana* (*nor bzang*) respectively.
- 30 Eimer (1983: ii, 247.17–18): *sangs rgyas bcom lan ’das mnyan yod na rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga’ rab na bzhugs so.* ‘While the Blessed Buddha was staying at Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park near Śrāvastī...’ (tr. Miller 2018: § 4.113).
- 31 While *ante* could be rendered as ‘within, inside’ (PW s.v. *anta*, BHSD s.v. *ante*), I don’t know whether Kṣemendra took it this way, or simply rendered the whole compound *samudrānte* as ‘the end of sea’, i.e., sea-shore, but if he did follow the KŚ as his source, he might be less likely to employ an obscure wording like *ante* here. But Tibetan translation here *mthar* could be interpreted as inner part

further comparison shows that in the NK there are no cliché details as seen in KŚ, such as Dhana’s marriage as well as the birth and naming ceremony of their son Sudhana, but instead other details are added, such as the ‘the gems on his serpent-hood’ (*phaṇāratna*; *gdengs ka’i rin cen*) here. Kṣemendra’s approach to represent his sources is always a topic attracting scholars, since he could sometimes closely follow or even copy his sources, but other times he deleted details according to his own preference or added details out of somewhere.<sup>32</sup> Here the *phaṇāratna* detail can also be found in the 53<sup>th</sup> chapter *Subhāṣitagaveṣyavadāna* of BAK,<sup>33</sup> and it might be his own poetic embellishment he added immediately when rephrasing this plot.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.2 Verses 3–4

*papātāharniṣaṃ tasya bhavane taptavālukā |*  
*yayāṅgeṣu bhujāṅgānāṃ tīvratāpavyathābhavat || 3*  
*kadācit sudhano nāma putraḥ papraccha taṃ priyaḥ |*  
*sukumāraḥ prakṛtyaiva vālukāparipīḍitaḥ || 4*<sup>35</sup>

(WTS s.v. *mtha*’), so we supposed that the Tibetan translators (therefore, also Kṣemendra?) understood *ante* this way. Also, cf. *samudre ’smin*; *rgya mtsho ’di na* in the verse 6 below.

- 32 E.g., Lüders (1930/1940: 44/637); Straube (2006: 32, 35–36); Silk (2008a: 138, 172–175).
- 33 *vyālāḥ phaṇāratnaruciṃ dadhānāḥ krūraṃ tamaḥ krodhamayaṃ vahanti*; *gdengs ka’i rin chen mdzes ’dzin sbrul rnam ni | gdug pa’i mun pa khro ba’i rang bzhin ’dzin*. ‘Schlangen, die mit den Juwelen in ihren Hauben Glanz verbreiten, haben eine bösertige, aus Zorn bestehende Finsternis in sich.’ (ed. & tr. Straube 2009: 158–159, 277).
- 34 This cliché description of Nāgas’ gems can also be attested in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Madhyamasvayambhūpurāna* with a similar wording, such as *tatra nāgādhipāraktastakṣakākhyah sukāntimān | samujjvalanmahāratnaṃ śrīmatphaṇo vibhūṣitaḥ* (verse 7); *tatra nāgopalālākhyo pītavarṇṇo mahākṛtiḥ | divyaratnaprabhojvāśrīmatphaṇāvibhūṣitaḥ* (verse 43). Cf. <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01469/236> [accessed 22 June 2021]. Sincere thanks are due to Dr. Felix Otter for reminding me of and providing the text.
- 35 **3b** *taptavālukā*] AC1C2ERT(=Ed.): *saptavālukā* B. **3c** *bhujāṅgānāṃ*] ABC1C2ER(=Ed.): *bhu jaṃ gā mā nāṃ* T. **3d** *tīvratāpavyathā*] ABC1C2ERT(ti bra tā pa bya thām)(=Ed.): *tīvratāvyathā* V || ‘ābhavat] BC2R(=Ed.): ‘ābhavata AC1T.



‘Hot gravel fell in his residence day and night, thus severe torment kept torturing the bodies of the serpents. Once his beloved son whose name was Sudhana, tender by nature (yet) suffered from the gravel (from youth), asked him.’<sup>36</sup>

Verses 3 and 4 introduce the inciting incident that furthers the story: the destined torture of the hot gravel (*taptavālukā*; *bye tshan dag*). We soon notice that in KŚ<sup>37</sup> the sands fall ‘three times each day and three times each night’ (*nyin dus gsum mtshan dus gsum du*), while in MPV<sup>38</sup> the fiery sands come ‘three times each day’ (*nyin mo ... .. lan gsum*), and it seems

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4a kadācit] ABC1ERT(=Ed.): kadāci, <ta>° C2. 4b papraccha tam] ABC1C2ER(=Ed.): pra ccha tām T. 4c prakṛtyaiva] BC2R(=Ed.), cf. Ś (nyid): prakṛtyeva AC1ET.

- 36 *de yi khang par nyin mtshan du || bye tshan dag ni babs gyur te ||  
gang gis lag 'gro rnam kyī lus || gdung ba drag pos nyen par gyur ||  
nor bzang zhes bya gces pa'i bu || rang bzhin nyid kyis rab gzhon pa ||  
bye mas yongs su gzir gyur pas || nam zhig de la rab tu dris ||*

3b babs gyur te] δ(TTdp)Eap: bab gyur te β. 3d nyen par gyur]: nyin par gyur Q.

- 37 Derge *ha* 189b1–2: *klu rnam kyī chos kyis ni nyin dus gsum mtshan dus gsum du lus la klu'i bye ma 'bab ste | gzhi des na de dag gis sdug bsngal drag pa dang mi bzad pa dang tsha ba dang yid du mi 'ong ba'i tshor ba myong bar 'gyur te | bu de byis pa shed ma bye ba'i bar du ni de'i lus la klu'i bye ma de mi 'bab bo || gang gi tshe cher skyes shing shed bye bar gyur pa de'i tshe ni de'i lus la yang klu'i bye ma 'bab par 'gyur te | gzhi des na des sdug bsngal drag pa dang mi bzad pa dang tsha ba dang yid du mi 'ong ba'i tshor ba myong nas | pha ma la dris pa*. ‘Now it is characteristic of the nāgas that **three times each day and three times each night the nāga sands rain down on their bodies**. This causes them to undergo dreadful suffering and extreme, excruciating, unbearable agony. **Until the day the child came into his own, the nāga sands never rained down on his body. But once he had grown and come into his own, the nāga sands rained down on him too** and caused him dreadful suffering and extreme, excruciating, unbearable agony, so he asked his **parents**.’ (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: § 4.113, bold script by Xiaoliang Meng).

- 38 Eimer (1983: ii, 247.18–23): *klu rnam kyī kun tu spyod pa ni lus la nyin mo bye ma me'i mdog lta bu lan gsum 'bab cing | des de dag rus pa'i keng rus tsam zhig lus par byed do || klu gzhon nu skyes nas ring po ma lon pa zhig gi lus la nyin mo bye ma me'i mdog lta bu lan gsum 'bab cing des de rus pa'i keng rus tsam zhig lus par byas pa dang des ma la smras pa*. ‘[It’s the custom of the nāgas that] the nāgas **thrice [each day]** felt fiery sand fall upon them, reducing their bodies to mere skeletons. After fiery sand thrice [each day] fell upon a young nāga **[soon after he was born]**, reducing his body to that of a mere skeleton, he asked his



that NK follows KŚ by using *aharniṣam*; *nyin mtshan du*. About Nāgas' suffering from hot sands, in the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Upoṣadha*, of *Avadānaśataka*, it mentions that hot sands fall seven times day by day, which description is close to MPV except for the times of sand-falling per day.<sup>39</sup>

But when does a Nāga begin to suffer from this? It is told in KŚ that only after fully growing up (*cher skyes shing shed bye bar gyur pa*) will a Nāga be bothered with the fiery sands. But in MPV it is shortly afterwards a Nāga is born (*skyes nas ring po ma lon pa*).<sup>40</sup> This information seems to be processed in a special way by Kṣemendra. In NK the *prakṛtyā* ('by nature') is allocated with *sukumāra* ('tender') by Tibetan translators (*rang bzhin nyid kyis rab gzhon pa*), but in light of the parallel text of MPV, would it be more plausible to pair it also with *vālukāpariṣṭita* ('suffered from the gravel'), thereby to interpret the *prakṛtyā* as 'originally' ('from youth') or 'by nature'? Or, Kṣemendra somehow skipped the aforementioned age information after all, and the *prakṛtyā* possibly refers to *klu rnams kyi chos kyis* ('it is characteristic of the nāgas') in KŚ or *klu rnams kyi kun tu spyod pa* ('It's the custom of the nāgas') in MPV, even though both of the Tibetan words might imply their prototype to

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**mother...**' (tr. Miller 2018: § 4.113, bold script and modification in square brackets by Xiaoqiang Meng).

39 Speyer (1902–1909: iv, 338.10–339.1): *dviṭīyenopavāsaḥ khaṇḍitaḥ | sa kālaṃ kṛtvā nāgeṣūpapannaḥ | tasyopari divase divase saptakṛtvah taptavālukā nipatati yayā so 'sthiṣeṣaḥ kriyate*. Ban de de ba tsan dra sogs kyis bsgyur (1995: 418.2–4): *cig shos kyis ni bsnyen gnas nyams par byas te de ni shi nas klu'i nang du skyes te | de'i steng du nyin gcig bzhin du lan bdun bdun bye tshan bab ste des rus pa 'ba' zhig lus par byed do*. However, in two Chinese translations, this detail is omitted: T 200 [IV] 233a15–1: 求生天者, 即便飲食, 以破齋故, 不果所願, 其後命終, 生于龍中; T 202 [IV] 353c4–5: 願生天者, 由破齋故, 乃生龍中. Another telling allusion comes from the Chinese translation of *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* 摩訶僧祇律 (*Mohe sengqilü*) which might be the same as MPV mentioning the thrice falling per day of hot sands: T 1425 [XXII] 489a9–15: 商人見龍宮中種種寶物莊嚴宮殿, 商人問言: “汝有如是莊嚴, 用受布薩為?” 答言: “我龍法有五事苦。何等五? 生時龍、眠時龍、姪時龍、瞋時龍、死時龍。一日之中三遇皮肉落地熱沙爆身。”復問: “汝欲求何等?” 答言: “我欲求人道中生。所以者何? 畜生道中苦, 不知法故。” (Bold script by Xiaoqiang Meng).

40 This detail is omitted in Miller (2018: § 4.113) but Ware (1938: 51) translates as 'having been born and having had shortly afterwards [the color of the day of sand, and of fire appear on his body three times]'

be \**dharmatā*?<sup>41</sup> It seems that here Kṣemendra did not follow KŚ but still employed a literarily wording embedded with multiple possibilities of interpretation.

Interestingly, now we spot a typical case where Kṣemendra left the traces of his (careless?) processing of the sources. In NK, Sudhana asks his father about their misfortune (*papraccha tam; de la rab tu dris*),<sup>42</sup> but in KŚ he actually asks his parents (*pha ma la dris pa*), while in MPV he asks his mother (*ma la smras pa*). However, after he gets answered, the verse 14 of NK continues as ‘having heard the words of father and mother’ (*pitur vākyaṃ jananyās ca; pha dang ma yi yang tshig dag*).<sup>43</sup> In KŚ, he also gets answer from and then answers back to his parents (*yab yum*),<sup>44</sup> yet the parallel text in MPV does not specify this detail here but the whole conversation is clearly between him and his mother. Therefore, probably Kṣemendra forgot his former choice to delete the cliché of Dhana’s marriage where the character of his wife is first introduced, also for which he had to rewrite the object Sudhana talks to here in verse 4, but when ending the long conversation in verse 14 he seemed to break the consistency yet simply copied his source, which is KŚ instead of MPV at least regarding this detail. Moreover, after verse 15, the parallel text in MPV abruptly changes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgakumāra story as said before, so from now on Kṣemendra totally relied on KŚ, and since he cut and pasted

41 Thanks are due to the anonymous reviewer for pointing out the underlying Sanskrit word of the Tibetan words. Cf. § 3.3.

42 Also rf. verse 7: *iti pṛṣṭaḥ sa putreṇa tam uvāca mahāmatiḥ; zhes pa bu yis dris de la || blo gros chen po des smras bu ||*.

43 Rf. § 3.6.

44 Derge *ha* 190a4–5: *klu’i bus smras pa | yab yum bdag gi lhan cig skyes pa’i bye ma’i sdug bsngal ’di zhi bar ’gyur ba ’ba’ zhig gi phyir yang ci nus kyis bsrung bar bgyi’o zhes smras nas | klu’i bu des lha’i me tog ud pa la dang pad ma dang ku mu da dang pad ma dkar po rnam kyis thu ba bkang ste | rgya mtsho chen po’i nang nas mi snang bar gyur nas rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal du phyin pa dang.* “**Mother, Father,**” said the young nāga, “I shall maintain them to the best of my ability, if only to assuage the sufferings of the sands innate to us.” With those words the young nāga filled up the front of his long shirt with divine blue lotus, lotus, white water lily, white lotus, and mandārava flowers, disappeared from beneath the great ocean, and traveled to the garden of Prince Jeta, where the Blessed One sat teaching the Dharma amid a company of hundreds ...’ (tr. Jampal and Fischer 2020: § 4.118, bold script by Xiaoqiang Meng).

many details, some discrepancies within the text could be attested and could only be fully understood by referring to the whole context as preserved in KŚ. But somehow, we can still understand Kṣemendra's rewritten version, and that is because he was a good storyteller.

### 3.3 Verses 5–6

*kasmād asmān iyaṃ tāta bād hate taptavālukā |  
mantramūlaprayogeṇa keneyam upasāmyati || 5  
asmadabhyadhikāḥ kecid asmatpratyavarāḥ pare |  
nāgāḥ santi samudre 'smin duḥkhārtā vayam eva kiṃ || 6<sup>45</sup>*

'Father! Why does this hot gravel (fall and) harass us? Who can stop this in the way rooted in magic? Some (Nāgas) are superior to us, others inferior, (yet they are not suffering like us). Is it only we, the serpents in this sea, who are struck by pains and sorrows?'<sup>46</sup>

From verse 5 to 13, the parallel texts in KŚ and MPV are rather close to each other and much longer, so Kṣemendra abridged long passages and cut out lengthy clichés. Here, for example, in verses 5 and 6 Sudhana raises three separate questions at three occasions to his parents, but Kṣemendra reshaped them into one question and thus avoided extra distraction. In KŚ<sup>47</sup> and MPV<sup>48</sup> the first question is actually about the duration of this hot-

45 **5a** iyaṃ tāta] ABC1C2(iyantā°)ER: i yanta ta T; °iyaṃ tā° Ed. **5b** bād hate] ABC1C2ER(=Ed.): bādha{pta}te C1(a. c.): bā pa te T. **5c** °prayogeṇa] C2, em. V: °prayogena ABC1ERT(=Ed.). **6d** vayam] ABC2ET(=Ed.): {ca bhū}vayam C1.

46 *yab cig bye ma tsha ba 'dis || bdag cag ci slad gdung bar byed ||  
sngags dang rtsa ba'i sbyor ba dag || ci yi nye bar zhi bar 'gyur ||  
'ga' zhig bdag las lhag pa dang || gzhan ni bdag las dman pa yi ||  
klu ni rgya mtsho 'di na gnas || yu nyid sdug bsngal gyis gzir ci ||*

**5a** yab cig] β: ci ga EapTTdp: yab gcig CD: lha cig em. Ed., cf. def. **5d** yi] TTdp, cf. def.:  
yis βCDEap || 'gyur] δEap: gyur β. **6c** klu ni] δEap(=Ed.): klu rnams β.

47 Rf. Derge *ha* 189b2–6 in Appendix 2.

48 Eimer (1983: ii, 247.23–248.13): *ma bdag gis yun ji srid cig tu sdug bsngal 'di lta bu mnag bar bgyi 'tshal | bu ji srid du ris mthun pa yod kyi bar du'o || de na klu rdzu 'phrul che ba dang mthu che ba gzhan gang dag yin pa de dag gi lus la bye ma me'i mdog lta bu mi 'bab nas des smras pa | ma 'di dag la ci'i phyir mi 'bab | mas smras pa | 'di dag ni rdzu 'phrul che ba | mthu che ba | bskal par gnas pa | sa*

sand calamity for Sudhana, while in NK it is about the cause of (and the antidote to) this punishment. Given that in the previous verses 3–4 Kṣemendra omitted the crucial information about the origin of the hot-sand calamity, i.e., Nāgas’ *\*dharma* or *\*samudācāra*,<sup>49</sup> from his sources, it seems consistent and reasonable to raise the question of the origin here in the verses 5–6. Nowhere else had Kṣemendra picked up the question of duration in NK again, and in KŚ and MPV the answer is that Nāgas have to suffer all their lives<sup>50</sup> which somehow contradicts the former passage defining that Nāgas begin to suffer when they are fully grown up (in KŚ) or shortly after being born (in MPV). Could it be possible that Kṣemendra tried to remove this contradiction by simply skipping this question, or by using *prakṛtyā* in verse 4?

The next two questions individually raised in KŚ and MPV are reduced to a half verse in verse 5: *asmadabhyadhikāḥ kecid asmatpratyavarāḥ pare*. Here, two kinds of Nāgas living elsewhere are categorized as those superior (*abhyadhika*; *lhag pa*) and those inferior (*pratyavara*; *dman pa*) to the Nāgas of Sudhana’s family. While in verse 7 Kṣemendra seems to ascribe

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*'dzin pa | 'dab chags kyi rgyal po 'dab bzañs kyis dbyung bar mi nus pa yin pas de'i phyir 'di dag la mi 'bab bo || de na klu phra mo gzhan gang dag yin pa de dag gi lus la yang bye ma me'i mdog lta bu mi 'bab nas | des smras pa | ma 'di dag la ni rigs na 'di dag la ci'i phyir mi 'bab.* “Mother, **how long must I endure such suffering?**” “Son, **for as long as you are in this life.**” Through all of this, fiery sand had not fallen on other nāgas who **possessed miraculous powers and great might**, prompting him to ask, “Mother, why did it not fall upon them?” His mother replied, “It did not fall upon them because they **possess miraculous powers and great might**; they live for eons and they sustain the earth. Even the garuḍa Suparṇi could not dislodge them.” Through all of this, fiery sand had not fallen on a number of scrawny nāgas either, prompting him to ask, “Mother, why did it not fall upon those of their type?” (tr. Miller 2018: §§ 4.113–115, bold script by Xiaoqiang Meng).

49 Rf § 3.2: *klu rnams kyi chos kyis* (‘it is characteristic of the nāgas’) in KŚ; *klu rnams kyi kun tu spyod pa* (‘It’s the custom of the nāgas’) in MPV. Rf. NEGI s.v. *kun tu spyod pa*; WTS s.v. *kun tu spyod pa*.

50 KŚ: *ji srid du skal ba mnyam pa 'di yod pa*; MPV: *ji srid du ris mthun pa yod kyi bar du*. The anonymous reviewer kindly suggests that ‘the text does not literally say “all their lives” and so can be understood as having the time of the question being asked (when the suffering has already started) as the point of reference.’

both their escapes from the hot sands to their being Buddhist followers,<sup>51</sup> in the parallel texts only those inferior Nāgas are defined so. And those superior Nāgas are spared because of their being great and mighty (*che bar grags pa* in KŚ; *'phrul che ba dang mthu che ba* in MPV).<sup>52</sup>

Even though KŚ and MPV are closer here, it seems that Kṣemendra still chose to follow KŚ more than MPV. As shown in **table 2**, it seems that in BAK as well as in KŚ Sudhana respectively dByig bzang expresses his confused and desperate state more explicitly in the conversation, while in MPV he simply raises questions without any emotional expression. It is *pādas* c and d of verse 6 (*nāgāḥ santi samudre 'smin duḥkhārtā vāyam eva kim*; 'Is it only we, the serpents in this sea, who are struck by pains and sorrows?'), of which the anguished tone is rather similar to KŚ, more so in the context of being compared with Nāgas elsewhere as seen in *pāda* a and b. In KŚ it is told that 'I think we have fallen into a lower realm' (*log par ltung bar gyur pa 'dra na*), which reminds of the *duḥkhārtā vāyam* in verse 6, while in MPV no similar words of moaning can be attested. Also, in KŚ it says: 'Mother, Father, are you telling me that these are all [great] nāgas [famed to be great], and that because of their [being famed to be great] nāgas sand isn't raining down on their bodies? For there are some here who are even more wretched than we are. Why then, if nāga sand isn't raining down on their bodies, is it still raining down on ours?' (*yab yum khyed gnyis na re klu chen po 'di dag ni che bar grags pa yin te | che bar grags pa yin pas na 'di dag gi lus la klu'i bye ma mi 'bab bo zhe na | 'di na bdag cag pas ches ngan pa gzhan dag kyang yod na | ci'i phyir de dag la ni klu'i bye ma mi 'bab la bdag cag la ni 'bab*). Here the great and the wretched Nāgas are juxtaposed in the question, somehow reminding of the similar wording in *pāda* a and b of verse 6: *asmadabhyadhikāḥ kecid asmatpratyaavarāḥ pare*

51 *iti pṛṣṭaḥ sa putreṇa tam uvāca mahāmatiḥ | yathānye phaṇinaḥ putra dharmajñā na tathā vāyam* || [7] 'Thus questioned by the son, that Great-minded told him: "(My) son! Dharma-knowers are the other serpents, but not are we (as like)."'

52 *Che bar grags pa* in KŚ is translated as 'great renown' (Jamspal and Fischer 2020: § 4.114), or 'une grande réputation' (Feer 1891: 228–229). *'phrul che ba dang mthu che ba* in MPV is translated as 'miraculous powers and great might' (Miller 2018: § 4.114), or 'great magic and great witchcraft' (Ware 1938: 51–52). It seems that Kṣemendra's wording of *mantramūlaprayogeṇa* in verse 5 is inspired by MPV here. Thanks to Dr. Péter-Dániel Szántó for helping me with the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts.

(‘some (Nāgas) are superior to us, others inferior’), but such juxtaposition of two groups of Nāgas in a single question is again absent in MPV. In contrast, in MPV we only have two questions concerning the respective conditions of those two groups of Nāgas sequentially and briefly, which suggests a tone more factual and less emotional. Moreover, there is extra information related to the Nāgas with miraculous powers and great might (*’phrul che ba dang mthu che ba*) in MPV which is not seen either in BAK nor in KŚ: ‘... they live for eons and they sustain the earth. Even the garuḍa Suparṇi could not dislodge them ...’ (*bskal par gnas pa | sa ’dzin pa | ’dab chags kyi rgyal po ’dab bzañs kyis dbyung bar mi nus pa yin pas*). Therefore, Kṣemendra here seems to follow KŚ more than MPV regarding speech tone, verbal wording and essential information, though we cannot deny that KŚ and MPV are textually rather close to each other.

### 3.4 Verses 10–11

*śikṣāpadāny avāptāni kleśaprasāmanāni yaiḥ |*  
*teṣāṃ amṛtasiktānāṃ pāpatāpabhayaṃ kutaḥ || 10*  
*śrāvastyāṃ asti bhagavān jino jetavanāśrayaḥ |*  
*loke śākyamuniḥ sarvakleśaprasāmanābandhavaḥ || 11<sup>53</sup>*

‘With the moral precepts obtained, the affliction tranquillized, they are sprinkled with nectar. (For them,) whence would the misfortune, sorrow and fear come? In Śrāvastī, dwelling in the Jetavana Grove is the victorious World-exalted Śākyamuni, who is the friend tranquilizing all the afflictions in the world.’<sup>54</sup>

Verses 7–9 are skipped since they are mainly the poetic embellishment of Kṣemendra, and seem less helpful for us to understand the relation-

53 **10a** śikṣā°] ABC1C2E: śi kṣa T. **11a** śrāvastyāṃ asti] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): śrā bastya māsti T. **11c** loke śākyā°] ABC1C2ET(=Ed.): loke {na} śākyā° A(a. c.)E(a. c.). **11d** °kleśa°] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): (kla TTdp: klai CD) śa T.

54 *gang gis nyon mongs rab zhi ba’i || bslab pa’i gnas rnam s thob gyur cing ||*  
*bdud rtsis bran pa de dag la || sdig dang ’jigs pa gang la spyod ||*  
*shā kya thub pa ’jig rten gyi || nyon mongs thams cad rab zhi’i gnyen ||*  
*rgyal ba rgyal byed tshal gnas pa || mnyan yod na ni bcom ldan yod ||*

**10d** dang] δEap(=Ed.): gdung β || spyod] δEap, cf. def.: yod β. **11a** gyi] δEap(=Ed.): gyis β.

BAK	KŚ	MPV
<p><i>asmadabhyadhikāḥ</i> kecid  <i>asmatpratyavarāḥ</i> pare    <i>nāgāḥ</i> santi samudre 'smin  <i>duḥkḥāntā</i> vāyam eva kim   </p> <p>'ga' zhig bdag las <b>lhag pa dang</b>               gzhan ni bdag las <b>dman pa yi</b>               klu ni rgya msho 'di na gnas               yu nyid sdug bsngal gyis gzir ci   </p> <p>Some (Nāgas) are <b>superior</b> to us, others <b>inferior</b>, (yet they are not suffering like us). <b>Is it only we, the serpents in this sea, who are struck by pains and sorrows?</b></p>	<p>de nas bu des bltas na   <b>klu chen po gzhan dag gi lus la klu'i</b> bye ma mi 'bab pa mthong ngo    mthong nas kyang pha ma la dris pa   yab yum <b>log par ltung bar gyur pa 'dra na</b>   ci'i phyir klu <b>chen po 'di dag gi lus la ni klu'i</b> bye ma mi 'bab la   <b>bdag cag gi lus la ni 'bab</b>   pha mas de la smras pa   klu chen po 'di dag ni <b>che bar grags pa yin te</b>   <b>che bar grags pa yin pas na de dag la ni mi 'bab bo</b>    de nas des bltas na rgya msho chen po de'i nang na <b>klu bdag cag pas ches ngan pa</b> de dag gi lus la yang klu'i bye ma mi 'bab par mthong ngo    mthong nas kyang pha ma la smras pa   yab yum khyed gnyis na re <b>klu chen po 'di dag ni che bar grags pa yin te</b>   <b>che bar grags pa yin pas na 'di dag gi lus la klu'i</b> bye ma mi 'bab bo zhe na   <b>di na bdag cag pas ches ngan pa gzhan dag kyang yod na</b>   ci'i phyir de dag la ni klu'i bye ma mi 'bab la bdag cag la ni 'bab</p> <p>The young nāga looked and saw that the nāga sands didn't rain down on the bodies of other [great] nāgas. Seeing this he asked his parents, "Mother, Father, I think we have fallen into a <b>lower realm</b>. For if the nāga sands don't rain down on those <b>high</b> nāgas there, <b>why do they rain down on our bodies?</b>" "Those <b>high</b> nāgas are [famed to be great]," his parents replied. "It's because of their [being famed to be great] that they aren't rained down upon." Then he looked and saw that in the great ocean there were <b>some nāgas who were even more wretched</b> than they were, but nāga sand wasn't raining down on their bodies. Seeing this, he asked his parents, "Mother, Father, are you telling me that these are all [great] nāgas [famed to be great], and that because of their [being famed to be great] nāga sand isn't raining down on their bodies? For there are <b>some here who are even more wretched</b> than we are. Why then, if nāga sand isn't raining down on their bodies, is it still raining down on ours?"</p>	<p>de na klu rdzu 'phrul che ba dang mthlu che ba gzhan gang dag yin pa de dag gi lus la bye ma me'i mdog ta bu mi 'bab nas des smras pa   ma 'di dag la ci'i phyir mi 'bab   mas smras pa   'di dag ni rdzu 'phrul che ba   mthlu che ba   bskal par gnas pa   sa 'dzin pa   'dab chags kyi rgyal po 'dab bzans kyiis dbyung bar mi nus pa yin pas de'i phyir 'di dag la mi 'bab bo    de na klu phra mo gzhan gang dag yin pa de dag gi lus la yang bye ma me'i mdog ta bu mi 'bab nas   des smras pa   ma 'di dag la ni rigs na 'di dag ta ci'i phyir mi 'bab</p> <p>Through all of this, fiery sand had not fallen on other nāgas <b>who possessed miraculous powers and great might</b>, prompting him to ask, "Mother, why did it not fall upon them?" His mother replied, "It did not fall upon them because they possess <b>miraculous powers and great might; they live for eons and they sustain the earth</b>. Even the garuḍa Suparni could not dislodge them." Through all of this, fiery sand had not fallen on a number of <b>scrawny nāgas</b> either, prompting him to ask, "Mother, why did it not fall upon those of their type?"</p>

Table 2: Comparing BAK 60.6 with the parallel texts in KŚ and MPV



ship between NK and its sources. But verses 10 and 11 are particularly illuminant, since they provide evidence that Kṣemendra indeed followed the parallel text of KŚ, but he seemed to also consult and employ MPV to a fair amount.

As Dhana answers his son why those inferior Nāgas are spared from the sand punishment, he reveals that it is because they are learned in Buddhist doctrine (verse 7: *dharmajñā*) and granted with moral precepts (*śikṣāpada*) that there is no gravel falling on them. Here in verse 10, those inferior Nāgas are described as being ‘sprinkled with nectar’ (*amṛtasiktānām*; *bdud rtsis bran pa*), a metaphor which Kṣemendra seemed to appropriate from KŚ:<sup>55</sup> ‘He [the Buddha] has let fall a rain of nectar’ (*de ni bdud rtsi’i char ’bebs pas*), from which verse 12 ‘he rains down the nectar’ (*amṛtaṃ so ’bhivarṣati*; *bdud rtsi’i char pa mngon par ’bebs*) is directly derived and verse 10 indirectly adapted.<sup>56</sup> Also in verse 12, Buddha is described as giving out moonlight (*karuṇākaumudīsūtir*; *snying rje zla ba’i ’od bskyed*) and raining down the nectar, a comparison which seems to be attested in Mātrceṭa’s *Śatapañcāsatka: asmād dhi netrasubhagād idaṃ śrutimanoharam | mukhāt kṣarati te vākyaṃ candrād dravam ivāmṛtam*, ‘For from this mouth of yours, pleasing to the eye, this your most ear-entrancing speech drops like nectar flowing from the moon’.<sup>57</sup> Kṣemendra might be employing a well-known Buddhist allusion here.

55 Derge *ha* 189b7–190a1: *de nas de thos ma thag tu bu de shin tu dga’ bar gyur te | smras pa yab yum de dag gi skyabs su ’gro ba dang bslab pa’i gzhi rnam ga las byung | de gnyis kyis smras pa | yul dbus ’dir sangs rgyas byung ste | de ni bdud rtsi’i char ’bebs pas | de las de dag gi skyabs su ’gro ba dang bslab pa’i gzhi rnam byung ngo*. ‘When he heard this, he surged with joy. “Mother, Father,” he asked, “how is that they came to take refuge and the fundamental precepts?” “A buddha has arisen here, in this central land,” they said. “He has let fall a rain of nectar, and so they have come to take refuge and the fundamental precepts”’ (tr. Jampal and Fischer 2020: § 4.116).

56 *upadeśaṃsunivahaiḥ sattvaśubhrai jagattraye | karuṇākaumudīsūtir amṛtaṃ so ’bhivarṣati* || [12]  
‘Producing the moonlight “compassion”, he rains down the nectar upon the Three-worlds, by multitudes of rays “instruction” which are as radiant as [Bo-dhi-]sattvas’.

57 The Chinese parallel text is: 睹者皆欢喜, 闻说并心开, 美颜宣妙词, 如月流甘露 (T 1680 [XXXII] 760a23–24). Tibetan translation is: *gsung ’di dag ni zla ba las | bdud rtsi ’dzag pa bzhin du ’byung*. dGa’ byed snyan pa’s commentary is: *zla ba*



Then in verse 11, Kṣemendra for the first time introduced the Buddha into the scenario, setting him in the Jetavana Grove of Śrāvastī (*śrāvastyām asti bhagavān jino jetavanāśrayaḥ; shā kya thub pa 'jig rten gyi ... rgyal ba rgyal byed tshal gnas pa*). After comparing with KŚ which briefly mentions that a Buddha has appeared in the central land (*yul dbus, Madhyadeśa*), we assume that Kṣemendra rather chose and adapted the outset sentence of the Tibetan MPV,<sup>58</sup> and enriched the brief and general reference of Buddha's position here in KŚ with the more detailed information present in MPV. In fact, at the outset of the KŚ there is also the information about Buddha's residence: 'When the Blessed One was in Śrāvastī' (*gleng gzhi mnyan du yod pa na bzhugs te*, rf. § 3.1), henceforth it seems that Kṣemendra may well have coined the pāda a and b of the verse 11 himself based on this sentence as well as the following passage in KŚ which reveals that Sudhana goes to Jetavana for Buddha. Therefore, he did not necessarily have to refer to MPV at all. However, given that Kṣemendra tended to copy the factual information from sources, while only adding poetic embellishment only to strengthen the aesthetic sentiment of the representation of the original storyline, he seems less likely to have bothered to add extra information himself, even less so when there is source already available for him to copy.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Kṣemendra mostly based his NK on the parallel text in KŚ, but sometimes he also appropriated available sources such as MPV in order to enhance plot-coherency.

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*ni bdud rtsi'i rang bzhin no zhes 'jig rten la grags pa'o || ji ltar de las zhu ba'i rang bzhin gyi bdud rtsi 'dzag pa de bzhin du | bcom ldan 'das kyi zhal gyi zla ba las don dam pa dang mya ngan las 'das pa thob pa'i phyir na gsung kho na bdud rtsi 'dzag pa bzhin 'byung ng.* Rf. Bailey (1951: 88–89, 166). As noted by Bailey, Kṣemendra used the same metaphor in the verse 86 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter *Śrīsenāvadāna* of BAK: *pūrṇendusundarād asmād uditā vadanāt tava | jyotsneva jīvaty eva vāṇī piyūśavarṣiṇī*, 'The speech issued from your face, lovely like the full moon, revives just like nectar-showering moonlight' (ed. & tr. Rothenberg 1990: 78, 170).

58 Eimer (1983: ii, 247.17–18): *sangs rgyas bcom lan 'das mnyan yod na rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' rab na bzhugs so*. 'While the Blessed Buddha was staying at Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park near Śrāvastī ...' (tr. Miller 2018: § 4.113).

59 However, as we have no strong evidence of the version of the MPV he consulted, we cannot reject the possibility that he directly copied from HIS MPV when writing verse 11.

## 3.5 Verse 13

*durvinītā na rakṣanti prāpya śikṣāpadāni ye |*  
*tīvratāpamayasa teṣāṃ narakeṣv akṣayaḥ kṣayaḥ || 13<sup>60</sup>*

‘Having obtained the moral precepts, the undisciplined ones cannot guard. As for them, the (only) imperishable thing is to perish in the hell which consists of severe pains and sorrows.’<sup>61</sup>

Having heard that Buddhist precepts can rescue him from the fiery sands, Sudhana proposes to adopt them, too. However, he is then sternly dissuaded since if he could not maintain the bestowed precepts, the ensuing retribution is much harsher than the hot-sand calamity: perishing in hell endlessly (*narakeṣv akṣayaḥ kṣayaḥ*; *dmyal bar mi bzad pas ... brlag par ’gyur*). Compared with KŚ<sup>62</sup> and MPV,<sup>63</sup> the description of the retribution as seen in NK seems closer to MPV than to KŚ. In MPV, one not guarding the precepts, ‘will have to endure suffering as a denizen in the hell realms for a long time to come’ (*yun ring por sems can dmyal bar sdug bsngal mnag par bya dgos*). While in KŚ, if you fail to maintain the

60 **13a** rakṣanti] B(rakṣati)C2E(=Ed.), cf. Ś (srung ba): rakṣyanti AC1T. **13b** śikṣā°] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): śi kṣa T || ye] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): ya T. **13c** °tāpa°] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): tā sa T. **13d** akṣayaḥ] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): a kṣa ya T.

61 *gang zhig rnam par ma thul bas || bslab pa’i gnas thob mi srung ba ||*  
*de dag dmyal bar mi bzad pas || gdung ba drag pos brlag par ’gyur ||*  
**13c** dmyal bar]: dmyal ba Ed. || bzad pas] δEap(=Ed.), cf. deJ.: bzad pa’i β. **13d** gdung  
 ba] βEapTTdp(=Ed.): gdab ba CD.

62 Rf. Derge *ha* 190a1–4 in Appendix 3.

63 Eimer (1983: ii, 248.14–20): *des smras pa | gal te de lta na bdag gis kyang bcom ldan*  
*’das kyi spyang snga nas skyabs su ’gro ba dang | bslab pa’i gzhi dag blang ngo || mas*  
*smras pa | bu tshe gcig gi sdug bsngal ni bla’i | tshe rabs mang po’i ni ma yin te | gal*  
*te khyod kyi bcom ldan ’das kyi spyang snga nas skyabs su ’gro ba dang | bslab pa’i*  
*gzhi dag blangs nas | yang dag par ma bsrungs na | yun ring por sems can dmyal*  
*bar sdug bsngal mnag par bya dgos so.* “If that is so, then I too shall take refuge  
 and adopt the precepts in the presence of the Blessed One.” “Son, a single life’s  
 suffering is easy to bear, that of many lifetimes is not. If you take refuge and  
 adopt the precepts in the presence of the Blessed One, but then do not properly  
 heed them, you will have to endure suffering as a denizen in the hell realms for  
 a long time to come” (tr. Miller 2018: §§ 4.115–116).

precepts, ‘it will be the basis of your taking rebirth as a hell being, an animal, or an anguished spirit, where you will undergo great suffering’ (*gzhi de las sems can dmyal ba dang dud ’gro dang yi dgas su skyes nas sdug bsngal chen po rnams myong bar ’gyur te*). It is obvious that Kṣemendra composed *pāda* c and d by means of poetic reformation of the parallel text in MPV. For example, not mentioned at all in KŚ, but the time limit to suffer in hell, i.e., *yun ring por* (‘for a long time’) in MPV, is adapted into *akṣaya* in NK, of which the Tibetan translation *mi bzad pas* (‘intolerably’, < \**asahya*,<sup>64</sup> or \**asadyas*?) seems to be less accurate. In contrast, the text in KŚ has a slightly different point, since it emphasizes that the great pain comes from being reborn into three unwholesome births, i.e., *naraka*, *preta* and *tiryāṅc*, while MPV simply concentrates on the situation of being in hell, even though it also warns about the danger of numerous rebirths (*tshe gcig gi sdug bsngal ni bla’i | tshe rabs mang po’i ni ma yin te*). Therefore, it is possible that Kṣemendra followed MPV instead of KŚ when composing this line, and he chose to base on a shorter text probably to avoid dispensable information.

### 3.6 Verses 14–15, 23

*iti śrutvā pitur vākyaṃ jananyāś ca bhujāṅgamaḥ |*  
*ādāya divyapuṣpāṇi puṇyaṃ jetavanaṃ yayau || 14*  
*sugatāśramam āsādya dharmāśravaṇasamgatām |*  
*dadarśa parśadam tatra sa santoṣamukhonmukhaḥ || 15*  
*praṇānāma sa taṃ kīrṇasampūrṇakusumāñjaliḥ |*  
*tatpādapadmasparśena sadyaḥ śītalatāṃ gataḥ || 23*<sup>65</sup>

‘Thus, having heard the words of the father and mother, the serpent went to the holy Jetavana Grove, after taking celestial flowers. Having reached Sugata’s hermitage, he saw an assem-

64 Cf. NEGI s.v. *mi bzad pa*.

65 **14b** *bhujāṅgamaḥ*] BC1C2ET(=Ed.): *bhujāṅgamuḥ* A: *bhu’jamṅgamaḥ* B(a. c.). **14d** *puṇyaṃ*] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): *pu ṇya* T || *jetavanaṃ*] ABC1C2ET(=Ed.): *jetava{nāṃ}*] A(a. c.): <je>*tavanaṃ* E(a. c.). **15a** *sugatā*] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): *su ga ta* T. **15d** *°mukhonmukhaḥ*] C1C2, cf. Ś(sgor ni mngon phyogs): *mu khyon-mu khaḥ* T: *°sukhonmukhāṃ* ABE, cf. deJ.: *°sukhonmukhiṃ* Ed. **23a** *praṇā*] ABC1C2E(=Ed.): *pra ṇā*° T || *sa taṃ kīrṇa*] AC1C2(=Ed.): *śataṃ kīrṇa*° BE: *pa taṃ ki rṇa*° T. **23d** *sadyaḥ*] AC1C2ET: *samdyāḥ* B.

bly consisting of people listening to (the Buddha's) Dharma(-preaching). There he looked up with his face in satisfaction ... With handfuls of flowers perfectly scattered, he (Sudhana) paid homage to him (the Buddha) with a touch of his (the Buddha's) foot-lotus, and immediately became cold and calm.<sup>66</sup>

Here again verses 16–22 are skipped because they are more or less Kṣemendra's own poetic composition, though to some degree inspired by the original description present in KŚ, elucidating on the Buddha's great physical appearance.

Resolved to take refuge in the Buddha, Sudhana sets out for the Jetavana Grove where the Buddha abides. Then, substantial divergence regarding the storyline appears between KŚ<sup>67</sup> and MPV,<sup>68</sup> and Kṣemendra again followed the scenario of KŚ in general.

As for Sudhana's preparatory action before meeting the Buddha, KŚ tells that he collects a variety of flowers in order to scatter over the Bud-

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66 *zhes pa pha dang ma yi yang || tshig dag thos nas lag 'gro ni ||  
me tog mchog dag yongs bzung nas || dag pa'i rgyal byed tshal du song ||  
chog shes sgor ni mngon phyogs des || bde bar gshegs pa'i gnas phyin te ||  
der ni chos dag nyan pa la || tshogs pa'i 'khor dag mthong bar gyur ||  
snyim pa me tog gis gang ba || de la gtor nas des phyag 'tshal ||  
de yi zhabs pad reg pa yis || 'phral la bsil ba nyid du gyur ||*  
23a gang ba] βCDTdp(=Ed): gdu ba T: bkang ba Eap. 23b 'tshal] β, cf. deJ.: btsal δ: la  
Eap: gsal Ed.

67 Rf. Derge *ha* 190a4–b1 in Appendix 4.

68 Eimer (1983: ii, 248.21–249.4): *des bsams pa | sdug bsngal 'di bas ches sdug bsngal  
bar 'gyur ba ci zhig yod kyis | bcom ldan 'das kyi spyen sngar skyabs su 'gro ba  
dang | bslab pa'i gzhi dag len du 'gro 'o snyam nas | des bram ze'i cha lugs su mngon  
par sprul nas rgyal byed kyi tshal du song pa dang | ji tsam na des dge slong dag  
bsam gtan dang | klog pa dang | rnal 'byor dang | yid la byed par brtson zhing | gnas  
pa mthong ngo || mthong nas kyang dad pa skeyes te | des bsams pa | ji je dang por  
skyabs su 'gro ba dang | bslab pa'i gzhi dag blang ngam | 'on te rab tu 'byung bar bya  
snyam mo || des yang bsams pa | rab tu 'byung bar bya'o snyam.* 'The young nāga  
thought, "What suffering could be worse than my present suffering? I shall take  
refuge and adopt the precepts in the presence of the Blessed One." Conjuring  
up the appearance of a brahmin, he set off for Jetavana, where he saw monks  
applying themselves to and abiding in meditation, recitation, yoga, and concentra-  
tion. Upon seeing them, he felt faith and thought, "Oh my! Should I first take  
refuge and adopt the precepts or go forth?"' (tr. Miller 2018: § 4.117)

dha as homage (*klu'i bu des lha'i me tog ud pa la dang pad ma dang ku mu da dang pad ma dkar po rnam kyis thu ba bkang ... bcom ldan 'das la lha'i me tog ud pa la dang pad ma dang ku mu da dang | pad ma dkar po rnam kyis gtor*). And this detail is clearly present in NK as 'after taking celestial flowers' (*ādāya divyapuṣpāṇi; me tog mchog dag yongs bzung*) and 'with handfuls of flowers perfectly scattered' (*kīrṇasampūrṇakusumāñjaliḥ; snyim pa me tog gis ... gtor*). However, as mentioned, after verse 15, the parallel text in MPV switches to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgākumāra story, henceforth in MPV there is a different preparatory work, as the Nāga transforms himself into a brahmin (*bram ze'i cha lugs su mngon par sprul*) before setting off. And this detail could be corroborated in other parallel versions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgākumāra narrative.<sup>69</sup> So concerning this preparatory action, Kṣemendra obviously followed KŚ rather than MPV.

In verse 15, when Sudhana arrives at the Buddhist hermitage (*sugātāśramam; bde bar gshegs pa'i gnas*), he sees an assembly of people listening to the Buddha's preaching, by which he becomes satisfied (*santoṣa-mukhonmukhaḥ; chog shes sgor ni mngon phyogs des*).<sup>70</sup> In MPV, the Nāga actually sees no Buddha but a group of diligent monks, and by the glance of them he generates faith (*dad pa skyes*). But in KŚ dByig bzang does see the Buddha who is teaching Dharma in an assembly of hundred (*de'i tshes bcom ldan 'das 'khor brgya phrag du ma'i nang na chos ston cing bzhugs*). He sees the Buddha from afar and feels great happiness (*de nas klu'i bu*

69 Rf. Appendix 1. In the Kuçā *Sarvāstivādinaya* fragment, it is told that 'he [the Nāga] changed into a human body' (*manuṣyavarṇam ātmānam abhinirmīya*). In the Pali *Mahāvagga*, it says that 'in the form of a brahmin youth' (*māṇavakavaṇṇena*). T 749 [XVII] 565c6–8 tells that 'after transforming into a human' (變為人形), while T 1435 [XXIII] 154a27–8 gives 'he changed into a human body' (變爲人身). And the Tibetan MPV specifies that the Nāga transforms into a brahmin (*bram ze*), a detail that is corroborated in the Pali parallel text.

70 Concerning the reading of °*mukhonmukhaḥ* in *pāda* d of this verse, it is notable that the earliest Sanskrit manuscripts C1 and C2, the Tibetan transcription of the Sanskrit text in the Bilingual edition, as well as Tibetan translation all support this reading, while the later Sanskrit manuscripts A, B and E give °*sukhonmukhām*. Considering the parallel text, we know that this compound word is less likely to be allocated with *parśadam*, thus it cannot be f.sg.acc. Rather, it makes more sense to read it as m.sg.nom, thus pairing it with Sudhana (*sa*). Also, the reading °*mukha*° instead of °*sukha*° should be preferred, a situation which also happens in verse 141 of the 59<sup>th</sup> chapter *Kuṇālāvadāna* of BAK. Cf. Yamasaki (2019: 71–72).

*des thag ring po zhig ... mthong nas kyang mchog tu dga' ba skyes te*). So, again Kṣemendra composed verse 15 based on his source KŚ.

Moreover, in verse 23 we learn that after Sudhana pays homage by touching the Buddha's feet, he soon feels cooling down (*śītalatāṃ gataḥ; bsil ba nyid du gyur*). While in MPV the Nāga actually does not meet the Buddha in the beginning at all, in KŚ Sudhana becomes spared from the hot-gravel calamity (*de'i klu'i bye ma med par gyur*) only after he pays homage to the Buddha, obtains fundamental precepts and listens to the Buddhist Dharma. It seems that Kṣemendra used literary language to describe the fact that Sudhana will never be burnt by fiery sands again, thus he is cooling down once and for all. Also, this line recalls verse 11 where the Buddha is featured as 'the friend tranquilizing all the afflictions' (*sarvakleśaprasāmbāndhavaḥ; nyon mongs thams cad rab zhi'i gnyen*). Therefore, verses 14–15 and 23 are written based on the source KŚ in terms of general plot as well as focalized scenes.

#### 4. BAK mirrored in a spectrum of diverse sources

The remaining verses are omitted since, as mentioned above, after verse 15 MPV changes to another type of Nāgakumāra narrative, thus it sheds less light on the understanding of textual relation between NK, KŚ and MPV. But after comparing verses 2–6, 10–11, 13–15 and 23 in light of the parallel texts, with a particular attention to the general plot line, literary embellishment, narrative coherency and close-up scenes, we now arrive at the preliminary conclusion that Kṣemendra chose the *vālukā* version of the Nāgakumāra story, and generally recomposed his version based on the full recension of the story preserved in KŚ, while it seems he was conscious of a 'simpler version' of the same story available in MPV and probably had adopted it to some degree.

Actually, Kṣemendra might have employed KŚ as his source widely when compiling his voluminous BAK, and after a preliminary yet surely not thorough comparison of the texts of all the stories of BAK and KŚ, we have found 16 chapters in BAK, apart from NK, which are textually parallel to the chapters in KŚ, sometimes closer in content than to the other possible sources such as *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya-vastus* (table 3). There is no doubt that more rigorous and detailed analysis should be applied when seeking for textual sources in KŚ, but this table is just used

as a reference. Interestingly, Kṣemendra sometimes repeated the use of one topos in different chapters. For example, it seems that Kṣemendra repeats the Kṣāntivādin narrative in chapter 30, 39 and 76, and there are also parallel tales of these in KŚ.<sup>71</sup>

	BAK		KŚ		Studies on BAK
1	30	Kāsisundara	89	Sa ra na	Okano 2010
2	39	Kṣāntirati			
3	31	Suvarṇpārsva	29	Dom	Hikita & Oba 2015
4	37	Pūrṇa	28	dByig dga'	Hikita & Oba 2017
5	43	Kanaka	47	Kham	—
6	58	Puṇyabala	48	Byams pa'i stobs	Hikita 2010
7	61	Karṣaka	43	Zhing pa	Hikita 2007
8	76	Vidura	18	sGam po	Okano 2010
			85	Long ba	
9	77	Kaineyaka	34	Kai ne ya	Okano 2010
10	78	Śakracyavana	115	brGya byin	Okano 2011
11	80	Subhadra	79	Rab bzang	Okano 2012
12	40	Kapila			
13	81	Hetūttama	49	rLung nag po	Okano 2012
14	87	Padmaka	21	Pad ma'i mdog	Zinkgräf 1940
15	91	Śibisubhāṣita	125, 126	Shi bi	Okano 2008; Straube 2009
16	97	Kacchapa	50, 51	Grog ma	Okano 2009

**Table 3:** Parallel tales between BAK and KŚ

However, the question remains whether Kṣemendra indeed consulted and even based his versions of these individual chapters on the prototypes derived from the very KŚ. We have to admit that the case of NK is rather exceptional, because the *vālukā* Nāgakumāra story is rarely found in the Buddhist literature we have today, yet the perfect matching between NK and the 55<sup>th</sup> chapter, *Klu*, of KŚ proves that Kṣemendra picked the prototype of NK from a text very close to KŚ. In contrast, as for other chapters of which their topoi are more prevalent, is it still the case that Kṣemendra

71 See Okano (2010). In addition, in BAK, chapter 35 *Gr̥hapatisudattāvadāna* and chapter 47 *Śālistambāvadāna* seem to repeat the same topos, and this is also the case in chapter 32 *Kalyāṇakāryavadāna* and chapter 46 *Kṛtajñāvadāna*.



heavily relied on KŚ when writing? When discussing the source of the *Śibisubhāṣitāvadāna*, Okano (2008: 57–60, 127–137) and Straube (2009: 325–328) argue that Kṣemendra based his version on chapters 125 and 126 of KŚ, in spite of the fact that this topos is rather popular and widely attested in various texts. So, it seems that Kṣemendra deployed KŚ not necessarily because that he had no choice. Rather, he might have sound reasons, and taking NK into consideration, it is possible that he borrowed heavily from whichever text that contained fuller details or better aesthetic sentiments.

Another telling example that also suggests this ‘instrumentally rational’ approach is the 61<sup>st</sup> chapter, *Karṣakāvadāna*, of the BAK. This story is about a poor Brahmin peasant, whose field becomes full of gold-sprouts as a merit for his kind donation to the Buddha.<sup>72</sup> Different from NK, this story is more known, and we can locate its parallel texts not only in KŚ (43 *Zhing pa*, Derge 340 *ha* 156b2–160a3), but also in *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya Bhaiṣajyavastu* (hereafter, MBV, Dutt 1947: 68–71; Derge 1 *kha* 157b7–158a2; T1448 [XXIV] 52a22–b25), and even in the *Avadāna*-anthology from Merv, Turkmenistan (69 *Karṣaka*, Karashima & Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 2015: 218–219) as well as its parallel texts in 雜寶藏經 (*Zabaozangjing*, T 203 [IV] 469c17–470a13). Since space is limited, we will discuss only two verses, 15–16, as examples.

BAK 61.15–16

*vyaktadāridryaduḥkhasya bhūyān me vibhavodbhavaḥ |*  
*cakāra jinapūjānte praṇidhānam iti dvijaḥ ||*  
*atha gatvā nijam kṣetraṃ vipraḥ śasyayavāṅkurān |*  
*sarvān apaśyat sauvarṇān sahasā tyaktadurgatiḥ ||<sup>73</sup>*

‘At the end of the veneration to the Victorious One, the twice-born made a vow, saying: “I shall have wealth increasing more and more when I am free from the pains of utter poverty!” Then, immediately liberated from misfortune, the Brāhman

72 For an outline of the story and the Japanese translation of the whole story, see Hikita (2007: 128–131).

73 Das et al. (1888–1918: 264–265). The Tibetan translation is:  
*dbul ba'i sdug bsngal rab bsal ba || bdag la 'byor pa 'byung gyur cig ||*  
*ces pa'i smon lam gnyis skyes kyis || rgyal ba mchod pa'i mzung tu byas ||*  
*de nas bram ze rang zhing du || song bas 'bru nas myu gu ni ||*  
*thams cad gser du mthong gyur nas || 'phral la nyid du dbul ba gtang ||*



went to his own field, and he saw that corns, barleys and sprouts had all become gold.’

Compared with the parallel texts in KŚ<sup>74</sup> and in MBV,<sup>75</sup> we soon realize that Kṣemendra drew his prototype for this story from a text so close to KŚ but still with significant differences from it, and we have no clear clues about the characteristics of that text.<sup>76</sup> For example, here in verse 15

74 Derge *ha* 158a3–5: *bram ze de dang bram ze mo de gnyis kyis smon lam btab pa | kye ma dge ba'i rtsa ba 'dis bdag cag gnyis kyi dbul ba'i rgyun chad par gyur cig | bdag cag gnyis kyi zhing 'di las nas kyi myu gu skyes pa thams cad kyang gser gyi myu gur snang bar gyur la | de dag kyang de kho na bzhin du gyur cig | gzhan du ma gyur cig ces byas nas | bram ze dang bram ze mo de gnyis kyis | de skad ces brjod pa'i mod la zhing de las skyes pa'i nas kyi myu gu thams cad gser du mthong ngo.* ‘As soon as the Blessed One left, the two brahmins began to pray, “By this root of virtue, may our poverty come to an end. May all the sprouts of barley growing in our field turn into sprouts of gold. May it be just so! May it not be otherwise!” No sooner had the two brahmins said these words than they saw that all the sprouts of barley growing in their field were gold’ (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: § 3.295).

75 Dutt (1947: 70): *abhinandyānumodya bhagavataḥ pādau śirasā vanditvā bhagavato'ntikāt prakrānto yāvat kṣetram gataḥ | paśyati tasmin kṣetre sauvarṇānyavān saṃpannān | dr̥ṣṭvā ca punar vismayotphullalocano.* Derge *kha* 157b7–158a2: *bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs pa la mngon par dga' ste rjes su yi rangs nas bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs gnyis la mgo bos phyag byas te | bcom ldan 'das kyi spyan snga nas song ngo | ji tsam na zhing drung du phyin pa dang | zhing de la gser gyi nas she dag skyes par mthong ngo || mthong nas kyang ya mtshan skyes nas mig bgrad.* ‘... having rejoiced in and praised the words of the Blessed One, the brahmin bowed low until his forehead touched the Blessed One’s feet, and he departed from the Blessed One’s presence. When he arrived at the field, he saw golden barley growing there. Upon seeing it, his eyes opened wide with astonishment ...’ (tr. Bhaiṣajyavastu Translation Team 2021: § 9.25). T 1448 [XXIV] 52b13–15: 聞佛說已歡喜信受，頂禮奉辭，詣種麥處，見其麥苗皆同金色，見已歡笑，生奇特想。

76 As already noted by Straube (2006: 31–35), when composing the 64<sup>th</sup> chapter *Sudhanakinnaryavadāna* Kṣemendra probably made use of a version of MBV which is different from the Sanskrit version that was found in Gilgit and we have today. Could ‘that text’ be the same offshoot version as this, which is textually speaking closer to KŚ? Or, rather, the heterogenous nature of the textual sources seen in Kṣemendra’s BAK did not transmit from a well-defined prototype, but instead it is Kṣemendra himself who coined a contaminated textual tradition under the aforementioned principle of instrumental reason. But as kindly suggested by the anonymous reviewer of this article, Kṣemendra was not under any obligation to

the only protagonist is the male Brahmin peasant, while in KŚ it is the Brahmin couple that make the vow; and even though in MBV there is only the protagonist Brahmin peasant who dedicates the rice soup to the Buddha, he never makes any vow for being rich. Furthermore, in verse 16 the Brahmin peasant goes to his field afterwards (*atha gatvā nijam kṣetraṃ; de nas bram ze rang zhing du song bas*), and there he sees that corn, barley and sprouts all become gold (*śasyayavāṅkurān sarvān ... sauvarṇān; 'bru nas myu gu ni thams cad gser du*). While in KŚ the Brahmin couple treats the Buddha right in their field (*ga la ba de logs su song*),<sup>77</sup> thus they do not have to 'go to their own field'. In MBV, though the male Brahmin peasant donates to Buddha near the field, he afterwards does leave Buddha and goes back to his field (*bhagavato 'ntikāt prakrānto yāvat kṣetraṃ gataḥ; bcom ldan 'das kyi spyān snga nas song ngo | ji tsam na zhing drung du phyin pa; 頂禮奉辭, 詣種麥處*). Therefore, it seems that Kṣemendra 'took over' *kṣetraṃ* and the verbal root  $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$  from his MBV. Moreover, in KŚ, what the couple see is the sprouts of barley turning gold, exactly what they wish (*nas kyi myu gu thams cad gser du*), and this is a little bit different from verse 16 here.<sup>78</sup> But in MBV what the peasant sees is the field full of golden barley (*sauvarṇān yavān saṃpañnān; gser gyi nas she dag skyes pa; 麥苗皆同金色*), and it seems that only the Chinese translation contain \**yavāṅkura* 'sprout of/and barley' (麥苗). Actually, this detail is also found in Merv *Avadāna*-anthology (*sauvarṇā yavāṅkurā prādurbhūtā; 所生苗稼, 變成金禾*).<sup>79</sup> Thus, it seems that both the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of MBV do not inherit the possible older element

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'faithfully transmit any one of the different versions of the stories available to him,' but he 'composed poetic versions of Buddhist stories on the basis of several versions which he could use and tweak as he saw fit,' which I fully agree with.

77 Derge *ha* 157b5.

78 Tibetan translators of BAK seemed to take *śasyayavāṅkurān* as *dvandva* compound with three individual items ('*bru nas myu gu*).

79 Karashima & Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya (2015: 218–219): *kar[s]akāḥ kṣetraṃ kṛṣati tenāyusmān Mahākāśyapo piṇḍakena pratipāditaḥ tasya kṣetre sauvarṇā yavāṅkurā prādurbhūtā vistareṇa avadānaṃ kāryaṃ*. '(A farmer), who ploughed a field, presented Venerable Mahākāśyapa with alms-food. In his field, golden shoots of barley appeared. The *avadāna* should be related in detail' (tr. Karashima & Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya). T 203 [IV] 469c22–24: 後於一日, 出到田中, 見其田中, 所生苗稼, 變成金禾, 皆長數尺, 收刈已盡, 還生如初。

of *aṅkura*, while other texts all preserve it including the KŚ, which Kṣemendra followed and again added his own poetic decoration to when writing *śasyayavāṅkurān*.

Therefore, it seems that Kṣemendra did fully utilize his available sources (such as the cases here in this paper), and actively and even freely selected whichever elements served his aesthetic taste or roused his poetic sentiment, but in principle he followed his prototype text in respect of the general storyline. However, we have to admit that both *Karṣakāvadāna* and NK are exceptional examples, and we still have to examine all other 15 chapters (or even more) in **table 3**, in order to better understand how Kṣemendra made use of mainly the KŚ as well as other sources. By means of textual comparison, we may even discuss the nature of his prototype sources as mirrored from his invented Buddhist tradition incarnated in BAK.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper investigates the source of NK, the 60<sup>th</sup> chapter of BAK, and by means of close reading of 11 verses therein and a comparison with the parallel texts in KŚ and MPV, we argue that the Nāgākumāra story in BAK is textually more akin to KŚ than MPV in the light of general plot line, literary embellishment, narrative coherency, and focalized scenes. While there are three stories of the Nāgākumāra narrative in the Mūlasarvāstivāda traditions, Kṣemendra chose the ‘less known’ *vālukā* Nāgākumāra tale and based his version on the full recension of the story preserved in KŚ, while he utilized the ‘simpler version’ of the same story available in the Tibetan MPV, which might be an adapted version taken as a new opening to its ensuing *pravrajyā* Nāgākumāra story.

After examining Kṣemendra’s approach and representation of his sources especially in the spectrum from KŚ to the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* traditions, we argue that he fully, actively and freely utilized available sources that serve his target, but in principle he followed his prototype text (mainly KŚ here), and thereby he coined a new ‘contaminated’ tradition of Buddhist literature, i.e., BAK, which was, and still is, an exemplar of the Indo-Tibeto Buddhist *belles-lettres*.

## Appendix 1: A comparative reading of the beginnings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgakumāra story

As related before, when comparing the openings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nāgakumāra story in Tibetan MPV, Pali Vinaya, T 749 and T 1435, we have reasonable doubts on the origin of the 1<sup>st</sup> in the Tibetan MPV. It seems that the 1<sup>st</sup> Nāgakumāra narrative is deliberately adapted from a fuller version of the story (possibly derived from the KŚ version) as the new opening to the ensuing 2<sup>nd</sup> story, which usually starts in a simpler way. For example, in T 749, the separate translation of *Nāgakumāravadāna* and *Samgharakṣitāvadāna*, it begins with: ‘while the Buddha was staying at Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park near Śrāvastī, a Nāga king once obtained the first generation of the faithful mind (信心), and came to Jetavana after transforming into a human. He requested to go forth after resorting to the monks.’<sup>80</sup> In the *Sarvāstivādinaya* T 1435, extra information is provided that the Nāga not only obtained the ‘faithful mind’, but also became ashamed of his Nāga-body (羞厭龍身).<sup>81</sup> This extra detail is preserved in the Kuṅcā *Sarvāstivādinaya* fragment mentioned before:

Pelliot Sanskrit: Numéro Rouge 12.2, Verso 3–5: *Buddho Bhagavām Śrāvastyām viharati a[n](yata) ... .. (a)bhiprasannaḥ sa svakena nāgabhogena ṛtiyate jehṛyat[e] vicarati vijugupsate svakena nāgabhoge[n](a) ... .. svakād [bha]vanād abhyudgamyā manuṣyavarṇam ātmānam abhinirmīya [•] sa bhikṣūn upasaṃkramyaivam āha.*

80 T 749 [XVII] 565c6–8: 如是我聞：一時，佛住舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。爾時，有一大海龍王初發信心，變為人形，來至園中。依諸比丘。求欲出家。Ware (1938: 49) translated: ‘Thus have I heard: One time when the Buddha was at Śrāvastī in the Anāthapiṇḍada garden (with a company of bhikṣus numbering 80,000 and bodhisattvas to the number of 36,000), a certain nāgarāja from the great ocean, having conceived faith, changed himself into a man and came into the garden. He besought the bhikṣus to let him enter the monastic life.’

81 T 1435 [XXIII] 154a27–8: 佛在舍衛國。是時有一龍。信心清淨。羞厭龍身。從宮中出。變爲人身詣諸比丘所。‘The Buddha was staying in the city of Śrāvastī. At that time there was a dragon (who was) pure in faith. Embarrassed and disgusted by his dragon body, (when) coming out of (his) palace, he changed into a human body and approached the monks’ (tr. Vogel & Wille 2014: 207–8, modified by Xiaoqiang Meng).

‘Buddha the Exalted One was staying at Śrāvastī, (and also) a certain serpent-demon was living (there) favourably disposed. He was distressed, embarrassed, offended, disgusted by his serpentine coil. Distressed, embarrassed, (and) disgusted by his serpentine coil, he came out of his house (and) changed himself by magic into a human form. He went to monks and spoke as follows’ (tr. Vogel & Wille 2014: 210–211).

Thus, the second reason why the Nāga left his abode in the T 1435, i.e., ‘羞厭龍身’, can be well equated with *svakena nāgabhogena ṛtīyate jehṛyat[e] vicarati vijugupsate* in Sanskrit.<sup>82</sup> However, the fuller version of the opening of the *pravrajyā* Nāgakumāra narrative can be located in the *Mahāvagga* (I.63.1–2) of the Pali Vinaya text:

*tena kho pana samayena aññataro nāgo nāgayoniyā aṭṭiyati harāyati jigucchati. Atha kho tassa nāgassa etad ahoṣi: kena nu kho ahaṃ upāyena nāgayoniyā ca parimucceyyaṃ khippaṅ ca manussattaṃ paṭilabheyyan ti. atha kho tassa nāgassa etad ahoṣi: ime kho samaṇā Sakyaputtiyā dhammacārino samacārino brahmacārino saccavādino sīlavanto kalyāṇadhammā. sace kho ahaṃ samaṇesu Sakyaputtiyesu pabbajeyyaṃ, evāhaṃ nāgayoniyā ca parimucceyyaṃ, khippaṅ ca manussattaṃ paṭilabheyyan ti. atha kho so nāgo māṇavakavaṇṇena bhikkhū upasaṃkamitvā pabbajjaṃ yāci.*<sup>83</sup>

‘Now at that time a certain serpent was troubled about his birth as a serpent, he was ashamed of it, loathed it. Then it occurred to that serpent: “Now, by what means could I be freed quickly from birth as a serpent and get back human status?” Then it occurred to that serpent: “These recluses, sons of the Sakyans, are dhamma-farers, even-farers, Brahma-farers, they are truth-speakers, they are of moral habit, of good conduct. Now if I were to go forth among the recluses, sons of the Saky-

82 Interestingly, the *pravrajyā* Nāgakumāra narrative in T 749 is closer to T 1435 and Kučā *Sarvāstivādinaya* fragment, than to the same story represented in the Tibetan MPV or the Turfan Sanskrit fragment (SHT 1030), thus T 749 is less likely to be afflated with the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition. Cf. fn. 21.

83 Pali Vin i.: 86.36–87.9.

ans, so would I be freed quickly from birth as a serpent and could get back human status.” Then that serpent, in the form of a brahmin youth, having approached the monks, asked for the going forth’ (tr. Horner 1962: 110–111).

Here we can not only attest the same passage of the Nāga being ashamed of his body (*nāgayoniyā aṭṭiyati harāyati jigucchati*), but also understand the process of his generating faith for the Buddha by his own question and answer. Interestingly, in the Pali Vinaya text, the Nāga resorts to the Buddha for the sake of salvation, i.e., to be rescued from being reborn as a Nāga (*nāgayoniyā ca parimucceyyaṃ*), while the NK in BAK elucidates on at least one specific reason why the Nāga birth is after all unwanted: because it brings terrible pains.

This self-questioning plot in the Pali Vinaya text, as well as the entire hasty opening in the *pravrajyā* Nāgakumāra tale, is replaced with a more vivid version in the Tibetan MPV, which is fully represented and compared to KŚ and NK before: the young Nāga is tortured by the doomed hot-sand punishment, and after his question and answer with his parents, he generates faith for the Buddha and sets out for him. This is exactly the *vālukā* Nāgakumāra story which is manifested in KŚ and NK. So, I assume that the Tibetan MPV (or its prototype) was once under reedition, by which the fuller version of *vālukā* (represented by the KŚ version) was collected, reformed and placed at the beginning of the *pravrajyā* tale of Nāgakumāra.<sup>84</sup>

## Appendix 2: Derge *ha* 189b2–6

*yab yum bdag gis yun ji srid cig gi bar du sdug bsngal  
'di lta bu myong bar 'gyur | pha mas smras pa | bu ji srid  
du skal ba mnyam pa 'di yod pa de srid du khyod kyis sdug  
bsngal 'di lta bu myong bar 'gyur ro zhes byas so || de nas bu des  
bltas na | klu chen po gzhan dag gi lus la klu'i bye ma mi 'bab pa  
mthong ngo || mthong nas kyang pha ma la dris pa | yab yum log  
par ltung bar gyur pa 'dra na | ci'i phyir klu chen po 'di dag gi lus*

84 Or, the Tibetan MPV reformulated the *pravrajyā* Nāgakumāra story and put the *vālukā* at the beginning of it to collect as many as similar thematic texts about Nāgakumāra in MPV.

*la ni klu'i bye ma mi 'bab la | bdag cag gi lus la ni 'bab | pha mas  
de la smras pa | klu chen po 'di dag ni **che bar grags pa** yin te |  
**che bar grags pa** yin pas na de dag la ni mi 'bab bo || de nas des  
bltas na rgya mtsho chen po de'i nang na klu bdag cag pas ches  
ngan pa de dag gi lus la yang klu'i bye ma mi 'bab par mthong  
ngo || mthong nas kyang pha ma la smras pa | yab yum khyed  
gnyis na re klu chen po 'di dag ni che bar grags pa yin te | che bar  
grags pa yin pas na 'di dag gi lus la klu'i bye ma mi 'bab bo zhe  
na | 'di na bdag cag pas ches ngan pa gzhan dag kyang yod na |  
ci'i phyr de dag la ni klu'i bye ma mi 'bab la bdag cag la ni 'bab.*

“Mother, Father, **how long must I undergo such suffering?**” His parents replied, “**For as long as [you are in this life]**, son, you will undergo [this suffering].” The young nāga looked and saw that the nāga sands didn’t rain down on the bodies of other [great] nāgas. Seeing this he asked his parents, “Mother, Father, I think we have fallen into a lower realm. For if the nāga sands don’t rain down on those high nāgas there, why do they rain down on our bodies?” “Those high nāgas are [**famed to be great**],” his parents replied. “It’s because of their [**being famed to be great**] that they aren’t rained down upon.” Then he looked and saw that in the great ocean there were some nāgas who were even more wretched than they were, but nāga sand wasn’t raining down on their bodies. Seeing this, he asked his parents, “Mother, Father, are you telling me that these are all [great] nāgas [**famed to be great**], and that because of their [**being famed to be great**] nāga sand isn’t raining down on their bodies? For there are some here who are even more wretched than we are. Why then, if nāga sand isn’t raining down on their bodies, is it still raining down on ours?” (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: §§ 4.113–115, bold script and modification in square brackets by Xiaoqiang Meng).

### Appendix 3: Derge *ha* 190a1–4

*klu'i bu des smras pa | yab yum bdag mchi bar gnang bar mdzod  
cig dang | gang dag gi mthus bdag gi lus la klu'i bye ma 'bab par*



*mi 'gyur ba'i skyabs su 'gro ba dang bslab pa'i gzhi de dag bdag  
gis blang bar bgyi'o || pha mas smras pa | bu ma len cig | lhan cig  
skyes pa'i bye ma'i sdug bsngal 'di ni chung gi | skyabs su 'gro ba  
dang bslab pa'i gzhi de dag blangs pa las ma bsrungs na | gzhi de  
las sems can dmyal ba dang dud 'gro dang yi dgas su skyes nas  
sdug bsngal chen po rnam myong bar 'gyur te | sdug bsngal 'di  
ni sdug bsngal 'di'i brgya'i char yang mi phod stong gi char yang  
mi phod 'bum gyi char yang mi phod do.*

“Mother, Father,” the young nāga requested, “please, permit me to go take refuge and maintain the fundamental precepts, by whose power nāga sand will no longer rain down on my body.” “Do not take them, son,” cautioned his parents. “Though the sufferings of the sands are innate to us, they are minor. If you take refuge and the fundamental precepts but do not maintain them, it will be the basis of your taking rebirth as a hell being, an animal, or an anguished spirit, where you will undergo great suffering, compared to which your current sufferings are not even a fraction’s worth—not even a hundredth, not even a thousandth, not even a hundred thousandth” (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: §§ 4.116–117).

#### Appendix 4: Derge *ha* 190a4–b1

*klu'i bus smras pa | yab yum bdag gi lhan cig skyes pa'i bye  
ma'i sdug bsngal 'di zhi bar 'gyur ba 'ba' zhi gi phyir yang ci  
nus kyis bsrung bar bgyi'o zhes smras nas | klu'i bu des lha'i me  
tog ud pa la dang pad ma dang ku mu da dang pad ma dkar po  
rnam kyis thu ba bkang ste | rgya mtsho chen po'i nang nas mi  
snang bar gyur nas rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal du phyin pa  
dang | de'i tshe bcom ldan 'das 'khor brgya phrag du ma'i nang  
na chos ston cing bzhugs so || de nas klu'i bu des thag ring po  
zhig nas sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das mdzes shing yid du 'thad pa  
dbang po dul ba thugs zhi ba thugs dul zhing rnam par zhi ba'i  
mchog dang ldan pa | gser gyi mchod sdong ltar dpal dang gzi  
brjid 'bar ba mthong ngo || mthong nas kyang mchog tu dga' ba  
skyes te | dga' ba skyes nas bcom ldan 'das ga la ba der song ste*



*phyin nas bcom ldan 'das la lha'i me tog ud pa la dang pad ma dang ku mu da dang | pad ma dkar po rnams kyis gtor te | bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs la mgo bos phyag 'tshal nas | bcom ldan 'das la skyabs su ,gro ba dang bslab pa'i gzhi rnams mnos te | chos mnyan pa'i phyir bcom ldan 'das kyi spyang sngar 'dug go || de nas de'i klu'i bye ma med par gyur nas.*

“Mother, Father,” said the young nāga, “I shall maintain them to the best of my ability, if only to assuage the sufferings of the sands innate to us.” With those words the young nāga filled up the front of his long shirt with divine blue lotus, lotus, white water lily, white lotus, and mandārava flowers, disappeared from beneath the great ocean, and traveled to the garden of Prince Jeta, where the Blessed One sat teaching the Dharma amid a company of hundreds. The young nāga saw the Blessed Buddha, resplendent and agreeable, in the distance. His senses were tamed, his heart was at peace, and his mind was tame and absolutely serene. He was graced with a supreme tranquility, shining and radiant like a golden pillar. He saw the Blessed Buddha, and the sight of him filled him with supreme joy. Full of such joy he approached the Blessed One, and when he arrived he scattered the divine blue lotus, lotus, white water lily, and white lotus flowers over the Blessed One. Then he touched his head to the Blessed One’s feet, took refuge in the Blessed One, received the fundamental precepts, and sat before him to listen to the Dharma. Now that the nāga sands affected him no more’ (tr. Jamspal and Fischer 2020: §§ 4.118–120).

## Abbreviations

### Abbreviations in the philological apparatus

A	Sanskrit-Ms., Cambridge University Library: Add. 1306
B	Sanskrit-Ms., Cambridge University Library: Add. 913
C	Block-print, Sanskrit-Tibetan bilingual, Cone-Tanjur
C1	Sanskrit-Ms., Drepung Monastery: ZX0675-ZB 38
C2	Sanskrit-Ms., Drepung Monastery: ZX0650-ZB 22

- D Block-print, Sanskrit-Tibetan, Derge-Tanjur
- E Sanskrit-Ms., National Archives Nepal: NGMPP reel no. B 95/5
- Eap Tibetan Ms., Phurdrup Gonpa Monastery in Bhutan: Thor bu, *dPag bsam khri shing*, EAP 310/3/3/15
- G Tibetan Ms., Ganden-Tanjur
- H Sanskrit-Ms., Library of the Asiatic Society Calcutta: B. 15
- N Block-print, Tibetan, Narthang-Tanjur
- Q Block-print, Tibetan, Peking-Tanjur
- R Sanskrit-Ms., Cambridge University Library: *Ratnamālāvadāna*, Add. 1615
- Ś Tibetan translation of BAK by Shong ston lotsāba rDo rje rgyal mtshan and Paṇḍita Lakṣmīkara
- T Block-print from Tohoku University in Japan, Sanskrit-Tibetan, 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama version
- Tdp Block-print from the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, New Delhi, India, Sanskrit-Tibetan, 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama version
- Ed. *editio princeps* of BAK. See Das et al. (1888–1918)
- V Edition Vaidya (Sanskrit-text reprinted from Ed. with emendations)
- deJ. Conjectures of De Jong (1979)
- β Hyparchetypus, Tibetan, of GNQ
- δ Hyparchetypus, Tibetan, of D(C)I(Tdp)

### Abbreviations in the main text

BAK	<i>Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā</i> , ref. Das et al. (1888–1918), Vaidya (1959).
BHSD	Edgerton, Franklin (1953). <i>Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary</i> . Vol. 2: <i>Dictionary</i> . New Haven: Yale University Press.
DIV	<i>Divyāvādāna</i> , ref. Cowell & Neil (1886), Hiraoka (2007), Rotman (2017).
KŚ	<i>Karmaśataka</i> , ref. Matsumoto (2001), Jamspal & Firscher (2020).
MBV	<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya Bhaiṣajyavastu</i> , ref. Dutt (1947), Bhaiṣajyavastu Translation Team trans. (2021).
MPV	<i>Mūlasarvāstivādinaya Pravrajyāvastu</i> , ref. Vogel & Wille (2014), Miller (2018).
NEGI	Negi, J.S., ed. (1993). <i>Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary</i> . Sarnath: Dictionary Unit, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies.
NK	<i>Nāgakumārāvādāna</i> , ref. Meng (2020).
PW	Böhtlingk, Otto & Rudolf Roth (1855–1875). <i>Sanskrit-Wörterbuch</i> . Bd.1–7. St. Petersburg: Commissionnaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences.
T	<i>Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō</i> , ed. Takakusu, Junjiro and Kaigyoku Watanabe. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taisho Issaikyo, 1924–1934.
Vin.	<i>Vinayapiṭaka</i> , ref. Oldenberg (1879), Horner (1962).
WTS	Kommission für zentral- und ostasiatische Studien der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (2005–). <i>Wörterbuch der tibetischen Schriftsprache</i> . München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Kommission beim Verlag C.H. Beck.

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