

EDITING OF ANCIENT ARDHAMĀGADHĪ TEXTS IN VIEW OF THE TEXT OF VIŚEṢĀVAŚYAKA-BHĀṢYA¹

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On the basis of a consideration of subject-matter, style, and metrical form, scholars have formed an almost unanimous opinion that certain portions of the Jaina canonical literature in Ardhamāgadhī possess very old strata. On the same grounds these ancient portions bear similarity with the oldest portions of the *Pāli Tripitaka*. However, the concerned phonological, and to some extent the morphological forms of the language are not so archaic in these portions and in this respect the editions of these works differ among themselves.

In the Western scholars' editions, we notice that the intervocalic stops generally lost their conclusion as per the rules framed by Prakrit grammarians which, strictly speaking, were meant for the Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit. As a result, in these editions, not only the consonantal spelling of the words but occasionally the morphological forms of the later period also are encountered. A preference accorded to later forms consequently neglects the archaic, in point of fact original, and hence authentic, variants available in some manuscripts.

The same method is adopted by Indian editors though usually with lesser rigour and hence on a smaller scale. Therefore, noticeable disparity is discernible between the age of the work and its language. Hence the current form of the language available in the so far published editions is not authentic even when they do not affect the sense intended to be conveyed. This situation impels one to find out the reasons behind it.

For explaining the reasons behind this kind of disparity, in this paper, an attempt has been made in its proper perspective based on the analysis of the language of the text of the *Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya* in its different editions and its variants in MSS. on the one hand and that of the language of older inscriptions and the *Isibhāṣiyāṁ*² edited by W. Schubring on the other hand.

The *Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya* is a versified exposition of the *Sāmāyika-āvaśyaka* and its corresponding *niryukti* (c. A. D. 525) by the learned *caityavāsī* or abbatial pontiff Jinabhadra gaṇi *kṣamāśramaṇa* (ob. A. D. 588 or 594). He had also composed its commentary in Sanskrit which had remained unfinished since he did not live as has been reported by Koṭṭārya vādi gaṇi (c. A. D. 675-700) who completed the commentary³.

1. Phonological Analysis of the VABh.

(a) Phonological analysis of the initial word/ words of every verse (No.1 to 100 only) quoted by the author himself in his auto-commentary³.

Medial consonants	Dropping	Voicing	Retention
(i) Unaspirates	09 (13 %)	09 (13 %)	49 (74 %)
(ii) Aspirates	00 (00 %) i. e. changing into 'ha'	06 (35 %)	11 (65 %)
Total	09 (10 %)	15 (18 %)	60 (72 %)

(b) The same words (i. e. of 1 (a) above) in the text of MS. J.⁴

Medial consonants	Dropping	Voicing	Retention
(i) Unaspirates	07 (10 %)	12 (18 %)	48 (72 %)
(ii) Aspirates	00 (00 %) i. e. changing into 'ha'	09 (53 %)	08 (47 %)
Total	07 (08.5 %)	21 (25 %)	56 (66.5 %)

This analysis reveals that there is very little advance in the phonological changes of the consonantal spelling of the words of the text of the MS-J, it is 5.5 % only (72?—66.5).

2. A phonological analysis of the words of all the initial 100 verses according to MS-J (as given below) reveals that the percentage of dropping is 11.5% and that of retention is 70% i. e. only a difference of 2% as compared to that of the auto-commentary.

The phonological changes occurring in two MSS, and two editions⁵ can be tabulated as follows:

(a) Non-aspirate Medials

Conso- nants	Dropping = D				Voicing = V				Retention = R				Total
	J.	T.	H.	K.	J.	T.	H.	K.	J.	T.	H.	K.	
K	34	35	36	36	22	21	22	22	04	04	02	02	60
G	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	28	28	28	28	28
C	05	05	05	05	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	05
J	03	03	03	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	03
T	13	15	185	185	01	01	00	00	184	182	13	13	198
D	06	29	62	31	33	08	00	00	39	41	16	17	78
P	00	00	01	01	50	50	49	49	09	09	09	09	59
Y	17	20	38	40	00	00	00	00	79	76	56	56	96
V	06	06	06	06	00	00	00	00	147	147	147	147	153
Total	84	113	336	337	106	80	71	71	490	487	273	272	680

(b) Aspirate Medials

Conso- nants	Dropping = D				Voicing = V				Retention = R				Total
	J.	T.	H.	K.	J.	T.	H.	K.	J.	T.	H.	K.	
Kh	01	01	01	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01
Gh	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01	01	01	01
Th	02	03	30	30	28	27	00	00	00	00	00	00	30
Dh	02	03	04	05	00	00	00	00	36	35	34	33	38
Ph	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01	01	01	01
Bh	00	00	04	04	00	00	00	00	36	36	32	32	36
Total	05	07	39	40	28	27	00	00	74	73	68	67	107

					Grand Total								
Total	89	120	375	377	134	107	71	71	564	560	341	339	787

(c) Percentage

(i)	M.		D	V	R
	S.	Unaspirates	84 (12.5)	106 (16.0)	490 (72.0)
	J.	Aspirates	05 (05.0)	28 (26.0)	74 (70.0)
		Total	89 (11.5 %)	134 (18.5 %)	564 (70 %)
(ii)	M.		D	V	R
	S.	Unaspirates	113 (16.5)	80 (12.0)	487 (70.0)
	J.	Aspirates	07 (07.0)	27 (25.0)	73 (70.0)
		Total	120 (15 %)	107 (14 %)	560 (71 %)
(iii)	Edi- tion II		D	V	R
		Unaspirates	336 (50.0)	71 (10.5)	273 (40.0)
		Aspirates	39 (36.0)	00 (00.0)	58 (53.0)
		Total	375 (48 %)	71 (9 %)	331 (43 %)
(iv)	Edi- tion k		D	V	R
		Unaspirates	337 (50.0)	71 (10.5)	272 (40.0)
		Aspirates	40 (36.0)	00 (00.0)	57 (53.0)
		Total	377 (48 %)	71 (09 %)	329 (43 %)

3. A high percentage of retention and very low percentage of dropping of medial consonants in the MS-J is questionable in view of the evolution of MIA language and the nature of the Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit in the 6th century A. D., the date⁶ of the composition of the VHBh can be assumed between A. D. 580-585. If the author made use of large number of Sanskrit equivalents (*tatsama* words), it seems to be the consequence of the influence of Sanskrit during its golden age. In the MS-J, medial dental -t- is often retained in the words, namely ablative singular suffix -to, verbal termination -ti of the present tense of III singular, and in the past participle -ta. Out of 198 instances, -t- is voiced on a single occasion e. g. *disadi* for Sanskrit *dīṣyate* (verse No. 53) and it is dropped 13 times only whereas retained 184 times. In the MS-T the dropping is 15% and the retention 70%. When we compare these two MSS. with the two editions H and K, the dropping of medial consonants rise up to 48% and the retention goes down to 43%. The percentage of voicing goes on decreasing with the passage of time (i.e. with the later dates of MSS.) e. g. 18.5% in J, 14% in T, and 9% in H as well as in K. This fact makes it abundantly clear that the copyists and the reciter-teacher-monks (preachers) brought about this kind of modification either inadvertantly or intentionally on account of the influence of the Prakrit language of their own times and also under the sway of the Prakrit grammar of very late dates.

If this was the condition of the original language of the text of VABh, within a few centuries after its composition, then what would be the state of the original Ardhamāgadhī language of the Jaina āgama texts in their MSS. copied a thousand or 1500 years late. We are now becoming increasingly aware that there has been a continual change in the language of a text in Prakrit MSS. which were copied in different periods by different copyists in western India.

4. Position of the Language of Inscriptions :

A study of the phonological changes in the language of inscriptions reveals that the dropping of medial consonants goes on advancing with the passage of time. This tendency of dropping has travelled from the North-West and North to other regions of India. The use of -n- (cerebral nasal) for -n- (dental nasal) has been a trait of the Northwest, North, and South. One of the oldest available Prakrit inscription, now regarded of c. 200 from Barli⁷, there is no dropping of medial consonant (e. g. there is no -e in place of -te and -ye, the inflectional suffixes.)

In the Aśokan inscriptions, the average phonological change⁸ is only 1 1/2 to 3% only. In the inscription of king Khāravela (c. B. C. 50-25), the voicing of medial consonants advances (i. e. 6 out of 8 instances are voiced). There -th- becomes -dh-, and the phonological changes on the whole are 5 to 6%. It is in the inscriptions of Pañjatār, Kalwān and Takṣaśilā (of the 1st century A. D.), located in the North-West⁹, that the

dropping of medial consonants has gone high, indeed up to 30% to 35% and the voicing of unvoiced consonants is near about 17%. Dental nasal *n-* is initially cerebralised into *n-* up to 100% and medially *-n-* into *-n-* up to 75%. This tendency of cerebralisation of *-n-* into *-n-* is traced in the South and West. And in the later centuries it spreads to other regions of India¹⁰.

5. Phonological changes in the *Isibhāsiyāṃ*

*Isibhāsiyāṃ*¹¹ is regarded as one of the oldest of the Ardhamāgadhī texts along with the *Ācārāṅga*, the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, the *Uttarādhyayana* and the *Daśavaikālika*. The state of phonological changes in this work is quite different from that encountered in other older Jaina canonical texts in the Ardhamāgadhī. An analysis of the data from some select chapters No. 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 29 and 31 reveals that an average of dropping, voicing-unvoicing, and retention is 11 to 35%, 7 to 22% and 45 to 81% respectively. The chapter-wise analysis is as follows :-

chs	01	02	03	05	11	29	31	Total
D	27	05	27	07	22	49	71	208
V	12	03	32	01	02	28	15	93
R	61	37	87	19	53	62	140	459
Total	100	45	146	27	77	139	226	760

The percentage of phonological changes in these chapters is as follows :-

chs	01	02	03	05	11	29	31	Average
D	27	11	18	27	27	35	31	27.4%
V	12	07	22	04	03	20	07	12.2%
R	61	81	60	69	70	45	62	60.4%

The position of medial *-t-* in these chapters is as follows :-

Perce-	D	32	00	15	28	27	48	21%
nage	R	68	100	85	72	73	52	79%

6. The position of phonological changes in the *Ācārāṅga* edited by W. Schubring¹², the oldest book of the Ardhamāgadhī canonical literature, is quite different from the *Isibhāsiyāṃ*. In it the dropping of medial consonants is more than 50%, a state which

cannot be relied upon. The palm-leaf Ms., the oldest one in date that was used by Schubring in editing the text of the *Ācārāṅga*, part I, is dated V. S. 1348/ A.D. 1292 and there in it the verbal termination -ti of present tense III singular is retained up to the extent of 50%. Schubring has not noted from the available variant -t- and he has dropped it wholesale. In comparison of it the edition of the *Ācārāṅga* by Muni Jambūvijayajī¹³ reveals quite a different state of the affairs. In it the dropping of medial consonants is 24% only. Linguistically, it is a better edition; yet it needs emendation on the basis of the variants available in various MSS. of the text and its *cūṛṇi*-commentary (c. late 7th cent. A. D.) because they preserve the archaic traits¹⁴.

7. It can now be surmised on the basis of the above comparative study that the Ardhamāgadhī language of older Jaina canonical texts went on changing from century to century and generation to generation as the time progressed. Therefore, in editing older agamic works and the older portions of the Ardhamāgadhī canon one must discard younger words and forms. Older words and forms that are available in the MSS. of the text itself, or its *cūṛṇi*, or in the quotations from the text in other works, should be adopted even if they do not agree with the rules of Prakrit grammarians as the treatises on grammar are of much younger origin and they do not present any historical or comparative grammar. It is now clear that the original language of the canonical works went on changing to a certain extent as the work of copying multiplied in different periods and at different places : otherwise how could there have been so much variation in the phonology of words in the text of *Isibhāsiyāṇi* on the one hand and that of the *Ācārāṅga* on the other hand¹⁵.

8. The authenticity of this conclusion can be verified with the help of variants that are noted in different edition of the VABh. A glance at them¹⁶ makes it clear that the change in the phonology of the type that is given below had taken place at different stages of the evolution of Prakrit dialects :-

Stage		(i)	(ii)	-	(i)	(ii)
k =	-	g	y	dh =	dh	h
t =	t	d	y	n =	n	ṇ
th =	-	dh	h	jn =	n	ṇ
d =	d	t	y			

According to the historical evolution of the Middle Indo-Aryan languages, the voicing of unvoiced and the unvoicing of voiced medial consonants takes place at an earlier stage than the dropping of medial consonants (i. e. stops). In this respect two published editions of the VABh., e. g. K and H are highly influenced by the later stage of Prakrit

i. e. the Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit, whereas the MSS. J and T preserve older forms and so the earlier stage of the Prakrit language and the MS. J preserves still earlier stage (i. e. older spellings of the words).

9. The language of the editions H and K had been regarded as the genuine language of the author until the palm-leaf MSS. J and Sam were discovered (i. e. the language having medial consonants generally dropped). Further non-dropping of medial -t- cannot be admitted as -t- śruti because it is preserved in the MS-J also and, therefore, it constitutes a feature of the original language of the author. The way the language underwent change at the hands of copyists and teacher-reciters can be discerned from the editions H and K which are highly influenced by popular language as well as by the rules of later Prakrit grammarians. Hence the principle of editing ancient Ardhamāgadhī texts needs wholesale modification, namely adopting older words and forms from the available source-material, discarding the younger words and forms, and thus being faithful and closer to the original language.

The comparative table of phonological variants in different editions and MSS. of VABh is appended as the sequel. (See phonological analysis of VABh Table for serial No. 8)

Notes and References :

1. L. D. Series 10, ed. Dalsukhbhai D. Malvania, Ahmedabad 1966.
2. L. D. Series 45, ed. W. Schubring, Ahmedabad 1974.
3. The MS. Sañ. having auto-commentary is dated A. D. 1434, vide VABh, part I, Preface, L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad 1996, p.4.
4. Palm-leaf MS. from Jaisalmer, datable to c. A. D. 950, vide *ibid.*, p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 3, 4.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
7. M. A. Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrit*, Deccan college, Poona 1948, pp. 326-7.
8. This change is higher in the North and North-West and lower in other regions.
9. D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. 1, No. 32-34, (total instances 89; dropping 27, and voicing 13, unvoicing 2 and retention 47).
10. Mehendale, *Historical.*, p. 276.
11. L. D. Series No. 45, Ed. W. Schubring (of the original German edition), Ahmedabad 1974.
12. On the basis of the first chapter.
13. *Āyaraṅga-suttam*, Jaina-Agama-Series 2, Bombay 1977.
14. Some of them (i. e. the older forms) have been given in the footnotes of the text by the editor.

15. Both works had been edited by W. Schubring, the former on the basis of two MSS. and one printed work and the later on the basis of several MSS., the *cūrṇī*, etc. Further, the *Ācārāṅga* has been published in several editions and all of them differ from one another in this respect.
16. See the table given below.

Abbreviations and References :-

D = Dropping = Loss of occlusion of inter-vocal stops.

H = Edition of Maladhāri Hemacandra.

J = Palm-leaf manuscript from Jaisalmer.

K = Edition of Koṭṭyācārya.

MS = Manuscript.

R = Retention = Retention of inter-vocal stops.

T = Palm-leaf manuscript (undated)

V = Voicing or un-voicing of inter-vocal stops.

VABh.=The text of the *Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya* edited by Pt. D. Malvania, L. D. Series No. 10, 1966, Ahmedabad.

Note: See the above-noted work for the details of the editions and Mss. H, K, and J,

**Comparative Table of phonological Variants
of some words from different editions and MSS. of
Visesavasyakbhāṣya
(initial words of verses No. 1 to 100)**

Year of Publication		1966 A.D. L.D. Series		1936 A.D.	1914 A.D.	MS. of C. 10th Cent.	Undated MS.	Consonant
Verse No.	Sanskrit	L.D. Text	Auto. Comm.	K	H	J	T	
41	अतीतम्	अतीतं	अतीतं	अतीतं	अतीतं	अतीतं	अतीतं	t
23	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	th
50	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	th
51	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	th
56	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	th
78	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	अथवा	th
65	अनुमतम्	अनुमतं	अनुमतं	अनुमतं	अनुमतं	अनुमतं	अनुमतं	t
52	अभिधानम्	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	dh
57	अभिधानम्	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	अभिधानं	dh
82	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	अवधीयते	dh&t
29	आगतम्	आगतम्	आगतम्	आगतम्	आगतम्	आगतम्	आगतम्	t
73	आदि	आदि	आदि	आइ	आइ	आदि	आदि	d
75	आदि	-आइ-	आदि	आइ	आइ	आति	आइ	d
21	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	dh
51	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	dh
55	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	इह	dh
77	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	ऋजुसूत्रौ	t
5	कृत	कृत	कृत	कय	कय	कत	कत	t
24	गालयति	गालयति	गालयति	गालयइ	गालयइ	गालयति	गालयति	t
33	चूतः	चूतो	चूतो	चूओ	चूओ	चूतो	चूतो	t

Verse No.	Sanskrit	L.D. Text	Auto. Comm.	K	H	J	T	Consonant
36	चूतादिभ्यः	चूताईरहितो	चूता०	चूताईर०	चूताईर०	चूताईर०	चूताईर०	t
3	ज्ञान	णाण	णाण	नाण	नाण	णाण	णाण	jh
30	ज्ञानम्	णाणं	णाणं	नाणं	नाणं	णाणं	णाणं	jn
46	ज्ञायक	जाणग	जाणग	जाणय	जाणय	जाणग	जाणग	k
81	ततो	ततो	ततो	तओ	तओ	ततो	ततो	t
19	तिथा	तिथा	तिथा	तिहा	तिहा	तिथा	तिथा	dh
28	द्ववति	दवते	दवते	दवए	दवए	दवते	दवते	t
28	दूयते	दूयति	दूयति	दुयए	दुयए	दूयति	दूयति	t
8	नमस्कारः	णमोकारो	णमोकारो	नमोकारो	नमोकारो	णमोकारो	णमोकारो	n
23	निपातात्	णिवातणातो	णिवातणातो	निवायणाओ	निवायणाओ	णिवातणातो	णिवातणातो	n
97	-निबुध्यते	-णिबुज्झति	-णिबुज्झति	-निबुज्झइ	-णिबुज्झइ	-णिबुज्झति	-णिबुज्झति	n
58	-निवृत्त	-णिव्वुत्त	-णिव्वुत्त	-निव्वुत्त	-निव्वुत्त	-णिव्वुत्त	-निव्वुत्त	n
47	भूत	भूत	भूत	भूय	भूय	भूत	भूत	t
22	मङ्गयते	मंगिज्जते	मंगिज्जते	मंगिज्जए	मंगिज्जए	मंगिज्जते	मंगिज्जते	t
86	मति	मति	मति	मइ	मइ	मति	मति	t
57	यथा	जध	जध	जह	जह	जध	जध	th
20	यदि	जति	जति	जइ	जइ	जति	जति	d
30	यदि	जति	जति	जइ	जइ	जति	जति	d
100	यदि	जति	जति	जइ	जइ	जति	जति	d
72	विवदन्ति	विवदति	विवदति	विवयति	विवयति	विवदति	विवदति	d
49	श्रुत	सुत	सुत	सुय	सुय	सुत	सुत	t
98	श्रुत	सुत	सुत	सुय	सुय	सुत	सुत	t
100	श्रुत	सुत	सुत	सुय	सुय	सुत	सुत	t
40	सूत्रस्य	सुतस्स	सुतस्स	सुअस्स	सुअस्स	सुतस्स	सुतस्स	t
43	हेतुः	हेतू	हेतू	हेऊ	हेऊ	हेतू	हेतू	t