

The Problem of 'Apadha in the Rgveda

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Interpretation of Vedic hymns in general and of individual words in particular, has been a knotty problem right from the day of Yāska and not all the ingenuities of the commentators of the Rgveda and scholarly labours of the Western and Eastern Orientalists have been able to unveil the mystery about a number of obscure Vedic words. One of them is the Vedic word 'Apadhā' in the RV, II, 12, 3. The word occurs in the second quarter of the above Rk which is as follows :—

यो गा उदाजदपधा वलस्य ।

Y o' gā' Udājad apadhā valasya.

The Pada text traditionally handed down to this day runs thus :

यः गाः । उतऽआजत् । अपधा । वलस्य ।

Sāyaṇa interprets this quarter in the following manner :—

यश्च वलस्य वलनामकस्यासुरस्यापधा तत्कतृ कान्निहृदा गा उदाजत् निरगमयत् ।

Here in his rendering of अपधा निरुद्धाः, he unwittingly reveals that the ultimate sense is 'imprisoned' and the word is an adjective of गाः. But while grammatically analysing, he seems to derive it from the root अप + √धा to which the termination अङ् is applied in the impersonal sense. The word thus becomes अपध आ is added. Thus it is supposed to be the ablative singular.

Venkaṭa Mādhava too renders the word as विलान्तरपिहिताः and takes it as an adjective of गाः, which he renders as पश्यन्.

Western scholars have created more confusion in trying to identify the exact grammatical form. Thus Roth takes it to be the instrumental of अप + √धा

Ludmig² suggests that this word is instrumental in sense and we must take it to mean wedge or key (quasi reserator).

Hillebrandt³ thinks that अपधि is a locative from अपधि. Grassman⁴ translates it

1. Sanskrit-Wor, St Pt, 1855, p. 282

2. Peterson, *Hymns from the Rgveda*, Second Selection, Notes, p. 116

3. *Veda Chrestomathic*, p. 70

4. *Worterbuch Zum Rigveda*, p. 71

as 'a hiding place'. Griffith¹ translates it as 'from the cave'. Peterson remarks that this word is a Vedic locative of the same kind as 'guhā' in the next verse and translates it as 'cave' :

Zimmerman³ translates it as 'from the enclosure'. He compares it with II, 14, 3 ; यो गा उदाजुदपु हि वलं वः ।

Macdonell⁴ also translates it as 'by the unclosing'. On the basis of feminine forms, he remarks that it can only be the instrumental singular of Apadhā'. He takes 'Valasya' as objective genitive i. e. by opening (the cave of) Vala. Velankar⁵ seems to follow Roth when he takes 'Apadhā' as instrumental singular of Apadhā on the analogy of एकया प्रतिष्ठा - प्रतिष्ठानेन in VIII; 77, 1,

Sāyana⁶ took it as irregularity for the ablative, by सुपां सुलुगित पञ्चम्या आकारः ।

Durga,⁷ the commentator on Nirukta explains the form by अपधानेन as meaning उदघाटनेन by the enclosing.

As has been seen above, Venkata Mādhava⁸ too while explaining it as विलान्तरपिहितः has indicated indirectly to the feminine base with 'ā' ending.

It seems that अपधा is really अपधाः accusative plural of अपधा, feminine form from apa + dhā by applying the affix 'añ' in accordance with the Pāṇinian rule III, 3, 106.

An analogous case is that of the word निधा occurring in the form of निधया in R V, X, 73, 11 :

वयः सुपुर्णा उप सेदुरिन्दुं प्रियमेधा ऋषयो नार्धमानाः ।

अप ध्वान्तमूणुहि पृथि चक्षु - मृमुग्ध्य ऽस्मान् निधयेव ब्रह्मान् ॥

The word निधा is found in the Naigamakāṇḍa of the fourth chapter of Nirukta.

Mukund Jha Bakshi⁹ in his notes on Nirukta explains निधा as "आतश्चोपसर्गो" इति (पा. ३.०१.१३६) क प्रत्यये अङि (पा. ३.३.१०६) वा । टापि निधेति भवति ।

This supports our thesis about the nature of the form of अपधा. In point of accent too, the form अपधा resembles निधा.

1. *Hymns from the Rigveda*, Vol. II, p. 273

2. Peterson, *op. cit.*,

3. *Vedic Selections*, Notes, p. 124

4. *Vedic Reader*, pp. 46 ff

5. *Rksūkta vaijayanti*, p. 72

6. Sāyana's commentary on II/2, 3: अपधा-अप पूर्वाद्धाते: 'आतश्चोपसर्गो' (पा. ३.३.१०६) इति भावेऽङ्प्रत्ययः । सुपां सुलुगित पञ्चम्या आकारः ।

7. Durga's commentary on Nirukta, Adhyāya, 8, 1.

8. *Rgarthadīpikā*, Vol. III, p. 75.

9. Mukund Jha Bakshi, (Ed.), *Nirukta*, p. 160

Now the Padapāṭhakāra has noticed the form as अप॒घा without the final 'Visarga'. Can it not be possible that in the Samhitā-Pāṭha, there was elision of original visarga of अप॒घा; the originally intended form and anyhow the author of Padapāṭha missed it ?

There are many instances in which the older authors of Padapāṭhas differed from one another in splitting Samhitā text into its component padas. This has been adduced to by Yāska himself. Thus Yāska takes note of difference of opinion of various authors of Padapāṭha with regard to the word आदित्य :—

शाकल्यात्रेयप्रभृतिर्नावगृहीतम्, पूर्वनिर्वचनाभिप्रायेण । गार्ग्यप्रभृतिभिरवगृहीतमिति तदेव कारणम्, विचित्राः पदकाराणामभिप्रायाः, क्वचिदुपसर्गविषयेऽपि नावगृह्णन्ति यथा शाकल्येन “अधीवासम्” इति नावगृहीतम्, आत्रेयेण तु “अधिऽवासम्”—इत्यवगृहीतम् । तस्मादवग्रहोऽनवग्रहः॥¹

Similarly with regard to the word मा॒स॒कृत् in R V I, 105, 18, Yāska takes it as an Upapada compound and hence as one word, thus :

मासकृत् मासानां चार्धभासानां च कर्ता भवति चन्द्रमाः ॥²

But Śākalya splits the word into two padas, as मा॒ । स॒ कृत् ॥⁵

Thus this possibility of the presence of originally existent but morpho-phonemically elided Visarga sets at rest all the unnecessary efforts of the traditional commentators and modern orientalists.

1. *Nirukta*, II, 13.

2. *Nirukta*, V, 21

3. cf. Padapāṭha of R V I, 105, 18 in R V. Samhitā (Poona), Vol I, p. 649.