



Review Article

Applicability of Paleography in Manuscriptology w.s.r to Critical Edition of Ayurvedic manuscripts

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Abstract

Most of the available manuscripts especially Ayurvedic manuscripts are written in the scripts like, grantha sharada, telugu Devanagari, nevari, Tibetan etc in languages like Prākṛita, Pāṇi, Saṃskṛta, Apabhraṃśa, Tamiletc .In the critical edition process the first step after collection of manuscript is the transliteration of the manuscripts available in different script into one common script. It indicates the importance of knowledge about different scripts in the critical edition of manuscripts. Objective are to study the different steps in critical edition of manuscripts and to study the importance of paleography in manuscriptology. Transliteration of the manuscript into common script is a crucial step in the edition process of manuscripts. Paleography has pivotal role in critical edition of manuscripts.

Key words: Paleography, transliteration, Critical edition

Introduction:

All the texts available in Ayurveda were in manuscript forms only. They were edited by scholars having proficiency in different sastras. So that it can be considered as a combined work of experts in different subjects like Sanskrit, Vyakarana, Bhasha, Ayurveda etc. Most of the available manuscripts especially Ayurvedic manuscripts are written in the scripts like, grantha sharada, telugu Devanagari, newari,

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Tibetan etc in languages like Prākṛita, Pāḷi, Saṃskṛta, Apabhraṃśa, Tamil etc here comes the importance of paleography in critical edition of Ayurvedic manuscripts.

Manuscriptology

Manuscriptology is a branch of study in archaeology focusing on history and literature using very old palm leaf manuscripts rare paper manuscripts, epigraphy and underwater archaeology as sources and evidences. It is the study of history and literature through the use of hand written documents. As a science it is the of collection, classification, preservation and edition of manuscripts.

Paleography

Paleography is the study of historic writing systems and the deciphering and dating of historical manuscripts, including the analysis of historic hand writing. [□] It's an ancient or antiquated manner of writing. It is concerned with the forms and processes of writing: not the textual content of document.

Critical edition

Any edition that attempts to construct a text of a work using all the available evidence is "critical," whatever its methodology. Critical editions require collation of the different manuscript witnesses, and the construction of a reading text out of the results of that collation. Most critical editions use a base manuscript, whose readings they accept except where there is reason not to do so, but some are more eclectic than others. Critical editions encourage readers to think about the work, more than about its specific manuscript presentation, and may well be more informative on

such topics as the work's sources, historical context, form, style, and other literary matters.

Steps in critical edition

1. Searching of manuscript.
2. Selection of mother manuscript:
3. Transliteration
4. Collation and deciphering
5. Variant reading and critical apparatus.
6. Preparing the final edition.
7. Translation

Script

Script is a particular system or style of writing. It can be comprehended as symbolic representation of sounds of a particular language. Since the time immemorial India is one of the countries multifaceted in terms of language, scripts, and culture. There are hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken in different parts of the country even today. This perhaps has prompted Indian manuscripts to cover a wide range of themes.

The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India lists only 22 official languages of the Republic of India. As far as National Mission for Manuscripts is concerned, it primarily deals with ancient scripts of manuscripts. There are some ancient scripts which are taught in the Manuscriptology & Palaeography workshops i.e. Brahmi, Gupta, Kutila, Nagari, Nandinagari, Sharada, Grantha, Kharoshti, vattelutu, Kaithi, Karani, Odia, Modi, Siddham, Lepcha, Naskh, Nasta'liq, Kufic, Reqa'i, Sulsi etc.

Most of the Indian scripts have been used for writing 70% of manuscripts are in the San-

skrit language. Other 30% of manuscripts are in languages like Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Meithei /Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Newari/ Nepal Bhasa, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Chakma etc.

Importance of knowledge on script in critical edition

1. Searching of manuscript:

While searching manuscript whether it is online or offline its necessary to have thorough knowledge about the topic and script that will be chosen for edition.

In offline while reading a particular text that might be written in particular script like grantha, Devanagari, sharada etc also while searching online the scholar has to use that particular script while doing advanced search in manuscript catalogue.

2. Selection of mother manuscript:

The mother manuscript of a copied or scribed manuscript may also be written in some other script, so that while scholar finds out it in other script then also he or she proceed the work with help of language expert or paleographer as the script reading is necessary for further proceedings.

3. Transliteration:

It is the step to decipher available copies of manuscript to a common script. In this step scholar has to first decipher what's written in scribal copies and also must have command on a common script to which he could transliterate the entire

data.

4. Collation and deciphering :

In this step from the collated documents deciphering with all the available evidence have to be done, for deciphering scholar must know that particular script.

5. Translation :

Translation of edited work to regional or any other language also demands comprehension on that script.

Applicability of paleography in Critical Edition of Ayurvedic manuscripts

Ayurveda began to be codified through centuries in written documents called Manuscripts. India is rich in its collection of medical as well as other manuscripts. Most of these remain unpublished. As such, several unique disease conditions and medical formulations contained in these texts are being lost by decaying. Many versions of the same text can be obtained from different places and therefore different readings about the same subject are seen. Ayurveda being mostly presented in Sanskrit language, a slight difference in reading makes a lot of difference in the interpretation of its meaning. Critical edition of a manuscript deals with the analysis of various versions of a text, to find out which is more meaningful and closer to the original text. It conveys many unique ideas; clarify the existing confusions and misinterpretations. Thus, critical edition of all Ayurveda manuscripts is necessary.

Only 2% of medical manuscripts are in printed form, so initiation should be taken up for

the conservation, cataloguing, critical edition, and publication of Ayurvedic manuscripts which will open a new way for further activities in research area of Ayurveda including effective clinical researches.

In the paleographic view on manuscripts, it can be found out that as different languages having their own script, the scribes have written in their respective scripts.

Even if taking the commentary on Ashtanga hridaya it can be found in different scripts like;

Sl.No	Author	Title of text	Script
1	Chandrachandana	Gunapatha	Tibetan
2	Ramanujacharya	Vakhyasaara	Telugu
3	Uppottukannan	Bhaskara	Malayalam
4	Vagbhata	Vaidurya bhashya	Devanagari and tibetan
5	Vishwesharapandita	Andhrateeka	Telugu

The present Kasyapasamhita is based on a single manuscript deposited in the Durbar Library, Kathamandu. It is in Newari script and broken in many portions but looking to its importance it was deciphered by Rajaguru Pandit Hemaraja Sharma of Nepal and published by Choukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi.

The Bower Manuscript is a collection of seven fragmentary Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit treatises found buried in a Buddhist memorial stupa near Kucha, northwestern China. Written in early Gupta script (late Brahmi script on birch bark, it is variously dated in 5th to early 6th century. The Bower manuscript includes the oldest dated fragments of an Indian medical text, the Navanitaka. The seven treatises included in the collection three on Ayurvedic medicine, two on divination by dice, and two on incantations (Dharani) against snake bites. The collection had at least four scribes, of which three were likely Buddhists because the second, the sixth and the seventh treatises open by

invoking the Buddha and other Buddhist deities. Two invoke Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, and other Hindu deities. The discovery of the manuscript in remote China near Central Asian region is considered evidence of the spread and sharing of ideas in ancient times between India, China and Central Asia. It also contains excerpts of the Bheda Samhita, a medical text whose damaged manuscript is in Tanjavur, Tamil Nadu. The medical fragments of the Bower manuscript have much in common with other ancient Sanskrit medical treatises such as those by Caraka, Ravigupta, Vagbhata and Kashyapa. These facts again indicate the significance of paleography while editing of Ayurveda manuscripts.

Ayurvedic manuscripts are available in different Indian scripts and also in scripts like Tibetan, Newari etc. Hence the scholar who is working on critical edition, must have command on these scripts for meaningful critical edition. Thus it can be concluded that, for the critical edition of Ayurvedic manuscripts paleography has a reminis-

cent role.

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