

Saṃskṛta-sādhutā

Goodness of Sanskrit

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Avid Mathematician and the Spurned Wife: A Motif from the Dhammillahimḍī

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The narrative *Dhammillahimḍī*,¹ generally held to be a late insertion² into the famous *Vasudevahimḍī* (Vh),³ commences with the education and marriage of Dhammilla. When he came of age, Dhammilla was married off to Jasamatī but paid scant attention to her, ignorant as he was in matters amorous.⁴ When Dhammilla’s mother heard that her son was not paying due attention to his wife, she was much upset and sent him to a courtesan for appropriate instruction. Dhammilla was captivated by the courtesan’s charms so much that he stayed on at her house for several years and squandered his entire patrimony. What distinguishes this story from the other parallel versions is the reason given for Dhammilla’s disinterest in women. Dhammilla, it was narrated, received instruction in seventy-two arts (*bāvattarīsu kalāsu*). These began with writing

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- 1 The last part of this title is variously spelt in manuscripts: with short *i* (*himḍī*) and also with long *ī* (*himḍī*). Some people transliterate this term into Roman as *hiṇḍī/ī*, but in writing Prakrit, *anusvāra* is preferable to *parasavarṇa* nasals.
 - 2 L. Alsdorf, ‘A New Version of the Aḡaḡadatta Story,’ reprinted in *L. Alsdorf: Kleine Schriften*, Stuttgart 1974, pp. 107–25, esp. 107: ‘... the so-called Dhammillahiṇḍī which ... is a late addition to the original Vasudevahiṇḍī but even as such cannot be later than the 6th century A.D.’
 - 3 *Vasudevahimḍī of Sanghadāsagaṇi Vācaka*, ed. Caturavijaya Muni and Punyavijaya Muni, Bhavnagar 1930–31 (Ātmānanda Jaina Grantha Ratnamālā 80–81); reprint: Gandhinagar 1989. On this edition, Alsdorf remarks as follows in ‘Vasudevahiṇḍī, a specimen of Archaic Jaina-Mahārāṣṭrī,’ repr. in *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 56–70, esp. 57, n. 1: ‘Though based on twelve MSS (of which readings are given) and outwardly a model performance testifying to the praiseworthy application and zeal of the editors, the edition is thoroughly uncritical and—particularly as regards orthography—in no way better than a moderately good MS.’ On Vh, see also Jagdishchandra Jain, *The Vasudevahiṇḍī: An Authentic Jain Version of the Bṛhatkathā*, Ahmedabad 1977; A. P. Jamkhedkar, *Vasudevahimḍī: a Cultural Study*, Delhi 1984.
 - 4 This is a common motif in several Jaina stories as well as in folk tales. Many a version of Cārudatta’s story has such a beginning. Cf. C. M. Mayerhofer, ‘Tradition and Innovation in Jain Narratives: A Study of two Apabhraṃśa Versions of the Story of Cārudatta,’ Proceedings of the International Symposium on Jaina Canonical Literature, (Strasbourg, 16th–19th June 1981), *Indologica Taurinensia*, 11 (1983) 163–173.

(*lehāiyāsu*) and culminated in the prognostication on the basis of bird-calls (*saiṅnaruya-pajjavasānāsu*). The most prominent among these subjects of study, however, was mathematics (*gaṇiyappadhānāsu*).⁵

After he had completed his course of studies, Dhammilla was married off to his maternal uncle's daughter (*mehuṇayā*) Jasamatī. But he was averse to erotic pleasures and spent his time in the cultivation or perusal of the *śāstras*.⁶ One day Dhammilla's mother-in-law came to visit her daughter. She was well received by Dhammilla's parents. At a suitable moment, she asked her daughter Jasamatī about her well-being (*sarīrādi-kusalam*). The daughter, lowering her face in embarrassment, narrated everything truthfully about her married life—a life that is bereft of domestic bliss (*logadhamma-uvabhogavajjam savvam jahābhūyam kahiyam*)⁷—by means of the following quatrain:

*pāsi kappi caūramsiya revāyayapuṅṇiyam
seḍiyam ca geṇheppi sasippabhavaṅṇiyam/
māim suyam pi ekkaliyam sayani nivaṅṇiyam
savvarattim ghosei samāṇasavaṅṇiyam//*⁸

This is a very pretty verse with a charming end-rhyme but bristles with knotty problems. The difficulties pertain to the reading of the verse as it came down to us, its metre, and finally the meaning.

5 The narrative *Dhammillahinḍi* occurs on pp. 27–76. But the portion with which the present paper is concerned is on pp. 27–28 only, and therefore no further page references will be given.

6 The text reads: *tato māṇussayabhogaraiparammuho satthagahaṇa-ratta-hiyayo*, (Skt. *śāstragrahaṇa-rakta-hṛdayaḥ*) *kameṇa kālam gamei*. But the v. 1. *satthārāhaṇa-ratta-hiyayo* (Skt. *śāstrārādhana-rakta-hṛdayaḥ*) is clearly preferable.

7 Jagdishchandra Jain, op. cit., pp. 583–84, renders this as 'narrated everything except the enjoyment of worldly pleasures.' This implies that Jasamatī told her mother many things but did not tell her anything about the enjoyment [or absence thereof] of worldly pleasures. If that were so, what follows would not make sense. Therefore, we have to construe that Jasamatī told her mother everything about her life in the husband's place and that this life was bereft (*vajjam*) of sexual fulfilment (*lokadhamma*).

8 The editors have helpfully provided a Sanskrit *chāyā*, which I shall have occasion to discuss later: *pārśve kalpayitvā (sthāpayitvā) caturasrikām (paṭṭikām) revāpayahpūrṇikām (?) seṭikām ca gṛhītvā śaṣiprabhavarṇikām/
mām suptām ekākinīm śayane nirvarṇya api
sarvarātrīm ghoṣayati svamānasavarṇitam (samāna-savarṇikam)//*

We take up first the identification of the metre which seems to be unique to this verse. No other verse in the Vh appears to have the same scansion as this one. The metre does not match with any of those described in Hemacandra's *Chando'nuśāsana*,⁹ nor with any in the *Prākṛta-Paiṅgala*.¹⁰ It is obviously a moric metre (*mātrācchandas*) and that too an *ardhasamavṛtta*. The odd feet have each 16 syllables, consisting of 23 morae, which follow the pattern 6 + 6 + 6 + *g l g* (*ṣaṭkala-trika* followed by a *ra-gaṇa*). Thus the odd feet are analogous to the metre called *Hīra* but not quite identical because in a *Hīra* the *ṣaṭkalas* must invariably consist of an initial *guru* followed by four *laghus* (*gllll*),¹¹ whereas this pattern is not adhered to in our verse.

The even lines have each 14 syllables, consisting of 21 morae,¹² which follow the pattern 6 + 5 + 5 + *g l g* (*ṣaṭkala, pañcakala-dvika* followed by a *ra-gaṇa*). This is similar to the metre called *Plavaṅgama* but again not identical. For the *Plavaṅgama* consists of just 21 morae with an initial *guru*. The example cited by the *Prākṛta-Paiṅgala* has a *ra-gaṇa* at the conclusion of each foot but the definition does not mention this feature expressly.¹³

Of course, the problem of identifying the metre does not pertain to this verse alone. The problem is quite widespread in the case of Middle Indic poetry. But that is no consolation. A knowledge of the metre, or at least of the metrical pattern, is necessary if an emendation has to be made to the text, as will be shown presently. On the other hand, the non-identification of the metre does not quite detract us from apprehending the meaning.

But then there are problems also in apprehending the meaning. Jagadish-chandra Jain, who has done a great service to the cause of Prakrit narrative literature through his detailed study of the Vh, renders the verse thus into English:

9 Included in H. D. Velankar (ed.), *Jayadāman: A Collection of Ancient Texts on Sanskrit Prosody and a Classified List of Sanskrit Metres with an Alphabetical Index*, Poona 1949, pp. 94–113.

10 *Prākṛta-Paiṅgala*, ed. & tr., Bholā Shankar Vyas, Varanasi 1959; reprint: Ahmedabad 2007.

11 Ibid, 1.199–201, pp. 170–171.

12 The last syllable of the first word in the fourth line *savvarattiṃ* ends in an *anusvāra*, but in Prakrit poetry this can be treated as a *laghu* on the authority of *Prākṛta-Paiṅgala* 1.5 (p. 6): *ihikārā bīndujuyā eo suddhā a vaṅṅamiliā vi lahū*.

13 Ibid, I.187–188; the example runs thus: *ṇaccaī camcala vijjuliṃyā sahi jāṇae mammaha khagga kiṅṅsai jalaharasāṅae/ ...*

‘Friend, the streak of lightning is dancing. Methinks that Manmatha is sharpening his sword on the whet-stone of the cloud ...’

‘Leaving me sleeping all alone at night, he goes on writing on a four-cornered slate of a grinding stone (*khoyayapuṇṇiyam*), working with a piece of chalk, memorising grammar aphorisms.’¹⁴

Before commenting on Jain’s translation, I may say that the two middle lines, i.e., the second and third, do not pose much of a problem. The second line states: *seḍiyam ca geṇheppi sasippabhavaṇṇiyam*, ‘even after having taken a [piece of] chalk (*seḍiya*) which has the colour of the moonlight.’ The purport of the third line (*maiṁ suyam pi ekkalliyam sayani nivaṇṇiyam*) is ‘even after having seen me sleeping alone on the couch.’ The problems occur with the first and last lines; in particular, with the compounds at the end of the two lines, viz. *revāyayapuṇṇiyam* and *samāṇasavaṇṇiyam*. Jain emends the first of these compounds *revāyayapuṇṇiyam* as *khoyayapuṇṇiyam* and adds that the compound was thus read by Alsdorf without telling, however, where Alsdorf proposed this emendation.

Be that as it may, the emendation creates fresh problems. It is of course possible to read *revā* as *kho* for these two forms look alike in Devanāgarī script. But then, we will be short of one syllable (or two morae) in the first foot and this violates the metrical pattern. But what do we achieve by this substitution? ‘A four-cornered slate of a grinding stone.’ From the second line, we have learnt that the young man had a piece of white chalk. With this he would write on a writing board (Skt. *lekha-phalaka* or plain *phalaka*; Pkt. *leha-phalaya*, *phalaya*; *phalaä*). This word is not mentioned in the verse, but may be inferred.

Writing boards are usually oblong or rectangular and this fact is stated by the expression *caüramsiya* (Skt. *caturasraka*). The verse goes on to add that the writing board is also *revāyayapuṇṇiyam* or *khoyayapuṇṇiyam*. Pkt. *khoyaya* may be connected to Skt. *kṣoda-ka* which, as the dictionaries tell us, means a grinding stone. But what is a ‘four-cornered slate of a grinding stone’? It cannot be that Dhammilla was using the grinding stone from his mother’s kitchen as his writing slate. Dhammilla is definitely stupid in neglecting the lovely wife and doing whatever he was doing, but he need not be made sillier than is necessary. Besides, even if one were so desperate as to pick up the nearest grinding stone to record his precious thoughts and even if it is assumed that the said grinding stone is of rectangular shape, what shall we do with *puṇṇiya* (from Skt. **pūrṇita*)? The writing board is said to be filled with *khoyaya*. You cannot say that the slate has been cut from the grinding stone.

To be sure, both the slate and the grinding stone are fashioned out of rough stones. However, to convert a rough stone first into a grinding stone and then

14 Jain, op. cit., 583.

once again to cut the grinding stone into a writing slate is possible but would be a waste of labour and time. It will be tantamount to cutting a tree to make a lofty *dhvaja-stambha* and then to convert it into a ruler—possible but not sensible. Furthermore, grinding stones are made of harder rock whereas writing tablets are cut from much softer slate stone.

Then again, writing tablets made out of slate stone and encased in a wooden frame—which were used in south India until recent times—were actually colonial importation of the nineteenth century. They did not exist previously in India. The traditional Indian writing tablet, on the other hand, was made of wood and painted black. This is what Siddhārtha Gautama carried to school, as depicted in the well known Gandhāra sculpture¹⁵ and this is what children in village schools in U.P. carry two thousand and odd years later even today. Dhammilla of our story also used the same kind of wooden writing board and it has no relation whatever with the grinding stone. Therefore the expression *revāyayapuṇṇiyam* (or *khoyaya-*), as an attribute of the rectangular writing board, should mean something else.

Before speculating on what it could be, it will be in order to look at the problems raised by the fourth line. Jasamatī is waiting in bed. Not paying any attention to her, Dhammilla takes an oblong writing board and a white piece of chalk, and recites or chants all night *samāna-savaṇṇiyam*. What is it that he recites? Jain's answer is grammar aphorisms (i.e. Pāṇini's *sūtras*).¹⁶

There are several difficulties with this interpretation. The grammatical term *savarṇa* denotes homogeneous letters belonging to the same class, which require in their pronunciation the same effort by the speech organ. These are dealt with by Pāṇini in just a single *sūtra*, viz. 1.1.9: *tulyāsya-prayatnam savarṇam*. Neither this *sūtra*, nor its elaboration in other texts, requires the whole night for memorising, let alone several months. Recall that Jasamatī is not complaining of neglect during one single night, but during a whole succession of nights. Secondly, this interpretation does not account for the word *samāna* in the expression *samāna-savaṇṇiyam*. The third objection is that traditionally memorising Pāṇini is not accompanied by writing, whereas this verse lays a great em-

15 Now at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; reproduced in Sir John Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra*, Cambridge 1960, pl. 66, fig. 95.

16 In his Gujarati translation of the Vh, which appeared from Bhavnagar in 1946, B. J. Sandesera is said to have rendered the expression in the same way; cf. A. P. Jamkhedkar, op. cit., p. 122, n. 418: '*samānasavaṇṇiya*, studied by Dhammilla; Vh(P), 23 [sic! 28]. According to Sandesera (trans. p. 34), it means the section on *savarṇa* in the Pāṇinian grammar.'

phasis on writing. Fourthly, grammar is not among the seventy-two *kalās* in which Dhammilla received instruction.

In order to reach the correct solution, we must consider what sort of study would be in keeping with Dhammilla's background. At the beginning of the story we are told that Dhammilla's father Surindadatta was a rich *satthavāha* (Skt. *sārthavāha*), i.e., the leader of a merchant caravan, who imports and exports goods. The seventy-two *kalās*, traditionally associated with his milieu, were to equip Dhammilla for his profession and later to enable him to enjoy the fruits of his wealth.¹⁷

Though the majority of the seventy-two items mentioned fall into the latter category meant for the man about town, the lists invariably mention that the series begin with writing and end with prognostication (important in times of unsafe travel, whether at Dhammilla's time or even today), but the most important of all the seventy-two *kalās* is *gaṇīya* (Skt. *gaṇita*), 'arithmetic or mathematics.'¹⁸ What kind of mathematics can this be?

In the traditional curriculum, higher mathematics was subsumed under mathematical astronomy (*gaṇita-jyotiṣa*) and did not have an independent existence of its own. Therefore, in the present context of a merchant's education, *gaṇita* can only mean arithmetic, or more precisely, commercial arithmetic. When we consider that the purpose of the education given to Dhammilla was not to make him a professor of Vyākaraṇa nor an astronomer but to prepare him for the life of a merchant trader, then it becomes clear that his nocturnal studies pertain to arithmetic. While much of the traditional education is oral, based on memorising, and therefore does not require writing, in mathematics one does need to write down the sums and solve them in writing. This explains the connection of Dhammilla's nightly studies with the writing board and chalk.

Of course, poets too need writing tools to record their sudden flashes of inspiration.¹⁹ As mentioned earlier, the editors of the Vh provided a *chāyā* for this

17 The 72 *kalās* are enumerated in *Rāyapaseṇayam (Rājaprasānīya-sūtram)*, tr. into Hindi by Deo Kumar Jain, Beawar 1991, p. 208: *lehaṃ gaṇīyaṃ rūvaṃ naṭṭaṃ gīyaṃ vāīyaṃ saragayaṃ pukkaragayaṃ samatālaṃ ... pattacchejjaṃ kaḍakacchejjaṃ sajjīvanijjīvaṃ saīṇaruyaṃ*; see also the editor's comments on pp. 210–211. Admittedly, this is a stock list, but there is no reason why it should be completely ignored.

18 See also Bibhutibhusan Datta & Avadhesh Narayan Singh, *History of Hindu Mathematics: A Source-Book*, (1st ed. 1935, 1938), 2nd ed, Bombay 1962, Part I, p. 6: 'Prince Gautama began his education when he was eight years of age "firstly (with) writing and then arithmetic as the most important of the 72 sciences and arts."'

19 That is why in his *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, Rājaśekhara enumerates all the varieties of materials a poet must keep ready in his study. For an analysis of this passage, see Sreeramula

verse, where they render *samānasavaṇṇiyam* as *svamānasa-varṇitam*, lit. ‘described in one’s own mind,’ or ‘made up in one’s own mind.’ This can be a poetical composition which Dhammilla recites all night. If that were so, chalk that resembles moon’s light (*sasippabhavaṇṇiyam sediyam*) would indeed be the appropriate tool to record such compositions.

But many things go against this interpretation. One, Jasamatī who, judging by the verse in question, was herself an accomplished poet, was not much enamoured with whatever the husband was reciting night after night. Therefore, it cannot have been poetry. If it was bad poetry, she would probably have made some witty remark on it. Moreover, the narrator himself told us at the beginning that Dhammilla’s mind was attracted to the acquisition or cultivation of *sāstra* (*satthagahaṇarattahiyayo*, v. 1. *sathārāhaṇarattahiyayo*).

More important still is the following. When Dhammilla’s mother came to know of her son’s nocturnal studies and the consequent neglect of the wife, she reported the matter to her husband, who pacified her by saying: ‘As long as the boy’s mind is attracted to learning (*vijjāsu*), we should be happy and not sad. If the newly acquired learning is not cultivated, it would be extinguished like a lamp bereft of oil. Don’t be naïve. As long as he is young, let him learn.’²⁰ Dhammilla’s poetic effusions could not have elicited such a tolerant remark from the father. He approved Dhammilla’s conduct only because the son was engaged in studies suitable to his calling, namely mathematics. Therefore, I think, we must attempt to interpret the verse in relation to Dhammilla’s mathematical studies.

For this, it is necessary to make a small digression and discuss how the mathematical sums were written down in pre-modern times. From the scanty references in literature and from various accounts from the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, it appears that sums were written down with chalk on a wooden board. Alternatively, one spread sand, dust or some coloured

Rajeswara Sarma, ‘Writing Material in Ancient India,’ *Aligarh Journal of Oriental Studies*, 2 (1985) 175–96. See also Budhasvāmin’s *Bṛhatkathāślokaśaṅgraha*, 20.67 where a poet cries out suddenly at midnight: *athānyatra śṛṇomi sma pādaḥ ślokasya śobhanah/*

āgatas taṁ likhāmy āśu datta me vartikāṁ iti//

‘Elsewhere I hear, “A nice line of poetry came to my mind. Give me a brush, I must put it down quickly.”’

20 *ajāṇue, jāva bālo vijjāsu ya aṇurattabuddhī ṇaṇu tāva te harisāiyavvaṁ, kiṁ visāyaṁ vaccasi/ ahiṇavasikkhiyā vijjā aguṇijjamtī ṇeharahio viva paīvo viṇāsāi vaccaī, taṁ mā ayāṇugā hohī/ jāva bālo tāva vijjāu guṇeu.*

powder on the wooden board, and traced the numbers on such a surface. Therefore arithmetic was also known as *dhūlikarman*.²¹

If we read the first line with Alsdorf as *pāsi kappi caūraṃsiya khoyaya-puṇṇiyam*, it would not denote ‘a four-cornered slate of grinding stone’ as Jain understood, but rather ‘an oblong writing board filled with dust,’ for *khoyaya* (from Skt. *kṣoda-ka*) means both grinding, or grinding stone, as well as dust.²² There is one more, and perhaps better, possibility: *kṣoda* also means multiplication.²³ Then the oblong writing board was filled with multiplications. However, as I said earlier, reading *kṣoyaya* instead of *revāyaya* would make the line shorter by one syllable. I do not know what Alsdorf’s arguments were in favour of such a reading.

More appropriate would be another emendation suggested by the editors, viz. *revāpayapuṇṇiyam* in the place of *revāyayapuṇṇiyam*. This will provide us the meaning ‘filled with the waters of the river Revā,’ or rather ‘the writing board looks as if it were filled with the waters of the river Revā.’ Revā is a synonym of Narmadā, or rather that portion of the river Narmadā which flows through the Vindhya. Here the waters are not placid but turbulent. Could it be that Dhammilla’s irregular jottings on the writing board, white against black, resembled the foamy waters of the river Revā on the stony bed of the mountain range?²⁴

In the fourth line also, there is some possibility of mathematical interpretation, especially in the term *savaṇṇiyam* Skt. *savarṇana*, short for *kalāsa-varṇana*, which is a technical term that denotes the process of reducing two or

21 Mahāmahopādhyāya Sudhākara Dvivedī (1855–1910) writes in his *Gaṇit kā Itihās*, part 1, Banaras 1910, pp. 43–44, that it was an ancient custom in India to spread dust or red powder (*abīr*) on a wooden board and to do sums upon it and that this practice continued up to his time. See also Datta & Singh, op. cit., part 1, pp. 8, 123, 129; Gaurishankar Hilalal Ojha, *Bhāratīya Prācīna Lipi-mālā*, Delhi 1894, reprint: Delhi 1959, pp. 146–47.

22 Cf. *Medinīkośa*, s.v. (page 74, verse 4): *kṣodaḥ syāt puṃsi rajasi peṣaṇe ca prakīrtitaḥ*.

23 Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v., see also s.v. *kṣuṇṇa*, ‘multiplied.’ The latter form is used frequently in Bhāskara’s *Siddhānta-Śiromaṇi*, see esp. *Tripraśnādhikāra* 83, 95; *Pātādhikāra* 102.

24 In the Mandasore Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvarḍhana, dated Mālava Saṃvat 589 (= AD 532), the waters of the Revā tumbling down from the peaks of the Vindhya range are indeed described as white (*vindhyaśya ... śikharataṭapatat-pāṇḍu-revāmburāśeḥ*); cf. J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. III)*, No. 35, verse 19.

more fractions to a common denominator, or just an operation with fractions.²⁵ In an extended sense, *savaṇṇana*, or rather the Prakrit form *savaṇṇana* can be taken to mean just fraction. If *savaṇṇiya* of our verse, which is not unrelated, means fraction, does the preceding word *samāna* mean integer or whole number? At least, the dictionaries answer in the affirmative.²⁶ Then the purport of the fourth line will be that Dhammilla recites whole numbers and fractions throughout the night.

Why should he do that when solving mathematical sums? Here we must visualise a child doing sums. Imagine that he needs to use the product of nine times five. Adults can do that mentally in one step. But a child will recite the table of nine from the beginning: ‘nine ones are nine, nine twos are eighteen,’ and so on until, ‘nine fives are forty-five.’ This is what the novice Dhammilla must be doing: reciting the multiplication tables of whole numbers and those of fractions²⁷ in a loud and monotonous tone, while doing his sums or daily accounts.

In the *Upālijātaka* of the *Mahāvagga*, Upāli’s doting parents ponder about a suitable career for their dear son and rule out *gaṇana*, saying that it would strain his poor chest (*sa ce kho upāli gaṇanam sikkissati urassa dukkho bhavissati*), obviously because he has to recite all kinds of arithmetical tables.²⁸ Now it becomes clear why the nights are unbearable to Jasamatī—not only the deprivation of the worldly pleasures but having to listen to the droning recitation of

25 In this sense, the expression is used as the heading of one of the branches of arithmetic. *Thānaṅga*, sūtra 747, enumerates the various titles of arithmetic thus:

*parikammaṃ vavahāro rajju rāsī kalāsavaṇṇe ya/
jāvaṃtāvati vaggo ghano tataha vaggāvaggo vikappo ta//*

quoted by Datta & Singh, op. cit, part 1, p. 8, n. 1. They render the various technical terms as follows: *parikammaṃ* (fundamental operations); *vavahāro* (determinations); *rajju* (rope, geometry); *rāsī* (rule of three); *kalāsavaṇṇe* (operations with fractions); *jāvaṃtāvati* (as many as, simple equations); *vaggo* (square, meaning quadratic equations); *ghano* (cube, meaning cubic equations); *vaggāvaggo* (biquadratic equations); *vikappo* (permutations and combinations).

26 Böhtlingk-Roth’s *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*, and following it Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v. mention that *samāna* means a whole number as opposed to a fraction on the authority of *Vārtika* 4 (*samānānām*) on Pāṇini 5.2.47.

27 Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, Indian children, especially of the merchant class, were made to memorise not just the tables of whole numbers but also tables of several fractions; cf. S. R. Sarma, ‘Some Medieval Arithmetical Tables,’ *Indian Journal of History Science*, 32 (1997) 191–98.

28 *The Mahāvagga*, ed. Bhikku J. Kashyap, Nalanda 1956, p. 80.

multiplication tables. After this long discussion, I may now translate the verse in the following manner:

An oblong [board] he keeps ready,
 filled [as it were with foamy] waters of Revā.
 He picks up a [piece of] chalk,
 white like the lustre of the moon.
 Even after he sees me sleeping all alone on the couch,
 He chants [the tables] of whole numbers and of fractions.
 Night after night.

Whether one accepts this interpretation or not—admittedly it is somewhat forced—, one cannot but be moved by the evocative use of the words *revā* and *sasi*. In the terminology of *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*, *sasi* is an *uddīpana-vibhāva*, exciter of passion or that which sets the lover's heart aflame. In Sanskrit poetry, *Revā* too plays a similar role. It is the stream that passionately clings to the neck of *Vindhya*, like an ardent girl clinging to the neck of her lover.²⁹ It is the very river on the banks of which lovers meet, and this pleasure cannot be recaptured elsewhere.³⁰ There is no doubt that the association of these evocative objects with the writing tools of the insensitive husband renders the wife's deprivation all the more poignant.

29 In his *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* (12.6), Varāhamihira states that *Vindhya* is blessed by the fact that the mountain is *rahasi revayā madanasaktayā kāntayevopagūḍhaḥ*.

30 Recall Śīlabhaṭṭārikā's immortal line (*Kāvyaaprakāśa*, illustration 1): *revārodhasi vetasī-tarutale cetaḥ samutkaṅṭhate* ('my heart longs for the first love under the cane shrub on the banks of the *Revā*'); and compare it with *Gāhāsattasāi*, 6.99:

akaṅṅnua ghaṇavaṅṅaṇaṇ ghaṇavaṅṅāṇṅāntariatarāṇiaraṇiaram/
jaī re re vāṇīraṇ revāṇīraṇ pi ṇo bharasi//

Don't you remember, you ingrate,
 the dark cane shrub
 [under which we first met]
 which shaded [us] from the strong sun rays?
 [Don't you remember]
 Even the cool water of the *Revā*?