

PALAEOGRAPHY AND THE OLDEST SURVIVING ŚAIVA TANTRA, THE
Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā

CAMBRIDGE, 5TH DECEMBER 2011

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1. The texts preserved in a ninth-century Nepalese manuscript (NGMPP Reel N° A 41/14), of which there are 3 apographs of the twentieth century:

Niśvāsamukhatattvasaṃhitā

Mūlasūtra (450–550 AD?)

Uttarasūtra

Nayasūtra

Guhyasūtra (650 BC)

2. *Niśvāsamukhatattvasaṃhitā* 1:21 :

śṛṅvantu ṛṣayaḥ sarve pañcadhā yat prakīrtitam
laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ caiva tathādhyātmikam eva ca
a[[timārgaṃ ca mantrākhyam]] †...†

3. Other surviving texts called « *Niśvāsa* »

- in South Indian MSS, in particular IFP T. 17, 127 & 150:

Niśvāsakārikā (the existence of which is indicated in the final lines of the
Guhyasūtra)

Dīkṣottara (part of the *Niśvāsakārikā* often cited by Abhinavagupta
(C10th–C11th))

- in Nepalese MSS:

Niśvāsākhyamahātantra (= *Devyāmata*)— *pratiṣṭhātantra* (unpublished
scripture surviving in Nepal) on the construction and inauguration
of temples

4. PALAEOGRAPHY. *Nayasūtra* 1:75c–76b (the alphabet in the body):

mātrkāvigrahaṃ hy etac charīre yas tu vindati
akāre ca tathaiveha sa saṃsārād vimucyate

5. *Nayasūtra* 1:34–35b (the letters *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū* and *ṛ*):

bhruvoḥ sandhi śiraḥ kṛtvā netratārau tu bindukau
ikāra eṣa vikhyāto nāsavaṃśena dīrghikā 1:34
u ū śravaṇamadyasthau ṛkāraṃ bāhukāritam

6. *Nayasūtra* 1:43–44 (the letters *gha*, *ṇa*, *ca*, *cha* and *ja*):

ūrdhabāhukarau kṛtvā muṣṭin dakṣiṇapāṇinā
ghakāraḥ śirasā yuktaṃ ṇakāraṃ hīnabāhunā 1:43
cakāraṃ vaktramārgge tu chakāraṃ nāsike sthitaḥ
ūrdhabāhukarau kṛtvā śi[[ro]]yuktan tu ja smṛtaḥ 1:44

7. *Nayasūtra* 1:53 (the letters *ta* and *tha*):

prasṛte ca tathā jaṅghe takāraṃ kaṭinā¹ saha
thakāro nābhir uddiṣṭā valirekhāsamanvitā 1:53

8. *Nayasūtra* 1:55c–56 (the letter *na*):

maṇibandham śiraḥ kṛtvā dakṣiṇasya karasya tu 1:55
saṅkuñcya caturō ṅgulyās [ta]thā muṣṭin tu kārayet
adhomukha smṛto ṅguṣṭho nakāras tu bhaviṣyati 1:56

9. *Nayasūtra* 1:62c–64b (the letters *ra*, *la* and *va* in the body):

jānuśiras tu pādorddham rakāraṅ jaṅghasaṃyutam 1:62
dehalīnau bhujau kṛtvā upaviśya ca lakṣayet
saṅkuñcya vāma jaṅghau tu lakāran divyarūpiṇam 1:63
muṣkasūtra śiraḥ kṛtvā vakāraṃ pāyur ucyate

10. *Nayasūtra* 1:69ff (the letters *ha* and *kṣa* in the body):

lakārasya tu yad rūpaṃ dakṣiṇe tac ca kārayet
hakāras tu tatoddiṣṭaḥ kṣakāraṃ sāmpratam śṛṇu 1:69
ekarūpaṃ caturdhā tu dehe dṛśyati sa prabhuḥ
hiṣkārāndhra śiran tasya rekhā yā ca-m-adhogatā 1:70
kaṭyā rekhā tu samprāptā stanarekhena kaḥ smṛtaḥ
kaṭirekhā ca tiryāṅ ca nābhirekhā ca madhyataḥ 1:71
pārśve ca yā bhaved rekhā kṣakāraḥ prathama[h] smṛtaḥ

¹kaṭinā] *conj.*; kathi(?)nā NW; kathitā K

a	𑂔	ā	𑂕	i	𑂖	ī	𑂗		
u	𑂘	ū		ṛ	𑂙				
e	𑂚	ai	𑂛	o	𑂜	au	𑂝		
ka	𑂟	kha	𑂠	ga	𑂡	gha	𑂢		
ca	𑂣	cha	𑂤	ja	𑂥	jha	𑂦	ña	𑂧
ṭa	𑂨	ṭha	𑂩	ḍa	𑂪	ḍha	𑂫	ṇa	𑂬
ta	𑂮	tha	𑂯	da	𑂰	dha	𑂱	na	𑂲
pa	𑂴	pha	𑂵	ba	𑂶	bha	𑂷	ma	𑂸
ya	𑂺	ra	𑂻	la	𑂼	va	𑂽		
śa	𑂿	ṣa	𑃀	sa	𑃁	ha	𑃂	kṣa	𑃃

Figure 1: A Gupta “font” created by Somdev VASUDEVA on the basis of SANDER 1968, Tables IX–XIX, which document what she calls “Gupta-Alphabete” of “Schrift-typus II” from c. 3rd to 5th century AD.

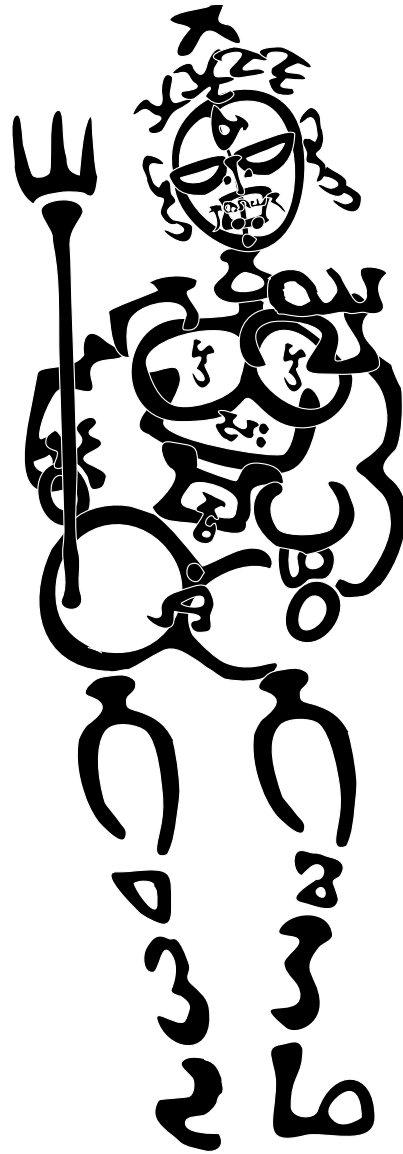


Figure 2: Somdev VASUDEVA’s “synaesthetic icon of Mālīnī” in his article “Synaesthetic Iconography: 1. the *Nāḍiphāntakrama*” (Pondicherry, 2007:536, fig. 2), showing the association of letters and body-parts.