Manuscripts and Manuscriptology

The word Manuscriptology is an oft used word, especially by Indian scholars of textual criticism. The word has a word of Latin etymology (manuscript) and a Greek word as the final component of it, namely, logos which means speech or 'word' (in Sanskrit may be represented by the words vac). In other words, logos finally signifies 'language' or in the extended meaning 'study about language'. Hence, it could be summed up that deciphering some hand-written (manuscript) materials and studying all relevant subjects and objects related to the matters expressed in a language in it, which has been maintained in such book-forms, in a scientific way. Thus, the subject of manuscriptology can be mainly divided into three branches. Firstly, cataloguing and conserving the manuscript treasures available. Secondly, studying the content of a manuscript following scientific and methodical process; an analytical study of the text in its historicity including all critical and comparative models of discourse. This again presupposes the proper decipherment of the hitherto unknown text, which involves the third branch of the science, namely Palaeography, scientific knowledge of scripts in which mss. are written/available. For editing the text the reading of the text needs to be brought out.

Again, for a text-critic, ancient manuscripts of India form a vast area of research. Indic manuscripts form the biggest collection of hand-written books in the world, among which mss. containing Sanskrit texts are highest in number. Manuscripts of Sanskrit language are available before us in more than forty scripts. Prakrit text of Gandhari Dhammapada is available in Kharosti script even, which is otherwise not so commonly available in manuscripts.

1.1 The materials:

The materials of writing as found are of various kinds, leaves of trees like birch or bhurj (making bhurjapatra), palm (making palm-leaf), aguru (making sanchipat), hand-made paper of different types (namely, as available in north-Indian mss., Nepalese mss., Tibetan xylographs and mss., wooden planks), metal plates, stones, animal-skin, clay tablets and so on and so forth.

However, paintings or drawings though produced by hand on such materials which could be used for writing down a text as well are not considered to be manuscripts, the criterion for exclusion of these being chiefly the use of language. Manuscripts communicate a text written in a language, rather a specific language and specific scripts of a particular time and region.

Inscriptions are beyond the scope of the study of manuscripts in the true sense although these may be pertaining to the study of manuscripts serving some auxiliary purpose regarding scripts, rather palaeographic features of scripts and their historicity as well as some additional historical data about the texts and its manuscripts taken up for study if these are parallel with regard to age and region. But the stone, wood or copper-plate inscriptions are always unique in their form and existence. Similar is the case of painting, drawing etc. These have been available to us down the ages in their original form and content. They have never been copied further because of the mutilated condition of the archetype or just for the sake of making many more copies for the purpose of teaching, studying, ritual practice or the like. Further, inscriptions are generally not written by hand with the normal instruments of writing;

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these are carved or chiseled with the instruments available for the purpose. So, for producing inscriptions a text is first written and then it is chiseled, hence giving rise to two sets of workers—the lekhaka and the karanika meaning the writer and the chiseller respectively. In some inscriptions of the South both of these sets of people are recorded.

Manuscripts are generally not single productions, even though each manuscript is a unique piece in its form, shape, material, size, appearance, style of writing, scribe, script, place of writing and the sponsor. A single text may be available in a large number of manuscripts which vary from each other in respect of the features just mentioned. These text written down on different types of writing materials have been continuing through different periods of time.

1.2 Development of manuscripts

In our times if we come across the world ‘manuscripts’ we have to understand that now-a-days, i.e., in the modern days of printing manuscripts mean the stage of books before printing. For example, the matters submitted to a publisher for the purpose of printing. In this case the typescripts, the dissertations, the personal writings or documents like matters, records, legal deeds, diaries, speeches etc. are all to be recognized as manuscripts. This is the scope of manuscripts in the post printing era. But in the ages before printing the books-form in which texts were produced are ancient manuscripts for us.

In the faculty of Library Science special mention is made about the ancient and mediaeval manuscripts in the related technical literature.

A clear distinction between the manuscripts in this modern age of printing and the manuscripts in this modern age of printing and the manuscripts of ancient times lies in the fact that in modern times the manuscript-form of a particular text is not further copied by hand, it is printed following all the technical procedure. In other words, many more manuscripts are not produced from one manuscript, which was the case in ancient and mediaeval times. Why in those days such copies were made, has just been mentioned above. Normally several copies were made from the author’s own copy, i.e., from the autograph. From these exemplars further copies were made for the purpose of study, teaching, presentation, ritual purpose, discussion and so on. These were again copied by many other interested persons for the aforesaid purposes. In this way a chain of relationship developed between the manuscripts, although there is no written record about this progress in the line of the development of the text in the manuscripts in different areas and scripts often far away from the place of origin of the text and its first manuscripts. The Sanskrit poetologist Rajashekra (10th cent. A.D.) mentions in a verse that a poet should make many more copies of his kavya which he has composed during his own lifetime itself so that his creation is made secured against the danger of loss, theft or destruction:

सिद्धं च प्रबन्धम् – अनेकादर्शगतं कुर्वात्। वदित्वं कथयन्नति –
निशेषो विक्रयो दानं देशव्यापीर्यजीविता।
तुदेस्तो वहिस्तरमभि प्रबन्धो चक्रेद्वेदेतः॥
(काव्यमीमांसा, अध्याय: १०)

It is to be noted, however, that all later copies development through several stages of extension and expansion of a particular text through hundreds of year and travelling over a vast area are
manuscripts. Of course, the status of each piece under study can be determined through minute observation and analysis combined with the comparative method of studying a manuscript regarding its formal aspects and contextual and stylistics features as well. In this matter it is to be determined whether a manuscript in hand is an autograph, i.e., the original writing of the author. If not, then among the several manuscripts of the same text available at hand the interrelation is to be established. That is the search for the archetype or archetypes of the particular pieces in hand needs to be done. An archetype is the relatively original source for further copies. There may be, naturally, more than one archetype for the pieces in hand, since these may have been copied from sources different from each other. Those source-points i.e., archetypical had naturally other archetypetal before them. Thus at every stage of production of manuscripts some copies are to be traced to one archetype and some others to some other archetypes. For some copies again there might have been two exemplars or copies of different features available and used as archetypes, which have been combined or conflated in the features of reading or content of the text.

1.3 Status of manuscripts at hand

Thus, if many manuscripts of a single text are available at hand the interrelation between them can be determined through the process of tracing the line of their development or genealogy, which is technically called stemma codicum or genealogy of the codices (manuscripts), codex meaning manuscripts.

The technical terms coming across for identifying a manuscript may be thus - autograph, exemplar, copy, archetype, conflated copy etc.

The copies made from the original exemplar which was the archetype for these may again serve as the archetype of further copies made from these. In this case these copies which are used by subsequent manuscripts writers as archetype are hyparchetypes or subarchetypes.

These terms are applicable for ancient manuscripts. The AACR/2 AACR/2R mention a technical term holograph meaning "manuscripts handwritten by the persons (s) responsible for the work (s) contained therein". So, for Library Science holograph means a text in manuscripts—from written not necessarily by the author, although the author is responsible for the content of the text. This may have been written by the secretary receiving a dictation or from a recorded matter on tape-recorder and so on. These holographs may be signed or even not signed by the author. Further, in modern times a manuscript may be there in form of a true transcript from an original manuscript or carbon copy of the same; as well as there may be a photocopy or microfilm printout of an original manuscript.

4.4 Some important technical terms required for textual criticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin/English</th>
<th>Indian/Sanskrit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manuscript / Codex / Evidence</td>
<td>Pustaka / Pustikā</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Pusta / Pustī / Māṭrkā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Grantha</td>
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<td>Granthakāra</td>
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Autograph
Granthakāra-svākṣara

Scribe
lipikāra/Lekhaka

Exemplar
Pratirūpa

Archetype
Pratnarūpa

Hyp-archetype
Antarvarti-Pratnarūpa /
Madhyavarti-Pratnarūpa

Copies / Ms. In hand
Pratilipi,Upalabdha-pustaka /
Māṭrka

Conflated Copy
Saṃkīraṇa Māṭrka

Codex Unicus / Single Manuscript
Ekala-Māṭrka /
Upalabdha – Māṭrka

Stemma Codicum
VaMśavrksa / Prāpta-Pustakānāṃ (=Māṭrkanām)
Vaṃśavrksa

Folium / Folio / Leaf
Pattra

Recto / Front side of a folio
Saṃmukha-Bhāga

Verso / Back side of a folio
Prṣṭha-Bhāga

Transcription
Pratīvarṇikaraṇa

Collation
Pāṭha-Saṃṭulana

Apparatus Criticus /
Critical Apparatus
Pāṭhavimarṣa / Pāṭha-Saṃkṣā

/ Saṃkṣā tippanī

Critical / Text – Critical Edition
Samīksātmaka- Saṃskaraṇa

Vulgate edition
Sādhārana Saṃskaraṇa

Popular edition
Pracalita Saṃskaraṇa

Students’ edition
Chātrapāṭhya Saṃskaraṇa

Colophon
Puṣpikā

1.5 Form of manuscript

Manuscripts are written usually with equal margin on the left and the right side of a page or side of a leaf. Equal margin is also kept on the top and below of the page. It is written
on both sides of the leaves. No space or gap is given between two separate words, sentences or punctuation mark. It is commonly believed that each side of the leaf must necessarily be a pūnakumbh, a full jar and not an empty or partially full jar, since that is the auspicious mark. So the lines on the leaves of a manuscript are found running at a stretch. Usually there is no punctuation mark like comma etc. Other than a single stroke or a double stroke (danda) as a mark of a stop (pūna ccheda). Sometimes in later manuscripts at some points some intermediate punctuation marks are found, which resemble a halanta sign i.e., a tangential stroke downwards from left to right below a line under a particular syllable. To show the continuation of a word from the end of a line to the next one is sometimes marked with three dots put in a perpendicular way one after another at the end of the previous line. These things are found more in manuscripts of prose texts with long compound words.

If for obvious reasons a text ends at the middle of a line or page, the rest of the line or page is filled up by the scribe with some auspicious mark like a flower or so or with a particular letter and the concept of making each page a pūnakumbh is implemented. This is also observed in case some portion of a palm-leaf or birch-bark, bhurjapattra is not fit for writing.

The pagination of manuscripts starts usually from the page where writing has started. It is to be noted that for manuscripts leaves are counted and not pages.

If the scribe forgets to write something which he should have he puts a mark at the place where the text is missed by mistake and puts the same mark in the margin on top or below whichever is closer and puts the line number counted from that side of margin and then writes down the text which should come in that particular place of the marked line. This mark or sign which usually has the form of a small arrow is called kakapada or 'crow's feet'. If the scribe has written something at a wrong place and he wants to get it erased he puts dots on the top of that portion in the line. The total portion which is meant for deleting is found under a series of dots or very small vertical lines. Only in very few cases we have come across the mechanism of putting a portion within first bracket or a rounded mark in order to denote that this portion should be ignored that is deleted.

1.6 Date of a manuscript, colophon-postcolophon

Some relevant information and analysis regarding dating the mss. Are also necessary and interesting. As such the date mentioned in the colophon of a ms. Is quite helpful for dating the ms. But what is to be done if it is not mentioned directly? Such cases may be of two types: (1) no date is mentioned at all, (2) the year etc. Are mentioned in code-language. In European language the word 'chronogramm' is used for such codes. But 'chronogramm' is not exactly what the Sanskrit date- codes are. In"chronogramm" the letters of the Roman alphabet, which have some numerical values are used in such a way in a sentence that they should be added together and the date can be deciphered from that sentence, e.g., the letter V=5, x=10, L =
50, \( D = 500 \). etc., so \( \text{LorD} = 50 + 500 = 550 \). The Tibetan letters have also certain numerical values, \( \text{ka}=1, \text{ki}=31 \) etc; this code is mostly used for the volume-numbers of texts or collections of texts. The Arabic letters have also particular numerical value. The same is the case with some other languages and their alphabet.

But the date codes in the colophons of Sanskrit manuscripts are not exactly of the same type. The numbers are expressed through some symbolic conceptual words involving Vedic and Puranic mythology. If it is said sake or sakabde, then the year received through decoding the code-indication should be primarily mentioned as Saka-year, which may afterwards be complemented with the conversion of it into the Christian era (i.e., by adding 78 with the Saka-year). 'Vikrama Samvat' (v.s.) "Bengali San' (B.S.) or"Nepalese Samvat' (N.S.) should be mentioned in the same way and then the conversion may be furnished with the help of the comparative calendar if need be.

If no date is mentioned in the colophon, then the cataloguer does not write anything in the respective column of the proforma. But the researcher may find out the date of the ms. From the script, style of writing, material and in case of illustrated mss. From the style of painting, colour, age of the illustration etc. The cataloguer can at best write some assumptions on the basis of these in the column of 'Remarks' in the data-sheet.

It should be remembered that the date of the ms. In hand is being discussed here, and not the date of the text itself. In other words, determining author's date is not the point of discussion here, (unless it is directly mentioned in the colophon).

Examples some date codes regarding the age of the ms. Are given below:

1. \( \text{श} \)के \( \text{सुजंग}-\text{शु} = 8771 > 1778 \) Śaka
2. \( \text{श} \)के \( \text{व} \)योम-\( \text{व} \)ा-\( \text{श} \)ु = 0571 > 1750 Śaka
3. \( \text{स} \)म-\( \text{व} \)ान-\( \text{श} \)ु = 2571 > 1752 Śaka
4. \( \text{व} \)सिंह-\( \text{स} \)ु-\( \text{श} \)ु = 1861 > 1681 Śaka
5. \( \text{व} \)ेद-\( \text{व} \)ाप-\( \text{स} \)िन्दु-\( \text{श} \)नीनाथ = 4671 > 1764 Śaka
In the five examples of date-codes cited above, the sarādhī and the component elements of the lone compound words are disjoined to help in the identification of the numerals. This is the first step in decoding such codes. Then each numerical connotation should be detected. The component elements should be detected very carefully, otherwise, the numerical value cannot be determined.

After decoding the individual numerical codes, the principle of ankasya (or ankanam) vama gatiḥ is to be applied. It means, the whole number will be received by putting those individuals in the reverse order from left to right, placing those in the places of units deca, hundred and thousand.

Regarding the calculation of dates of dated mss. A few points are left. In the colophon sudi (sometimes wrongly written sudi) means a day in the suklapaksa, i.e., the bright fortnight and badi means balaladivasa, a day in the krṣnapaksa, i.e., the dark fortnight. This part of the ms. i.e., the colophon) is composed by the scribe; therefore, there may be for obvious reasons many mistakes. Those should be understood in proper sense, rectifying of ignoring the slip; e.g., a scribe might have written 17012 Saka instead of 1712 Saka yet this should not confuse the scholar.

The colophon of a ms. is the most important part of it for discerning the identity of its text regarding the title of the text, author's name, his age of date, background etc. Likewise, the information regarding the scribe, the owner and their background is available in this part. But how are these different personalities involved with a ms. referred to in the colophon? It may be pointed out that there exists a very thorough and orderly method in the representation of them. If somebody is mentioned in Sanskrit with the sixth case ending (sasthi-vibhakti) attached to the respective word and then the word krtih follows it, then the person- name bearing the sasthi-ending the author of the text itself, e.g., kalidasasya krtir iyam means it is a composition of Kalidasa. The author is denoted through the third case-ending also; e.g., kalidasena krtam etc.

It should be noted that the authorship is denoted through the use of the rood krin most of the case, sometimes the root rac is also found; e.g., kalidasaracite kumarasambhave etc. In the case of denoting authorship the root likh is never used. The word lekhaka or likhita would always invariably stand for the scribe, the lipikara. Instead of the normal use of likhitam (= written), sometimes the word svaksaram is also fund. The person whose svaksara is in a particular ms., is also the scribe and not the author of the text. And if only the sixth case-ending is used and then pustakam etc., e.g. amukasya pustakam idam, then the denoted person is the owner of the ms., for whom the scribe has written it. The manuscript is always mentioned as pustakam, the text is referred to as grantha. The grantha of a text is put in a pustaka of ms., form which many more copies are made.

1.7. Textual Criticism : Higher and Lower Criticism
When it is decided that a programme of editing a text on the basis of available mss. of it would be taken up, the initial task is to find out whether the text has ever been published in any one of the forms of edition. If there is no printed edition at all an editio princeps is aimed at in from of a vulgate of critical edition. If a vulgate edition is available, and in the light of the newly uncovered mss. of the text there is every possibility of revising and reconstructing the erstwhile decided reading, then also the text may be taken up for preparing a text- critical edition even, if it is found to be outdated in view of the inadequacies in determining the reading or correctly deciphering the codices/ evidences used by the editor; or if many more significant mss. have come to light which may revise the reading accepted till date or remove the anomalies therein and bring out the actual composition (logos) of the author. The whole endeavour of text-editing on the basis of consulting its various mss. available is to reach out to the nearest possible original composition of the author, whose words many have undergone faulty changes due to various reasons in the development of the text and its long journey through the series of mss. available now. The task of the editor is to search for all possible mss. by using the suited research tools in this regard, namely, the Catalogus Catalogorum compiled by Theodor Aufrecht and the New Catalogus Catalogorum (vols. 1 to 19 only published till date form GOML, University of Madras)- in short CC and NCC which record the repository's name, the ms. no of the concerned ms., the author, whether commentaries available or not etc; but these do not provide the description of the mss., for which the published (or even unpublished) ms. -catalogues of the respective ms.- libraries are to be consulted.

Thereafter follows the process of selecting one for the primary job of transcription followed by collating the readings of it with other available and representative / dependable mss. Hence, evaluating the mss. is also an important and significant task, which would be followed by evaluating the readings for selecting one for the reconstructed tax ('body') and recording possible all the rest in the critical apparatus along with reasoning for selecting one and rejecting the rest. The reasons may be grammatical and metrical correctness, contextual and textual consistency regarding content, author's style and so on and do forth. However, while evaluating the readings collated for determing the reading, the ms. selected for transcription, which is usually called 'mother' does not have any preferential value as such. The critical apparatus would contain the textual identity and reference of all quotations (florilegia) available in the present text at hand. This part of the work of editing is usually denoted as lower criticism.

The higher criticism is the historical and critical study of the text in a very extensive form provided before the reconstructed text is presented. This section of the text-critical research aims at finding out all historical details about the author and his/her works. The place of the author and the text in the historicity of the development of the particular knowledge system, the predecessors who are referred to, or whose texts are quoted by the present author, other authors and texts who or which quote from the works of this author, or
refer to those- all these points are to be presented here. In short, the history of the text and the journey of the text, (the recessions if developed) are to be methodically studies here and presented in an argumentative manner with substantial evidence in each case. The detailed description of the available mss. is to be presented here and their interrelation to be established in form the *stemma codicum*.

Finally, editing principles, principles of orthographic standardisation adopted by the editor, difficulties in editing, signs and symbols used, emendations done if any- how and why - not excluding the probable causes of corruption in the mss. noted by the editor are to be presented to convince the reader- scholar about the decisions of the editor in selecting a reading giving it priority or preference to others. The editor does not have any right or scope of undoing the author's words! The whole exercise is, on the other hand, to restore it, as it is apprehended to have gone corrupt.

To conclude, the words of Abhinavagupta and Nilakanthadikita to be quoted which are brief and pithy, yet enlightening the intellectual horizon about the task of textual criticism:

उपादेयस्य संपाठ, स्वदन्यस्य प्रतीकन्म।
स्फुट्वाच्च, विरोधानों परिहारः, सुपूर्वात॥
लक्ष्यानुसरणं, लब्धिं, व्यक्त्यांशविवेचनम्।
संगतिः पीनरक्त्याणां, समाधान-मनाकुलम्।
संग्रह्येतः व्याख्याप्रकारोऽत्र समाधित॥

(महङ्गलाचरणम् अभिनवभारती, commentary on Bharata's Nātyaśāstra)

बहुत समाहृत्य विभिन्नदेश्यानु कोशानु, विनिष्ठित्य च पाठमग्नम्।
प्राचा गुरुणामुनुस्यत वाच, - मार्भयते भारतभावदीपः॥

(Bharātabhāvadīpa, महङ्गलाचरण verse 6, commentary on Mahabharata ascribed to Vyāsa)