

# References to Books and Writing in Early Jain Commentarial Literature

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# Outline

Conclusions

Introduction

Books and hides

Knowledge in material form

Literate monks

Literacy and literariness

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# Early textual evidence for manuscript culture

Sometime between the time of Asōka (3rd c. BCE) and the time of, say, Aśvaghōṣa (2nd c. CE), **writing** and **manuscripts** went from something more or less completely unknown to a regular feature of daily life, at least for intellectuals, bureaucrats, and businesspeople.

But we have very little **physical** evidence, and even very little textual evidence (transmitted via manuscripts), for this transformation, and certainly no scholarly **narrative** of how it took place.

The *nijjuttis*, Jain texts from around the 1st/2nd c. CE, fill in this gap slightly.

# Double consciousness

On the one hand, these texts depict manuscript literacy as relatively widespread, and monks were presumed to be literate.

They mention “five types of manuscripts” (*poṭṭhaya-paṇaya-*), differentiated based on their format, as well as letters (*lēha-*), which are differentiated based on their script (*livi-*), language (*bhāsā-*), and content (*attha-*).

They also suggest that manuscripts were used for **literary** purposes, including religious poetry and love poetry.

# Double consciousness

On the other hand, nuns appear to have been prohibited from using manuscripts at all, and monks were allowed to use manuscripts only as an exception to a general prohibition on handling “porous” materials (including manuscripts, certain cloths, and certain grasses). They could be **punished** for their use of manuscripts.

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# The *nijjuttis*

- ▶ Part of the (Śvētāmbara) Jain textual tradition
- ▶ “Commentaries” on existing *āgama*- texts in Ardhamagadhi (but mostly lists of topics and examples for further oral exposition)
- ▶ Traditionally Sanskritized as *niryukti*- (but probably more correctly *nirvyukti*-)
- ▶ In *gāhā* (*āryā*) verses, in a “slovenly” kind of Prakrit (not Ardhamagadhi)



# The *nijjuttis*

<b>Nijjutti</b>	Notes
Āvaśyaka- Daśavaikālika-	<i>Nijjutti</i> transmitted with <i>Mūlabhāsa</i>
Daśā- Kalpa- Vyavahāra- Niśītha-	<i>Nijjutti</i> mixed up with <i>Bhāsa</i> ( <i>chēda-sūtras</i> )
Uttarādhyayana- Ācārāṅga- Sūtrakṛtāṅga-	<i>Nijjutti</i> transmitted on its own
Piṇḍa- Ōgha-	Isolated from other <i>nijjuttis</i> and considered <i>aṅgas</i>

# Timeline

The composition of the *nijjuttis* is notoriously hard to date, especially because many of them are combined with later commentaries, also in Prakrit verse, called *bhāsas* (*bhāṣyas*) that date more or less from the 5th to the 7th c. CE.

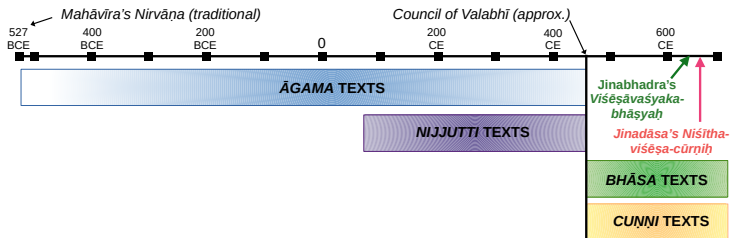
There are nevertheless references in these texts to political events and dynasties associated with Western India from the 1st to the 4th c. CE. (e.g., the conflict between the Śakas and the Sātavāhanas; Jain 1947, 393, Jain 1964, 91–92).

# Timeline

The time of composition of the basic texts of monastic discipline (the *chēda-sūtras*) is also unclear.

Some scholars take them to have been composed by the same author who composed the *nijjuttis* on them, but I think this is unlikely.

# Timeline



Alsdorf (1977, 6) however considers the *Bhāsa* texts to be versifications of the *Cuṇṇi* prose texts.

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# Writing as a technological innovation

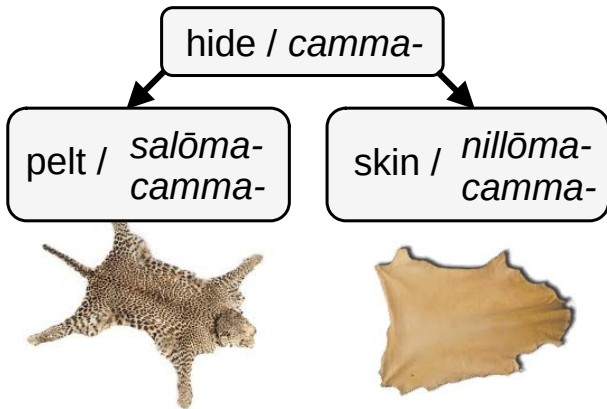
The *āgamas* were first formulated and transmitted without the use of writing, and in fact writing is **not mentioned at all** in them.

But later generations felt the need to formulate rules for how to interact with books and writing.

Where and how are those rules formulated?

# Rules for hides

Monks and nuns' use of the hides of animals (*camma-*) was highly regulated.



## The basics: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3805–3878

There are several texts of monastic discipline for Śvētāmbaras, but the earliest available seem to be the triad of *Kalpa*, *Daśā*, and *Vyavahāra* which each have old *nijjuttis*.

The *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* is a large work attributed to Saṅghadāsa (6th c. CE) that incorporates an earlier set of *nijjuttis*.

- ▶ Jyväsjärvi (2010)
- ▶ *carmaprakṛtam: sūtras* 3.3–6, *gāthās* 3805–3878 (vol. 4 pp. 1050–1066)



# The basics: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3805–3878

- ▶ Nuns are generally forbidden from using hides (especially **pelts**)

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- ▶ Nuns are generally forbidden from using hides (especially **pelts**)
- ▶ Monks are allowed to use **pelts** with certain restrictions
  - ▶ They are generally prohibited from using anything *jhusira* (porous), which includes certain **pelts**
    - ▶ **Manuscripts are included in this category.**
  - ▶ They are also generally prohibited from using **skins**

## Excursus on *jhusira-*

- ▶ glossed as *suṣira-*, itself of uncertain etymology
- ▶ connected with *sīrā* “stream” by Mayrhofer 1986-2001, II.733, who suggests “gutes Gerinne habend” for *susirā-*
  - ▶ perhaps from IE  $\sqrt{siHr}$  “eine gerade Linie ziehen”
  - ▶ Lubotsky (1988, 103) considers it non-Indo-European)
- ▶ connected with *suṣi-* “Höhlung eines Rohrs” by Mehendale (1961–1962, 184)
  - ▶ so also Wackernagel (1905, §230b)
- ▶ Kuiper (1948, 130, 162) connects it with almost all of the words in all Indian languages meaning “hollow”
- ▶ traditionally derived from  $\sqrt{suṣ}$  “dry,” but the same root can mean “hiss”

It seems likely that *jhusira-* is an attempt to preserve the onomatopoetic aspect of the root in the face of the loss of contrast between *s*-phonemes in Middle Indic. Hence “having holes, porous.”

# The problems with manuscripts: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3826

*saṅghaṁsa-apaḍilēhā bhārō ahikaraṇam ēva avidiṇṇam  
saṅkāmaṇa-palimanthō pamāya-parikammaṇā lihaṇā ~ 3826*

Abrasion, lack of investigation, weight, abode, non-given,  
transference-obstacle, carelessness, revision, writing.

# The problems with manuscripts: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3827

The biggest concern, at least for Saṅghadāsa, appears to have been the harm that could be caused to small beings living in the manuscript pages:

*potthaga-jiṇa-diṭṭhantō vaggura-lēvē ya jāla-cakkē ya ~ 3827ab*

The examples for manuscripts given by the Jinās are the snare, the adhesive, the net, and the mill.

# The problems with manuscripts: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3828–3829

- ▶ An animal stuck in a **snare** might get out
- ▶ A bird stuck in **adhesive** might fly away
- ▶ A fish caught in a fine **net** might swim off
- ▶ A worm in a sesame-**mill** might get out
- ▶ But beings in the pages of a manuscript cannot leave.

# The problems with manuscripts: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3830-3831

*jaī tēsīm jīvāṇaṁ tatthagayāṇaṁ tu lōhiyaṁ hojjā  
pīlijantē dhaṇiyaṁ galejja taṁ akkharē phusitaṁ ~ 3830*

If the living beings in it have blood, then it will flow when they are squeezed, and touch the letters.

*jattiyamettā vārā u muñcaī bandhaī va jati vārā  
jati akkharāṇi lihati va tati lahugā jaṁ ca āvajjē ~ 3831*

One is subject to as many 'light' penalties as the number of times one opens or closes it, or the number of letters one writes.



# The exceptions: *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3843

*gheppati potthaga-panagam̐ kāliya-ṇijjutti-kōsaṭṭhā ~ 3843cd*

He may take the five kinds of manuscripts for the purpose of storing up the *Kālikaśruta* and the *Nijjuttis*.

# Manuscripts for monks only?

The exception for possessing manuscripts comes up in the context of 3.4, which speaks about **monks** alone.

This suggests to me that nuns were **prohibited** from using manuscripts.

## The simplified version: *Niśīthasūtra*

The *Niśītha*, originally an appendix to the *Ācārāṅga*, became an independent work, probably *after* the triad of *Kalpa*, *Daśā*, and *Vyavahāra* and their *nijjuttis* were completed. Its *bhāṣya*, attributed to Siddhasēna, is largely a compilation, and it takes over many verses from other texts, including the *Brhatkalpabhāṣya*.

The *Niśītha-viśēṣa-cūrṇi* was written by Jinadāsa (later 6th c. CE).

- ▶ *sūtra* 12.5. *gāthās* 3996–4020 (vol. 3 pp. 320–324)

# The simplified version: *Niśīthasūtra*

- ▶ Monks are **prohibited** from using **pelts**
  - ▶ The restriction on *porous* materials, including manuscripts, is now a special case of the rule rather than an exception.

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The rest of the discussion is almost identical to the *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya*, except that it excludes nuns.

# The “five kinds of books” (*potthagapaṇaga-*)

*gaṇḍī-kacchati-muṭṭhī chivāḍi-sampuḍaga potthagā pañca*

(*Bṛhatkalpabhāṣya* 3822ab)

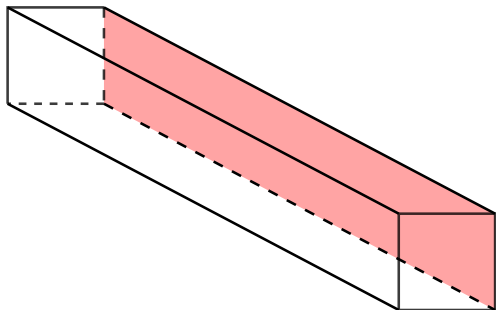
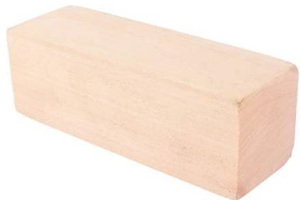
*gaṇḍī-kacchavi-muṭṭhī sampuḍa-phalaē tahā chivāḍī ya*

(*Nisīthacūrṇi* 4000ab)

Jinadāsa explains these in the *cūrṇi*, and Malayagiri appears to reproduce Jinadāsa’s explanation (as he often does) but puts it in the form of four *gāthās* rather than prose, which he attributes to “earlier scholars” (*pūrvasūri-*).

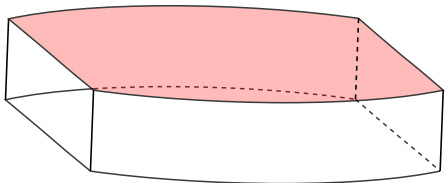
# *Gaṇḍī* “block”

Rectangular prism, long but with equal depth & height



# *Kacchavī* “tortoise”

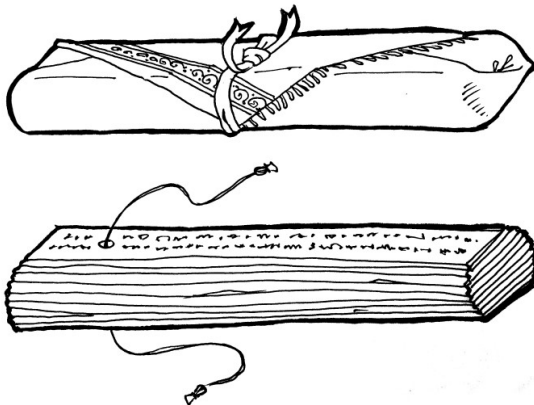
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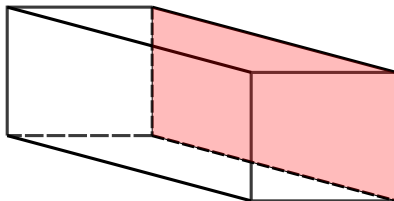
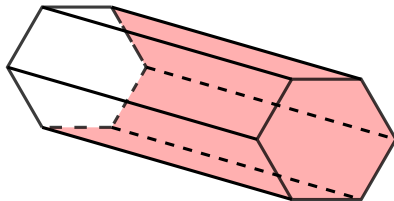
# *Kacchavī* “tortoise”

Wider at center than at the edges



From Loukouta Sanclemente 2019, 69

# Muṭṭhī “handle”



# Chivāḍī

Probably related to the name of a shrub (Sanskrit *śēphālikā*, *śiphā*, *śivāṭī/śivāṭikā*); see Pischel (1981 [1900], §212).

Jinadāsa gives two possibilities:

- ▶ wide or narrow, but of relatively large height (*pihula-*) and small depth (*appabāhalla-*); or
- ▶ broad (*ussia-*) but with thin pages (*taṇupatta-*).

## *Sampuḍagō* “trough”

Jinadāsa simply says *du-m-āī* (recast as *duga-m-āī* by Malayagiri): “double, etc.” Probably **folded**.

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# Knowledge in material form

The *nijjuttis* occasionally mention manuscripts (*potthaga-*) in the course of “nikṣēpizing” a concept like “learning” (*suya-*) or “study” (*ajjhayaṇa-*), i.e., explaining it in terms of a set of four or six conventional parameters. One of them is *davva-*, “material form.”

Hence:

# Knowledge in material form

- ▶ *ajjhayaṇa-* in material form, outside of the body of the knower (*Uttarādhyaṇaniryukti* 543)
- ▶ *suya-* in material form (*Uttarādhyaṇaniryukti* 311)
- ▶ *gāhā* in material form (*Sūtrakṛtaniryukti* 130: *pattaya-potthaya-lihitā* or *potthaga-pattaga-lihitā*)

# Manuscripts in the “canon”

The *Anuyōgadvārasūtra* is a “canonical” text, hence before the council of Valabhī in the 5th c.

It appears to follow the *nijjuttis* in admitting manuscripts as a form of “traditional knowledge in its material form,” and uses the exact same expression we encountered in the *Sūtrakṛtaniryukti*:

*jāṇaya-sarīra-bhavva-sarīra-vatirittam davvasutam  
pattaya-potthaya-lihiyam. (sūtra 39)*

“traditional knowledge in its material form, apart from the body of the knower or the body of the perfectible soul, is *pattaya-potthaya*-written.



## *pattaya-potthaya-lihiyaṃ*

What kind of compound is it? According to the commentaries (*cūrṇi* by Jinadāsa and *vivṛti* by Haribhadra):

- ▶ a *potthaya*- made of *pattaya*- (palm-leaves, *tāli-m-ādi-pattā*)
- ▶ either *pattaya*- (palm-leaves) or *potthaya*- (cloth, *vattha*-)

# Knowledge in **what kind of** material form?

Apart from this passage, no indication is given of the material from which any of these manuscripts are made.

## Knowledge in **what kind of** material form?

It is **not obvious** that palm leaves should be considered “porous” (*jhusira-*), like straw or cotton stuffing!

One possibility, which would make sense of its inclusion in the discussion of **hides**, is that *potthaga-* still retained its etymological sense of “skin” (Middle Persian *pōstag*), and the word referred to writing supports in a variety of materials, **including** leather, parchment, and cloth.

Monks might have preferred **palm-leaf** to other materials for this reason, but because insects could still live in palm-leaves, even these remained in principle off-limits.

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# *Bṛhatkalpabhāṣyaḥ* 3336 = *Niśīthabhāṣyaḥ* 5256

Inexperienced monks might be asked to stay in a village and do certain tasks in exchange for their alms (Sen 1975, 236):

*jōtisa-nimitta-m-ādī chandaṁ gaṇiyaṁ ca amha sāhitthā  
akkhara-m-ādi va ḍimbhē gāhessaha ajataṇā suṇaṇē ~ 5256*

“Please teach us astrology, divination, and so on, and meter and calculation. Please teach our children **letters**.” If they accept, it is laxity.

# Love letters in the *Niśīthasūtra*

*Niśīthasūtra* 6.13 prohibits monks from writing love letters, either for themselves or for others.

(As noted previously, the *Niśītha* is compilation of disciplinary material, later than the *Kalpa*, but probably a bit earlier, or the same time, as the *nijjuttis*, maybe 1st c. CE.)

# Love letters in the *Niśīthabhāṣya*

The now-indistinguishable *nijjutti* and *bhāsa* on the *Niśīthasūtra* distinguish between **secret** (*chaṇṇa-*) and **non-secret** letters (*gāthā* 2261), where a letter can be secret on account of:

- ▶ script (“like Tamil,” says Jinadāsa)
- ▶ language (“like a foreign language,” *aṇāriyā bhāsā*)
- ▶ content (“uncommon expressions,” *appaītābhihāṇa-*)

## Love letters in the *Niśīthabhāṣya*

Several examples of the kinds of things that might appear in love letters are given. The background is the rainy season, when monks stay in one place, and might strike up a romantic relationship with a woman in the same town.

They are worthy of the *Gāhāsattasāi*.



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## Niśīthabhāṣya 2263

*kālē sihi-ṇandikarē, mēhaniruddhammi aṁbaratalammi  
mita-madhura-mañjubhāsiṇi, tē dhannā jē piyāsahitā ~ 2263*

When that time comes that delights the peacocks,  
and the sky is filled with clouds,  
lucky are those who can be with their loved ones,  
you whose few words are sweet and charming.

(A monk's overture to a woman)

# Niśīthabhāṣya 2264

*kōmudī-nisāe pavarō vāriyavāmāe duddharō mayañō  
rēhanti ya sarayaguṇā, tīsē ya samāgamō ṇatthi ~ 2264*

It's on full moon nights  
that the immense desire of a woman  
who wants what she can't have  
is hardest to bear.  
Autumn of course has its positive aspects,  
but there's no chance of meeting then.

(The woman's response [with some minor corrections]; note the word *vāriyavāmā*, which is also used in a famous Prakrit verse quoted by Ānandavardhana.)

## Gāthā in material form

For *pattaya-potthaya-lihitā* in *Sūtrakṛtaniryukti* 130, the commentaries quote the following verse, which is also given as the first example of a *gāthā* in the anonymous metrical handbook *Kavidarpaṇa*:

*vīra vasabha bhamarāṇaṁ kamaladalāṇaṁ ca tumha ṇayaṇāṇaṁ  
muṇivai muṇiya-visēsā acchīsu tuhaṁ ramaī lacchī ~*

“Hero! R̥ṣabha! Between bees, lotus petals, and your eyes,  
Lakṣmī, who knows the difference, great sage,  
sports in your eyes.”

Thank you!

॥ కులకచ స్తుతి ॥

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