

## THE STRUCTURE OF MIDDLE MAITHILI

(As Gleaned from the Hand–Copied Newari Manuscripts of Maithili Plays and Songs Composed by Malla Rulers of the Medieval Nepālamaṇḍala and Archived in the *Nepāla Rāṣṭrīya Abhilekhālaya* in Kathmandu)

*Ramawatar Yadav*

*The keynote speech discusses Newari's orthographic peculiarities that deftly represent the Middle Maithili sound system, and describes the linguistic structure of Middle Maithili as enshrined in the numerous manuscripts published, to date, in Nepal, India, Germany, and Japan. The presentation is a culmination of my earnest endeavors to incessantly and assiduously seek to retrieve and create and assimilate and disseminate indigenous knowledge coded in the precious Newari manuscripts of the Maithili language archived in the National Archives of Nepal.*

Keywords: Middle Maithili, Maithili sound system, Newari orthography, Maithili grammar

Since written records give us direct information about the speech–habits of the past, the first step in the study of linguistic change, wherever we have written record, is the study of these records.

– Leonard Bloomfield

Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues, invited guests, and ladies and gentlemen!

I am honored and humbled to be chosen to deliver the Keynote speech to the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Linguistic Society of Nepal.

### 0. Prolegomena

I wish to speak this morning on the rather under–investigated topic of the linguistic structure of Middle Maithili – drawing sustenance principally from my own archival linguistic research publications (Yadav 2004, ed.2011, ed. 2018, 2019) and peripherally from the collated data culled from an assortment of related publications in Nepal, India, Japan, and Germany during my three and a half decades–long research–work intermittently carried out at suitable intervals in Germany during the span of 1983 through 2018.

Indeed my odyssey of a medievalist began with a chance encounter with a hand–copied Newari MS. of a Maithili play some forty years ago in 1980 when Mr. Prem Bahadur Kasā confided to me to have had in his private possession a huge quantity of Newari manuscripts that he could read with ease but not quite comprehend. Mr. Kasā was kind enough to allow me to get a photocopy of the MS. of a medieval Maithili play made against payment – thereby enabling me to learn to decipher the Newari script leading to a presentation of a preliminary account of the characteristics of the written text of that medieval Maithili play to the Literary Association of Nepal as early as 18 April 1982 (cf. Yadav & Jha 1982).

My passion for scientific linguistic analysis of archival literary texts has remained unabated ever since. Presently, I am working on a facsimile edition of a British Library, London Manuscript titled *Comparative Vocabularies* compiled by an East India Company Servant, Francis Buchanan (later Hamilton) at the cusp of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries in the colonial Northern India – a lexicographical *terra incognita* of Vernacular languages in those days – my prime purpose being to critique and assess the linguistic worth and value of Buchanan's invaluable contribution to the newly–emerging genre of Maithili lexicography (Yadav ed. 2021, *Forthcoming*). During next year, as an Invited Speaker at the First Colloquium on Medieval Manuscripts of the Himalayan River Basins Kathmandu 2020, I am scheduled to deliberate on the mutual benefits that have accrued to the deft craft of Middle Maithili dramaturgy and versification owing to "a new symbiosis of knowledge and power" (Richards 1993) or, alternatively put, from the effects of the synergy of working together by the Newari–speaking royal men of letters and the Sanskrit–knowing Maithili–speaking Brahmans migrating from the South

seeking shelter and gold and glory and later resident as priests in the Royal Courts of the medieval Nepālamaṇḍala. Today's presentation is in essence a culmination of my earnest endeavors to incessantly and assiduously seek to retrieve, create, analyze, classify, assimilate, and disseminate knowledge coded in the precious Newari manuscripts of the Maithili language archived in the *Nepāla Rāṣṭrīya Abhilekhālaya* in Kathmandu.

Before moving further, I deem it proper to take a sneak peek into the number of such manuscripts of dramas (and verse compositions) stored and preserved in the National Archives in Nepal. An eminent Indian scholar, Jayakanta Mishra (1960) reports that in all "as many as 300 old Mss. in Maithili" are found to have been stored in the National Archives in Nepal; Horst Brinkhaus (1987), a German Indologist, refers to some 150 Newari and/or Mithilākṣara hand-copied manuscripts; while the eminent archaeologist from Nepal, Taranand Mishra (2005, 2015), claims of the existence of some 400 manuscripts in the Āsā Archives, the Kaiser Library, and the Nepal National Archives in Kathmandu. In a separate count, Kamal Prakash Malla (*Personal Communication, Email* 2012), while in residency in Georgia, USA, had guesstimated that the manuscripts of a total of 153 dramas (26–30 in Newari; 5–6 in Bangla and Hindi/Braj Bhasha/Awadhi; and more than 115 in Maithili), and a host of collections and/or anthologies of Maithili and Newari verse compositions were stored and preserved in the Nepal National Archives in Kathmandu. Indeed, in my opinion, there are plenty more discoveries waiting to be unearthed; sadly, only an infinitesimal number of these manuscripts have seen the light of the day till today across the globe.

August Conrady (1891), a German, was the first scholar ever to publish a German edition of a Maithili(-cum-Bengali) drama, *Hariścandraṅṅtyam*, ascribed to king Siddhinarasimhamalla (1620–1661) under the rather confusing and somewhat ambiguous title of *Das Hariścandraṅṅtyam: Ein Altnepalesisches Tanzspiel*. With due permission of the East India Company Government of the Bengal Presidency and under the sponsorship of the Asiatic Society

of Bengal, Haraprasād Shāstrī – a renowned scholar from Bengal – travelled to Nepal twice and to Benaras once in search of the rare Sanskrit Manuscripts (cf. Shāstrī 1905, 1911). Soon thereafter, a number of Bengali scholars, viz. Nanigopal Bandopadhyaya (ed. 1917), Prabodh Chandra Bagchi (1940), and Bijitkumar Datta (ed. 1980) published a total of 5 medieval Maithili plays from Nepal – inadvertently mistaking a number of them as Bengali plays. A few Maithili-speaking scholars of Bihar too followed suit: Jayakanta Mishra (ed. 1965), Lekhanath Mishra (ed. 1972), and Ramdeo Jha (ed. 1970, 1976, 1988, ed. 2013) published a total of 6 Maithili plays from medieval Nepal. Horst Brinkhaus (1987) published an English edition of Jagatprakāśamalla's (1643–1673) play *Pradyumnavijaya* (1666); while Ramawatar Yadav (ed. 2011) published a facsimile edition along with Devanāgarī and Roman transliterations and an English translation of Bhūpatindramalla's (1696–1722) play *Parsurāmopākhyāna* (1713). In the meantime, Makoto Kitada (2014, 2015) published a Japanese edition along with a Roman transliteration of Jagajjyotirmalla's (1614–1637) play *Madālasāharaṇa* in two installments in the Osaka University journal *Indomizokukenkyu* (Indian Folk Culture Research). Lately, Ramanand Jha 'Ramaṇa' (2019) has published a Maithili edition of the play *Hariścandraṅṅtyam* in Ranchi, Jharkhand, India. Thus, of around 115 Maithili plays ascribed to the Newar kings of the Malla dynasty, altogether a total of mere 13 plays are published, to date.

Moving on to the genre of medieval versification, Shailendra Mohan Jha (1969) of India was the first scholar ever to publish an assortment of Maithili songs by Siddhinarasimhamalla under the title of *Siddhi Narasimha Malla*; Sundar Jha Shastri (V.S. 2029/1972 CE) published a collection of Maithili songs by Jagatprakāśamalla titled *Nānārtha Deva Devī Gīta Saṁgraha* in a modest Maithili magazine in Kathmandu; Durganath Jha 'Śrīśa' (ed. Śāke 1896/1974 CE) published a collection of 50 Maithili songs of Jagajjyotirmalla titled *Ṇṛpatijagajjyotirmalla-Kṛta Gīta-Pañcāśikā*; Jaimant Mishra (1977) published a slim anthology of a total of 21 rare Maithili songs of Newar kings preserved in

inscriptions on stone tablets in the cities of Kantipur and Bhaktapur titled *Maithilī Abhilekha Gītāmālā*; while Ramawatar Yadav (ed. 2018) published a facsimile edition along with Devanāgarī and Roman transliterations and an English translation of Jagatprakāśamalla's collection of intensely elegiac and highly panegyric lyrical songs under the title of *Elegy Written in a Royal Courtyard: A Facsimile Edition of Jagatprakāśamalla's Gītapañcaka*.

## 1. The Structure of Middle Maithili (1600–1769)

### 1.1 Preliminaries

The historical linguistic analysis of the origins of Maithili is at its best opaque and sketchy. No two historians of the Maithili language and literature tend to agree on the precise historical dates of division into literary periods; indeed they have their own preferred temporal boundaries to vouch for. Consequently, and quite understandably, therefore, the current practice of using such labels as Old Maithili, Middle Maithili, and Modern Maithili is at its best tentative and speculative. Maithili is believed to have descended from the *Ursprache* Eastern Māgadhī Apabhraṃśa, branching off into West (Awadhi, Bhojpurī), Central (Magahi, Maithili, Angika, Kurmali), and East (Bengali, Assamese, Oriya) New Indo–Aryan languages (cf. Singh 1950, Nara 1979, Bhattacharya 2016). Nonetheless, to the best of my knowledge, no scientific study delineating the evolution and derivation of Maithili from a specific Māgadhī Apabhraṃśa work is available as yet. Interestingly, Subhadra Jhā – a disciple of none other than Suniti Kumar Chatterji and a doyen of Maithili linguistics – in his magnum opus, *The Formation of the Maithilī Language* (1958), tends to unabashedly frog-leap from the Old Maithili forms straight onto the Modern Maithili (and its variant) forms – showing a total disregard to the existence of a vast body of Middle Maithili literature (preserved in Nepal and Assam) as well as to the standard phonological rules of sound change (and their order of application) that characterize the formation and evolution of Modern Indo–Aryan languages, including Maithili.

The origins of Old Maithili may be traced back to such verse compositions as the *Caryāpada* (circa

800–1100) of a host of Siddha poets that the Bengali scholars, citing Suniti Kumar Chatterji's thus-far unassailable authority, have successfully usurped and published as a work of the Bengali literature, eventually enticing a young Norwegian scholar, Per Kværne (1977) to have published in Oslo a Roman transliteration and an English edition of it as a work of Bengali – a classic case of the 'politics' of translation, indeed; the *Ḍāka–Vacana* (circa 1000) of the famed *ḍākagoāra* 'Ḍāk the *Gwālā*' (Christian 1891); Jyotirīśvara's eminent prose work *Varṇa–Ratnākara* (circa 1324) that has the rare distinction of being the oldest extant prose work of the Indo–Aryan languages of North India and Nepal; and Vidyāpati's two Avahatṭha prose–poetry works *Kīrttilatā* (circa 1406) and *Kīrttipatākā* (early 15<sup>th</sup> century), the Sanskrit play *Goraḥaviyaya* (early 15<sup>th</sup> century) – containing songs in Maithili –, and the famous *Padāvalī* (early 15<sup>th</sup> century) – a compendium of around a thousand hugely popular and highly mellifluous lyrical songs in Maithili.

A few of the Middle Maithili dramatic and verse compositions produced in the Post–Vidyāpati era in North India are: Govindadāsa's *Padāvalī* (early 17<sup>th</sup> century), Umāpati Upādhyāya's Sanskrit–Prākṛit play *Pārijātaḥaraṇa* (early 17<sup>th</sup> century) containing a total of 20 Maithili songs, Ramāpati Upādhyāya's play *Rukmiṇī–Parīṇaya* (early 18<sup>th</sup> century), and Manabodh's *Haribans* (early 18<sup>th</sup> century) – later re-christened *Kṛṣṇajanma*. However, a hugely vast bulk of dramas and verse compositions superbly crafted in immaculate Middle Maithili are well-known to have been produced by the Newar Malla rulers and their Maithili-speaking *paṇḍit* priests resident in the Royal Courts in Nepal, (and also in Assam – where the genre of plays composed in *Mischsprache* Maithili with a sprinkling of Assamese is famously known as the *Aṅkīyānāṭa* 'One-Act Plays' and their register dubbed *Brajabulī*).

Medieval Maithili literature composed in the Nepal Valley is typically characterized by features such as language contact, multilingualism (for more information on the copious presence of multilingualism in literary culture of the 15<sup>th</sup> century North India, see Orsini 2012 and Jha 2016) and migration, in particular, of "political

refugees, brahmans, pundits, men of letters etc. who, while coming from various parts of northern India, streamed by far in the largest number from the northern Indian regions of Bihar and Bengal" (Brinkhaus 1987: 112). In a similar vein, an eminent European scholar of Newari, Siegfried Leinhard (1974/1992: 2), had earlier remarked as follows: "As regards subject matter, almost the whole of medieval Nevārī literature is founded on works in Sanskrit, which regained prestige and importance when, at the beginning of the Moslem Era in India, considerable numbers of fugitives, among them scholars of repute, left Bihar and Bengal and found a new home in or around Kathmandu."

Discourse on aspects of linguistic analysis of Middle Maithili texts is both spasmodic and sparse: thus, barring Govind Jha's synoptic summary of the *viśeṣatā* 'characteristics' of Middle Maithili (Jha 1974: 39–41; 2007: 8–9), practically very little worth its salt was published prior to the onset of my research on Middle Maithili. I present below a sketch of the linguistic description of Middle Maithili: self-evidently, all the cited examples chosen for illustration are attested to in the text of medieval Newari manuscripts of Middle Maithili plays and songs.

## 1.2 Script & sound system

To an initiate not fully conversant with, and not quite adept in, reading the *Nepālākhala* (Skt. *Nepālākṣara*) Newari script in which these manuscripts are composed – in particular with how to flawlessly decipher and to correctly interpret a host of intricate ways in which the graphemes and their various and, I might add, curious combinations of the diacritic and the *mātrā* of the Newari script conspire to deftly and felicitously represent the sound system of Middle Maithili – I recommend that s/he go through my earlier works (Yadav ed. 2011: 22–42 and Yadav ed. 2018: 37–41). I must also admit that I have myself not yet produced any facsimile-cum-critical editions of a Newari manuscript composed either in the *Raṅjanā* script that is well-known for its highly aesthetic appeal, or in the *Bhumjīmōl* script that is famously known as the more-difficult-to-decipher script. Consequently, I present below a few characteristic features of the

*Nepālākhala* Newari orthography for your kind consideration.

- i. Following the convention of the Sanskrit language (Whitney 1870/1993: 78), after *r* (represented by a *repha*), a consonant is doubled, e.g. <sarvva> for सर्व <sarva> (Throughout); अर्जुन <arjjuna> for अर्जुन <arjuna> [Fol. 31a,b]; वर्णव <varṇaba> for वर्णव <varṇaba> [Fol. 8b]. Occasionally, the convention is over-generalized – thereby resulting in insertion of an intrusive *-r-* before double consonants where it doesn't belong, e.g. युद्ध <yurddha> for युद्ध <yuddha> [Fol. 7a]; चित्त <cirrtta> for चित्त <citta> [Fol. 53b].
- ii. Following the conventions of the Bangla script and those of the *Mithilākṣara* script, the Newari script too uses a back stroke below the horizontal bar (known as *śirorekhā*) and preceding a consonant to represent the vowel *e*, e.g. कामधनु for कामधेनु <kāmadhenu> (Fol. 48b).
- iii. The back stroke diacritic below the horizontal bar together with a *repha*-like diacritic above a consonant represent the diphthong *ai*, e.g. मगै छथि for मगै छथि <magai chathi> (Fol. 49b).
- iv. By the same token, a back stroke diacritic below the horizontal bar and conjoined with the *mātrā* representing the vowel *ā* denote the vowel sound *o*, e.g. गोकुलदास for गोकुलदास <gokuladāsa> (Fol. 28a).
- v. The most difficult of all is the highly elusive tilde-like curly horizontal bar placed on or above a consonant representing the vowel *e*, e.g. ह <he> (Fol. 28b). In addition, when the tilde-like curly horizontal bar above a consonant is conjoined with the *mātrā* representing the vowel *ā*, together they denote the sound *o*, e.g. राजना <rājāno> (Fol. 63a); when it is additionally conjoined with a superimposition of a backward looking *repha*-like mark above the consonant it denotes the diphthong *ai*, e.g. देखे छिए <dekhai chie> (Fol. 49b). This reading is of course highly context-sensitive.
- vi. By the same token, the diacritic mark of a tilde-like horizontal bar above a consonant and conjoined with a *mātrā* representing the vowel *ā* together with a backward looking *repha*-like mark above a consonant denotes the diphthong

*aii*, e.g. उमो <uhaü> (Fol. 29b). (Yadav ed. 2011)

There is considerable room for confusion between the following pairs of consonant characters, e.g. <ya> and <pa>; <ca> and <ra>; <cha> and <kṣa>; and <ḍa> and the vowel letter <u>; characters such as <jha>, <cha>, <bha>, and <pha> are equally problematic for accurate decipherment, while <va> and <ba> are almost always inseparable. A number of conjunct graphemes representing consonant clusters too defy correct reading and pose considerable difficulty in correctly deciphering them, e.g. <ttha>, <sta>, <tpara>, <khya>, <pta> (Yadav ed. 2018). Most of such ambiguities are however suitably disambiguated in the context by an expert reader of the text.

Finally, as opposed to the 8-vowel system of Modern Maithili (Yadav 1984, 1996, 2003), Middle Maithili has a straightforward 6-vowel system – the vowels being i, e, ə, a, o, u. However, the spelling conventions of a few fluid vowels tend to indicate that probably two more allophonic vowel sounds i.e. [æ] and [ɔ] were in the offing in Middle Maithili, thus, <tem> ~ [tæ], <kie> ~ [kiæ], <bhala kaela> ~ [bhəl kæl], while <jaño> ~ [jɔ̃], <aotāha> ~ [ɔtah], and so on (Yadav ed. 2011).

### 1.3 Morphology

#### Number

Grierson (1881), Chatterji (1926), D. Jha (Sāla 1353/1946 CE), and S. Jhā (1954, 1958) have all made unequivocal claims about an early loss of the grammatical category of number in the Māgadhan language Maithili (and Bangla) – giving rise to an unusually complex set of honorificity distinctions in its pronominal and verbal morphology. I must admit that I have yet to come across relics of affixes of Old Maithili grammatical number attested to in the Middle Maithili texts that I have analyzed thus far. I show below how the semantics of plurality is conveyed by agglutination of a number of periphrastic words indicative of multitude and/or aggregate to the noun or pronoun, e.g. *saba* (and its variants) 'all', *jana* 'person', *loka* 'people', *ādi* 'and others', *gaṇa* 'a number/mass', *dala* 'group'. Examples are: *paiṭra-saba* 'grandsons'; *nagarabāsī-jana*

'citizens/dwellers of the city'; *gāyan-ī-loka-ke* 'to (female) singers'; *mṛga sukara-ādi* 'deer, boars (and others)'; *nāgar-i-gana* 'the ladies/comely women' (Yadav ed. 2011); and *tāri-dala* 'the stars/the starry universe' (Yadav ed. 2018). Additionally, and quite curiously, a noun used in apposition to a pronoun (generally of the first person) may also convey the sense of the plural, e.g. *hama-rā brāhmaṇa-kā yurddha ucita nahi* 'to us – the Brahmins – it is not proper to engage in a battle' (Yadav ed. 2011).

#### Gender

Grammatical gender of nouns does not seem to exist in Middle Maithili; only the natural gender obtains. Traces of OIA gender system, however, are found to be remnant on adjectives, pronominal adjectives, genitival adjectives, and past and future tense verb forms in Middle Maithili, e.g. *śaśimukh-i* moon-faced-FEM 'moon-faced', *manonurañj-īni* pleasing to the mind-FEM 'charming', *kanisth-ā* (*kaniṣṭh-ā*) younger-FEM 'the junior queen'; *ehana-ø* such-MAS 'such', *ehan-i* such-FEM 'such'; *toha-r-a* (you-GENIT-MAS) *pitā* 'Your father', *toha-r-i* (you-GENIT-FEM) *mātā* 'Your mother' (Yadav ed. 2011); *gagana pura-l-a-ø* (fill-PST-MAS-3) *megha-hi ehi khana* 'Suddenly the sky was covered with clouds', *se binu mahi tar(l)a pura-r(l)-i-hu* (fill-PST-FEM-3) *nora* 'Without him I filled the earth with my tears' (Yadav ed. 2018); *se svāmi ihā-kām ho=e-t-āha* (be=LINK-FUT-MAS-3HON) 'He (HON) will be your (HON) husband' (Yadav ed. 2011).

#### Tense and person and Honorificity Agreement

*ki bahuta kahini kar-ai* (do-IMPERF) *cha-ha* (AUX-PRES-2NONHON) *chāḍa-ha* (leave-PRES-2NONHON) 'What idle conversations do you make? Stop'; he munirāja kī āññā *kar-ai* (do-IMPERF) *ch-ia* (AUX-PRES-2HON) 'O king of sages! What are your orders?'

*teṃ bahuta cirtta vyākula ho-i* (become-IMPERF) *acha-ø* (AUX-PRES-3NONHON) 'My spirit is therefore shaken'; he tapodhana rājakumāri prasava vyathā *jan-ai* (know-IMPERF) *cha-thi* (AUX-PRES-3HON) 'O great sage! The princess is in labor' (Yadav ed. 2011).

The verbal agreement morphology of Modern Maithili is profusely complex, rarely matched by

other Indo–Aryan languages of India and Nepal (Stump & Yadav 1988, Yadav 1996, 2003). In an earlier work, this is what I had to say about its emergence:

The question is: how is it that in works produced by kings and their priest-scholars in the Nepal Valley a codification of a complex verbal morphology occurred? The answer to the question may be had in the sociology of language use. During 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Maithili was a court language, a language of royal communication, a language of prestige and high esteem, and at the same time it was a robust and potent means of literary expression in the Nepālamanḍala. Maithili was being used in the royal courts of the Malla kings of Nepal under highly formal and even formulaic circumstances by elites and courtiers of varying cadre and status. No wonder an element of highly codified form of deference and courtesy and honor was superimposed on the verbal bases in order to distinctly stratify the status of members of the royal court vis-à-vis other users/consumers of this language. Maithili was after all a language of kings and queens, of princes and princesses, of elites and courtiers, and of high priests and scholarly pundits. This perforce led to emergence of an immaculate form of language 'fit' to suit the royal purposes, while, at the same time, probably less dignified varieties, i.e. colloquial varieties of Maithili coexisted elsewhere in Nepal and India. It is highly likely therefore that what linguists later dubbed 'diglossia' existed rather early in Maithili – a phenomenon that needs to be explored further. (Yadav ed. 2011: 66–67)

#### 1.4 Sentence Types

##### Declarative

revā nadi pahuca-I-āhu Fol. 11b  
Revā river arrive-PST-1  
'I have (now) arrived at (the bank of) river Revā (Yadav ed. 2011)

tohe binu ham-e nahi pāra-ba sambhāri Fol.1 V: 4  
You without I-NOM NEG can-FUT(1) control  
'Without you I can no longer control myself' (Yadav ed. 2018)

##### Imperative

ehana ājñā janu *kar-ia* Fol. 50a  
such order not do-IMP-2HON  
'Kindly do not command so' (Yadav ed. 2011)

ham-e janu *bisara-ha* Fol. 16 R: 6  
I-ACC/DAT NEG forget-IMP(2MH)  
'Do not ever forget me' (Yadav ed. 2018)

##### Interrogative

na pāra-ba parābhava *kie* gumāne Fol. 51b  
not make-FUT-1 crush why pride  
'Why (shall I) not crush (your) pride?' (Yadav ed. 2011)

Ehana priya sakhi *kata-hu* ge-l-i ābe Fol.14 V:2-3  
Such dear friend where-EMPH go-PST-FEM(3)  
now  
'Where did such a dear friend suddenly go away?' (Yadav ed. 2018)

##### Converbal Constructions

Converbal constructions in Modern Maithili are known to obtain the readings of 'simultaneity' and 'sequentiality'. In all the Middle Maithili manuscripts that I have analyzed, all the sentences carrying converbs obtain the semantic reading of 'sequentiality' only; as a matter of fact, no converbal construction obtaining the semantic reading of 'simultaneity' is available in them.

The converbal affixes are: (a) *-i*, (b) *-e <ya>*, and (c) *-kahu*, e.g.

kanaka kamala sama kuca juga *dekh-i* (see-CONV) Fol. 8a  
'Having seen (your) two bosoms as firm as gold lotuses' (Yadav ed. 2011)

sakhi-ka pāñi *la-e* (take-CONV) Fol. 14 R: 5-6  
'Holding (lit. having held) the hands of the friend' (Yadav ed. 2018)

ī pāpiṣṭha rājā mṛgayā vyāje *ā-e-kahu* (come=LINK-CONV) Fol. 52a  
'This king – the basest of the sinners –, having come under the pretext of deer (hunting)' (Yadav ed. 2011)

ura-si *dhar-i kahu* (keep=LINK-CONV) Fol. 14 R: 6  
'Placing (them) on my heart' (Yadav ed. 2018)

he hemabatī premabatī! jala snāna *ka-ya kahu* (do=LINK-CONV) udyāna *jā-e* (go-CONV) raha-ba

'Let us bathe in the water, [then] go stay in the park' (Brinkhaus 1987: 242-243)

he hemabatī premabatī! nārada-ka bacana *mān-i kahu* (accept=LINK-CONV) eta-hi raha-ba  
'Hemabatī, Premabatī, we'll do what Nārada said and remain here' (Brinkhaus 1987: 282–283)

In a historical linguistic survey of the diachronic origins of Maithili converbs citing data of around 1100 years, I had convincingly argued that the Middle Maithili converb *-kahū/-kahu* may indeed be viewed as the logical historical antecedent of the Modern Maithili converb *-ka* or *-kae*, and had concluded as follows: "In Middle Maithili, along with *-i* and *-e* suffixes, converbs were dominantly represented by such *k-* form affixes as *-kahū*, *-kahu*, and *-kae*; these were later transformed into *-ka*, *-kae*, and *-ke* in Modern Maithili." (Yadav 2004: 233)

## 2. Postscript

Ladies and Gentlemen! For diversion's sake, I beg to draw your attention to a set of two trends that have tended to emerge under the circumstances. First, the Universities, the Academies, and the Research Centers of Nepal – the so-called knowledge-producing 'regimes' – sadly appear to be quite indifferent to the existence of the vast wealth of knowledge and cultural heritage enshrined in the hand-written manuscripts of a wide variety of languages of Nepal. You may be surprised to note that, to date, a total of mere 3 Prākṛt-Sanskrit dramatic works of Medieval Nepal are published by these organizations. Thus, the Lalitpur-poet Dharmagupta's Prākṛt-Sanskrit play, *Rāmāṅka-Nāṭikā*, composed in the *Bhumjīmol* Newari script in N.S. 501/1381 CE, and most likely staged to celebrate the solemn occasion of the establishment of the newly-founded Kingdom of Lalitpur as well as Jayasīnhamalla's accession to the throne as the first crowned king of Lalitpur, was edited with a Nepali translation by Govindaprasad Bhaṭṭarai and published by the Royal Nepal Academy in V.S. 2032/1975 CE. Eight years later, poet-playwright Jayat's Prākṛt play, *Mahīrāvaṇavadha*, composed much earlier in the *Bhumjīmol* Newari script in N.S. 457/V.S. 1394/1337 CE, was edited with a translation into Nepali by Jñānamaṇi Nepāla and published by the

Tribhuvan University Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies in V.S. 2040/1983 CE. Another Prākṛt play, *Bhāiravānanda*, of the Maithili poet Maṇik (written Māṇikyavarddhana and Māṇika in Sanskrit and Manaku in Vernacular) and composed in the *Bhumjīmol* Newari script in N.S. 503/V.S. 1439/1383 CE was also edited with a translation into Nepali along with a gloss of Prākṛt words into Sanskrit and Nepali by Jñānamaṇi Nepāla and published by the Mahendra Sanskrit University, Dang in V.S. 2057/2000 CE. To the best of my knowledge, it's no different in India either. It is to the distinction of Ramdeo Jha that he got a total of two works, viz. *Kuñjavihāra Nāṭaka* (1976) and *Jagajjyotirmalla Kṛta Muditakuvalayāśva Nāṭaka* (2013), published by the Kameśvarasīmha Sanskrit University, Darbhanga and the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, respectively; in addition Surendra Jha 'Suman' & Ramdeo Jha got an anthology of Old Maithili verse, *Maithilī Prācīna Gītāvalī*, published by the Maithili Academy, Patna in 1977. The same year, Jaimant Mishra (1977) too got his *Maithilī Abhilekha Gītāmālā* published in Patna by the Maithili Academy.

Secondly, a closer scrutiny of the editor-scholars and the manuscripts that are selectively chosen for publication, to date, reveals a distinct ethnocentric segregation. For instance, the Bengali editor-scholars of India tend to produce only the Bengali editions of the Bengali and/or Maithili works; the Maithili-speaking editor-scholars of India and Nepal tend to produce the Maithili editions of Maithili and/or Prākṛt-Sanskrit works – only occasionally do they publish their English editions, e.g. Subhadra Jha ed. 1954, Jayakanta Mishra ed. 1960, and Ramawatar Yadav ed. 2011, 2018; the Newar editor-scholars mostly, and quite understandably, produce the Newari editions of the Newari works – with the singular exception of a young scholar, Rajitbahadur Shrestha, who published in 2004 a Newari edition of a Bengali play inadvertently mistaking it to be a Maithili play which I have concluded it is not; while the Nepali-speaking editor-scholars of the Brahman caste end up producing the Nepali editions of the Prākṛt-Sanskrit works alone as the Nepali manuscripts of the Malla dynasty are virtually nonexistent and rather hard to come by. As much

as I empathize with the limitations of the caliber of the individual scholars, I deem this stark segregation highly regrettable. Let me mention though in their defense that the scholarly act of critically editing a trilingual Newari manuscript of the Malla dynasty turns out to be a stupendously arduous task. To illustrate my point, and without much ado, allow me to simply quote from one of my publications in Maithili:

मुदा अछि ई काज अति कष्टसाध्य । हस्तलिखित पाण्डुलिपिसभक समीक्षात्मक संस्करण-कार्य आसान नहि अछि । एहि कार्यक सफल सम्पादनकहेतु कठोर परिश्रम, अदम्य साहस, दीर्घ काल, गहन गवेषण, त्रिभाषा (संस्कृत, नेवारी, मैथिली) ज्ञान, ऐतिहासिक एवम् पुरातात्विक ज्ञान, सही लिप्यन्तरण क्षमता, पद-विच्छेद करवाक सामर्थ्य, अनुवाद कौशल, प्रतिलिपिकारजन्य त्रुटि-विश्लेषण आदि गुणसभक खगता पडैत छैक । ई समस्त गुणसभक समष्टि कोनहु एक विद्वान व्यक्तिके नहिओ भ' सकैत अछि, ताहि हेतुएँ एहि काजमे विद्वत्समुदायक (a team of scholars) सहभागिता प्रयोजनीय नहि अपितु अपरिहार्य देखना जाइत अछि । (Yadav 2019a: 9)

To conclude, taking cue from Leonard Bloomfield's insightful observation cited prior to the onset of the paper, I would wish to exhort the young (and not-so-young) linguistic scholars and cultural historians – possessing knowledge of languages such as Sanskrit, Prākṛit, Pali, Tibetan, Bengali, Maithili, and Newari – to join hands together to devote their time and synergy to the study, analysis, and eventual publication of facsimile-cum-critical editions of the precious hand-copied manuscripts of all languages archived in the Āśā Saphu Archives, the Nepal National Archives, or any other Archives for that matter, in Nepal.

Ladies and Gentlemen! It would go amiss if I didn't offer my most sincere thanks to the President, the General Secretary, and the Members of the Executive Committee of the Linguistic Society of Nepal for the invitation. Thank you all for your kind attention.

#### References

Bagchi, Prabodh Chandra Baṅgābda 1347/1940 CE *Kuñjavihāra-nāṭaka* (of Jagajjyotirmalla), *Paricaya* (Calcutta University Bengali Monthly Journal). In Bengali

Bandopadhyaya, Nanigopal (ed. Baṅgābda 1324/1917 CE) *Nepālera Bāṅgālā Nāṭaka*, Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣada Mandira. In Bengali

Bhattacharya, Tanmoy 2016 "Inner/outer politeness in Central Magadhan Prākṛit languages: Agree as labeling," *Linguistic Analysis* 40: 3–4, 297–336.

Bhattarai, Govindaprasad (ed. V.S. 2032/1975 CE) *Rāmānka-Nāṭikā*, Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy.

Brinkhaus, Horst 1987 *Pradyumnavijaya-nāṭaka* (of Jagatprakāśamalla), In: *The Pradyumna-Prabhāvatī Legend in Nepal: A Study of the Hindu Myth of the Draining of the Nepal Valley*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden, "Appendix 1", pp. 161–345.

Chatterji, Suniti Kumar 1926 *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, Calcutta: Calcutta University Press.

Chatterji, Suniti Kumar & Babua Mishra (eds. 1940) *Vaṇa-Ratnākara of Jyotirīśvara-Kaviśekharācārya*, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Christian, J. 1891 *Behar Proverbs*, Delhi: Unity Book Store.

Conrady, August (ed. 1891) *Das Hariścandraṅṅyam: Ein Altnepalesisches Tanzspiel*, Leipzig: G. Kreysing. In German

Datta, Bijitkumar (ed. 1980) *Prācīna Bāṅgālā-Maithilī Nāṭaka*, Burdhan: Viśvavidyālaya. In Bengali

Grierson, George Abraham 1881 *An Introduction to the Maithilī Language of North Bihār, Part 1, Grammar*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Grierson, George Abraham 1884 "Manbodh's Haribans," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 51: 1, 129–150.

Grierson, George Abraham 1917 "The Pārijāta-Haraṇa of Umāpati Upādhyāya," *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 3: 1, 20–98.

Jha, Dinabandhu Sāla 1353/1946 CE *Mithilā-Bhāṣā Vidyotana*, Daḍibhaṅgā: Maithilī Sāhitya Pariṣada.

Jha, Govind 1974 *Maithilī Bhāṣā Kā Vikāsa*, Patna: Bihar Hindī Gramtha Akādāmī. In Hindī

Jha, Govind (ed. 1982) *Govindādāsa-Bhajanāvalī*, Patna: Maithili Academy.

Jha, Govind 2007 *Maithilī-Pariśilana*, Patna: Maithili Academy.

Jha, Govind (ed. 2012) *Vidyāpati-Gīta-Samagra*, Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.



- Jha, Pankaj Kumar 2016 "Literary conduits for 'consent': Cultural groundwork of the Mughal state in the fifteenth century," *The Medieval History Journal* 19: 2, 322–350. Academia.edu PDF
- Jha, Ramdeo (ed. 1970) *Jagajjyotirmalla Kṛta Haragaiṛvivaḥa Nāṭaka*, Laheriasarai–Darbhanga: Mithila Research Society.
- Jha, Ramdeo 1976 *Kuñjavihāra-nāṭaka*, In: *Manīṣā* (Journal of the Kameśvarasirṅha Darbhanga Sanskrit University).
- Jha, Ramdeo 1988 *Jagajjyotirmallakṛta Daśavatāraṅṭyam O Śoḍaśagītam*, Laheriasarai–Darbhanga: Mithila Research Society.
- Jha, Ramdeo (ed. 2013) *Jagajjyotirmalla Kṛta Muditakuvalayāśva Nāṭaka*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.
- Jha, Shailendra Mohan 1969 *Siddhi Narasimha Malla*, Lālabāga–Darbhanga: Pustak Kendra.
- Jhā, Subhadra (ed.1954) *Vidyāpati–Gīta–Saṅgraha or The Songs of Vidyāpati*, Banaras: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Jhā, Subhadra 1958 *The Formation of the Maithilī Language*, London: Luzac.
- Kværne, Per 1977 *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti*, Oslo–Bergen–Tromsø: Der Norske Videnskaps–Akademi.
- Kitada, Makoto 2014 "Manuscript of a Maithili play preserved in the Kathmandu Valley: *Madālasāharāṇa–nāṭaka*, Part 1," *Indomizokukenkyu (Indian Folk Culture Research)*: 13, 65–84, Osaka University Knowledge Archive: Osaka university. In Japanese
- Kitada, Makoto 2015 "Jagajjyotirmalla's play *Madālasāharāṇa–nāṭaka*, Part 2 (Latter half)," *Indomizokukenkyu (Indian Folk Culture Research)*: 14, 45–84, Osaka University Knowledge Archive: Osaka University. In Japanese
- Leinhard, Siegfried (ed. 1974/1992) *Songs of Nepal: An Anthology of Nevar Folksongs and Hymns*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Mishra, Jaimant 1977 *Maithilī Abhilekha Gītamālā*, Patna: Maithili Academy.
- Mishra, Jayakanta (ed. 1368 Sāla/1960 CE) *Maithilī–Dhūrtasamāgama* (of Jyotirīśvara), Allahabad: Akhila Bhāratīya Maithilī Sāhitya Samiti.
- Mishra, Jayakanta (ed.1961) *Rukmiṇī–Parinaya* (of Ramāpati Upādhyāya), Allahabad: Akhila Bhāratīya Maithilī Sāhitya Samiti.
- Mishra, Jayakanta (ed. 1965) *Vidyāvilāpa: Nepālīya Maithilī Nāṭaka* (of Bhūpatīndramalla), Allahabad: Akhila Bhāratīya Maithilī Sāhitya Samiti.
- Mishra, Lekhanath (ed.1972) *Jagatprakāśamallakṛta Prabhāvātīharaṇa Nāṭaka*, Paūnā–Arerahātā–Darbhanga: Śrī Lekhanātha Miśra.
- Mishra, Taranand V.S. 2062/2005 CE "Nepāla upatyakāka maithilī hastalikhita granthaka viśeṣatā," *Āṅgana* (A Maithili Journal of the Royal Nepal Academy): 1, 53–59.
- Mishra, Taranand V.S. 2072/2015 CE "Cikitsāsāstra, simarāūnagaḍhakā vaiḍya śrīcakradatta ra devapāṇanakā malla rājavaīdyamājha aṁtaḥsambandha," *Abhilekha* (Journal of the National Archives, Kathmānu) 33: 33, 44–55.
- Nara, Tsuyoshi 1979 *Avahatṭha and Comparative Vocabulary of New Indo–Aryan Languages*, Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
- Nepāla, Jñānamaṇi (ed. V.S. 2040/1983 CE) *Jayataracita Mahīrāvaṇavadha Nāṭaka: Vivecanātmaka Adhyāyana*, Kathmānu: Tribhuvan University Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies.
- Nepāla, Jñānamaṇi (ed. V.S. 2057/2000 CE) *Kavimaṇikaracitam Bhāiravānandanāṭakam*, Beldāṅgī, Dāṅga: Mahendra Sanskrit University.
- Orsini, Francesca 2012 "How to do multilingual literary history: Lessons from fifteenth and sixteenth century north India," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 49: 2, 225–246. Academia.edu PDF
- 'Ramana', Ramanand Jha (ed. 2019) *Rāmabhadraśarmākṛta Hariścandraṅṭyam (Mallakālīna Maithilī Nāṭaka)*, Ranchi, Jharkhanda: Visvambhara Foundation.
- Richards, Thomas 1993 *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, New York: Verso.
- Shāstrī, Haraprasād 1905 *A Catalogue of Palm–Leaf and Selected Paper Mss. Belonging to the*

- Durbar Library, Nepal*, Vol. 1, Calcutta: Baptist Mission.
- Shāstrī, Haraprasād 1911 *Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts (1906–1907 to 1910–1911)*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- Shastri, Sundar Jha V.S. 2029/1972 CE "Śrī jaya jagatprakāśa malla kṛta Nānārtha Deva Devī Gīta Saṅgraha," *Phūla-Pāta* (A Maithili Magazine Published in Kathmandu) 4: 8, viii + 38.
- Shrestha, Rajitbahadur (ed. N.S. 1124/2004 CE) *Kāśīvijaya*, Nhū Hisu Pucaḥ: Tāpāhiti, Yala (Patan), Nepal.
- Singh, Gangananda 1950 "Akhila bhāratīya prācyavidyāsammelanaka caūdahama adhivēśanaka māithilī śākhāka adhyakṣa kumāra gaṅgānanda siṃhaka abhibhāṣaṇa 1950," In: Devendra Jha (compiler, 1983) *Bhāṣaṇatrayī*, Patna: Maithili Academy, pp. 37–73.
- Śrīśa', Durganatha Jha (ed. Śāke 1896/1974 CE) *Nṛpatīyajajyotirmalla–Kṛta Gīta–Pañcāśikā*, Kataharabādī–Darbhanga: Cetanātha Jhā.
- Stump, Gregory T. & Ramawatar Yadav 1988 "Maithili verb agreement and the Control Agreement Principle," In: *Chicago Linguistic Society Parasession on Agreement in Grammatical Theory* (USA) 24: 2, 304–321.
- 'Sumana', Surendra Jha & Ramdeo Jha (eds. 1977) *Maithilī Prācīna Gītāvalī*, Patna: Maithili Academy.
- Yadav, Ramawatar & Ratneshwar Jha 1982 "Bhūpatīndramalla's *Parśurāmopākhyāna-nātaka* (1713 A. D.): A preliminary report," Paper presented to the Literary Association of Nepal, Kathmandu, April 18, 1982.
- Yadav, Ramawatar 1984 *Maithili Phonetics and Phonology*, Mainz (Germany): Selden und Tamm.
- Yadav, Ramawatar 1996 *A Reference Grammar of Maithili*, Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter. [Indian Edition, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1997]
- Yadav, Ramawatar 2003 "Maithili," In: Cardona, George & Dhanesh Jain (eds. 2003) *The Indo-Aryan Languages*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 470–490.
- Yadav, Ramawatar 2004 "On diachronic origins of converbs in Maithili," *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 31: No. 2, 215–241.
- Yadav, Ramawatar (ed. 2011) *A Facsimile Edition of a Maithili Play: Bhūpatīndramalla's Parśurāmopākhyāna-nātaka*, Kathmandu: B. P. Koirala India–Nepal Foundation.
- Yadav, Ramawatar (ed. 2018) *Elegy Written in a Royal Courtyard: A Facsimile Edition of Jagatprakāśamalla's Gītapāñcaka*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- Yadav, Ramawatar 2019a "Maithilī bhāṣā-sāhityaka saṅrakṣaṇa: Cunaūtī ā nidāna," *Āmjura* (A Maithili magazine published in Janakpur, Nepal) 29: 88, 3–11.
- Yadav, Ramawatar 2019b "A hitherto undiscovered and unstudied hand-copied Newari manuscript of a Maithili *Bārahamāsā* song by king Jagatprakāśamalla of Bhaktapur," In: *Conference Proceedings 2015: The Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and The Himalaya*, Kathmandu: Social Science Baha, 2019, 244–265.
- Yadav, Ramawatar (ed. 2021, Forthcoming) *Historiography of Maithili Lexicography & Francis Buchanan's Comparative Vocabularies: Facsimile Edition of the British Library, London Manuscript*, Darbhanga: Maharajadhiraja Kameshwar Singh Kalyani Foundation, Kameshwar Singh Bihar Heritage Series–23.