

Appendix 2: The *Vikṛti* Permutations of the Saṃhitā

The following traditional permutations (*vikṛti*) of the Saṃhitā texts are based on the *padapāṭha* and serve as mnemotechnic aids which produce specific changes of both spelling and accent, through the grammatical process of *saṃdhi*. Traditionally, there are eight such *vikṛtis*, but the important *kramapāṭha* is often not counted as part of the (eight) *vikṛtis*, but rather with the natural (*prakṛti*) recitation of the Veda. The “natural” recitation of the Veda according to some sources is the base text (*mūla*) — i.e. the *saṃhitā* recitation, the *padapāṭha*, and the *kramapāṭha*. The following popular verse⁴¹³, given to me by one of the *vaidikas* of Maharashtra, lists eight *vikṛtis*:

*jaṭā mālā śikhā rekhā dhvajo daṇḍo ratho ghaṇaḥ
ityaṣṭo vikṛti proktaḥ kramapūrva maharṣibhiḥ.*

Of these permutations, only three are preserved in Maharashtra: *jaṭāpāṭha*, *kramapāṭha*, and *ghanapāṭha*, and that too only in the Ṛgveda and in the Yajurveda recensions. Someone who has mastered these three *vikṛtis* is entitled to carry the name *ghanapāṭhin*.

For the sake of simplification, a visual representation of the eight traditional patterns is given below. Lower-case letters (a, b, c, and so on) symbolize each word of a verse; a slash (/) separates clusters of words, a double slash (//) indicates endings of verses. The Sanskrit marker “iti” marks the final word of a verse or half-verse (*pada*).

jaṭāpāṭha or “braid” recitation

abbaab / bccbbc / cddccd / deedde / fgfffg / ...

mālāpāṭha or “garland” recitation, which has two variations:

1) *kramamālā*⁴¹⁴ (ordered garland)

ab / h iti h / bc / hg / cd / gf / fg / dc / gh / cb / h iti h / ba //415

2) *puṣpamālā* (flower garland)

ab / ba / ab / bc / cb / bc / cd / dc / cd / df / fd / df ...

3) *śikhāpāṭha* or “topknot” recitation

abbaabc / bccbbcd / cddccde / effeefg / ...

⁴¹³ The verse appears in a number of works, some of them compiled in: ABBHYANKAR and DEVASTHALI 1978. The editors of this volume point to a certain Vyāḍi as the possible author of this verse. I thank Dominik Wujastik for this reference. The verse is also cited in Maheśvara’s commentary on Amarakośa, first *kāṇḍa*, *śabdādivarga*, verse nr. 4. Unfortunately, the commentator does not give a source for this quotation. (AMARASIMHA 1907: 35)

⁴¹⁴ Not to be confused with the more common *kramapāṭha*, see the recitation pattern number 9.

⁴¹⁵ Forward movement from the beginning of each half-verse in two-word clusters which alternate from the end of a half-verse, with each two-word cluster in a reverse order.

4) *rekḥāpāṭha* or “row” recitation

ab / ba / ab / bcd / dcba / bc / cd / defg / gfed / ...

5) *dhvajapāṭha* or “flag” recitation

ab / p iti p / bc / op / cd / no / ... / op / bc / p iti p / ab //

⁴¹⁶

6) *daṇḍapāṭha* or “staff” recitation

ab / ba / ab / bc / cba / ab / bc / cd / dcba / ... / ab / bc / cd / de / ef / fg / gh / hi /
ihg fedcba⁴¹⁷

7) *rathapāṭha* or “chariot” recitation

ab / ef / ij / mn / ba / fe / ji / nm / ... / dcba / hgfe / lkji / ponm //

⁴¹⁸

8) *ghanapāṭha* or “dense” or “bell” recitation

abbaabccbaabc / bccbbccddcbbcd / cddccdeedccde / ...

(9) *kramapāṭha* or “step by step” or “progressing” recitation

ab / bc / cd / df / fg / gh / ...

For a more detailed account on the *vikṛtis* with the modification in the accentuation of the text, see: HOWARD 1986; BHANDARKAR, 1874: 133.

416 This recitation is very similar to *kramamālā* except that the two-word clusters are not reversed in the backward movement and the pattern consists of movement from the beginning and end of the verse, not the half-verse.

417 This recitation pattern is formed little by little, until all the words of the verse in reverse order is presented.

418 Here, a quarter of a verse, in more or less equal divisions of a complete verse, is ordered in such a way that they together represent the wheels of the “chariot”. The quarter verses “used as wheels” follow the gradual *daṇḍa* formation.