

## 6 Conclusions

Due to the project's limitations of time, resources, framework and so forth, only selected corpora of the manuscripts from the East and West India, and Nepal have been dealt with in the present study. Therefore, the conclusion drawn here on the basis of the analysis of the selected manuscripts may not be universally applicable for the rest of the corpora of the respective regions. Nonetheless, the present study can argue with a degree of confidence that the analysis made here is certainly applicable, to a great extent, to manuscripts contemporaneous to the period of the present study. As mentioned elsewhere in chapter 1, the present study, with a few exceptions,<sup>557</sup> is an initial scientific step towards the study of the largely unexplored manuscript-culture of the regions. It is hoped that this will foster further scientific research on the topic.

As far as Nepalese manuscripts are concerned, (although exceptions also exist here) the manuscripts produced between the 9<sup>th</sup> c. and 13<sup>th</sup> c. show that in the course of time, to some extent, a more and more standardised layout was used (see section 2.4.1, Figs. 2.4.1-I–2.4.1-XXII). These manuscripts exhibit overall layouts for arranging the text on a folio, including, at times, the use of two or three text-sections. Gaps can be found between parts of verses (see sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). Ruling-lines can be also found occasionally. Of the manuscripts originating from East India or, more precisely, from Vikramaśīla, the text seems to have been organised with 'delicate care'. Most of the manuscripts produced there contain seven lines per folio (see section 2.4.2, Figs. 2.4.2-III–2.4.2-X). The lines are written rather more consistently than those of the Nepalese and West Indian manuscripts. The number of letters (*akṣaras*) per line does not differ as much from one manuscript to the other. Space-fillers are not used in the manuscripts. No text-sections are found. In most of the manuscripts square-shaped free spaces appear around both string-holes on the folio. Three lines have been left clear to create a free space around the string-holes in height on the folios. Furthermore, ample free space appears on the margins of the folio in the majority of the manuscripts. Clear visible gaps—like those that between parts of the *śloka*s in some Nepalese manuscripts—are not to be found in the manuscripts from this area. Furthermore, with regard to text genres, all manuscripts contain Buddhist texts. In the West Indian manuscripts, texts are generally organised in two to three text-sections. Although ruling-lines are only occasionally found in

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557 Such as Śākya 1973; Roth 1986; Sander 1986; Bhattacharya 1995; Sarkar/Pande 1995; Einicke 2009; IndroSkript etc.

some of the Nepalese and East Indian manuscripts, they are present in all of the West Indian manuscripts of my corpus (see section 2.4.3, Figs. 2.4.3-I–2.4.3-VII). Each text-section appears demarcated by vertical ruling-lines. Ample free space on the left and right-hand margins can also be found in the West Indian manuscripts. Hardly any gaps can be observed between smaller text units.

Symbols, appear in manuscripts of this corpus from all areas (see sections 3.4, 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 3.5.3). They appear predominantly at the end of the sub-chapters, chapters or text in the manuscript. However, in the manuscripts from the Western India, stylised *puṣpikās* frequently appear around the string-hole or together with the foliation numbers on the left-hand margin of the verso (see sections 3.6.1, 3.7). A large variety of symbols can be found in the Nepalese manuscripts. In terms of their aesthetic value, some of the symbols exhibit the highest level of sophistication of all the symbols in the corpus (e.g. see section 3.4). Furthermore, even realistic types of representation of *puṣpikās* with stalks, leaves and sepals ('realistic *puṣpikās*') have been found in a few Nepalese manuscripts (see section 3.5.1, Figs. 3.5.1-I–3.5.1-XII). Varieties of the use of symbols are also found in the East Indian manuscripts of the corpus. Symbols in the East Indian manuscripts appear in different shapes and sizes. A smaller variety of symbols can be traced in the West Indian manuscripts (the occurrence of beautifully drawn colourful symbols and other elements in later paper manuscripts from the area is well known to this researcher). They are drawn in a small size and form and are a height of one text line on the folio (see section 3.4, Fig. 3.4-XLVII and section 3.5.3, Figs. 3.5.3-I–3.5.3-III). In this region an important custom is for all manuscripts (with only few exceptions) to contain symbols around the string-holes (see section 3.6.1, Figs. 3.6.1-I–3.6.1-VII). Manuscripts from this region also frequently feature small, stylised *puṣpikās* together with every tenth foliation number on the left-hand margin verso (see section 3.7, Figs. 3.7-I–3.7-IV).

In terms of the appearance of symbols, some precisely drawn, representing elements clearly related to the specific religious affiliation to which the manuscript belongs or the text the manuscript contains. But some symbols appear in simple sketch-like forms or even in more abstract forms. Here the idea of the drawing can only be pieced together in connection with the content of the text or only with prior knowledge of its relation to a particular school of thought to which it is obviously referring. In some cases, a few symbols can clearly be linked to the performative aspects of knowledge, i.e. to the rites in which the manuscripts can be employed.

Furthermore, a particular type of use of symbols and their way of distribution on the folios may also point out a specific tradition or be closely related to manuscripts containing a text of a specific religious affiliation (see section

3.6.2.4.2). Moreover, among other features (such as palaeography, layout etc.), they may also help to identify various scribal hands in a manuscript (see sections 3.9.1–3.9.5). Symbols may be interpreted as means to help approximate the date of production of a manuscript and also be used to reconstruct the dismembered parts of a single manuscript (see sections 3.8.1–3.8.2). According to their appearance and possible functions, they should be understood as decorative or structuring devices.

Blank spaces can be found in manuscripts from both the Nepalese and East India regions of my corpus, but not in the corpus of manuscripts from the West India. For whatever reason, blank spaces have been left in the manuscripts, it appears that during the course of time, leaving a free space at the end of a sub-chapter, chapter or text may have developed into a kind of convention and used as a dividing device (see section 4.1). Use of such blank spaces in a manuscript can be understood as one of the main devices to visually indicate the end of a chapter, sub-chapter or text. At times changes in the size of blank spaces in the manuscript may also be taken as hints regarding the endings at different levels of the text.

Gaps have been left in some of the Nepalese manuscripts within this corpus. They can be found between sentences or parts of a verse either within the text line or integrated into the text-section layout of the page in manuscripts (see sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2). Gaps can be understood as a crucial dividing device in terms of visual demarcation for smaller text units. A careful effort, a planned strategy and also a detailed knowledge of the structure of the text may be all the necessary requirements for a scribe who intended to insert gaps while working in a particular manuscript.

Colours are used in the manuscripts from all the regions in this corpus (see section 5.1). As for the style of colour application, a close similarity can be observed between the Nepalese and East Indian manuscripts. The method of colour application in the West Indian manuscripts has similarities with the Nepalese and East Indian manuscripts. However, the use of colour in the West Indian manuscript is generally intense (see the highlighted foliations and symbols around string-holes in section 5.1). It is not only used to indicate text deletions and corrections, but also as an important visual text dividing device. Colours applied over specific elements on the folio offer some sort of structural function for the text. In some cases, colour application on manuscript covers can show a close connection to the ritual performances for which the manuscripts were quite probably employed.

Regarding the materials used for highlighting foliation numbers, *daṇḍas*, symbols, etc., the examination confirmed that the colouring agent was probably

the red ochre in some of the manuscripts from Nepal and East India (see section 5.2). Additionally, the analysis confirmed that the ink used for writing the text and drawing symbols could be similar in one manuscript. This may indicate that the person who wrote down the text may have also drawn the symbols using the same ink. Furthermore, symbols made of precise circles were most probably drawn with compasses or a similar instrument (see Figs. 5.2-VII, 5.2-IX).

As we have seen, the topic of visual text-organisation is vast in terms of the variety of elements used in the manuscripts. However, it is hoped that these results will contribute to the studies and towards a better understanding of the visual organisation of texts in Indic manuscripts. Many topics and questions have yet to be addressed and many subjects require further study. Therefore, this book draws to a close in the hope that its outcome will foster further research in the field, to answer those questions remaining unanswered while simultaneously raising new ones.