

THE WORD NUMERIC SYSTEM OF CHANDOMAÑJARĪ: MARKING PAUSES IN SANSKRIT METRES

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Abstract :

In Chandomanjarīkāra Gaṅgādāsa's description of vṛtta and jāti metres, he has indicated the yati (pause point of the tongue) within the vṛtta metre not only through numbers such as *tri* (three), *chatur* (four), etc., but also by using words like *vāṇa*, *gaja*, and others. Although these words have their own dictionary meanings, in this context they also convey specific numerical values.

For example, in the verse — *māttau gau cec chālinī veda-lokaiḥ* — which describes the characteristics of the śālinī metre, the yati occurs at the fourth and seventh syllables. Here, the word *veda* indicates the number four, and *loka* indicates the number seven, because there are four Vedas (R̥k, Yajuś, Sāman, and Atharvan) and seven *lokas* (worlds such as bhū, bhuva, sva, etc.).

Key Words : Bhūta-saṃkhyā, Śabda-saṃkhyā, Saṃkhyā, Metre, Yati, Akṣara, Pāda

1. Introduction

Hindu ritual traditions are among the most diverse and dynamic in the world, shaped not only by scriptural authority but also by the living heritage of local wisdom embedded within indigenous communities. Across different cultural landscapes—from the Indian subcontinent to the island of Bali—ritual forms are not merely inherited from canonical texts such as the Vedas, Smṛti, or Purāṇas, but continually reinterpreted through the interplay of cosmology, ecology, and localized knowledge systems. These layers of meaning shape how offerings are prepared, how ceremonial sequences unfold, who assumes ritual responsibilities, and how sacred spaces are constructed and inhabited.

In the expression *chandah pādau tu vedasya*¹, metre (*chandas*) is metaphorically described as the feet of the Veda, when the Veda is imagined in anthropomorphic form as a divine being.

Among the major treatises on Sanskrit metrics, Piṅgala's Chandaḥsūtra (2nd–3rd century BCE), Kedārabhaṭṭa's Vṛttaratnākara (11th century CE), and Hemacandra's Chando'nuśāsana (12th century CE) hold significant positions. Within this tradition, Gaṅgādāsa's Chandomañjari (15th century CE) became particularly popular. Gaṅgādāsa divides metre into two principal categories — vṛtta and jāti — as stated: *tac ca vṛttam jātir iti dvidhā*² ("Metre is of two kinds — vṛtta and jāti").

¹ Pāṇinīyaśikṣā

² Chandomañjari by Gaṅgādāsa (CM)

The vṛtta chandas is that in which the metrical structure is determined by the count of syllables (akṣaras) — *vṛttam akṣara-saṁkhyātam*³. A syllable (akṣara) may be a pure vowel, a vowel with a consonant, or a vowel with an anusvāra — *savyañjanāḥ sānusvāraḥ śuddho vāpi svaro'kṣaram*⁴.

The jāti chandas, on the other hand, is determined by the count of mātrās (metrical instants) — *jātir mātrā-kṛtā bhavet*⁵. Examples include metres such as āryā, vipulā, and capalā etc.

The vṛtta metres are further classified into three types — samavṛtta, ardhasamavṛtta, and viṣamavṛtta — as defined: *samam arddha-samam vṛttam viṣamam ceti tat tridhā*⁶.

- In samavṛtta chandas, each of the four pādas (quarters) contains an equal number of syllables, arranged in identical patterns of laghu and guru syllables — *samarṁ sama-catuṣ-pādaṁ bhavaty ardha-samarṁ punaḥ*⁷. Examples include indrajavrā, upajāti, and vasantatilaka etc.
- In ardhasamavṛtta chandas, the first and third pādas have an equal number of syllables, as do the second and fourth — *ādiḥ tṛtīyavad yasya pādaś caturtho dvitīyavat*⁸. Examples: upacitra, sundarī, kaumudī etc.
- When each of the four pādas contains a different number of syllables, the metre is termed viṣamavṛtta — *bhinna-cihna-catuṣ-pādaṁ viṣamam parikīrtitam*⁹. Examples: saurabhaka, sudgatā, etc.

The structure of Sanskrit metres is based on combinations of laghu (short) and guru (long) syllables, which form gaṇas (metrical groups). There are ten gaṇas in Sanskrit prosody. The la and ga gaṇas each consist of one syllable, whereas the others — ma, na, ra, sa, etc. — consist of three syllables each (*mas tri-gurus tri-laghuś ca nakāraḥ...*¹⁰). The determination of gaṇas follows a fixed rule.

A short syllable (hrasva) is laghu — *hrasvam laghu*¹¹. A syllable becomes guru if it is long (dīrgha), or followed by an anusvāra, visarga, or a conjunct consonant, or if it occurs at the end of a pāda when required — *sānusvāraś ca dīrghaś ca*¹².

During recitation of Sanskrit verse, it is not always possible to complete an entire pāda in a single breath. Hence, either for articulatory ease or for aesthetic sweetness (*śruti-mādhurya*), a pause becomes necessary. The point at which the tongue rests is called yati — *yatir jihveṣṭa-viśrāma-sthānam*¹³.

³ CM

⁴ Varṇaratnapradīpikā-śikṣā

⁵ CM

⁶ CM

⁷ CM

⁸ CM

⁹ CM

¹⁰ CM

¹¹ Aṣṭādhyāyī I/IV/10

¹² CM

¹³ CM

However, the yati cannot be placed arbitrarily at any position within a verse. Its application follows definite metrical rules. A misplaced yati distorts the rhythm and leads to errors in recitation, which are strictly undesirable. Every Sanskrit verse follows a specific metrical pattern, and it must be sung or recited in accordance with that pattern. Any deviation in the placement of yati either breaks or alters the metre. For instance, in the *śālinī* metre, each *pāda* contains eleven syllables, and the yati occurs after the fourth and the seventh syllables. If these positions are altered, the metre becomes incorrect. Similarly, both *sarak chandas* and *maṇigūṇanikara chandas* contain fifteen syllables and follow the same *gaṇa* sequence (na na na na sa). Yet, in *sarak chandas*, the yati occurs after the sixth and ninth syllables, whereas in *maṇigūṇanikara chandas* it occurs after the eighth and seventh syllables respectively. Thus, the distinction between these two metres lies solely in the position of the yati. Therefore, the position of yati in a metre is invariable and fundamental to its identity.

Although there are certain established rules determining the number of yatis (pauses) in a particular metre, it is not universally true that a larger number of syllables necessarily entails the presence of yati. The existence of yati within a metre depends primarily on the inherent characteristics of that metre. It is observed that even metres with comparatively fewer syllables may possess distinct yatis — for example, in the *śālinī* metre, each *pāda* consists of eleven syllables, yet there are two yatis: the first occurring after the fourth syllable and the second after the seventh. Conversely, in the *āśokamañjarī* metre, which comprises as many as thirty-three syllables, no yati is prescribed at all.

Gaṅgādāsa, while discussing yati (pause) in metrical composition, employed several distinct methods of indication.

- First, he often specified the position of the yati directly through numerical expressions, using words that explicitly denote numbers. This method is straightforward and easily comprehensible to all.
- Secondly, he adopted another, subtler approach in which no numerical words were used, yet the yati positions were clearly implied. For instance, in describing the *mandākrāntā* metre, he writes *mandākrāntāmbudhi-rasa-nagair mo bhanau tau ga-yugmam*¹⁴.

In this rule (*lakṣaṇa*), *Gaṅgādāsa* does not employ explicit number words to indicate the yati, but there are, in fact, three yatis within the metre. He uses the words *ambudhi*, *rasa*, and *naga* to denote the pause positions. Here, *ambudhi* ("ocean") signifies the number four, *rasa* ("essence") denotes six, and *naga* ("mountain") stands for seven. Hence, the yati in this metre occurs respectively after the fourth, sixth, and seventh syllables.

Words such as *ambudhi*, *rasa*, and *naga* are known as *bhūta-saṃkhyā* or *śabda-saṃkhyā*, i.e., symbolic words used to represent numbers. The use of *bhūta-saṃkhyā* is an ancient Indian tradition and can be traced across various disciplines — astronomy (*jyotiḥśāstra*), mathematics (*gaṇita*), manuscriptology (*puthi-vidyā*), epigraphy (*śilālekha*), the reckoning of time in Vedic rituals, and even in *vāstuśāstra* (architecture).

Since antiquity, each *bhūta-saṃkhyā* word has been associated with a specific numerical value, justified by symbolic or cultural reasoning. For example, though the word *haya* literally

¹⁴ CM

means “horse,” in numerical symbolism it represents the number seven. Likewise, *naga*, which literally means “mountain,” also denotes seven in the context of numerical expression.

These *bhūta-samkhyās* or *śabda-samkhyās* were so well known and widely accepted that Gaṅgādāsa and his commentators did not feel the need to explain their numerical significance in detail.

The principal aim of the present research paper is to explore the symbolic and logical foundations behind these *bhūta-samkhyā* or *śabda-samkhyā* expressions and to analyze the method of indicating *yati* as found in *Chandomañjarī*.

Exclusive Use of *bhūta-samkhyā* in *samavṛtta* Metres

In *Chandomañjarī*, the application of *bhūta-samkhyā* (numerical symbolism) or *śabda-samkhyā* (word-numeral system) for indicating *yati* (pause) is observed **only in the *samavṛtta* type of metres**. In the cases of *ardhasamavṛtta* and *viśamavṛtta* metres, there is no mention of *yati* whatsoever.

Although the concept of *yati* does occur within the *jāti* metres, **no *bhūta-samkhyā* or *śabda-samkhyā*** is used there to indicate it. Instead, Gaṅgādāsa merely specifies **after which *gāṇa*** the *yati* should occur.

For example, in the description of the *āryā* metre, it is stated:

ṣaṣṭhe dvitīya-lāt parake nale mukha-lāc ca sayati-pada-niyamaḥ /
carame'rdhe pañcamake tasmād iha bhavati ṣaṣṭho laḥ
//¹⁵

That is, in the *āryā* metre, the *yati* occurs **after the second laghu syllable in the sixth *gāṇa*** and again **before the first laghu syllable in the seventh *gāṇa***, and so on.

Thus, while *bhūta-samkhyā* expressions are a distinctive feature of *yati* indication in *samavṛtta* metres, other metrical categories either omit *yati* entirely or indicate it purely through *gāṇa*-based positional rules, without recourse to symbolic numerals.

The Twelve Positions of *yati* and Corresponding *bhūta-samkhyā*

In *Chandomañjarī*, twelve positions of *yati* are observed, ranging from the **third syllable to the fourteenth syllable** in a line. While Gaṅgādāsa frequently employs *bhūta-samkhyā* (numerical symbolism) to indicate the *yati*, he does not do so for all numbers. For example, for the numbers **three** and **thirteen**, he uses the words *tri* and *trayodaśa* respectively, but no *bhūta-samkhyā* is applied in these cases. Conversely, for the numbers **four** through **twelve**, and for **fourteen**, *bhūta-samkhyā* usage is clearly evident.

Particularly significant is the application of symbolic numbers to indicate positions **four through ten and twelve**, where Gaṅgādāsa uses words like *catur*, *pañcan*, *ṣaṣ*, *saptan*, *aṣṭan*,

¹⁵ CM

nava, *daśa*, and *dvādaśa*. This practice demonstrates the influence of **Kedārabhaṭṭa**'s **Vṛttaratnākara**, whose treatise also prescribes *yati* positions using numerical words. Indeed, in all metres where Kedārabhaṭṭa applies numbers for *yati* indication, Gaṅgādāsa follows him closely — **with the sole exception of the *hariṇī* metre**. For all other metres, Gaṅgādāsa specifies *yati* positions using the corresponding *bhūta-saṅkhyā* numbers.

A table summarizing the use of *bhūta-saṅkhyā* for each number in *Chandomañjarī* can be constructed as follows:

This table illustrates the systematic use of *bhūta-saṅkhyā* in indicating *yati* positions in *samavṛtta* metres.

Number	Word
4	artha, adhvan, ambudhi, abdhi, sāgara, yuga, varṇa, veda, śruti, catur
5	iṣu, karaṇa, bhūta, vāṇa, śara, pañcan
6	ṛtu, guhavaktra, rasa, ṣaṣ
7	aṅga or aṅgānta, aśva, turaga, naga, muni, loka, svara, haya, saptan
8	karin, gaja, phanin, bhūjaga, bhogin, vasu, aştan
9	graha, randhra, nava
10	āśā, dik, daśa
11	īśa, rudra, śiva
12	ina, dineśa, māsa, sūrya, dvādaśa
14	bhuvana

In Gaṅgādāsa's *Chandomañjarī*, while indicating *yati* (pauses) in the *hariṇīplutā* and *haraṇarttana* metres, he employs the word **karin**, and in the metre *samudratatā*, he uses the word **gaja**. Both of these words signify the number **eight (8)**.

These eight *gajas* (elephants) are paired, each pair symbolically representing the eight cardinal and intercardinal directions. The pairs are as follows:

1. **airāvata** and **abhramu** – East
2. **kapila** / **kapilo** / **kapilayā** – Southeast
3. **vāmana** and **piṅgalā** – South
4. **kumuda** and **anupamā** – Southwest
5. **añjana** and **tāmarakarṇī** – West
6. **puṣpadanta** and **śubhradantī** – Northwest
7. **sārvabhauma** and **aṅganā** – North
8. **supratīka** and **añjanavatī** – Northeast

This tradition of the “eight directional elephants” (*aṣṭa-dig-gaja*) is also found in Telugu literature. In the 16th century, during the reign of Vijayanagara King **Krishnadevaraya**, eight poets were recognized as the royal assembly poets (*aṣṭa-dig-gaja*). These poets and their notable works are:

1. **Allasani Peddana** – Known as the *Andhra Kavita Pitāmaha* (Grandfather of Telugu Poetry). Works: *Harikathāsāram* and *Manucaritra* among others
2. **Dhurjaṭi** – Works: *Śrīkalahastiśvaramāhatmyam*, *Śrīkalahastiśvaraśatakamu*

3. **Nandi Thimmana** or **Mukku Thimmana** – Works: *Pārijātapaharaṇamu, Bharatakathāmañjarī, Vānīvilāsamu*
4. **Mādayagari Mallana** – Work: *Rājaśekaracaritam*
5. **Ayyalarāju Rāmabhadruḍu** – Works: *Rāmābhyudayam, Sakalānīti-sāra-saṁgraha*
6. **Pandit Rāmakṛṣṇa** or **Tenali Rāmakṛṣṇa** – Known as a flamboyant poet. Works: *Pāṇḍuraūga-māhatmyam, Ghaṭikācala-māhatmyam, Udbhaṭatarādhya-caritam*
7. **Rāmarājabhuṣaṇudu** – Works: *Kāvyalāmkāra-saṁgrahamu, Vasucaritramu, Hariścandra-Nalopākhyānamu, Narasabhupaliyamu*
8. **Piṅgali Sūrana** – Works: *Prabavati Pradyumna, Rāghava Pāṇḍavīyam, Kalā Pūrṇadaya*

(The names of these eight Telegu scholars and their works are taken from several web sources. Original spelling may differ.)

Aśva, Turaga and Haya

In *Gaṅgādāsa's Chandomañjarī*, while indicating *yati* (pauses) in the metres **vaiśvadevī, candrikā, hāriṇī, kusumitalatāvellitā, citralekhā, kesara, siṁhavisphurjītā, śārdūlavikrīḍita, suvadanā, śobhā, bhujaṅgavijṛmbhīta**, he employs the word **aśva**, and in the metres **phulladāma, vimba, samudratatā, mahāsragdharā**, he uses **turaga**. Similarly, for the metres **hariṇī, kokilaka, bhārakrāntā, hari, kāntā, nandana, phulladāma, mahāsragdharā**, he applies the word **haya**. In all these cases, the words **aśva, turaga, and haya** represent the number **seven (7)**. According to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*:

*hayaś ca sapta chandāṁsi teṣāṁ nāmāni me śṛṇu
gāyatrī sa bṛhatyuṣṇig jāgatī triṣṭubh eva ca /
anuṣṭup pañktir ity uktāś chandāṁsi harayo raveḥ //*

The seven horses of the Sun carry his chariot, as mentioned in the *Rgveda*:

*sapta tvā harito rathe vahanti deva sūryā /
śociṣkeśam vicakṣaṇa//
ayuktah sapta śundhyuvaḥ sūrau rathasya naptyah /
tābhīr yatiḥ svayukti-bhiḥ //*

Graha

In the metres **rucirā, prabhāvatī, mañjarī, pṛthvī**, *Gaṅgādāsa* indicates *yati* using the word **graḥa**, which here represents the number **nine (9)**. This corresponds to the nine planets in ancient Indian astronomy: **Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu, and Ketu**. As described in *Bṛhat-parāśara-horāśāstra*:

*atha setā raviś candro maṅgalaś ca budhas tathā /
guruḥ śukraḥ śano rāhuḥ ketuś caite yathākramam //*

The names of these nine planets also appear in the *Sūryasiddhānta* and the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*.

Varṇa

In the metre **citrālekha**, the word **varṇa** is used to indicate *yati*, representing the number **four (4)**. These four are the social classes: **Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra**. The *Rgveda* (10th Maṇḍala, Puruṣa-sūkta) mentions:

*brāhmaṇo asya mukham āśid vāhurājnyaḥ kṛtaḥ /
ūrū tad asya yad vaiśyaḥ padbhyaṁ śūdru ajāyata //*

Similarly, the first chapter of the *Manuśmṛti* states:

*lokānāṁ tu vṛddhyartham mukhabāhūr ūpādataḥ /
brāhmaṇam kṣatriyam vaiśyam śūdrām ca niravartayat //*

Muni

In the metres **lalanā, maṇiguṇanikara, varṇśapatrapatita, cala, surasā, vimba, sragdharā, tanvī, krauñcapadā**, the word **muni** is used to denote *yati*. Here, **muni** represents **seven (7)**, referring to the seven sages: **marīci, bṛhaspati, aṅgiras, atri, pulastya, pulaha, and kratu**. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* states:

*pūrva-bhāge bhagavān marīcir apare sthito vasiṣṭhaḥ smāt/
tasyāṅgirās tato' tris tasyāsannah pulastyāś ca //
pulahaḥ kratur iti bhagavān āsannānukrameṇa pūrvādyāt /
tatra vasiṣṭham munivaram upāśritārundhatī¹
sādhvī //*

Naga

In the metre **mandākrāntā**, the word **naga** indicates *yati*, representing the number **seven (7)**. The seven *nagas* are: **mahendra, malaya, sahya, śuktimān, ṛkṣa, vindhya, and paripatra**. According to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*:

*mahendro malayah sahyāḥ śuktimān ṛkṣa-parvataḥ /
vindhyaś ca pāripatraś ca saptātra kulaparvatāḥ //*

Śruti and Veda

In the metre **bhārākrāntā**, *yati* is indicated using the word **śruti**, and in the metres **śālinī, maṇimālā, madanalalitā, hariṇī, hāriṇī candralekhā, mattamayūra, prabhāvatī**, he uses **veda**. Both words denote the number **four (4)**, corresponding to the four Vedas: **Rk, Yajuś, Sāman, and Atharvan**. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* (first chapter) states:

*jagrāha pāṭhyam rgvedāt sāmabhyo gītam eva ca /
yajurvedād abhinayān rasān ātharvaṇad api //*

Similarly, the *Mahābhārata* (Śānti Parvan) mentions:

*aṅgāni vedāś cātvāro mīmāṁsā nyāyavistaraḥ /
purāṇam dharmaśāstrām ca vidyā hy etāś catur-daśa //*

According to the *Mahābhārata*, the fourteenth of the sciences created by Śaṅkara is the Veda itself. In the second chapter of *Manusmṛti*:

Śrutis tu vedo vijñeyo dharmaśāstras tu vai smṛtiḥ /
te sarvārtheśv amīmāṁsye tābhyaṁ dharmo hi nirvabhau //

Yuga

In the metres **puṭa**, **madhyakṣamā**, **hari**, **cala**, the word *yuga* is used to indicate *yati*, representing **four (4)**. These four *yugas* are: **Satya**, **Trētā**, **Dvāpara**, and **Kali**. The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* states:

kṛtam trētā dvāparaś ca kaliś caiva catur-yugam/
divyair varṣa-sahasrais tu tad dvādaśabhir ucyate //

Similarly, the ninth chapter of the *Manusmṛti* mentions:

kṛtam trētāyugam caiva dvāparam kalir eva ca /

Bhuvana

In Gaṅgādāsa's *Chandomañjarī*, while indicating *yati* in the *haṁsī* metre, he uses the word *bhuvana*. Here, *bhuvana* represents the number fourteen (14). The fourteen *bhuvanas* are: bhu, bhuva, sva, maha, jana, tapas, satya, atala, vitala, sutala, rasātala, talātala, mahātala, and pātāla.

According to the *Vedāntasāra* (by Sadānanda Yogīndra):

etebhyaḥ pañcī-kṛtebhyaḥ bhūtebhyaḥ bhūr bhuvah svar mahar janas tapah satyam
ity etan nāmakānām upary-upuri vidyamānānām, atala-vitala-sutala-rasātala-talātala-
mahātala-pātāla nāmakānām adho adho vidyamānānām lokānām brahmāṇḍasya tad-
antargata-catur-vidha-sthūla-śarīrāṇām annapānādīnām co utpattir bhavati //

Rasa

In the metres *sarak*, *śikharinī*, *mandākrāntā*, *hari*, *kāntā*, *meghavisphurjītā*, *makarandikā*, *śobhā*, *apavāha*, the word *rasa* is used to indicate *yati*. Here, *rasa* represents the number six (6). Although Sanskrit poetics traditionally describes nine *rasas*, Gaṅgādāsa uses it for six: sweet (*madhura*), sour (*amla*), salty (*lavaṇa*), pungent (*kaṭu*), astringent (*kaṣāya*), and bitter (*tikta*).

The *Tarka-saṁgraha* states *rasanā-grāhyo guṇo rasah/ sa ca madhurāmla-lavaṇa-kaṭu-kaṣāya-tikta-bhedāt ṣaḍvidhah/*

Īśu, Śara, Vāṇa

- *īśu* is used in mattākrīḍa, kraunca-padā metres.
- *śara* is used in asambadhā, mañjarī, elā, phulladāma, vimba, krauñca-padā, apavāha metres.
- *vāṇa* is used in vaiśvadevī, hariṇaplutā, haranarttana metres.

These words indicate the number five (5). The five *vāṇas* are: aravinda, aśoka, cūta, navamallikā, and nīlotpala.

According to *Amarakosha*:

*aravindam aśokam ca cūtam ca nava-mallikā /
nīlotpalam ca pañcaite pañca-vāṇasya sāyakāḥ //*

Guhavaktra

In the maṇimālā metre, the word *guhavaktra* indicates yati.

- *guha* = Karttikeya
- *vaktra* = face

Thus, it represents the face of Karttikeya, who is known as Śaḍānan (six-faced), indicating the number six (6). *Amarakośa* states:

*kārttikeyo mahāsenah śarajanmā śaḍānanah /
pārvatīnandaḥ skandah senanīr agnibhūr guhaḥ //*

Svara

In the metres aparājītā, nāndimukha, candrakāntā, upamalinī, ṛṣabhagajavilasita, cala, sursā, apavāha, the word *svara* is used. It represents seven (7) musical notes: niṣāda, ṛṣabha, gāndhāra, ṣaḍja, madhyama, dhaivata, pañcama. According to *Amarakośa* (Nāṭya section):

*niṣādarṣabha-gāndhāra-ṣaḍja-madhyama-dhaivatāḥ /
pañcamaś cety amī sapta tantrī-kanṭhotthitāḥ svarāḥ //*

In the seventh chapter on Jāti in *Saṅgītaratnākara*, it is stated:

*śuddhāḥ syur jātayaḥ sapta tāḥ ṣadjādi svarābhidhāḥ/
ṣadjyārṣabhī ca gāndhārī madhyamā pañcamī tathāḥ/
dhaivatī cātha naiṣādī śuddhātālākṣma kathyate//*

Randhra

In the mattamayūra metre, the word *randhra* is used. It can represent either 0 or 9, but here it denotes nine (9). These nine are: Two nostrils, two ears, two eyes, mouth, navel, anus. *Bhāvaprakāśa* states:

*netre avarā nāsānāṁ dve dve randhre prakīrtite /
mukha-mehana-pāyunā mamaikāṁ randhram uccyate //*

Rtu

In the metres candrikā, candrarekhā, madanalalitā, kokilaka, hariṇī, kusumitalatāvelliṭā, sārdūlalalita, sudhā, siṁhavisphurjītā, meghavisphurjītā, kutaṭagati, the word *ṛtu* indicates yati, representing six (6) seasons: grīṣma, varṣā, śarad, hemanta, śīta, and vasanta. Bhāvaprakāśa states:

*śiśirāḥ puṣpasamayo grīṣmāṁ varṣā śarad vimāḥ/
māghādi-māsa-yugmaiḥ syur ṛtavāḥ ṣaṭ kramād amī //*

Bhūta

In kusumitalatavelliṭā, siṁhavisphurjītā, tanvī, the word *bhūta* represents five (5): kṣiti, ap, tejas, marut, vyoma. Garuḍa Purāṇa states:

*tasmād buddhir manas tasmāt tataḥ kham pavanas tataḥ/
tasmāt tejas tatas tvāpas tato bhūmis tato'bhavat //*

Artha

In kesara metre, *artha* denotes the four aims of life (puruṣārthas): dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa. Kūrma Purāṇa states:

*dharmaṁ samjāyate mokṣo hy arthāt kāmo'bhijāyate /
evaṁ sādhana-sādhyatvāṁ catur-vidhye pradarśitam //*

*ya evaṁ veda dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣasya mānavāḥ /
māhātmyāṁ cānūtiṣṭhata sa cānāntyāya kalpyate //*

Īśa, Śiva, Rudra

- *īśa* in bhujāṅgavijṛmbhita metre
- *śiva* in nandana metre
- *rudra* in śikharinī metre

These words all represent eleven (11) numbers, referring to the eleven rudras: ajaikapāṭ, aḥirbudhna, virupākṣa, rāivata, hara, bahuṛūpa, surarāja-tryambaka, sāvitra, jayanta, piṇākī, aparājita. Matsya Purāṇa states:

*ajaikapāda aḥirbudhno virupākṣo'tha rāivataḥ /
haraś ca bahu-rūpaś ca tryambakaś ca sureśvaraḥ //*

*sāvitryāś ca jayantaś ca piṇākī cāparājitaḥ /
ete rūdrāḥ sam-ākhyātā ekādaśa gaṇeśvaraḥ //*

Garuḍa Purāṇa states:

*ajaikapād ahirbudhnyas tvaṣṭā rudraś ca vīryavān /
tvaṣṭuś cāpy ātmajah putro viśvarūpo mahātapāḥ //*

*haraś ca bahuṛupaś ca tryambakaś cāparājitaḥ /
vṛṣakapiś ca śāmbhuś ca kapardī raivataś tathā //*

*mṛga-vyādhaś ca śarvaś ca kapālī ca mahāmune /
ekādaśaite kathitā rudrās tribhuvaneśvarāḥ //*

Vasu

In the metres puṭa, pramadā, kumārī, maṇiguṇanikara, pr̥thvī, lālasā, haṁsī, mattakrīḍā, bhujaṅgavijṛmbhita, supavitra, krauñcapadā, *vasu* indicates eight (8). These are: āpa, dhruva, soma, dhara, anila, anala, pratyuṣa and prabhāṣa. Matsya Purāṇa states:

*āpo dhruvaś ca somaś ca dharaś caivānilo'nalaḥ /
pratyuṣaś ca prabhāṣaś ca vasavo'ṣṭau prakīrtitāḥ //*

Garuḍa Purāṇa also confirms:

*āpo dhruvaś ca somaś ca dharś caivānilo'nalaḥ /
pratyuṣaś ca prabhāṣaś ca vasavo nāmābhiḥ smṛtāḥ //*

Therefore, when the bhūta-saṁkhyās (symbolic numerals) in Sanskrit literature are examined in terms of their semantic and cultural significance, it becomes evident that each possesses an underlying mythological or scriptural rationale. In view of the constraints of space, only a concise account of certain representative bhūta-saṁkhyās—namely *aṅga* or *aṅgānta*, *phaṇin*, *bhujaga* and *bhogin*, *āśā* or *dik*, *māsa*, and *karaṇa*—is presented here by way of conclusion.

The term *aṅga* or *aṅgānta* has been interpreted by Gaṅgādāsa as denoting the number seven (7). The employment of this term is attested primarily in the context of indicating yati (metrical pause) within the *candrālekha* metre.

The expressions *phaṇin*, *bhujaga*, and *bhogin* are synonymous, all signifying “serpent,” and they conventionally represent the number eight (8). This numerical correspondence is rooted in Purāṇic tradition, according to which the eight serpents (*aṣṭa-sarpa*) are named Śeṣa (Ananta), Vāsuki, Takṣaka, Kāliya, Padma, Karkoṭaka, Piṅgala, and Kulika. In prosodic usage, the word *phaṇin* occurs in the *māhsragdharā* metre, *bhujaga* in the *lālitya* metre, and *bhogin* in the *mālinī* metre—all serving to indicate the placement of yati.

The term *āśā*, in the present context, should be understood in its lexicographical sense of *dik* (“direction”), both words symbolizing the number ten (10). The ten directions (*daśa dik*)—east, west, north, south, Īśāna (northeast), Vāyu (northwest), Agni (southeast), Nairṛta (southwest), upward, and downward—are well established in classical cosmography. The word *āśā* is employed in the *prahasinī* and *mattakrīḍā* metres, while *dik* appears in the *pr̥thvī*,

bhadraka, kuṭila, and vamśapatrapatita metres, each indicating the locus of yati within the respective metrical structure.

The word *māsa* ("month") naturally signifies the number twelve (12), corresponding to the twelve divisions of the solar year. Gaṅgādāsa employs *māsa* in the śārdūla metre to denote the yati-position. The twelve months are: vaiśākha, jyaiṣṭha, āṣāḍha, śrāvaṇa, bhādra, āśvina, kārtika, agrahāyaṇa, pauṣa, māgha, phālguna, and caitra.

Finally, the term *karaṇa* symbolizes the number five (5). Its occurrence in the surasā metre serves, once again, to mark the point of yati.

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