

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 (Ṛk, Yajus, Sāman, and Atharvan) and seven *lokas* (worlds such as bhū, bhuva, sva, etc.).

Key Words : Bhūta-saṁkhyā, Śabda-saṁkhyā, Saṁkhyā, 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 *chandaḥ 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 Chanda'nuśāsana (12th century CE) hold significant positions. Within this tradition, Gaṅgādāsa's Chandomañjarī (15th century CE) became particularly popular. Gaṅgādāsa divides metre into two principal categories — vṛtta and jāti — as stated: *tac ca vṛttaṁ jātir iti dvidhā*² ("Metre is of two kinds — vṛtta and jāti").

¹ Pāṇinīyaśikṣā

² Chandomañjarī by Gaṅgādāsa (CM)

The *ṛtta* chandas is that in which the metrical structure is determined by the count of syllables (akṣaras) — *ṛttam akṣara-samkhyātam*³. A syllable (akṣara) may be a pure vowel, a vowel with a consonant, or a vowel with an anusvāra — *savyañjanaḥ sānusvāraḥ śuddho vāpi svarō'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 *ṛtta* metres are further classified into three types — *samavṛtta*, *ardhasamavṛtta*, and *viṣamavṛtta* — as defined: *samam arddha-samam ṛttam 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 — *samam sama-catuṣ-pādam bhavaty ardha-samam punaḥ*⁷. Examples include *indravajrā*, *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-pādam 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 *śrak chandas* and *maṇiguṇanikara chandas* contain fifteen syllables and follow the same gaṇa sequence (na na na na sa). Yet, in *śrak chandas*, the yati occurs after the sixth and ninth syllables, whereas in *maṇiguṇanikara 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 aśokamañjarī 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-saṁkhyā* or *śabda-saṁkhyā*, i.e., symbolic words used to represent numbers. The use of *bhūta-saṁkhyā* is an ancient Indian tradition and can be traced across various disciplines — astronomy (jyotiḥśāstra), mathematics (gaṇita), manuscriptology (puṭhi-vidyā), epigraphy (śilālekhā), the reckoning of time in Vedic rituals, and even in *vāstuśāstra* (architecture).

Since antiquity, each *bhūta-saṁkhyā* 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-saṁkhyā*s or *śabda-saṁkhyā*s 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-saṁkhyā* or *śabda-saṁkhyā* expressions and to analyze the method of indicating *yati* as found in *Chandomañjarī*.

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

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

Although the concept of *yati* does occur within the *jāti* metres, **no *bhūta-saṁkhyā* or *śabda-saṁkhyā*** is used there to indicate it. Instead, Gaṅgādāsa merely specifies **after which *gaṇa*** 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 /
caramē’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 *gaṇa*** and again **before the first laghu syllable in the seventh *gaṇa***, and so on.

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

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

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-saṁkhyā* (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-saṁkhyā* is applied in these cases. Conversely, for the numbers **four** through **twelve**, and for **fourteen**, *bhūta-saṁkhyā* 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-saṁkhyā* numbers.

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

This table illustrates the systematic use of *bhūta-saṁkhyā* 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, guhvaktra, rasa, ṣaṣ
7	aṅga or aṅgānta, aśva, turaga, naga, muni, loka, svara, haya, sapta
8	karin, gaja, phaṇin, bhūjaga, bhogiṇ, vasu, aṣṭan
9	graha, randhra, nava
10	āśā, dik, daśa
11	īśa, rudra, śiva
12	ina, dīnēśa, māsa, sūrya, dvādaśa
14	bhuvana

In *Gaṅgādāsa's Chandomaṇjarī*, 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: *Harikathāsāraṁ* and *Manucaritra* among others
2. **Dhurjati** – Works: *Śrīkalahastīśvaramāhatmyam*, *Śrīkalahastīśvaraśatakamu*

3. **Nandi Thimmana or Mukku Thimmana** – Works: *Pārijātapaharaṇamu*, *Bharatakathāmañjarī*, *Vānivilāsamu*
4. **Mādayyagari 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*, *Udbhaṭatarādhyā-caritam*
7. **Rāmarājabhūṣaṇudu** – Works: *Kāvyalaṁkāra-saṁgrahamu*, *Vasucaritramu*, *Hariścandra-Nalopākhyānamu*, *Narasabhupaliyam*
8. **Piṅgali Sūrana** – Works: *Prabavati Pradyumna*, *Rāghava Pāṇḍavīyam*, *Kalā Pūrṇadaya*

(The names of these eight Telugu 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**, **citrālekḥā**, **kesara**, **siṁhavisphurjitā**, **śārdūlavikrīḍita**, **suvadanā**, **śobhā**, **bhujaṅgavijṛmbhita**, he employs the word **aśva**, and in the metres **phulladāma**, **vimba**, **samudratatā**, **mahāśragdharā**, he uses **turaga**. Similarly, for the metres **hariṇī**, **kokilaka**, **bhārakrāntā**, **hari**, **kāntā**, **nandana**, **phulladāma**, **mahāśragdharā**, 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 brhatyusṇig jāgatī triṣṭubh eva ca /
anuṣṭup paṅktir 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//
ayuktaḥ sapta śundhyuvaḥ sūrau rathasya naptyaḥ /
tābhir yatīḥ svayukti-bhiḥ //*

Graha

In the metres **rucirā**, **prabhāvatī**, **mañjarī**, **pṛthvī**, *Gaṅgādāsa* indicates *yati* using the word **graha**, 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 *Brhat-parāśara-horāśāstra*:

*atha seṭā 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 *Brhatsaṁhitā*.

Varṇa

In the metre **citralekhā**, 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 *R̥gveda* (10th Maṇḍala, Puruṣa-sūkta) mentions:

*brāhmaṇo asya mukham āsīd vāhurājnyaḥ kṛtaḥ /
ūrū tad asya yad vaiśyaḥ padbhyāṁ śūdro ajāyata //*

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

*lokānāṁ tu vṛddhyartham mukhabāhūr ūpadataḥ /
brāhmaṇaṁ kṣatriyaṁ vaiśyaṁ śūdraṁ ca niravartayat //*

Muni

In the metres **lalanā, maṇiguṇanikara, vaṁśapatrapatita, 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 vasiṣṭho'smāt/
tasyāṅgirās tato'tris tasyāsanṇaḥ pulastyaś ca //
pulahaḥ kratuḥ iti bhagavān āsannānukrameṇa pūrvādyāt /
tatra vasiṣṭhaṁ munivaram upāśritārundhatī
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 malayaḥ sahyaḥ 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: **Ṛk, Yajuṣ, Sāman, and Atharvan**. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* (first chapter) states:

*jagrāha pāṭhyam ṛgvedāt sāmabhyo gītā eva ca /
yajurvedād abhinayān rasān ātharvaṇad api //*

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

*aṅgāni vedāś cātvāro mīmāṁsā nyāyavistarāḥ /
purāṇaṁ dharmasāstraṁ 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 dharmasāstras tu vai smṛtiḥv /
te sarvārtheṣv amīmāṁsyē tābhyāṁ 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:

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

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

kṛtaṁ 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, bhuvā, 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 bhuvāḥ svar mahar janas tapaḥ 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 **srak**, **śikharinī**, **mandākrāntā**, **hari**, **kāntā**, **meghavisphurjitā**, **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 rasaḥ/ sa ca madhurāmla-lavaṇa-kaṭu-kaṣāya-tikta-bhedāt ṣaḍvidhaḥ/*

T̥ṣu, Śara, Vāṇa

- *t̥ṣu* 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 aśokaṁ ca cūtaṁ 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 Ṣaḍānan (six-faced), indicating the number six (6). Amarakośa states:

*kārttikeyo mahāsenah śarajanmā ṣaḍānanah /
pārvatīnandah skandah senanīr agnibhūr guhah //*

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-kaṇṭhotthitāḥ svarāḥ //*

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

*śuddhāḥ syur jātayaḥ sapta tāḥ ṣaḍjādi svarābhīdhāḥ/
ṣaḍjyārṣabhī ca gāndhārī madhyamā pañcamī tathā/
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 nāsānām dve dve randhre prakīrtite /
mukha-mehana-pāyunā mamaikam randhram uccyate //*

Rtu

In the metres candrikā, candrarekhā, madanalalitā, kokilaka, hariṇī, kusumitalatāvellitā, śārdūlalalita, sudhā, śimhavisphurjitā, meghavisphurjitā, kuṭajagati, the word *rtu* indicates yati, representing six (6) seasons: grīṣma, varṣā, śarad, hemanta, śīta, and vasanta. Bhāvaprakāśa states:

*śīśiraḥ puṣpasamayo grīṣmaṁ varṣā śarad vimāḥ /
māghādi-māsa-yugmaiḥ syur ṛtavaḥ ṣaṭ kramād amī //*

Bhūta

In kusumitalatavellitā, śimhavisphurjitā, 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:

*dharmāt samjāyate mokṣo hy arthāt kāmo'bhijāyate /
evaṁ sādhana-sādhyatvaṁ catur-vidhye pradarśitam //*

*ya evaṁ veda dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣasya mānavaḥ /
māhātmyaṁ cānutiṣṭhata sa cānantyāya kalpyate //*

Īśa, Śiva, Rudra

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

These words all represent eleven (11) numbers, referring to the eleven rudras: ajaikapāt, ahirbudhna, virupākṣa, raivata, hara, baurūpa, surarāja-tryambaka, sāvitra, jayanta, pinākī, aparājita. Matsya Purāṇa states:

*ajaikapāda ahirbudhno virupākṣo'tha raivataḥ /
haraś ca bahu-rūpaś ca tryambakaś ca sureśvaraḥ //*

*sāvitryaś ca jayantaś ca pinākī cāparājitaḥ /
ete rudrāḥ sam-ākhyātā ekādaśa gaṇeśvaraḥ //*

Garuḍa Purāṇa states:

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

*haraś ca bahurūpaś 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, pṛthvī, lālasā, haṁsī, mattakrīḍā, bhujāṅgavijṛmbhita, supavitra, krauñcapadā, *vasu* indicates eight (8). These are: āpa, dhruva, soma, dhara, anila, anala, pratyūṣa and prabhāṣa. Matsya Purāṇa states:

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

Garuḍa Purāṇa also confirms:

*āpo dhruvaś ca somaś ca dharś caivānilo'nalaḥ /
pratyūṣaś 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 candrālekhā 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 mahāśragdharā 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 pṛthvī,

bhadraka, kuṭila, and vaṃśapatrapatita 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, agraḥāyana, 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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