

Materials for a Proposal to encode the Devanāgarī headstroke in the BMP of the Unicode Standard

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– A8FA DEVANAGARI EMPTY HEADSTROKE = shuunya shirorekhaa

The Devanāgarī empty headstroke is used in manuscripts copied from deteriorated originals to indicate small lacunae, that is, illegible gaps in the original due to obliteration of the text or destruction of the material on which it was written. As many headstrokes are used as orthographic syllables are estimated to have occupied the illegible space. Many Devanāgarī fonts include such a character, for example, Vedic font 224, which is used for input of the examples below. Figure 1 shows four examples, in lines 1, 4, 5, and 10 of the verso of folio 157 [Scharf photocopy p. 161 top] of the manuscript labelled by Macdonell (1886) as P1. The text, of which the manuscript is one of many witnesses, is Ṣaḍguruṣiṣya's *Vedārthadīpikā* commentary on *R̥gveda* 10.95 concerning the dialogue between Purūravas and Urvaśī. The transcription of the examples in Devanāgarī (Vedic font), and Roman together with the corresponding text of Vijayapala's (1985) edition of the text follow. In Roman, the DEVANAGARI EMPTY HEADSTROKE is represented by an underscore.

Note that I have surrounded the headstroke with spaces so that it is distinct from preceding and following characters and there are discrete headstrokes in sequence in examples 3-4, not simply a continuous headstroke. Manuscripts typically make the headstroke for each orthographic syllable (*akṣara*) as a separate unit. Modern printed and digital Devanāgarī runs the headstroke together in a continuous line. If we followed the general pattern of modern Devanāgarī, we'd run these empty headstrokes together. However, it seems to me it is essential to the character to be discrete and countable so that the reader knows how many missing characters are represented by counting the number of discrete headstrokes. Therefore, the headstroke character should be made short, i.e. non-joining when placed in sequence with itself or with any other character that has a headstroke included.

A proper graphic, character properties, etc. will be supplied by Michael Everson in N3488.

Example 1

Ms. P1, line 1 प्राप्ष – ते । उमा सस्त्रीत्वस्य स्त्रीत्वकाले
prāptaṣa_te. umā sastrītvasya strītvakāle

Vijayapala प्राप्षण्मासिकस्त्रीत्वकाले
prāptaṣaṇmāsikastrītvakāle

Example 2

Ms. P1, line 4 स्वप्रासादे वरोद्धुं – सयितुन्मैच्छतीर्दुरासां कृतवान् ।
svaprāsāde varoddhūṃ _sayitunmaicchattīrdurāsāṃ kṛtavān.

Vijayapala स्वप्रासादेऽवरोद्धुं वासयितुमिच्छन् दुराशां कृतवान् ।

svaprāsāde'varoddhum vāsaitumicchā durāsām kṛtavān.

Example 3

Ms. P1, line 5 प्रत्या - - षा - कृतवती

praty_ _ṣā_ kṛtavatī

Vijayapala प्रत्याचष्टे प्रत्याख्यानं कृतवती

pratyācaṣṭe pratyākhyānaṁ kṛtavatī

Example 4

Ms. P1, line 10 चलितौ च तदुक्ते ज्यू कुम्भे निहित - - कौ

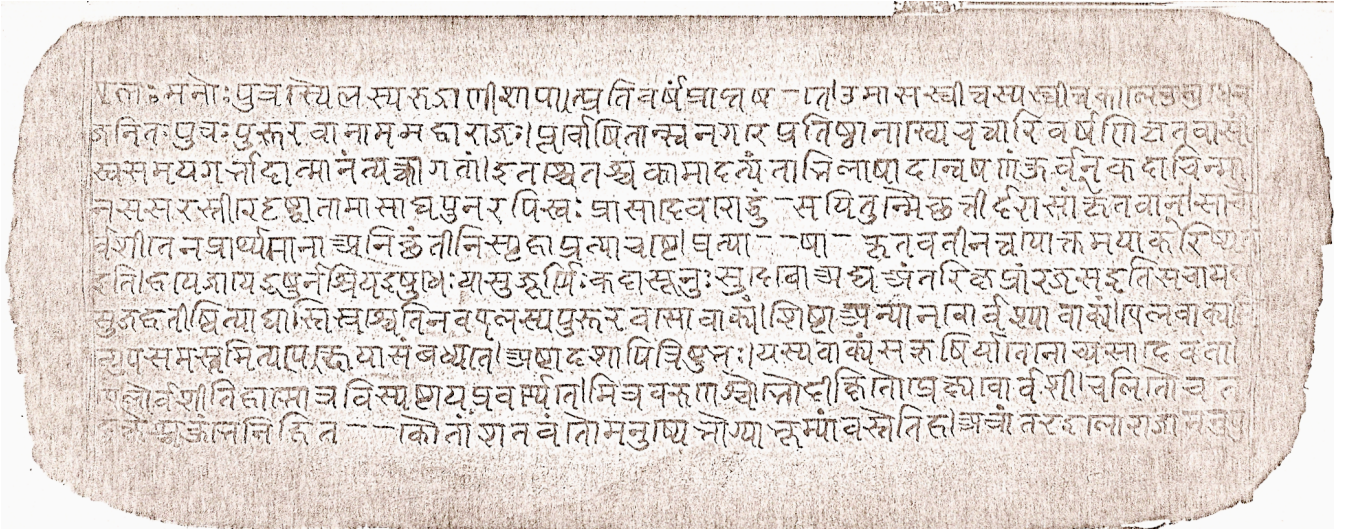
calitau ca tadukte jyū kumbhe nihita_ _kau

Vijayapala चलचितौ ततश्चैतौ कुम्भे निहित शुक्रकौ ।

calacittau tataścaitau kumbhe nihita śukrakau.

Figure 1

A manuscript page of Ṣaḍguruṣiṣya's *Vedārthadīpikā* showing the DEVANAGARI EMPTY HEADSTROKE.



Bibliography

Macdonell, Arthur Anthony, ed. 1886. *Kātyāyana's Sarvānukramaṇī of the R̥gveda with extracts from Ṣaḍguruṣiṣya's commentary entitled Vedārthadīpikā*. Anecdota Oxoniensia, Aryan Series, vol. 1, part 4. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Vijayapāla, ed. 1985. *Kātyāyanīya ā ṛksarvānukramaṇī (Ṣaḍguruṣiṣya ā viracitayā kṛtsnavṛṭṭiyā sahitā)*. Calcutta: Sāvitrīdevī Bāgaḍiyā Trust.