Chandonuśāsana of Vāgbhaṭa: An Unpublished Jain Text on Prosody

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Chandas-śāstra, the science of prosody, is one of the fields to which Jain authors have made significant contributions. Texts such as the Chandonuśāsana of Hemacandra Sūri from the 12th century CE and the Kavidarpaṇa by an unknown Jain author from the 13 century CE have established themselves as milestones in the study of prosody. That said, it must be noted that many more original works, as well as commentaries on other well-known Jain and non-Jain texts, remain in manuscript form, still awaiting publication. One such text is the Chandonuśāsana by Vāgbhaṭa,¹ a son of Nemikumāra who lived around 1300 CE. The text is accompanied by his own commentary (svopajña ṭīkā) known as the Vivaraṇa. Two manuscripts of this text are available, one of which is very modern and merely a copy of the older one. This article aims to introduce the treatise to the scholarly community. The main points covered include descriptions of the two available manuscripts, detailed examination of the text and information about its author, Vāgbhata.

Manuscript A

This manuscript is housed in the Hemacandrācārya Jaina Bhāṇdāra in, Patan, Gujarat, Cat.No. 110-2. It contains two works: the first is *Pravacana Sandoha*, and the second is *Chandonuśāsana*. It was photocopied by Muni Jambū Vijaya and is available in his collection of manuscripts, although some folios are missing from the photocopy. However, these folios remain intact in the original collection.

The manuscript comprises 21 palm leaves, some of which are damaged at the corners, resulting in the loss of a few letters. Each leaf contains 4 or 5 lines on each side, with each line consisting of 45 to 48 letters. The exact dimensions of the folios are not known. The scribe did not indicate the date of writing; however, based on the materials and writing style, it can be inferred that the manuscript was likely written in the second half of the fourteenth century or the fifteenth century AD.

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¹ Vāgbhaṭa's *Chandonuśāsana* is an important text on prosody that has not yet been published. Having understood the necessity of publishing this text, the Shrutabhavan Research Center, Pune, has undertaken the project of preparing a critical edition to ensure that this treasure of knowledge is accessible to future generations.

Manuscript B

This manuscript is available on the website of the L.D. Institute in Ahmedabad. It is a rather modern manuscript, as the scribe notes in its colophon that it was written in the year 1996 of the Vikrama era (1939/40 CE). The manuscript contains 12 folios, with each page featuring around 13 lines, and each line consists of approximately 56 letters. The handwriting is legible. This manuscript is filled with errors, indicating that the scribe was likely unaware of the *Chandas-śāstra*. There is substantial evidence to suggest that it is a copy of the manuscript A, which we have already discussed. Every confusing letter from the manuscript A is incorrectly transcribed in the manuscript B. All the mistakes from the manuscript A have been copied directly into the manuscript B, and any letters missing from the broken corners of the manuscript A are represented by dashes (-) in the manuscript B. These points confirm that the manuscript B was indeed copied from the manuscript A.

Notably, in some instances, missing letters from the manuscript A are not indicated by dashes but are instead filled in with letters to form meaningful words. This suggests that some of the broken and now-missing parts of the manuscript A were still accessible at the time manuscript B was written in V. S. 1996. For this reason, the manuscript B holds some utility despite its numerous errors.

About the Text

The main text of the *Chandonuśāsana* is written in $s\bar{u}tra$ format, with all the definitions of various meters provided in concise aphorisms. To elaborate on these aphorisms, Vāgbhaṭa offers a commentary. The commentary consists of an explanation of the $s\bar{u}tras$, along with illustrative verses demonstrating the specific meters.

Where the $s\bar{u}tras$ are straightforward, Vāgbhaṭa omits the explanation and provides only an exemplary verse. Some of these illustrative verses are composed by Vāgbhaṭa himself, while others are quoted from earlier works.

The author explains the etymology of the title in the very first verse of the *Chandonuśāsana*: *Chandasām anuśāsanaṃ Chandonuśāsanam*. ² This suggests that he intends to compose a *śāstra* to regulate and discipline the meters. In the same verse, he pays homage to the first *tīrthaṅkara*, Ādinātha, to ensure an auspicious beginning for the text. He also mentions his father's name, Nemikumāra, in this verse. In the first verse of his commentary,

² vibhuṃ nābheyam-ānamya chandasām-anuśāsanam । śrī-man-nemikumarasyātmajo 'haṃ vacmi vāgbhaṭaḥ ॥ Chandonu.1.1.

Vāgbhaṭa again invokes the first $t\bar{t}rthankara$ and explicitly states that he himself is the author of the commentary.³

The text consists of five chapters: *Saṃjñādhyāya*, *Samavṛttādhyāya*, *Ardhasamavṛttādhyāya*, *Viṣamavṛttādhyāya*, and *Mātrācandodhyāya*, containing 18, 140, 12, 7, and 9 *sūtras*, respectively.

In the first chapter, *Saṃjñādhyāya*, Vāgbhaṭa explains technical meanings attributed to general terms such as *laghu*, *guru*, and *yati* in the context of prosody, along with the rules governing the arrangement of *yati* in a verse. This chapter consists of 18 *sūtras*.

The second chapter, Samavrttadhyaya, defines meters with four quarters that follow identical syllabic arrangements of laghu and guru. This chapter is divided into two sections: Jati-prakaraṇa and Daṇḍaka-prakaraṇa. It begins with the smallest meter from the Ukta-jati, called $Śr\bar{\imath}$, which consists of a single guru syllable in each quarter. It concludes with the Sudhakalaśa meter, belonging to the Utkrti-jati, which has 26 syllables in every quarter. Vāgbhaṭa further explains that all samavrttas (except those from the Śeṣa-jati) with more than 26 syllables are classified as daṇḍakas. He then provides examples of daṇḍakas such as Pracita, Pannaga, and Siṇhavikriḍa. This is the longest chapter, with 140 $s\bar{\imath}tras$.

The third chapter, *Ardhasamavṛttādhyāya*, covers the *ardhasamavṛttas*, where the first half and the second half of the verse follow different syllabic arrangements, but the internal quarters maintain identical patterns. This chapter contains 12 *sūtras*.

The fourth chapter, *Viśamavṛttādhyāya*, defines meters with different syllabic arrangements in each of the four quarters. With only 7 *sūtras*, this is the shortest chapter of the text.

The final chapter, $M\bar{a}tr\bar{a}chandodhy\bar{a}ya$, deals with $m\bar{a}tr\bar{a}$ meters, which do not require a specific syllabic arrangement but instead focus on the total number of $m\bar{a}tr\bar{a}s$. This chapter contains 9 $s\bar{u}tras$.

This work draws influence from the *Vṛṭṭaratnākara* of Kedāra Bhaṭṭa and the *Chandonuśāsana* of Hemacandra Sūri. The alternative names of meters mentioned in Vāgbhaṭa's commentary are directly borrowed from Hemacandra's commentary on the *Chandonuśāsana*.⁵

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³ praṇipatya prabhuṃ nābhi-sambhavaṃ bhakti-nirbharaḥ ı vivṛṇomi svayam ahaṃ nijaṃ chando 'nuśāsanam ॥ Chandonu. Comm. 0.1.

⁴ yat-kiñcid dṛśyate chandaḥ ṣaḍviṃśaty-akṣarādhikam | śeṣa-jātyādikaṃ muktvā tat-sarvaṃ daṇḍakaṃ viduḥ || Chandonu. 2.132.

⁵ Padmam-ityeke Chandonu. 2.5, Puspam-iti kaścit | Chandonu. 2.6.

Even so, Vāgbhaṭa names three meters slightly differently compared to Hemacandra. Hemacandra's *Maṇiguṇanikara* becomes *Guṇamaṇinikara* in Vāgbhaṭa's work. Similarly, *Prabhadraka* is renamed *Bhadraka*, and *Meghamālā* becomes *Meghāvalī*.

The meter *Candrik*ā is defined differently by Vāgbhaṭa than by Hemacandra. Hemacandra provides the *sūtra: nau ryau gaścandrikā* (2.205). However, Vāgbhaṭa replaces the *ya-gaṇa* with the *ja-gaṇa* and writes: *nanarajagaṇā guruśca candrikā* (2.83). Vāgbhaṭa composed the illustrative verse for this meter himself, but the second quarter of this verse exhibits *vṛttabhaṅga* (metrical irregularity) with one extra syllable.

Similar metrical faults can be found in a few other verses. It is quite unusual to encounter faulty meters in a text specifically dedicated to explaining meters. However, it is unclear whether these errors are original or the result of scribal mistakes. Apart from these few verses, Vāgbhata's compositions demonstrate that he was an excellent poet.

About the Author

There have been many śāstrakāras and mahākavis named Vāgbhaṭa in India since ancient times. The earliest among them was the renowned Āyurvedācārya, the author of the Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya-saṃhitā, who is considered to have lived in the 6th century CE in North India. He was a Buddhist, as accepted by scholars.⁶

At least four individuals named Vāgbhaṭa, who followed Jainism and wrote books, are known. The first was Vāgbhaṭa, who composed a *mahākāvya* titled *Neminirvāṇa*, likely in the 11th century CE. The second was a minister to the Chaulukya king Siddharāja Jayasiṃha (c. 1091 to 1143 CE), a contemporary of Hemacandra, and the author of the *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*. He lived in *Aṇahilla Pātaṇa* in the Gujarat region in the early 12th century CE. The third Vāgbhaṭa, who lived shortly after the second, served as a minister to the Chaulukya king Kumārapāla (ruled from 1143 to 1172 CE). The fourth Vāgbhaṭa, the author of the present work, provides a detailed introduction to himself in his writings. He likely lived in modern-day Bharuch, Gujarat, in the last quarter of the 13th century CE.

Considerable confusion exists among scholars regarding these individuals with the same name. Velankar⁷ and Chatterjee⁸ identify Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Neminirvāṇa*, with the author of *Vāgbhatālaṅkāra*. Premi⁹ does not support this view, mentioning them as different

⁶ Premi 1942: 483.

⁷ Ibid., p. 218.

⁸ Ibid., p. 263.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 483-486.

individuals. There are valid reasons to accept them as distinct persons. The author of *Neminirvāṇa* was a Digambara, as he mentions *tīrthaṅkara* Mallinātha as male, ¹⁰ whereas the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* was a Śvetāmbara, as *Prabhāvakacarita* mentions that he had established a statue of Mahāvīra by the hands of a Śvetāmbara *ācārya* named Vādi Devasūri (Vādideva). ¹² Furthermore, the father of the author of *Neminirvāṇa* was named Chāhaḍa and he lived in *Ahicchatrpura*, ¹³ while the father of the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* was Soma and he lived in *Anahilla Pātana*. ¹⁴

Chatterjee argues that at least six verses from *Neminirvāṇa* are quoted in *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* without acknowledging the authorship, implying the same author wrote both works. However, this reasoning is weak. The author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* frequently quotes from various other texts without citing their authors. The only thing that Chatterjee's observation regarding quotations confirms is that the author of *Neminirvāṇa* existed before the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*. Chatterjee also speculates that Vāgbhaṭa, initially a *Digambara*, might have converted to the *Śvetāmbara* sect under the influence of luminaries at Siddharāja Jayasiṃha's court. Regarding the differing names of their fathers, Chatterjee suggests Chāhaḍa and Soma might refer to the same person. These arguments lack authentic evidence and seem speculative. Thus, it is far-fetched to equate the authors of *Neminirvāṇa* and *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*. Since Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*, was a contemporary of Siddharāja Jayasiṃha, he can be safely considered to have belonged to the first half of the 12th century CE, and Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Neminirvāṇa*, being his predecessor as proven so far, can be safely considered to have belonged to the 11th century CE.

Another point of confusion can be mistaking Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* who served Siddharāja Jayasiṃha, for a minister of Kumārapāla. This confusion is understandable, as both lived during similar periods at same place and served Chaulukya kings. However, clear evidence differentiates them. The father of the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* was

¹⁰ tapaḥ kuṭhāra-kṣata-karmavallir-mallirjino vaḥ śriyām-ātanotu । kuroḥ sutasyāpi na yasya jātaṃ duḥśāsanattvaṃ bhuvaneśvarasya ∥ NemiNi. 1.19.

¹¹ PrabhāC. 21.67-73.

¹² JPD ID 461.

¹³ Premi 1942: 483.

¹⁴ siri-bāhada-tti tanao āsi buho tassa somassa | Vāgbha. 4.147.

¹⁵ Chatterjee 1984: 263.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 264.

Soma, while Kumārapāla's minister's father was Udayana. Shah¹¹ mentions that some scholars equate Soma and Udayana, but he provides no evidence or citations. The author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* praises Siddharāja Jayasiṃha extensively but does not mention Kumārapāla, indicating he did not serve the later. Many Sanskrit chronicles written by Jain ascetics, such as *Prabhāvakacarita* by Prabhācandra, glorify the reign of Kumārapāla. These chronicles also provide detailed accounts of Udayana but never indicate that he was ever referred to as Soma at any point in his life. They also mention Vāgbhaṭa, Kumārapāla's minister, but describe him as a temple builder rather than an author. These differences affirm that the two Vāgbhaṭas were distinct individuals. Johannes Klatt appropriately lists them as separate entries in his catalogue.¹9

Similarly, Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*, should not be confused with the Vāgbhaṭa who authored *Kāvyānuśāsana* and *Chandonuśāsana*. The later provides sufficient biographical details in his writings to establish himself as distinct. While the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* was the son of Soma and a minister to Siddharāja Jayasiṃha, the author of *Kāvyānuśāsana* and *Chandonuśāsana* was the son of Nemikumāra. He also mentions names of his grandparents and uncle but makes no reference to Siddharāja Jayasiṃha. Moreover, he refers to the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* in his *Kāvyānuśāsana* while discussing the concept of *kāvyāguṇas* and shows difference with his opinion.²⁰ It proves that they were distinct individuals. A gap of more than 150 years separates these two Vāgbhaṭas.

Johannes Klatt's catalogue is a valuable resource for studies in Jaina Prosopography, but it is very old and his sources cannot be relied upon completely. There are some discrepancies in the entries related to Vāgbhaṭa in this book. In the entry for 'Rśabhadevacaritam', 21 Klatt mentions that Vāgbhaṭa wrote this text in V.S. 1180. As a matter of fact, this date corresponds to the author of Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra. The Vāgbhaṭa who authored Rśabhadevacaritam is the same who wrote Kāvyānuśāsana and Chandonuśāsana, and he lived around 1300 CE, as will be shown later in this article. A similar error can be found under the entry for 'Neminirvāṇa', 22 where Vāgbhaṭa, the author of Kāvyānuśāsana, is wrongly mentioned to have lived between V.S. 1150 and V.S. 1199. Similarly, under the entry for

¹⁸ Shah 1993: 105.

¹⁹ Klatt 2016: 754.

²⁰ iti daṇḍi-vāmana-vāgbhaṭādi-praṇītā daśa kāvya-guṇāḥ. vayaṃ tu ... trīneva guṇān manyāmahe | Kavyanu.
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²¹ Klatt 2016: 265.

²² Klatt 2016: 554.

' $V\bar{a}gbhaṭa$ (Mantrin of Jayasinha)', ²³ the authorship of $K\bar{a}vy\bar{a}nuś\bar{a}sana$ is wrongly attributed. There is no separate entry for $V\bar{a}gbhaṭa$, the author of $K\bar{a}vy\bar{a}nuś\bar{a}sana$ and $Chandonuś\bar{a}sana$, although he is wrongly mentioned under the entry for $V\bar{a}gbhaṭ\bar{a}lank\bar{a}ra$.

Let us now examine the life of Vāgbhaṭa, the author of *Kāvyānuśāsana* and *Chandonuśāsana*, as described in his own writings.

Vāgbhaṭa possessed multifaceted knowledge and was well-versed in various śāstras. According to a reference in his Kāvyānuśāsana, he had composed numerous prabandhas, nāṭakas, and mahākāvyas.²⁴ Unfortunately, only two of his works are available today. He quotes a verse from his Rśabhadevacarita mahākāvya in Kāvyānuśāsana.²⁵ But complete text of Rśabhadevacarita is not yet available.

Vāgbhaṭa's father was named Nemikumāra, and his uncle was Rāhaḍa. His grandfather was Kālapa, and his grandmother was Mahādevī. In the printed edition of another of Vāgbhaṭa's works, *Kāvyānuśāsana*, the editors mentioned his grandfather's name as *Makkalapa*. Subsequent research articles and theses have followed this reading, but it is incorrect.

It is likely that the manuscript of *Kāvyānuśāsana* had "kka" mistakenly written instead of "tka," i.e., Śrīmakkalapa instead of Śrīmatkālapa. Alternatively, the editors may have misread the text and assumed Makkalapa to be the correct name. However, the available manuscripts of *Chandonuśāsana* clearly mention Kālapa as Vāgbhaṭa's grandfather,²⁷ with his name appearing a total of 19 times.

Further investigation reveals that even some internal verses of *Kāvyānuśāsana* correctly mention the name *Kālapa*, not *Makkalapa*. Vāgbhaṭa also identifies his lineage as belonging to the *Kaunteya vaṃṃśa*. Phere is no information available presently about the *Kaunteya vaṃśa*. But Vāgbhaṭa has mentioned it multiple times in both his treatises. This suggests that this *vaṃśa* must be one of the celebrated lineages of that time.

²⁴ vinirmitāneka-navya-nāṭaka-chando 'laṅkāra-mahākāvya-pramukha-mahāprabandha-bandhuro 'pāra-tāraśāstra-sāgara-samutttaraṇa-tīrthāvamāna-śemuṣī ... mahākavi-śrī-vāgbhaṭo... Kavyanu. p.2.

²³ Klatt 2016: 754

²⁵ yathā svopajña-ṛśabha-deva-carita-mahākāvye... | Kavyanu.1.60.

²⁶ Kavyanu. p.1.

²⁷ śrīmān kālapa ity abhūn nija-kulālankāra-cūḍāmaṇiḥ | Chandonu.Comm.1.15.

²⁸ ramyodyāne kālapa-sūno bhavadīye | Kavyanu.3.27, yātrā kālapa-nandanena vidadhe śrī-pārśvanātha-prabhoḥ | Kavyanu.5.19.

²⁹ śrī-rāhaḍa bhavadīyā kaunteya-kula-kamala-dinanātha | Chandonu.4.4.3.

Vāgbhaṭa's father, Nemikumāra, held his elder brother Rāhaḍa in high regard. Nemikumāra built a grand temple dedicated to Neminātha in Naloṭapura and twenty-two other temples near the temple of Ādinātha in Rāhaḍapura. Through these acts, he enhanced the success and glory of Rāhaḍa throughout the world. In *Chandonuśāsana*, Vāgbhaṭa mentions Nemikumāra's victory over Medapāṭa³¹ - an ancient name for the region now known as Mewar in Rajasthan.

Historical records do not list any Nemikumāra as a ruler of Mewar, indicating that the victory was not political. Other verses in *Chandonuśāsana* and the prologue of *Kāvyānuśāsana* commentary suggest that Nemikumāra completed a pilgrimage³² to Medapāṭa along a challenging route, defeating forest-dwelling tribes like the Kirātas on his way. Vāgbhaṭa's "victory over Medapāṭa" likely refers to this arduous pilgrimage.³³

Nemikumāra also founded a new city called Rāhaḍapura near Bhṛgukaccha (modern-day Bharuch).³⁴ Even today, there is a place called Rāhaḍapura near Bharuch, though whether it is the same city built by Nemikumāra remains a subject for further research.

The verses in *Kāvyānuśāsana* and *Chandonuśāsana* suggest that Vāgbhaṭa came from a wealthy family.³⁵ His uncle, Rāhaḍa, constructed many *caitya* temples,³⁶ and his father, Nemikumāra, also built numerous temples and established a new city in honor of his brother. Both brothers were deeply religious and devoted much of their wealth to charitable causes.³⁷

³⁰ nābheya-caitya-sadane diśi dakṣiṇasyāṃ dvāviṃśatir vidadhatā jina-mandirāṇi | Manye nijāgraja-vara-prabhu-rāhaḍasya pūrṇīkṛto jagati yena yaśah-śaśāṅkaḥ || Kavyanu.Comm.3.7.

³¹ kālapāngaja bhavad-rathoddhatā medapāṭa-vijaye 'tra pāṃsavaḥ \ kuryu-randha-tamasaṃ cirāya cen na syuraśva-mukha-phena-vipruṣaḥ \| Chandonu.Comm.2.52.

³² su-ramyāṃ śrī-neme tava vidadhato medapāṭa-sthita-śrīmat-pārśva-prabhum-abhisarat-tīrtha-yātrām | Chandonu.Comm.2.102.

³³ sita-śara-visarābhi-varṣibhir-uccakair-druta-taram-abhitaḥ kirāta-śatairiyamı Api pathi viṣame yayau tava kālapātmaja jina-bhavanam camūr-aparājitā || Chandonu.Comm.2.90, khara-khura-koṭi-nirdalita-medapāṭa-viṣayācalāvani-talam... kālapāṅgaja paraṃ tad-aśvalalitaṃ cirāya bhavataḥ || Chandonu.Comm.2.128.

 $^{^{34}}$ śrī-man-nemikumāro 'sau bandhoḥ svasya puraṃ ramyam ı abhyarne bhṛgu-kacchasya cakre śakra-pura-sparddhi ॥ Chandonu.Comm.2.34.

³⁵ evam dhyātveva lakṣmīr-mandiram nābhi-sūnor-vyālolāpi sthirāsau sevate rāhaḍasya | Chandonu.Comm.2.88.

³⁶ puruṣottama rāhaḍa prabho kasya na hi pramadaṃ dadāti sadyaḥ ı vitatā tava caitya-paddhatir vāta-caladhvaja-māla-bhārinīyam || Chandonu.Comm.3.12.

³⁷ sadā kare svīkṛta-dāna-vāri-pramoditāśeṣa-jagaj-janābhyām ...kālapa-nandanābhyām Chandonu.Comm.2.59.

They built special *dānaśālā*s (charity halls) for donations.³⁸ Rāhaḍa, in particular, was widely praised by noble individuals for his contributions and religious activities within Jainism.³⁹

Although Vāgbhaṭa provides extensive details about his family, he does not mention the time period in which he lived. He has quoted verses from *Neminirvāṇa* and mentioned the author of *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra*. It confirms that he lived after both of them. Premi⁴⁰ mentions that this Vāgbhaṭa has quoted a verse in his *Kāvyānuśāsana* from the *Rājīmatīparityāga Mahākāvya* which is most probably *Rājīmatīvipralambha Mahākāvya* of Āśādhara. Premi further says, if this is true, then Vāgbhaṭa would have lived after Āśādhara, sometimes in the 14th century of Vikrama era. Shastri supports this view. Chatterjee⁴³ says that he would have written *Kāvyānuśāsana* at around 1300 A.D. These theories seem plausible and our author can be kept safely between 1275 CE and 1325 CE.

Premi⁴⁴ and Shastri⁴⁵ also suggest that Vāgbhaṭa was a follower of the *Digambara* sect, and not of the *Śvetāmbara*, based on his quotations from *Digambara* texts in *Kāvyānuśāsana*. However, there is no evidence in *Chandonuśāsana* to confirm or refute this theory. His *Chandonuśāsana* only confirms that he was a Jain.

³⁸ kaunteyā-nvaya-maṇḍanāmaṇe bhavadīyā viditā jagati vibhānti dānaśālāḥ | Chandonu.Comm.4.6.

³⁹ nija-bhuja-yugalopārjita-lakṣmī-santarpitā-rthi-jana-nivaham ı śrī-rāhaḍa tava caritaṃ nitarām-āryāḥ praśaṃsanti || Chandonu.Comm.5.5.

⁴⁰ Premi 1942: 488.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Shastri 1974: 39.

⁴³ Chatterjee 1984: 264.

⁴⁴ Premi 1942: 487f.

⁴⁵ Shastri 1974: 38.

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