

## The Nyāyabhāṣya Project: New Materials and a Hypothetical Stemma

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### Abstract

The Nyāyabhāṣya project supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) has been in progress since August 2004. It aims at establishing a critical edition of Vātsyāyana's Nyāyabhāṣya (NBh) on the basis of the collation of as many manuscripts as we can utilize. Four years after its initiation, collation of around forty manuscripts in the first chapter of the first book of the NBh has almost completely been undertaken. The bare collection of variant readings and scribal errors found in these manuscripts affords a more meaningful and reliable basis for the stemmatic evaluation of the manuscript transmission of the NBh. Due to the stemmatic analysis of variations, the collation undertaken so far reveals the divergent lines of the textual transmission and the complex contamination among manuscripts or manuscript groups. The collation also clearly demonstrates necessity of a well-established critical edition of the text not only because of lack of a satisfying critical edition. The necessity is strongly felt by looking at the fact that the available printed editions, except for Thakur's two editions (published in 1967 and 1997), frequently fail to supply more important lineages of the textual transmission partly due to the limitation or selection of the utilized manuscript materials. Taking exemplary words and passages from the NBh such as the known definition of *lakṣaṇa* ("characteristic mark" or "definition") and so forth, this paper makes a brief review of Thakur's editions in view of reaffirming the significance of the Jaisalmer manuscript as one of the most important lineages. In this relation, an untapped Jaisalmer manuscript (jī.kā 1274/3), the oldest extant manuscript dated to ca. 1222, is also introduced. These text-critical examinations are followed by the presentation of a hypothetical stemma of the above mentioned initial chapter. Accordingly, this paper suggests methodological improvements in constituting a critical text of the NBh by applying a stemma to the process of reconstructing the theoretically presumable archetype besides the philological scrutiny. As a further methodological consideration of critically editing the NBh, demonstration of the computer-assisted methods of generating and proving a stemma of manuscripts is given. (342)