



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

Critical Editorial Challenges in the Journey of त्रिपथगा

Dipen Maji¹

Abstract:

The process of editing a text presents multiple challenges, particularly when it is dealing with manuscripts that have undergone numerous transformations over time. This article examines the critical editorial challenges encountered in the preparation of a scholarly edition of त्रिपथगा by राघवेन्द्राचार्य. Key issues include textual variations, deletion and addition of words and lines, linguistic complexities, and the need for a balanced approach in reconstructing the text. The study highlights the significance of a critical edition in preserving and interpreting traditional knowledge while ensuring textual accuracy and accessibility.

Key words: Manuscript, commentary, त्रिपथगा, राघवेन्द्राचार्य, text editing, challenges.



AIJITR - Volume - 2, Issue - I, Jan-Feb 2025



Copyright © 2025 by author (s) and (AIJITR).
This is an Open Access article distributed
under the terms of the Creative Commons
Attribution License (CC BY 4.0)
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

Introduction:

Critical editions play an important role in the preservation and interpretation of texts like त्रिपथगा, an important Sanskrit commentary on परिभाषेन्दुशेखर by नागेश भट्ट. According to K. V. Abhyankar, the commentator राघवेन्द्राचार्य was a disciple of नीलकण्ठ शास्त्री थाट्टे¹. He lived between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century².

The editorial process or the methodology of this commentary includes a meticulous examination of available and procured manuscripts, comparing their readings, evaluating variations using traditional and modern textual criticism techniques, transcription, collation and careful reconstruction to restore the original meaning. The study followed a systematic approach by considering internal and external evidences, philological analysis and grammatical evaluations. The commentary presents several editorial challenges due to the lack of a single authoritative manuscript and the presence of variations across different copies done by many scribes. This article explores these challenges and discusses methodologies to address them effectively.

Major Editorial Challenges:

1. Text selection:

Selecting a text is the first hurdle for an editor in the field of textual criticism. Because this selection lies in several key factors like –

a. Scholarly Significance:

The chosen text should have academic value and it should hold historical, literary or philosophical importance. It may be a foundational work in a particular field or an influential but neglected manuscript.

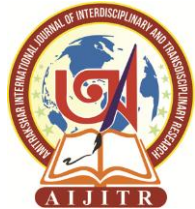
b. Textual Condition:

The availability and condition of manuscripts play an important role in text editing. If there are multiple versions of a text or it has missing sections and unclear readings, then it requires careful editorial work to reconstruct an authentic version as close as possible to the original text.

c. Transmission History:

¹ Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Sanskrit, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal, India,

Email Id: dipenmaji90@gmail.com



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

If an editor understands how a text has been transmitted over time, then it will be easier for him or her in identifying errors, interpolations and variations introduced by scribes or commentators.

d. Research Contribution:

Editing an excellent text adds value to the existing scholarship. A well edited text can provide new insights into language, culture and intellectual traditions.

e. Readability and Accessibility:

A critical edition makes a text accessible to the modern scholars and students, preserving its authenticity while ensuring clarity.

So, it is clearly understood that selecting the right text ensures meaningful contribution and advances the study of textual traditions. Therefore, keeping in mind those above-mentioned academic excellences, it was a difficult challenge to select the commentary त्रिपथगा as the subject of critical editing due to its complexities, textual transmission, the presence of multiple manuscript variations and the interpretative challenges posed by its intricate language and philosophical depth.

2. Procurement of Manuscripts:

After selecting त्रिपथगा for critical edition, the next significant challenge was the procurement of its manuscripts. One of the most important aspects of manuscript research is locating the libraries or archives where the manuscript is preserved. Without this information, procurement of photocopy and critically editing a text becomes next to impossible.

In this journey, the process of locating manuscripts was simplified with the help of the New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC). During the initial phase of research, relevant information was collected from volumes II, VIII, XI and XII of the NCC. From these sources, it was discovered that copies of the manuscript exist not only in India but also outside the country. To get these manuscripts, every possible effort was made, including communication via phone and email. However, only one photocopy was procured from The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai. Additionally, two more photocopies were collected from the Internet Archive³ (archive.org). Thus, the critical edition of त्रिपथगा was based on three available manuscripts.

3. Selection of Mother Manuscript:

After collecting photocopies of the manuscripts, the most ultimate challenge or task for an editor is to read them thoroughly and identify their distinctive features. For the critical edition of त्रिपथगा the same approach has been followed. Each collected manuscript was carefully examined before selecting the mother manuscript.

Several factors were considered while making this selection: whether the manuscript is complete or not? the clarity of its handwriting, the presence of contextual or grammatical errors, the number of illegible characters, and any physical damage such as insect infestation, fire burns, water stains, or other deterioration. Additionally, the extent of omissions and additions was also evaluated. After analysing these aspects, one manuscript which has been procured from internet archive was chosen as the mother manuscript⁴.

4. Transcription and collation:

The next two hurdles for an editor must be overcome i.e., transcription and collation. After selecting the mother manuscript, the first step is to create an exact copy of it. This process is called transcription. In the initial phase of transcription, a collation sheet is often used.

During transcription, an editor may come across various errors in the manuscript. However, the editor does not have the authority to correct these errors. Instead, they must strictly follow the editing principles. One fundamental rule in this process is यद्दृष्टं तल्लिखितम्, meaning write exactly what is seen, whether it is correct or incorrect. Following this principle, the present editor has completed the transcription of the entire commentary on the collation sheet, even though some errors were noticed in the mother manuscript.

Once the transcription of the entire text is completed, the next step is to compare it with other available manuscripts. This comparison helps to identify textual variations between the mother manuscript and the additional manuscripts. This process is called collation. The same method has been followed for त्रिपथगा also—



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

first, the entire transcription of the text was prepared, and then the textual variations between the mother manuscript and the other two manuscripts were recorded on the collation sheet.

5. Critical Apparatus:

The critical apparatus is a very important stage in text editing. It is often said that the critical apparatus, or lower criticism, should be so precise that a particular manuscript's reading can be reconstructed solely based on it. This shows how careful and attentive an editor must be while preparing the critical apparatus.

If the critical apparatus is not prepared with accuracy and dedication, the overall quality of the text editing is compromised. A well-structured apparatus helps scholars understand the variations between different manuscripts and ensures that the most authentic version of the text is presented.

In the case of त्रिपथगा, the editor has taken great care in preparing the critical apparatus. Every variant reading has been carefully analyzed and documented to present the best possible edition of the commentary. This effort ensures that त्रिपथगा is preserved in its most refined and reliable form for future scholars and readers.

6. Emendation:

Emendation is one of the most critical aspects of textual criticism. It involves making necessary corrections to a text when the original manuscripts contain errors, omissions, or inconsistencies. These errors may arise due to scribal mistakes, misinterpretations, or damage to the manuscripts over time. In a critical edition, emendation plays a key role in restoring the most authentic and logical reading of the text.

In the case of त्रिपथगा, emendation was a challenging but essential task. The manuscripts of this commentary contained numerous variations, some of which were clearly errors introduced by scribes. Common issues included missing words, incorrect spellings, miswritten letters, and inconsistencies in terminology. To resolve these problems, the editor carefully analyzed different manuscript versions, compared them with parallel texts, and applied philological and grammatical reasoning to reconstruct the most probable original reading.

However, emendation must be applied with caution. An editor should not introduce unnecessary changes based on assumptions. Instead, every correction should be backed by strong textual evidence, logical reasoning, and an understanding of the author's style and intent. In त्रिपथगा, the editor has followed a balanced approach, making corrections only where necessary and ensuring that the text remains as close as possible to its original form.

Through careful emendation, this edition of त्रिपथगा achieves greater clarity, coherence, and authenticity, making it a reliable source for future scholars and researchers. For an example it can be mentioned that परमनिष्कर्षे(तु) ऊडिदमिति सूत्रे शब्देन्दुशेखरे च्छोः शूडिति सूत्रे अनुनासिकेत्यस्य विषयसप्तमीत्वस्योक्तत्वेन गुणादन्तरङ्गत्वादूडिति न काप्यनुपपत्तिः here in this line of the commentary the reading of one manuscript which has been procured from the Theosophical Society of Adyar does not comply any meaning. Therefore, probable reading is given in first brackets by following the rules of emendation in critical apparatus.

7. Linguistic and Grammatical challenges:

The language of त्रिपथगा is rooted in classical Sanskrit and often exhibits archaic grammar and unique stylistic features. Over time, linguistic conventions may have changed, leading to inconsistencies in spelling, syntax, and terminology. Additionally, regional variations in Sanskrit usage may influence the transmission of the text. A thorough understanding of Sanskrit grammatical traditions and commentarial practices is



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

necessary for accurate reconstruction. In some cases, editors must refer to earlier or contemporary texts by the same author or school to confirm specific usages.

8. Peculiarities of Manuscripts:

While working on the critical edition, the editor identified various characteristics of the manuscripts and encountered several challenges, primarily related to text decipherment. One of the major difficulties was the complex nature of the manuscript which has been procured from the internet archive and not been selected as the mother manuscript. In contrast, the mother manuscript was the most reliable among the three, but the other two presented significant challenges.

Regarding the characteristics of the manuscripts, one manuscript which has been procured from the Theosophical society Adyar, Chennai has clear and legible handwriting. However, some portions of the text are missing, while certain sections appear twice. This duplication may have resulted from the scribe's inattentiveness. The omitted parts were later added in the margins, with specific symbols indicating their placement. Additionally, special symbols were used to mark unnecessary or irrelevant portions. The folio numbers are recorded on the verso side.

The mother manuscript was the most well-organized among the three. Additions and deletions are marked with special symbols in it, and errors are relatively minimal. There are no inconsistencies in textual continuity. Unlike the other two manuscripts, it contains a colophon (or पुष्पिका), which provides valuable information about the manuscript. The colophon of the manuscript says that it was once printed from Ganesh Prabhakar Printing Press, Banaras and was available there in Babu Kavaleswar Singh's store.

The other manuscript which has been procured from the internet archive posed the most difficulties in preparing the edition. The scribe's inconsistencies are evident, and scribal errors are frequent. For example, the scribe sometimes wrote ma (म) as pra (प्र) and vice versa. Similarly, tra (त्र) was occasionally written as tta (त्त). Additionally, the manuscript fails to maintain the continuity of the commentary in several places. Due to the thickness of the handwriting, certain sections are nearly unreadable. Inconsistent usage of compound words (समास) is also observed.

Conclusion:

The critical edition of त्रिपथगा has been a challenging yet significant scholarly endeavor. The process involved careful selection of the text, procurement of manuscripts, preparation of a meticulous critical apparatus, and thoughtful emendation to ensure the most authentic reconstruction of the commentary. Each stage required deep textual analysis, rigorous comparison, and a balanced editorial approach to maintain both accuracy and readability.

The challenges faced—such as manuscript variations, textual inconsistencies, and interpretative complexities—highlight the importance of a systematic method in textual criticism. The study not only refines the text of त्रिपथगा but also contributes to Sanskrit philology by providing a reliable edition for future scholars.

This research underscores the necessity of preserving classical texts with scholarly precision. It also opens avenues for further studies on related commentaries and their textual transmission. Ultimately, this edition of त्रिपथगा serves as a valuable resource, ensuring that the wisdom embedded in the text remains accessible to future generations.

References:

1. Abhyankar, K. V. p 179. Column 2.
2. Murthy, Sripada Satyanarayana. p IX. Preface.
3. <https://archive.org/details/ParibhashenduShekharVyakhyaTripathgaShankariTikaAbhavaRahsyagrantha1886GaneshPra> (07:25 PM, 02.05.2024)



Amitrakshar International Journal

of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research (AIJITR)

(A Social Science, Science and Indian Knowledge Systems Perspective)

Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Bi-Monthly, International E-Journal

<https://archive.org/details/ParibhashenduShekharVyakhyaTripathgaShankariTikaAbhavaRahsyaGrantha1886GaneshPra/page/n1/mode/2up> (07:48 PM, 02.05.2024)

4. <https://archive.org/details/ParibhashenduShekharVyakhyaTripathgaShankariTikaAbhavaRahsyaGrantha1886GaneshPra> (07:25 PM, 02.05.2024)

Bibliography:

Abhyankar, Kashinath Vasudev. *A dictionary of Sanskrit Grammar*. Baroda: Oriental Institute. Aryasanskriti Mudranalaya, Poona. 1961.

Bhaṭṭa, Nāgeśa. *Paribhāṣenduśekhara*. Ed. Sripada Satyanarayan Murthy. Tirupati: Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha. 2004.

Chaube, B. B. *lectures on Manuscriptology*. Hoshirpur: Katyayan Vaidik Sahitya Prakashan. 2004.

Murthy, R. S. Shivaganesh. *Introduction to Manuscriptology*. Delhi: Sharda Publishing House, 1996.

<https://archive.org/details/ParibhashenduShekharVyakhyaTripathgaShankariTikaAbhavaRahsyaGrantha1886GaneshPra> (07:25 PM, 02.05.2024)

<https://archive.org/details/ParibhashenduShekharVyakhyaTripathgaShankariTikaAbhavaRahsyaGrantha1886GaneshPra/page/n1/mode/2up> (07:48 PM, 02.05.2024)

