

# Himalayan Nature Representations and Reality

EDITED BY ERIKA SANDMAN AND RIIKA J. VIRTANEN



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**Himalayan Nature  
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ERIKA SANDMAN AND RIIKA J. VIRTANEN



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Nakza Drolma: “mTho ris la, a mountain pass at the top of Brag dkar sprel rdzong, and a Buddhist pilgrimage site in Xinhai County, Qinghai Province, People’s Republic of China.”

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## CONTENTS

ERIKA SANDMAN & RIIKA J. VIRTANEN	
Preface .....	vii
KLAUS KARTTUNEN	
Himalaya-Workshop: Opening address .....	xi
RUTH GAMBLE	
“Looking over at the Mountains”: Sense of place in the Third Karmapa’s “Songs of Experience” .....	1
TIINA HYYTIÄINEN	
Repkong Tantric Practitioners and Their Environment: Observing the vow of not taking life .....	17
KLAUS KARTTUNEN	
Toes and Heels Tormented by Hardened Snow.....	39
PEKKA LEHTISALO	
Holy Grounds: Landscapes in Tibetan thangka paintings.....	61
NAKZA DROLMA (ZHUOMA)	
Pilgrimage to Brag dkar sprel rdzong: Presentation and translation of a pilgrimage guide .....	83
JUHA-PEKKA REILIN	
The Main Factors of Biodiversity Changes in East Tibet.....	105
THUPTEN K. RIKEY	
The Nature-Deities of Tibet: A discussion on the tale “The Subduing and Putting under Oath of Tibet’s Malignant <i>lha 'dre</i> ” in <i>Padma bka' thang</i> .....	119

REENA AMATYA SHRESTHA, XIANG HUANG & MIKA SILLANPÄÄ Effects of Urbanization on Water Quality of the Bagmati River in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.....	141
JAAKKO TAKKINEN Medicine in India and Tibet – Reflections on Buddhism and nature .....	151
PILVI VAINONEN Making Museum Collections: Missionary Hilja Heiskanen’s Himalayan artefacts .....	163
RIIKA J. VIRTANEN Dhondup Gyal and Nature: Interpreting poetic images of wind and cloud in two Tibetan works .....	183
<b>Review Article:</b>	
JUHA JANHUNEN Correctness and Controversies in Asian Historiography .....	209
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....	229
<b>Contributors</b> .....	237

# TOES AND HEELS TORMENTED BY HARDENED SNOW

*Klaus Karttunen*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For the majority of Indians, snow and ice were more or less unknown, sort of a legend. However, even in ancient times they could easily be observed in the Himālayas. The number of those who actually went there and thus saw snow with their own eyes was not small. A popular route of pilgrimage led to Badrināth at the source of the Ganges, and the most tough and pious went further, over the high passes of the Himālayas to the holy lake of Mānasarovar, behind which Mt. Kailāśa, the abode of Śiva, could be seen. Traders took other passes to go to Nepal and Tibet. Snowy winters were also experienced in Kashmir, which was an ancient stronghold of classical literature. But in the plains of North India, snow was rarely seen in the dry and rainless winters, though occasional frost was known. Snow and frost were just a distant rumour in the south. In the following, I shall attempt a survey of what the ancient Indians said and thought of snow and frost.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. WORDS

The great chain of mountains rising between India and Tibet was known in Sanskrit as “the abode of snow”, *himālaya*, or just “the snowy” *himavat* (a great number of synonymous words were also used, see below). Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) *hima* is the standard word for snow, derived from the common Indo-European and related to Latin *hiems* and Greek χειμών.<sup>2</sup> In OIA, *hima* has also the more general meaning of ‘cold, frost’ (but rather in masc. instead of ne. ‘snow’). It is attested as early as the Rigveda and still used in New Indo-Aryan (NIA), e.g. Hindī (*him*) beside Persian *barf*.<sup>3</sup> Apparently related is *hemanta* ‘winter’, or the

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1 An asterisk before a source indicates that I know it only indirectly.

Margot S. Whiting has kindly corrected my English.

2 Cf. also Avestan *zyam*, *zəmə*, *zayan*.

3 See Turner 1965 s.v. *hima*.

first part of the winter in the six-season system, the second being *śísira*. Other words include OIA “Tocharian” or *tuṣāra*, used for snow as early as the Mahābhārata. Perhaps related to this is *tuhina*, attested from the mid-first millennium on. Often such distinctions as we make between snow, ice and frost cannot be made in our texts. Moreover, words with the primary meaning ‘snow, ice’ are occasionally found denoting ‘mist, dew’ or ‘spray of cold water’.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. SNOW AND WINTER IN KASHMIR

The best place where winter cold was really experienced, and where there were also learned people to describe it, was, of course, Kashmir. No wonder that I have found the most realistic, but also the most colourful descriptions of snow and winter in Kalhaṇa’s *Rājatarāṅginī*.

An elaborate description of winter is found in Rājat 3, 168–177. Formally, this passage is located on the Indian plains, not in Kashmir, but I am certain that Kalhaṇa had the winters of his home country in mind when he wrote these lines. To summarise Stein’s translation: the winter came, scorching the body, as it were, with its winds which brought hoar frost and dense mist. (169) The continued darkness which covered the regions subdued by the fierce cold, appeared as if it were a black cloak. (170) The days became short, for the sun, which seemed pained by the cold and eager to seek the warmth of the submarine fire, was rapidly descending into the Ocean.<sup>5</sup> (171) In the palace, lamps and fire-pans shone forth in the night,<sup>6</sup> (172) but the lamps were shaken by the wintry winds entering the house with their harsh and loud sounds (*hemantānilair bhūribhāmkāraparuṣaiḥ*). (177) The poor man was shaking doubly with cold and fear (*bhayadviguṇībhūtaśītakampāḥ*).

In Kashmir, the snow could cause serious problems. Once there was an unexpectedly heavy snowfall in autumn, when the rice-crop was just ripening (Rājat 2, 18 *paṭā tuhinain mahat*). When the routes over the mountains are closed by the impassable snowdrifts, the people are helpless like birds when the opening of

4 These and related words are listed in AK 1, 6, 180. *avaśyāya tu nīhāras tuṣāras tuhinain himam*. 181. *prāleyam mihikā cātha himānī himasambatīḥ*. 182. *śītam guṇe tadvarthāḥ suśīmaḥ śīśiro jaḍaḥ*. 183. *tuṣāraḥ śītalāḥ śīto himaḥ saptāryaliṅgakāḥ*. The seasons *hemanta* and *śísira* in AK 1, 7, 250. Of the other words mentioned, *prāleya* seems primarily to signify ‘cold water’ (*pralayād āgatam*), while *mihikā* is ‘mist’. I have not found the meaning ‘snow’ for *avaśyāya* in dictionaries.

5 Rājat 3, 168 *tataḥ prāvartata sphāranībhāralavavābhīḥ / dahan nīvāṅgam prāleyapavam ārtair hemāgamah // 169 saṁtatadhvāntamiṣatastivraśītavaśīkṛtāḥ / āśācakāśīre nīlanicolāc chādītā iva // 170 śītāryā dyumaṇāv aurvadahanoṣmābhilāṣataḥ / drutaṁ yāṭīva jaladhīm dīnāni laghutām yayuḥ*.

6 Rājat 3, 171 *dīpojvale dhāmnī lasaddīptahasantike*. Stein quotes a gloss explaining the rare word *hasantikā* as *magnāgnikā*.



their nests is closed.<sup>7</sup> In the early history of Kashmir, snow was said to have been a divine punishment against Buddhists (Rājāt 1, 179–186). When they broke the traditional customs of the land, the Nāgas, deprived of their oblations, sent down excessive snow, and thus destroyed people. Deep snow fell every year causing distress to the Buddhists and the king spent the six months of the cold season (note the length!) in the low country. But when the rites were finally re-established, the calamities caused by Bhikṣus and snow ceased.<sup>8</sup>

During heavy snowfalls, people did not move outside.<sup>9</sup> The army waited and prepared to proceed only when the snow stopped falling.<sup>10</sup> In the two winter seasons, *hemanta* and *śiśira*, the sun rarely shines (Rājāt 4, 401), but when it does, it is also easy to enjoy it (6, 298 *sukhasevatvaṃ hemanta iva bhāsvataḥ*).

Describing the wintry escape of King Bhoja over mountains to the Daradas, Kalhaṇa (Rājāt 8, 2710–2714) gives a nice description of the hardships of the snowy season (*tuṣārakāla*). The sharp edges of frozen stones (*śyānāśma*) hurt the feet – here we seem to have a reminiscence of the Kumārasāmbhava – clouds hide the daylight, falling masses of snow resemble herds of elephants (*himasaṃghātagajavyūha*), further there is the hissing spray of torrents, piercing wind, the glittering snow destroying vision (*ātapakṣatahimajyotirnihataḍṅkpathān*) and deep fall in open places.

Thinking that the new king will be overthrown as soon as the snow melts, his opponents derided him as the “snow-king”.<sup>11</sup> On another occasion, a king perished because of excessive snow which fell out of season.<sup>12</sup>

When the cold winter was over, snow became a source of pleasure. In the eyes of local people, Kashmir had many blessings: learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes – things that even in heaven are difficult to find, are common there.<sup>13</sup> Where else do the inhabitants on a hot summer day find before their houses water like that of the river Vitastā (cooled) by large lumps of snow?<sup>14</sup> The

7 Rājāt 2, 38 *himasaṃghātadurlaṅghyakṣitibhḍruddhanirgamāḥ* / *baddhadvāarakulāyasthakagavad vivaśā janāḥ*.

8 Rājāt 1, 179 *maṅḍale viplutācāre vicchinabalikarmabhiḥ* / *nāgair janakṣayaś cakre prabhūta-himavarṣibhiḥ*; 180 *himānyām bauddhabādhāya patantyām prativatsaram...*; 186 *bhikṣavo himadoṣāś ca sarvataḥ praśamaṃ yayuḥ*.

9 Rājāt 6, 125 *mahāhimāpātaniḥsancāre dine*.

10 Rājāt 8, 1448 *himavarṣtyante*. Cf. Kullūka on Manu 7, 182 that winter is best time for an army mainly consisting of elephants and chariots. But this is in the lowlands.

11 Rājāt 4, 1445 *matvā himavyapāyāntaṃ rājyarodhaṃ ... himarājābbhidhām vyadhuh*.

12 Rājāt 4, 367 *tuṣāraavarṣair babalāis tam akāṅḍaniḥpātibhiḥ ... niḥnamam*.

13 Rājāt 1, 42 *vidyā veśmāni tuṅgāni kuṅkumaṃ sahimam payaḥ* / *drākṣeti yatra sāmānyam asti tridivadurlabham*.

14 Rājāt 3, 362 *vaitastaṃ vāri vāstavayair bṛhattubhinaśarkaram* / *grīsmogre 'hni svaveśmāgrāt ka tato 'nyatra labhyate*.

Kashmirian poet also knew that the Himālayas are wet from melted snow in summertime and therefore pleasant to visit while other (more southerly) mountains must be avoided because of forest fires.<sup>15</sup> In summer, in the alpine regions above the timberline, people made līngas of snow or ice for worship.<sup>16</sup> It seems to have been a standard example of a profitless venture to try to sell snow on a snowy mountain (3, 138 *himādrau himavikrayaḥ*). But what happens when “snow dissolves snow” (5, 401 *himenaiiva himam śāmyed*), I am not able to say.

More examples of snow in Kashmir might be collected from the *Nīlamata-purāṇa* – e.g. the festival of the first snow or *navahimāpātotsava* in 46 ff. – and other Kashmiri works, but perhaps this is enough.

#### 4. SNOW IN LITERATURE

Others also knew that snow is seen in mountains: I have collected a number of passages extending from the earliest Veda to the Middle Ages. For poets, the Himālayas are white with snow.<sup>17</sup> The Kumārasambhava 1, 11 on icy snow is quoted in my title.<sup>18</sup> In winter, the rays of the sun cannot do anything to the snowy mountains (Kir 17, 12). The alpine region of always snowy mountain tops has no trees, birds, or beasts (Mbh 1, 111, 8 *santi nityahimā deśā nirvṛkṣamṛga-pakṣiṇaḥ*). Blaming his own pride, Bhartṛhari asked it to go to the gorge of the snowy mountain.<sup>19</sup>

When the winter winds are blowing, they bring heavy snowfall.<sup>20</sup> In the month of Pauṣa, a not excessive snowfall is considered good omen. I suspect Ramakrishna Bhat is not used to winter, translating this as “not too thick frost”.<sup>21</sup> In another passage, snow or frost in winter is briefly counted as a good omen (VM:BS 46, 92 *tuṣāratvam*). The cold winter wind comes from the Himālayas (ŚārṅgP 3925 [137, 7] *prāleyasailaśiśirānila*). But when the rain begins, snow flakes

15 Rājat 4, 582 (also *Ind. Spr.* 2788) *sāndrabhimadravādras citraṁ tuṣāraśikharinī nitarām niṣevyaḥ*. Could there be some similar idea in AV 12, 1, 11 asking the hills, the snowy mountains and the forests of the earth to be pleasant (*girāyas te pārvatā himavantō ranyam te pṛthivi syonām astu*) – no, more probably this was intended against beasts.

16 Rājat 2, 138 *himaliṅgārcanaḥ prāyād vanānteṣu*. In a note on Rājat 1, 267, Stein explains that in his time Amareśvara was worshipped in the form of a līṅga-shaped block of ice.

17 Kd:Md 52 *gauram tuṣāraiḥ*; Śiśup 4, 64 *prāleyaśitam acaleśvaram*; ŚārṅgP 3930 (137, 12) *prāleyāvāsapṛthvīdharasīkha*.

18 KS 1, 11 *udvejyaty aṅgulipārṣṇibhāgān mārgē śilbhūtahime ’pi yatra*.

19 Bhartṛhari 725 Kosambi (also *Ind. Spr.* 5828) *yābi droṇīm himādreḥ*.

20 Amaru 54 in Eastern text (Devadhar p. 122, also *Ind. Spr.* 3801) *kṛtatubhinakāṇāsārasasaṅgān ... haimanā vānti vātāḥ*.

21 VM:BS 21, 19 *nātyartham ... pauṣe himapātam*. During *śiśira*, the *himapāta* is a good omen (BS 46, 94).

melt away (KSS 19 = 3, 5, 50 *jalāpātatuṣārakaṇaśvaṛī*). However, when the cold morning wind mixed with ice crystals blows, the wise man discerning virtue from vice would not attempt to expel cold with water.<sup>22</sup>

Snow is cold. Those pained by cold do not rejoice in the cooling rays of the moon (Hitopad. 1, 111 [Spr. 2, 6433] *śaśinīva himārtānaṁ*). Kātyāyana (vārttika 8 on P 5, 2, 122) derives the form *himelu* as “one not standing cold or snow” (comm. *himaṁ na saḥate*), but I have not found it in texts. The cold wind makes lips and skin shiver.<sup>23</sup> People were no more attached to truth than to the shadow of trees in winter.<sup>24</sup> The ascetics were proud of their ability to endure all kinds of harsh conditions: standing outdoors during the rains and immersed in water in winter, accepting the heat of summer and so on.<sup>25</sup> There is even a particular hell, called Tamas, where the sinners are afflicted with bitter cold (*śītārtās*) and with wind carrying snow or ice (*himakhaṇḍavaho vāyur* – MkP 12, 12–18).

On the positive side, there is snow’s cooling effect. In the RV, it was used by the Aśvins to rescue Atri from the fiery pitch.<sup>26</sup> Indra slew Arbuda with the help of snow.<sup>27</sup> In an AV spell for protecting a house from fire, the sorcerer claims to wrap the house within the fetal envelop made of snow.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, fire was the remedy for snow.<sup>29</sup> It was one of the tasks of fire to destroy cold (*himamardanam* in BhāgP 3, 26, 40). In a simile, snowy or cold water is the remedy for one scorched by heat (BhāgP 5, 2, 12 *dāghadagdhasya yathā himāmbhaḥ*), but in classical poetry, the fever of love was so hot that neither a cool lake nor the cool-rayed moon could allay it (Bhavabhūti: Mm 1, 31 *himasarasi vā candramasi vā*).

Everyone used to snow and cold understands the idea of burning snow. Rājaśekhara in the Viddhaśālabhañjikā 3, 17+ remarked that snow, though formed of water, burns (*salilamayy api dahati himānī*). The moon emits fire with its cold rays (Śak 3, 3 *visṛjati himagarbhair agnim indur mayūkhais*). Nevertheless, snow

22 Pañcatantra of Kosegarten quoted in *Ind. Spr.* 4344 *prāleyaleśamiśre maruti prabhātike ca vāti jaḍe / guṇadoṣajñāḥ puruṣo jalena kaḥ śītam apanayati*. In my opinion, the *prāleyaleśamiśra* wind is mixed with ice crystals rather than mist. In the Śiśup 6, 55, the winter wind is bringing snow: *haimanas tubinayan*.

23 *Ind. Spr.* 6472 from \*Kupalay. 37 *vraṇayaty adharaṁ tanoti romāñcam ... haimanaḥ pavanaḥ*.

24 Mbh 3, 34, 62 *sattvaṁ ... na tu prasaktāṁ bhavati vṛkṣacchāyeva haimānī*.

25 Mbh 12, 253, 15 *satye tapasi tiṣṭhan saba ca dharmam avaiḥṣata / varṣāsv ākāśāśāyī sa hemante jalasamśrayaḥ*. An ascetic exposing himself to snow also in Pāli Jātaka 94 and MilP 396 (*himapāta-samaye*, during snowfall). Note that the classical accounts mention similar penances exercised by the Indian Gymnosophists.

26 RV 1, 116, 8 *himēnāgnīm gharmaśam avārayethām*; RV 1, 119, 6 *himēna gharmaṁ páritaptam átraye*.

27 RV 8, 32, 26 *himēnāvidhyad árbudam*.

28 AV 6, 106, 3 *himásya tvā jarāyuṇā śāle pári vyayāmasi*.

29 VS 23, 10 *agnír himásya bheśajám*.

was clearly the opposite of fire. In the MkP, the sun is the source of both warmth, rain and snow (103, 49 *gharmavarṣāhimākara*). For the gnomic poet, the power of destiny was great enough to make fire cold and snow hot.<sup>30</sup> For Jayadeva, it was the averseness of Rādhā.<sup>31</sup> In Pāli Jātaka, the power of the Bodhisattva, ready to sacrifice himself, made the fire feel cold.<sup>32</sup>

## 5. WINTER

The word *hemanta* signifies winter, in the six-season system, the early winter. The traditional list of the six seasons of India – spring, summer, rains, autumn, winter, and cold season – is first met in the AV.<sup>33</sup> Thus the winter lasts two months.<sup>34</sup> In the majority of Vedic sources, however, the number or *ṛtus* is only five, the *śiśira* being left out.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the other four, the winter has then four months. An Atharvanic sage saw the whole system of seasons superfluous; for him, the count of six cold months and six hot ones was enough.<sup>36</sup> The six-season system remained standard, although the Buddhists tended to count only four and in connection with monastic life, even three, the cold, hot and rainy season.<sup>37</sup> For our present purpose, we can take *hemanta* and *śiśira* together as both may have snow. Actually *śiśira* is often presented as the coldest season, but it also sees the coming of the first spring flowers.

In the Veda, it was Sūrya, the Sun-god, who caused both the heat of summer and the burning cold of winter.<sup>38</sup> The summer is hot and the winter cold, but the

30 ŚārngP 445 (29, 11, also *Ind. Spr.* 545) *vahnīḥ śitalatām himam dahanatām*.

31 Gītag 9, 10 *śitānśus tapano himam hutavahaḥ*.

32 Sasajātaka (J 316): Bodhisattva as a hare is ready to offer his body as food-offering to a Brahman. But, jumping into fire it was like entering a region of frost... He said: "Your fire is icy-cold" (*himagabbham pavīṭṭho viya ... tayā kato aggi atisītalo*).

33 AV 6, 55, 2 *grīṣmo hemantaḥ śiśiro vasantaḥ śarad varṣāḥ*; also 8, 2, 22; 12, 1, 36; and AB 4, 26. The different systems of seasons are fully discussed in Vogel 1971 (who also gives more references to texts).

34 Dual in the AV 15, 4, 5 *haimanāu māsau*; VS 14, 27 *hāimantikāv ṛtū*; ŚPB 4, 3, 1, 18 & 8, 5, 2, 14.  
35 TS 2, 6, 1 & 5, 7, 2; TB 1, 4, 10, 10; PvB 21, 15, 2; ChUp 2, 5, 1 and MaitrīUp 6, 33. The ŚPB has both systems: five in 1, 5, 3, 13f. (*hemanta* is followed by spring) & 2, 2, 3, 8 & 8, 5, 2, 14 & 11, 2, 7, 32; but six in 10, 4, 5, 2. In the TS 1, 6, 2 *hemantaśiśirau* form a dvandva, while other four are listed separately. The same dvandva also in ĀśvGS 2, 4, 1 and P 2, 4, 28. AB 1, 1 explains that seasons number five as these two belong together: *pañcartavo hemantaśiśirayoḥ samānena* (but six seasons each with two months in AB 4, 26).

36 AV 8, 9, 27 *śād ābuh śitān śād u māsā uṣṇān ṛtūm no brūta yatamó 'tiriktaḥ*. Also quoted in Vogel 1971: 285.

37 Pāli *hemanta*, *gimha* and *vassa*, also used by Jains, see Vogel 1971: 301.

38 AV 13, 1, 46 *tatraitāv agnī ābhata himam ghraṁsām ca rōhitaḥ*; cf. RV 10, 37, 10 where Sūrya is asked for blessings with these two (*śām himā śām ghr̥ṇéna*).

rains are pleasant through the absence of both heat and cold.<sup>39</sup> The ideal lifespan of human beings was one hundred years, often expressed as a hundred autumns, sometimes also a hundred winters.<sup>40</sup>

After the Vedic period, we find more poetic expressions for seasons. In Kālidāsa, the sun, desirous of going to the north, left Mount Malaya and, driving away the snow, made the mornings pure and clear (Rv 9, 25 *dinamukhāni ravir himanigrabhair vimalayan*). Also in Md 39, the sun takes away the tears of frost (*prāleyā-sram*). Perhaps Jayadeva had the Raghuvamśa passage in mind when writing how the spring winds from the sandalwood forests blow toward Himālayan peaks to plunge into the snow.<sup>41</sup>

In the Rāmāyaṇa 3, 15, there is a description of the Himālayas in wintertime. The mountains are then a treasure store of snow (9 *himakośādhyo*), all the more so when the sun is far away (*dūrasūryaś*). The mornings are frosty, powdered with snow (11 *himadhvastā*). The west wind's touch, cold by nature, is doubly so now, when it blows at dawn, shot through with snow (15 *prakṛtyā śītalasparśo himavidhvaś ca sāmpratam | pravāti paścimo vāyuh kāle dvigunaśītalah*).

From Varāhamihira, we learn that the sun is usually blood-red in winter, but when it appears yellowish, it forebodes diseases.<sup>42</sup> The idea that the sun and the moon have different colours in different seasons is also found in the Purāṇic literature. The texts in question (Brahmapurāṇa, Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa, Kūrmapurāṇa, Liṅgapurāṇa) also explain rather reasonably the coldness of winter: the Sun God sends a different amount of rays to earth in different months.<sup>43</sup> But King Milinda asked, why is the heat of the sun more fierce in winter than in summer? Nāgasena explained that in the hot season, “dust is blown up into clouds, and pollen agitated by the winds ... (they) heaped together shut off the rays of the sun ... But in the cold season ... the dust is quiet.”<sup>44</sup> The medieval poet Jāyasī stated that in the month of Pauṣya, the sun feels cold and escapes to the warm south (Laṅkā; Padmāvat stanza 350 in Vaudeville 1965: 62–63).

The Sanskrit “collections of good sayings” (Subhāṣitasamgraha) are usually arranged according to the themes of the poems included. The seasons are a natural theme and thus we also find strings of poems on winter and the cold

39 AV 7, 18, 2 *ná ghráms tatāpa ná himó jaghāna*.

40 *śatām himāḥ* in RV 1, 64, 14; 2, 33, 2; 5, 54, 15; 6, 48, 8; AV 2, 28, 4; 12, 2, 28; *hemanta* in RV 10, 161, 4; VS 2, 27.

41 Gītag 1, 47 *īśācalaṁ prāleyaplavanecchayāmusarati śrīkhaṇḍasaīlānilah*.

42 VM: BS 3, 24 *hemante rudhīrasannibhal* & 26 *hemante pīto rkaḥ*.

43 The reasonableness ends, when they quote the actual number of rays: 900 to 1,500 in the BP, 5,000 to 11,000 in others, according to Vogel 1971: 295 & 317 (table).

44 MilP 274 *bhante nāgasena, kīssa hemante suriyo kathinaṁ patati, no tathā gimhe ti? gimbe, mahārāja, anupahatam hoti rajojallam, vātakkhubhitā reṇū...*

season. The ŚāringP has sixteen stanzas (3919–3934) on winter in section 137 and fourteen (3935–3948) on *śiśira* in 138. In Vidyākara’s anthology, section 12 has thirteen winter stanzas (293–305) and section 13 seventeen on *śiśira* (306–322). I have referred to them in various parts of my study, but here it suffices to take up two.

Vidyākara 307 & 308 describe so realistically falling snow that Ingalls suspects them of coming from a poem describing the northern mountains. As I cannot better his translations, I quote them: “The heavy snow is falling, not easy to distinguish / among the smoke-gray damanaka trees, / but for the fire of dung it forms a tent of beauty. / At dawn it hides the rising sun, / and clinging to the traveler’s furs, / shows them all white of every limb.”<sup>45</sup> In the second stanza, the rising sun is “wrapped in a net of snow so thick you could pierce it only with a needle” (308 *pūṣā prātargaganapathikaḥ prasthitaḥ pūrvasailāt sūcībhedyaprabalamahikājālākanthāhvrtāṅgaḥ*).

Even in the Pañjab, winter days are sunny and warm, but nights can be cold. A Vedic text states that night is the mother of frost (AV 19, 49, 5 *himāsya mātā*). The poet Abhinanda compared the cruelty of the snowy wind to a hypocrite’s embrace.<sup>46</sup> Amaraçandra: Padmānanda 11, 52 (Warder 2004: 595) gives a description of a frozen forest lake in winter. Note that in Sanskrit the word “forest” often means “mountains”. In Tamil poetry, the associative strings are even more canonised than in Sanskrit. Here winter, mountains, night and the erotic sentiment belong together.<sup>47</sup>

In the Ṛtusamhāra, (Pseudo-)Kālidāsa described the six seasons, although he was mainly concentrating on their erotic aspects, while nature and the weather were just sort of background. His winter took place in the warm Indian plains. It was pleasant with sprouting new crops (4, 1), with deer and cranes (4, 8), with blue water-lilies (*nīlotpala*) blooming in cold lakes (4, 9). There is, in truth, drops of frost (or just dew?) on grass tops (4, 7) and cold winds born of snow (4, 10). In the last stanza of the *hemanta* chapter, the snowy wintertime, praised by cranes, is clearly characterised with fallen snow (4, 18). In the cold season (*śiśira*), the nights are cold with plenty of fallen snow and the cool rays of the moon (5, 4).<sup>48</sup>

45 307 (13, 2) *durlakṣyā syād damanakavane dhūmadhūmre patantī / kārīṣāgneḥ paṭamayagr̥hā vāmalīlām tanoti // prādurbhāvaṃ tirayati raver adbhagānām idānīm / sarvāṅgiṇām diśati palitām himānī*. The idea of the smoke of the cow dung fire and frost also in 302 and 303 (12, 10–11).

46 Quoted by Vidyākara 317 (13, 12) *asaralajanāśleṣakrūras tuṣārasamīraṇaḥ*.

47 Lienhard 1974 referring to Tolkāppiyam (the rules concerning winter in the *kuriñci* style of *akam* or love poetry are found in Poruḷ 953–954). Lienhard goes on showing parallels from Sanskrit poets and concludes on p. 142 that “Wintergedicht” is a definite genre.

48 Ṛs 4, 1 *navapavalodgamasasyaramyaḥ*; 4, 9 *suśītalāni sarāṃsi*; 4, 7 *ṛṇāgralagnaiḥ tubinaiḥ*; 4, 10 *himaḥjātaśitair ... maruḍbhīḥ* (PW has v.l. *himaḥpāta-*); 4, 18 *vinipatitatuṣāraḥ krauñcanādopa-*

Warm fire and warm clothes help against the cold of winter. In the *Ṛtusamhāra* (5, 2), the windows are closed during the *śiśira* and people resort to fire, sunshine and thick clothes. The ladies of graceful waists attracted the prince with their rustling winter garments (Rv 19, 41 *marmarair ... vyaktahemaraśanaś ... haimanair nivasanaś*). Bhartṛhari gives a nice description of the happy man, who, eating ghee and yogurt, wearing bright-red clothes, and anointed with Kashmiri oil, sleeps comfortably in the wintertime, exhausted after love-making.<sup>49</sup> Cold water and nightly pastimes were the two positive things (“virtues”) in winter.<sup>50</sup> But to spend winter in warmth and pleasure was an option only for the rich. In a stanza quoted by Vidyākara, they could look to the coming of the frost as pleasant, but “it is we poor folk who despair; our lap, half covered by a torn and beaten rag, receives no better gift than the trembling of our knees”.<sup>51</sup>

Started by the *Ṛtusamhāra*, the poetic description of the six seasons (*ṣaḍṛtuvarṇana*) became a genre. For example, *Vastupāla* in the *Naranārāyaṇānanda* (early 13th-century epic) canto 4 (according to Warder 2004: 507) listed some of the characteristic flowers, birds, winds, clouds, snow, etc. of the six seasons in a mountain forest. A medical work, *Suśruta*, also turns poetic when describing the seasons. In the winter, the cold north wind blows, the quarters are full of dust and smoke, the sun is hidden in frost, and lakes are frozen. The animals such as crows, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, rams and elephants are heated, while some trees open their flowers. The cold season (*śiśira*) is extremely cold, the four quarters are agitated by wind and rain; in other respects, the wise man knows it to be similar with winter.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the six seasons, poets also wrote descriptions of the twelve months (Hindi *bārahmāsā*). This second genre became very popular in early NIA poetry (East Hindī, Rājasthānī, Beṅgalī). In her study, Vaudeville (1965) lists a number of examples and analyses the different types of *Bārahmāsā*. In

*gītaḥ ... himayuktaḥ ... kālaḥ*; 5, 4 *tuṣārasaṅghātānīpātaśītalāḥ śaśāṅkabhābhīḥ śiśīrikṛtāḥ ... rātrayaḥ* (snowfall as *himagama* also in 5, 8).

49 Bhartṛhari 2, 97 (also *Ind. Spr.* 7417) *hemante dadhidugdhasarpīraśanā, mañjiṣṭhāvāsobhṛtaḥ...* For winter (*hima-ṛtu*) as the season of love, see also *Śiśup* 6, 61. These ideas of poets about warm clothing, substantial food, wine and love-making as suitable in wintertime correspond well with the advice of Caraka 1, 6, 9–21.

50 ŚārṅgP 3923 (137, 5) *he hemanta smarisyāmi tvayy aṭite guṇadvayam / ayatnaśītalām vāri nīśā ca surataḥsamā //*.

51 312 (13, 7, Ingalls’s translation) *dhanyānām ... ramyas tuṣārāgamaḥ / asmākaṁ tu vidīrṇa-daṇḍītapāṭīpracchāditoddbhāṭītakroḍasvīkṛtajānuvepathumatām cetaḥ param śidati.*

52 1, 6, 22 *vāyur vāty uttaraḥ śīto rajodhūmākulā dīśaḥ / channas tuṣārāśiḥ savitā himānaddbhā jalāśayāḥ //* 23 *darpiṭā dhvāṅkṣakhaḍgāhvamaḥīṣorabhrakuñjarāḥ / rodhrapriyaṅgupunnāgāḥ puṣpīṭā himasāhvaye //* 24 *śiśire śītam adhikaṁ vātavṛṣṭyākulā dīśaḥ / śeṣam hemantavat sarvaṁ vijñeyam lakṣaṇam buddhaiḥ //*.

her opinion, the two genres have different origins. In the *Bārahmāsā*, the main theme is separation (*viraha*) from the beloved, described in an erotic or religious tone, and references to the characteristics of seasons are rare.<sup>53</sup>

## 6. NATURE IN WINTER

Winter is hard for everyone. According to a Vedic text, it subjects all creatures to its will: the plants wither, the leaves fall off the trees, the birds retire, etc.<sup>54</sup> The poets also knew that animals have a difficult time in winter. Lakṣmīdhara: “The monkeys shiver in the wind; sheep, goats, and cattle, thin from cold, are suffering. / The dogs, although just driven out, return and will not leave the oven. / And this poor man, sick with the attack of frost, / like a turtle tries to hide / his limbs within his body.”<sup>55</sup>

There are further examples. BhNS 32, 62 Nagar (32, 61 Ghosh) in a Pkt. example: *himāhae vaṇāntare aam gao pavīṇṇao* “The forest region being stuck with snow (Ghosh: frost) this elephant comes to tears”. The cow, fortunately, is protected by her skin against rain, cold and heat (ŚPB 3, 1, 2, 14 *tayaiṣā varṣantaṁ tayā himāṁ tayā ghr̥ṇāṁ titikṣadhyata*). Bees and frost I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>56</sup>

Plants suffer in winter. In the RV, one’s longing is compared to the longing of trees for the leaves stolen by frost.<sup>57</sup> The strong and snowy winter winds bend the stalks of jasmine (Amaru in Devadhar p. 122, also *Ind. Spr.* 3801). The *priyāṅgu* or millet becomes pale in the cold wind (R̥s 4, 10 *vipāṇḍutām yāti*). In the morning, the jasmine flower is filled with cold dew (Śak 5, 18 *vibhāte kundam antastuṣāraṁ*).

Quite often we hear of the poor state of lotuses and water-lilies in the winter.<sup>58</sup> After a snowfall (*tuṣārapatanāc caiva*), the lotus ponds ravaged by snow have lost their beauty as the leaves have aged and withered, the filaments and

53 In the second part of her study Vaudeville gives a number of examples in the original and a French translation. A perusal of this brought very little: Vinayacandra Sūri remarked that in the month Māgha the cold increases (stanza 20 *māh māsi mācāi him-rāsi*) and in Phālguna the winds make the leaves fall from trees (st. 23 *phāguṇ vā-guṇi panna paḍanti*). In Mullā Dā’ūd, we find a somewhat more elaborate description, how people try to dispel the cold with warm clothes and warm food, but nothing seems to help against bitter cold nights (st. 407–408).

54 ŚPB 1, 5, 4, 1 (ed. 1, 4, 5, 5) *hemanto hīmāḥ prajāḥ svām vaśam upanayate, tasmād dheman mlāyanty oṣadhayaḥ, pra vanaspatināṁ palāsāni mucyante, pratitarāṁ iva vayāmsi bhavanti...*

55 Quoted by Vidyākara 313 (13, 8) *kampante kapayo bhṛṣāṁ jaḍakṛṣāṁ go’jāvikaṁ glāyati’ svā cullīkuharodaraṁ kṣaṇam api kṣipto’pi naivojjhati / śītārtivyasanāturaḥ punar ayaṁ dīno janaḥ kūrnavat’ svāny aṅgāni śarīra eva hi nihnotum ākāṅkṣati*; Ingalls’s translation. The same also in ŚārṅgP 3921 (137, 3) with some different readings.

56 Karttunen 2009: 111.

57 RV 10, 68, 10 *himēva parṇā muṣitā vānāni*.

58 Vidyākara 293 (12, 1) *kālo so ’yaṁ kamalasarasāṁ saṁpadah kālādūtaḥ*. Also in 310 and 311 (13, 5–6).



petals shriveled, and nothing but stalks remain.<sup>59</sup> This is often used in similes. Imprisoned by Rāvaṇa, Sītā looks like a lotus at the beginning of winter (R 5, 63, 13 *Padminīva himāgame*). In battle, the head of the enemy fell from his neck just as a lotus, with fibres shrunken by cold, falls from its stalk (Rv 15, 52 *himakliṣṭa-kīñjalkam iva pañkajam*). To destroy an enemy, softness is the only way: does not a snowfall torment the lotus in winter?<sup>60</sup> The man, whose wife is always barking at home like a bitch, will shrink like a lotus at the onset of cold.<sup>61</sup> But a young woman, married to the snow-white old man, will do exactly the same.<sup>62</sup> Tears on the face are compared to cold dewdrops on lotuses (R 6, 98, 10 *snāpayantī mukhaṁ bāṣpair tuṣārair iva pañkajam*).

But even in wintertime, the sun gives warmth and thus it is possible to raise winter crops (MkP 101, 23) and the first spring flowers open during the cold season.

Cool weather was apparently good for grafting trees: according to Varāhamihira, this was done in *śiśira* for those without branches and in early winter (or just winter) for those with branches (BS 55, 6 *ajātaśākhān śiśire jātaśākhān himāgame*, cf. Gode 1961).

## 7. WHITE SNOW

Snow was also used in metaphors and similes as a poetic illustration of bright white colour. The English “snow-white” has its exact equivalents in Sanskrit (e.g. *himaśubhra* in Śiśup 1, 7). In the Rāmāyaṇa 1, 39, 21 Bhadra, the guardian-elephant of the north, is snow-white (*himaṣṇḍura*). In the Buddhist story, the Bodhisattva, sacrificing himself being born as an elephant, shone like the snow-cover on a mountain peak (*himottariya*, Jm 30, 23). Snow-white pearls are mentioned, e.g. in Kd: R̥s 4, 2 (*tuṣāra...ribha*). According to Varāhamihira, *haima* was one of the eight kinds of pearls (BS 81, 2 & 5). *Haimavata* pearls are mentioned in lexicography, while tin and even fresh butter are called *hima* (pw).

Varāhamihira compares the moon, when exceptionally white (a good omen), to snow, jasmine, etc.; Ketu to moonbeams, white as silver, snow, white lotus or jasmine; in a third passage, he has clouds having the lustre of snow, pearls,

59 R 3, 15, 24 *jarājarjaritaiḥ parṇaiḥ śiṅṅakesarakarṇikaiḥ / nālaśeṣā himadhvastā na bhānti kamalākarāḥ*.

60 Pañcatantra Book 3, verse 134 (Kale p. 180 from the Bombay ed., also *Ind. Spr.* 6385) *śatror ucchedanārbhāya na sāmno 'sty anyad auśadham / hemante himapātena padminī kim na dahyate*.

61 Vṛddha-Cāṇakya according to *Ind. Spr.* 5388 *yasya bhāryā grhe nityam sunīva parigarjati / tasya śidanti gātrāṇi padminīva himāgame*.

62 KSS 30 = 6, 4, 31 *himaśubhreṇa tena tvaṁ hemanteneva padminī*. Lotus killed by frost also in KSS 29 = 6, 3, 55 *padmasyeva himāhitaḥ*.

conch-shells and moonbeams.<sup>63</sup> Kālidāsa has snow-white (R̥s 1, 6 *tuṣāragaura*) garlands, Somadeva an umbrella gleaming white as snow (KSS 18 = 3, 4, 71 *chatre tuhinatviṣi*).

In poetical imagery, the smile or laugh was considered white. Therefore, the snowy mountain also seemed to be laughing (KSS 73 = 12, 6, 159 *himam̐ hasantam̐ iva*). The simile is discussed by Hara (1995), but his examples do not mention snow.

Even the night, though very dark in itself, had dazzling white teeth and hair of snow so that its slow onset gave the poet the idea of an old lady.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, Kalhaṇa compared the snow itself as a target domain to the whiteness of curds.<sup>65</sup>

A less pleasant comparison is found in Jayānaka's Pṛthvīrājavijaya 10, 45 (according to Warder 2004: 386). The Turkish G(h)ori king seemed to have taken his whiteness from the snow of his native land in the direction of the Snowy Mountain and on his body he appeared to bear a blameworthy disease. Jonarāja explains this as the white leprosy (*śvitra*) in his commentary.

A Buddhist idea is found in Vedehathera's Samantakūṭavaṇṇanā 707 (Warder 2004: 335) stating that the value of the life of people is more trifling than that of ice.

## 8. MEDICINE

Physicians classed a number of things according to the seasons: the changes of the three humours, the food, drinks and medicines to be preferred or avoided, the power of medicinal herbs (Vogel 1971: 304). From this viewpoint, the seasons are discussed, e.g. in Suśruta 1, 6. It is stated that the herbs growing during the rains reach full power in the winter. The waters are calm, smooth, and very heavy, and as the sun's rays are weak, the snowy wind makes the body somewhat numb.<sup>66</sup> Vāgbhaṭa (AH 1, 12, 24–25) explains that in winter phlegm and wind are calming,

63 VM: BS 4, 30 *prāleya*; 11, 14 *śasikiraṇarajatabhimakumudakusumopamāḥ*; 24, 16 *himamauktikaśaṅkhaśaśāṅkakaradyutiḥ*.

64 ŚāringP 3919 (137, 1) *himadhavaladantakeśā mandadyutitārakā bṛhattimīrā / dviguṇībhūtā rajanī vṛddheva śanaiḥ śanair yāti //*.

65 Rājat 3, 225 On the frontier of Kashmir: He saw before him the snowy range, verdant with waving trees and glittering auspiciously like a dish of curds (*lolānokahaśādvalam̐ maṅgalyadadhī-pātrābhām̐ dadarśāgre*).

66 Suśruta 1, 6 *tā evauśadhaya ... balavatyo hemante bhavanty, āpaś ca praśāntāḥ snigdḥā atyartham̐ gurvyāś ca, tā upayujyamānā maṅḍakiraṇatvād bhānoḥ satuṣārapavanopastambhitadehānām...* See also Caraka 1, 6, 9–21, and ŚāringS 1, 2, 24–29.

but in *śísira*, wind and bile are calming, while phlegm is accumulating (interpretation of Zimmermann 1999: 34).

Cold extracts or *himas* are occasionally used as medicine (*ŚāringS* 2, 1, 1; 2, 4, 1 ff.). Caraka (*Ci* 24, 154) lists cold water, air from ice bags (*himapūrṇānām dṛtīnām pavanāhatāḥ*) and other cold things among remedies for alcoholism.

Naturally, I have also looked for any mention of frostbite in medicine, but without success. Apparently it is not included in various lists of diseases and ailments. Just before I gave this to the press, I happened to note, searching for something else, the passage *AS* 6, 49, 160 where the effects of cold wind and frostbite are listed among the ailments treated by garlic (*śītavātahimadagdhatanūnām ... laśunasya*).

## 9. SNOWY MOUNTAINS

Introducing Prajāpati in the Hiraṇyagarbha hymn, the *RV* claims that both the Himālayas and the ocean came from his power, while the *AV* spoke of the embryo of snowy mountains.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps we have here the earliest account of the common belief that Kashmir and Nepal were originally under water.<sup>68</sup> In mythology, Himālaya is a king, just like human kings (meeting Raghu in *Kd*: *Rv* 4, 79). For the poet of the lower countries, the snow on the Himālayas was a fault, just like the stain was a fault on the moon.<sup>69</sup> A boy is afraid of young breasts, but a grown-up is not even afraid of the Himālayas.<sup>70</sup>

The snowy chain of the Himālayas is the source of the river systems of the Indus and the Ganges.<sup>71</sup> The mountain rivers were cold. According to Kālidāsa, the cooling tears of joy replaced the hot tears of sorrow, just like the Himālayan stream flowing down into the summer-heated waters of the Ganges and Sarayū.<sup>72</sup> In another place, he rightly mentions a cold river in the Himālayas (*KS* 1, 6 *tuṣārasrutī*), but supposes that lions are hunting elephants around it (cf. *KSS* 22 = 4, 2,

67 *RV* 10, 121, 4 *yasyemé himávānto mahitvā yasya samudrām*; *AV* 6, 95, 3 *gárbo himávātā*.

68 *Rājāt* 1, 25 Kashmir was in the womb of the Himālayas, filled with water (*kukṣau himādrer arṇobhiḥ pūrṇā*).

69 Subhāṣitārṇava 126 according to *Ind. Spr.* 2250 *candre lāñchanatā himam himagīrau*; id, 147 (*Ind. Spr.* 4978) *himālayagiriḥ prāleyarūpo* – with two late words! The same idea also in *Kd*: *KS* 1, 3 *yasya himam na saubhāgyavilopi jātam*.

70 Subhāṣitārṇava 226 according to *Ind. Spr.* 6858 *laghayati sma haimācalam*.

71 *AV* 6, 24, 1 *himāvataḥ prā sravanti sīndhau samaha saṅgamāḥ*. Cf. the blessing in *AV* 19, 2, 1 *śām ta āpo haimavatīḥ*. Later e.g. *Rājāt* 4, 146 *ullaṅghya himādrim iva jāhnavī*; *KSS* 19 = 3, 5, 111.

72 *Rv* 14, 3 *ānandajaḥ śokajalam āsru bāṣpatayor aśītam śísīro bibbeda gaṅgāsaravyor jalam uṣṇataptam himādrinisyanda ivāvātīrṇaḥ*.

76 on elephants and 140 on lions in the Himālayas). Their water was considered wholesome and healthy (Caraka 1, 27, 209).

The MkP 58 tells the story of a young Brahman who was so absorbed in admiring the beauty of the Himālayas that the magical ointment was washed from his feet by melting snow (19 *tuhinena vilīyatā*, 28 & 45 *himavāriṇā*).

The Himālayas were also famous for many healing herbs, already known in the times of the AV.<sup>73</sup> In Kālidāsa, the luminous plants dispel the darkness which fills the caves of the snowy mountain.<sup>74</sup> Varāhamihira knew reddish Himālayan diamonds (BS 80, 7 *īṣattāmraṁ himavati*). Himālayan gorges were also the home of yaks and śarabhas.<sup>75</sup> And of course the Himālayas were the favourite of hermits and of divine Vidyādhara.<sup>76</sup>

A long description of the Himālayas is given by Bhāravi in canto 5 of the Kirātārjunīya: the snowy chain has its usual attributes including many jewels (5, 8, 10), rivers (7) showering small drops of snowy water (9 *laghutuṣārātuṣārajala-cyutam*), and with snow-white tops glittering with many jewels (12 *anekamaṇi-prabhair ... himapāṇḍubhiḥ ... śikbarair*). The Mountain King himself has snow-white heads (17 *himagaaurair acalādhipaḥ śirobbhiḥ*). In the well-known myth, Śiva was the son-in-law of the Himālayas.<sup>77</sup>

The Sanskrit name of the Himālayas somewhat fluctuated, as any combination of a word for “snow” and for “mountain” was accepted, especially by poets. The most common name is *Himavant*, while *Himālaya* seems to be rather late.<sup>78</sup> The other variants include *himakṣmādhara* (VM:BS 72, 1), *himagiri* (KSS 10 = 2, 2, 217; 37 = 7, 3, 82; *Ind. Spr.* 2054<sup>79</sup> & 2250 above), *himadhara* (R in *PW*), *himaprastha* (Harivaṁśa in *PW*), *himabhūbhṛt* (MkP 58, 20), *himaśikharin* (Vikramāṅkacarita 18, 85 in *pw*), *himāga* (*hima+aga*) (Harivaṁśa in *PW*), *himācala* (Kir 5, 1; Śiṣup

73 AV 4, 9, 9 The ointment coming from the three-peaked snowy mountain (*āñjanam traikakudām jātām himāvatas pāri*); 5, 4, 2 The herb born in the snowy mountain (*jātām himāvatas pāri*) and 8 in the northern snowy mountain (*udañ jātō himāvataḥ*); and 19, 39, 1 *himāvatas pāri* & 8 *yātra himāvataḥ śiraḥ*. In later times, e.g. KSS 28 = 6, 2, 169; Caraka Ci 28, 165.

74 Rv 8, 54 *jvalitena guhāgataim tamas tubinādrer iva naktam oṣadhīḥ*. Mountain caves also in Rv 2, 67 *haimāvataic ca kukṣeḥ*.

75 Yaks, e.g. in VM: BS 72, 1 *camaryaḥ ... himakṣmādharakandareṣu*; śarabhas in Bāṇa HC 5, 132.

76 Hermits, e.g. Kd: KS 1, 54 & BhāḡP 1, 13, 29; Vidyādhara e.g. KSS 22 = 4, 2, 255; 37 = 7, 3, 180; 59 = 10, 3, 9 and 65 = 10, 9, 246.

77 R 4, 11, 12 *himavān as śaṅkaraśvaśura*; Bhartṛhari 1, 28 *tuṣārādreḥ sūnu*. Pārvatī as *Himagirisutā* in KSS 22 = 4, 2, 254 & 42 = 7, 8, 225.

78 *Himavant* as early as the RV, then AV; further R 4, 11, 12, Manu 2, 21 (in the north); Kd: KS 3, 23 & 6, 47, Śak 5, 5+; AK 3, 4, 638; VM:BS 14, 24 (in the north); 16, 17 (presided over by Mercury); 80, 7; Rājat 5, 152; KSS 52 = 9, 2, 11; MkP e.g. 51, 9 and 58, 16. *Himālaya* in Kd: KS 6, 94; BhG 10, 25; BhāḡP 1, 13, 28 and 5, 16, 9; KSS 4, 21.

79 Bhartṛhari lith. ed. *gaṅgātīre himagiri*, not in Kosambi.

13, 27; Rājāt 3, 225; 4, 515; KSS 4, 27; 7, 109; 19 = 3, 5, 111; 22 = 4, 2, 76 & 140; 52 = 9, 2, 9; 59 = 10, 3, 9; MkP 58, 34), *himācalendra* (KSS 28 = 6, 2, 169), *himādri* (Kd: KS 1, 54 & Rv 14, 3; Rājāt 1, 25; 3, 138; 4, 146; KSS 1, 39; 37 = 7, 3, 180; 52 = 9, 2, 69; 59 = 10, 3, 75; 65 = 10, 9, 246), *tuṣāragiri* (Mbh 13, 14, 109), *tuṣārasīkharin* (Harṣacarita in *pw*), *tuṣārādri* (Md 104; Bhartṛhari 1, 28; KSS 1, 40 & 4, 87), *tuhinakṣmābhṛt* (Kādambaṛī in *pw*), *tuhinagiri* (Prasannarāghava in *pw*), *tuhinaśaīla* (KSS 22 = 4, 2, 255), *tuhinacaīla* (Harṣacarita in *pw*), *tuhinācala* (MkP 83, 6), *tuhinādri* (Kd: Rv 8, 54), *prāleyaśaīla* (KSS 37 = 7, 3, 22; ŚārṅgP 3925), *prāleyabhūdhara* (Vikramāṅkac. 18, 77 in *pw*) and *prāleyādri* (Md 57; Vikramāṅkacarita 18, 86 & 94 in *pw*).

Another mountain, north of the Himālayas, was known as snow-capped, Hima- or Hemakūṭa (in Purāṇas, see e.g. BhāgP 5, 16, 9 and 17, 9).

## 10. COOLNESS

Especially in the hot plains, the idea of snow and frost was not very familiar. Thus, the snow words may refer just to coolness, for instance, to the cool sand of a river (*himavāluka* – BhāgP 10, 29, 45) or to cool fragrant drinking water (Naiṣ 3, 93 *tuṣārā*). In lexicography, a number of names indicating coolness are given to camphor because of its cooling effect (*hima*, *himakara*, *himayukta*, *himavāluka*, *himāṅka*, etc. in the *pw*). But the most common example is the coolness of the Moon.

## 11. COLD MOON

The moon brings coldness or coolness and has cold rays (or hands). With these it can dispel the heat of fire (Śak 3, 1 *visṛjati himagarbhair agnim indur mayū-khaiḥ*). Several poetic names for the moon are derived from this idea: snow-beamed or -rayed as *himagu* (VM:BS 104, 9; VM:BJ 2, 16; 5, 25; 6, 4; 8, 11; 9, 4; 25, 3), *himamayūkha* (VM:BS 21, 14), *himaraśmi* (Śiśup 9, 68; VM:BJ 2, 16 *himaraśmija*), *himāṁśu* (Kd: Rv 5, 16; 6, 47; 14, 80 & Md 87; *Ind. Spr.* 2: 6896 = Śak 1, 20; AK 1, 6, 171; VM:BS 33, 13; 34, 9), *tuṣārakiraṇa* (Śiśup 9, 27), *tuṣāraraśmi* (Prab in *PW*), *tuhinakiraṇa* (VM:BJ 3, 7; -*putra* in VM:BS 104, 24 is Mercury), *tuhinagu* (VM:BJ 5, 15), *tuhinaraśmi* (VM:BJ 17, 17 acc. to *PW*), *tuhinamayūkha* (Vikramāṅkac. 104, 19 in *pw*), *tuhināṁśu* (*Ind. Spr.* 7385; VM:BJ 17, 13); *prāleyaraśmi* (VM:BS 18, 7); *prāleyāṁśu* (VM:BS 4, 24; Śiśup 9, 87). It can also be snow-handed as *himakara* (Kd: Rv 9, 38; Vāsav 4 & 186 Hall = 208 Ś; Rājāt 4, 17 of moon-face; VM:BS 24, 33), *tuṣārakara* (Prasannarāghava 7, 61) and *tuhinakara* (Prasannar 6, 23), or snow-lighted as *himajyotis* (Harivaṁśa in *PW*),

*himatviṣ* (KSS 35 = 7, 1, 23 & 85 = 12, 18, 16), *himaruci* (Śiśup 4, 20 & 11, 14; *Ind. Spr.* 3123 = \*Kāmandaki NS 5, 88), *himasrut* ('emitting snow', i.e. snowy light, Kādambarī in *pw*), *himosra* (Bhattik 9, 2 in *PW*), *tubinadyuti* (Śiśup 9, 30), *tubina-dīdhiti* (Vikramāṅkac. 11, 37 in *pw*), or even the abode of snow as *himadhāman* (Śiśup 4, 20 & 9, 53). Kālidāsa compares bright ornaments to the union of the star Citrā and the moon freed from the cold season (Rv 1, 46 *himanirmuktayor yoge citrācandramasor iva*). Rāma burst into tears like the Pauṣa moon shedding dewdrops (Rv 14, 84 *sabāṣpas tuṣāravarṣīva sahasyacandraḥ*).

## 12. DEW AND DROPS

There are four examples of this usage from Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa: people's faces were bathed in tears like a forest dripping with dew on a windless morning (15, 66). In the morning, the "dewdrops pure like the polished pearls of a necklace have fallen on the rosy hearts of the tree-buds" (5, 70). The forest breeze laden with cold dew drank the drops of his perspiration (9, 68). Blending with the spray of mountain-cascades ... the refreshing breeze (2, 13).<sup>80</sup> The spray from cool cascades is also found in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.<sup>81</sup> Kālidāsa mentioned autumnal dewdrops on leaves (R 3, 15 *patrāntalagnatuhināmbu*). The moon rays are said to emit cold drops.<sup>82</sup> Occasionally, mist is also meant: the sun may be concealed by clouds, mist, or an eclipse, in the same way as the moon or stars.<sup>83</sup> In the hot season, the mist brings coolness.<sup>84</sup>

## 13. CONCLUSION

When we look through the material collected (and one could easily find more), snow and ice are by no means rare in classical Indian literature. Early Vedic culture

<sup>80</sup> Rv 15, 66 *himanīyandīnī prātar nirvāteva vanasthālī*; 5, 70 *tāmrodareṣu patitaṁ tarupalla-veṣu nirdhautahāra gulikāvīśadaṁ himāmbhaḥ*; 9, 68 *sveda...jālakam ācacāma satuṣāraśīkaro ... vanānilaḥ*; 2, 13 *prktas tuṣārair girinirjharāṇām ... pavanaḥ*.

<sup>81</sup> BhāgP 4, 25, 18 *himanirjharavipruṣmat*.

<sup>82</sup> Amaru 98 (*Ind. Spr.* 7385) *prāleyaśīkaramucas tubināṁśubhāsaḥ*. Kd: Rv 14, 84 above.

<sup>83</sup> Sun in BhāgP 10, 84, 33 *sūryam iva meghahimoparāgaṁ*. In VM:BS 21, 20 the sun or moon dimmed by mist is mentioned as a good omen in the month of Māgha (*tuṣārakaluṣadyuti ravi-śaśāṅkau*). Moon also in Mbh 9, 64, 6 *pūrṇacandram iva vyomni tuṣārāvṛtamaṇḍalam* and R 3, 15, 13 *tuṣārāruṇamaṇḍalaḥ* and Prabodhacandrodaya 1, 23 *sāndratuhināntarito vibhāti*. Stars in Kd: KS 2, 19 *himakliṣṭaparakāśāni jyotīṁṣīva*.

<sup>84</sup> Dṛṣṭāntaśataka 25 according to *Ind. Spr.* 3059 *nidāghakāle prāleyaṁ prāyāḥ śaityaṁ vabatya alam*. Here the hot season seems to confirm to the interpretation as mist. But combined with wind, it is difficult to say, whether *prāleya* is mist (so Böhtlingk) or snow when it makes one tremble (*Ind. Spr.* 4366 = \*Bhartṛhari in Schiefner *prāleyavātpracayavikampita*).

was centred in the Punjab and there snow was not so rare in wintertime. The real winter was found in the mountains and they were rather close. In later times, the most explicit passages on snow were usually connected with mountains, with the Himālayas and Kashmir. In the North Indian plains, cold weather and frost mainly occurred in the night. Thus, we have a number of passages describing cold winter mornings, when the sun had not had time to warm up the air. For South Indians, snow was something exotic, but not unknown. The rarity of snow and experience of it is clearly the reason that words for snow, ice, cold water, water drops and mist form a tangle where it is often difficult to decide what is actually meant. This could never happen where snowy winters are a common experience. Nobody could imagine using Tibetan *kha ba* or *gangs*, Finnish *lumi* or *jää*, English *snow* or *ice*, for mist or dewdrops.

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