

# The Gaming Board in Indian Chess and Related Board Games: A Terminological Investigation\* /

Andreas Bock-Raming

Our knowledge of Indian gaming boards used for chess and related board games is based to a large extent on textual evidence contained in the mythological literature (e.g. the *Rāmāyaṇa*; Purāṇic literature); in grammatical and lexicographical works like those of Patañjali and Amara; in various poetical works (e.g. Ratnākara's *Haraviḷaya*, Amaracandra's *Bālabbārata*, Bhartṛhari's *Vairāgyaśataka*) and in some religious writings of the Buddhists and Jains. All these texts clearly show that already in ancient times there existed several terms signifying a gaming board, the most frequent of which are the Sanskrit words *aṣṭāpada*, *phalaka* as well as a number of Sanskrit expressions meaning "cloth". Many of these literary sources have already been referred to in earlier books and articles (cf., e.g., Murray 1913: 33ff.). It seems necessary, however, to follow, with respect to the relevant literary data, a more systematic approach. I propose to investigate the history of each of the above-mentioned terms as reflected in various Indian texts separately, to give a tentative dating of the contexts in which they occur and to see if and how they are interrelated with each other.

In this connection, it also seems desirable to deal with a number of texts which have been largely neglected so far. Unlike the literary documents just mentioned they have nothing to do with mythology or religious matters, but are concerned with a pure description of the rules of chess and related board games. The most important among them are the *Mānasollāsa*, the *Vilāsamaṇimañjarī*, the *Kṛīḍākauśalya* and some others. For the present investigation they are especially interesting as they contain some more names for gaming boards in addition to those just mentioned as well as a variety of expressions relating to the details of these boards. At the same time, these observations invite the question whether all these terms were in any way differentiated. In other words: it has to be asked whether certain terms were possibly reserved for a specific board used in a particular game. Thus, the present investigation will concentrate on the terminological aspects of the Indian gaming board, leaving aside for the time being other aspects like the representations of boards preserved at archaeological sites and in art history.

## 1. Terms meaning "cloth"

Previous scholarly publications on the dice game in Vedic and Sanskrit literature (cf. above all Falk 1986; esp. 111ff.; cf. also Bhatta 1985) have shown that the earliest evidence for the use of a board – or, to put it more general, a surface for playing a board game – is provided by the Sanskrit terms *vāsa*, *akṣāvāpana* and *varāśī* all of which mean "cloth". The *varāśī* is mentioned in the *Kāṭhakaṃ* (15.4), a Vedic text which dates back to around 800 B.C., while *akṣāvāpana* occurs in the *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra* (15.3,30: "vāladāmabaddham akṣāvapanam") and the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (5.3.1,10: "vāladām-nākṣāvāpanam prābaddham"), the latter of which may have been composed around 600

B.C. The *vāsas* is mentioned in the *Mānavaśrautasūtra* (1.5.5,7: “adhivevane ‘hataṃ vāsa udagdaśam āstūrya tasmimś catuḥśatam akṣān nivapati”), a text belonging to the late Vedic period which begins around 550 B.C. In another, probably later passage of the second book of the great Indian epic *Mahābhārata*<sup>(1)</sup> the cloth is called *āstara* (2.51,3d: “rathaṃ viddhi mamāstaram”).

All these different passages just quoted leave no doubt that the piece of cloth they mention was exclusively used as a dice-board in a simple game of dice. There is no evidence that some kind of board game with pieces was involved. As we will see later on, it is only in very much younger texts that a piece of cloth is used as a board in a game like chess. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that even in Vedic times the cloth used as a “board” in a simple game of dice seems to have been an exception to the rule. In most cases, the game was played without a piece of cloth, the dice being thrown on a depression in the ground called *adhivevana*, *ādevana* or *āvapana* (Falk 1986: 115).

## 2. *aṣṭāpada*

The next expression to be discussed here is *aṣṭāpada*,<sup>(2)</sup> which is much more complicated than *vāsas* and related terms. It has often been simply translated as “chess board”. However, in many cases it is utterly unclear whether it is connected with chess or not. Furthermore, among the various meanings listed for *aṣṭāpada* by the relevant dictionaries, there are two which are equally important for the present study: it may stand for a kind of board game; and it may be used as an expression for “gold”.

The earliest known occurrence of the term in the sense of “gaming board” without any further specification, however, as to the kind of game played on it is a passage in the Buddhist *Vinayapiṭaka* (= *Vin*), which can be roughly dated between the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. It runs:

“They (i.e. the shameless, sinful monks mentioned before) play on [boards with] eight times eight squares and on [boards with] ten times ten squares”.<sup>(3)</sup>

Also the definition given by Patañjali (2nd century B.C.) in his *Mahābhāṣya* – “pañktau pañktāv aṣṭau padānīti”: “*aṣṭāpada* is called [a board with] eight fields in each row” – does not allow any conclusions for which kind of game the *aṣṭāpada* was meant. There is nothing to indicate that Patañjali might have understood it as a chess board as has been assumed by Thieme (1962: 208 = *Kleine Schriften*, 417).

Evidently, the term *aṣṭāpada* was not only used to signify a gaming board. It seems that it was, like the *daśapada*, also the name for a kind of board game. The passage from the *Vinaya* quoted above is also contained in another Buddhist text of approximately the same period, namely the *Brahmajālasutta* in the *Dīghanikāya* of the *Suttapiṭaka* (DN I 6,23). There it has the same wording as in the *Vinaya* with the only exception that the locatives “on *aṣṭāpada*- and *daśapada*-[boards]” are substituted by accusatives thus translating as: “They played the *aṣṭāpada* = *aṣṭāpada*- and *daśapada* = *daśapada*-[games]”.<sup>(4)</sup> However, as in the case of the *Vinaya* text, there are no further details neither about the character nor the rules of this game; and this also holds true for a number of texts belonging to the canon of the Śvetāmbara-Jains which show that their authors

apparently knew *aṣṭāpada* as a kind of board game. E.g. in a passage of the *Sūyaga-ḍaṅga*, the second of altogether twelve *aṅga*-s, which are considered to form the oldest part of the canonical books of the Śvetāmbara-Jains and therefore may go back to about 300 B.C., the wise man is given the instruction:

“He should not learn [to play] the *aṣṭāpada*-[game], he should not speak anything forbidden by the law; a wise man should abstain from fights and quarrels”.<sup>(5)</sup>

According to other Jaina texts, however, e.g. the 40th of the *Uvavāiṃya Suttas* and the first chapter of the *Nāyādbammakabāo*, the *aṣṭāpada* (-game) is reckoned as the 13th of 72 arts which a young prince should learn. Although also here we are not given any details with respect to the character and the rules of the game called *aṣṭāpada*, it is nevertheless interesting to note that it is collocated with *jūya* (no. 10) = Skt. *dyūta* and *pāsaka/pāsaya* (no. 12) = Skt. *pāsaka*.<sup>(6)</sup> The first expression is normally translated as “gambling” (esp. with dice), while the second signifies dice of pyramidal shape. May we conclude from this that the authors of the 40th of the *Uvavāiṃya Suttas* and the *Nāyādbammakabāo* mentioned the *aṣṭāpada*-game together with these terms because they considered it as a game of chance?

The interpretation of passages containing the word *aṣṭāpada* sometimes is even more complicated because in later texts which all belong to post-Christian times this term may also have the meaning of “gold”. The earliest use of *aṣṭāpada* in the sense of “gold” seems to be a verse in the *Kumārasaṃbhava* of Kālidāsa, who probably lived around the turn from the 4th to the 5th century A.D. The relevant portion of the verse in question (7,10) runs:

“āvarjitāṣṭāpadakumbhatoyaiḥ satūryam enāṃ snapayāmbabhūvuḥ:”

“They (i.e. female servants) bathed her (i.e. the goddess Pārvaṭī) to the accompaniment of music with water from jars [made of] gold, which were poured out [over] her.”

The Sanskrit equivalent for “gold” in this verse is *aṣṭāpada*, which in the given context definitely has nothing to do with a gaming board or a game played on it. To my knowledge nobody has ever asked why *aṣṭāpada* in course of time also took the meaning of “gold”. I think, I have possibly found an answer which is related to the *aṣṭāpada* as a gaming board as we shall presently see. The *Saddbarmapuṇḍarika*, an important text of the Mahāyāna-Buddhism, the bulk of which was probably composed around 200 A.D., has in its third chapter a passage on the country in which the future Buddha named Padmaprabha will appear (page 65, lines 8-11, in the edition of H. Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio). It is described as even,<sup>(7)</sup> pleasant and beautiful, pure, prosperous etc. Among these epithets the following statement is especially interesting:

“suvarṇasūtrāṣṭāpadanibaddam/teṣu cāṣṭāpadeṣu ratnavṛkṣā bhaviṣyanti...:”

“It (i.e. the above-mentioned country) is composed [in the form] of *aṣṭāpada*(-s) [made] of golden threads. On these *aṣṭāpada*-s will be jewel-trees...”

This phrase is repeated at several other places of the *Saddb.* in an identical or similar wording and in a similar context.<sup>(8)</sup> In none of these cases an explanation is given, why Padmaprabha’s country should be composed in the form of one or more *aṣṭāpada*-boards. It seems, however, plausible to assume that the author, by using the expression *aṣṭāpada*, wanted to intimate the symmetrical arrangement of the whole area, the golden

threads indicating its streets intersecting at right angles. This interpretation of the passage from the *Saddb.* is corroborated by a few verses in the 1st book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* from the first half of the 5th century A.D. (cf. Hacker 1960: 56 = *Kleine Schriften*, 413 with reference to W. Kirfel). They contain the following description of the town Ayodhyā (R. 1,5,6-16, Critical Edition):

“ayodhyā nāma nagarī tatrāsīl lokaviśrutā... suvibhaktamahāpathā rājamārgeṇa mahatā suvibhaktena śobhitā... tāṃ tu rājā daśaratho... purīm āvāsayāmāsa... suvibhak-tāntarāpaṇām... citrām aṣṭāpadākārām...”

“There was situated Ayodhyā, a city which was famous in the worlds... it had well-ordered main roads and it was adorned with a great and well-proportioned royal highway. King Daśaratha dwelt in that city... which had well-ordered interior shops... which was colourful and shaped in the form of [a board] of eight times eight squares.”<sup>(9)</sup>

From this passage it seems to become clear that the metaphorical use of the expression *aṣṭāpada* in the descriptions of towns as contained in the *Saddb.* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the symbol for the symmetrical or at least well-proportioned arrangement of streets, buildings, etc.<sup>(10)</sup> But let us return to the above quoted text of the *Saddb.* The fact that there the *aṣṭāpada* is said to be made of golden threads may have been the origin of its meaning of “gold”. One can imagine that the attribute “having golden threads” was so prominent that at some time *aṣṭāpada* became an expression of the material “gold” itself.

The fact that from the beginning of the 3rd century A. D. it was evidently possible to use *aṣṭāpada* either in the sense of “board” or in the sense of “gold” depending on the context in which it occurred throws a different light upon another text contained in the *Harivaṃśa*, the supplement of the great epic *Mahābhārata*. It describes a game of dice between two characters named Saṃkarṣaṇa and Rukmin. Before going into the details of this episode it seems necessary to recall that the *Harivaṃśa* is, in its entirety, not a homogeneous text but belongs to the vast mass of anonymous compilatory literature the original form of which has increased over several centuries to its present form by numerous additions and interpolations. Like all anonymous texts it is difficult to date, but on the ground of previous investigations it seems likely that its final redaction took place in the 5th century A.D. (cf. Hacker 1960: 62 = *Kleine Schriften*, 419).

The passage containing Saṃkarṣaṇas and Rukmin’s game of dice has already been dealt with by two German Indologists, Heinrich Lüders (1940: 170f.) and Paul Thieme (1962: 213f. = *Kleine Schriften*, 422f.). It is, however, important to note that their interpretations are not based on the Critical Edition of the *Harivaṃśa*, which appeared only in the years 1969-1971 and is based on 37 manuscripts. Therefore, it seems necessary to have a fresh look on the whole story as it is told in the critical text, which can be summarized like thus: On the occasion of the marriage of Kṛṣṇa’s grandson Aniruddha with Rukmin’s granddaughter Rukmiṇī many kings from the south of India (*dākṣiṇātya*) assemble and incite Rukmin to begin a game of dice with Saṃkarṣaṇa, the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa. Rukmin agrees and they all enter a hall which is adorned with golden pillars and sprinkled with sandal-water. The area where the game is supposed to take place is adorned with flowers. When they have taken place on golden seats, they summon Saṃkarṣaṇa, who says that he is willing to play with them. After heaps of jewels, pearls and gold have

been brought to the hall the game begins. At first, Saṃkarṣaṇa stakes ten thousand golden *niṣka*-s as they are called in Sanskrit, i.e. bands worn round the neck as a kind of ornament. It is Rukmin who wins them. When Saṃkarṣaṇa has been defeated several times, he raises the stakes to 10 millions of gold, but loses them again to Rukmin, who somehow does not play honestly, but boasts himself of having won and offends Saṃkarṣaṇa by saying that he, Saṃkarṣaṇa, is an incompetent player. Saṃkarṣaṇa becomes angry, but subdues his fury and stakes even 100 millions. He then calls upon his opponent to throw the red and black dice. This time, he wins, which, however, is not accepted by Rukmin, who claims that he is the winner. Saṃkarṣaṇa becomes even more angry, but gives no answer. Thereupon, a voice from the sky is heard which declares him, Saṃkarṣaṇa, as the rightful winner. The following text describes Saṃkarṣaṇa's reaction on these heavenly words (H. 2,89,42-43):

“iti śrútvā vacas tathyam antarikṣāt subhāṣitam / saṃkarṣaṇas tadotthāya sauvarṇe-  
noruṇā balī / rukmiṇyā bhrātaraṃ jyeṣṭhaṃ niṣpipeṣa mahītale// vivāde kupito rāmaḥ  
kṣeptāraṃ krūrabhāṣiṇam / jaghānāṣṭāpadenaiva prasahya yadupuṅgavaḥ//”

“When the powerful Saṃkarṣaṇa heard these well-spoken and true words from the sky, he jumped up and crushed the eldest brother of Rukmiṇī with a broad [piece of] gold on the ground.

Rāma (= Saṃkarṣaṇa), the bull among the Sadus, who had become angry in the dispute, slew him (i.e. his adversary Rukmin), who was about to throw [the dice] and who was uttering harsh words, forcibly with (or: with the?) *aṣṭāpada*”.

He then knocks out the teeth of one of the kings present, scares the others with his sword and tears out a golden pillar of the hall where the game takes place. Nearly at the end of the whole incident we are told in verse 49:

“na hato vāsudevena yaḥ pūrvaṃ paravīrahā/sa rāmakaramuktena nihato dyūta-  
maṅḍale / aṣṭāpadena balavān rājā vajradharopamaḥ//”

“The mighty king, the killer of hostile heroes, who was like the wielder of the thunderbolt (= the god Indra) and who had not been killed by Vāsudeva, was slain in the gambling circle with (or: with the?) *aṣṭāpada* which was hurled from Rāma's (= Saṃkarṣaṇa's) hand”.

I am sceptical that in *Harivaṃśa*-story just outlined *aṣṭāpada* is used in the sense of “gaming board” as has been assumed by Lüders and Thieme. The first point which should attract our attention is that it does not play the slightest role in the course of the game played between Rukmin and Saṃkarṣaṇa, but merely occurs as a weapon used by the latter to strike down his opponent. Apparently, it does not serve as a surface on which the players throw their dice. Verse 35 of our text clearly says that the dice are cast on a place – evidently on the ground – which is, as can be expected in a royal hall, free from dust.<sup>(11)</sup> Furthermore, verse 42 deserves our special attention. The text on which Lüders (and Thieme) based their translations runs: “Saṃkarṣaṇa jumped up and slew [him = Rukmin] with the broad golden *aṣṭāpada*”. However, the line “he slew him with the *aṣṭāpada*” is attested in not more than 6 out of the 37 manuscripts mentioned above and seems to have been secondarily adapted in these manuscripts from the second half of the following verse 43, where it stands in its proper place. So one must conclude that the Critical

Edition in verse 42 offers the more original and better reading according to which, as shown by my translation, Saṃkarṣaṇa hits his opponent with a piece of gold. Of course, one wonders how it is possible to knock down somebody with a piece of gold. A possible answer is that Saṃkarṣaṇa uses one of those thousands of *niṣka*-s mentioned in the preceding context. Those *niṣka*-s were silver or golden ornaments which were worn round the neck with their heavier or broader parts resting on the breast. In shape and weight they may be compared to the so-called “torques” worn in ancient Europe by the Celts or the *grivina*-s used by the Slavs (cf. Rau 1974: 53, footnote 63 with reference to Schrader 1917-1929). Like their European counterparts the Indian *niṣka*-s were also used as a means of payment, which is shown in our *Harivaṃśa*-text by the fact that Saṃkarṣaṇa pays his stakes in *niṣka*-s.

So if I am right in my conclusion that originally in verse 42 only a piece of gold and not a gaming board named *aṣṭāpada* was mentioned, it seems doubtful to me that in the remaining two verses of the *Harivaṃśa*-text, where *aṣṭāpada* indeed occurs, this term was intended in any other sense than simply gold. This seems all the more probable as the whole 89th chapter is full of references to gold: as we have seen, golden pillars and golden seats are mentioned several times; even the name of Saṃkarṣaṇa’s opponent, Rukmin, refers to gold as it means a person who is equipped with a *rukma*, which has the same meaning as *niṣka*, namely a relatively heavy ornamental breastplate made either of silver or of gold. Provided that my interpretation of the *Harivaṃśa* is right this would mean that it deals with a simple game of dice, in which, like in Vedic times, a board was not used at all.<sup>(12)</sup>

Concluding my observations on the *Harivaṃśa*, I should like to remark that its story of the game between Saṃkarṣaṇa and Rukmin has several parallel versions in the Purāṇic literature. In two of these, the *Brahma*- and *Viṣṇupurāṇas*, Saṃkarṣaṇa’s killing of Rukmin is mentioned just in one verse saying that he slew him with (the) *aṣṭāpada*.<sup>(13)</sup> Whether the redactors of these two texts understood *aṣṭāpada* as gold or as a gaming board cannot be decided. In any case, also in the *Viṣṇu*- as well as the *Brahmapurāṇas* the *aṣṭāpada* does not play the slightest role in the game itself.<sup>(14)</sup> The third parallel version contained in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, a text of the 10th century A.D., even eliminates the mentioning of (the) *aṣṭāpada* and makes Saṃkarṣaṇa slay Rukmin with his bludgeon.<sup>(15)</sup>

However, not all texts in which *aṣṭāpada* is mentioned are as problematic as those I have quoted so far. There are indeed a few texts in which *aṣṭāpada* clearly and beyond any doubt signifies a gaming board, and from their contexts it is clear that it is either meant as a chess board or as backgammon board. Examples for *aṣṭāpada* as a chess board are: first, the well-known passage in the second chapter of Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* (beginning of the 7th century A.D.) which says that during the reign of king Harṣa the *caturaṅga*, the four-fold army, was only drawn upon the *aṣṭāpada*-board;<sup>(16)</sup> secondly, a verse in Ratnākara’s *Haraviṣaya* (c. 850 A.D.) which mentions the *aṣṭāpada* together with foot-soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants as gaming pieces;<sup>(17)</sup> and thirdly, the commentary *Mṛtasaṅjivini* on Piṅgala’s *Chandaḥsūtra* by Halāyudha (10th century A.D.),<sup>(18)</sup> where *aṣṭāpada* occurs together with *caturaṅga*. The *aṣṭāpada* in the sense of a backgammon

board may be intended in Amarasimha's *Amarakośa* 2,10,46 (discussed below in part 3 of this article) and also in Amaracandra's *Bālabhārata* from the 13th century A.D., which mentions a golden *aṣṭāpada*-board used in a kind of backgammon.<sup>(19)</sup>

It may well be that the *aṣṭāpada*, if not in the *Harivaṃśa*, occasionally also served as a surface on which the dice were thrown in a simple game of dice. This seems to become evident from v. 45 in Bhāsa's *Dūtaghaṭokaca* (2nd-3rd century A.D.), where Ghaṭokaca is calling on Śakuni to abandon the dice and to prepare an *aṣṭāpada* which is (a) suitable (mark) for the arrows (of the enemies): "akṣān vimuñca śakune kuru bāṇayogyam aṣṭāpadaṃ samarakarmaṇi yuktarūpam". This possibly means that the *aṣṭāpada*-board on which the dice are cast is to be substituted by a chariot on which the enemies shoot their arrows (cf. Syed 1995: 87).

### 3. *Phalaka*

It appears that the term *phalaka* does not have such a long tradition as the Sanskrit terms for "piece of cloth" and *aṣṭāpada*. Although the meaning of *phalaka* as "board" or "lath" used for certain objects like doors, carts and ships is well established already in the late Vedic literature, its use in the sense of "gaming board" occurs for the first time very much later in the Buddhist Jātaka-literature, which in its present form belongs to the 5th century A.D.<sup>(20)</sup> In contrast to what has been said above with reference to the use of the *aṣṭāpada*-board, in most cases the use of the *phalaka* seems clear. From a passage in the *Aṅḍabbhūtajātaka* it becomes evident that the *phalaka*, like the piece of cloth discussed above, was used in a simple game of dice as a surface on which the dice were thrown ("rajataphalake suvaṇṇapāsake khiṇpati", I,290,1; cf. Lüders 1940: 115).

The term *phalaka* also occurs in the *Vairāgyaśataka* composed by Bhartṛhari who lived around 600 A.D. Verse 42 of this text says that [the god of] time is playing with the second as his partner by moving to and fro day and night like two dice, using the living beings as gaming pieces on the earth, which is identified as a gaming board (*bhuvana-phalaka*).<sup>(21)</sup> The context of Bhartṛhari's verse mentions "houses" in which there are at first several gaming pieces and afterwards only one piece as well as houses which at first have a single piece, then many pieces and at last none at all. This leaves no doubt that we have here an allusion to a kind of game which must have been very similar to the modern backgammon (cf. Thieme 1977: 520).

In addition to the *Vairāgyaśataka*, there are two more texts that clearly attest to the use of the *phalaka* as a backgammon board: first, a verse in the *Ṛṣabbapañcāśikā* composed by Dhanapāla (around 973 A.D.), which evidently refers to backgammon as it uses a similar metaphor as Bhartṛhari's text saying that the living beings on the board of the world (*samsāraphalaka*) are overpowered by the dice,<sup>(22)</sup> and secondly, a passage in the *Skandapurāṇa* which describes Śiva and Pārvatī playing backgammon on a *śāriphalaka*.<sup>(23)</sup>

The term *śāriphala* mentioned in the *Amarakośa* (2,10,46) by Amarasimha (probably between the 6th and 8th century A.D.), where it occurs together with *aṣṭāpada* as a synonymous expression, seems more difficult to interpret. As, however, both parts of this compound – *śāri*- = "gaming piece(s)" and *phalaka* = "board" – are used in all texts

quoted above – the *Vairāgyaśataka*, the *Ṛṣabhapañcāśikā* and the *Skandapurāṇa* (as well as the *Campūrāmāyaṇa*, cf. footnote 45) – as components of the game of backgammon and beyond that also occur in the backgammon-passage of the *Mānasollāsa* (cf. part 4 of this article), the conclusion seems permissible that the *sāriphala* = *aṣṭāpada* in the *Amarakośa* is a backgammon board, too.<sup>(24)</sup>

It is not quite clear, however, what kind of boards are precisely meant by *dyūtapthalaka* and *ākaraṣaphalaka* mentioned in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* 1,3,14 (4th century A.D.).<sup>(25)</sup>

#### 4. Terms Signifying a Gaming Board as well as the Details of these Boards in the Sanskrit Literature from the 12th Century A.D. onwards

Probing further into the history of the words *aṣṭāpada*, *phalaka* as well as the group of terms signifying a piece of cloth, one is struck by the fact that *aṣṭāpada* as a term for chess board or any other gaming board seems to have gradually come out of use around the 9th-10th centuries A. D., the only exception being the above-mentioned *Mṛtasañjivini* from the 10th and the *Bālabbārata* from the 13th century A.D. It seems that later authors preferred other terms like *phalaka* for the gaming board, substituting them for *aṣṭāpada*. This is confirmed by another allusion to chess which is contained in Rudraṭa's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* from the 9th century. There (5,2; cf. Jacobi 1896: 228 = *Kleine Schriften*, 541), instead of *aṣṭāpada*, the term *caturaṅgapīṭha*, i.e. "seat for the *caturaṅga*-game", is used, which is explained by Nami in his commentary from the 11th century as *caturaṅgapthalaka*. The same expression, i.e. *caturaṅgapthalaka*, is also substituted by Alaka's commentary from the 12th century for *aṣṭāpada* in the text of the *Haraviṅjaya* mentioned above.

For the present, we can only speculate on the reasons why *aṣṭāpada* obviously became obsolete, but it seems plausible to assume that it was just this ambiguity of the term which led to its coming out of use. Evidently, later Sanskrit authors did not know exactly what an *aṣṭāpada* was or were at a loss to explain the term with certainty. A case in point is the commentary "Rāmāyaṇatilaka" written by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa on the passage of the 1st book of the *Rāmāyaṇa* discussed above. Commenting on the expression *aṣṭāpada* he says: "Some say it means gold, others say it is a gaming board (*dyūtapthalaka*)". So Nāgeśa evidently can't make up his mind, he leaves the interpretation of the term undecided.

The assumption that in course of time *aṣṭāpada* as a term for chess board or any other gaming board came out of use is furthermore confirmed by a number of rather late texts which were composed between the 12th and 19th centuries A.D. As already mentioned, they do not, like those I have just discussed, belong to the Indian mythological or religious literature, but consist of a more or less detailed description of the rules for playing chess and other board games. The following texts, which I have used for my present investigation, belong to this literary category:

1. the *Mānasollāsa*, which was composed at the beginning of the 12th century by the South Indian ruler Someśvara. In its 5th *viṃśati* it contains, among others, a description



of the rules of two- and four-handed chess as well as a passage on a board game which is very similar to our modern *nard* or backgammon;<sup>(26)</sup>

2. the *Haribaracaturaṅga*, probably written in the first half of the 16th century by Godāvaramiśra, a scholar and poet at the court of the Indian king Pratāparudra. It deals with the rules of two-handed chess on an enlarged board of 14 x 14 squares;

3. two texts from the 15th and 16th centuries: the *Tiṭhitattva* by Raghunandana and the *Caturaṅga-Dīpikā* ascribed to a certain Śūlapāṇi, which both deal with the rules of four-handed chess;<sup>(27)</sup>

4. the *Nītimayūkha* by Nilakaṅṭha, which dates back to 1600 or 1700 and deals in 16 verses with two-handed chess;

5. the *Vilāsamañimanjari*, which was composed by a certain Tiruveṅgaḍācārya probably towards the end of the 18th century and is an extensive treatise on chess problems and their solutions;

6. the *Kriḍākauśalya*, an encyclopaedia of all sorts of games of the 19th century, which deals apart from chess and its variants with various board- and table games with and without dice and was composed by a certain Harikṛṣṇa, a resident of Auraṅgābād;

7. finally, two minor anonymous texts on two-handed chess, namely the *Śatarañjakutūhala* and the *Bālakahitabuddhibalakriḍana*.

Examining these texts more closely, one arrives at the surprising conclusion that to my knowledge they never use once the expression *aṣṭāpada* as a term for the board in chess or any other gaming board. Instead, they make use of a number of different expressions some of which we have met earlier. The most frequent of them are the two Sanskrit terms *paṭ(ṭ)a* and *vastra* which both mean “cloth”. Thus, in no less than four of the texts just mentioned, namely the *Haribaracaturaṅga*, the *Nītimayūkha*, the *Bālakahitabuddhibalakriḍana* and the *Śatarañjakutūhala*, a piece of cloth is used as a chess board.<sup>(28)</sup> Besides, *paṭ(ṭ)a* is also used for other boards: in the *Kriḍākauśalya*, it is the usual term applied to the boards of running and hunting games like *cauṣar* and its variants (cf. v. 159a; 179a; 181a; 285a; 308a; 158a and 170c: *catuḥpaṭṭa*). Thus, these texts continue a very old tradition, for we have seen above that cloth used as a gaming board can be traced to the Vedic literature of about 800 B.C.

Also *phala(ka)*, the term we have met, for example, with Bhartṛhari and in the Buddhist Jātaka-literature, is used in some of the texts under consideration in the 4th part of this article as a term for the chess board as well as for other gaming boards. Thus, in the *Nītimayūkha* the chess board is called *phala* (v. 2 beside the above-mentioned *paṭa*) while in the *Mānasollāsa* (5,634b) it is used as an expression for the board on which a game very similar to the modern backgammon is played.

Furthermore, *kriḍāyuddhāsana* = “the battle-ground of the play”, a metaphorical expression we have not met so far, is used in the *Haribaracaturaṅga* (8,24c) in connection with the chess board. A similar meaning is conveyed by *raṅga* in the chess text of the *Tiṭhitattva* (v. 31a), which is generally translated as “stage”, “arena”, but can also be used in the sense of “field of battle” according to Sanskrit lexicographers. Moreover, we find the expression “field of battle” also for boards other than chess boards. In the *Kriḍākauśalya*, it is used, e.g., for the board of the so-called *śmaśānadyūtakaṅkarikriḍā*

or “game [played with] small stones in the ‘cemetery-game’”, which is a war- or battle game of the group of Alquerque games (*raṇabbūmikā*, v. 266b; 301d; *yuddhabbūmikā*, v. 277b; for the *śmaśānadyūtakaṅkarīkrīḍā* see Bock-Raming 1995b: 122).

Finally, it should be mentioned that it was not always necessary to make use of a piece of cloth or a *pbalaka*-board. Chess as well as running and hunting games were, like the simple game of dice, played on the bare ground (cf. *Nītimayūkha*, v. 2; *Krīḍākauśalya*, v. 351a) or on a piece of rock (cf. *Krīḍākauśalya*, v. 259a: *ādarśasadyrṣe cāsmasthale*), on which diagrams of various forms were drawn.<sup>(29)</sup>

On the whole, one may conclude that in non-mythological texts like the *Mānasollāsa* etc. there were evidently no specific terms that were exclusively applied to a particular board, and interestingly enough, this result is, to a certain extent, paralleled by observations relating to the terminology used to describe certain details of a board. Evidently, some of the names of these details were not restricted to the board of a particular game, but were used for the board in chess as well as in other games. Let us take, e.g., the Sanskrit synonymous terms *pañkti* and *rekḥā*, which in several chess texts may signify a row as well as a file on the chess board.<sup>(30)</sup>

The first of these – *pañkti* – is also used as an expression for “row” in the *Mānasollāsa*’s description of *nard* (5,636a and c; 642c; 645c; *passim*), while the second, *rekḥā*, is used in the sense of “line” in the “cemetery game” as described in the *Krīḍākauśalya* (v. 260ab; 266a). Another case where a certain detail occurs with several types of boards is the term for the cells where the pieces used in a particular game are positioned. In the Sanskrit texts describing the rules of chess, such a cell is often called either *koṣṭha* (*ka*), the primary meaning of which is “granary”, “store-room”;<sup>(31)</sup> or it is, as in the *Vilāsamaṇimaṅjarī* and the *Śataraṅjakūtūhala*, expressed by a number of synonyms all of which have the meaning “house” like *gr̥ha*, *geha*, *sadana*, *sadman*, *bhavana*, *niketana*, *mandira* and *ālaya*.<sup>(32)</sup> Beyond that, the first of these terms, *koṣṭha*, is also used for the *pachisi* board as well as with respect to the boards of other running games as described in the *Krīḍākauśalya* (cf., e.g., v. 157d; 158c; 248a; 260c; 261d; 272c *passim*; 170d: *madhyakoṣṭha*; 242c: *prakoṣṭha*), while most of the synonymous expressions meaning “house” equally appear in the *Mānasollāsa*’s description of *nard* (for *gr̥ha*, cf., e.g., v. 5,635a; 645a; 646b *passim*; *geha*: 639d; 647b; 651c *passim*; *mandira*: 688a; 689b; *veśman*: 648c; 650d; 681b; *sadman*: 642d). Moreover, also the squares on the *pachisi* board are termed, beside the above-mentioned *koṣṭha*, as *geha* (*Krīḍākauśalya*, v. 184e).

Finally, the term *bhāga* = “side” seems worth mentioning, which occurs in chess (*Vilāsamaṇimaṅjarī*, *Paribhāṣā*, v. 32: *rājabhāga* and *mantribhāga* = “the king’s side” and “the minister’s side”) as well as in the *Krīḍākauśalya*’s description of the rules of *caupar* (v. 166a and 168a *savyabhāga* = “left side”).

On the other hand, there are expressions that seem to be restricted to one kind of game. Beside the above-mentioned Sanskrit words *pañkti* and *rekḥā*, the terms *vīthi* and *valaya* (lit.: “bracelet”; “ring”) are used to signify a row, but they only appear in the chess texts of the *Mānasollāsa* (*vīthi*: v. 564c; 590c; 597c; *valaya*: 574c; 575a). The same holds true for the Sanskrit words *pada* meaning “foot, footing, standpoint” and *sthāna* meaning “place of standing, place, spot”, both of which are, with two exceptions, only used with

reference to the square of the chess board and not in other games.<sup>(33)</sup> Similarly, also the expressions *koṇa* meaning “corner” and *sīman* meaning “(one) half (of the board)”<sup>(34)</sup> are only used in connection with the board in chess,<sup>(35)</sup> while *granthi*, the literal meaning of which is “knot”, is restricted in its use to signify a certain point on the board of a number of running games as described in the *Kriḍākauśalya* (cf., e.g., v. 264a; 266a; 268d; 272d; 275a: *dvātriṃśadgranthike kbele* – “in the game with 32 points”; 289b; 290a; 306c pas-sim). Furthermore, specific terms are also found in the *Mānasollāsa*’s description of *nard*: point 1 in the inner field of each player is called *śiras* or *mūrdhan* in Sanskrit both meaning “head” (cf., e.g., v. 5,639a; 642a; 644c; 646a), while point 12 in the outer field of each of the two opponents is termed *apaśīrṣa* or *avaśīrṣaka* both meaning “having the head turned down” (cf., e.g., 640d; 645c; 649b; 670a).

Summarizing the preceding observations on the names for Indian gaming boards and the terms of their details, one may draw the following conclusion: Sanskrit authors who were concerned with the description of the rules of board games and the boards connected with them never made use of the term *aṣṭāpada*. For signifying the gaming board, they had at their disposition a number of other expressions which they referred indiscriminately to the chess board as well as to the boards of other games. With respect to the details of these boards a certain terminological differentiation can be observed, which, however, is far from being consistent as the discussion of the terms for “line”, “row” and “square” has shown.

## References

### A. Texts

- Amaracandra. *The Bālabbārata*, ed. by P. Śivadatta and K. P. Paras. Delhi (2nd revised ed.) 1992.
- Amarasiṃha. *Amarakoṣa Nāmaliṅgānuśāsanam of Amarasimha [Enlarged with Anekarthadhvanimanjari, Dwiroopa-Koṣha and Ekakṣhara-Koṣha]*, ed. with ‘Ratnaprabha’-Sanskrit and Hindi Commentaries by Brahmananda Tripathi. Varanasi (3rd ed.) 1988 (The Chaukhamba Surabharati Granthamala 52).
- Bālakahitabuddhibalakriḍāna: see Triveṅgaḍācārya.
- Bāṇa. *The Harṣhacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa* (Text of Uchchvāsas I-VIII), ed. with an Introduction and Notes by P. V. Kane. Delhi etc. (repr.) 1986 (1st ed. Bombay 1918).
- Bhāgavatapurāṇa. *Śrīmadbhāgavata anvītarthaprakāśikā*, (ed. by) Rāmāteja Pāṇḍeya. Delhi (repr.) 1987 (Vrajajivan Prācyabhārati Granthamālā 26).
- Bhartṛhari. *Śatakṛāyām of Bhartṛhari*, critically edited by D. D. Kosambi. Bombay 1946.
- Bhāsa. *Bhāsanāṭakacakram. Plays Ascribed to Bhāsa. Original Thirteen Texts in Devanāgarī*, critically edited by C. R. Devadhar. Delhi etc. (repr.) 1987.
- Brahmapurāṇa*. (Ed.:) P. Schreiner, R. Söhnen, *Sanskrit Indices and Text of the Brahmapurāṇa*. Wiesbaden 1987 (Purāṇa Research Publications, Tübingen, vol. 1).
- Dasaveyāliya. *Śayyambhava’s Dashavaikālik Sūtra [Original Text, Hindi Version, Notes, Annotations and Appendices etc.]*, chief editor: Sh. Ch. Bharill. Beawar 1985 (Jinagam Granthamala Publication No. 23).

- Dhanapāla. *Ṛṣabhapañcāsikā*, (ed. by) J. Klatt. In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 33 (1879): 445-477.
- Dighanikāya*. 3 vols., ed. by T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, London 1890-1911.
- Godāvaramiśra. *Haribaracaturāṅgam*, critically edited with introduction by S. K. Ramanatha Sastri. Madras 1950 (Madras Government Oriental Series No. XVII).
- Harikṛṣṇa. *Kṛīḍākauśalyam. Bhāṣāṭīkā-sametam. Śrīmadbrhajjyotiṣārṇavamahāgranthakāraśrīmadaurāṅgābādnagaranivāsiśrīmadharikṛṣṇaveṅkaṭarāmapaṇḍitavaryaviracitam*. Bombay saṃvat 1957, śake 1822.
- Harivaṃśa. *The Harivaṃśa*, critically edited by P. L. Vaidya. Vols. 1-2. Poona 1969-71.
- Jātaka. The Jātaka Together with its Commentary Being Tales of the Anterior Births of Gotama Buddha*, for the first time edited in the original Pāli by V. Fausbøll. 7 vols. London 1877-1897.
- Kālidāsa. *The Kumārasaṃbhava of Kālidāsa. With the Commentaries the Sanjivini of Mallinātha (1-8 Sargas), and the Sanjivini of Sītārāma Kavi (8-17 Sargas), Various Readings, Notes, Pariśiṣṭa, Index etc.*, 13th ed. re-edited with Pariśiṣṭa, Notes etc. (by) N. Rām Ācārya "Kāvyaīrtha". Bombay 1946.
- Kāthakam. *Die Saṃhitā der Kaṭha-Çākḥā*, ed. by L. von Schroeder. 3 vols. Leipzig 1900-1912.
- Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra. *The Śrautasūtra of Kātyāyana*, ed. by A. Weber. Berlin 1859 (repr. Varanasi 1972).
- Mahābhārata. The Mahābhārata* for the first time crit. ed. by Vishnu S. Sukthankar (2ff. Shripad Krishna Belvalkar). Poona 1933-1960.
- Mānava-Śrautasūtra*, ed. by J. M. van Gelder. New Delhi 1961.
- Nāyādbharmakabāo. Nāyādbharmakabāo [Jñātādbharmakathāṅgasūtram]*, ed. by Muni Jambūvijaya. Bombay 1989 (Jaina-Āgama-Series No. 5).
- Nīlakaṇṭha. *Nītimayūkha*. s. Weber, A.: *Fortsetzung der Untersuchungen über das indische Schachspiel*.
- Nisīhasutta. *Niśīthasūtra [Original Text with Variant Readings, Hindi Version, Notes, and Annotations etc.]*, translator, annotator, editor: Anuyoga Pravartaka Muni Shri Kanhaiyalalji 'Kamal', Geetharth Shri Tilokmuniji. Beawar 1991 (Jinagama Granthamala Publication No. 32 A).
- Patañjali. *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, ed. by Franz Kielhorn. Poona (4th ed.) 1985.
- Raghuṇandana. *Tiṭhitattva*. s. Weber, A.: *Einige Daten über das Schachspiel nach indischen Quellen*.
- Rāmāyaṇa*. 1. *The Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa. I. The Bālakāṇḍa. The First Book of the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa*, critically edited by G. H. Bhatt. Baroda (2nd ed.), 1982 (1st ed. 1958).
- Rāmāyaṇa*. 2. *Śrīmad-Vālmikimahāmunipraṇītam Rāmāyaṇam. Rāmāyaṇatilaka Rāmāyaṇaśīromaṇi-Govindarājīya-Rāmāyaṇabbūṣaṇeti-ṭīkātrayopetam. (1) Bālakāṇḍam*. Bombay 1912.
- Sadbharmapūṇḍarika. Sadbharmapūṇḍarika*, ed. by H. Kern and B. Nanjio. Osnabrück (repr. of the edition of 1908-1912) 1970 (Bibliotheca Buddhica X).
- Śatapathabrāhmaṇa. The Çatapatha-Brāhmaṇa in the Mādhyandina-Çākḥā*, ed. by

- A. Weber. Berlin, London 1855 (repr. Varanasi 1964).
- Śatarañjakutūbala. Śatarañjakutūbala*, ed. by Ch. Chakravarti. Calcutta 1946 (Sanskrit Sahitya Parishat Series 24).
- Skandapurāṇa. Skandapurāṇam by Mahārshi Vedavyās*. 5 parts, Calcutta 1960-1965 (Gurumandal Series XX).
- Someśvara. *Mānasollāsa of King Someśvara*. Vol. III, ed. by G. K. Shrigondekar. Baroda 1961 (Gaekwad's Oriental Series 138).
- Śūdraka. *The Mṛichchhakatika of Śūdraka*, ed. with the commentary of Pṛthivīdhara by M. R. Kale. Delhi etc. (3rd rev. ed.) 1972.
- Sūyagaḍaṃga. *Sūyagaḍo 1 [Text, Sanskrit Rendering and Hindi Version with notes]*, editor and commentator: S. Mahāprajña. Ladnun 1984.
- Uvavāiya: *Uvavāiya Suttam (Aupapātika Sūtram)*. Original Text with Hindi and English Translation, editor: G. Lalwani. Jaipur and Mewanagar 1988 (Prakrit Bharati Publication 50).
- Vātsyāyana. *Kāmasūtram*, ed. by D. Śāstrī. Bombay 1964.
- Triveṅgaḍācārya. *Pañḍita Triveṅgaḍācāryakṛta Vilāsamañimañjarī atbavā Buddhibalakṛīḍaratnem āñi Bālakabītabuddhibalakṛīḍanam lekā anāmak granthakārācā ek aprakāśit sañik prabandh*, (ed. by) G. R. Kulkarnī. Kolhapur 1937.
- Vinayapīṭaka*. 5 Vols, ed. by H. Oldenberg, London 1879-1883.
- Viṣṇupurāṇa: Viṣṇupurāṇam. Śrīdharaśvāmīkṛtasvaparakāśākhyāñikāsabītam*. Calcutta 1883.

### Secondary Literature

- Bhatta, C. Panduranga. 1985. *Dice-Play in Sanskrit Literature (A Study)*. Delhi 1985.
- Bhatta, C. Panduranga. 1995. Antiquity of Indian Board Games - A New Approach. In: *New Approaches to Board Games Research. Asian Origins and Future Perspectives*, ed. by A. J. de Voogt. Leiden (International Institute for Asian Studies, Working Paper Series 3): 125-133.
- Bock-Raming, Andreas. 1995a. The Varieties of Indian Chess Through the Ages. In: *Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques* 49: 309-331.
- Bock-Raming, Andreas. 1995b. The Literary Sources of Indian Chess and Related Board Games. In: *New Approaches to Board Games Research. Asian Origins and Future Perspectives*, ed. by A. J. de Voogt. Leiden (International Institute for Asian Studies, Working Paper Series 3): 112-124.
- Bock-Raming, Andreas. 1995c. *Untersuchungen zum indischen Würfelspiel in nachvedischer Zeit I: Das Backgammon nach der Darstellung des Mānasollāsa*. Seevetal.
- Bock-Raming, Andreas. 1996. *Mānasollāsa* 5,560-623: Ein bisher unbeachtet gebliebener Text zum indischen Schachspiel, übersetzt, kommentiert und interpretiert. In: *Indo-Iranian Journal* 39: 1-40.
- Falk, Harry. 1986. *Bruderschaft und Würfelspiel. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des vedischen Opfers*. Freiburg.
- Hacker, Paul. 1960. Zur Entwicklung der Avatāralehre. In: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 4: 47-70 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 404-427).

- Jacobi, Hermann. 1896. Über zwei ältere Erwähnungen des Schachspiels in der Sanskrit-Litteratur. In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 50: 227-233 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 540-546).
- Lüders, Heinrich. 1940. Das Würfelspiel im alten Indien. In: *Philologica Indica*. Göttingen: 106-175 (repr. of the first ed. in: *Abhandlungen der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Neue Folge, IX,2, 1907, 1-75*).
- Murray, H[arold] J[ames] R[uthven]. 1913. *A History of Chess*. Oxford.
- Rau, Wilhelm. 1974. *Metalle und Metallgeräte im vedischen Indien*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. *Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 1973, No. 8. Mainz.
- Schlingloff, Dieter. 1969. *Die altindische Stadt. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung*. Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. *Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 1969, Nr. 5. Mainz.
- Schrader, O. 1917-1929. *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde. Grundzüge einer Kultur- und Völkergeschichte Alteuropas*. 2nd enlarged and revised edition. Vol. 1-2, ed. by A. Nehring, Berlin and Leipzig.
- Syed, Renate. 1993. Das caturaṅga im *Mānasollāsa* und einige Bemerkungen zum Schach in Indien. In: *Beiträge des Südasien-Instituts der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, pt. 6: 93-132.
- Syed, Renate. 1994. Das altindische Spiel mit den *śāras* – ein Vorläufer des Backgammon und des Tricktrack? In: *Beiträge des Südasien-Instituts der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, pt. 7: 85-131.
- Syed, Renate. 1995. *Caturaṅga*. Anmerkungen zu Alter, Ursprung und Urform des Schachs. In: *Beiträge des Südasien-Instituts der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, pt. 8: 63-108.
- Thieme, Paul. 1962. Chess and Backgammon (Tric-Trac) in Sanskrit Literature. In: *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown*. American Oriental Society: 204-216 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 413-425).
- Thieme, Paul. 1977. Bhartṛharis Allegorie vom Schicksalswürfelspiel. In: *Beiträge zur Indienforschung. E. Waldschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*. Berlin: 509-522 (Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin vol. 4).
- Weber, Albrecht. 1873. Einige Daten über das Schachspiel nach den indischen Quellen. In: *Monatsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*. Gesamtsitzung vom Februar 1872: 59-89.
- Weber, Albrecht. 1874. Eine Fortsetzung der Untersuchungen über das indische Schachspiel. In: *Monatsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*. Sitzung der philosophisch-historischen Klasse vom November 1873: 705-735.

## Notes

- \* Revised and enlarged version of a paper presented at the International Symposium on “Approaching the Roots of Chess”, Pondicherry University, 26th-29th November 1996.
1. The *Mabābhārata* is assumed to have been composed between 400 B.C. and 400 A.D.
  2. It is assumed that the use of *aṣṭāpada* as a technical term is even older than Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (probably 5th century B.C.) where its formation with archaic *aṣṭā-* instead of *aṣṭa-* is taught (6.3.125: *aṣṭanaḥ samjñāyām*).
  3. “aṭṭhapade pi kiṭanti dasapade pi kiṭanti”, *Vin* II 10,17, repeated at *Vin* III 180, 22, which is explained by Buddhaghosa (between 370 and 450 A.D.) in his commentary *Samantapasādikā*: “aṭṭhapadaphalake jūtaṃ kiṭanti”: “They play the game on the *aṣṭāpada*-board”; for *pbalaka* as a term meaning “gaming board” cf. part 3 of this article.
  4. The observation that *aṣṭāpada* and *daśapada* may be also interpreted as board games had already been made by Murray (1913: 34f.). However, he had not clearly pointed out the difference between the *Vin*- and *DN*-passages quoted above.
  5. “aṭṭhāpadaṃ ṇa sikkhejā vedhādiyaṃ ca ṇo vae/hatthakammaṃ vivāyaṃ ca taṃ vijjaṃ pari-jāṇiyā//”, *Sū.* 1,9,17. The translation follows the one given by Jacobi 1895: 303. Cf. also *Dasaveyāliya* 3,4 – the *aṣṭāpada*-[game] as one of many things the Jaina mendicant should abstain from practising – and *Nisibāsutta* 13,12: the *aṣṭāpada*-[game] as something which, if practised by the monk, necessitates an act of penance.
  6. *Uvavāīya Sutta* 40: “tae ṇaṃ se kalāyarie . . . bāvattari kalāo suttato ya atthato ya karaṇato ya sehāvihiti sikkhāvihiti/taṃ jahā: lehaṃ gaṇitaṃ rūvaṃ . . . jūyaṃ jaṇavāyaṃ pāsakaṃ aṭṭhavāyaṃ . . .”, which is nearly identical with *Nāyādharmakabāo*, 1st *Śrūtaskandha*, 1, 20.
  7. *Sama* which may also mean “having the right measure”, “regular”: cf. below, the discussion on symmetry.
  8. In the 6th chapter: “tac cāsya buddhakṣetraṃ śuddhaṃ . . . samaṃ ramaṇiyaṃ prāsādikam darśaniyaṃ vaiḍūryamayaṃ ratnavṛkṣapratimaṇḍitaṃ suvarṇasūtrāṣṭāpadanibaddhaṃ puṣpābhikīrṇaṃ/” (ed. Kern/Nanjio, p. 144, l. 9 - p. 145, l. 1); cf. also chapter 11: “iti hi tasmin samaya iyaṃ sarvavātī lokadhātū ratnavṛkṣapratimaṇḍitābhūd vaiḍūryamayī saptaratnahemajālasaṃchannā mahāratnagandhadhūpanadhūpitā . . . suvarṇasūtrāṣṭāpadavinaddhā . . .” (ed. Kern/Nanjio, p. 244, l. 7-10); chapter 16: “idaṃ ca me buddhakṣetraṃ sahāṃ lokadhātum vaiḍūryamayīm samapraratāṃ drakṣyati suvarṇasūtrāṣṭāpadavinaddhāṃ ratnavṛkṣair vicitritāṃ/” (ed. Kern/Nanjio, p. 337, l. 12-13).
  9. On the discrepancy between such descriptions in Indian poetical texts as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the actual findings of archaeological excavations cf. Schlingloff 1969: 23f.
  10. Cf. also Govindarāja’s commentary: “. . . suṣṭhu vibhaktāḥ . . . mahāpathāḥ . . .”: “with perfectly symmetrical mainroads”. The proportionate arrangement of lines on the *aṣṭāpada*-board is possibly also alluded to in Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* (beginning of the 7th century A.D.) where the wrinkles on Durvāsas’ forehead are compared to them (cf. the 1st chapter, p. 3, l. 19 in Kane’s edition, Delhi 1986).
  11. “etaṃ samparigṛhṇīṣva pātayākṣān narādhipa/kṛṣṇākṣāṃl lohitākṣāṃś ca deśe ’smiṃs tvam apāṃsule/”, 2,89,35c-f. Thieme based his interpretation of this verse on the reading “. . . pātayākṣān narādhipa/kṛṣṇākṣān lohitākṣāṃś ca deśe ’smiṃs tv adhipāṃsule” which he translates as: “Throw the dice, o ruler of men, the black dice and the red dice, o ruler, on this radiant place (i.e., the surface of the golden *aṣṭāpada* mentioned later on)” (Thieme 1962: 213f. = *Kleine Schriften*, 422f.). The problem, however, is that the reading *adhipāṃsule* used by Thieme is attested in not more than 7 out of 37 manuscripts.
  12. The possibility of this interpretation had not yet dawned on me when I was writing my article

- on the Indian dice game in post-Vedic times (cf. Bock-Raming 1995c : 2).
13. For *Harivaṃśa*, *Viṣṇuparvan* 89,42-43, the *Brahmapurāṇa* (Ed.: Wiesbaden 1987) has in its 201st chapter: “tato balaḥ samutthāya krodhasaṃraktalocanaḥ/ jaghānāṣṭāpadenaiva rukmiṇaṃ sa mahābalaḥ/” 23: “The powerful Bala (= Saṃkarṣaṇa) got up with his eyes reddened with fury and slew Rukmin with (or: with the) *aṣṭāpada*. H., *ViParv.* 89,49 is missing in the version of the *Br.* The reading of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* in 5,28,23 is nearly identical: “tato balaḥ samutthāya kopasaṃraktalocanaḥ / jaghānāṣṭāpadenaiva rukmiṇaṃ sumahābalaḥ/” (Ed.: *Srīdharasvāmīkṛta-svaparakāśākhyaṭīkāśābitam*. Calcutta 1908; the edition of śake 1824 with the commentary “Vaiṣṇavākūṭacandrikā” has the same wording, the only exception being *sa mahābalaḥ* instead of *sumahābalaḥ*).
  14. Despite of this, the later commentaries on this verse of the *Vi.*, the one by Śrīdhara and the *Vaiṣṇavākūṭacandrikā*, do understand it as gaming board, explaining it by *phalaka* (see below): “aṣṭāpadena akṣadyūṭaphalakena and aṣṭāpadena kṛīḍārekhāṅkitena phalakena”.
  15. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 10,61,36-38: “rukmiṇaivam adhikṣipto rājabhiś copahāsitaḥ/kruddhaḥ pariḥgam udyamya jaghne taṃ . . ./36 . . . anye nirbhinnabāhūrusīraso rudhirokṣitāḥ/rājāno dudruvur bhītā balena pariḥhārditāḥ//38”: “In this manner insulted by Rukmin and ridiculed by the [other] kings, he (= Saṃkarṣaṇa) angrily lifted his bludgeon and slew him . . . The other kings with their heads, breasts and arms wounded and sprinkled with blood fled in fear, afflicted by Bala with his bludgeon”.
  16. “aṣṭāpadānāṃ caturaṅgakalpanā”, p. 35, line 31-32 in Kane’s edition, Delhi (repr.) 1986, which is itself based on three prior editions, namely the Nirṇayasāgara edition, that in the Bombay Sanskrit Series and the Calcutta edition of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. There is no reason to assume that this statement is a later interpolation.
  17. “śriyaṃ dadhānaṃ caturaśratāśrayām anekapattyaśvarathadvipākulam/ vipakṣam āviṣkṛta-sandhivigrahaṃ tathāpy anaṣṭāpadam eva yo vyadhāt/”: “[He] who even so did not turn the enemy, who had an entirely quadrangular shape, who was full of foot-soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants and who had the form of a combination [of two parts], into a chess board (text and translation according to Jacobi 1896: 227f. (= *Kleine Schriften*, 540f.).
  18. Who according to Bhatta (1995: 130) is not identical with Halāyudha, the author of the *Abhidhānaratnamālā*.
  19. “aṣṭāpadāṣṭāpadamūrdhni pātyamānaḥ samutpātya muḥus tadākṣau”, 2,5,11ab. My interpretation of this verse differs from that proposed by Thieme 1962: 212 = *Kleine Schriften*, 421, and Lüders 1940: 172f. In my opinion Thieme’s translation of *-mūrdhni* = “surface” is not quite correct. It means “head”, “the highest or first part of anything”, “top”, “point”, “summit”; “beginning”. From a passage on the rules of *nard* contained in the *Mānasollāsa*, which shall be discussed in detail in part 4 of this article, it becomes evident, that *mūrdhan*, the “head”, was a technical term for point one in the inner field of each player. So the verse in question may be translated: “the dice were cast at point one, i.e. at the beginning of the board from where the game starts”. Thus, Thieme’s somewhat unlikely assumption that two boards were used, one on which the dice are thrown and another on which the pieces were moved, can be avoided.
  20. It may be interesting to note that Śūdraka, who presumably lived a little earlier than Kālidāsa, i.e. around the 4th century A.D., in the 4th act of his drama *Mṛcchakatika* has the *vidūṣaka* mention a *pāsaapīṭha* = Skt. *pāśakapīṭha*, that is a gaming table on which gaming pieces made of precious stones are placed. Immediately afterwards the *vidūṣaka* happens to notice boards for painting which he calls *citta-phalaba* = Skt. *citra-phalaka* (*Mṛcchakatika*, Kale’s 3rd revised edition 1972, p. 160): “eso a maṇīmaasāriāsahido pāsaapīṭho/ime a vavare . . . vivihavaṇṇiā-villittacittaphalahaaggahatthā ido tado paribbhamanti gaṇiā . . .” This observation may indicate



that Śūdraka was familiar with *phalaka* as a term for any kind of board like a tablet for painting, but that it was not yet known to him as a technical term for “gaming board”.

21. According to Thieme, the original, authentic reading of this verse is: “yatṛānekaḥ kvacid api gr̥he tatra tiṣṭhaty athaiko/yatṛāpy ekas tadanu bahavas tatra naiko 'pi cānte/itthaṃ cemaṃ rajanidivasau dolayan dvāv ivākṣau/kālaḥ kalyā bhuvanaphalake kṛīdati prāṅsāraiḥ/” (cf. Thieme 1977: 521).
22. The whole text runs according to the edition of Klatt’s edition in ZDMG 33 (1879), p. 465: “sāri-vva bandhavahamaraṇabhāiṇo jiṇa na hunti paiṃ diṭṭhe/akkhehiṃ vi hīrantā jīvā saṃsārapha-layammi”, v. 32; the commentary, however, interprets this as a reference to (four-handed dice-)chess. – The metaphor of the earth as a backgammon board also occurs in the *Campūrāmāyaṇa* (1st half of the 11th century A.D.) at 5,38cd: *kṣititalaphalaka*.
23. *Skandapurāṇa* 2,4,88,5d; on this passage see Bhatta 1985: 121 and Syed 1994: 88ff. Syed assumes that the *Skandapurāṇa* was compiled between 1000 to 1300 A.D. (p. 130).
24. With respect to the *aṣṭāpada* Thieme has a different opinion: “*Am. Kośa* 2.10.46 gives *aṣṭāpada* and *śāriphala* as synonyms – which does not, of course, invalidate the assumption that the first really is ‘chess board’, the second, ‘backgammon board’” (cf. Thieme 1962: 211 = *Kleine Schriften*, 420, fn. 17).
25. Syed (1995: 87) contends, without giving any reasons, that the *dyūtaphalaka* must be an *aṣṭāpada*.
26. For details on the passage on chess see Bock-Raming 1996. For further information on the pas-sage on “backgammon” refer to Syed 1994 and Bock-Raming 1995c: 3-16.
27. The relationship between these two texts has been dealt with in Bock-Raming 1995a: 316.
28. *Haribaracaturaṅga*, v. 24d (*paṭṭavastrādinirmita*); *Nītimayūkha*, v. 2; *Bālakabītabuddhi-balakṛīḍana*, v. 1b; *Śatarāṅjakutūbala*, v. 3a (“sadūrṇāmāye vastrakhaṇḍe”: “on a piece of cloth made of beautiful wool”).
29. “. . . yantraṃ samālikhet/aṅgārakeṇa vā śvetapāṣāṇena subuddhimān//”, *Kṛīḍākauśalya*, v. 259: “the wise [player] should draw a diagram with charcoal or a white stone . . .”; cf. in the same text also the instructions to draw a triangular diagram (v. 262c; 276a; 306a); a square (303a; 310a), a five-cornered diagram (289a) and a diagram with 8 corners (308a).
30. E.g. *Mānasollāsa*, v. 5,563b; 567c; 571b and c; 572c; 560c (*ādīpaṅkti*, *ex conj.*), cf. Bock-Raming 1996: 33, footnote 37); 578c (*bahīḥpaṅkti*); *Nītimayūkha*, v. 3b; 4c; 5d; *Haribaracaturaṅga*, v. 8,25b and c; 27b and c; *Bālakabītabuddhibalakṛīḍana*, v. 2a.
31. Cf., e.g., *Mānasollāsa*, v. 5,561a; 562c; 566a; *Tītibhātva*, v. 1a; 2a; 6c; 8c (*koṇakoṣṭha*); *Haribaracaturaṅga* v. 8,26c; 29c; *Śatarāṅjakutūbala*, v. 3c; 5b; 7a and c; 8a; 9b; 10; *Bālakabītabuddhibalakṛīḍana*, v. 1c; 2b; 3a; 4b and c; 5c and d.
32. Cf., e.g., *Vilāsamaṇīmaṇjarī*, *Paribhāṣā*, v. 8c; 9a; 15c and d; 22c; *Pūrvakhaṇḍa*, *Prathama Stabaka*, v. 1b; 5b; 3b *passim*; *Śatarāṅjakutūbala* v. 5a (*amātyālaya*).
33. For *pada* cf., e.g., *Mānasollāsa*, v. 5,563d; 564a and b; 565a; 568b and c *passim*; *Haribaracaturaṅga*, v. 8,101a and f; 102c; 103c; 104d *passim*; *Tītibhātva*, v. 20a; 25a; *Nīti-mayūkha*, v. 2d; 3b; 4a; 5a *passim*; *Kṛīḍākauśalya*, v. 356c; 357c; for *stbāna* see, e.g., *Mānasollāsa*, v. 5,576c; *Haribaracaturaṅga*, v. 8,101c; 111b; *Tītibhātva*, v. 35a; *Vilāsa-maṇīmaṇjarī*, *Paribhāṣā*, v. 19cd; 24ab (*mūlasthāna*); 25c (*uttamasthāna*-). The two above-mentioned exceptions are *Kṛīḍākauśalya*, v. 301d, where *pada* is used for “square” in the *ekapañcāśattamakōṣṭhakātmikā kṛīḍā* = “game [on a board of] 51 squares” and *Kṛīḍākauśalya*, v. 315b, where the same expression occurs for “square” in a hunting game called *vyāghra-trayaṣoḍaśājākbhelana* = “game of the 3 tigers and the 16 goats”. On the other hand, *haṃsapā-da/haṃsapāda* (lit.: “goose-foot”), the technical term for certain marked squares, is used for

both chess boards as well as for boards of hunting and running games. For chess, see *Nitimayūkba*, v. 3a; 6c; *Kriḍākauśalya*, v. 352a; for running and hunting games see *Kriḍākauśalya*, v. 158b and 184a (*pachisi*); 303c and 305c (*dyūtārdhakkhelana*); 310c (*vyāghracatuṣṭayāṣṭaviṃśatyajākkhelana* = “game with 4 tigers and 28 goats). Instead of *haṃsapada*, the *Haribaracaturaṅga* (v. 8,29f) uses the expression *padmalāṅchana* = “having the sign of a lotus” for the marked squares.

34. Literally, *śīman* means: “a separation or parting of the hair so as to leave a line”, hence “boundary, border, limit”.
35. For *koṇa* cf., e.g., *Mānasollāsa*, v. 5,560c; 563c; 564a; 565c; 566d; 569c *passim*; *Haribaracaturaṅga*, v. 8,30b, 44b; 80b; *Tūthitattva*, v. 7b; 8c; 25a; *Nitimayūkba*, v. 9a; *Kriḍākauśalya*, v. 359a; 369a; *Vilāsamañimañjarī*, *Paribhāṣā*, v. 8d; *Śatarāñjakutūbala*, v. 3b. The term *śīman* seems to be peculiar to the *Haribaracaturaṅga* alone: cf. the definition in v. 8,27cd-28ab: “pañktayaḥ sapta sapta syuḥ śīmānau svāminor dvayoḥ// śīmāntyā saptamī pañktiḥ śīmādiḥ prathamā smṛtā/”: “There are seven rows [for] each [of the two players]; they are the respective halves of the two kings//The seventh row is the last of one half, the first is its beginning”. The chess text of the *Mānasollāsa* has for “half” the expressions *svasya pañkticatuṣka* = “one’s own four rows” (v. 5,589c) and *parakṣetra* = “the enemy’s field” (v. 5,590b).