

Paleography

Semester Second
Paper 1
Credit Hours: 3
Teaching hours – 48

Objectives

The objective of this course is to provide comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge of ancient scripts so that the students are able to explain the dynamics and significance of Nepali paleography and decipher and write different scripts.

Course Contents

- Unit I Introduction to *Palaeography* 8**
- (1) meaning, description, interpretation, and classification of ancient writing systems; Materials used in writing/engraving.
 - (2) Beginning and development of writing: a. Word/logo syllabic writing, b. Syllabic writings of Mesopotamia and Egypt and c. Alphabetic writing of Greece.
 - (3) Indus valley script: basic features, problems of origin and decipherment.
 - (4) The controversy regarding the antiquity of writing of the Indo-Aryans.
 - (5) Different theories on the origin of Brāhmī.
- Unit II) *Learning and Practice of writing*, 10**
- (1) The Aśokan Brāhmī: Vowels and consonants; Medial vowel system (the Mātrās); Formation of Conjuncts (the Samyuktākṣara), deciphering and transliterating.
 - (2) A study of Aśoka's *dharmalipi* including the Lumbini and Niglihawa Pillar Inscriptions .
 - (3) Development of the Brāhmī in North India up to the fifth Century AD, A survey of features developed during the periods of the Śungas, Śaka Kṣatrapas (of Mathura): the equalization of the thick top verticals, Introduction of new tool and technique; Kuṣaṇas: new medial signs and emergence of head marks; the Maghas of Kausambi: the effect of cursive hand and the north Indian writings of early Gupta writings: Round and shortened characters and new forms, formation of different headlines, medial vowel signs and conjuncts.
- Unit III The Lichchhavi Scripts 12**
- (1) Nomenclature and derivation of the Lichchhavi script; Learning of vowels and consonants, new features, head mark, medial vowels; conjuncts.
 - (2) A comparison with the writings of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta and the Statue Inscription of Jaya Varma.

- (3) Stages of development of Lichchhavi scripts .
- (4) Learning and Practice of writing, deciphering and transliterating.

Unit IV The Newari Scripts 12

- (1) The name Newari or Newā ākha (Nepālākṣara); Derivation of Newari Scripts - New features developing in the late Lichchhavi script: Alternatively use of different forms of character, Development of medial vowels, tail, cursive hand and condition leading to the emergence of different styles of writing including the Nagari writing.
- (2) Theories regarding the derivation of *Kunmoh*, *Golmo* and *Pachumoh*.
- (3) Introduction to *Bhujinmoh*, *Ranjanā* (broad characters with a thick and distinct headline) and *Prachalit Newari*; Features such as angular headline, new alphabets, developed system of medial vowel, complicated system of conjuncts.
- (4) Emergence of ornamentation and practice of calligraphy and the unity in the inner form of letters.
- (5) Learning and Practice of writing, reading and transliterating *Bhujinmoh*, *Ranjanā* and *Prachalit Newari*.

Unit V Study of Numeral Signs 6

- (1) Lichchhavi system of numeral signs, (derived from the Brāhmī); Numeral signs in different Newari writings, Study of individual signs.
- (2) Study of Word Numeral system used in medieval inscriptions and manuscripts.
- (3) Introduction of letter numeral system.

References

1. Bühler, J.G. *Indian Palaeography*, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1980.
2. Dani, A.H. *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford: The clarendon Press, 1963.
3. Dutta V.B. and A.N. Singh, *Hindu Ganit Shastra ka Itihas*, (A History of Hindu Mathematics, (Hindi) Part 1. Lucknow, 1947.
4. Gelb, I.J. *A Study of Writing*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.
5. Gupta, S.P. and K.S. Ramachandran (ed.) *The Origin of Brahmi Script*, Delhi: D.K. Publications, 1979.
6. Ojha, G.H. *Bharatiya Prachin Lipi mala* (A Garland of Ancient Indian Scripts) (Hindi), (reprint) Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1959
7. Rajvanshi, S.M. *Nepali Lipi Vikash* (Evolution of scripts in Nepal) (Nepali) (reprint in a book form), Kathmandu: S.S.Rajvanshi.
8. -----*Lichchhavi Lipi Sangraha* (A collection of Lichchhavi writings) (Nepali), Kathmandu: Bir Pustakalaya, 2021 V.S.
9. Regmi, D.C. *Puralekhan ra Abhilekh* (Palaeography and Epigraphy), Kathmandu: Himalaya Book Stall, 2060 VS
10. Regmi, D.R.(ed.) *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal*. New Delhi: Abhinav Pulications, 1983 (Plates of inscriptions for practices).
11. Verma, T.P. *The Palaeography of Brahmi Script in North India (From C.236 B.C. to C. 200 A.D)* Varanasi: Siddhartha Prakashan, 1971.

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