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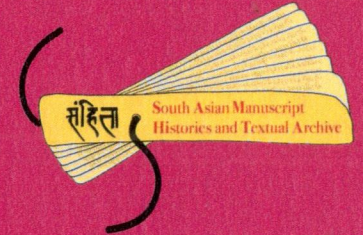
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Government of India



SAMHiTA

South Asian Manuscript
Histories and Textual Archive

Map of Jambudvīpa

Adapted from Indic Manuscript 622, folio 1a. Wellcome Collection. CC BY 4.0

initiated by the India International Centre, New Delhi and
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If a collection of printed catalogues of Indian manuscripts were brought together at the present time, it would ... constitute in itself a specialist library.

KLAUS JANERT, 1965

SAMHiTA is an initiative to create a relational database and digital archive of Indian and broadly South Asian manuscripts housed in libraries, archives and other repositories outside India, through collaboration with institutional partners. The word 'samhita' in Sanskrit means 'collection' or 'compilation'. SAMHiTA's goal is to consolidate information dispersed across institutions on an online platform accessible to all. It is housed at the India International Centre, a space for the exchange of ideas from across the world.

India's intellectual inheritance spans fields including medicine, mathematics, architecture, philosophy, aesthetics and literature. Its continuous transmission from ancient times was largely through an oral tradition and through hand-written texts (manuscripts) in different languages such as Sanskrit, Tamil, Odia, and Bengali, and scripts like Nagari, Grantha, Sharda, Newari among others, written on materials such as copper plate, birch bark, parchment, and palm leaf.

From around the 2nd–3rd centuries CE, texts fanned outwards from the Indian subcontinent to regions like Balkh, Xinjiang, Tibet, Japan, Thailand, and Bhutan. From the 18th century, Europeans began taking an active interest in Asian history, religion, philosophy, and literature. Many manuscripts were collected and taken to the West.

Today, Indic manuscripts are scattered across Asia, Europe, and North America.

SAMHiTA is the first attempt to bring together repositories from outside India and South Asia on a common platform. The information collected will be shared on a common platform hosted by PANDiT: Prosopographical Database of Indic Texts and Records, a database on South Asian intellectual history.

SAMHiTA'S goal is for libraries and universities to come together to:

- comprehensively inventory South Asian manuscripts, so that copies are not lost through neglect;
- digitise select manuscripts, based on criteria like antiquity and singularity;
- make accessible searchable texts in different South Asian languages;
- build a relational database to facilitate connections between texts, authors, and places; and
- establish an integrated framework for critical editing, translation, research, and education.

In its pilot phase (2022–23), SAMHiTA has taken up the cataloguing and digitization of manuscript collections at institutions in Denmark, the UK, and Nepal.

We seek collaboration with institutions and support from funding partners.

'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra'
Sanskrit MS Epsilon 1. Wellcome Collection. CC BY 4.0

