asthāt/asthāsīt in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra

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1. The Problem of the Form Aorist in BHS

There have been many studies concerning the problem of the aorist form in BHS. Briefly put, the studies point out that older strata of texts use aorist forms and the younger groups use imperfect or perfect forms.¹⁾ Without the exception of one instance of *āha*, the Lüshun Fragments, the oldest manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, shows aorist forms only.²⁾

As for *sthā*, there are two occurrences of the aorist forms in the Lüshun Fragments: A-5 recto, line 8 has *asthāsi* in the *gāthā* portion, and B-6 verso, line 7 has *asthāsī* in the prose portion. In the former case, its parallels—the so-called Kashgar manuscripts (92b2) and eds. KN (86,4) and WT (80,16)—have same reading. But in the latter case there is a clear distinction between the Lüshun's *asthāsī*, the Kashgar's *asthāsīt* and the KN/WT *asthāt*.

Though the form *asthāt* occurs in the prose portion of eds. KN and WT throughout, the Kashgar MS. uses *asthāsīt* except for 253a3, which has *asthāt* in the Devadatta-parivarta. We must look more carefully into the difference between these readings.

Although Ji Xianlin and Jiang Zhongxin pointed out the occurrences mentioned above, there is some room to take up the problem again. The purpose of this paper is to examine the difference between the root aorist form *asthāt* and the *s*-aorist *asthāsīt* through an overview of the 3. sg. form from Vedic literature to BHS literature.

2. *asthāt* in Vedic Literature

In Vedic literature the regular aorist form of the root *sthā* is the root aorist (3. sg. *asthāt*), e.g., RV II 3,1ab *sāmīddho agnīr nīhitaḥ pṛthivyām / pratyān viśvāni bhūvanāny asthāt* / “enflamed Agni, having been set on the earth, stayed [there] for all beings”; IX

85,12a ūrdhvó gandharvó ádhi náke **asthāt** “having gone upward, Gandharva stood on the celestial vault” (= RV 123,7a).

Root aorist forms are maintained even in the Brāhmaṇas, e.g., AB VII 17,5 *bhīma eva Sauyavasīḥ / śāsena viśiśāsiṣuḥ / asthāt* “the terrible son of Sūyavasa stood, intent on killing [his son] with his knife” (~ Śāṅkhāyana-ŚrautaSūtra XV 25,1).

2.1. s-aorist Form *ásthiṣata* in ŚBM/ŚBK

The s-aorist form of *ásthiṣata* is met with in later Vedic Literature (Narten [1964, 281]): ŚBM III 7,3,9 <úpa devān dáivīr víśaḥ práḡur> (VS VI 7) *íti. dáivyo vā etá víśo yát paśávó 'sthiṣata* “he says, ‘the celestial races approached the gods’ (VS VI 7); if the animals were standing there, indeed, these are celestial races” (~ ŚBK IV 7,3,6 <úpa devān dáivīr víśaḥ práḡur> *íti. dáivyo vā etá víśo yát paśávas. tán évaitád āhāsthiṣata*); ŚBM III 9,1,2 . . . *pārācyo mát prajāḥ abhūvan. ná me prajāḥ śrīyè 'nnādyāyāsthiṣatēti.* // “[Prajāpati said:] ‘The creatures have turned away from me. These creatures didn’t stand in for my welfare and food.’” (~ ŚBK IV 9,1,2 *pārācyas tá abhūvan. ná me tiṣṭhante śrīyè 'nnādyāyēti*). The form made by using the productive ending of -ṣata is intended to be a substitute for the middle paradigm of the root aorist.

3. *aṭṭhā* in Pāli *Gāthās*

We can find some cases of the historical root aorist *aṭṭhā* (< *asthāt) in the *gāthā*-portion of Pāli canonical texts:³⁾ Sn 429 *Duggo maggo padhānāya / dukkaro durabhisambhavo, imā gāthā bhaṇaṃ Māro / aṭṭhā Buddhassa santike*, “The road is hard to go along, hard to perform, hard to attain for making exertions—saying these verses Māra stood near the Buddha”; Jātaka I: 188,9–12 *Purāṇacorāna vaco nisamma / Mahilāmukho pothayam ānucāri, / susaṇṇātānaṃ hi vaco nisamma / gajuttamo sabbagūṇesu aṭṭhā ti* “After hearing the words of former thieves, [the elephant] Mahilāmukha ranged, with beating others; After hearing the words of wise men, the superior elephant stood in all the virtues.”⁴⁾

4. *aṭṭhāsi* in Pāli Texts

In the *gāthā*- and prose-portion of Pāli canonical texts, the s-aorist form *aṭṭhāsi* is fairly common. The number of occurrences is overwhelmingly great,⁵⁾ e.g., Sn 13,7–9 *Atha kho Bhagavā yena parivesanā ten’ upasaṃkami, upasaṃkamitvā ekam-antaṃ aṭṭhāsi* “Then the Blessed One went to where the food-distribution [was taking place]; after that he stood

to one side” (cf. Sn 18,12 . . . *Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi* = 46,12; 125,12; SN I: 1,11–12; 2,5–6, etc.); Theragāthā 623cd *mam’ eva anukampāya / aṭṭhāsi purisuttamo* “having mercy on me, the highest of men stopped”; Milindapañha 350,18 *yāvatā mahārāja Bhagavā loke aṭṭhāsi* . . . “O king, while the Blessed One was in this world . . .”

5. BHS Literature: Mahāvastu

For most of the Mahāvastu we can find the form *asthāsi*, e.g., III: 234,3–4^m: *treviṃśadvarṣasahasrāṇi teṣāṃ / saddharmo asthāsi parinirvṛtānāṃ* // “the saddharma of emancipated ones has endured for twenty-eight thousand years”; III: 286,4^p *atha māro pāpimāṃ yena bhagavāṃs tenopasaṃkramitvā ekānte asthāsi* / “Then the evil Māra went to where the Blessed One was; after that he stood to one side.” I can find only one occurrence of the root aorist ⁶⁾ as follows: III: 325,14^p . . . *ekānte ’sthāt*. “he [Upaka] stood to one side.”

6. Gāthā-Portion of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-Sūtra

The *gāthā*-portion of the Saddhp reads *asthāsi* in eds. KN and WT and Central Asian manuscripts: Saddhp III 62 (KN 86,3–4 = WT 80,13–16) *etādṛśaṃ bhairava tan niveśanaṃ / jvālāsahasrair hi viniścaraḍbhiḥ / puruṣaś ca so tasya gr̥hasya svāmī / dvārasmi asthāsi vipaśyamānaḥ* // “The mansion, with thousands of flames flaring up here and there, was awful in such way. While watching the situation, the man, the master of the house, stood near the gate” (~ Kashgar MS. 92b1–2 *etādṛśaṃ bhairava taṃ niveśanaṃ / ārcisahasrāṇi viniścaraṃti • puruṣaś ca sas tasya (gr̥hasya) svāmiko / dvārasmim asthāsi vipaśyamānaḥ*; Lüshun Fragment A-5 (recto) 7–8 +*tāḍr*../// /// [m]i [dvā]rasmin {asthin} *asthāsi pa[śya]mānā*).

The reading appearing on Kashgar 93b4 *’sthāsi* 3. pl. ⁷⁾ is especially important: Kashgar 93b4–5 *nirdhāvitās tatkaṣaṇaṃ eva sarvi / ākāśi ’sthāsi duḥkhavipramuktā(h)* “having immediately rushed out [from house], all [of the boys] stood in the open air, having been freed from harm.” It stands in contrast to eds. KN and WT: KN 87,12 = WT 82,9–10 *nirdhāvitās tatkaṣaṇaṃ eva sarve / ākāśi tiṣṭhanti dukhena muktāḥ*. This is a convincing example illustrating the fact that the Kashgar MS. gives older readings.

7. Prose-Portion of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra

In the prose portion of the Saddhp, while the Kashgar recension shows *asthāsīt* almost consistently, parallel passages found in eds. KN and WT read *asthāt*:⁷⁾ KN VII: 159,3 *sa bodhivṛkṣamūle bodhimaṇḍa ekam antarakalpam asthāt* “He remained at the foot of the tree of enlightenment, the seat of enlightenment for an intermediate *kalpa*” (= WT 143,13–14) ~ Kashgar VII: 152b7–153a1 *sa ca bhagavān bodhivṛkṣamūle bodhimaṇḍe ekam abhyantarakalpam asthāsīt* (~ Lüshun Fragment B-6 (verso) 7 reads as follows: /// [so] *bodhivṛkṣamūle bodhimaṇḍe eka abhyāntarakalpa asthāsī · na ca tā[va] ///*).

Table.

Kashgar [Lüshun]	KN [WT]	Kolkata MS.
92b2 <i>asthāsī</i> [A-5 Recto 8 <i>asthāsī</i>]	III 62: 86,4 [80,16] ^m <i>asthāsī</i>	40b2 <i>asthāsī</i>
93b4 <i>'sthāsī</i>	III 73: 87,12 [82,10] ^m <i>tiṣṭhanti</i>	41a4 <i>tiṣṭhan</i>
152b7–153a1 <i>asthāsīt</i> [B-6 verso 7 <i>asthāsī</i>]	VII: 159,3 [143,14] ^p <i>asthāt</i>	71a1 <i>asthāt</i>
153a1 <i>asthāsīt</i>	VII: 159,3 [143,15] ^p <i>asthāt</i>	71a1 <i>asthāt</i>
153a4 <i>asthāsīt</i>	VII: 159,5 [143,18] ^p <i>'sthāt</i>	71a2 <i>asthāt</i>
153a4 <i>asthāsīt</i>		
153a5 <i>asthāsīt</i>	VII: 159,6 [143,20] ^p <i>asthāt</i>	71a3 <i>asthāt</i>
175b7 <i>vi(hā)ragata asthāsīt</i>	VII: 182,3–4 [162,14] ^p <i>vihārasthita evāsīt</i>	82b5–6 <i>vihārāṇy evāsthāt</i>
190b1 <i>asthāsīt</i>	VIII: 199,9–10 [176,15] ^p <i>sthito 'bhūt</i>	89b7 <i>sthito 'bhūt</i>
226b3 <i>'sthāsīt</i>	XI: 239,3 [207,4] ^p <i>samavātiṣṭhat</i>	106b1 <i>samatiṣṭhet</i>
240a1 <i>'sthāsīt</i>	XI: 248,13 [213,26] ^p <i>'tiṣṭhat</i>	111b2 <i>tiṣṭhat</i>
253b5 <i>'sthāt</i>	XII: 263,15 [226,13] ^p <i>'sthāt</i>	118b4 <i>asthāt</i>
288b2 <i>tuṣṇibhāvenāsthāsīt</i>	XV: 300,8 [255,27] ^p <i>tūṣṇīm abhūt</i>	134a3 <i>tūṣṇīm abhūt</i>
362b1 <i>'sthāsīt</i>	XX ^p 376,11 [319,8] <i>sthito 'bhūt</i>	167b7 <i>sthito 'bhūt</i>
362b2 <i>asthāsīt</i>	XX ^p 376,12 [319,9] <i>sthito 'bhūt</i>	168a1 <i>sthitam abhūt</i>
(missing)	XXVII ^p 468,5 [382,7] <i>asthāt</i>	207a4 <i>asthāt</i>

7.1. *asthāt* in Devadatta-parivarta

As Dschi Hiän-lin had pointed out, there is one exception in the Devadatta-parivarta: Kashgar 253b5 *asthāt* = KN 263,15 [WT 226,13] *asthāt*: Kashgar 253b4–5 *sā bhagavataḥ pāḍau śirasā vedyakānte* [*'vaṃdyaikānte*] *'sthāt* ~ KN 263,14–15 *sā bhagavataḥ pāḍau*

śīrasābhivandyaikānte 'sthāt "Saluting the feet of the Blessed One with her head, she stood to one side" (WT 226,13; Kolkata 118b4).

8. Conclusion

In Vedic literature the root *sthā* shows the forms of root aorist (3. sg. *asthāt*, → 2). The historical form *aṭṭhā* is retained in the *gāthā*-portion of the Pāli canon (→ 3).

The *s*-aorist *aṭṭhāsi* is fairly common in canonical and non-canonical Pāli texts (→ 4). The form *asthāsi* is common in both of the *gāthā*- and prose-portion of the Mahāvastu (→ 5). That is basically the same as the Middle Indo-Aryan languages which use the forms of the *s*-aorist frequently.

Perhaps the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* had used the *s*-aorist form for *sthā* originally. The *asthāsi* is retained in the *gāthā*-portion of the Saddhp (→ 6). Though the Central Asian recensions have maintained the form *asthāsīt* in both of the *gāthā*- and prose-portions, the eds. KN and WT (or Nepalese manuscripts) show the "historical" form *asthāt* (→ 7). It is noteworthy to recall that Pāṇini II 4,77 pointed out that the roots *gā*, *sthā*, *dā*, *pā*, *bhū* make root aorist forms. From this viewpoint one may say that the Nepalese recensions have replaced the *s*-aorist forms by the root aorist forms, i.e., the classical Sanskrit forms.

The only inconsistent example that is attested is the Kashgar 253b5 *asthāt* which occurs in the Devadatta-parivarta (→ 7.1). The difference in readings indicates the presence of textual strata in the Saddhp. Although it is well-known that the Devadatta-parivarta belongs to a newer layer in the Saddhp, we can confirm it by checking certain Sanskrit word forms.

If we integrate other instances, it will be possible to examine the situation relating to editing the Saddhp more accurately.⁸⁾

Notes

- 1) Dschi 1949 (reprinted in Ji 1988).
- 2) Jiang [1988: 200] says thus: "One finds only aorist in Manuscripts A and B in this book. With the exception of one instance of āha, the perfect verb never appears."
- 3) Cf. Geiger [1994] §160: "The forms of Type I [i.e. root aorist] belong for the most part to the Gāthā language, individual forms occurring also in canonical and post-canonical prose. Mostly roots in vowels use forms of this type. . . . 2. The root *sthā* 'to stand': 3 sg. *aṭṭhā* Sn 429 = *asthāt*."

4) Mahilāmukha is the “state elephant” of Brahmadatta, king of Benares (cf. Malalasekera [1997], vol. II, pp. 591–592).

5) The ratio of *aṭṭhā* to *aṭṭhāsi* is 1 : 5 in the early Pāli canonical texts, cf. Yamazaki and Ousaka [2000]. Prose-portion of the Sn shows *aṭṭhāsi* only. There are no attestation of *aṭṭhā* in the SN and AN according to Kasamatsu, Kawasaki, Yamazaki, and Ousaka [2010] and Kasamatsu, Kawasaki, and Ousaka [2014]. In contrast, there are 49 examples of *aṭṭhāsi* occurring in the SN, and the AN has 33 examples.

6) There is one doubtful example, Mv III 238,6 *asthā*, which is thought to be a clerical error: III 238,5–7^p *sarvārthadarśī tathāgata ānanda dharmanetrīm avalokayanto kalpasahasraṃ loke asthā aśokaṃ ca tathāgataṃ vyākārṣīt* // “O Ānanda, Sarvārthadarśin Tathāgata has stayed (*asthāsi*) in the world observing the ways of the law till thousands of *kalpas* passed. Then he gave this prophecy to Aśoka Tathāgata.” This is a stock phrase. We can compare the parallel passage found in next page: III 239,3–4^p *samitāvi tathāgato dharmanetrīm avalokayanto paripūrṇaṃ kalpasahasraṃ loke asthāsi. baladattaṃ ca tathāgataṃ vyākārṣīt*. // “Samitāvin Tathāgata stayed in the world” It is noteworthy to point out *vyā-kar* conjugates as an in *s*-aorist.

7) BHS §32.13.

8) Kashgar manuscripts show *adāsīt* against *adāt* in eds. KN/WT. Gilgit and Nepalese recensions gives us *adāt* in general except for a few exceptions, for example Kolkata 112a5 *adāsīt*.

Abbreviations

AB: Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. **AN:** Aṅguttara-Nikāya. **BHS:** Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. **BHSG:** Edgerton’s BHS grammar. ^m: metric portion. ^p: prose portion. **KN:** Saddhp, edited by Kern and Nanjio. **MS:** manuscript. **Mv:** Mahāvastu. **RV:** Ṛg-Veda. **Saddhp:** Sanskrit text of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra. **ŚBK:** Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Kāṇva-recension. **ŚBM:** Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Mādhyandina-recension. **Sn:** Sutta-nipāta. **SN:** Saṃyutta-Nikāya. **VS:** Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā. **WT:** Saddhp, edited by Wogihara and Tsuchida.

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