Introduction

Avahāṭṭha (< Aparāhṛata) is the literary form of so-called Desī-bhāṣa which is supposed to have been prevailing among Indo-Aryan people roughly between 10th and 13th century. It was nearest to the desī-bhāṣa ("the country speech") termed by the earlier grammarians such as Purasottama and Hemacandra. It was most probably the immediate ancestor of the literary New Indo-Aryan speeches such as Old Bengali, Old Hindi, Old Marathi, Old Gujarati etc., and can be placed as Dr. Sukumar Sen describes at the latest stage in the history of Middle Indo-Aryan language or the Proto-vernacular stage in that of New Indo-Aryan language. (Vide—"A Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan", by Sukumar Sen; Linguistic Society of India, Poona, 1960; PP. 31-32)

Avahāṭṭha forms are available in such semi-religious literature as Sāvayadhāma-dohā, Ṛaha-dohā, Tillo-dohakośa and Kāṅha-dohakośa, Saraha-dohakośa etc., and in such secular literature—all are verses—as comprised in Hemacandra's Śabdānumaśaṇa, Sandeśa-rāśaka, and Prakṛtī-Pāṁgalam etc.

Avahāṭṭha is described in the following three works:

1. Saraha-dohakośa (at the end of the pañjika)
   samāpteyam dohakoṣasya pañjikā viṣamapadbhañjakaḥ / dohā abhībhṛṣṭa vacanasyeti /

2. Sandeśa-rāśaka (verse 6)
   avahāṭṭha-yā-sakkaya-pāiyamī pesāiyamī bhāṣā /
   lakṣhaṇapāyacchedāharaṇe sukaittapa bhūsiyaḥ jehi //

3. Kṛtilatā (P. 6. 1-2)
   sakkaya vāṇī būṣhaṇa bhāvanai,
   pāyaraṁ ko wama na pāvai /
   desilā ṣaṇā saba jana matthā,
Dr. S.K. Chatterjee divided the Middle Indo-Aryan period into four stages and termed the last stage as Apabhramśa: i.e. early stage (600 B.C. to 200 B.C. - Asokan & Pali etc.-), transitional stage (200 B.C. to 200 A.D. - Kharosthi & Brahmi etc.-), second stage (200 A.D. to 600 A.D. - Sauraseni, Mahārāṣṭrī, Māgadhī & Jain Ardha-māgadhī etc.) and third stage (600 A.D. to 1000 A.D. - Apabhramśa-). (Vide "The origin and development of the Bengali Language, by Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Calcutta University Press, Calcutta, 1926; pp. 18-20 & p. 90).

Calling the later development stage than 1000 A.D. as New Indo-Aryan period Dr. Chatterjee further stated that a younger form of Sauraseni Apabhramśa or Nāgaraka Apabhramśa, intermediate in forms and in general Ap. of times before 1000 A.D. and to the Braj-bākhā of the Middle Hindī period, say, of 15th century, was sometimes known as 'Avahāṭṭha' (Vide ibid p. 113).

Here I follow Dr. S. Sen and Sr. S.K. Chatterjee and use the term Avahāṭṭha specifically for the literary form of desī-bāṣa prevailing among Indo-Aryan people roughly between 10th century, the last stage of Apabhramśa, and 13th century when each of the New Indo-Aryan languages had almost got its own distinctive characteristics.
Proto-Bengali is the term not exactly for the later development stage of Avahaṭṭha itself but rather for the mixture of Avahaṭṭha and a local form of late Māgadhī Apabhramśa in Bengal which was in the process of forming its own linguistic characteristics. Therefore the Proto-Bengali period largely overlaps the Avahaṭṭha period and the relevant linguistic forms are available mainly in such materials as Kāpha-dohā, Tillopada-dohā, Saraha-dohā and Caryāpada etc.

(§.2 ) Materials

In this thesis the following materials are used:


The editor assumes that this dohā was composed in about 933 A.D.

(2) Rāmāsiṅga's Pāhuda-dohā, critically edited by Hiralal Jain; Gopal Ambadas Chaware for Karanja Jaina Publication Society, Berar, 1933.

The editor states that though the work itself mentions Rāma- siṅga muni as its author yet one feels inclined to give Yogindra-deva the credit and that the work may be taken to have been produced in about 1000 A.D. Both the works ( SYD & PD ) have striking affinities in their subject-matter, as well as form, with the works of Jaina authors such as Kundakunda, Srutasaṅgara, and specially Yogindra ( Paramātma-prakāśa & Yogasāra ). They have further similarities in the respect of mysticism, as well as in the form of their poetry, with Caryāpadas of Krishna, Dombi, Vīṇā, Saraha and Gundari, and the Dohākoṇas of Saraha and Kāḥapāḍa.

(3) Dohākoṇa, by Prabodh Chandra Bagchi; University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1935.

This book comprises several dohākoṇas by different authors.

(a) Tillopādasya dohākoṇaṁ

(b) Sarahaḥpādasya dohākoṇaṁ

Both are contained in an old manuscript, which bilongs to the 13th century, in the collection of the Exalted Rājaguru Hemarāja Sarmā, in Nepal.
(c) Sararahapâdîya-doha

This fragmentary manuscript in the Darbar Library, Nepal, is dated 211 N.S. (1101 A.D.). Therefore the editor claims that it is the oldest manuscript of any doha-kośa hitherto known and contains fragments of two new Dohâkosas of Saraha and a portion of the Dohâ-kośa of Saraha already known. According to Dr. M. Shahidullah Saraha was a Brahmin, but later became one of the Mahasiddhas of Tibetan Buddhism after being converted to Tantric Buddhism. He is also said to have been once in the country of Rajni in Eastern India and a contemporary of King Ratnapala of Assam (1010 - 1050 A.D.). (Vide — 'Dohâkośa' by P.C. Bagchi, Preface)

(d) Kânhapâdasya dohâkośa

In these dohas Kâňha or Kṛṣṇâcarîya expresses his mystical experience. Kâňha, who is popularly known as Kânîph Nâth or Kânupâ, appears to have been a native of Samataṭa of Eastern Bengal. According to M. Shahidullah Kâňha's preceptor, Jâlandhari or Jâlandhar Nâth, was a contemporary of Mâtsyendra Nâth who was in Nepal in 657 A.D. in the reign of Narendra Deva and Gopîcanda, another contemporary of these, was a near relative of Bhartṛhari, the king of Malwa, who died according to Itsing in 651 A.D. If this data was correct, Kâňha should be located in about 700 A.D. (Vide — H/G. Ap., p.20) While Dr. S.K. Chatterji assumes that there were possibly more Kâňhas than one and that the earliest Kâňha must be located later than Lûyî-pâda, an elder contemporary of Dîpânkara Sîrijâna or Aîśa, who went to Tibet in 1038 A.D. when he was 58. Dr. Chatterjee further says that if Kâňha-pâda or the Kâňha of Carya-pâda No.36, the disciple of the Nâtha Yogî Jâlandhari of the legend, were also the work of Kâňhapâdasya dohâkośa, then we would get about 1200 A.D. for one Kâňha at least. The author of the 'Hevajra-pañjikâ Yoga-ratna-mâlâ' is described as 'Paṇḍitâcarîya Sîr-Kâňha-pâda' in the manuscript dated from 1199 A.D. (in the collection of the Cambridge University Library). We cannot find any positive testimony in the linguistic forms of Kâňhapâdasya dohâ-kośa which shows that it should be located much earlier than Sararahapâdasya dohâkośa.
Hemacandra describes the Prakrita Grammar by quoting ample examples from various Prakritic verses and specially deals with the Apabhraṃśa forms from the section 329 onward. He gives a short account for each phonological as well as morphological change by quoting a few verses as its illustration which is characteristic of the historical development of Ap. As Dr. Vaidya describes, Hemacandra was born in 1088 A.D. at Dhandhuka in a family of Modha bania caste. He was initiated as a Jain ascetic by Devacandra in 1098 A.D. and was given the name of Somacandra on his entering the order of ascetics. After studying various branches of Hindu and Jain sciences he was given the title of Śūri by Devacandra in recognition of his scholarship and was renamed as Hemacandra in 1105 A.D. Thereafter Hemacandra visited Anahillapura, the capital of Gujrat, and was introduced to King Jayasiṃha or Siddharāja. It was at the suggestion of Siddharāja that Hemacandra wrote this Prakrit Grammar. This was written mainly on the lines of Pāṇini's grammar, but Hemacandra added sections on Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa dialects and this work was completed in the reign of Siddharāja's successor, King Kumārapāla. Hemacandra died at the age of 84 in 1172 A.D. So we can conclude that Siddha-Hema-Sabdānuśasana or Kumārapāla-carita must have been produced between 1105 and 1172 A.D. ( Vide — Kumarapalacarita, edited by Shankar Pandurang Pandit, and revised by P.L.Vaidya; Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1936; Introduction xxiii — xxvi )

Abdul Rahaman's Sandeśa Rāsaka,
(a) critically edited by Jina Vijaya Muni & Harivallabh Bhayani; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1945.

In this work the author introduces himself in the 3rd & 4th verse:
paccmesi pahūto puvvapasiddho ya micchadesa tthi /
taha visae sambhūto āraddo mīrasenassa // ( verse 3 )
This means, "In the western tract there is the Mleccha country which was well known in earlier times. In that country there was a weaver, Mirasena by name. His illustrious son Addahamana (i.e. Abdala Rahamana), famous for his Prakrt poems and songs, has composed this Sandesarasaka."

The editor of (a) Jina Vijaya Muni infers that Abdala Rahamana was born before the period of - though not much earlier to - the rise of Sultan Mahamowd alias Shihabuddin Ghorı (1192) who established the sovereignty of Muslim rule on the throne of Delhi and that the Sandesarasaka must have been composed during the reign of Siddharaja or Kumarpala, i.e. in the later half of the 12th century or at the latest, the first half of the 13th century of the Vikrama era.

While Sri Agaraoanda Natha infers that the composition of Sandesarasaka is not so much earlier to Laksmicandles's commentary (1408 A.D.)

The editor of (b) Vishvanatha Tripathi follows the opinion of (a) and says that there cannot be any objection if we assume about 12th century as the time of composition of Sandesarasaka. (vide -(b) Introduction p. 23)

(6) Prakrta-Paṅgalam, edited by Bhola Shanker Vyas;
Prakrit Text Society, Varanasi, 1959

The 'Prakṛta-Paṅgalam' is a treatise on Prakṛt and Apabhṛṣṭa meters, recording not only their definitions but also copious illustrations, some of which appear to have been composed by the author himself and others selected from a wide range of contemporaneous literature. Ravikara, the author of 'Paṅgalasara-Viśālīnī,' one of the commentaries on the 'Prakṛta-Paṅgalam,' was the son of Harihara who seems to be identical with Haribambha or Harihara-bambha mentioned in verses 108 and 115. Dr. Vyas asserts that this Harihara was identical with the Harihara mentioned by Vidyāpati in his 'Kīrtilatā' as Dharmadhikarī of Kīrtisimha (1390-1400 A.D.) and that Harihara retouched the original text by adding a few verses of his own some time between circa 1360 and 1390 A.D. Dr. Vyas further states that in the 'Prakṛta-Paṅgalam' there are about 8 verses referring to the
exploits and bravery of Hamalra against the Mlecchas and the Shah, who should be identified with Alauddin Khilji, and that the battle of Ranathambahora between Hamalra and Alauddin was finally finished by 1302 A.D. (vide- ibid - foreward iii-iv) If these statements are correct, then we have to locate the date of the composition of the 'Prakrita-Paingalam' at the first quarter of the 14th century.

(7) Caryagiti-padaval, by Sukumar Sen; Sahityasabha, Bardhaman, 1956.

Carya-pada is the collection of verses composed by many siddhas of the Sahejiya sect, which was an off-shoot of the Tantrika or late Mahayana Buddhism. This sect seems to have been connected with the Saiva sect of the Yogis in their doctrines. Dr. S.K. Chatterjee affirms that the language of the 'Carya-pada' is Old Bengali, modified to some extent by a Western Apabhramsha and further states that Bengali with its characteristics was already established in the 11th century A.D. (vide -O.D.B.L.p.98)

Discussing the date of Caryapada Dr. S. Sen supposes that it might have been composed in about 11-12 century A.D. (vide- Caryagiti-padaval p.6).

(8) Vidyapati Thakkura's Kirtilata, edited by Vaburama Sakasena; NagarPracarini Sabha, Kasi, 1957

According to Dr. V. Sakasena Vidyapati was born as a son of Gunapati Thakkura in Mithila and composed 'Kirtilata' when he was twenty years old (about 1380 A.D) (Vide-ibid -Introduction p.18). Vidyapati describes in this work the achievement of Kirtisinha, one of his royal patrons, in Avahattha. One of the verses in this work reads 'sakkaya veni buhana bhavai, pauaras ko mamma na pavai/ desila vaana saba jana mitthaa, tei taisana jappao avahattha' ( Intelligent people handle Sanskrit and no one can understand best of Prakrit but the country language (desila vacana) sounds sweet to every one's ear. Therefore I will narrate in such kind of language -Avahattha-as Desi-bhasa). Though this work was written in Avahattha, one can notice...
some Proto-Maithili elements in a good number of instances.

(§ 3) Method

When I read the materials I generally followed the editors' reading. But whenever I came across a form whose reading did not seem to me correct from the various points of view—metrical, phonological, morphological and syntactical, I selected the best form among the various readings if there were. But there were a few questionable forms remained unsolved which might have resulted from scribal error by an original scribe, misreading of an editor or printing error. I cannot elucidate them till I happen to obtain the original manuscript or its correct copy.

Since all the materials comprise only verses, all the words recorded there are supposed to have been literary as well as poetic forms and possibly inclined to have been subject to metrical cause, which makes sometimes difficult the historical explanation for phonologic and morphologic change of an Avahattha form.

While considering these difficulties I tried to do my best to describe the Avahattha language and to give the historical explanations for it as exhaustively as I could—phonologically, morphologically, and sometimes even syntactically.

In principle I showed an OIA form for each AvH form and when I failed to trace any AvH form in the OIA stage, I traced back further to the IIr. stage or IE. stage. And when I could not succeed to find an original form in these stages I had to set a hypothetic form for it or to take it as a desī-word.

In Chapter II (Phonology) I gave each type of phonological change of a certain sound along with a few examples and their sources (i.e. names of the materials from which the concerned examples were quoted). But from the chapter III onward (Morphology) I gave each example along with not only the names of its source but also the exact place—i.e. the verse number or line number of the material where the concerned example was obtained.
All the forms comprised in Kanha-doha, Tilopađa-doha, & Saraha-doba were quoted in a thesis but from the other materials such as Savayamme-dohā, Pahuḍa-dohā, Siddha-Hema-śebdānumaśasana, Sandeśa Rāsaka, Prakṛta-Paṅgalam, Cāryaṇī-padaśvalī and Kirtilatā. Only a few relevant examples were quoted. For there is no book which discussed the languages in the materials of the first group, while those of the latter group were elaborately studied by many scholars and many examples are quoted in their books besides the indexes in which almost all the vocabularies are arranged. But whenever I utilized their examples I referred to the original context and examined whether their explanations were correct or not. Therefore I did not quote any description from any author's book unless there were available the example (word or sentence) by which I could attest that description by myself.

As regards the arrangement of Chapters and the way of description I followed generally that of Dr. Sukumar Sen's book "A Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan" with slight modifications. Because I found Dr. Sen's method as best suitable for the purpose of my thesis and also believe that it will be very useful for any one who wants to study the historical development of New Indo-Aryan languages by comparing MIA with Avahātha.

(§ 4) Phonology

Dr. S.K. Chatterjee describes the prominent features of MIA as follows.

(vide O.D.B.L., pp. 18-20)

Early MIA (600 B.C.-200 B.C)

(1) Loss of r & I, (2) āi, aya > ē; āu, ava > ō, (3) simplification of consonant group -kk, dd, tt, mh etc, (4) loss of final consonant & -h, (5) Eastern dialect-cerebralization of dental stop & aspirate in connection with r; Western & North-Western dialect-resisted this tendency (r in consonant group), (6) Eastern dialect-reduction of s, s, s, s to one sibilant ʃ or s; Western & North-Western group - retention of ʃ, s, s up to the end of the transitional MIA period.
Transitional MIA (200 B.C. - 200 A.D.)
(1) Single intervocal unvoiced stops and aspirates became voiced and fell together with original voiced stops and aspirates.

Second MIA (200 A.D. - 600 A.D.)
(1) Original single stops became zero, (2) Original intervocal aspirates (except -ṭh-, -ḍh- → ṭh-) became spirants aspirated and weakened to -h- (This tendency appeared first in Mahārāṣṭrī and last in Saurasenī and Māgadhī), (3) -p- → -v-, (4) -s- → -h-.

Third MIA (600 A.D. - 1000 A.D.)
(1) Weakening of final vowels -a- → -a-, -e- → -i-, -o- → -u-, (2) -s-, -ss- → -h-,
(3) -w- → -v- (or -w-), (4) Nasalization of vowels.

Dr. S. Sen added further the following features of MIA (vide C.G. MIA, pp. 34-73)
(1) An OIA long vowel in a closed syllable becomes short,
(2) An OIA short vowel in a closed syllable becomes long in an open syllable.
(3) An OIA long vowel in an open syllable becomes short in a closed syllable,
(4) New vowels of anaoptic and glidic origin are not infrequent,
(5) i and u sometimes result from samprassāraṇa,
(6) Single vowels sometimes result from the contraction of two or more vowels,
(7) The diphthongs ai, au split up into two vowels,
(8) Simplification of consonant group: (a) Between plosives assimilation is regressive, (b) Plosives assimilate liquids, (c) Semi-vowels are assimilated to a preceding plosive or to the corresponding affricate, but ty > cc, thy > cch, ḍy > jj, ḍhy > jjh, and optionally ty > pp and ḍhy > bbb (d) Nasals are assimilated to a preceding plosive, but optionally tw > pp, (e) A following sibilant is assimilated to a plosive and the result is cch, but optionally kṣ > kkh, tṣ > ss, (f) A preceding sibilant (or aspirate) is assimilated to a plosive with aspiration, but optionally ṭc > cc, (g) A sibilant followed by a nasal becomes nasal plus aspirate, (h) A liquid is assimilated to a semi-vowel, nasal or sibilant, but optionally ṭr > mb, hr and hl are split up.
by epenthesis, (i) \( mn > nn \), (j) in a tri-conjunct generally the first two consonants are first affected, but if a nasal comes first the last two are assimilated first, (k) initially a conjunct is simplified, with or without assimilation,

(9) Anaptyxis appears in the initial syllable of inherited words,

(10) An unvoiced consonant following a nasal becomes voiced (sometimes also aspirated in the North-Western dialect-group) in its second stage,

(11) After assimilation a palatal or cacuminal conjunct sometimes changed its first element into the corresponding nasal.

According to Puruṣottama the following are some of the important characteristics of Nāgarka (or Sauraseni Ap).

(vide - C.G.MIA p.29)

(1) \( s', s > s \), (2) \( y > j \), (3) \( n > p \), (4) loss of intervocalic \(-k, -g,\)

(5) vocalization of intervocalic \(-p, -ph\), (6) intervocalic \(-kh, -gh, -th, -bh\) became \(-h\), (7) optionally \(-k, -kh, -t, -th\) became \(-g, -gh, -d, -dh\) respectively.

Vṛcādaṅka

(1) \( s, s > s' \), (2) the \( c \) series pronounced as \( aspāṭatālāvayāḥ \),

(3) \( t, dh \) pronounced as \( aspāṭau \) (slurred), (4) initial \( t-, d-> t~, d~ \) respectively

Dr. S.Sen describes the salient phonological features of Āyāṭha as follows (vide-C.G.MIA p.32 )

(1) the marked tendency of contraction of contiguous vowels,

(2) final \(-m\) when not combined in Sandhi with a following consonant, nasalizes the preceding vowel and disappears,

(3) final \(-e \& -o\) are generally reduced to \(-i, -u\),

(4) Initial and medial \( e \) sometimes becomes \( i \),

(5) Intervocalic \(-m-\) generally becomes \(-v-\) and nasalizes the preceding vowel,

(6) final \(-am\) either drops the nasal or becomes \(-u\),

(7) final \(-ah\) either drops the visarga or becomes \(-u \ vx-o)\).
Besides the above mentioned features (in MIA including Ap. as well as AvH described by Dr. S. Sen) we can find some more features in AvH.

(1) In some instances an OIA long vowel in an open syllable becomes short in an open syllable in AvH— not only finally but also medially—.

(2) Contrary to (1) in rare instances an OIA short vowel in an open syllable becomes long in an open syllable in AvH.

(3) In rare instances an OIA long vowel split into two vowels,

(4) Weakening and reduction of vowels are frequent,

(5) a, i, and u are lost at the initial of word in a few instances,

(6) Sporadic change of OIA vowels are not infrequent,

(7) In rare instances an OIA single consonant is lost initially,

(8) Cerebralization of dental stop and aspirate (and also clusters) in no connection with r,

(9) In rare instances an intervocalic plosive becomes an aspirate,

(10) In a rare instance -n- and -m- are lost medially. But they are sometimes geminated,

(11) In a few instances an intervocalic plosive becomes geminated,

(12) In a few instances a nasal nasalizes a preceding vowel,

(13) y becomes j initially and jj in an accented syllable or lost medially,

(14) In some instances r and l substitute each other,

(15) In a few instances homogeneous conjuncts are simplified into single consonants,

(16) In a few instances heterogenous triple conjuncts are simplified into single consonants,

(17) In some instances consonant clusters are lost,

(18) In very rare instances a nasal assimilates a following consonant,

(19) bn, hm, and -m are split up by epenthesis after undergoing metathesis,

(20) Sibilant plus nasal conjuncts undergo metathesis after sibilant changing into h,

(21) Aspirate plus semi-vowel conjuncts undergo metathesis after semi-vowel changing into j or b,
(22) Some other sporadic changes are: -gdh- > -ddh-, -jn- > -gh-, -jy- > -cc-, -dy- > -tt-, -tp- > -v-, -ttv- > -cc-, -t, d, t > -d- > -r- l, d > -d-, -d- > -dd-, -nth- > -tth-, b > bhe, bh- > h-, -bh- > -bhb-, -mr- > -mb-, l > lh, -v- > -vv-, -sk- > -kk-, -sn- > -tth-, -sn- > -bn- and sn- > hn- etc.

(23) In t&sama or semi-tatsama words the following clusters or single ( plosive & semi-vowel ) consonants are retained:

gn, dg, dy, tr, tr; -k-, -p-, -th-, -g-, -gh-, y- and -v-

(§. 5) Morphology

Dr. S.K. Chatterjee describes the prominent morphological of MIA as follows ( Vide — O.D.B.L. pp.18 - 20 ).

Early MIA: (i) obscured root sense, (2) fixed stress accent,
(3) standardising the a-declension, (4) loss of dual number, (5) Dative merged into Genitive, (6) extension of pronominal formations to the noun, (7) loss of Subjunctive mood, (8) perfect system became less and confined to a few verbs, (10) aorist & imperfect fell together and less used, (11) disappearance of middle voice, (12) Causative remained, (13) verbal nouns & gerund became fewer but more used, (14) wider use of passive participle for the past tense, (15) fewer prepositional particles.

Transitional MIA: use of a help-word (santaka) in forming nominal case

Second MIA: (1) mc. & fm. were preserved, (2) use of help-words in forming cases of nouns & pronouns — kera<kārya, kaa<kṛta, (3) reduction of the conjugational system to Indicative present & future, Imperative, Optative present, Passive present, (4) perfect for a few stray words, (5) use of the passive participle to indicate the past became the rule, (6) a number of verbal nouns and participle forms.

Third MIA: (1) all declensions reduced practically one but survivals of fm. & nt. declensions in some instances, (2) typical case forms: Nom. sg. -u, -i; pl. -a; Inst. -ep, -him;
Abl. -ahu; Gen. sg. -aha, -āha, -assu, -ā; pl. -ṇa, -haṃ; Loc. -i, -ahim, -ahu, -asu; (3) inflected help-words to emphasize case relations — kara, kaṇṇa, kiṭṭa, maṭṭha, kāccha or kakkha, thāma, sāma, anta, antara etc. generally added to Genitive or some other forms; (4) verbal forms like (a)hanta, sanda, thakkha, dia; (5) conjugational system reduced to Indicative present & future, Passive present, Imperative, and Optative less used; other moods & tenses entirely lost; (6) use of the passive participle for the past tense establishes the passive and neuter construction; (7) pleonastic affixes -ill-, -all-, -q-

Dr. S. Sen gives us further details of morphological features of MIA in his C.G.MIA (Vide — p. 74 onwards).

Noun: (1) change of the consonantal stems to vowel stems, (2) the different types of the OIA vowel declension were reduced to only -a, -u, -i, -ī & -ū, (3) growing influence of the a-stem which was influenced by the pronominal declension, (4) the original gender is generally preserved in the transfer stems, (5) mc. & nt. came closer together; nt. differs from mc. in only Nom.-Acc.; fm. remains distinct from mc. only in Inst., Dat., Abl., Gen. and Loc. sg., (6) -ī for the adjective and -(i)ni for the noun, (7) the dual number is replaced by the plural, (8) Dat. is a dying idiom and replaced by Gen., (9) Inst. often functions also for Abl. & Loc.

Pronoun: (10) the declension of 1st per. pron. includes nine stems derived from IE. *egho-, *me(i)-, *uei & *no(s)- (OIA aha-, ma(y)-, vay- na- and asma-): ahakam, ham, hakam, hami, ma-, ma-, *mami-, maya-, mama, mamaka, *mabh(y)a-, mahya-, as, asmi, whi and na).

Numeral: (11) the ar- dental numerals in MIA are treated and inflected as substantives. (Inflected forms other than Nom.-Acc. are rare for numerals above ten).

Verb: (12) the dual number was completely and the middle voice almost lost, (13) the flexional difference between the active and the passive was confined to the stem only, (14) complete loss of the perfect tense, (15) the imperfect and the aorist fell together and this combined finite past tense was lost in Ap., (16) the preterite was formed by the past participle,
(17) the future remained throughout but it began to lose ground to the present and to the future passive participle in -tavya, (18) the Subjunctive survived in a few forms in early MIA, (19) the Optative survived till the second MIA when it tended to coalesce with the passive, (20) the Imperative and the present Indicative remained throughout.

Purusottama described the following as some of the important morphological characteristics of Nagaraka (i.e. Sauraseni Ap.):

(1) pleonastic affixes -dHA, -dHa frequent, (2) some unique forms (e.g. vrāsa for vyāsa, bhuha for bhūta, chacchanda for svacchanda, tumbhārā for tvadīya-, ambhāra for madīya-, jima for yāvat, tīma for tāvat), (3) the verbs kr-, gam-, bhū became optionally kar, gam, ho respectively, (4) na, nai, nāvai, naham, jima, jani used in the sense of iva, (5) kai, kimpru, kimpradu, kīra, kīra used in the sense of kim, (6) unique suffixes: -evīṇu, -epiṇu, -eppēvu for gerund tvā; -iavva-, -iavvau for future passive participle -tavya; -tāṇa, -ppāṇa, -dā for abstract noun formation -tva, -tā, (7) pleonastic affix -ulla.

Vṛcaḍaka: (1) je, jji for eva, bhū bho (non-initially).

Dr. S. Sen describes the morphological features of Avahattha as follows (Vide — C.G.MIA pp. 32 - 33).

(1) a distinct tendency of levelling the declensional difference between mc. & fm. stems, (2) complete fusion of the Inst., Abl. & Loc., (3) new pronominal forms come into being in the three genders (eha, jeha, keha, imu, kemu, kiva, jima, tīma, tāḍ̄k, mai(q), tai(p), ambha, tumha, ambhāra, tumbhāra-, madīya, yuṣmadīya etc.), (4) the conjugal endings of the verb (Indicative and Imperative): 1st per.sg. -hum, -m; pl. -ma; 2nd per.sg. -i, -u, -hi; pl. -ha; 3rd. per.sg. -(a)i, -a; pl. -nti, -hi, (5) periphrasis appears in nominal and verbal idioms.

Besides the above-mentioned features (in MIA as well as AvH described by Dr. S. Sen) we can add some more features in AvH.

Noun: (1) Among the OIA declensional types only seven survived ( -a, -ā, -i, -I, -u, -an & -in; -r in a few stray forms), (2) many allomorphs are available for each case ending, (3) extended use of case endings and confusion of number, (5) OIA case-endings are losing their distinctive grammatical functions at the later stage of AvH, (6) new plural formation by adding loa (<loka) to singular form of substantives.
Pronoun: (7) new pronominal forms (2nd per. sg. Acc.-Abl.-Loc. païm, Gen. sg. tudhra; demonstrative Nom. sg. mc. tram; -tI is used for fn.; saḥ is extended to Nom. nt. & Acc. mc.; *rtya- is used for the plural forms of the near demonstrative; oï< are for the far demonstrative; kavana for kaḥ, sāhu for sarvam), (8) -ka & -ra (originally adjectival suffix) for the possessive pronominal adjective ending, (9) lai as a postposition for Inst. & Abl. sg. form of the demonstrative pronoun.

Numeral: (10) analogical formation of an ordinal number (*ekadaśama-ka-), (11) some forms of ordinal numbers used for cardinal numbers.

Adjective: (12) almost all the adjectives do not indicate clearly their declensional concordance with the modified substantives.

Verb: (13) the preterite (combined finite past tense of the imperfect and the aorist) survived in a few stray forms but it is an almost dying form, (14) Imperative form used for Conditional in a few instances, (15) disappearance of past participle suffix -mēna, (16) future passive participle used for verbal noun, (17) verbal noun or gerund form used for infinitive, (18) past participle form became frequently used for gerund or absolutive, (19) change of verbal class.

Other features: (20) frequent use of pleonastic affixes (ka, la, đa) for nouns and past participles, (21) appearance of some adverbs through nominal formations which were not attested in OIA: e.g. — agge (SD.28) *agrena = OIA agram, ālē (SD.18.33.49)<*alena = OIA alam, uare (KD.22)<*uparena = OIA upari, caṇge (SD. 37)<*caṅge = OIA caṅgam, niūne (TD.26; SD.32) *nipunena = OIA nipunam, dūre (KD.27)<*dūre = OIA dūram, paṣcē (SD.27)<*paṣcena = OIA paṣcat, micche (TD.4)<*mithye, micchehī (SD.3)<*mithyebhīm = OIA mithyā, MIA micchē, vāhire (SD.62.80)<*vāhire = OIA bahis, saccē (SD.33)<*satyena = OIA satyam.
(§. 6) Syntax

Dr. S.K. Chatterjee mentions the prominent syntactical features of MIA as follows (Vide — O.D.B.L. pp. 18 - 20).

Second MIA: (1) word-order became stereotyped, (2) preference for the nominal rather than the verbal phrase, (3) compound verb.

Dr. S. Sen pointed out a few more features (Vide — C.G.MIA pp. 193 - 194): (1) appearance of the various types of the syntactical compound (with postpositions, nouns, adverbs and phrases) (2) Tatpurṣa, BahūvrThi and syntactical compounds are often strengthened by a pleonastic suffix, (3) the omission of the common element between the two constituent words in a compound.

Besides the above-mentioned features we can notice the following features also in AvH: (1) In nominal composition most of the OIA compounds became simplex or just combined as sequence of words without any Sandhi and they tended to become collective singular, (2) a few syntactical compound forms, (3) group inflection.

(§. 7) Vocables

Dr. S.K. Chatterjee describes the features of AvH vocabulary as follows (Vide — O.D.B.L. pp. 20): (1) use of rime, wider use of onomatopoetic forms, (2) loan-words (new tat-sama and semi-tat-sama) from Skt., (3) influence of Skt. & the literary Pkt. of the earlier MIA stage.

Dr. S. Sen states that the AvH vocabulary is distinguished by new stems both nominal and verbal (e.g. vāṭa, vāḍa 'fool', kalla, kalli 'tomorrow, yesterday', cikhiḷa 'muddy', khojja 'trace', kāla 'deaf', bobba 'dumb', vuḍ- 'to sink', vaḍḍa 'big, high' etc.) and that there is an abundance of metrical varieties all showing rhyme except Dohā and Gāhā (Vide — C.G.MIA. p. 33).

The following vocables may be added as unique forms to AvH. uddūlia (SD.4) < ud-dūlita 'besmear', cf. Skt. /dul
ullūriya- (PD.112) < ud-lūrita 'destroyed', cf. Skt. /lu
The meanings of some vocables are unique to AvH.

- kārimata (PD.9) 'evil', cf. Skt. kṛtrima, kālima
- kharagoda (SD.23) 'stain, pollute', cf. Skt. khar
- jhagada (SD.23) 'trouble, disturb', cf. onomatopoetic origin
- cellu (SD.10) 'religious disciple', cf. Skt. cēta
- bhidi (SD.19) 'tightly, fast', cf. MB. bhiri
- hallai (SD.5) 'make sound, move', cf. Hindi hilana

The meanings of some vocables are unique to AvH.

- ekkallau (PD.75) 'single enough', Fkt. or
desi 'strong' > AvH 'at once'
- orahī (SD.8) 'opposite'
- chadda (SD.16) 'vomit', Skt. 'vomit' > AvH 'abandon'
- bheu (SD.1) 'division, breaking' > AvH 'secret, mystery'
- (vi)rahi (SD.102) 'separated, being a lonely place' > AvH 'remain'

(§ 8) Local character

Since AvH was the literary form and the authors of those days are supposed to have been using the colloquial forms of local character as their mother tongues, it is not strange to find some local elements -- i.e. Proto-vernacular forms in the language of their Avahaṭṭha works. The following may be counted as the local elements in SYD and PD: (1) Residual -y- in the place of an intervocalic plosive consonant, (2) Dat. sg. -hù; Abl. sg. -he; Abl.-Gen. sg. -ho, -hù, -hem, (3) Pronominal forms: Gen. sg. majjhū, tujjhū; (4) Pronominal adverb: kaham, taham

The eastern group (KD, TD, SD, & SD*) shows its local elements in

(1) Loss of an intervocalic plosive consonant, (2) Confusion between v and b, (3) Unique forms of vocables.

In both groups the number of Proto-vernacular forms is quite small. However the later the works were composed, the more the Proto-vernacular forms crept frequently in their languages (as in the case of SR and specially KL). Since Old Maithilī had been already used as a literary form early 14th century (e.g. Jyotiśvara Thākura's "Vāṇa-ratnakāra"), we can well understand why so many Old Maithilī forms are found in KL though the author, Vidyāpati Thākura, himself declared that he composed it in Avahaṭṭha.
§ 9 Relation between Avahāṭṭha and Proto-Bengali

Since Proto-Bengali was derived from spoken Māgadhī and was being used as a colloquial form while AvH was used as a literary form, it is quite probable that some colloquial form, Proto-Bengali, crept in the Avahāṭṭha works composed by those authors whose mother tongue was Proto-Bengali.

If Caryāpada was written in Old Bengali, then we have to presume that Saraha and Kāpha composed their Dohā works in Avahāṭṭha and CP in Old Bengali just as Vidyāpati composed KL in AvH and the songs on the love of Radha and Kṛṣṇa in Old Maithili. The details will be discussed in the Chapter X.

§ 10 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this thesis.

Abl. — Ablative, Acc. — Accusative,
A.D. — anno domini, Ap. — Apabhṛmśa,
Aśokan — Aśokan Inscriptions, AvH — Avahāṭṭha,
B. — Bengali, B.C. — before Christ,
C. — consonant, C.G.MIA — A Comparative Grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan, by Dr. Sukum Sen, 1960;
cf. — compare, CP. — Caryāpiti-padavālt,
Dat. — Dative, fm. — feminine,
Gen. — Genitive, Gk. — Greek,
H.G.Ap. — Historical Grammar of Apabhṛmśa, by Gajanan Vasudev Tagare, 1948; HS. — Siddha-Hema-Sadbānuśasana,
IE. — Indo-European, IIr. — Indo-Iranian,
Imp. — Imperative, Inf. — infinitive,
Inst. — Instrumental, KD. — Kāpha-dohā,
KL. — Kārttiķa, Loc. — Locative,
MB. — Middle Bengali, MIA — Middle Indo-Aryan,
mc. — masculine, NIA — New Indo-Aryan,
Nom. — Nominative, nt. — neutral,
O.D.B.L. — The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language, by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, 1926;
OIA — Old Indo-Aryan, p. — page,
PD. — Pāhuḍa-dohā, part. — participle,
per. --- person, Pkt. --- Prakrit
pres. --- present, pl. --- plural,
FP. --- Prakrit-Paingalam, RV. --- Rgveda,
SD. --- Saraha-dohā, Sd. & Sd.' --- Sarahapādiya-dohā,
sg. --- singular, Skt. --- Sanskrit,
SR. --- Sandeśa/Kāśaka, SYD. --- Sīvayadjamma-dohā,
TD. --- Tillopada-dohā, Voc. --- Vocative

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