

“And afterwards the king *Kai-Vishtâsp* spoke thus:— ‘If all the sons, and brothers, and princes of mine, (who am) *Kai Vishtâsp Shah*, and of *Hûtôs*, who was chosen by myself (to be my spouse), (and) who (was married to me and) is my wife, and by whom are begotten 30, including sons and daughters; (if they) are to die together, then (too) I shall not forsake this sacred Mazdayasnian Revelation such as I have accepted from *Aûharmazd*.’”

The Pahlavi expression *zyam khajîd* suggests to us that the courting or solicitation for the hand of a maiden was not unknown to the Irânians in the age of the Avesta. The failure of such a solicitation does not seem to have been uncommon, as the highest power, like King *Vishtâsp*, emphatically expresses the successful result of his courtship in his subsequent connubial union with *Hûtôs*.



In the second Pahlavi passage quoted above, the word *nîshâ* is not used in its ordinary import of ‘wife’ or ‘woman,’ but it seems to be, as in other Pahlavi MSS., an erroneous reading of the original *nîsmô* or *nîsman*, which means ‘soul,’ ‘life,’ ‘vital power,’ etc. (cf. S.B.E., vol. xxxvii, chap. xiv, § 1). This much discussed passage can therefore be rendered: “*Vîrâf* had seven sisters, and all these seven were unto *Vîrâf* as dear as (his) soul.”

A further progress in the decipherment and interpretation of more Pahlavi texts will, I hope, enable us to throw better light on such ambiguous and obscure Pahlavi words and expressions.—Yours sincerely,

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4. SANTAK OR SIGN-SIGNATURES IN INDIA.

SIR,—Perhaps some of the readers of your Journal may kindly help me to obtain further information as to the origin of the *santaks* or marks used to attest the signatures of illiterate persons in some parts of India, and as to the use of similar marks in other countries.

In the Orissa districts of Bengal every man has according to his caste and family a distinctive mark, which, if unable to sign his name, he is supposed to draw, and may generally use as a crest. In most cases these marks are rude or conventional drawings of an implement used by members of a profession: for instance, a Bhandári or member of the caste of barbers makes a square which is called the *darpan santak* or looking-glass sign; a Khandait or member of the old warrior caste uses a *khanda santak* or sword sign; and a goldsmith makes a simple circle supposed to represent a touchstone. Many castes use more than one mark, and custom appears to determine which of them is used in any particular family. The most general mark is the figure of Jaganath  which any Hindu may use, and the most exclusive is the peacock confined to descendants of the old royal family of the peacock line. To illustrate the use of the *santak*, we may suppose that Fagu Paharāj, an illiterate Brahman, asks Rám Mahanti to sign a paper for him. Rám Mahanti would write “e  *kuṣabatu santak likhitan Fagu Paharāj*,” i.e., this symbol of the ring of kusa-grass was made by Fagu Paharāj, and would probably add the words “by the agency of Rám Mahanti.” Whether this addition was made or not the form of signature would show that Fagu Paharāj was a Brahman, and that he could not or did not sign his own name, the mark only being, in theory, made by him. I have made a collection, by no means complete, of such marks, and I shall be greatly obliged for information as to the existing literature on the subject, and as to the prevalence of similar customs elsewhere.

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To Professor Rhys Davids.