BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

NYAÑCANĪ- "REFUGE" ATH.S. V.5.2 d

The second stanza of the hymn to the plant *śilācī*¹ reads:

*yās tvā pībati jīvati
trāyase pūruṣaṁ tvām/
bhartrī hi śāsvatām asi
jānānām ca nyāñcanī*

The meaning "lap" assigned to *nyāñcanī*- by Roth (and Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 69, Grill, *Hundert Lieder des AV.*, p. 11, Monier-Williams) is obviously an etymological guess (cf. *añka*-, m., since BÄU.). Against it Bloomfield, *SBE*, vol. 42, p. 420, pointed to *nyāñcana*-, n. "refuge" in RS. VIII. 27.18a, Ath. S. IV. 36.6d (like Grill, *op. c.*, p. 142!) and translated "(thou art) the refuge of men" (p. 20). Whitney followed him by rendering "hiding-place(?)" Since every pāda of this stanza stresses the salutary effect of *śilācī*-, Thieme's proposal to read **nyāñjani*- "paint" (see *Kuhn's Zeitschr.*, vol. 69, 1951, p. 209, n. 1) has little chance of being correct. Especially the *nomina instrumenti* in -ana-, when used as epithets to other nouns, very often adopt the grammatical gender of these. Cf. e.g. *pīśnir upasécanī* RS. X. 105.10a contrasting with *upasécana*-, n. RS. X. 76.7c (see Thieme, *Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des RV.*, p. 33f.). Since the accent of *nyāñcanī*- suggests a relation *nyāñcanī*- : *nyāñcana*- similar to that of *upasécanī*- : *upasécana*-, the word *nyāñcanī*- „refuge“ may be supposed to stress again the idea already expressed by *trāyase* in b (Kuiper, *Vāk* 2, p. 42). In this connection it is interesting to note that for *agnāú vā etān nyāñcanam ichate* MS. I. 8.2 (: p. 116, 14) the corresponding Kāthaka-version has *agnā evā tát trāṇam icchate*, KS. VI. 2 (: p. 50, 19); cf. KapKS. 4.1 (: p. 37, 11).

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¹ See K. N. Dave, *Lac and the Lac-Insect in the Av.* (Nagpur, 1950).