

CHAPTER EIGHTEENCONCLUSION

From its embriyonic state of Vedic legends and Epic Ākhyānakas, and its sojourn through the long period of unrecorded development, Sanskrit prose-romance first made its appearance, in the history of Sanskrit literature, in the passing references of Pāṇini and Patañjali, especially of the latter who mentioned a few romances, viz., Vāsavadatta ttā, Sumanottarā and Bhaimarathī, without giving out the names of their authors. Likewise, the Cārumati of Vararuci, the Śūdraka-kathā of Rāmila-Saumila, the Taraṅgavatī of Pālitta and the romance of unmentioned name by Hariścandra have survived only in their titles. But they have left their indelible influence in the royal legal documents in the form of a number of inscriptions such as those of Rudradāman (150 A.D.), of Samudragupta (4th century), and the Mandasor inscription (437 A.D.) composed by ~~Vatsabha~~ Vatsabhātṭi, all of which have been composed in ornate poetic prose decorated by poetic conventions and perspicuous, short, sweet, striking and charming words.

Though, long before Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin, Sanskrit prose-romance had crystalized into its twofold form of Kathā and

and Ākhyā^yikā, it was not until the sixth century A.D. that the now extant specimens of full-fledged Sanskrit prose-romance of Subandhu and Daṇḍin appeared on the stage of ~~the~~ the history of the so-far-known Sanskrit literature.

Subandhu selected a very novel way in his narrative, ^{otherwise,} which was ~~neither~~ highly effective nor attractive. The weakness of the slender theme with its insignificance was ^{however,} ~~fully~~ compensated by minute portraiture of personal beauty of the lovers, their qualities and their sentiments in union and separation. The VK afforded an opportunity to Subandhu to perfect "a clear, simple and beautiful diction as ~~a~~ well as a style majestic with long and rolling compounds, and full of double-meaning epithets, showing off his scholarly abilities, his command of sciences, his ability to weave together words to form a difficult construction and his love of the out-of-the-way and the un-attempted ~~sa far~~ sa far by anyone else "¹.

Bāṇa picked up the thread of Subandhu's style and perfected all his literary craftsmanship in greater elaboration. But the greatest contribution of Bāṇa was in that he suffused this style with unprecedented poetic imagination and close observation both culminating in his graphic descriptions which overshadowed rather loose plot-structure held together by the ~~the~~ primary literary device of boxing stories within

1. VK(S), Introduction, p.53.

stories. His rich fancy and wonderful command over Sanskrit language combined to make him a master of flowery, luxuriant and highly finished style which metamorphosed rough rock of a folk-tale into a beautiful poetic gem.²

Dandin, who was at the same time an artist as well as a critic, chose a path of his own and led the holy Ganges of Sanskrit novel in hither to unfrequented groves of a new form and content; the resultant products were his *Avantisundarī-kathā* and the *Dasakumaracaritam*. In both these romances he depicted "a lively picture of dissolute and fraudulent rogues, brave robbers, expert thieves, passionate lovers, unfaithful wives, coquetish harlots, cunning paramours and procuresses, and, above all, of hypocritical ascetics and greedy priests, inhabiting the great cities of the day"³, the curious and mysterious atmosphere being further fortified "by the lively elements of folk-tale, viz., living interest in the narrative, power of vivid characterization and subtle caricature, a keen sense of amusing wit and humour and piquant satire; all these qualities clothed in the best garb of literary making the works of Dandin a class by themselves."⁴ In form, however, the plot-structure of Dandin's novels was quite unique as it comprised a number of independent well-knit tales tied together by the artificial device of repeated coincidences linking them with a common tale of a central character.

2. cf. CSDHW, p.272.

/ 3. *ibid.*, p.285.

4. *ibid.*, p.286.

His main contribution lies in that he created a new genre in the field of Sanskrit novel which he composed in a forceful medium of expression marked by the quality of elegance of diction (padalālitya).

It is not surprising that instead of exploring new possibilities in the genre created by Bāṇa, Daṇḍin chose to himself create a new genre. Perhaps the reason for this phenomenon lay in Daṇḍin's very nature as a rhetorician and as a man realistic down to his very marrow.

On the authority of Dhanapāla⁵ and some of the Sanskrit anthologists like Śārṅgadhara⁶ and others,⁷ it seems that Bāṇa's masterly performance as a novelist served as a discouraging influence for the prospective subsequent novelists for about a couple of centuries during which not a single Sanskrit poet dared to touch the Kathā form at all.⁸ And those like Trivikramabhaṭṭa, Somadevasūri, Bhoja who had some confidence rather took to a new form, viz., Campū, perhaps to avoid the contingency of unfavourable comparison with Bāṇa; some poets like Sodḍhala who aspired to compose a Kathā preferred to err on the safe side by calling their work a ~~campū~~ Campū-kathā : It was, thus, left to Dhanapāla to break the ice by taking up ~~the Kathā form~~ Bāṇa's genre and explore

5. TM(N), Intro. vs. 26 ab: केवलोऽपि स्फुरन्बाणः करोति विमदान्कवीन् ।

6. Srg. Pad., vs. 117 d: ... कविकुम्भिकुम्भद्विदुषे बाणस्तु पञ्चाननः ।

7. Kirtikaumudī, I, 15: सुक्तं कारम्बरीं शुक्ला कवयो मौनमाश्रिताः । बाणध्वना-
वनध्यायो भवतीति स्मृतिर्यतः ॥ ; also, बाणस्य हर्षाश्रिते निशिता-
मुदीक्ष्य शक्तिं न केऽत्र कविताश्चन्द्रं त्यजन्ति । (quoted by Keith
in HSL(K), p. 347.

8. Sag. Vol. III, No. 4, p. 347; Samvid, Vol. IV, Nos. 1-4, p. 131.

(ii) While utilizing as many popular motifs as could possibly be utilized purposefully in the given frame-work of a well-knit plot, Dhanapāla added an element of rationality and in the process reduced the degree of incredibility and unreality invariably associated with the often-misused element of accident. ~~It~~ It is Dhanapāla who, as a Sanskrit novelist, has a right to claim the first place in developing the technique by which a novelist could eschew the disadvantage of utilizing the element of accident and that of the mysterious and would acquit the novel from losing its firm foot-hold on solid earth while, at the same time, taking full advantage of the effect of surprise so necessary for continuously ~~holding the attention~~ catching the imagination and maintaining the curiosity of his audience. This technique was rooted in the typically Jain rationalistic outlook evinced in Jain works like Raviṣeṇa's Padmapurāna and such others.

(iii) Aesthetic delight and literary entertainment had hitherto been the chief motives behind Sanskrit prose-romance. Dhanapāla introduced a new element of the religious ethics, without in any way lessening the importance and the degree of the above-mentioned twin essential elements of literary art. Dhanapāla achieved this by resorting to the technique of allegory inherited from veteran Jain authors like ~~Haribhadra~~ Haribhadrāsūri, Udyotanasūri and especially Siddharṣi. However,

our poet was highly careful in not letting the element of religious morality overshadow or hinder artistic and aesthetic ones. The resultant picture thus emerging was the one of a tastefully mild, totally unintrusive and poetically suggested ~~the~~ Jainistic background which would never obstruct the torrential flow of the highly ornate style in which the story proceeds, with its slow royal pacing, to the ultimate union of its heroes and heroines on the one hand, while, on the other hand, it unfailingly impresses upon the minds of the sympathetic audience the transitory nature of all the pleasures, of earth as well as of ~~the~~ heaven.

(iv) In increasing the number of verses to about one hundred, almost half of them comprising the introductory remarks and ~~the rest~~ the rest being tastefully interspersed in the body of the narrative, he enlarged the scope of the poet's exhibition of his twin ~~and~~ skill in prose as well as in verse, while, at the same time, maintaining the essential nature of 'Kathā' as a prose-romance in contrast to the allied mixed genre called Campū. It is with Dhanapāla that Sanskrit novel diverted from its course of hitherto mixed up ~~and~~ function of prose and verse and began to define their scope and allocate proper functions to them as a literary medium in the novel, much in the same manner as it was

done in the field of Sanskrit drama. Dhanapāla, thus, carried further the radiant torch of Sanskrit prose-romance, enkindled by Subandhu and Daṇḍin, and profusely nurtured by Bāṇa; and, establishing himself as a worthy literary successor of the last one, he sought to develop a new form for his romantic tale by striking a balance between the stylistic extremities of both prose as well as verse, though at the same time properly maintaining the scholarly tenor of the then prevailing literary norms.

It is in view of this highly important contribution in the field of literary art, the Sanskrit prose-romance, that Dhanapāla has a right to claim an honoured place, in the history of Sanskrit literature, among the comity of veteran Sanskrit novelists of medieval India. And it is on this very ground that the TM, this literary master-piece of Kavi Dhanapāla, has the honoured privilege to claim the attention of the lovers of Sanskrit language and literature and that of the orientologists of all the nations of the world, ~~and~~ And, finally, it is on the strength of all these qualities and contributions that the work rightly deserves the fully justified encomiums showered on it by lovers of Sanskrit literatures ~~and~~ in the following verses :

नमः श्रीधनपालाय येन विज्ञानगुम्फिता ।

कं नालंकुरुते कण्ठास्थिता तिलकमञ्जरी ॥

वचनं श्रीधनपालस्य चन्दनं मलयस्य च ।

सरसं हृदि विन्ध्यस्य कोऽभून्नाम न निर्वृतः ॥

तिलकमंजरीमंजरिरसंजरिलोलद्विपश्चिदलिजालः ।

जनार्णयेऽसालः कोऽपि रसालः पफाल धनपालः ॥

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