CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROSE LITERATURE IN SANSKRIT

II.I The Origin of Prose

It has been the eternal wish of mankind to express the thoughts and feelings in a distinct manner. Since very early days, the word '*gadya*' (what is to be spoken clearly) is used to mean 'prose statements' as opposed to verified compositions, since prose is the natural form of human articulation and expressions.

Examples of the earliest Sanskrit Prose (*gadya*) are found in the *Saṁhitās* of *Yajūrvedā*. It consisted primarily of hymns and sacrificial non-metrical formulae (*Yajūs*). However, the language of such prose was very ambiguous and fragmentary. Little could be derived logically out of such prose. So, the earliest prose of significant importance can be traced in the *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Kṛṣṇāyajūrvedā Saṁhitās* (for example, the *Taittirīyasaṁhitās*, the *Kaṭhakasaṁhitā* and the *Maitriyainsaṁhitā*) and the *Brāhmaṇas* proper (for example, the *AitareyaBrāhmaṇa*, the *ShapathaBrāhmaṇa* and the *PañcaviśaBrāhmaṇa*), where it has been employed for narrative purposes in terse composition.

A later presentation of prose is found in the saṁhitās of the *Atharvavedā*. About one sixth of this *Vedā* is in prose composition. As per Macdonell, the prose of this period is even later than the *Brāhmaṇas*.

The *saṁhitā* period is chronologically followed by the period of *Brāhmaṇas*. Except for some metrical pieces (*Gathās*), the whole of *Brāhmaṇas* are composed in prose literature. The prose of this period seems to be closer to the actual speech

of the people, since it is free from artificialities such as use of puns and long compound structures.

Although simplistic in nature, due to repetition of words and clauses, the structure of sentences used in such prose is very monotonous and is over-explanatory in nature. However, the style of the *Brāhmaṇas*, speak volumes of its natural composition in contrast to that observed in fable literature. The point to be noted is that although the literature is predominantly inornate, coherent, cumbersome and disjointed, a distinct progress is made towards greater facility compared to earlier compositions.

The language of the *Brāhmaṇas* represents an era between the *samhitā* period and the classical Sanskrit of *Pāṇini*. The style of *Brāhmaṇas* itself has undergone a metamorphosis in expressive content. While the prose style seen in *Taittirīyasamhitās* and earlier *Brāhmaṇas* is characterized by shorter sentence construction, the later *Brāhmaṇas* are characterized by heaps of figures of speech and proper connectives. Honestly speaking and not exaggerating too much, the later *Brāhmaṇas* can be pointed out as the origin of 'Poetic' prose.

Here is an example from the *Taittirīyasamhitā*, depicting the construction of expression during that time[1]:

मनो न्वा हुवामहे नाराशषँसेन स्तोमेन पितृणां च मन्मभिः।

आ न एतु मनः पुनः त्रत्वै दक्षाय जीवसे। ज्योक्च सूर्य दृशे।

Prose is also found in the *Āraṇyakas*, which are the later portion of *Brāhmaṇas*. The latest portion of *Brāhmaṇa* literature comprises the *Upaniṣads* which are the final parts of *Āraṇyakas*. There is similarity in the prose style of *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads* and *Brāhmaṇas*. The prose of early *Upaniṣads* (for

[1] Sharma, Nita, *A Literary Study of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*,P.3

example, the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*) is more organized and easy to understand.

एषां भूतानां पृथिवी रसः पृथिव्या आपो रसोऽपामोषधयो रस ओषधीनां पुरुषः रसः पुरुषस्य वाग्रसोवाच ऋग्रस ऋचः सामरसः साम्र उद्गीथो रसः। (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* verse 2)

There are also few prose passages in the *Mahābhārata,* which can be considered as good samples of pre-Pāṇiniyan Sanskrit prose.

In between, the *Upaniṣads* and the classical prose literature, a need was felt for shortening the content of subject matter. This transformed prose literature into a peculiar compressed prose which is referred as *Sūtra* literature. The compression yielded long compound words helpful for memorizing. The essence of *Sūtra* style was a string of short sentences interleaved together in concise form. The origin of 'artificiality' as seen in later *Prose-Kāvyas* may be traced to *Sūtra* literature. The style represented by *Sūtra* literature is classical in nature.

The Sanskrit prose developed without any interruption from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads* in two streams: as a development of the *ākhyānas* and the *ākhyāyikās* of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*, and as instructive tales and fables written since very early days. Unfortunately, a major part of this literature is now lost except for the *Pañcatantra* in several adaptations.

II.II Prose literature of Classical Period

The writings in Sanskrit prose made great progress towards classical literature at a very early age. It started with the *Nirukta* of Yāska (7th century B.C.), which is an important treatise of the science of etymology and reached perfection in the *Mahābhasya* of Patañjali (2nd century B.C.), the earliest commentary on the

Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini. It is also worthwhile to mention here that prose is also observed in the *Purānas* in an easy and lucid form. Sanskrit prose is also used in the works of Grammar, *Jyotiṣa* and Philosophy. After *Pāṇini*'s refinement of grammatical rules, the nominal style took over the verbal style. The *Mīmāmsābhasya* of Śabarasvāmī, the *Nyāybhasya* of Vatsāyana and Śankarācaryā's commentaries (*bhāṣyas*) on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtra* and the *Bhāgvadgitā* deserve mention as excellent pieces of exegetical literature. In the works of Śankarācaryā, it is seen that the sentences are lengthier but the style is rich in elegance and expression. Thereafter, prose is seen to be more artificial in the later philosophical works.

It is difficult to say with any certainty since when the *gadya-kāvya* came into vogue. It appears that Kātyāyana (4th century B.C.), the author of the supplementary rules (*varttika*) on Pāṇini's (5th century B.C.) grammar knew the genre *ākhyāyikā* and Patañjali was acquainted with *ākhyāyikās* such as the *Vasavadattā*, the *Sumanottara* and the *Bhaimarathi*.

In the classical period, proses of different styles are noticed. One of the styles included didactic fables written in easy, clear and natural style. Examples of this form are found in *Pañcatantra*, *Hitopodeśa* etc. The other style is the articial poetic prose style as seen to be practiced in the *Prose-Kāvyas* of Subhandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin.

Another form of Sanskrit *gadya* is found developed in the epigraphical records. Though the earliest epigraphs of India are in Prakrit and not in Sanskrit (for example, the edicts of Aśokā, the inscription of the Kuśānas, the Besnagar inscription of Heliodoros), however Sanskrit, found its footing in the 2nd century A.D. During this time, the classical examples are evident in both fundamental principles and descriptive references. A study of various inscriptions during this period revealed the existence of numerous '*prasastis*' which go a long way in

proving the development of Sanskrit prose during the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries. An expressive and ornamented prose piece is found in the Girnar edict (130 A.D.) of the western Saka Satrap Rudradaman I. The use of figures of speech and rare use of verbs is evident in this inscription.

The style of prose writing is seen further developed in Harisena's *prasasti* of Samudragupta (4th century A.D.) as inscribed on the Allahabad stone pillar of Aśoka. The prose of Harisena may be recognized as the precursor of the later cultivated *gadyakāvyas*.

Indian Buddhist writers, belonging to both the Mahayana and Hinayana denominations, made significant contributions to prose narratives and Sanskrit literature in general. Both canonical and non-canonical writings are scattered with *gathās* in Prakrit or mixed Sanskrit. The lives of Buddha and other religious personalities were described in the works to demonstrate the teachings of non-violence, compassion, renunciation, etc. The refinement and accuracy of classical Sanskrit took a back seat in these works and the authors greatly used a 'mixed' Sanskrit. The earliest example of this type of writing is the *Mahavastu Avadana*, a canonical text of the *Lokottaravadins*. The language and style adopted in Mahavastu does not confirm to the rules of Sanskrit grammar. However, the Buddhists changed their style for prose narratives later on by accepting refined idioms and ornamented style. The outcome of this change in stance for prose narratives is evident in works such as *Avadanaśataka*, the *Divyavadana*, the *Lalitavistara* and the *Jatakamālā*.

After the fourth century, artificiality is seen to increase more and more in prose literature, as we proceed towards the age of Subandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin. Compounds of larger sizes and figurative illustrations are seen to be ruling prose literature.

No other prose kāvya earlier than Subandhu's (6th century A.D.) *Vasavadattā* is available. It is a notable prose romance in Sanskrit. The love episode between the prince Kandarpaketu and the princess Vasavadattā is the central theme of the romantic work. The style of Subandhu's narration is too descriptive and elaborate; as a matter of fact, the *Vasavadattā* represents an exercise of the style in the description of mountain, river, the valour of the prince, the beauty of the heroine etc. Subandhu is less interested in the story and is fond of playing with words. He uses long compounds and almost every syllable contains a pun (*sleśa*). It is well accepted that Subandhu is earlier than Bāṇa. Subandhu has been mentioned with great respect by his successors such as Bāṇa, Vakpaptirāja, Kavirāja etc.

The *Kādambari* and the *Harṣacarita* by Bāṇabhaṭṭa (7th century A.D.) are the most celebrated works of Sanskrit *gadyakāvya*. Bāṇa's works are unique in the whole of Sanskrit literature. Bāṇa carefully avoids all the shortcomings of Subandhu's works and established himself as a poet of higher stature with his excellent poetic merits. Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* is a historic tale, a biography of his patron king Harṣavardhana of Kanauj and contains some autobiographical accounts of the author. His work of *Kādambari* is a romantic imagery. Bāṇa plays here with all sorts of figures of speech, for example, *Anupraśa*, *Yamaka*, *Upamā*, *Sleśa*, etc. But the poetry is nowhere lost. He has demonstrated in the *Kādambari* and *Harṣacarita* an unequalled power of keen observation of human character and an unrivalled art of story telling.

Daṇḍin is renowned as the theoretician of Sanskrit poetry. The chronology of Daṇḍin and Bāṇa is a subject open to controversy. However, it appears in all probabilities that either a contemporary of Bāṇa or flourished a little later. Daṇḍin divides poetry (*kāvya*) into three categories according to the forms – verse (*padya*), prose (*gadya*) and mixed (*mishra*). He defines *gadya* as a form of poetry, the

composition of which is not regulated by the metrical arrangement of the feet (*pada*). *Daśakumāracarita*, by Daṇḍin, is one of the widely read prose romances in Sanskrit. The romance narrates the adventures and exploits of ten princes. The present text of *Daśakumāracarita* is divided into three parts – *Puravapithika*, *Daśakumāracarita* and *Uttarapithika*, the first and the third part being later additions. His style is charming and simple, avoiding the use of long compounds. Daṇḍin reflects a good judgement in arrangement of his works. The characters of the romance represent a cross-section of the contemporary society. He greatly emphasizes on descriptions of human beauty, love being the chief sentiment of his work. There is much didactic material in the *Daśakumāracarita*, which Daṇḍin has incorporated with a view to teach the principles of *Nitīśāstra*. His wit and humour are also praiseworthy.

As mentioned earlier, there is a great difference of opinion amongst scholars regarding Daṇḍin's age. Based on the evidence of *Kāvyadarśa*, a well-known work on rhetorical canons by the poet, it is held that Daṇḍin flourished after Pravarasena. According to *Rājataraṅgaṇī*, Pravarasena ruled Kashmir in the sixth century A.D. This Pravarasena was probably the author of the poem *Setubandha*. The other controversy is the relation between Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha, another rhetorician of that time. One school of thought opines that Daṇḍin has criticized Bhāmaha's views while the other entertains the opposite view. The relationship between Daṇḍin and Bhaṭṭi, the grammarian poet is yet another controversy. Some scholars are definitely of the opinion that Daṇḍin used the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*. From the evidence of both *Daśakumāracarita* and *Kāvyadarśa*, it appears that Daṇḍin was an inhabitant of South India. He was fairly acquainted with the Kaveri, the Andhra and the Colas[2].

[2] Shastri, Gaurinath, *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, P. 132

Many centuries after Alexander (326 B.C.) left India, the country was visited by three Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, Fa Hein (399 A.D.), Hieun Tsang (630 to 645 A.D.) and I Tsing (671 to 695 A.D.). The records of their travels, which have been preserved, and are all now translated into English. These works shed much light on the socio-economic conditions, religious thoughts, generic as well as specific facts about Indian literature during those days.We also have the valuable account of our country during the Mohammedan conquest by the Arabic athor Alberuni, who wrote in India in 1030 A.D.

The development of Sanskrit literature also encompasses the short stories in Indian literature. Short stories may be classified under three heads, namely, the popular tales, the beast fables and the fairy tales. The popular tales are again subdivided into two groups – Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic.

The Buddhist popular tales are the Pali *Jātakas* which were current among the Buddhists from the earliest times. Apart from these *Jātaka* stories, there are some popular Buddhist Sanskrit stories.

Amongst the non-Buddhist popular tales, an outstanding work is that of Guṇāṇḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā*. It was originally written in *Paiśāci* Prakrit, a north western dialect of India. Unfortunately, the original work is lost to us and the story is preserved in three Sanskrit works – (a) Budhasvamin's *Ślokasaṁgraha* (composed between eighth and ninth century A.D.), (b) Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (1037 A.D.) and (c) Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (1063 to 1081 A.D.). Dr.Keith, however opines that *Ślokasaṁgraha* (which is found only in a fragment of twenty eight chapters and some 4,539 verses) is the only authentic translation of Guṇāṇḍhya's works. As per Dr.Keith, Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (containing 21,388 verses) and Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (containing about

7,500 verses) do not translate any portion of the original *Bṛhatkathā*[3]. Nevertheless, Daṇḍin's *Kāvyadarśa* in the 7th century A.D. also mentions about *Bṛhatkathā* and Dr.Bühler has placed the work as early as the first or second century A.D. Summarizing and not over-estimating, the importance of *Bṛhatkathā* in ancient Indian literature can very well be placed next only to the two Great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Visnusarman's *Pañcatantra* is an important work of beast-fable literature. This book is said to have an earlier basis called the *Tantrākhyāyikā*, which is again not available with us. The work comprises of five distinct books in a clear and lucid style with a mixture of prose and verse. *Pañcatantra* appears to refer indirectly to *Cāṇakya* and tends to follow Kautaliya's *Arthaśāstra*. It is suggested by Dr.Johannes Hertel that the work was originally conceived as a tool for teaching and preaching political wisdom. However, one must admit that its character and purpose as a political textbook is quite gloomy. The work surfaces to be one where the political teacher and the story-teller are unified in a singular personality. Its importance is nevertheless noteworthy considering the fact that *Pañcatantra* has been translated into numerous languages since its inception. First, it was translated into Pahlavi and Syriac in the sixth century A.D., into Arabic in the eighth century A.D., into Hebrew in the eleventh century A.D., into Spanish in the thirteenth century A.D. and thereafter into Latin and English in the sixteenth century A.D.

Another beast fable literature is literature is *Hitopodeśa* written by Narayana Paṇḍita. The style and methods of arrangement of the work is similar to that of Visnuśarmā. The author used to live in the court of King Dhavalachandra. A manuscript of this work dates from the fourteenth century A.D. However, Dr.Keith is of the opinion that the date cannot be later than the eleventh century A.D., as a

[3] Keith, A.B, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, P. 266

verse of Rudrabhaṭṭa is cited in the book. Also, a Jain scholar made use of it in 1199A.D. to produce a new version.

The *Kathakautaka* written in the fifteenth century A.D. is another example of a beast fable.

The following three books maybe classified under fairy-tale literature: the *Vetālapañcavimśati* attributed to Sivadāsa, the *Simhāsanadvātrimśikā* of Buddhist origin and *Śukasaptati* of unknown origin. While the former two books are based on the fiction character of King Vikrama, the last one is a collection of seventy tales of a parrot narrating to a mistress who was about to play her husband false.

Some of the lesser prose tales comprise the following[4]:

a. *Upamitibhāvaprapañca-kathā* – by Siddha or Siddharsi, a Jain monk belonging to 906 A.D. – written in prose intermingled with verses – a didactic tale.
b. *Kathārṇava* – by Sivadasa, containing thirty five tales primarily of thieves and fools – an unknown date.
c. *Puruṣapariṣkā* – by Vidyapati, containing thirty four stories belonging to latter part of the fourteenth century A.D.
d. *Bhojaprabandha* – by Ballalasena of the sixteenth century A.D., chiefly demonstrating the legends of the court of King Bhoja.
e. *Campakaśreṣṭhikathānaka* and *Palagopalakathānaka* – by Jinakirti belonging to the fifteenth century A.D.
f. *Kathakoṣa* – Collection of tales of unknown date composed in Sanskrit.
g. *Samyaktvakaumudī* – by an unknown author characterized by its doctrines.

[4] Shastri, Gaurinath, *A Concise History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, P. 138

h. *Katharatnakara* – by Hemavijaya-gani of the seventeenth century A.D. containing 258 different short tales, fables and anecdotes.

II.III Prose Works of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa

Classification of prose *kāvya* in Sanskrit is based on its division as *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā*. According to Bhāmaha, *ākhyāyikā* deals with factual experiences with scope being extended for poetic invention with the hero narrating the story. The tale may contain subjects such as abduction of a maiden, fighting, separation and the final triumph of the hero. The tale is divided into *ucchvāsas* and verses in *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres suggestive of future courses of events. It is marked by a peculiar sign indicating the poet's particular intention and above all, it is composed in Sanskrit in fine and elegant diction. In *kathā*, the theme is generally an invented story where the narrator is someone else other than the hero. Here, there is no division into *ucchvāsas, vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* verses and the medium is in Sanskrit, Prakrit or *Apabhramsa*.

The definition of *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* is further illustrated below:

अपाद पदसन्तानो गद्यमाख्यायिका कथा ।

इति तस्य प्रभेदौ द्वौ तयोराख्यायिका किल । (*Kāvyadarśa*) I / 23

The sequences of words which do not fall into (metrical) feet in *Gadya* (prose) are subdivided into two: *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā*. Of the two, one is put in the mouth of the hero alone; the other may be put in the mouth of others also. Praise one's own virtues in this mode (*ākhyāyikā*) being only a narration of what really existed is no blemish[5].

[5] Sastrulu V.V., *Translation in English.*

तत् कथाख्यायिकेत्यका जातिः संज्ञाद्वयान्किता ।

अत्रैवान्तर्भविष्यन्ति शेषाख्यानजातयः ॥ (*Kāvyadarśa*) I / 28

Therefore, *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* form one class though stamped with two different names. Other forms of *ākhyāyikā* all fall within this class.

Bhāmaha's defines as follows:

प्रकृतानुकूलश्रव्यशब्दार्थं पदवृत्तिना ।

गद्येन युक्तोदात्तार्था सोच्छ्वासाऽऽख्यायिका मता ॥

वृत्तमाख्यायते तस्यां नायकेन स्वचेष्टितम् ।

वक्त्रं चापरवक्त्रं च काले भाव्यार्थशंसि च ॥

केवराभिप्रायकृतैः कथनैः कैश्चिदङ्किता ।

कन्याहरणसंग्रामविप्रलम्भोदयान्विता ॥

न वक्त्रापरवक्त्राभ्यां युक्ता नोच्छ्वासवत्यपि ।

संस्कृते संस्कृता चेष्टा कथाऽपभ्रंशभाक्तथा ॥

अन्यैः स्वचरितं तस्यां नायकेन तु नोच्यते ।

स्वगुणाविष्कृतिं कुर्यादभिजातः कथं जनः ॥[6]

II.III.I Daṇḍin's works:

Daṇḍin conflicts with Bhāmaha's school of thoughts. Although he is silent about the nature of subject matter, Daṇḍin allows a *kathā* to be narrated by a hero

[6] Bhāmaha, *Kavyālaṅkāra*, I. 25 to 30, P.9-10

and likewise an *ākhyāyikā* by some one other than a hero. He also notices the name *lambha* for chapters in a *kathā* and mentions *āryā* metre with reference to this form. Daṇḍin does not encourage the twofold division and opines that the two are formal variations without any essential marks of distinction[7].

Daṇḍin writes:

अपादः पदसन्तानो गद्यमाख्यायिका कथा।

इति तस्य प्रभेदो द्वौ तयोराख्यायिका किल॥

नायकेनैव वाच्याऽन्या नायकेनेतरेण वा।

स्वगुणविष्क्रियादोषो नात्र भूतार्थशंसिनः॥

अपि त्वनियमो दृष्टस्तत्राप्यन्यैदुदीरणात्।

अन्यो वक्ता स्वयं वेति कीदृग्वा भेदकारणम्॥

वक्त्रं चापरवक्त्रं च सोच्छ्वासत्वं च भेदकम्।

चिह्नमाख्यायिकायाश्चेत् प्रसङ्गेन कथास्वपि॥[8]

Daṇḍin has rejected all the distinguishing marks by practising his theory in generating two prose *kāvyas* which cannot be rigidly classified in any one of the divisions as mentioned earlier. Both the works deal with an invented story and there is no uniformity with the personification of the narrator. While *Daśakumāracarita* follows the division into *ucchvāsas* which is used in *ākhyāyikā*, the other romance has no divisions. Both the works contain *āryā* metre allowed only in *kathā*. Also, *Avantisundarīkathā* has a *vasantatilakā* verse which is not theoretically recognized in either form.

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[7] Singh, Mann, *Prose Works of Daṇḍin & His art*, P.283
[8] Daṇḍin, *Kāvyadarśa*, I. 23 to 30, P.12-15

Applying the technical requirements of an *ākhyāyikā* and a *kathā*, we find that the extant *Avantisundarī* agrees strictly to neither of the categories[9]. Considering the concepts presented in Bhāmaha's *Kavyālaṅkāra* and countered by Daṇḍin himself in *Kāvyadarśa*, it is found that the work is not divided into chapters and does not contain the verses in the *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres, inspite of some of its stories such as *Mandakini, Pushpodbhava, Ratnodbhava* and *Somdattā* being narrated by the heroes themselves. Hence, it cannot be classified as an *ākhyāyikā*. When we judge the extant *Avantisundarī* on the lines of the distinction laid down by later rhetoricians like Rudraṭa[10], the work however approximates to the *ākhyāyikā* class, modeled on Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* (which is a specimen *ākhyāyikā* with Rudraṭa's distinction). Like *Harṣacarita*, it contains an introduction in verse with twenty six stanzas in *anuṣṭubh* and one in *āryā*, bowing to the famous trinity of Gods and paying homage to the great poets and writers like Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Pāṇini, Bhāsa, Kālidāsa and Bāṇa. However, the inclination towards the *ākhyāyikā* class terminates here. Some of the stories such as Rājahaṁsa, Ripuṇjaya, Potāpa, Vararuci, Vyāḍi, Indradattā, Upavārsa, Saunaka, Sudraka and Rājavāhana are not narrated by the heroes themselves. Hence, the *Avantisundarī* is styled more as a *kathā* than an *ākhyāyikā*.

Now we come to the *Daśakumāracarita* proper, which does not have the introductory part preserved. Had it been there, we would have been able to determine the form of the romance more precisely. Its text also does not adhere to the requirements of either of the forms – *ākhyāyikā* or *kathā*. Applying the older definition, it is found that the work is composed in Sanskrit, is divided into *ucchvāsas* and all stories except the Rājavāhana are narrated by the heroes

[9] Singh, Maan, *Subandhu and Daṇḍin: Their Works*, P. 107
[10] Gupta, Dharmendra, *Critical Study of Daṇḍin*, P.282

themselves, just like an *ākhyāyikā*. The work is also named as '*carita*', probably at the instance of *Harṣacarita*, an *ākhyāyikā*. However, *Daśakumāracarita* lacks verses in the *vaktrā* and *aparāvaktrā* metres, thus characterizing it to be a *kathā*. According to the later definitions, we notice that the work does not have any obeisance to Gods and elders (*Gurus*) and praise of older poets, has no statement of motive of its authorship and does not contain two *āryā* verses at the beginning of each *ucchvāsa*. However, it is divided into *ucchvāsas* just like an *ākhyāyikā*.

As a matter of fact, it seems that as a writer, Daṇḍin held a true revolutionary spirit and only followed the old traditions that suited him. He boldly discarded the rigid conventions which stood in the way of his poetic charisma and cherished to deliberately challenge the superficial marks of distinction between the two forms. Judging from a modern viewpoint, Daṇḍin deserves all the credit and applause for his logical stand. Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* also reflects upon the then prevalent corrupt practices of society like gambling, theft, fraud, murder, impersonation, abduction and rape. It differs to a great extent from the prototype specimen of prose *kāvya* which usually encompasses a good subject and delineate a noble hero.

Daṇḍin writes:

तदनन्तरमसौ नितम्बवतीवृत्तान्तमप्राक्षीत्। सोऽहमब्रवम् – ' अस्ति शूरसेनेषु मथुरा नाम नगरी। तत्र कश्चित्कुलपुत्रः कलासु गणिकासु चातिरक्तः मित्रार्थं स्वभुजमात्रनिर्व्यूढानेककलहः, कलहकण्टक इति कर्कशैरभिख्यापिताख्यः प्रत्यवात्सीत्।[11]

According to Webster's English dictionary, 1961 edition, a novel is defined to be 'an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain perplexity

[11] Daṇḍin, *Daśakumāracarita, Uttarpithikaya, Chapter 6, I. 42,* P.366

that deals imaginatively with human experience through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting.' The two works of Daṇḍin come in the category of prose fiction and may be closely approximated to be novels. W.H. Hudson calls this class of literary composition 'the loosest form of literary art' and 'the most elastic and irregular of all forms of literary expression'[12]. Granting the aforesaid concessions, the prose *kāvyas* of Daṇḍin can legitimately be termed as novels, though all characteristics of modern day novel may not be critically viewed in the old classics. The differences in art, style, conceptualization, plot construction, characterization with today's novels should not cause an eyebrow to rise considering the time gap of centuries in scripting the works. The following remark by W.H. Hudson on the origin of novel affirms beyond doubt that Daṇḍin's prose compositions share all the characteristics of modern day Sanskrit prose literature. Hudson remarked, "Novel owes its existence to the interest which men and women everywhere and at all times have taken in men and women and in the great panorama of human passion and action." Daṇḍin's works closely approach in content and spirit, if not in form and technique to the adventure novels of modern literature wherein there is a series of almost independent tales, finally related to, or string with the adventurous deed of a hero.

The Sanskrit prose *kāvyas* are generally styled today as prose romances. The term romance which is defined as a prose tale based on legend, chivalric love and adventure on the supernatural is very appropriate when applied to the prose *kāvyas* of Daṇḍin. However, the recent concepts of romance as a prose narrative, highlight romantic characteristics like delineation of imaginary characters unrelated to everyday life or treatment of the remote in time or place, the heroic, the adventurous and often the mysterious. Although these modern day concepts did not suit to Daṇḍin's prose *kāvyas* in the literal sense, the allied features of a romance can be figured out in almost all the prose *kāvyas* of Sanskrit in general and in the

[12] Hudson, W.H., *Introduction to the Study of Literature*, P. 129-130

works of Daṇḍin, in particular. The story in a romance insistently enters the sphere of poetry and unfolds itself through the medium of poetic elements and there is a confluence of various streams of episodes coming from different directions and all crowded with a large number of characters belonging to this very world, though to be very rarely seen in actual life. There are adventurous and brave personalities helping the wretched and specially the ladies in distress and defeating their rivals in matters of love. An emotional atmosphere persists in the whole of a romantic work. The romantic interest takes us to a marvelous world through the works of Daṇḍin, where the poet's attitude is both romantic and realistic. These two elements dwell in perfect harmony in Daṇḍin's works. Daṇḍin's approach to loose principles in life is satirical rather than serious. His real aim is to expose the darker aspects of social life and practicality, realism, romance, optimism blend perfectly in the works of Daṇḍin.

II.III.II Subandhu's works:

Subandhu is the predestinator of the trend which does not put as much stress on incidents as on descriptions, however of digressive nature. Subandhu's style is typical of lesser attention to the narrative and greater interest in the depiction of the lover and beloved and of the frowns and smiles of fortune in store for them. He richly carves these descriptions with romantic commonplaces of poetry which constitute the bulk of his work. In the course of elaborate depictions, he amply displays his *śāstric* learning and technical skill. It may be noted here that Subandhu's long chain of puns (*sleśa*) is also followed later on by his successors Bāṇa and Daṇḍin with the net effect of often straining the language and diction. Subandhu believed in a cult of style which prefers the extraordinary way of expression and suppresses the ordinary way. He cares more for the ornamental aspect of art than for the poetic possibilities of his core subject.

Inspite of his weird style, Subandhu demonstrates great mastery of the Sanskrit language which is evident from his difficult diction. He evinces wide and profound learning in his prose romance[13].

II.III.III Bāṇa's works:

Bāṇa happily commands the supreme gift of poetic imagination which compensates for all his weakness for stylistic accomplishments. Although like his predecessor, he delights in elaborating his narratives with lengthy and digressive descriptions; his sense of proportion often comes to his rescue and saves the plot from boredom.

गद्यं कवीनां निकषं वदन्ति ॥

This is best illustrated in the works of Bāṇa. Undoubtedly Bāṇa holds an unparalleled stature in the whole of Sanskrit prose literature. Fortunately, Bāṇa's works seem to be a pillar in the times of ancient Sanskrit prose literature. The *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambari* are classified into the *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* categories respectively.

In comparision to Subandhu, his outstanding merits are reflected in his observation skills, graphic description, his love of nature with its charming colour and music, the richness of his fancy and definitely his skill of wonderful command over the language. Bāṇa skillfully depicts romantic and youthful love in its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears amidst his deep sentimental and poetic touch in his works. Bāṇa shows his mastery of florid style wherein he is able to convert the rough stones of popular literature into gems of literary beauty.

In the following paragraph, we can see a beautiful sketch of Mahāśvetā that is the spciality of Bāṇa:

[13] Singh, Mann, *Subandhu and Daṇḍin*, P. 19-23

दक्षाध्वरकियामिवोद्धत गण कच ग्रह भयोपसेवितत्र्यम्बकाम् रतिमिव मदनदेहनिमित्तं हरप्रसादनार्थं मागृहीतहराराध्नाम् क्षीरोदाधि देवतामिव सहावास परिचित हर चन्द्रलेखोत्कण्ठाम् इन्तुमूर्त्तमिव स्वभानुभयकृतत्रिनयनय्शरणगमनाम् ऐरावतदेहाच्छविमिव गजाजिनाव-गुण्ठितशितिकण्ठविन्ति तोपन्ताम् पशुपति दक्षिण मुखहासच्छविमिव वहिरागत्य कृतावस्थानाम् शरीरिणीमिव रूद्रोद्धूलन भूतिम् आविर्भूताम् ज्योत्स्नामिव हरकण्ठान्धकारविघट्ट.....[14]

II.IV Prose Literature of Medieval Period

Taking the discussion further, we come across Campū literature as a perspective composition of mixed prose and verse in Sanskrit. Although the subtle mixture of prose and verse can be traced back to the *Brāhmaṇas* in Vedic literature, the origin of Campū is held in its predecessors, the fables and romances. Although, stray verses are noticed in the works of Subandhu and Bāṇa, the intermingling of prose with verse became a characteristic feature of the then contemporary literature at a much later date. The literature of *Kathā* and *Ākhāyikā* also uses a number of verses in its otherwise exclusive prose medium. The distinguishing feature of the Campū from the mentioned types is its prominent proportional mixing of prose with verse. Also, the employment of prose and verse does not follow any fixed principle in Campū literature and the authors are given a license to be indifferent towards the logical use of prose and verse for various purposes. The use of verse is not restricted to passages of poetic description or impressive speech or sentimental outburst. Prose and verse are equally employed as a medium in Campū literature. Although Campū literature does not possess any noteworthy literary work, it is known to have flourished in Southern India, the Bengal Vaishnava School and the Jain religious propaganda. No Campū literature earlier than the tenth century A.D. is existent today.

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[14] Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *Kādambari*, P.379

Macdonell, in his book, '*A History of Sanskrit Literature*' speaks sadly on the condition and state of affairs of Indian History. He laments, 'History is the one weak spot in Indian literature. It is, in fact, non-existent. The total lack of the historical sense is so characteristic, that the whole course of Sanskrit literature is darkened by the shadow of this defect, suffering as it does from an entire absence of the exact chronology. So true is this, that the very date of Kālidāsa, the greatest of Indian poets, was long a matter of controversy within the limits of a thousand years, and is even now doubtful to the extent of a century or two. Thus the dates of Sanskrit authors are in the vast majority of cases only known approximately, having been inferred from the indirect evidence of interdependence, quotation or allusion, development of language or style. As to the events of their lives, we usually know nothing at all and only in a few cases one or two general facts. Two causes seem to have combined to bring about this remarkable result. In the first place, early India wrote no history because it never made any. The ancient Indians never went through a struggle for life, like the Greeks in the Persian and the Romans in the Punic wars, such as would have welded their tribes into a nation and developed political greatness. Secondly, the Brāhmaṇas, whose task it would naturally have been to record great deeds, had early embraced the doctrine that all action and existence are a positive evil and could therefore have felt but little inclination to chronicle historical events.'

Some of the other reasons why Sanskrit prose literature development is still not imprinted in a very systematic and chronological manner may be explained as follows.

Around 1000 A.D., medieval Sanskrit literature abounded in creative production of several varieties, all being rich both in quantity and quality. It is this period that mostly represents the origin and development of modern Indian languages (barring one or two exceptions). The overflowing Sanskrit literary stream must have inspired their creation and evolution. Medieval Prakrit is divided

into four dialects. The valley of Indus holds the Apabhramsa while Doab holds the Sauraseni with Mathura as its centre. The eastern Prakrit appeared as Magadhi (now Bihar) and Ardha-Magadhi with Benaras as its centre. The Sauraseni got further subdivided into Gaurjari (Gujarati), Avanti (Western Rajputani) and Maharastri (Eastern Rajputani). The Sindhi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi and various dialects of Bengal also started developing from the various dialects of Medieval Prakrit. These modern vernaculars started forming interesting parallel and developed literatures of their own. Similarly, the non-Aryan languages of the Deccan, Telegu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil, borrowed words from Sanskrit and developed a parallel model. Although, all these vernaculars were entirely based on Sanskrit, parallel developmental work may have caused Medieval Sanskrit literature to take a beating.

Another important fact during this era was the prolonged and successive waves of invasion and conquest by Persians, Muhammedans, wherein Persian, Arabic and other foreign languages started flourishing in the peninsula. The development of literature of the Indo-Aryan race remained blocked and unchecked for a substantial amount of time down to the era of British colonization. As per Macdonell[15] 'No other branch of the Indo-European stock has experienced an isolated evolution like this.'

Here, we may discuss the question whether the Sanskrit prose *kāvya* exhibits any foreign influence either during its origin or in its long developmental course[16]. Peterson tried to prove Greek influence on the prose romances of Sanskrit on the basis that they exhibit a new spirit in richly embellishing the simple narrative dealing with swift but monotonous chain of adventures. He quoted in support of his view some characteristics common to Sanskrit and Greek romances. We do observe certain common features; both for example, depict:

i) Ideal love and wondrous beauty as also charming objects of nature.

[15] Macdonell, Arthur A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, P. 7
[16] Gupta, Dharmendra, *op.cit.*, P. 268-269

ii) Love at first sight.

iii) Lovers revealed to each other in vision.

iv) Affectionate letters of courtship.

v) Pathetic lamentations of afflicted lovers.

vi) Fighting for forceful possession of a maiden.

vii) Passion of love in inanimate objects.

viii) Fickleness of fortune.

ix) Adventures and encounters on land and at sea.

Again there are in both the romances, the device of tales within tales, erudite and often obscure allusions and enumeration of precedents and the employment of long compounds, alliterations and figures like paronomasia (*Sleśa*) and antithesis.

Such points of similarity, however, which maybe held to be co-incidental rather than based on any actual contact, cannot positively prove borrowing on either side. As a matter of fact, there is a fundamental difference between the two romances. While in Sanskrit romance, supreme emphasis is put on formal decoration and minute depiction of nature and the thread of narrative is broken at places and characterization often neglected, in Greek romances, stress has been laid on the continuity of narrative and the rhetorical embellishment and depiction of nature have been entirely overlooked. The Sanskrit romance as we have seen, derives its inspiration, with regards to both content and form, from native sources, be it either folktale literature or the metrical *kāvya* and it is futile to try to find an alien influence thereon[17]. As a matter of fact here should be solid grounds for proving influences on the delicate basis of similar points or characteristic which are often observed in literature belonging to quite different times and climes.

Hence, this period has not yet received the distinction of chronologically arranging Sanskrit prose literature in a fashion it perhaps deserves. More and more

[17] Gupta, Dharmendra, *op.cit.*, P. 268-269

is required to be done to disseminate the aesthetic value of Sanskrit literary creations in this period.

II.V Prose Literature of Modern Period

During the eighteenth century, inspite of the step-motherly attitude shown towards the language, Sanskrit continued to enjoy a pre-eminent place among the languages and literatures of India as the most refined and learned medium of the cultured classes all over the subcontinent, even in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. English education tried to reduce its importance as a result of policy of the British rulers. However, the traditional esteem of classical Sanskrit was so high that even before they thought of establishing universities, the English had founded the Sanskrit College, Calcutta and the Queen's College, Varanasi, in the early nineteenth century to promote Hindu culture. This was in pursuance of the declared policy of the English rulers to encourage and promote Hindu learning which was held to be the key to the nation's heritage over the centuries in all fields – religious, philosophical, ethical, literary, artistic and cultural.

During this period, the long narrative poem or court epic was the most prestigious literary work, drama, campū were next ranked in importance and then came up *Gadya* (ornate prose). The themes were restricted to myths and legends about Gods and epic heroes along with some prints of historical patron-kings, saints or godmen.

According to H.L.Shukla[18], 'the period lasting from 1784 to 1919 is an extremely glorious chapter in the history of Sanskrit literature. In this period, there was a stimulating change in every sphere of Indian life on account of the new awakening of India and new radiant ideas were born... The years between 1784 to

[18] Shukla, H.L., *Modern Sanskrit Literature*, P.9

1919 witnessed the life palpitations and the revolutionary fervor of the Renaissance, which blossomed enormously... After the year 1919, this activity crystallized into a fixed concrete form.

Sir William Jones founded the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. This society was responsible for salvaging invaluable Sanskrit manuscripts and starting research work on the subject. We see a series of translation works taking place during this time. *Dharmaśastra*, *Bhagvadgitā*, *Hitopodeśa*, *Śakuntalā*, *Manusmṛti* etc. were all translated into English which fetched great popularism of the works in foreign countries. The influence and participation of the foreign elements cannot be denied during the period of modern Sanskrit Renaissance. A noticeable change surfaced in Sanskrit literature after the middle of the eighteenth century. The style, plot, background and theme of writing underwent a significant change from that of the past era. The way of writing became more varied and natural and gradually the bondage of heroic couplet was shaken off. Writers began to find romance in objects other than mere human characters. Nature seemed to be a huge source of inspiration. The writings started referring to country life, mountains and scenic beauty. The objectives of national unity were described with great enthusiasm and sympathy. Heralded by the study of different literatures, the new founded spirit took different shapes in Epics, Lyrics, Dramas, Novels and Stories.

The rise of nationalism in new literary forms like the novel in modern Indian literature and the cultivation of prose as an effective medium for the literary essay, biography, short story and drama came to be indistinctly and indirectly felt even by the purist Sanskrit pandit – he could not ignore the insistent new trends surrounding him. An example is *Saralā* by Haridasa Siddhantavāgisa, which is a novel in Sanskrit modeled after Bankimchandra's Bengali novel and published in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Quite a few puṇdits with an open mind tried their hands at translating novels, plays and essays from Bengali, Marathi etc.,

while a few University products attempted Sanskrit renderings of Shakespeare's plays from English and Rabindranath Tagore's poems and essays from Bengali. Earlier during the years 1808-1811, the Serampore Mission Press published the Sanskrit translation of the New Testament in three volumes under the Superintendence of William Carey. But these works of translation, unfortunately, did no leave a footprint in the growth of new literature in Sanskrit.

A few interesting facts are inked below: Bart's catalogue of Native Publications in the Bombay Presidency up to 31st December, 1864 (second edition, Bombay, 1867) contains no modern printed book in Sanskrit. The Bibliotheca Indica series started by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1849 runs into hundreds of printed titles, but without mentioning a single modern creative Sanskrit work. Same is the case with several other publishing agencies like the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series (started in 1911), Gaekwad's Oriental Series (started in 1916) and those of Mysore, Bombay, Varanasi, Poona, Srinagar etc. Even renowned private publishers such as Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay and the Chowkhamba Publishers, Benaras are not found to have published creative new works in Sanskrit. A creative writer of the orthodox school, Y.Mahalinga Sastri of Tamil Nadu, in the English preface to a Sanskrit play, *Udgaṭr-dasanam* (Tiruvalangadu, 1958), bemoans the plight of Sanskrit letters, which bears quoting here[19]: " It is not surprising that in the endless winter nights for Sanskrit which is refrigerated with the Antarctic temperature in the minus grade, the thawing of hearts has not set in too soon in spite all the warmth of endeavour which I have carried with me for more than a quarter of a century. I have taken refugee against the chill-blasts at the sanctum-sanctorum of chillness itself, through locating the action of the play at the loftiest and most holy of the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas."

[19] George, K.M., *Modern Indian Literature, an Anthology: Surveys and Poems*, P. 356

II.VI Political, Social and Religious Conditions in Modern Sanskrit Literature

It would be worthwhile to pause at this juncture of the discussion and take a view of the various conditions prevalent at the dawn of modern Sanskrit literature to appreciate the context in a more critical fashion.

II.VI.I Political conditions:

Feudalism had greatly weakened the fragmented nation by the middle of the eighteenth century[20]. Inspired by the political turmoil, anarchy was rampant during this time. The East India Company had already made its entry in the political frame of India. The Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was bestowed upon Lord Clive in the year 1765, through the good graces of Emperor Shah Alam of Delhi. The English soon started to extend their dominance, neglecting the native rulers of the country. In a few years time, with great administrative and political skills, the English became the rulers of the country towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. This new rule set the stage for different views of language, thought, manners and culture. In the year 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny took place, which is also sometimes referred to as the country's First War of Independence. After the failure of the revolt, British sovereignty was established all over the country.

In 1858, an Act was passed to transfer the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. The transfer of governance to the Empress Victoria expressed feelings of justice, impartiality and religious tolerance creating an ambience of assurance amongst countrymen. Gradually with the impregnation of foreign culture and technology, literature started flourishing once again. Various writers such as Surendra Mohan Tagore, Sripati Thakur, Baldev Singh, Bharatendu Harishchandra, Sampatkumar Narsimhacharya, Maheshchandra Tarkachuramani,

[20] Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.9

Brijnath Shastri, Ramswamy, and Ramavatar Sharma wrote panygyrics to commemorate the British regime.

Gradually, allergic of the foreign slavery, feelings of patriotism aroused in the hearts of various Sanskrit poets. The partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon afflamed the minds of all. "Boycott" and "Swadeshi" emerged as the watch-words and slogans of the agitators and freedom fighters all over India. The song 'Vande Mataram' was invested with a nationalistic glow. The writers strongly supported the boycott of foreign goods by fiercy lectures, articles and books. The underlying ideas of the patriotic Sanskrit writer aroused from deep national feelings.

Thereafter Mahatma Gandhi stepped into Indian politics in the second decade of the twentieth century. Before that the years in the political scene of India were the years of stress and strain.

II.VI.II Social conditions:

Sanskrit scholars played a vital role in implementing social reforms in the country[21]. The distinguished Sanskrit scholar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed the ill-practice of the 'Sati' and with the help of Lord William Bentick, it was declared as illegal in 1829.

The greatest social agitation of this age was started in the favour of widow-remarriage. In Bengal, Raja Ram Mohan Roy columned the '*Bangamātā*' to start this agitation. In 1854, he wrote an important book on this vital social problem and in 1856, the English Government passed, legislation in favour of widow-remarriage. In Maharashtra, Dadoba Pangdurang joined the movement by writing a famous Sanskrit book "*Vidhabashrumārjanam*". Thereafter, Bishnu Shastri led the movement by focusing the attention of mass towards this important issue in

[21] Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.26

Maharashtra and South India. The widow-remarriage movement became the paramount activity in his life and in the year 1865, he established 'Punarvivahottejaka Mandali'. Nilkanta Sharma, Ramavatar Sharma, Madhusudan Sharma Maithil, Kavyakanth Vasisth Ganapati Muni, Paramananda Shastri, Devdattā made magnificent contributions towards the widow-remarriage movement.

People supported the abolition of child marriage also. In 1891, Lokmanya Tilak strongly opposed the law of fixing twelve years as the minimum marriageable age for girls. Various writers supported the views of Tilak by writing *Uddwahnirnaybyabasthā* (Jaychandra Sharma, January 1985), *Boyonirnayā* (Gajapati Shastri, Madras 1910), *Parinayamīmamsā* (K.G. Natesh Kadyam, 1913), *Ṛtuma*ti *bibāhabidhīniṣedha pramānāni* (K.G. Natesh Kadyam, 1913), *Vivāhasamayamīmamsā* (Anantakrishna Shastri, Bombay, 1913), *Uddwahnirnayabyabasthā* (Hrishikesh Bhattacharya, 1899), *Vivāha* (Surendra Mohon, 1915). Various dramas and novels were written and they had widow-remarriage, polygamy and marriages as themes.

II.VI.III Religious conditions:

The novel ideas of Vedic religion were eroded with the passage of time and the society was flooded with artificial rites and rituals[22]. Like the British rule, religious cruelty was playing havoc amongst countrymen. The gradual advent of English education had metamorphosed the outlook of Sanskrit scholars.

The highlights of this era were the voluminous translations of religious Christian books into Sanskrit to promote the spread of Christianity. Gradually with the publication of several translated works, the Hindu society was thoroughly shaken. The minds of Indian students were richly influenced by the British

[22] Shukla, H.L., *op.cit.*, P.35

education system. Hindus were getting converted into Christianity in thousands. The writers of Sanskrit, being pre-eminent Vedic followers, were deeply grieved by such downfall of Hinduism.

Various writers expressed their intolerable anguish by means of dramas, novels, stories, epics, scholarly discourses and essays. Some of the works during this era are as follows:

a. Novels: *Makarandikā* by Upendranath Sen (Calcutta, 1894), *Kundamālā* by Upendranath Roy (Calcutta, 1894) and *Ādarśamani* by Mathuranath Bhatt (1905).
b. Stories: *Pallīchavi*: *Sanskritcandrikā*, Vol.III. No.1 by Upendranath Sen.

In the history of Sanskrit literature, the period 1784-1919 has witnessed a unique cultural reawakening or Renaissance which marks its independent place in the whole of Sanskrit modernism. The texture and material of such Renaissance varies from that of other countries on account of the cross-fertilization of Medieval devotion and current rationalism in terms of thought, imagination and action. Some of the noteworthy works were presented by Ganapati Shastri, Appashastry Rashiwedkar, Madhusudan Ojha, Sudhaldev, Ramavatar Sharma, Punnashowrie Nilkanth Sharma, A.R. Rajrajverm Koitamburan, Annadacharan Tarkachuramani. This period has experienced an undreamt progress of Sanskrit literature, including a vigourous and lusty growth in various branches of the subject. Revolutionary creations appeared in epics, dramas, novels, stories, autobiographies and letter writing. The writers of the Renaissance period were in no way inferior to Kālidāsa, Bhoja and Bāṇabhaṭṭa.

Broadly speaking, the period of 135 years in the Renaissance of Modern Sanskrit literature was spent in a state of political, social, economic as well as religious turmoil. The era speaks in its own way and confirms the truth about the

increasing misery suffered by the people of the nation in the process of transition. Complex problems of varying degree and depth spread across the society. With such a backdrop, the development of Sanskrit literature was more reactive than proactive. At the same time, it was more realistic than imagery. People could easily relate the context by referring to the current situation rather than exploring into the deep sea waters of philosophy. As evident from the earlier context setting, there are reasons to believe that Sanskrit literature's preferred path of growth was ripped apart from idealistic grounds and thrown into the puddle of cultural battleground.

II.VII Prose Literature in the Nineteenth and Twentieth century

We now approach to a section of writings which can be undoubtedly classified as modern and shaped by western influence, the novel. There is a distinct transition from a background and theme like that of Bāṇa's '*Kādambari*' to a modern social environment as seen in eminent writer Visheshwar Pandey's '*Mandārmañjarī*'. There has been a series of translations from different regional languages. However, novels have been value added in translations, adaptations as well as original productions.

The first translated novel in modern Sanskrit literature is '*Shivarājvijaya*' written by Ambikadutta Vyas in 1870. The history of Sanskrit literature abounds in examples of several poets who failed in imitating Bāṇa because of wrong choice of theme. Vyas realized this and chose for his subject the great Maratha ruler Shivaji and his heroic exploits to create a world of romance, filled with suspense and intensity of passion. The novel is well accepted for its simplicity of style and has even been recognized as part of syllabi in Universities thereafter. This novel was in fact translated from Rameshchandra Dutta's '*Mahārāṣtrajīvan – Prabhāt*'. Mahavir Prasad Trivedi had in his letter to Appasastri dated 5th March, 1900, mentioned to draw the attention of Ambikadutta Vyas to this fact of translation

which he had apparently admitted. However, due to the untimely death of the author, the preface of '*Shivarājvijaya*' does not include the mentioning of this fact of translation.

Subsequent to Ambikadutta Vyas, some of the noteworthy novelists were Saila Tatacharya (1863-1926), Appasastri and Haricharan Bhattacharya. Appasastri rendered Bankim Chandra's *Lāvaṇyamayi* (1906) in his journal *Samskrita Candrikā* and later on published it as a separate book too.

Rajrajverm Koitamburan (1863-1928) is known for his contribution for western translations and transformation into novels. He successfully converted the Shakespearean play 'Othello' into '*Uddalcaritam*'. Thereafter, Kalyanarama Sastri translated Shakespeare's 'Lucrece' into a fine romantic prose and named it '*Kanakalatā*'. Kadambari Tirumalacharya translated another Shakespeare's work 'Comedy of Errors' and named it '*Bhāratbilasam*'. Rangacharya translated 'Vicar of Wakefield' into '*Premarājyam*'. During this period, several Sanskrit stories and romantic novels appeared in different Sanskrit journals: *Atirūpā* by Gopal Sastri, *Vijayinī* by Parasurama Sarma, *Simantinī* by Narayana Sastri, *Kamalākumarī* and *Sati Kamal* by Chidambara Sastri, *Suśilā* by R.Krishnamachariar and *Suloconā* by Kappuswami. Regional translations continued to contribute heavily to Sanskrit novels. Bankim's Bengali works were translated and published in *Samskṛita Sāhitya Pariṣad Patrikā*, Calcutta (SSPP). *Rajanī* by Renudevī (1928-29), *Rādha* (1922), *Durgeshnandinī* (1922-23), *Rādharanī* (1930-31) were some of the notable translatory publications. Srisaila Tatacharya also translated *Durgeshnandinī* and *Kshaitriyaramanī* (1908). A novel entitled *Dattā* was also published in the same journal in 1935.

During this time, two Tamil novels were also translated into Sanskrit. Kumar Tatariya had translated Doraswamy's Tamil novel '*Menakā*' by the same name. G.Ramacharya serialized the story Devi Vasanti in *Madhuravanī* much like a

modern day concept. In the Maharajah's Sanskrit College Magazine, Mysore, N.Narasimhachari wrote a heroic romantic tale – *Kirtīsena* (1948-49). The *Mandāravatī* of K.Krishnamacharya (Madras 1929) is based on one of the stories in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*. Compositions such as the following also flourished in this era. Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri (1850-1936) wrote the novel *Purna*, Vidhusekhar wrote the romance *Chandraprabhā*. Medhavrata wrote *Kumudinī Chandra* (1920). Gangopadhyaya also wrote a new novel, *Sīmāsamaya* featuring a leftist youth (November 1950).

Towards the fag end of the nineteenth century, Pratipradibhayankar Anantacharya wrote '*Samsārcaritam*' and Vasudev Atmaram Latker wrote '*Balidānam*'. The former work is a translation of a novel of the Hindi writer, Jagannath Prasad while the latter is based on Narasimha Chintamani Kelkar's Marathi novel. Bidhusekhar Bhattacharya translated Rabindranath Tagore's *Jayparājaya* in 1906. *Mṛttikāvṛṣabhakathā* of Narasimhacharya Punekar and *Viyogini Bālā* of Balabhadra Sarma were fictions published in the *Samskrita Candrikā*. Haridasa Siddhanta Vagisa penned a novel called '*Saralā*'. A.Rajagopala Chakravarti adapted another Bengali novel and published *Śaivalinī* (Mysore, 1917). He also wrote *Kumudinī* and *Vilāsakumārī Sangara*. *Madanalatikā* was written by Chintamani Madhava Gole (Bombay, 1911).

Apart from the translated novels, during this period some novels were also written which were based on the epics – *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. The ones worth mentioning over here are Laxman Suri's (1859-1919) '*Rāmāyaṇsangraha*', '*Bhīṣmavijayam*' and '*Mahābhāratsangrām*' (1904). Among the various epic novelists, Shankarlal Maheswar (1844-1916) had pioneered works such as '*Anasūyamyudam*', '*Bhagawatibhāgyoday*', '*Candraprabhācaritam*' and '*Maheshwarprāṇapriya*'. Gopal Sastri's (1853-1924) '*Atirūpcaritam*' was published in 1908. The mention of *Aṣtabakr*a is found in Sheshayee Shastri's

(1870-1932) '*Aṣtabakriyam*' while Saila Tatacharya's '*Menakā*' is based on a Roman epic. Mudumbay Shrinivasacharya's '*Kayarvini*' novel is also based on devotional traditions. Longer stories encompassing historical episodes were also seen to be captured in novels.

Krishnamacharya had written two historic novels – firstly '*Bararuci*' and secondly '*Candragupta*'. Both were published in the Sahriday magazine (1908-09). Narsimhacharya Purnekar wrote a novel called '*Saudamini*' in 1905, depicting the love and romance between Raja Sursen, the King of Magadh and Saudamini, the princess of Vidharbha. *Vangavīra Pratāpaditya* by Devendranath Chattopadhyay (SSPP, 1930-31), *Gauracandra* by Indranath Bandopadhyay (SSPP, 1932-33) and *Viralabadham Pāritoṣikam* by R.Ramamurti from Chola history are some of the other compositions. Shorter stories using historical episodes were seen in *Vīramati* (*Samskṛta Ratnākara*, 1909), *Atyācarinaḥ Parināmaḥ* (SR, 1942), *Ajantā* (1956), *Dvirasvamedhajayī* (1955) etc. *Candramaulī* of A.Rajammal, Madras uses an old type of social theme with the introduction of drama and sarcasm into the story. Sri Jagadrama Sastri produced a prose fiction in his *Chatrasalvijaya.*

Novels highlighting social problems were also not left behind. Krishnamacharya wrote three such novels which were published in the *Sahridaya* magazine – *Patrivratā, Pāṇigrahanam* and *Suśila.* Thus, we find a series of novels mushrooming across the length and breadth of the country in the first half of the twentieth century.

Appa Sastri Rasiwadekar, in his relatively short life (1873-1913) achieved literary excellence in all his attempts and his touch is unmistakable in all that he wrote. He is best remembered as an essayist who has something personal to say and says it well and memorably. Hari Charan translated Bankim Chandra's Bengali

novel *Kapālakuṇdalā* (1918). Appa Sastri also published *Devīkumudwatī* (1903) as well as *Kriṣnakāntasya Nirvāṇa* (1907) and *Indirā* (1904) narrated autobiographically.

The strange hold of the formalist tradition on Sanskrit writers is indeed so pervasive that the stray cases of any reformist activity perhaps went unnoticed. Though the epic genre had outlived its utility in all the literatures of the world (except for the lessons which are applicable even today), epic writers in hundreds were found in Sanskrit language in the first half of the twentieth century. Though fiction had become a very popular trend globally and in India too, hardly any good Sanskrit fiction could be found at that time. No Sanskrit work seemed to have captured realistically the complexity of life as a whole.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, some novelists started experimenting with contemporary style, thoughts and descriptions. The modern day novelist characterized by having the ability to blend and use all the elements of the history of Sanskrit prose literature into a single composition. There are many novelists who harp upon these conditions and a representative of this rejuvenated group stands out to be Orissa's Dr.Keshab Chandra Dash who has brought modernity and reality in the theme and style of Sanskrit writings.

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