

CHAPTER

I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.I IMPORTANCE OF SANSKRIT

Sanskrit is an ancient language of the world. It has also been the source of Indian culture. Sanskrit is the only language of India which transcends the geographical boundaries and all religious and regional limitations. It brings about nation-wide unity as well. In this language best of the literary and philosophical works are composed, preserved and have earned name and fame in the whole world. It should be noted that some of the best classical masterpieces are also composed in this language. A number of works have been written in different branches of academics and sciences in Sanskrit. No other ancient language can claim this record.

The twentieth century proves to be a very crucial period for literary activities in India for various reasons including the political shift which include pre independence and post independence period. Sanskrit scholars were under the influence of classical compositions. But the new generation of Sanskrit authors performed new experiments. On one hand they tried to accommodate modern subjects in the old literary forms and on the other hand they tried new literary forms with tradition or mythological base. This made Sanskrit literature richer, involving the use of new vocabulary enriching and modernising the language. Moreover, modern Sanskrit writers introduced a number of innovations in the form of literature, which is happily accepted. This retains the flavour of language in current times. The Sanskrit literature occupies a prominent place in the world by virtue of great antiquity, amazing magnitude, and vast expansion, luxuriant development of various literary forms and comprehensive range, which it amply commands. Among the extant literary works, novels stand foremost from the point of popularity and prominence among the people.

The history of the evolution of Sanskrit Prose is one of the continuous and gradual processes. In *Brāhmaṇas*, we can see the earliest prose works, which developed gradually into prose of the romances and also we can see the development of the prose of the technical and philosophical works. Sanskrit prose has been progressing through its successive stages from Vedic period to classical period and even till today's modern period.

We can see the Sanskrit prose literatures in the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda respectively, written in prose. Sanskrit prose begins in the *Mantra*, period of Vedic literature. This is the first stage where Sanskrit prose starts.

The *Brāhmaṇas* Period is the second stage of Vedic literature where the prose is exclusively the mode of expression, where we can see the simple but vigorous style of prose. The *Brāhmaṇas* also contain the legendary matter which enhances their importance.

The *Upaniṣad* period is the third stage of Vedic literature, where prose reigns supreme. The prose of the *Upaniṣads* is direct, the style is simple, expressive and easy. The fourth stage is of the *Sūtra* period where the Sanskrit prose undergoes a remarkable change.

The *Śrautasūtra* and *Grhyasūtra* are the two divisions of the *Kalpasūtra* which are written in *Sūtra* style of Sanskrit prose. But, in *Dharmasūtra* the third division of *Kalpasūtra* the prose intermixed with verses. The *Arthaśāstra* is mostly in prose with verses at the end of each section. The *Kalpasūtra* of Vāstyāyana resembles the *Arthaśāstra* on form and treatment. This style was later adopted by Rājaśekhara in his rhetorical work *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*.

As it has already been mentioned, the ground works of the six philosophical systems were written in the *Sūtra* form. The *Sāṅkhyasūtra* in its present form is a late work; but other *Sūtra* works on *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Yoga*,

Mīmāṃsā and *Vedānta* are works of a fairly early age. In their commentaries of these *Sūtras*, the prose shows traits of philosophical style. The *Bhāṣya* of Śabarāsvāmī on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, of Vātsyāyana on *Nyāyasūtra* and of Śaṅkarācārya on *Vedāntasūtra* are works of the classical prose style used in technical and scientific literature. Their language is emphatic, argumentative form of prose, later on, developed into that *Navyanaiyāyika* style of prose, where hair-splitting arguments and high sounding verbal complexities render the comprehension of the subject-matter difficult, if not impossible. Even the literary works of later times have not escaped the influence of this philosophical style.

The Philosophy of Buddhists and Jains occupies the fifth stage where, we can see the Sanskrit prose style. When the Buddhists themselves began to employ Sanskrit as their medium of expression, we find such work as *Lalitāvistāra* and *Divyavardāna* written in elegant Sanskrit prose mixed with verses and thus bearing clear marks of later Sanskrit prose.

The Aśoka period occupies the sixth stage where, in the Girnar Rock inscription contains highly ornate prose of later times. The Allahabad Inscription shows clearly that by that time Sanskrit prose had already attained the artificial and elaborate style of long compounds, where complex phraseology is enlivened by flowery description and an elegant manner of narration.

The prose form is found also in *Āraṇyakas* and older *Upaniṣads*. The *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* and *Chāndogyopaniṣad* which are the oldest works of this class of Vedic literature also is almost entirely written in what is called the *Sūtra* style of prose which we observe in works like *Chandaḥ-Sūtra* of Piṅgala and *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini.

The classical Sanskrit literature occupies the seventh stage where we find the prose is highly ornate and artificial. Simple expression of ideas is no longer in vogue. The *Daśakumāracaritam* of Daṇḍin is a fine example of this kind of

prose. The prose of Daṇḍin does not suffer much from the inordinate love for extremely long strings of compounds and the excessive use of puns that we find in the *Kādambarī* of Bāṇa. This extreme fondness for puns is carried further in the *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu who takes pride in having composed a work, every syllable of which contains a pun.¹ The age of Daṇḍin and Bāṇa required a high standard of literary taste and linguistic embellishment. A poet richly gifted by nature and possessing poetic talents developed by extensively literary studies could not, in consonance with the spirit of the age, help following the dictum of literary world that vigorous language and abundance of compounds constitute the soul of prose.² Lastly come the works, called *Campū*, in which prose and verse are freely used by the author as suited his purpose.

In short, the prose of the early period is the natural business like prose of every day use and moves with rapidity, of a postal runner, to convey the intended sense while the ornate and artificial prose of the later periods is like an adorned and luxuriously clad king marching in a slow and stately procession and instead of leading the reader to the intended sense, itself becomes an object to aimed at. Tagore said that Sanskrit prose in later literary works can be compared to hand fan of peacock feathers which is meant more for adornment than for serving any practical purpose.

Nevertheless, prose existed and developed however very slowly, side by side with verse almost from the very beginning. We cannot however, uphold the theory of Oldenberg that prose intermingled with verses was the original form of literature in India. According to the theory, this kind of literature existed in the *R̥gveda*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, and the Epics and in *Jātakas*. It is said that while verses were preserved in definite form in these writings, the prose portion, which was to be supplied by the storytellers, was subsequently eliminated and according to Oldenberg, the *Jātakamālā* and *Pañcatantra* are among the earliest extant

¹ प्रत्यक्षरश्लेषमयप्रबन्धविन्यासवैदग्ध्यनिधिनिबन्धनम् । *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu, Prastavaṇa, p. 10

² ओजः समासभूयस्त्वमेतद्गद्यस्य जीवितम् । *Kāvyaadarśah*, p. 12

examples of this form. But the earliest form of prose with verses interspersed appears to be that where a gnomic verse is cited to corroborate what is stated in prose and this is in line with the practice followed in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Dharmasūtras* and in some cases, in *Upaniṣads*. The next stage site class of composition where the writer concludes his treatment of subject with a few verses of his own giving a resume of the theme.

The Vedic prose which is freely and extensively used in literature is simple, straight and forceful; it is unlike the classical prose, composed of short sentences, devoid of lengthy compounds and laboured diction. Poetic figures like simile and metaphor have been suitably employed with proper judgment and power. The developed form of prose in the Yajurveda presupposes an earlier tradition perhaps of centuries, and the conjecture is not wholly discernable that it existed in the Ṛgvedic period also, though, of course, we cannot maintain the existence of prose in the supposed original dialogic hymns of the Ṛgveda.

Subandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin drew upon, or at least received inspirations from *Bṛhatkathā* the greatest storehouse of popular tales. Thus, the prose *kāvya* was evolved out of the artistic *kāvya* with the raw material either of the folk tale or some historical story.

I.II NOVEL

We may now notice a class of writings which can be definitely called modern and shaped by western influence, the novel. Here again we can see the transition from a background and theme like that of the *Kādambarī* to a social milieu. This class has been enriched in all the three ways, translations, adaptations and original productions. Appa Sastri rendered Bankim Chandra's *Lāvanyamayī*, first published in his journal *Sanskrit Chandrika* and then issued as a separate book. The *Kapālakuṇḍala* of the same celebrated Bengali novelist was translated by Hari Charan. Among other works of Appa Sastri which appeared in his *Sanskrit Chandrika* are *Kṛṣṇakāntasya Nirvāṇa* and *Indirā* narrated autobiographically by

the heroine. Of fiction of other writers published in *Sanskrit Chandrika* are *Mṛttikāvṛśabhakathā* of Narasimhacharya Punekar and *Viyoginī Bālā* by Balbhadra Sarma. Upendranath Sen wrote the *Pallicchavi*, the *Makarandikā* and the *Kundamālā*. Haridasa Siddhanta Vagisa wrote a novel called *Saralā*. A. Rajagopala Chakravarti's *Saivalini* is an adaptation of another Bengali novel: the same author wrote two other novels also, *Kumudini* and *Vilāsakumārī Sangara*. Chintamani Madhava Gole wrote the *Madanalatikā* (Bombay 1911). In the *Sah.* (III) appeared *Kanakalatā* by Kalyanarama Sastri: written in fine prose, it is a romance in ninety pages, based on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*; *Atirupa* (III) by Gopala Sastri; *Vijayini* (IV) by Parasurama Sarma; *Simantini* (VII) by Narayana Sastri, *Kamalākumārī* and *Sati Kamalā* (IX) by Chidambara Sastri and *Suśīlā* (XI) by R. Krishnamachariar.

Dr. V. Raghavan informs³ that the following were published in *SSPP*: *Rajani* by Renudevi, *Radha*, *Durgesanandini* and *Radharani* were translations from Bankim's Bengali works. In the same journal appeared also a novel entitled *Datta* (Oct. 1935 ff). In the *Madhuravani*, the editor, G. Ramacharya, serialised the story *Devi Vasanti*. In the *MSCMM*, N. Narasimhachari wrote the romance *Kirtisena* using a heroic theme (1948-49). The *Mandāravatī* of K. Krishnamacharya (Madras 1929) is based on one of the stories in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*. Srisaila Tatacharya also took up Bengali novels for translation, two of his productions being *Durgesanandini* and *Kṣatriyaramaṇī*. Kavyakantham Ganapati Sastri wrote the novel *Purna*. Vidhusekhar wrote the romance *Candraprabhā*. Medhavrata wrote the novel called *Kumundinī Chandra*. Mr. Narasimhacharya wrote a novel *Saudamani*. The *Simasamasaya* is a new novel by Gangopadhyaya featuring a leftist youth. Among longer stories using historical episodes are *Vangavira Pratapaditya* by Devendranath Chattopadhyaya, *Gaurachandra* by Indranath Vandyopadhyaya and the *Viralabdhham Paritoshikam* by R. Ramamurti from Chola history. Some examples of short stories on historical episodes may also be noted here: *Viramati*,

³ Raghavan V., *Contemporary Indian Literature: A Symposium*, p. 278

Atyacharinah Parinamah on the consequences of excess based on an episode of the Muslim period, and *Dani Dines. Chandramauli* of A. Rajammal, Madras, uses an old type of theme and introduces also a drama into the story. Sri Jagadrama Sastri, Hoshiarpur, has produced a prose fiction in his *Chatrasalavijaya*.

Sanskrit had always kept an intimate relation with the popular tongues and the literatures in them. In the modern period, the critical and historical study of Indian literature had included many a Sanskritist to render into the Sanskrit medium some of the best examples from his own regional literature. These renderings are from ancient as well as modern productions in these languages. Reference has already been made to modern novels and stories translated into Sanskrit from the languages.
