

bhadram te and bhadanta

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(1)

In Vālmikis *Ramāyaṇa* the expression *bhadram te* occurs as a formula of blessing, of averting evil or of formal greeting inserted in the midst of a sentence in the speech of a character, breaking the syntactical order—without any connection with the preceding or succeeding portion of the sentence—i.e. as an asyndeton.

The following few occurrences from the first and the second Kāṇḍa would illustrate this peculiar usage :

ताटका नाम भद्रं ते भार्या सुन्दस्य धीमतः । (I 23 25a)

एवं भवतु भद्रं ते इक्ष्वाकु-कुल-वर्धन । (I 41 21)

इमौ कुमारौ भद्रं ते देव-तुल्य-पराक्रमौ ।

कथं पद्भ्यामिह प्राप्तौ किमर्थं कस्य वा मुने ॥ (I 47 2)

इमौ कुमारौ भद्रं ते देव-तुल्य-पराक्रमौ ।

गज-सिंह-गती वीरौ शार्दूल-वृषभोपमौ ॥ (I 49 17)

सौपाध्यायो महाराज पुरोहित-पुरस्कृतः ।

शीघ्रमागच्छ भद्रं ते द्रुष्टुमर्हसि रघवौ ॥ (I 67 11)

लक्ष्मणागच्छ भद्रं ते ऊर्मिलामुद्यतां मया ।

प्रतीच्छ पाणिं गृह्णीष्व मा भूत् कालस्य पर्ययः ॥ (I 71 18)

स त्वा पश्यतु भद्रं ते रामः सत्य-पराक्रमः ।

सर्वान् सुहृद आपृच्छ्य त्वामिदानीं दिदृक्षते ॥ (II 31 4)

शत्रुघ्नोतिष्ठ किं शेषे निषादाधिपतिं गृहम् ।

शीघ्रमानय भद्रं ते तारयिष्यति बाहिनीम् ॥ (II 83 2)

It is to be noted that the formula is used in a fixed metrical position—as the last two words in the first or the third of the Anuṣṭubh.

(2)

bhadam̐ta is quite well-known in Pali as a term of respectable address or adjective with respect to Buddhist mendicant, monk etc.

Its contracted form *bhamte* (for *bhadamte*) is frequently used similarly in the Jain Āgamas. (Pischel §§ 165, 349, 366 o, 417, 463, 465).

The root *bhand* is given in the *Dhātupāṭha* (2, 11) with the meanings *kalyāṇa*, *sukha*-. *bhadanta*- derived from it is noted in the *Uṇādi-sūtra-vṛtti* (3, 130) according to Monier Williams dictionary.

Semantically, *bhadanta* can be possibly explained as meaning *kalyāṇakāraka*. But its very frequent use in speeches as a respectful term of address leads me to suspect that it may have been also influenced by the MIA. form of the traditional blessing formula *bhadraṃ te* (> *bhaddaṃ te* > *bhadamte*).

The addresser thereby expresses his or her reverence and good wishes 'Bless you !' 'Let no evil visit you'.

This is comparable to the utterances *jaya*, *jīva*, *nanda*, *vardhasva* shouted as blessing for a great person on a festive occasion.

A paralld case is that of Sk. *jīva* 'long live', Ap. *jiu*, *jiu*, occuring in various NIA. languages as *jiu* ! *jyu*, *jī* etc. as a particle of assent or respect and also as an honorific particle added to names (Turner, 5240).

From the respectful term of address *bhadamte* was created the address *bhadam̐ta* which later became specialized as applying to the Buddhest monks and mendicants.