

## NOTES ON SOME PRAKRIT WORDS

H. C. Bhayani

### (1) *Āḍuāliya*

The Partridge In / And The Cart

In Agastyaśiṃha's *Cūrṇi* on the *Daśaveāliyasutta*<sup>1</sup> (c. late 6th Cent. A. D.), while treating various types and sub-types of the *udāharaṇas*, the following story is given as an illustration of the *Vyaṃsaka* ("trickster, trickery") subtype of *Hetu*<sup>1</sup> :

एकेण गामेस्सएण कट्टु-सगडेण णगरं जंतेणं अंतरे तित्तिरी मता लद्धा । तं सगडे पक्खिवित्ता णगरे पविसंतो  
णगर-धुत्तेण पुच्छितो - कहं सगड-तित्तिरी लब्धति ? । तेण भणितं - तप्पणादुयालिताए । धुत्तेण सक्खिणो  
आहणिकुणं सगडं स-तित्तिरीयं णीयं । गामेस्सओ स-चित्तो अच्छति । अण्णेण विडेण पुच्छिता - किं चित्तेसि ?  
तेण सव्वं कहितं । विडो भणति - जाहि पदेसिणि वेदेत्ता भण 'विसिट्ठं पि ता तप्पामाडुगालियं देहि' । दिण्णाए  
'अंगुली दुक्खति' ति महिलाए आदुतालावेहि । तं महिलं स-सक्खियं हत्थे धेतुं भण - तप्पणाडुतालिता सगड-  
तित्तिरिए कीता । तेण जहोवएसं कतं । धुत्तेण सण्होरं जेमावेत्ता सगड-भरो विसज्जितो, णियत्तिया भज्जा ॥

Translation :

A villager while going to the city with his cart loaded with pieces of wood saw a dead partridge on the way. He picked it up and put it in the cart. As he entered the city, a city-rogue asked him : "For how much can I get the cart-partridge ?" The other replied, "In exchange of commingled barley-groats." The rogue called witnesses and took away the cart with the partridge. The villager sat worrying. Another clever and cunning fellow asked him : "What is your worry ?" The other man told him all that happened. The cunning fellow said : "You approach that rogue with your index finger wrapped up and tell him, 'Give me the commingled barley - groats we agreed upon.' When he gives it, tell to the chief lady of his house that "my finger aches" and get it soaked by her (in cold water ?). Then getting hold of that lady in the presence of witnesses tell the rogue : "I have bought the barley-groats (*tappaṇa*) and the soaker (*āḍutālītā*) in lieu of the cart-partridge." The villager acted in accordance with the instructions. The rogue with humble submission dined him, returned the cart, discharged him, and called back his wife.

Notes : *tappaṇāduyālītā*, *tappaṇāḍugālīyā*,  
*āḍutālāv-*, *tappaṇāḍutālītā*.

If the inorganically inserted *-t<sup>2</sup>-* and *-g-* are removed and *-du-* in the first form is taken to be a mistake for *-ḍu-* in other forms, we would have *tappaṇāḍuālīā* and *āḍuālāv-*.

In the first occurrence *tappaṇāḍuāliā* means 'barley-groats (Pk. *tappaṇa* = Sk. *saktu*) which are commingled' (*āḍuāliā* : past passive participle used as a modifier) (with probably ghee). Hemacandra has given *āḍuāli* in the sense of 'mixing', 'mixture', (*miśratva*, *miśrībhava*, *Deśināmamālā*, I. 69 ). Gujarātī *āḍvaḷvu* means 'to mingle a powdery substance (e. g. grain-floor) with a liquid and coagulate.' In the third occurrence in the cited passage *tappaṇāḍuāliā* means, 'barley-groats (*tappaṇa*) and the person who has soaked them' (*āḍuāliā* : feminine agent noun)<sup>3</sup>. In the second occurrence it is to be taken as ambiguous having *double entendre*. The rogue played a verbal trick on the villager by using the expression *sagaḍa-tittiri* which can mean 'the partridge that is in the cart and the cart and the partridge'. He is paid back in the same coins through a matching verbal trick : *tappaṇāḍuāliā* can mean 'barley-groats mingled' and 'barley-groats and the mingler'. The 'aching' finger is treated by immersing it in the cold water<sup>4</sup>.

*sanhoram* : This is glossed in the Notes as *salajjani* 'being ashamed, shamefully'. It seems to be a corrupt reading for *sa-nihoram*. In Modern Hindi *nihornā* means 'to entreat', *nihorā* entreaty. It occurs in Apabhraṃśa in an illustrative citation given in the *Svayambhūcchandas*, VIII 10-105<sup>5</sup>.

Another version of this story occurs in Saṃghadāsa's *Vasudevahiṇḍī* (c. mid 6th century A.D.)<sup>6</sup> where it is given as a tale narrated by Kamalasenā to her husband Dhammilla to illustrate the roguish and cheating character of the urban people. Its later part is completed by Dhammilla.

In that version the cartman brings with him in the cart a cage with a partridge in it. The roguish sons of a seller of medicinal herbs (*gaṃdhiya-putta*) tricked the cartman to sell to them the *sagaḍa-tittiri* (differently interpreted by the buyer and the seller) for one *kārṣāpaṇa*. Thereafter, following the instruction of a benign nobleman the cheated cartman approached the rogue and offered them his ox in lieu of *tappaṇāḍuāliyā*, but on condition that, that is given to him at the hands of their mother, nicely dressed and adorned. When the mother came to give the barley-groats, the cartman caught hold of her and went away. The dispute was ultimately settled in favour of the cartman, who was liberally compensated.

Now, the editor and translators of the *Vasudevahiṇḍī* have failed to grasp the meaning and significance of the Prakrit expression *tappaṇāḍuāliyam* in the text of this story. The editors have emended it as *tappaṇāḍupaliyā* i. e. the two *pālīs* (a measure) of the barley-groats, and the translators also have depended upon this emendation. But in the emended expression there is no scope for the *double entendre* which is pivotal for the point of the story as shown above in the case of the *Daśakālīka-cūrṇī* version.

As a tale-type, this story is based on the principle of 'tit for tat' or clever retaliation.

Deception by some verbal trick or equivocation is the motif in one class of these tales<sup>7</sup>.

Incidentally, we may note two other occurrences of *āḍuyāl-* from Prakrit literature. In the *Āvaśyaka cūrṇi* (c. A. D. 600-650) (P. 447) (Haribhadra's *Vṛtti*, P 342 a, Malayagiri's *Vṛtti*, P. 452)<sup>8</sup> occurs *adḍuyāliya* (v. l. *adḍuyāliya* - *adḍuyāliya*)<sup>9</sup>.

तत्थ पत्थो सरिसवाणं छूढो । ताणि सव्वाणि अडुयालियाणि ।

'A measure of *saṛṣapas* was thrown in it. All these were mixed up by stirring.' Later *aduyāliya* -occurs in a somewhat different sense. In Śīlāṅka's *Caṭṭapanna-mahāpuris-cariya* (A. D. 869) it is used in the sense of stirring and heaving felt in the stomach due to undigested food : अडुयालियं ( v. 1. अडुयालियं ) पोदुब्भितरं (p. 319, l.11). Rajasthānī *adāro* preserves this meaning<sup>10</sup>. Monier Williams has given *ādval* (*ādvalayati*) 'to mix, mingle' on the basis of *advalana* 'mixing, mingling' which occurs in the *Kātyāyana-śrauta-sūtra* and its commentary. *ṭval* is recorded in the *Pāṇinīya-Dhātupathā* (20, 5) as also *ṭal*-(20, 4), both in the sense of *vaiclavya* 'to be disturbed.' Monier Williams considers these *ṭval*, *ṭal*, and *ḍval* as variants of the same root. Whitney observes that, as *ādvalana* is used by only one scholiast, it is no proper root (*The Roots, Verb - forms*, p-59). Turner also thinks *ṭal*, *ṭval* and (*ā*)*ḍval* to be allied (CDIAL under 5450). However the Pk. and NIA. evidence (from Gujarātī and Rājasthānī) clearly show that *ṭal* (or *ṭval*) and *ḍval* have separate identities and semantic range.

This case further bears out the view that, with regard to those roots of the *Dhātupāṭhas* which remain unattested from the available Sanskrit literature, Middle Indo-Aryan and New Indo-Aryan sources can provide evidence to establish their authenticity. It would be rash to dismiss them as artificial creations of the grammarians.

## (2) On the words *gommaṭa*, *gumaṭi*, *gumaṭā*

Late A. N. Upadhye had convincingly established<sup>11</sup> that the word *gommaṭa* in Old Marāṭhī and *gomṭā* in Modern Marāṭhī (and *gomṭo* in Koṅkaṇī) means 'fair,' 'handsome,' 'attractive,' 'good,' etc., and in Old Kannaḍa *gommaṭa* similarly signified 'pleasing,' 'excellent.' He has cited passages containing this word from several Marāṭhī literary texts of the 13th century and documents of the 17th century and from the Kannaḍa inscriptions of the 12th century. He has also rightly concluded that the word is of Dravidian origin and was an early loan-word in Marāṭhī (through Kannaḍa).

His other important conclusions that *gommaṭa* 'fair-skinned,' 'beautiful' was a household name, a pet name, a personal name of Cāmuṇḍarāya, the minister and general of the Gaṅga monarchs, who got carved, out of the rock, the famous image of Bāhubali at Śravaṇabelgoda in A. D. 981; that statue came to be called *Gommaṭeśvara* after the minister's name; and that through reinterpretation *Gommaṭa* was made later synonymous

with Bāhubali. Thus all earlier speculations and misunderstandings have been set at rest.

The present brief note aims at supplementing Upadhye's study of the word *gommaṭa* by pointing out three occurrences of the word *gumaṭī*, one as a Prakrit word and another as a Sanskrit word, not noticed by Upadhye or, to my knowledge, by any other scholar. The first occurrence is noted from a text passage datable in the first half of the 11th century A. D. and hence the earliest brought to light so far.

In Bhoja's *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, to illustrate the *Sanikīrṇa* type of the Figure of Sound called *Jāti*, a verse is cited which has a mixture of Sanskrit, Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit, and Apabhraṃśa (II. v. 10) languages. Its first line begins with the following words :

*akaṭa-gumaṭī-candra-jyotsnā*

The Mahārāṣṭrī word *akaṭa* is paraphrased by the commentator Ratneśvara as *āścaryaṃ*<sup>12</sup> and *gumaṭī* as *manojñā*. Thus the moonlight is described as wonderfully beautiful. It should be noted that one constituent of the meaning of *gumaṭī* here (applied to the moonlight) is 'white'. Compare the Marāṭhī phrase *gorā-gomṭā* in which, as suggested by Upadhye, we have collocation of two synonymous words to express intensity of whiteness.

The second occurrence of *gumaṭī* I happened to notice was in a verse cited in the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (A. D. 1305) of Merutuṅga in one of its manuscripts (*Pb Siglum*) dated the 17th Century A. D. The verse occurs within a legendary anecdote connected with the Paramāra king Bhoja and a poor man. The latter addresses to the King a self-composed Sanskrit verse which contains 11 *ṭī*-sounds. Its third line contains the following words : *priyā na gumaṭī* : 'I have not got a fair woman as my wife'.

The third occurrence is somewhat doubtful. In Someśvara's *Mānasollāsa* (A. D. 1131), the illustrative verse given for the musical *prabandha* called *Caturaṅga*, which is characterized by a mixture of several languages, is found in a highly corrupt form. I have attempted to restore it<sup>13</sup>. The first line of the verse is in Sanskrit, the second in the Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit, the third in some regional dialect (Early Madhyadeśīya ?) and the fourth in Māgadhī. The third line has been restored by me as under :

*jo govi-jaṇi gāije bahu-pare rūpiṃ tinho gomaṭā*

The Mss. read *nihām—tinho* and *gomaya* respectively for the last two words. If my emendation of *gomaya* as *gomaṭā* is plausible, we have here an early 12th century occurrence of *gomaṭā* in the sense of *manojñā*. It cannot of course mean here *gaura*, because Kṛṣṇa is *śyāmala*, dark.

Thus *gomaṭa*, quite probably a Kannaḍa loan word in early Marāṭhī, is attested from more number of texts, of the 11th, 12th, and 14th century.

### (3) Pk. *halāhalā/olā* and *bambhaṇi*

In a recently published paper on the 15th chapter (Teyanisagga, Gosālaya-saya), which gives an account of Gosāla Maṃkhaliputta, the leader of the *Ajivikas*, Roth has made the following observation on the significance of *Halāhalā*, the personal name of the potter woman, in whose shop Gosāla with his follower was accommodated :

“From this it appears that the name *Halāhalā* was given to the potter-woman, who accommodated Gosāla, in order to characterize her as a poisonous snake.” (p. 448, note 13).

Roth's observation is based on the meaning 'snake' recorded in PW and on *halāhala-dhara* 'a small, black, venomous kind of snake'. It may be noted that MW also records *halāhala* 'a kind of snake' from Indian lexicographers. It has, however, also recorded *halāhalā* and *halāhalā* 'a kind of lizard' and *halāhala* 'a kind of small mouse'. Besides, it has given *halinī* 'a kind of lizard'. All these derive from lexicographical sources.

It seems that there is strong evidence for supporting 'a kind of lizard' as the original meaning for *halāhalā*, *halāhala*, etc.

Roth has noted (p. 419) that, Hemacandra's *Deśināmamālā* records under 8.75 *halāhalā* with two meanings : *mālāra* (= SK. *mālākara*, *mālika* 'garland-maker') and *bambhaṇi* (= *bambhanika* according to Hemacandra's commentary on the passage). Roth has misunderstood *bambhaṇi* / *bambhanika*. We may note in this connection that the *Deśināmamālā* records under 8.63 *halāhalā* also with the single sense of *bambhaṇi* and further it has given *bambhaṇi* (with its variant *bambhani*) also under 6.90 in the sense of *halāhalā*. Corresponding to PK. *bambhaṇi*, the SK. form is *brahmaṇi*. Dhanapāla, using possibly the same source as Hemacandra, records (714) *halāhalā* as synonymous with *bambhaṇiā*.

Now, Hemacandra's *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* records, as noted by Bechardas Doshi (p. 316, note 2. p. 429, not 1), under v. 1298 *halāhalā* with its synonyms *halinī*, *añjanikā*, and *añjanādhikā* in the sense of 'a type of lizard' and under 1299 *brāhmaṇi* in the sense of 'a fat lizard having red tail (*rakta-pucchika*)'. So here Hemacandra has given *halāhalā* and *brāhmaṇi* as Sanskrit words, but as words with somewhat different meanings. MW. has recorded *brāhmaṇi* from the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the same sense. The word is preserved in Hindi *bābhani*, *bāmhani* 'a type of lizard', and in Gujarati *boḍi bāmṇi* in the same sense.

*Halāhala* occurs in Hāla's *Gāhakośa* (1, 62) where the commentator Bhuvanapāla observes that *halāhalā* is the same as *gṛhagodhikā*, which is popularly called *brāhmaṇī*.

The *Deśī-Śabdakośa* has recorded from the Jaina *Āgama* literature *haliya*, *halliya*, 'lizard', 'brāhmaṇī'; *hallāhallā* 'a kind of insect'; *halaka* 'a kind of insect' and *halāhala* 'a kind of insect'.

We can conclude that the potter-woman's name *Halāhalā* signified 'a red-tailed big lizard.' Such personal names have been traditionally common down to the present day in the lower castes<sup>14</sup>.

### Postscript

Dr. Roth has kindly sent to me a copy of H. Lueders's paper 'Von indischen Tieren' (included in his *Kleine Schriften*, ed. O. Von Hinuber, 1973, pp. 24-80) and has also drawn my attention to some Hindi textual data. I feel, however, that the Prakrit lexical evidence is much more relevant and it heavily weighs in favour of a non-poisonous type of lizard as the meaning of *halāhalā* (called in Gujarāṭī 'Sāp-nī-māsi,' aunt of serpent).

### Notes And References :

1. *Dasakāliya-sutta*, Ed. Punyavijaya Muni, PTS series No. 17, Ahmedabad 1973, p. 28.
2. The Text of the *Dasakāliya sutta* has numerous forms with the inorganic -t (the so-called t-*śruti*). Comparable to the reading *āḍutālī* is *okkayallitāo*. (For *okkayalliyāo*. For the discussion of insertion of -t- in Prakrit forms, see *Vasudevahiṇḍī-Madhyama-Khaṇḍa*, Ed. H. C. Bhayani, R. M. Shah, LDS No. 99, Ahmedabad 1987, 'Introduction', pp. 38.
3. In the Sanskrit glosses given in the footnotes of the *Daśakālika*, the Prakrit expression is rendered as *tarpaṇa-cālikā* (p. 28, n. 9).
4. The Sanskrit gloss in the Notes on *āḍutālāvehi* is *śītīkaraṇārtham ācālaya* (p. 28, n. 8).
5. कण्ण परिपाडि, जणु जाणइ तोरा ।  
चत्तउ जो सवइ, तसु कवणु णिहोरा ॥

'O Karṇa, people know your habitual practice. What entreaty can be made to him, who abuses that which is abandoned ?' This seems to be a citation from some Apabhraṃśa poem on the *Mahābhārata* theme.

6. Eds. Chaturvijaya Muni and Punyavijaya Muni, Gujarat Sahitya Akademi Reprint, Ahmedabad 1989, pp. *Vasudevahiṇḍī* Gujarati Translation by B. J. Sandesara (1988 reprint), pp. 85-86. *The Vasudevahiṇḍī* English Translation, J. C. Jain, Ahmedabad 1977, pp. 618-620.

7. H. C. Bhayani, *Lokakathā-nā Mūla ane Kuḷa*, (Gujarātī), Ahmedabad 1990, pp. 154-161.
8. *Āvaśyaka-cūrṇi*( )- *Vṛtti* of Haribhadra, 1, p.228; also in the *Āvaśyaka* 1-1 *vṛtti* of Malayagiri.
9. The Sk. verb *āloḍ* is used in the same sense in a similar context :

स्थगिकायाः समाकृष्य सकूनालोड्य वरिणा ।  
एकोऽपि भोक्तुमारेभे टक्को रङ्ग इव द्रुतम् ॥

(Hemacandra's *Yogaśāstra*, 2. 156)

10. See. H. C. Bhayani, " Rājasthānī aḍāravu, Gujarātī aḍdālvu," *Maruśrī*, 6, 2-3, Jan.- June, 1977, p. 65.
11. *Gommaṭa : Origin and Etymological Study of the Word*. Reprinted in the *Jinamanjaree*, 8, 3, New York 1993, pp. 15-32.
12. With *akaṭa* we can compare Apabhraṃśa *kaṭa*, *kaṭa-re* etc. occurring in the same meaning. In both the words *akaṭa* and *gumaṭī*, ṭ- has exceptionally remained unvoiced.
13. "The Prakrit and Desabhasa Passages from Someśvara's *Mānasollāsa*", *K.K.Handiqui Felicitation Volume*, 1983, pp. 174-175 (=Indological Studies, 1993, p. 306).
14. In story no. 37 of Rājaśekhara sūri's *Vinodakathā Saṃgraha*, we meet a gambler named *Halāhala* (l.34. b). The work is dated c. middle of the 14th century A. D.

#### References :

- Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* of Hemacandra, ed. Vijayakastursuri, Ahmedabad 1957.
- Deśināmamālā*, ed. Pischel and Ramanujaswami, Bombay 1938.
- Deśi Śabdakośa*, Ed. Muni Dulaharaj, Ladnun 1988.
- Deśi Śadba Saṃgraha*, edited and translated by Bechardas Doshi, Ahmedabad 1974.
- "Golsāla Maṅkhaliputta's Birth in a cow-stall Including Notes on a Parallel in the Gospel of Luke 2" by Gustav Roth in *Jain Studies In Honour of Jozef Deleu*, Tokyo 1993, pp. 413-455.
- Hāla's Gāhākosa* with the Sanskrit commentary of Bhuvanapāla, ed. M. V. Patwardhan, Part - I, Ahmedabad 1980.
- Pāialacchināmamālā* of Dhanapāla, ed. Bechardas Doshi, Bombay 1960.
- Pāiasaddamahāṇṇavo*. Hargovinddas T. Sheth. Sec. ed, Varanasi 1963.
- Vinodakatha Saṃgrahā* by Rājaśekharasūri, ed. Vijayavira suri, Bombay 1918.
- Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Monier Williams, reprint, Delhi 1963.
- Viyāhapaṇṇatti-suttam*, Part-2. Jain Agama Series, Bombay 1978.

## ON THE RISE OF APABHRAMŚA AS A LITERARY LANGUAGE

H. C. Bhayani

### 1. General Observations

1. Literary language means a language used also or mostly for literary purposes, presupposing the existence and cultivation of literature in that language. The idea and domain of literature and literary art, as we understand in modern times under the impact of the West, were considerably different in the Indian Tradition. Even in the latter, their implication, application, and formulation have altered inevitably in a spatio-temporal context that embraces three thousand years of continuous production of literary discourse and vast regions with partly shared, partly specific, cultural traditions.
2. In the Indian situation historically viewed, our currently understood oppositions between literary and non-literary, literality and orality, creative literature and non-creative literature cannot always hold, at least not to the same degree.
3. History as conceived by us after the Western impact as a record of events and things changing over sequential chronological periods was, with a few exceptions, something unknown to the Indian Tradition. So, when we talk of literary history in Indian context, we are setting up an alien frame for ordering, organizing, and understanding, for our purpose, the changes in the character and form of the texts produced at different periods of time."
4. To deal with Indian literary traditions means to deal with vastly multilingual developments, broadly shared by, but narrowly peculiar to various regions in keeping with, of course, more or less pervasive cultural developments.
5. Who, for whom, and with whose support produced literature are very obviously the interconnected vital matters for our consideration. The patronage came from the rulers, from the élite groups, or the religious institutions and establishments. All the three great traditions — Vedic-Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist — played a key-role. Popular literature of course flourished in a different milieu. But establishing significant and mutually invigorating linkages between the 'Class' and 'Mass' literatures periodically was a distinguishing feature of the literary history. Besides, the hierarchical structure of Indian society, its authoritarianism and distribution of literacy were factors determining the nature, character, type, and structure of the



literary texts produced.

6. Modes of transmission and the preservation also of texts produced over centuries present us with a set of problems. Besides the oral and written modes of preservation and a set of complex relations of give and take between them, we are faced with the fact that a vast amount of literature is permanently lost to us and a considerable bulk remains locked up in unpublished manuscripts and unrecorded oral traditions. This situation also creates serious handicaps in trying to figure out literary history.
7. The ideological and philosophical overview of the community plays a decisive role in the production of literature and the type of literature produced. The changes which the former had undergone was also a basic deciding factor for the rise of 'new' literatures at various periods.
8. With regard to the Indian Tradition, our modern notions of uniqueness of the author of a text, of integrity of a text, and of originality mostly fail to work. Reinterpreting, revising, retelling, recreating, or rather transcreating has been the mode of preserving the traditional, modifying or enriching it, and keeping it 'living' and thus making it meaningful under the changed socio-cultural conditions and cater to the new needs of the community were the normal and accepted practice.
9. A corollary of the point 7 is that the categorizations or dichotomies we got as the modern Western heritage, into fact and fiction, real and mythical, objective truth and subjective belief, have to be basically modified when we consider the Indian Tradition. In many an area the view and approach are not the positivistic 'either-or' but the holistic 'both-and.' The contrast in practice is not exclusive but graded with poles differentiated. Several of these points of course overlap and are interdependent.

## 2. The case of Apabhramśa language

### 1. Earlier Traditions : The precedent situation.

I will consider the recognition of Apabhramśa as a literary language and the beginning and cultivation of Apabhramśa literature, assuming that it was typical of similar other developments in the Indian Tradition. Periodwise, Apabhramśa literature was subsequent to Sanskrit and Prakrit literatures and preceded literatures in Modern Indian Languages of North India, i. e. New Indo-Aryan languages. The earliest statement on record relating to Apabhramśa as a recognised language of literature is by Bhāmaha, a late sixth century theorist of literature. From the references we find in Bhāmaha

and Daṇḍin, another literary theorist who followed the former after a century or less, we gather that the Apabhraṃśa was one of the four languages of literature, another three being Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Paisācī. There are indications that the Apabhraṃśa literature began to be produced from about the sixth century when there already were three other literary languages and literatures with a history extending over several centuries and with a large number of works in several literary genres which can be subsumed under the general types of poetry, fiction, and drama.

We know that, by the sixth century before Christ, the Early Indo-Aryan or 'pre-Sanskrit' as used by the common people in the region of Magadha in East India had so much changed that Vardhamāna Mahāvīra and Gautama Buddha, who were among the most prominent religious teachers of that period, had preached their message in the colloquial "Māgadhi" and not in the language current in the prestigious Vedic-Brahmanic circles. The dialect situation of a few centuries thereafter is reflected broadly in the inscriptions of emperor Aśoka (3rd century B. C.) which show the distinctive features for the dialects of the eastern, western, and northern regions.

But what is noteworthy about this literary situation is the important fact that, of the then current three languages of literature, Sanskrit had been confined since over a thousand years to a limited class of élites, who employed it for learned discourse and for composing high literature. There existed a large volume of texts in Sanskrit — *Śāstras* (religio-philosophical and scientific treatises) and *Kāvya*s (creative writings) also in the several literary genres: *Mahākāvya* (the ornate epic), *Kathā* (the fiction), *Nāṭya* (the drama), etc.

Sanskrit drama used a mixture of prose and verse and its performance was an organic structure of verbal text, dance and music combined. Over and above the Sanskrit language, it used for the speech of 'inferior' characters several regional colloquial dialects (*Śaurasenī*, *Mahārāṣṭrī*, *Māgadhi*, etc.) in a highly stylized form so as to represent the sex and class differentiation of the language used in the society of those times. The preserved fragments of Aśvaghoṣa's dramas (second century after Christ) and Bharata's encyclopaedia of dramaturgy and dramatic performance (original portions datable to c. the third century of Christ) give us a picture of the situation.

Before the beginning of the Christian era, *Gāhā*, *Dhavalā* (short lyrics), etc., and *Kathā* (romantic fiction) began to develop as consciously composed literary genres in the language of the Mahārāṣṭra region in the West (i.e. Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit), and by the fourth century, an ornate *Mahākāvya* (the

*Harivijaya*) was composed in that language. Another elaborate *Mahākāvya* (the *Setubandha*) also appeared a century later.

It should, however, be noted in this connection that, because of its religious and cultural prestige, its refinement and creative vigour, the Sanskrit language, literary style and expression, and literary models exerted quite a dominating influence. Literary Mahārāṣṭrī was in that regard rather a colloquialized and stylized form of Sanskrit, which was confined to its region to start with but shortly earned recognition in all other regional literary circles.

This is not to gainsay the fact that the contents of the Mahārāṣṭrī lyrics largely and typically related to the life and ways of the rural society, but this poetry was produced and appreciated mostly in royal courts and élite circles. Essentially, in that regard, it was not different from the Sanskrit poetry; but there was a significant point of difference : Mahārāṣṭrī poetry and verse-fiction had developed its own metrical forms different from those of Sanskrit. Moreover, the performance aspect, too, played a decisive role. It should also be stressed that Prakrit had predominantly vocalic word-forms with only homo-organic consonant clusters. This made it more suitable for song and music.

Regarding the Paisācī language and literature, we are almost totally in the dark. An enormous work in the Paisācī language, containing stories, tales, legends and narratives teeming with romantic episodes and daring adventures, with humans, subhumans, and suprahumans having a free intercourse and with remarkable complexity of form — the *Vaḍḍakahā* — was written about the second century after Christ. But the original has been irrecoverably lost. What we now have are its several considerably late recasts, renderings or retellings, with additions, expansions, and omissions, in Sanskrit and in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit. No other work is available in the Paisācī language. Only the name of one other Paisācī text is mentioned by a writer of the ninth century. This means that Paisācī had virtually ceased to be the language of literature shortly after the second century.

We are also ignorant about the region where Paisācī was in colloquial use and how it came to be used for composing literary works. The Indian Tradition presents us with myths and legends about these matters. Guṇādhya, the author of the lost *Vaḍḍakahā*, is reported to have been a learned Sanskrit scholar, well-versed also in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit. He was a court-poet of the Sātavāhana king (himself a famed Prakrit poet and patron of poets), ruling at Pratiṣṭhāna in Mahārāṣṭra. The legend has it that he came to be placed

in such a situation that he had to forego the use of Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the spoken idiom of his time. Hence he had to compose his marathon story-work (which in fact, had originated from God Śiva and he was just a carrier) in *Paiśācī*, spoken by some tribals or primitives (actually *Piśācas*, 'goblins') haunting the forest regions of the Vindhya mountain range. Medieval Indian and Modern scholars disagree considerably about the original region and characteristics of the *Paiśācī* language. It was in all probability a stylized form of Prakrit with its phonology partially recast after the dialect of some aboriginal tribe.

### 3. Beginnings of Apabhramśa language and literature

Daṇḍin, a seventh century literary theorist, has characterized literary Apabhramśa as based on the dialects of the communities called *Ābhīra* and others (which probably included the *Gūrjaras*). Taking into account the cultivation and continuities during the later times, it is reasonable to assume that it was the Western region including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Sindh, and Mālava where Apabhramśa language and literature had their beginnings. Later, they spread to other regions towards the south and east. To start with, the Apabhramśa was but a colloquialized form of literary Prakrit. Like Prakrit, literary Apabhramśa, too, became considerably stylized and strongly influenced by Sanskrit, which provided the prestigious paradigms for style and expression. But its metrical repertoire was its own; so also it had developed some characteristic literary genres (the *Rāsābandha* and the *Sandhibandha*, besides several song-types).

A noteworthy feature of the literary Apabhramśa was that it was, to a degree, free to absorb colloquial elements. The explanation lies in the fact of its rise and recognition as a literary medium. The highly stylized Prakrits, continuing with vigour side by side with the dominant Sanskrit, got in course of time considerably removed from the popular regional dialects. Apabhramśa arose to fill the communication gap. Phonologically, Apabhramśa was but a developed variety of Prakrit. But its morphology, a part of its lexicon, and above all its idiomatic features made it more allied to the later New Indo-Aryan languages.

In that way, Apabhramśa was transitional. It preserved its 'classical' character in limited Jaina circles up to about the 15th-16th century. On the other hand it became more and more colloquialized and diversified, eventually ending up as various New Indo-Aryan literary languages, many of which inherited its metres, patterns, and literary forms.

It now remains to delineate the socio-cultural and geographical milieu within which the Apabhramśa literature flourished for several centuries after its rise (and continued to be produced for an equally long period after the rise of New Indo-Aryan literatures about 1000 years after Christ, although it had then lost its vitality and vibrancy, and had become increasingly rigidified.)

In a general way, the Apabhramśa literature can be said to repeat in many respects what happened in the case of Sanskrit and Prakrit literatures, which had continued to be produced in bulk alongside the Apabhramśa literature. Unfortunately, the period of the first three centuries in the history of Apabhramśa literature is almost a blank for us, as all early texts are lost. We have a score of names of early poets and a few citations and allusions. But there is enough evidence that Apabhramśa had continued the earlier tradition of composing voluminous epics having the *Mahābhārata* as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa* narratives and the *Kṛṣṇacarita* (the Purāṇic life account of *Kṛṣṇa*) as their themes. Besides these there were a number of lyrical types basically oriented towards performance. Apabhramśa had been adopted by all the three main traditions — the Vedic-Brahmanic, the Jainistic, and the Buddhist. But, on account of the better institutional structure of preservation, most of the preserved works in Apabhramśa are Jainistic. The modern Westernized perception would call it religious poetry. But the Indian Tradition categorized the 'fictional' literary works according to the four ends of all human endeavour, namely *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*, and hence the *Dharmakathā* (religious fiction), irrespective of its religious theme and didactic purpose, had the same status as the *Arthakathā* (pertaining to the worldly life and dealings) and *Kāmakathā* (having the love-life as its theme).

All the preserved Apabhramśa texts are verse-texts and there is little evidence to believe that there were also Apabhramśa works in prose. The Apabhramśa texts were recited, sung, or performed before the audience or spectators, who, even though mostly illiterate, were quite familiar with and responsive to orally presented literature.

The audience consisted of the religious, faithful, or the interested groups at large. The patronage was provided by the high-ups in the ruling class or by rich merchants and heads of guilds who maintained religious institutions and establishments. Literary Apabhramśa was more or less homogeneous, but in the later period, and because of preservation through oral transmission, the original language of earlier texts and parts of the textual contents were subject to modifications in keeping with the changing colloquial idioms and changing cultural conditions. This was of course an essential and indispensable condition for the text to remain in the living tradition and to have

contemporary relevance.

The account presented here is obviously sketchy and open to the charges of having several gaps and loose ends. In view, however, of the complexity of the subject, the issues involved, and scantily preserved evidence, this was in part inevitable. Limitations of time and space, too, cannot be disregarded.

(For the present purpose, I have omitted the bibliographical references. But the requisite preliminary information can be had from H. C. Bhayani, *Apabhramśa Language and Literature*, B. L. Institute of Indology. Distributors, Motilal Banarsidass. Delhi 1989.)

---

v