CHAPTER IV
MUSIC, RHYME AND REFRAIN:
A RÉSUMÉ

Eminent scholars like Dr. Hāzarāprasad Dwivedī and Ramchāri Sinha Dinkar are under the impression that the remarkable change of ideas and forms in Apabhramśa poetry is due to Arabic infiltration. Though Dinkar is rather hesitant about it, yet now and then he returns to the point that unforeseen modes of mediaeval Indian poetry were strengthened by Islamic and Iranic impact.1 Dr. Dwivedī has, however, no hesitation in saying that the end-rhyme in Apabhramśa poetry was a result of India's contact with the migrant tribes in the north-western frontier round about the sixth and seventh centuries. He reminds us, in this connection, specifically of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry which was replete with the device of the end-rhyme.2 One cannot deny the presence of the end-rhyme in pre-Islamic poetry.3 Nor should one doubt that there was a relation between music and poetry in the pre-Islamic period.4 But that does not prove its influence on Apabhramśa poetry. The mingling of Aryan and Semitic elements gave some new notes to Spanish poetry, and troubadours like Ibn Quzman (1160 A. D.) contributed a finished art-form to Zazal. But again, all this took a long time to happen and in any case had nothing to do with
Indian lyric forms. Furthermore, Jayachandra Vidyālankār and many other reliable historians attach much importance to the fact that from the time of Harun Al Rashid (786-809) onwards, Indian literature and science made a considerable contribution to the Arabs. The whole point, however, does not rest on this assessment of influence. From internal evidence it has got to be recognised that Indian poetry arrived at the use of the end-rhyme by an inherent and gradual process of its own which was quite independent of, if not simultaneous with, Arabic poetry. In the field of narrative poetry the Sufi poet Muhammad Jayasi wrote his Padumāwati in the 'Mathnawi' pattern of Persian poetry. But while translating it into Bengali, Saiyad Ālāol, a seventeenth century court-poet, simply adhered to payār. Only once reluctantly Ālāol promised to his patron to emulate 'bayt', the Arabic form of verse:

sthir kari amare karila angikār /
bhāngiyā bayet chhanda rachite payār//

But nowhere did Ālāol observe the rules of 'bayt' which are somewhat complex in their system for hemistichs. Krishna-dhan Bandyopādhyāy has shown convincingly that the gazl form of Arabic verse was much later imitated by the Indian lyricists, but it was transformed into tappā. Gazl songs, he says,
began as improvisation which evolved into 'rektā' and 'rubai' in Persian and Urdu poetry, whereas tappā has never missed its characteristically Indian modulation of rāgas and rāginīs.7 Both Persian and Urdu poetry are indebted to Arabic poetry for rhyme and refrain (kāfion and radifon). Bengali poetry, on the other hand, took these practices from Apabhramśa poetry.

In the Vansē-khaṇḍa (the episode of the flute) of Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana, the poet Baḷā Chandidāsa, while describing a natural scene, writes:

bānā ṇājāla yave kāṅhe/
kokil kaila pāligāne//

(When Kṛṣṇa began playing on his flute, the cuckoos responded in choral refrain).

Dr. Sukumār Sen has pointed out that 'pāligāna' is a portion of the choral refrain and has attracted our attention to the following line in Chaitanya Charitāmṛta where it is stated that the duty of the throng (dohār) is to join the leader in pāligāna:

ār paḷchajana kaila tār pāligāne/

It is obvious from the description of kīrtana in the above line of Chaitanya Charitāmṛta (Middle Book, canto 13)
that Padāvālī-kīrtana put a considerable stress on refrain which rendered the whole song concrete and coherent, interrelated and well-knit.

Therefore, it would be erroneous to assume that Padāvālī-kīrtana exempts itself from lyrical brevity. Narahari Chakravartī in his Bhakti-ratnākara has categorically written:

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\begin{align*}
\text{param kautukī krṣṇa laitādi prati/} \\
\text{kṣudra gīta gāite dilen anumati//} \\
\text{śuddha sālēr prāy kṣudra gīta hay/} \\
\text{antyanuprāsa praśasta śāstre kahay//} \quad \tag{9}
\end{align*}
\]

(Kṛṣṇa in good humour asked Lalita and others to sing short lyrics. Pure sālāga or chhāyālāg often consists of short lyrics which depend much on the end-rhyme).

As Amiya Māth Sanyāl puts it, chhāyālāg is a rāga of the hybrid class. Rāgas like lait, śri and pūrabī dhan-esrī fall into this class because they are composed of two different genres. Kīrtana has a pronounced liking for chhāyālāg rāga which works out a complicated yet rich tapestry of emotion. Narahari Chakravartī's further classification of kṣudragīta into chitrapada, chitrakathā, dhruvapada and pānchālī should not be lost sight of. The provision of short lyrics
or kṣudra gītā cast into chhayālag is a way of defining Padāvalī-kīrtana which has a variegated and elongated texture of rāga and which is an annexation of short lyrics. In other words, kīrtana is a prolonged song which contains short lyrics. That these lyrics abound in rhyme and refrain and varied couplet-combination is evident from Narahari Chakravarti's definition of each of the four types referred to. Particularly the third type, namely Dhruvapada, is to be noted, for it is nothing but refrain. This once again reveals the intimate relationship between rhyme and refrain. One cannot abide without the other. The other type of panchali is possibly no other than pānchālī which is the naïve form of the most popular genre of narrative Bengali poetry, i.e., Maṅgalākāvyā. The way Narahari Chakravarti refers to it proves the reciprocal relation between the lyric and narrative form in pre-modern Bengali poetry. Some other terms connoting choral refrain invite our attention. Ghoṣā is one such term which means the same as dhuča or dhruvapada of a song. Again, this refrain assumed new names — Viṣṇupada and Gopībhāva — in Mādhavachārya's Jāgarana. Bāsu Ghoṣ in his Gaurāṅgacharita mentions the name as 'thāṭa'. In Assamese, the name Ghoṣā signifies choral refrain.¹²

Kīrtana-cum-padāvalī, indeed, considerably affected post-Chaitanya narrative poetry. It is interesting to observe
that Mādhavāchārya (the date of his composition being 1579) and Dvija Rāmadeva (1649—?), both belonging to the Sakta cult, owe their musically enriched poetic forms chiefly to Vaisnava Padāvallī. Some of the refrains from the latter are quoted below:

1 phirata mohana vesā/
   eki eki pura venu          jalada tulita tanu
   ākula karalo prāna sesa//
   —— set in Kedāra rāga

(Charmingly adorned, he wanders about. With his flute and his cloud-resembling body he fills the hearts).

2 dayāl more emani karila/
   bāndhiyā kumati pāse jaladhī ḍubāila//
   —— set in Varāḍi rāga

(0 compassionate one ! Do I deserve this ? You have chained me with evils and have drowned me into the sea).

3 suni bānśir tāna          ākula haila prāṇa
   maraṇa jīyana kānu pāne/
   dvija rāmadeva bhaṇe   sei bānśir sans
   nā gele bāṅche nā prāne//
   —— set in Āswārī rāga !

(Hearing the modes of his flute, one's heart becomes enchanted and life and death flow towards Kānu. Says Dvija Rāmadeva : to
follow the way of the flute is the way to live).

The last refrain is particularly reminiscent of Chandīdasā's celebrated line in the same context. What is most revelant in this connection is the name of Daulat Kājī, the poetic precursor of Saiyād Ālāol. In his Sāṭīmaynā 0 Lora Chandṛāmī (1622-1635), he made confident use not only of the overworn Vaisnava imagery, but also the musical pattern of the Vaisnava lyrics. There are at least fifteen refrains in his narrative, written under the direct influence of the Vaisnava poets. The following one, for instance, bears the diction of Vidyāpāti:

mālīnī ki kahava vedana ora/
lora vine vāmahi vidhi bhela mora// Ṣ

(Mālīnī, my sorrow knows no bounds. Without Lora, I feel that fate is unkind indeed).

Daulat Kājī, like Dvīja Rāmadeva, has combined lyric and narrative by means of refrains which are condensed in arrangement. They have served the purpose of mitigating the monotony of prolonged narration.

One more point is to be noted. Our seventeenth century poets, Kājī and Ālāol, were, like the major poets of the fifteenth century, chiefly translators. Kṛṣṭivāsa and Mālādhara Basu
rendered Sanskrit epics in Bengali. Kājī and Ālāol imported romantic legends and thus extended the geographic frontiers of Bengali literature. However, both groups of poets, truly speaking, have attempted adaptation, and not translation. All their interest was in adapting alien and congenial elements into Bengali without affecting the spirit of the language. The extract that follows furnishes one more proof:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{theta chaupaīyā dohā kahila sādhane/} \\
\text{nā bujhe gohāri bhāsā ār kon jane//} \\
\text{desī bhāsā kaha tāke pānchālīr chhanda/} \\
\text{saṅkaḷ āsīyā jena bujhay sānande//} \\
\text{tave kājī daulat bujhyā āratī/} \\
\text{pānchālīr chhanda kahe maynār bhāratī//}
\end{align*}
\]

(Āṣraf Khān said: "The story we are going to tell has been told in dohā and chaupaī in Hindi. But that language is not understood by all. You better use your vernacular so that everyone can enjoy the work! Daulet Kājī consented to the proposal and began to relate the story in Pānchālī style).

The above-mentioned chaupaī-dohā style evolved out of the paddhatīr style found in Jaina charita-kāvyas. The Chaupaī-dohā style first occurred in Purvī Apabhramṣā and it was afterwards established in all its potency in the Prabandha-kāvya
form of Awadhi language. The popularity of this style, with its clear-cut couplet-arrangements, was due to its power of conveying didactic messages in a concrete way.

Tulasidāsa rightly said:

puraini saghana chāru chaupāi/
yugati maṃju mani sīpa sohā//
chhanda soraṭhā sundara dohā/
soi bahuranga kamala kula sohā//

(Beautiful chaupāis are like lotuses. And the premises are like precious shells. So also the soraṭhā metre and dohā are like lotuses of many colours).

Payār also had a close relation with paddhatiā (paddhatikā). But it did not blindly observe any fixed number of couplets to achieve its end. Therefore, besides its didactic vein, it created its sub-species (such as lachādī, laghu tripadi and dīrgha tripadi) in order to express various moods.

Thus Apabhramśa poetry left a legacy of immense potentialities to its successors. It created different traditions which began to take different courses. Each vernacular poet, while adhering to his desi-bhāṣā, developed a cohesive
attitude towards the languages of the neighbouring provinces. It was the Brajabuli language which could once dissolve the formal differences and provide the poets with a common forum of expression. But again the gap widened, perhaps for the better, for each vernacular came into its own and evolved independent forms.
NOTES

1. R. S. Dinkar, Samskriti ke Char Adhyaya, Delhi, 1956, pp. 353-355.


4. Dr. Makhanlal Ray Chaudhuri has furnished valuable informations on this matter in his article 'Music and Islam' (Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters No. XXXII, 1957, p. 55).

5. Samskriti ke Char Adhyaya, p. 230


9 Bhakti-ratnākara, 5/2999, 3003.


12 Gopīchandrer Gān, Ed. Dr. Āshutosh Bhāṭṭāchāryya, Calcutta University, 1959, p. 471.

13 These excerpts are from Dvīja Rāmadeva Virachita Abhayāmaṇgalā, Ed. Dr. Āśutosh Dās, Calcutta, 1957.


15 Desī-bhāṣā has been rendered as vernacular. The association of desī-bhāṣā roughly corresponds to romanç (Old French), romance (Spanish and English) and romanzo (Italian).

16 This evolutionary process has been discussed in details by Prof. Hamsaraj Agrawal, Hindi Sahitya ki Paratapara, Delhi, 1960.