Paddhatiā and Payār

Paddhatiā, (or Paddhatikā) when shorn of its last two mātrās, has been termed as payār. Looking to the fact, that the fourteen letters of the payār verse ...are the same as fourteen mātrās of fourteen syllables, the payār may seemingly be regarded as composed of fourteen letters; but that it is a syllable (which may consist of more than one letter) and not letter which is the unit in a Bengali word should never be lost sight of. Tagore substantiates this point and emphasises, in this connection, the elasticity or ductility which is characteristic of the payār. One can easily, he says, lengthen the breath-pause but without affecting the typical character of the payār. The examples adduced by him are as follows:

1. mahābhāratera kathā.../ amṛta samān../
   kāśīrāmadāsa bhaṅe../ sūne punyavān../

2. mahā.. bhāratera kathā../ amṛta.. samā..n/
   kāśīrā.. madāsa bhaṅe../ sūne..punyavā..n//

3. vachana nāhito mukhe / tabu mukhakhāni../
   hṛdayer kāne bale / nayaner vaṇī../

The last example shows, according to Tagore, that the payār has 16 mātrās in all. If that be so, there is no basic
difference between the paddhatika and the payar.

The Charyā-composers still wrote in paddhatia but the term payar applies to their poems. It would be seen from the following extracts from Svayambhū's work on prosody, that it is not only the conformity to certain letters that can identify a paddhatia or a payar, but also its varied and elastic pattern:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{paddhatia punu jeha karenti/} \\
\text{te sodaha mattau pau dharenti/} \\
\text{vihim paahim jamau te nimmaanti/} \\
\text{kadavaa atthahim yamaahim raanti/} \\
\text{áhahim punu ghattā samāmananti/} \\
\text{jamaāvasāna chhaddani thananti/} \\
\text{samkānibaddhakadavehiṃ samdhī/} \\
\text{ihā vivihapaārahim tuhumbi bandhi/} \\
\text{samdhibheāṃ te rahiaeaa/} \\
\text{chhaddanābi ghattā bhaṇa subhea/} \\
\text{annāu vivihapaāriāau/} \\
\text{ghattāu chhaddani viāriāuu/} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Svayambhūchhandas/VIII

The sense of the given passage is that there is essentially a lyric genre which includes paddhatika (or paddhatia),
chhardanika (or chhaddani ), ghattā etc., and it becomes this form or that by varied permutation and combination of complete but plastic rhyme-scheme. The very use of the word 'paāra' attracts our notice. It is to be legitimately deduced that the word, along with Payār, derives from 'Prakāra' which means 'variety'. We are also tempted to trace the evolution thus:

Prakāra > Paāra > Payār

It is also clear that the above varieties are all musical in character. Svayambhū particularly mentions that 'paddhadia-ñeviha gliyo honti vivihāho', e.g., Paddhadia assumes various types of Paddhadia which are sung in various fashions.

The prosodist Svayambhū lived in the 10th century. His contemporaneity with Charya-poets and the given description of his helps us to establish that the Charya-gītis, which have been said to be written in pajjhatikā(or paddhadia), can also be safely described as set to payār.

While revealing the fact that the metres employed in Charya-songs are all moric, Dr. Sunāti Kumār Chatterji maintains that 'the medieval Bengali, Assamese, Oriya metre payār' originated from Pādākulaka. But it is quite likely from the given evidence that the terms pādākulaka, pajjhatikā or paddhadia have a common inheritance. Furthermore, the likelihood of Prakāra,
and not Padākāra, as the prototype of Payār suggests itself.

Indian Classical Music — a Reinforcer

The other issues also should not escape our notice. The burden, already dealt with in detail, passed into a new fusion under the treatment of the Sahajiyā Buddhistic poets. Proto-Bengali poetry, for its final shape, adhered to the Prabandha-samgīta form of Indian classical music which has essentially four component parts, viz., Udgrāha (the beginning or the burden), Melāpaka (interval), Saṅchārī (setting in motion) and Ābhoga (completion or the return to the burden). These parts, accommodating thus the burden which they name Dhruvapada, unite to mould a compact Charyā-lyric. A quotation from Āryamaṇjuśrīmūlakalpa, a Buddhistic work on Tantra of the 8th century, shows that the mutual relationship between mantra and classical melody was now taken to be an intimate one:

ragārtham avṛtē mantrām raginasyaiva yuṣyatē

(A mantra abides by rāga and is applicable along with the latter).

It is pretty difficult to give the exact rendering of this peculiar Sanskrit of the Buddhists. But it can be seen that a close connection between rāga and mantra is advised here
so as to create an appeal to the listener's mind. Thus it is clear that the Jaina poets passed the popular form of poetry to the neo-Buddhistic poets who, in their turn, charged it with classical music and this change is reminiscent of their typical cult-consciousness. The difference between these two classes of poet-reformers is pronounced in the sense that while the Jaina poets approached the listening public with utmost candour and directness of technique, the neo-Buddhistic poets, owing to their esoteric leanings, did not consider it proper to be easily accessible. Hence the undue stress on obscure terminology, and on the 'purposive' (ābhiprāyik) way of their cryptic language (sandhābhāṣā). And that is the reason behind their dependence upon the classical mode of Indian music, which, despite its contact with the desi or indigenous kind of music, is somewhat obscure with its subtle arrangement of rāgas and rāginīs.

The whole attitude reminds us of the trobar clus (or car, ric, oscur, sotil, cobert) school of Troubadour poetry. The poets of this school like Giraut de Bornelh avoided all that is easy and direct so far as the meaning of poetry is concerned. The analogy may be pushed further, although hypothetically. If the connection between the Catharists and the Troubadours is proved, the heretic yet somewhat religious departure of the latter certainly will help us to read the Provençal poetry in a
new light. Sahajiyā Buddhistic poetry on the other hand, exploits Religion to emphasise its erotic elements. The peculiar bent of their religion, however, is responsible for the oblique nature of Charyā-poetry. Admitting that too much of religious fetishism is apt to spoil a lyric, it must be taken into account that the Charyā-poets, from the moment of inception of the Bengali lyric, established close relation between religion and poetry which has existed for centuries. Moreover, the Charyā-poets have had to do with the forthcoming school of Nīrguna poetry which, with its sharp, significant classification of Sākhī and Sāhda, and its rich ramifications of mystery-codes appeals to us mysteriously for their double layer of meaning, literal and transcendental. Charyā-poets introduced for the first time in the history of indigenous form of India lyrics, this oscillation between two poles — or, at times, two kinds of language. Also, it should be remembered, "the same group of poets composed both in the Western (Saurasenī Apabhramśa as representing an older and Pan-Aryan tradition in India, and in proto- or old Bengali as representing the rising local vernacular. The situation was to some extent repeated in Bengali half a millennium later, when the Bengali Vaiṣṇava lyricists writing padas on the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa used two kinds of speech: their own native
Bengali, and an artificial literary language, the Brajabuli. This independence of two levels of language or modes of expression, indicates not only their religious preoccupation but also an appreciable amount of their kunstwollen (artistic purpose). Apart from the consideration of artistic urge, this semantic and linguistic tension cannot be explained.

Before probing into their artistic purpose, it is necessary to recapitulate one or two important conclusions as to the linguistic base of the Charyā-padas. Grierson suggested that the Apabhraṃśa of the Charyā-padas is to be well-explained in the light of the Sauraseni Apabhraṃśa examined so thoroughly by Hemchandra. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, however, has pushed the above conclusion back to its premise and so to find out the complete truth. Sauraseni Apabhraṃśa, according to Dr. Chatterji, gave way to a medley named Avahatṭa in course of time, and local patois was not outside its sway. The influence of this literary Sauraseni Apabhraṃśa was inevitable on all the contemporary vernaculars and Charyā-forms were no exception.

A Secular Source

Prof. Chatterji's view enormously helps us to get at the 'inner form' of the Charyā-padas. If we are allowed to draw a line between 'influence' and 'instillation', we may conclude that the poetic form of the Charyā-padas was influenced by and not instilled with the Sauraseni Apabhraṃśa; that the latter,
the *lingua cortiginia* (the language of the courts) gave the local patois a common heritage, a common fountain-head whence many local lyric forms, together with the Charya type of songs, were born almost simultaneously. This is not to say that there never existed literary forms such as Maharastri Apabhramśa, Sauraseni Apabhramśa etc., and that modern Indian languages sprang up from the literary form of one Apabhramśa only. What we want to emphasise is that the Western Apabhramśa in particular had nothing to do with the final shape of the Charya kind of songs. Someśvara in his Mānasollāsa (1130-1131 A.D.) makes this clear when he mentions Charya-songs with reference to certain occasions and festivals:

```plaintext
tripadī satpadī chaiva dhavalo mangalastathā/
ovi cha charchātī charya rāhadī dantikā tathā//
ete sudēṣu no geyah prabandha loukika matah/
viprakīrṇā pragātavya vyāparesu prthak prthak//
tripadī kandane chaiva śṛngāre vipralambhake/
prāyaścātrībhīrevaiśā geyā nānārthabhuṣitā//
kathāṣu satpadā yojyā vivāhe dhavalastathā/
utsave mangala geyascharyā yogijanastathā//
maharāstrē su yodibhiḥ ovi geyā tu kandane/
holāke charchātī geyā rāhadī viravarmānē/
dantī gopālakaivrude gātavya nijabhāṣayā//
(Tripadī, Satpadī, Dhavalo, Ovi, Charchātī, Charya, Rāhadī and Dantikā — these are the songs which should not be sung in the
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Sūda type of composition. On the other hand they should be sung according to Viprakīrṇa mode on different occasions. Tripadī is to be sung while grinding corns, or making love, and also in pathos of separation. On all these three occasions it assumes varied suggestiveness. Satpadī and Dhavala are applicable to narrative and marriage ceremonies respectively. Mahāl type of songs are sung in festivals and Charyā-songs are sung by mendicants. The women of Māhārastra sing Ovi while grinding corns. Chārcharī and Rahaṇḍī are sung in spring-festival and in describing the feats or features of a hero respectively. The Pastoral Dantī songs are sung by the cowherds in their own vernacular.

It is seen from the above evidence that deriving from festal group-songs, vernacular in character, the Charyā-songs differentiated themselves to fulfil their own destiny. Though the Charyā-lyrics are meant for, and composed by, an ostracized group of neo-Buddhistic people, yet the forms of their poetry show this kinship with many contemporaneous musical forms, secular or ritualistic.

We have already mentioned the conspicuous advent of the end-rhyme in the Prākrit and Apabhṛṣṭa poetry. It is shown by authorities like Haripāla, Someśvara, Jagamallā and others that the above-mentioned and many other lyric forms counted enormously upon the trick of the end-rhyme. They have used expressions
like prāntaprasā (having rhyme at the end), or prāntapras-ātmaka (that which abides by the end-rhyme) to identify these forms. The Charyā-lyricists obviously derived this artifice from the secular song and dance festival and adapted it to their special purpose. This keen awareness of the end-rhyme on their part would be clear to us if we took note of one or two factors. As we have already noticed the end-rhyme makes it convenient for us "to anticipate recurring terminations of the poem and thus connecting the composition to give it a stronger hold upon the memory". This repetitive device, set to music, creates a particular association for the initiated ones, for whom only these Charyā-lyrics were originally composed. Dhāranī, the Mahāyānī Buddhistic practice was dependent on this device. 'Gzungs', the Tibetan form of prayer, which again had its being from the Mahāyānī Buddhism like the Charyā-lyricists, i.e., the follower of the Sahājā Buddhistic school, also put an emphasis upon this repetitive motif. In 'Tibetan Buddhism mantras appear on countless stones and flags. They are written in endless repetitum on rolls of paper written in the prayer wheels...Répétition of a mantra is equally effective whether the good words are voiced, set forth manually, or disposed by any of the forces of nature'. Persons concerned, however, should concentrate on the import of the words and live accordingly. The word 'Charyā' also connotes the application of faith into empiric knowledge. On the one hand, the tenet
followers had to cling to a code, a priori in nature; and on the other hand they had to apply it to an a posteriori scale of experience, which in their case happened to be specifically a sexo-yogic one. This characteristic tension between an esoteric faith and similarly exacting esoteric practice gave birth to their Sandhā-bhāsa or occult language. There is no reason to sublimate the nature of their experience and yet Moritz Winternitz is only partially right in regarding it as an 'unsavoury mixture of mysticism, occult pseudo-science, magic and erotics' couched in 'strange and often filthy language'. The word 'filthy' is rather too strong to apply to the pronouncedly symbolical language of the Charyā-songs. In the last analysis, these songs are to be judged neither as mantras nor as talismanic doggerels, but from the fact that the makers of these songs metamorphosed for the first time in the New Indo-Aryan period, a secular heritage into a sectarian artefact. The credit of their achievement, from the structural point of view, lies in their conscious handling of the stanzaic pattern. They neither reverted to the brief-spun śloka nor embraced the long-drawn story-telling custom prevalent in the Apabhramṣa tradition so adroitly handled by Svayambhū, Puṣpadanta, Dhanapāla, and many others. They reduced the latter's narrative practice into an abstract yet wieldy lyric form. This provided the archetype of the Gīta-govinda, Vaiṣnava Padāvalī, Sahajī Vaiṣnava lyrics and
the Nirguna school of Hindi poetry. But it would be hyperbolic, if not anachronistic, to hold with Dr. Shahidullah that these lyrics were imitated over into Persian Gazals. The latter variety of verse form sprouted in Spain from folk-songs and was raised to a finished product by the Troubadour poets who had no chance to be influenced by the Neo-Buddhistic song-makers.

At most it can be said that when on the pegs of a Hindi or Bengali song, is hung an Indian rāga or a homophonic melody (the process was first adopted by the Charya-composers) shorn of the subtler embellishments, it reminds one of the snatches of the Troubadour melodies of the good old days of Queen Eleanor... The emotional values of the Troubadour melodies and the Indian show in the last analysis a remarkable affinity of taste.

A Type of Imagery

The Charya-padas, despite their occasional human interest, can never claim to be termed 'modern'. And it goes without saying that these poems in no sense contain any technical apparatus which identifies a poem as 'modern'. Yet, analysing some of the images of the Charya-lyrics, we find that there are also underlying strata of metaphors gathered from varied sources which have been squeezed into the shortest possible unit of expression. First let us cite three verses from 'Gahasattasaï', an anthology of Prākrita verses assigned to Sātvāhana Narapati Hāla:
1 sihi-pehūvaamsā bahū bāhassa gabbirī bhamai/
gaa mottiaa-raia-pasahāṇāṇaṁajhe sabattīnam//

(Although the wife of the hunter is adorned with mere pea­
cock's tail, she makes a proud stroll amidst her co­wives
who have decorated themselves with pearls).

2 ṇa gunēna hīrai jano hīrai āna bhāvai teṇa /
mottūṇa pulindā mottiaṁ guṇjāoṁ gehṇanti //

( A person is not attractive for his or her attributes, it
is clearly an affair of love. The people of the Pulinda
tribe detest pearls but revel in a guṇja seed, a small shrub
bearing a red­and­black berry).

3 āloanti pulindā pabba­siharatthia dhanu ṇisanna/
hatthi­ulehin' ba bīnjham pūrijjantam pabbebheīm //

(The pulindas, while sitting on the mountain­tops with bows
in their hands, are looking at the Vindhya ranges covered with
black new clouds).25

Let us now turn to a Charyā-verse where, it can be some­
what safely assumed, the above and similar verses have been
transmuted into an erotic­spiritual context. Because of this
variation the latter can be termed as example of Ekaparikārya:26
On high mountains lives Sabari, the maid of the hunter tribe. She adorns herself with peacock's tail and necklaces of gunja seeds. O foolish Sabari, I request you not to be misguided. Do not forget that I, the Sahaja Sundari, am your faithful consort.

Similarly, it would be seen from the following group of verses that the images of the former ones have been purposely imitated by the latter:

(a) ajjam mohana suhiam muatti mottu palaie halie/
dara fudia benta bharomaai hasiam va phalahie//
(The cotton-plant, bending with its half-blown flowers, smiled when the farmer was about to leave the most beautiful compassionate lady, thinking her to be dead).

(b) gaanata gaanata taila badi heiche kuradi/
kanthe nairamani vahi jagante upadi/
chhaq chhaq mai moha viasma dundoli/
mahasuhe vilasanti sabaro laia sunda-meheti//
Severing the apartment of the lower level with the axe of the Void, the Yogi passes the night embracing Nairatma or the Abstract Beauty. One should shake off all illusions as the Sahana who is happily embraced with the Abstract Beauty. And the abode now radiates the pure beauty of abstraction while the flowers of cotton-plants are abloom).

(a) padhama-nilima-mahura-mahu lohallali-ulabaddha-jhankaaram/
shima-ara-kirana-niuramba-chumbam dalai kamala-vanam/31

(The buzzing bees greedy for sweet honey are just seated upon the group of lotuses, which, being kissed by warm sun-rays, are going to bloom).

(b) adharati bhaara kamala vikasiu/
vasis yogini tasu aniga uhlasiu/31

(The lotus unfolds itself through the midnight, in contact with the sun of ultimate Reality. Thirty-two Yoginis' bodies are trembling with rapture).

Instances could have been multiplied. But the above ones will suffice. It can be maintained that the latter verses are, by no means influenced by the former ones, but that both
derive from the same source, i.e., sprüche or folk-poesy, essentially gnomic in character. The probability of neither direct plagiarism nor parallelism but that of thematic continuity through social heritage suggests itself more definitely here. It is to be remembered that, the Charyā-poets were all very learned and the range of their awareness runs from the study of Vedanta up to that of the poesy transmitted to them. These poets, quite naturally, crystallised or rather saturated into images, the similes or metaphors which had been transmitted by the preceding poets who had gathered them fresh from folk-poesy, which, to borrow Coleridge's phrase, have 'dews upon them'.

Obviously this does not amount to saying that the Charyā-poets were imagists. But this much can be deduced that these poets, hitherto underrated, have a claim to be rescued from their undeserved obscurity. The peculiar way of experimenting with truth they chose was indeed an unhappy choice between the abstract and the concrete, the esoteric and the tangible modes of realisation. It is for this reason that, despite all their didacticism, these poets have created an empirico-ontological world around themselves, which does not wholly lack poetic fervour and form.

Charyā-verses, the first watermark of Bengali poetry, thus, served a historically unique necessity when Sanskrit poetry had nothing new to give to the Apabhramsa poesy which again was about to take rest after sending fresh shoots in the new-born vernaculars.
NOTES


9. C.D. Barthwal has given an interesting account of these mystic-codes in The Nirguna School of Hindi Poetry, Benares, 1939.

11 Dr. S. N. Ghosal has summarised these and some other relevant views in his article entitled *Controversy over the significance of Apabhramśa and a compromise between the views of Jacobi and Grierson*, J. R. A. S. XXII, no. 1, 1956.


13 A time-table drawn by Somesvara on certain congenial festive forms of compositions (Prabandha-kala-vyavastha). Quoted from Bharatkosa, a dictionary of technical terms with definitions collected from the works in Music and Dramaturgy by Bharata and others, compiled by M. Rama-krishna Kavi, Sri Venkatesvara Oriental series no. 30, 1951.

14 Ibid.

15 The whole process beginning with secular dance and song ending into the religious lyrics is reminiscent of the similar role of Carole in the history of English and French poetry. See W. P. Ker, Medieval English Literature, Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. 61-62.
16 J. C. L. Sismonde De Sismondi, Historical View of Literature of the South Europe, Henry Colburn & Co., 1823, p. 244.


18 Shashibhusan Dās Gupta, Obscure Religious Cults, Calcutta University, 1946, pp. 17-18, 26 and 37.

19 Winternitz's views have been summed up in History of Bengal, vol. I, p. 329, f.n.

20 Exactly similar is the procedure adopted by some of the later Troubadour singers. "The Sirvantes, in the later period of Troubadour literature was often reduced to one or two stanzas (Coblas esparsas). This cobla afterwards has a miraculous fortune: it seems that the Italian Sonnet came from it". Translated from E. Hoffner's 'Les Troubadours', Paris, 1955, p.11.

21 Dr. Muhammad Shahīdullāh, Bānglā Sahityer Kathā, Dacca, 1953, pp. 75-76.

22 Ibid, p.76.

24. G. R. Kar, Thoughts on the Mediaeval Lyric, 1933, p.65. The words within the bracket are by the present author.

25. These verses have been cited from the bilingual version of the anthology edited by Dr. Radhāgovinda Basāk, Calcutta, Phālgun, 1362 B. S. (Verses 2/73, 4/10 and 2/15).

26. This is a term most probably coined by Rājasēkhara and is said to take place when a writer borrows a method of description from an earlier poet and changes the principal object of description. Rājasēkhara, Kāvya-mīmāṃsā, Ed. C. D. Dalāl and R. A. Sastrā, Gaekwad’s Oriental series, 12/1/25.

27. This verse, set in Balāḍī rāgini, is assigned to Śabaripāda.

28. The word, literally means "a simple", charming dame, but essentially implies a female medium assisting the enlightenment of the male, her psycho-physical partner.

29. Gahasattasāi, 4/60.

30. The authorship of this verse also goes to Śabaripāda. This verse is set in Rāmakeli rāgini.

31. Gahasattasāi, 5/95
32 Set in rāga Kāmoda, this verse is composed by Bhusuku-pāda.

33 The meaning rendered by Manindramohan Bose has been accepted here.

34 Sri S. N. Ghoshāl in 'Probable Sources of some Apabhramśa Stanzas of Hemachandra' (Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters vol. XXII, no.2, 1956) throws this light, although in a different context. The article is interesting as it points out some occurrences of the same images in Hemachandra and Pāhuḍadāhā, which also are present in some of the Chāryā-padas.

35 How they assimilated the eleven metaphors of Śaṅkara-chārya, a contemporary of Saraha, would be noticeable from one of Bhusuku-pāda's verses, set in Kāṛu-gūṇjārī melody, beginning with 'āie anuānāe jaga re bhāṅgtie so padhīāi' (The Mystic Void knows that the world is not born at all).