SECTION III

DANDIN AS A WRITER OF PROSE KĀVYA

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF PROSE AND PRE-DANDIN DEVELOPMENT OF PROSE KĀVYA

Prose, as compared with verse occupies a lesser place in Sanskrit literature. The evident reason for inclination towards verse and the consequent neglect of prose is the fact that writings in verse are easily reduced to memory. The medium of metrical measure makes a composition musical and concise, so that it soon gets inscribed on the canvas of a reader's mind. This is one of the chief reasons why, not only the poetical compositions, but even the scientific works have been composed in verse in Sanskrit.

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 inṚveda, the Brāhmaṇas, the Epics and in the 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 story-tellers was subsequently eliminated and, according to

1. Cp. ZDMG. XXXVII. 54 ff.; XXXIX. 52 f.; SāA. 1903, pp. 66 ff. etc.; op. Keith (JRAŚ. 1911, pp. 381 ff.; 1912, pp. 429 ff; HSL. pp. 69 ff; SDR. pp. 21-2) for the refutation of the theory.
Oldenberg, the Jātakamālā and Pañcatantra are among the earliest extant 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 the Upaniṣadas. The next stage is the class of composition where the writer concludes his treatment of a subject with a few verses of his own giving a résumé of the theme. Even the grammarians recognised the importance of this device which was emulated by the writers like Kauṭilya and Vātsyāyana also in their works.

The first appearance of prose we notice as early as the Vedic sāhītās; and the black Yajurveda, which is said to owe its qualification to the fact that it is 'blackened' (mixed) with prose, presents to us the oldest available specimen of prose. In other schools, too, of the Yajurveda, viz., in Kāṭhaka, Maitrāyaṇī etc., prose occurs in amplitude. A mention may be made of the Atharvaveda also, the sixth kāṇḍa of which is composed in prose. Again, the Brāhmaṇas are mostly written in prose; they contain, inter alia, ākhyānas or traditional stories also which may be regarded as the rudimentary form of fiction in prose. The prose form is found also in the Āraṇyakas and older Upaniṣadas. The Brhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogyopaniṣad, which are the oldest works of this class of Vedic literature,

2. Cp. the kārikās of MBhāṣ.
are mostly in prose. The Vedāṅga literature also is almost entirely written in what is called the sūtra (aphoristic) style of prose which we observe in works like Chandah-sūtra of Pingala and Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini.

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 judgement and power. The developed form of prose in Yajurveda presupposes an earlier tradition perhaps of centuries, and the conjecture is not wholly discardable that it existed in the Ṛṣvedic period also, though, of course, we cannot maintain the existence of prose in the supposed original dialogic hymns of Ṛṣveda.

In the classical period, we have glimpses of prose in various branches of learning, namely, scientific, Purānic, inscriptional, dramatic and didactic literature, besides the prose-kāvyā literature proper. Prose has been abundantly employed in scientific writings ranging from works on Grammar, Prosody, Philosophy, Political Science and Economics to treatises on Medicine and Surgery. From the point of view of style, it may be divided into following classes: (i) aphoristic (sūtra) style, (ii) commentatorial (vṛtti) style and (iii) expositive (bhāṣya) style. For evident reasons, a proper development

3. Oldenberg (loc. cit.) advanced this hypothesis which has been amply confuted by Keith (op. loc. cit.).
of prose norm could not be possible in these forms (and especially in the first one), though we often notice forceful prose composed in a style capable of fully expressing the requisite thought-material. Patañjali's prose which is possessed of elegant and forceful diction deserves a special mention in this respect.

The prose found in the Bhāagavata- and Viṣṇu-puṛāṇas is still more charming and effective; though very little in quantity, it is amply ornamented, and the grace of literary prose is present herein in its moderate form. But it is the inscriptional prose which closely approaches to the literary prose in point both of language and style. It must have been influenced by the contemporary prose kāvyas which are now unfortunately lost, for it contains almost all the elements of poetic prose, viz., compactness, perspicuity, grace and embellishment. The oldest available specimen of this ornate prose in the Sīmar inscription of Rudradāman (180 A.D.) reminds us of Bāṇa's elaborate style, though in point of time the two are separated by a period of about five centuries. The inscription makes an express mention of "perspicuous, light, pleasant, varied, charming and embellished prose elevated by verbal conventions", and it is itself a befitting example of such ornate prose. The Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta (c. 350 A.D.) by Harisena presents another beautiful specimen of ornamented prose. There are other epigraphs also which contain the elements of refined prose.

4. SI., VIII., p. 38f.; for the kāvyas features of this and other inscriptions, cp. Bühler's Die Indischen Inschriften.
The prose in dramas and especially in early plays is simple and direct and hence forceful. It exhibits a style which is concise but effective and polished but unostentatious. The general poetic elements like poetic figures and excellences have, of course, been employed here, but with utter restraint. Equally simple and straight is the prose found in the beast fables represented by the Pāñcatantra or its older recensions and later offshoots. It disdains the employment of ornamental measures, though it possesses a peculiar charm of style of its own which is born of fluency, force and perspicuity. Although the stories of Pāñcatantra have been termed kathās and the word ākhyāyikā is suffixed to its older recension, the work is never included in the category of ornate prose kāvya for its evident indifference to embellished diction, as also for its being didactic in nature and spirit. The prose style of Jātaka stories, on the other hand, professes to be artistic and ornate, and it may easily be accorded a suitable place between the prose diction of fable literature and that of the prose kāvyas.

The literary prose form includes the prose kāvya with its varieties like kathā and ākhyāyikā as also the form campū where prose is interwoven with verses here and there. The prose kāvya style which we observe in the works of Subandhu,

5. Cf. for inscriptive records, Fleet: CII, III; D.C, Sirdar & SI.
6. For other varieties like khanda-kathā etc., cf. above, sect. II, chap. II, fn. 30.
Bāṇa and Daṅḍin presents a somewhat mature form and it is evident, therefore, that it originated and received its early development much before these writers. There is, however, no work extant belonging to this formative period and hence we cannot fully appreciate the merits and defects of the existing prose kāvya literature. The existence of such prose works, however, is attested to by stray references in literature to writings of this class and it may be traced back to at least 4th or 5th century B.C. Pāṇini in this period notes the term ākhyāyikā, while Kātyāyana (300 B.C.), commenting on his sūtra (lub ākhyāyikābhyo bahulan), refers separately to ākhyāna and ākhyāyikā. A little later, Patañjali (150 B.C.), commenting on the same, mentions Yavakriṭa, Priyavara and Yayati as instances of ākhyāna and Vāsavadatta, Sumanottara and Bhaimaratī as those of ākhyāyikā. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about these works. Again, we know nothing of Ārunti of Vararuci from which a stanza has been cited in Bhoja's śṛṇavārakāśa, of Śūdrakakathā, perhaps a śāk lawkā, by Rāmaśila and Somila referred to by Jahlana and Bhoja or of Taraṅgavati of Śrīpālīta, praised in Dhanapala's Tilakamañjari and in Abhinanda's Rāmacarita as a contemporary of Hāla Sātavahana (73 A.D.). The works Śātakarniharana and Nānadvantikathā

9. Cpt. De: HSP. pp. 200-1; also Sūkt. M. IV. 49; Tilak. intro. v. 23; Śr. P. XI; XXVIII.
written at the time of the Āndhrabhārtiyas are also mere names to us, as also Manovati referred to by Dandin and Bhoja and Satakiharana mentioned by the latter. Bāṇa refers to Bhattārā Haricandra as the author of a prose kāvya of excellent merit. The writer has also been mentioned, alongwith Kālidāsa, Subandhu and Bāṇa, by the Prakrit poet, Vākpaitirāja (9th century A.D.). Although in the absence of these works, we cannot see the origin and the course of early development of this important branch of Sanskrit literature in proper perspective, yet the above references prove beyond doubt the antiquity of this literary form which must have gradually evolved during a considerable period of time. The earliest forms of prose kāvya, according to the evidence of rhetoricians, are those which were noticed and discussed by Dandin and Bhāmaśa. They were, however, certainly not the works of Subandhu and Bāṇa, but some earlier prose kāvyas now lost to us. From Dandin's discussion of the subject, it appears that he had a good number of examples of various kinds of prose composition before him. He recognizes the broad division of prose kāvya into kathā and ākhyāyikā, though he is against drawing a line of distinction between the two forms. The older form of prose kāvya reflected in these early theorists seems to have been replaced by the

10. ASK., intro. v. 21; śr.P. XXVIII.
12. Gaṅgavaho, v. 800; Rājaśekhara also refers to him.
newer one, evidently on the line of the model set by Bāṇa in his two romances, the chief characteristics of which were generalised into definite rules to be universally followed. These specific rules, on their part, finally stereotyped the two forms of prose kāvya in Sanskrit literature.

In the absence of older material, it is difficult to determine the precise conception and original character of this form of literature, though it is certain that it had no affinity whatsoever with the beast-fable literature from which it is basically different in matter and spirit as also in technique. Its early connection with folk-tale literature, however, may plausibly be presumed, as is suggested not only by the designation kathā applied to Bṛhatkathā which is again expressly referred to as a kathā by Dauḍin, but also by the fact that all the great prose writers, Subandhu, Bāṇa and Daniin drew upon, or at least received inspiration from, Bṛhatkathā, the great storehouse of popular tales. It must be clearly understood, however, that despite the close affinity in point of contents and spirit, there is essential difference between the two in conception and expression. For obvious reasons, the popular tale did not aspire for the artistic polish and finish which the prose kāvya stood for from its very inception and, therefore, the latter cannot be traced back to the former in point of diction and style for which its direct precursor is

13. KA. I. 38; the work is also referred to in ASK. p. 20.
the ornate kāvyā itself. Thus the prose kāvyā was evolved out of the artistic kāvyā with the raw material either of the folk-tale or some historical story.

We need not discuss the suggestion that the kāvyā style was first applied to historical story and then to the popular tale which in later theory developed respectively into ākhyāyikā and kathā, since it has no bearing on the basic problem of the origin of prose kāvyā. What is important to note is that the raw material was embellished and elaborated after the manner of the kāvyā which subsequently also influenced the style and diction of its counterpart in prose. The raw material in itself, whether it is folk-tale or some historical story, cannot be allowed to enter the arena of poetry unless it is gracefully decorated and adorned.

The conjecture that the original inspiration for the application of kāvyā style to prose came from inscriptive panegyrics is not tenable, for it is difficult to believe that the writers of belles-lettres received impetus from professional eulogists who, on the other hand, appear to have emulated the kāvyā writings. Besides, as we have seen above; the origin of prose kāvyā certainly belongs to a period much earlier than the extant inscriptions composed in ornate kāvyā style.

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that the prose

kāvya in Sanskrit had a peculiar origin. While on one hand, it handled the narrative material of popular tale with its natural and supernatural incidents and motifs and adopted its curious method of emboying tales within tales along with certain other elements or, if it happened to get some historical theme, enlivened it with charming devices of folk-tale, it derived, on the other, its form and manner of story-telling from the ornate kāvya the elements of which it developed or rather overdeveloped. The special stress laid on elaborate description and fine embellishment and the consequent neglect of theme bespeak of the great influence the kāvya exercised on it and, therefore, the works of this sort may suitably be designated as prose-kāvyas or poetical compositions in prose. The process of development of this type of prose-composition was facilitated by the prevalent conception of kāvya as any literary composition with poetical manner of expression whether it is in verse or prose. Verse as a medium of expression naturally predominated prose which, on its part, fell a willing prey to the niceties of verse and zealously derived its rhythm and refinement. The natural result was that like poetry it was often over elaborated and over embellished.

Here we may discuss the question whether the Sanskrit prose kāvya exhibits any foreign influence either at its origin or during the course of development. Peterson tried to prove

16. Op. De: Höl. pp. 205-6; but he objects here to calling these works prose-romances. We may or may not use the foreign term for our prose-kāvyas, but the fact remains that there is close affinity between the two; see below.
Greek influence on the prose romances of Sanskrit on the basis that they exhibit a new spirit in richly embellishing the simple narrative dealing with swift but monotonous chain of adventures. He quoted in support of his view some common characteristics of Sanskrit and Greek romances. We do observe certain common factors; both, for example, depict (a) ideal love and wondrous beauty as also charming objects of nature, (b) love at first sight, (c) lovers revealed to each other in vision, (d) affectionate letters of courtship, (e) pathetic lamentations of afflicted lovers, (f) fighting for forceful possession of a maiden, (g) passion of love in inanimate objects, (h) fickleness of fortune and (i) adventures and encounters on land and at sea. Again, there are in both the romances the device of tales within tales, erudite and often obscure allusions and enumeration of precedents and the employment of long compounds, alliterations and figures like paronomasia and antithesis.

Such points of similarity, however, which may be held to be coincidental rather than based on any actual contact, cannot positively prove borrowing on either side. As a matter of fact, there is fundamental difference between the two romances. While in Sanskrit romance, supreme emphasis is put

18. Also op. L.H. Gray: Vās., intro. pp. 35 ff; but he rightly refused to admit any relation or interdependence between the two romances. Lacôte, on the other hand, adduced evidence in favour of the borrowing of Greek romance from India; op. Keith: JRAS., 1915; pp. 784ff; HSL. 366-9.
on formal decoration and minute depiction of nature, and the
thread of narrative is broken at places and characterisation
often neglected, in Greek romance stress has been laid on
the continuity of narrative, and the rhetorical embellishment
and depiction of nature have been entirely overlooked. In
fact, Sanskrit romance, as we have seen, derives its inspiration,
with regard both to content and form, from native sources, be
it either folk-tale literature or the metrical kāvyā, and it
is futile to try to find an alien influence thereon. As
a matter of fact, there should be solid grounds for proving
influence of one literature upon another. We cannot link litera-
tures on the delicate basis of similar points or characteristics
which are often observed in literatures belonging to quite
different time and clime.

Predecessors of Dandīn. Dandīn in the introductory
verses of his Avasīsandarākathā refers to a good number of
predecessors in poetry, drama and prose. Among the poets who
find a mention in him are Vālmīki, (Vyāsa), the arranger
of Mahābhārata, Sarvasena, who wrote a work probably named
Harivijaya, the celebrated Kālidāsa, one blind poet, perhaps
Kumāradāsa (c. 517-26) who composed Janakīharaṇa, one Nārāyaṇa
credited with the composition of three works and Mayūra (the
author of Sūryāsataka). If Dr. Kane’s conjecture be right,

19. For a fuller discussion of the question, op. Keith:
JAS. 1914, p. 1103; 1915, pp. 784 ff.; app. 365 ff;
De. BSL. pp. 201-2.

20. See, finds a mention in AŚK. p. 20, where there is also
allusion to Mṛbhār., Setu., Brk. and Kād.
Vijjakā has been referred to in a broken stanza of introduction. Bhāravi, exalted as the creator of poetic speech, and his friend, the poet Dāmodarāsvāmin who introduced him to the prince Viśuvardhana, find a place in Dandin's autobiographical sketch at the threshold of the romance. Again, Dandin refers, in the body of romance, to Setubandha of Pravarāmaṇa. The dramatists known to him are Bhāsa and Kālidāsa and probably Subandhu also whose Vasanvadattānātyadhārā seems to have been alluded to in an introductory verse. He probably knew also the works, Padmaśrībhṛptaka (describing the love of Mūladeva and Devadatta) and Mrcohakatika of Śūdraka. Among the prose writers, he knew Guraṅghya, whose Bhatkathā has been referred to by him as a 'kathā', and Bāṇa, the writer of Harṣacarita and Kādambarī, and probably Subandhu also, his reference to whom seems to have been lost. He also refers to Dhavalā's Nanovatī and a work Śūdrakacarita in Tamil by Bālītālaya which are now lost.

These predecessors of his must have influenced him in respect either of content or form. The impact of the authors of the two Epics and of Kālidāsa and Śūdraka may be traced in

22. Cp. ASK, op. 9-10; also cp. above, sect. I, chap. IV.
23. Cp. also KA. I. 34; also cp. above, Sect. I, chap. III, fn. 2.
26. Cp. (a) XXIXIXIXIXIXXIIXXXXIXXX. KA. I. 38; ASK, intro. v. 7; p. (b) ASK. intro. v. 13; p. 20 (Kād.).
numerous places. Among the prose writings, Sūryādhyāya's Sphatkāthā, now lost, seems to have influenced him most with regard to his plot in general and certain incidents and motifs in particular. He must have also derived inspiration from the prose works mentioned by Patañjali, and the lost writings of Vāsaruci, Rāmila-Somila, Srīpālita, Dhavala and Bhāṭṭāra Hari-candra. But the main source of inspiration must have been the works of Subandhu (c. 600) and Bāṇa (c. 606-46 A.D.). We can understand the literary characteristics and achievements of our author only in the perspective of the literary trends and tendencies observed in the works of these two great romancers of 7th century A.D., to which period Daṇḍin also belongs.

There is a close affinity among these writers with regard to art and style, and it is in the fitness of things, therefore, to examine in brief the main characteristics of art and diction of these predecessors of Daṇḍin.

Subandhu, the author of Vāsavadattā, is the predestinator of the trend which does not put as much stress on incidents as on descriptions however of digressive nature. Little does he attend to his narrative; instead he invests himself in the depiction of the lover and beloved and of the frowns and smiles of fortune in store for them. He richly embroiders these descriptions with romantic commonplaces of poetry which constitute the bulk of his work. In the course of elaborate depictions, he amply displays his sāstric learning and technical skill.

27. Cp. (a) ASK. intro. v. 21; (b) ib. p. 13.
He laboriously employs the poetic figures like simile and metaphor and strings them with a long chain of puns, in the use of which he takes legitimate price. It is important to note that Bāṇa and Dāṇḍin also take pleasure in frequent employment of the figure, which often strains the language and diction. Subandhu believes in a cult of style which prefers the extraordinary way of expression and disdains the ordinary manner. He cares more for the ornamental aspect of art rather than for the poetical possibilities of his subject.

Bāṇa also presents the same literary inspiration and the same characteristics of art and style. But he happily commands an additional quality, namely, the supreme gift of poetic imagination which amply compensates for all his weakness for stylistic accomplishments. Although like his predecessor, he delights in elaborating his narratives with lengthy and digressive descriptions, yet his sense of proportion often comes to his rescue and saves his plot from boredom. In comparison with Subandhu, his outstanding merits are his power of close observation and graphic description, his love of nature with its charming colour and music, the richness of his fancy and his wonderful command over language. There is deep sentimental and poetic touch in his works which we notice.

28. Cf. intro. v. 13 where he qualifies himself as skilled in the art of employing paronomasia in every syllable.

29. Bāṇa ( Kād. intro. v. 9 ) speaks of compositions abounding in unending series of puns which captivate the minds of connoisseurs, while Dāṇḍin also eulogizes the figure in KA. II. 362; also cf. above, sect. II.
in his skilful depiction of romantic and youthful love in its joys and sorrows and hopes and fears. He is a master of florid and finished style which is able to convert the rough stones of popular literature into gems of poetic beauty. The historical censure of his style by Weber who compared his elaborate prose with a typical Indian jungle may be justified from modern point of view about literature, but it is unjust to apply modern standards of criticism to his style which does not claim to be judged thereby. The blame in fact should go to the age that exhibits a trend which aspires to produce the graces of poetry in prose.

The two romancers faithfully reflect in their works the trends and tendencies of contemporary art and style. In the field of poetry also, the age exhibits more or less similar characteristics. It is not just, therefore, to condemn these aspirants for their 'queer mentality or bad taste', for the question is vital and requires an historical evaluation. We do not mean that these writers are faultless, but what we want to emphasise is that their fault lies in their blindly following the ill-trodden path of the time. The standard that was set up by the age was both faulty and difficult to follow, but the writers could not realise its fault and surmounted the difficulty by unabated zeal and fervour. The characteristic
