

SUMMER POEMS IN SANSKRIT AND PRĀKRIT¹

In some earlier publications² I have already pointed out that a series of interesting correspondences can be traced between the *akam* poetry of the Tamil Caṅkam literature and the predominantly erotic *muktaka* in Prākṛit and Sanskrit. The parallels that can be found are a matter of great importance for the study of both the poetic tradition in later Ancient and Mediaeval India and the development of classical Sanskrit and Middle-Indian lyrics.

The conformities existing between anthology poems in Early Old Tamil and the one-stanza poem (*muktaka*) in Prākṛit and Sanskrit are rather numerous. Most important are undoubtedly certain conventions in handling the motifs. Many themes, such as for example the descriptions of seasons, of the various stages and situations of love, etc., are invariably connected with certain constantly recurring and stereotyped motifs. These form a more or less ready-made stock of poetic associations for the poet, though the practice of classical *kāvya*, as a rule, is to employ only one or two, or a few more, of the elements of this stock.

Caṅkam literature confronts us with five principal forms of the *akam*, the famous *akattinai*, each of which is built up of parts of a sharply delineated field of poetic associations. The elements that are most important for the *kuriñci* poem are mountains, winter, night and love-enjoyment; for the *mullai*, forest and pasture land, the rainy season, evening and the waiting of the beloved for the lover's arrival;

1. This article is a thoroughly revised version of a paper published in the K. A. Nilakanta Sastri Felicitation Volume, Madras 1971, pp. 416-422: *Palai Poems in Sanskrit and Prakrit*.

2. See note 1; furthermore *Akapporul and Sanskrit Muktaka Poetry*, Comptes-Rendu de la Troisième Conférence Internationale des Études Tamoules, Pondichéry 1973, pp. 111-118; *Bauern, Berge, Nacht und Winier*, Festschrift E. Sluszkiewicz, Warsaw 1974, pp. 137-142; and *Tamil Literary Conventions and Sanskrit Muktaka Poetry*, WZKS XX (1976), pp. 101-110.

for the *marutam*, agricultural land, day-break and love-quarrel; for the *neytal*, the sea-shore, late afternoon or early evening and the pangs of separation felt by the beloved lady; and, finally, for the *pālai*, desert or a landscape parched by the heat of the sun, summer, noon-time and traveller(s). Taken as a whole, these fields of associations are a stock fund of poetic matter, of the material stored by convention and tradition. Inherent in the organic texture of a poem, they form an essential portion of the poetical system. As has been already said, the individual work will, however, only contain a limited selection of these elements and will realize only a few possibilities of many.

The erotic *muktaka* poetry in Prākṛit and Sanskrit discloses distinct traces of the above-mentioned associations, with the exception only of those of the *neytal*. It thus seems to indicate that at least some of its poets made use of the poetic technique which is so characteristic of the Tamil *akam*. Above all, there exist in Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan poetry numerous one-stanza poems which appear to have been modelled by their poets on the pattern of the *mullai* or *pālai* or, as I have shown with full particulars in my article *Bauern, Berge, Nacht und Winter*³, on the pattern of the *kuriñci*. Whereas the *kuriñci*, as far as Sanskrit and Prākṛit are concerned, may be called the poem of the pleasures of love (*śṛṅgārasambhogamuktaka*) or, if preferred, may be called the winter-poem, *pālai*, on the contrary, represents the typical summer poem. Its principal associations are, as above mentioned, traveller(s), separation from the beloved, summer, noon-time (or, at least, day-time), the desert or any arid tract, dust and dryness. The summer poem thus contains at the very least one, but, as a rule, two or some more of these and similar features.

In the following paper the motif structure of the summer poem will be described by means of a number of characteristic verses taken from the *Ṛtusamhāra*, Hāla's *Sattasāi* and Vidyākara's *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*. Further examples from the works of other poets, too, or from other anthologies, could easily be given. I wish, however, to avoid too much repetition and I therefore restrict myself to the below-given extracts only. It also seems appropriate to me to quote only the respective associations utilized by the poets instead of rendering here the whole stanzas.

*Ṛtusamhāra*⁴ I,10: whirls of dust (*reṇumaṇḍala*), earth parched by the violent heat of the sun (*pracaṇḍasūryātapatāpitā mahī*), travellers (*pravāsin*), separation from the beloved mistress (*priyāvīyoga*);

3. See note 2.

4. My edition is: *mahākaviśri-Kālidāsa-viracitaṃ Ṛtusamhāram. Bhāradvājagrotṛpanna-Maṇirāma-viracitayā Candrikākhyayā Vyākhyayā sametaṃ. Śṛṅgāratilakaca = The Ṛtusamhāra of Kālidāsa. With the Commentary (the Chandrikā) of Maṇirāma and The Śṛṅgāratilaka. Ed. by W. L. Śāstrī Paṅsīkar, «Nirnaya Sagar» Press, Bombay 1922.*

*Sattasāī*⁵ 399: noon-time (*majjaṇha*), a traveller (*pahia*), pain (of separation) (*saṃtāva*), (beloved) wife (*jāā*);

*Subhāṣitaratnaakoṣa*⁶ IX,4⁷: in the month of Jyeṣṭha (*jyeṣṭhe māsi*), when rivers dry up (*śusyacchrotasi*), when the dust is heated (*tapta-bhūmirajasi*), when the sky flames (*jvālāyamānāmbhasi*) and the heat of the sun is intense (*kharārkatejasi*); travellers (*pāntha*);

Subh. IX,14⁸: traveller (*pāntha*), dust (*pāṃṣu*), pools (*kāsāra*) having mere remnants of water left (*śesam ambu*);

Subh. IX,16⁹: ponds (*ādihāra*) the surface-water of which has been heated (*agre taptajala*), exhausted cisterns (*vyāmathyoparataprapā*), travellers (*pathika*), midday (*madhyamādinā*);

Subh. XXIII,5¹⁰: you, too, have been separated—(like myself, a wayfarer)—by destiny from your beloved (*daivenāntaritamriyo' si... tvaṃ cāpi*); you roam about (*bhrāmyasi*);

Subh. XXIII,9¹¹: distressed wayfarer (*pāntha tapasvī*);

Subh. XXIII,14¹²: beloved (wife) separated by (many) countries, hundreds of rivers and mountains and by (many) forests (*deśair antaritā satais ca saritām urvibhṛtām kānanair... kāntā*); a traveller (*pathika*) looks with tear-filled eyes in the direction (of his beloved wife) (*kṛtvāśrupūrṇam dṛṣam tām āśam... vīkṣate*);

Subh. XXIII,31¹³: deserted forest (*śūnyam araṇyam*), watercourses which have nearly dried up (*tanutām gatāni toyāni*), hot days (*divasās... taptāh*);

Subh. XXIII,38¹⁴: (wayfarers) separated (*virahin*) (from their lovers);

5. Quoted from A. Weber's edition, *Abhandlungen f.d. Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. VII, 4, Leipzig 1881.

6. *The Subhāṣitaratnaakoṣa*. Compiled by Vidyākara. Edited by D.D. Kosambi and V. V. Gokhale, Cambridge, Mass (= Harvard Oriental Series 42) 1957. See also *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry*. Vidyākara's «*Subhāṣitaratnaakoṣa*» translated by Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard Oriental Series 44) 1965 (in the following always referred to as Ingalls).

7. Ingalls 194.

8. Ingalls 204.

9. Ingalls 206.

10. Ingalls 756.

11. Ingalls 760.

12. Identical with *Amaruś.* 99; Ingalls 765.

13. Ingalls 782.

14. Ingalls 789.

Subh. XXIII,41¹⁵: sky covered with new clouds¹⁶ (*sthaḡitaṃ navāmbuvāhair... vyoma*), (weeping) traveller (*paṭhika*);

Subh. XXIII,44¹⁷: separated (*vīyogin*) (wayfarer remembering his beloved);

Subh. XXXI,11¹⁸: intense sun-shine (*paṭujyotis*), dust (*dhūli*), dried-up dūrvāgrass (*nīrdagdhadūrvā*), wayfarer (*pāntha*);

Subh. XXXI,12¹⁹: travellers (*pāntha*), heated water (*prataptaṃ payaḡ*).

It is of some importance that the first of the example given above appears in *Rtusamhāra* I, which is the chapter describing summer (*grīṣma*), and that the stanzas quoted from the *Subhāṣitaratnaḡoṣa* have been distributed by its compiler over the sections Summer (*grīṣma-vrajyā*)²⁰, Separated Lover (*virahivrajyā*)²¹ and Midday (*madhyāhnavrajyā*)²², i.e., sections corresponding directly to the most indispensable motifs prescribed for a stanza of the *pālai* pattern. In another anthology, Vallabhadeva's *Subhāṣitāvali*, summer poems are contained in mainly the chapters on Summer (*grīṣma*)²³ and Desert (*maru*)²⁴.

Numerous poems of this kind, including many of those in the *Rtusamhāra*, are pure descriptions of nature in the sense of a *svabhāvokti* and therefore need not include elements of *śṛṅgāra*. Thus the union of the lovers during the winter night, which otherwise is one of the prerequisites of poems modelled on the *kuriñci* pattern, can be omitted in poems describing winter, just as the wayfarer or similar elements may be absent in a more common type poem illustrating the torments of an Indian midsummer day. In any case, the examples chosen above demonstrate rather clearly that from the point of view of motifs and inner poetic structure, many Sanskrit and Prākṛit *muktakas* connected with summer, and more particularly those composed in the *rasa śṛṅgāra*, do surprisingly often reflect the rules and conventions of Caṅkam poetics. In the same measure as the *sambhogaśṛṅgāramuktaka* or winter poem corresponds to the Tamil *kuriñci*, so does the summer poem, which not infrequently presents itself as a *virahamuktaka* or *vipralambhaśṛṅgāramuktaka*, agree with the Tamil *pālai*.

15. Ingalls 792.

16. The appearance of new clouds on the sky indicates, of course, the transition from summer to the rainy season.

17. Ingalls 795.

18. Ingalls 991.

19. Ingalls 992.

20. *Subhāṣitaratnaḡoṣa* IX.

21. *Subhāṣitaratnaḡoṣa* XXIII.

22. *Subhāṣitaratnaḡoṣa* XXXI.

23. *Subhāṣitāvali* 1693-1717, in: *The Subhāṣitāvali of Vallabhadeva*. Edited by P. Peterson and Pt. Durgāprasāda, Poona 1961 (reprint, Bombay Sanskrit and Prākṛit Series XXXI).

24. *Subhāṣitāvali* 938-950.

I have already mentioned that, as a matter of fact, a careful study of *muktaka* literature appears to reveal the existence of two more genres of the one-stanza poem. One of them conforms to the rules of the Tamil *marutam*, the other to those of the *mullai*. Of the greatest importance is, as we know, the poem composed in accordance with the latter, the most characteristic associations of which are the rainy season and evening. Since simple and clear terminology is conducive to elucidation, I term the Sanskrit and Prākṛit stanza created on the *kuriñci* model the winter poem, the stanza constructed according to the rules for the *pālai* the summer poem and, finally, the *muktaka* corresponding to the *mullai* the rain poem.

Comparing the summer poem with the rain poem, we can observe that both of them, in contra-distinction to the winter poem, are governed by a strong sentiment of love-separation. In Tamil poetics the various types of poems are very nicely differentiated: a certain clearly defined phase of love (*uripporuḷ*) is required for each of the five principal forms of the *akam*. Whilst the *Tolkāppiyam* prescribes for the *mullai* that the beloved expects the lover's arrival (*iruttal*), the same work fixes as the *uripporuḷ* of the *pālai* the separation of the two lovers, since the lover is travelling by land (*pirivu*). Instead of the different aspects of separation laid down in the *Tolkāppiyam*, namely *iruttal*, *pirivu* and *irañkal*²⁵, the poetic practice of the Sanskrit and Prākṛit authors recognizes but one single conception, that of *viraha*, which gradually came to be considered to be poetically the most effective and, for that very reason, also the most productive of erotic sentiment. Later Sanskrit theoreticians also admit its immense importance. Distinguishing between *sambhogaśṛṅgāra* and *vipralambhaśṛṅgāra*, they unmitigably tend to give preference to the latter, i.e., love in separation. Thus separation (*viraha*) characterizes the summer poem as well as the rain poem. Essential differences exist, however, inasmuch as the summer poem always has as its central figure the *nāyaka*, here presented in the shape of the lonely wayfarer (*virahin* or *pathika*), whereas the rain poem focuses on the solitary beloved, the *nāyikā* depicted as a *virahinī*. It stands to reason that also this differentiation has been produced by the South Indian conventions mentioned above.

It is thus evident that the poetic practice of the *muktaka* authors sometimes perfectly coincides with that of the *akam* poets of the Caṅkam. As I have stated elsewhere²⁶, *muktaka* poetry is undoubtedly based on its own history and tradition and it is more than probable that originally *muktaka* and *mahākāvya* or *sargabandha* represented two

25. A third type of separation belongs to the *neytal* which, however, does not seem to have inspired Sanskrit and Middle Indo-Aryan writing. The *uripporuḷ* required for it is *irañkal*, that is, the beloved lady's grief about the separation from her lover, who is travelling by sea.

26. *Tamil Literary Conventions and Sanskrit Muktaka Poetry*, p. 110.

genres of poetic composition²⁷ fundamentally different in respect of structure and purpose. Whereas the *mahākāvya*, in conformity with its essence and nature, originally belonged to the domain of the epic, the *muktaka* from the very beginning constitutes poetry *par excellence*. It seems an incontrovertible fact that, at a certain period, close relations must have been maintained between the Tamil bards on the one hand and the lyrical poets in Sanskrit and Prākṛit on the other. The features I have been discussing occur in both great traditions, the Dravidian as well as the Indo-Aryan, but they are, as we have already remarked, less often and less consistently to be found in the latter. We have reason to assume that these elements made their way into Prākṛit and Sanskrit from the Tamil tradition.

27. The fact that even long portions of the classical *mahākāvya* are in actual fact series of *muktakas* is decidedly the result of a later development. The various stages of this evolution can for the time being only be guessed at, since too little poetry from the time before Kālidāsa has been preserved.