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Development of modern Sanskrit stories: From Veda to 19th century

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Abstract

The 'Modern Sanskrit story' is a new concept of modern era. 'Kathasahitya' is an important matter in the writings of twentieth and post -twentieth century poets. Though there are many changes in 'modern stories' from traditional Sanskrit literature, it acquires new subject matter, new styles but it originated from ancient Vedic literature. Story of Sanskrit literature is called 'Katha'. This 'Katha' literature was originated and developed before Christian era. In the different branches of twentieth and post twentieth century Sanskrit literature (Short story, *Khanda kavya*, *Upanyasa* etc.) there is a collaboration of tradition and modernity. We see in Rgveda '*Manu-matsyakatha*', '*Vekasukta*', the story of Pani and Sarama, the story of a dog in Chhandagyopanisad, *Yajnavalkya –Maitreyi samvada* of Vrhadaranyokapanisad, the story of Yama and Naciketa in Kathopanisad, the story of a bird who gave golden eggs every day, the story of a clever jackal etc. We find in Mahabharata many fictions and narratives with main story. As for example we can mention the story of King 'Yayati', the story of Nala and Damayanti, the story of Savitri and Satyavana, the story of Janamejaya, the story of Rudra and Vinata, story of sea churning of Gods and demons. These types of fables, parables or moral narratives are almost everywhere in Mahabharata. Ramayana and Purana are sources of tales and narratives. In this aspect, we can mention Jataka and Avadana literature of Buddhist, Kathanaka literature of Jain. Vetala pancavimsati, Simhasanadvatrimisika, Sukasaptati of Chintamani, Purusapariksa of Vidyapati, Pancatantra of Visnusarma, Hitopadesa of Narayanasarma, Prabandhakosa of Rajasekhara, Pravandhacintamani of Merutunga, Kathakautuka of Sridhara, Bhojaprandha of Vallava etc. are examples of tales and fables of traditional Sanskrit literature. In this way through Rgveda, Brahmana, Upanisads, Puranas, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Vrhatkatha etc. Sanskrit stories transformed into a separate form of literature as Kathasahitya. In 19th century with translating works and other story creations of modern Poets enrich that and establish it on a perfect base of literature.

Key words: Rgveda, Upanisad, Brahmana, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Vrhatkatha, Pancatantra, Katha, Kathasahitya, Akhyana, Upakhyana, Modern, Story, Avadana, Divyavadana, Avadanasatakam, Buddhist, Jain, Patanjali, Ksemendra, Buddhaswami, Somadeva, Hitopadesa, Hemachandra, Parisistaparva, Vetalapancavimsati, Simhasanadvatrimisika, Sukasaptati, Rita Chattopadhyay, Jataka Prabandhakosa, Pravandhacintamani, Purusapariksa, Kathakautuka, Bhojaprandha, Upamitibhavaprapancakatha, Arabian Nights, Aesop's Fables

Introduction

In Oxford dictionary we get the meaning of the word 'modern' is 'Adhunik'. Again the word is used in art and music as new and different from traditional styles. In Sanskrit the word 'Adhunik' is formed adding by the words 'adhuna' and 'than' suffix, so –'अधुना भवः आधुनिकः'. Dr. Rita Chattopadhyay said in her 'Adhunik Sanskrita Sahitya' - In 1947 which is present or new, in 2007 that will be not. So the problem of 1947 is different from 1950. Again as here are some problems which are eternal, they are always modern. From above discussion we can think this modernity is subjective and contemporary. Again in Sanskrit 'Kathasahitya' previous poets wrote their stories in a style but in modern age poets are make literature in different styles, so modernity is a continuous changeable process.

Stories or 'Kathasahitya' are more popular than Novel. After birth story begins in man's life. Hearing and talking stories become a hobby for them. For this we find stories in every civilized and uncivilized society. In this aspect we can mention a speech of Dr. Jagadish

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Chandra Jain - जो देश लोककथाओं से जितना ही समृद्ध है, उतना ही वह सभ्य और सुसंस्कृत माना जाता है। In India there has an ancient glory of stories. There are 'Manu-matsyakatha', 'Vekasukta', the story of 'Pani and Sarama', 'Yama-Yami' akhyans (in dialogue hymns) etc. in Veda, which are the oldest form of stories. There has no doubt that story is an eminent medium for entertainment and learning. Hearing stories is very natural matter like sucking of child. This attraction is primitive desire of man. After the invention of language man expresses his imagination through stories. After expanse of language, number of story also is extended and by passing of time these stories are transformed into literature. Every religion and civilization has huge number of stories, which are related with their culture. In this context we can mention the Gods and Kings related Akhyans, Upakhyans or tales from Veda, Ramayana and Mahabharata, Puranas in Sanskrit. In Bengali literature 'Thakurmar Jhuli' (knapsack of grandmother) is a very popular collection of tales for children, which are familiar from the old time. In western literature there are Aesop's Fables, Arabian nights etc.

The process of research

Research methodology is very important part of research. I have tried to complete my work appropriately with proper research method and research technique. This modern Sanskrit Katha was quite unknown to me; its variety attracts me to do work on it. It have new subject matters, styles etc. So I decided to work on it. In this stage of an article it's very important to choose a perfect topic. So, I also select a topic for my writing. My selective topic is 'Development of Modern Sanskrit stories: From Veda to 19th century'. The name of the topic is the central point for my discussion. I think, it's a new topic and it will helpful for the interested future readers.

The next stage was Data collection and Data preservation. But in this stage, there I faced some difficulties. The main problem was the shortage of needed books. But I tried to collect data from here and there. My work is accumulative research; I have to depend on books, Journals etc. Sometimes I collected the necessary data from the internet also and analyzed it continuously with new data. After selecting the data I arranged them properly. I started to write my research work after being sure about data and its sequences. At first I wrote the name of the topic as directed. After that in the part of introduction I presented a discussion on modern Sanskrit literature and its origin. In the part of discussion I placed my accumulative research. After that I have presented the results of the discussion in the part of conclusion. At last I arranged a list of references with page number as directed.

In the writing of the research paper I have chosen A4 paper size with the font time's new roman of 11points in MS word. But the name of the topic typed in 14points and the name of discussing objects was written in bold.

I arranged my writing following a define order. At first I gave - The Title, next Abstract and then 1) Key words 2) Introduction 3) Research Methodology 4) Discussions with the 5) Conclusion and 6) References.

I think my research work on this field will help the readers who are not much familiar with modern Sanskrit stories and its development and it also will grow interest for work in future. Beside that I also think they will get necessary data from this essay.

Discussion

Origin and development of Sanskrit 'Kathasahitya' generally is divided in three stages – 1. Early age: from starting to before Christ (Veda, Upanisad, Aranyaka, Brahmana, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Purana, Jataka etc.). 2. Middle age: from first century to 1800A.D (Vrhatkatha, Pancatantra, Hitopadesa etc.). 3. Modern age: from 1800A.D to till now (translation in Sanskrit of Arabian nights, Aesop's Fables and the stories of old testaments and other modern stories).

Though we find the word 'katha' here and there in Vedic literature, first in Aitareya Aranyaka we get it as 'Akhyayika'. Acarya Sayana explains the word 'katha' in his commentary on Aitareya Aranyaka as – 'कथा न वदेत् लोकिनी वार्ता न कुर्यात्'. From this explanation it is clear that the word 'katha' is signifying the – 'लोकिनी वार्ता न कुर्यात्' and 'Akhyayika' is also a 'लोकिनी वार्ता'.

From the beginning there is the attraction for stories in human mind. Imagined world of story is more beautiful than the real. Man's desires fill in imagine stories. In literatures of ancient age there have charming and entertaining stories. It is supposed that after invention of languages there were stories in man's talking. Later it transformed as folk literature (Lokasahitya).

In the time of Yajna there was the custom of pray for God by uttering Vedic mantras. But in this prayer there is the hint of man's present and past lives. We can say it is the seed of Kathasahitya. In the invocation there was God's fictitious activity. For example we can mention the 'Indrasukta' of Rgveda (2nd mandala), where sage Grtsamada said about Lord Indra –

‘यो हत्वाहिमरिणात्सप्त सिन्धून्यो गा उदाजदपधा बलस्य I
यो अश्मनोरन्तरग्निं जजान संवृक्समत्सु स जनास इन्द्रः II’

1/12/3 There has the mention that Indra kills the demons like Ari, Bala etc. and frees the cows and also frees seven rivers to flow. In Veda there have not only allegorical stories, also are the stories of human. In 'Dasarajnasukta' of Rgveda (7th mandala) has the battle between Sudas, son of Divodas and other Aryan kings. Rgveda have twenty dialogue hymns, which carry the feature of Katha, such as Yama-Yami sukta, Pururava-Urvasi sukta etc. So we can say Rgveda is the source of Sanskrit Kathasahitya. The seed of Kathasahitya was in man from the beginning but at first it written in Rgveda, the oldest book of the world.

Almost the sources of all Akhyana literatures we see in Rgveda, it's development was in 'Upanisads', 'Aranyakas', 'Brahmanas' and 'Puranas'. Sanskrit 'Kathasahitya' was developed through some era by Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrt, Apabhramsa languages etc. In 'Aitareya Brahmana' there is the 'Upakhyana' of Harishchandra. The 'Satapatha Brahmana' was written in Gadya. In 'Satapath Brahmana' we find the stories, such as division of world between Gods and Demons, searching of Lord Visnu in Earth and the establishment of Veda, 'Manu-Matsyakatha' etc. That type of prose is the first creation of Sanskrit prose literature. Elements of 'Kathasahitya' are also in the Upanisadas. For example, in 'Chadogyopanisad' has the Akhyana of 'Udgitha-swana', where Dogs are selecting their leader for food. Like that in a place an ox, a duck and a bird give advice to Styakama, the son of Jabala.

There have many Upakhyanas with the main story of Kuru and Pandava in the Mahabharata. We see here Fables,

Parables or moral narratives like the stories of King Yayati, Nala and Damayanti, Dusyanta and Sakuntala, Savitri and Satyavana, Sarpayajna of Janamejaya, Rudra and Vinata, Sea churning by Gods and demons, Ruru, Cavana, flood, absorption of sea by Agastya, Sivi, Vyadha and pigeon. Ramayana and Puranas are the sources of Akhyanas and Upakhyanas. Basically Pauranic age makes popular the Kathasahitya. Buddha jatakas were influenced by these Pauranic Kathas.

In this development of Sanskrit Kathasahitya Buddhist and Jain poets play important roles. Bauddha Kathasahitya was known by the name of Jataka and Avadana. Avadana is one among the twelve parts of Gautam Buddha's Upadesa. Bauddha Avadana literature is an important part of Kathasahitya. Meaning of Sanskrit word Avadana (in Pali Uadana) is great or admirable work. In the volume Jataka have the descriptions of previous birth of Vodhisattwa.

There have two divisions of Avada. One is 'Pratyautpanna Vastu' (present stories) and another is 'Atita Vastu' (past or old stories). Real author of Avadana is unknown. The time of this writing probably 1st century A.D. We find here hundred heroic stories in ten chapters compiled by Nandikeswara. In every story of 'Avadanasataka' have praise of great qualities and achievement of Buddhattwa by good works. In the mentioned stories, there have descriptions of the man of all classes like religious Brahmin, Sresthi, Usurer, King and the princess. The sixth chapter of the volume is very important, because here are the stories of man, birds and animals.

In 'Divyavadana' of the unknown writer have thirty eight Upakhyanas. It translated in Chinese language in 265A.D. Subject matters of some Upakhyanas of this volume have been taken from 'Vinayapitaka'. The stories are written sometimes in prose and sometimes by the mixing of prose and poetry. Some features of Pali language included with simple Sanskrit prose style in the volume. God, human, birds and beasts are the elements of the Avadana stories. The achievement of Vodhisattwa by ethical values and good qualities is published by these stories. On the basis of the book poet Khemendra creates the volume 'Vodhisattvavadanakalpa' (1051A.D). Basically, by these Avadana stories nobility of 'six Paramitas' of Bauddha Mahayana school is explained. In the complete volume 108 Upakhyanas are described. For good and keen writing style the Avadana stories of Khemendra appreciated as good literature. Other two mentionable volume of Avadana are 'Mahavastu Avadana' and 'Suvarnavadana'. The Mahavastu is written by following the great Akhyanas of 'Vinaipitaka'. The subject matter of the Avadana is life history of Bodhisattwa, Buddha and his followers. Beside these we get some other short volumes like Manicudavadana, Avadana-arasamuccaya, Asokavadana etc. Here are also some short volumes by naming Avadanamala, such as Ratnavadanamala, Kalpadrumavadanamala, Vratavadanamala, Asokavadana mala etc. In Khuddakanika of Suttapitaka the tenth volume is Jataka among fifteen volumes. In Jataka volumes have the stories of various births of Buddhadeva. Jataka have five parts – 1. Paccupannavattu (indicating stories) 2. Atitavattu (story of past life) 3. Gatha (part of verse) 4. Veyyakarana (explanation of Gatha) 5. Samodhana (consistency between past and present). 500 to 565 stories were compiled in the volume of 'Jatakakathavannana', 'Cullaniddesa' etc. The Jataka was written in verse or Gatha but we get Jatakas today as mixing of verse and prose. Gathas or ancient verses were written probably in sixth century to 2nd century B.C. There are 34 stories in 'Jatakamala' and 'Vodhisattvavadanamala'

of Aryasura. These stories were very popular before 6th century A.D. Sources of the stories of Jatakamala are Paliy jataka, Caryapitaka, Vinaipitaka, Mahavastu Avadana etc. In 'Bharhut stupa' has some moral stories of 3rd century.

In 2nd century B.C Patanjali in his 'Mahabhasya' mentions the words 'Ajakrpaniya', 'Kakataliya' and he also mentions the names of moral stories of 'Ahinakulam', 'Kakolukiyam' as example eternal enmity.

That proved the Kathasahitya achieved a great position in Sanskrit literature before Christ. Though there has huge difference from modern Sanskrit stories.

In the early stage of middle age 'Nitikatha' (moral stories) became popular and 'Lokakatha' (Folk literature) also starts to grow. In the early stage, this was not possible to make divisions of Sanskrit Kathasahitya as fairy tales, Lokakatha, Myths or Fables etc. Though in Rgveda has no stories of birds and animals, there has the seeds of these. Manu-Matsyakatha, Bhekasukta, the story of Pani and Sarama of the Rgveda etc. are the sources of Fable literature. In Pani-Sarama dialogue hymn Pani calls the bitch Sarama as friend, sister - आ च गच्छन्मित्रमेना दधामथा गवां गोपतिर्नो भवति 10/108/3. Here has the seed of relationship with animals. The stories of Pancatantra and Hitopadesa were written mainly in prose. But the advices of these stories were written in poetry and these poetries carry the subject of Dharmasutra. This type of application of the prose we find in 'Aitareya Brahmana'.

In the Upanisad Dogs are compared with priests, who move in a line uttering the mantras. We find the elements of sources of Fable literature in the Upakhyanas of Chandagyopanisad, in the advices of an ox, duck and a bird to Satyakama. Again in Adikavya of Ramayana we see the talking of Jatayu and Sampati like human, monkey and other animals behave like man. From that we get the sources of Fable literature. Also in the Adiparva, Vanaparva and Santiparva of Mahabharata there have 12 moral stories like the stories of Dog, Elephant and tortoise, Manu and Matsya, religious cat, clever Jackal and the story of bird who gives golden eggs. These stories are origin of Pancatantra. Birds and animals played role to teach politics, which is an important feature of Fable literature. Again in the tales and Fable literature we see the main story is related with other stories. This style of writing we get in Mahabharata and Purana. We also get biographical stories in Mahabharata and Puranas. This type of style we see in tales and Fable literature. In Bauddha Jataka of 380B.C there has the mention of born in previous births of Vodhisattwa as monkey, deer etc. There have similarities between the Jataka and Pancatantra. The oldest volume of Avadana literature is Avadanasataka (1st century to 2nd century A.D). There have Fables in the sixth chapter.****. From the stories of Mahabharata, Jataka and the words of Patanjali we may sure that this type of Fables were in that time. But we can't say that stories transformed into literature and tales and Fable literature established on this ancient base.

The greatest creation of ancient Sanskrit tales and Fable literature is Pancatantra. The main form of this volume is unknown. The volume was published in fifty languages and above 240 editions. The volume was written probably between 2nd to 3rd centuries A.D. We get here 63 stories, which are related with Arthasastra, Nitisastra and Dharmasastra. Main part of this volume was written in prose, we get some verses of moral advices. The verses were very popular in the ancient age. This type of verses is quoted in Mahabharata, Smriti and Puranas. The language of Pancatantra is very simple and it has a perfect structure. These are the feature of subsequent or modern stories. These Fables

mention the characteristic features of man of that time like greatness, pretention, heartlessness etc. In the modern Sanskrit stories also there have the description of peculiar characters of today's life.

After Ramayana and Mahabharata Gunaddha's 'Vrhatkatha' is the most popular creation of Kathasahitya in Indian literature. It was written in Prakrt language but this volume is elided. These stories are preserved in next three volumes. One is 'Vrhatkathaslokasamgraha' of Buddhaswami (probably in 6th century A.D). Other two volumes are 'Vrhatkathamanjari' of Ksemendra (1029-1064A.D) and 'Kathasaritsagara' of Somadeva (1029-1064). If we suppose that the time of creation of 'Vrhatkatha' was 1st century A.D, we get the elements of Pancatantra or Fables from Kathasaritsagara of the volume. Beside these we find here many stories of Vetalapancavimsati, Pancatantra and Bauddha Jataka. Almost 900 stories are there in the volume. N.M Penjar said in his edited volume Kathasaritsagara – We must hail him as the Father of Fiction and his work as one of the master pieces of the world. From this discussion we may imagine that Gunaddha's Vrhatkatha was a perfect creation of Kathasahitya before Pancatantra, which enriched the next fictions and Fable literatures.

Siddhartha Jain's 'Upamitibhavaprapancakatha' (906A. D) is an important volume of Jain Kathasahitya, which was written in simple conversational Sanskrit language.

In 11th century Jainacarya Hemacandra creates 'Parisistaparva' (Jain Katha).It has moral stories in simple Sanskrit.

'Vetalapancavimsati' (collection of 25stories) is a precious volume of Sanskrit Kathasahitya. Though we get four editions of this but the volume of Sivadasa is most popular. The time of creation of this book probably after 12century A.D, but here stories are old. These stories were very popular in man's talking as Folk literature (Lokasahitya). The stories of Vetala narrated in Vrhatkathamanjari in 1220 verses and in Kathasaritsagara in 2195 verses. In these volumes the oldest form of verse was written in 11th century A.D. The volume of Sivadasa is remarkable and it was written in prose and verse. The editions of Jambhaladatta and unknown writer was composed in prose. Uniqueness, elements of humor, deep imagination of these stories enriched the later Kathasahitya.

'Simhasanadwatrimika' is another popular volume of stories. Probably it was written in 13 century A.D. The writer of the main volume is unknown. We find some editions of this volume. We get here 32 stories uttered by 32puppets. Though has no variety in these stories, it also enriched later stories. In later some stories were written following by the volume. There mentionable creations are Viracarita of Ananta, Salivahanacarita of Sivadasa, Vikramasenacarita and Salivahanacarita of unknown writer etc.

'Sukasaptati' is one of the popular creations of stories. It has two editions. One is vast edition of Cintamanibhatta (after 12th century A.D) and Jain edition of Devadatta. Beside these we find a brief edition of Devadatta. Probably Sukasaptati was composed on the basis of an unknown old edition.70 stories of this volume described many stories of Pancatantra. The stories were written on the basis of false love of women, slyness and treachery. Stories were composed in prose and later moral advices were added with these. Almost there have no qualities of literature in the volume. Some stories of these were taken from old folk literature.

Narayanasarma's 'Hitopadesa' is a mentionable creation of stories. This volume was written depending on the writing style and stories of Pancatantra.25 stories were taken from

Pancatantra among 43stories and other stories were taken from other volumes of that time. The time of writing of this volume is supposed 9th to 14th century A.D. Though the volume seems much influenced by Pancatantra, the plot making of the stories are different. Many verses were taken from 'Kamandakiya Nitisara'.The writing style of this volume is very simple. Namadeva creates an allegorical Jain Kathasahitya 'Madanaparajay'a in 13century. The subject matter of this volume is defeat of Madana by Mahavira.

Sivadasa's 'Katharnava' is a collection volume of 35 stories about full and thief. Vardhamanasuri writes 'Kathakosa' following the story of Nala.

In 'Purusapariksa' of Vidyapati (14th century) has compiled 44 short stories. Some of these are moralistic like Pancatantra and Hitopadesa. We find here some popular funny folk stories. Again here are also some stories, which admire quality. The writing style of Vidyapati is very simple and easy readable.

'Pravandhacintamani' (acollection of Jain stories) of Merutunga of 14th century was written on biography. Here are the descriptions of historical persons in talkative language. In these charming stories we see the popular noble characters like Vikramaditya, Satavahana, Jayasimha, Varahamihira, Bhatrhari, Magha, Dhanapala, Kalidasa etc.

'Pravandhakosa' or 'Caturvimsatipavandha' (collection of Jain stories) of Rajasekhara narrated the life history of 24 noble persons in 1405A.D. It is influenced by 'Prabhavakacaritam' (1277A.D), 'Pravandhacintamani' (1305A. D) and 'Vividhatirthakalpa' (1333 A.D).

In 15th century Sadhura composed the 'Bharakatadwatrimika' (Jain stories). Basically the subject matter of this volume is to ridicule the Brahmana. The volume is a unique collection of stories of fools. It influenced by Jain thinking. In these stories we feel the effect of Pancatantra. There have some songs in Apabhramsa language in Sanskrit verses and here have some local words.

Acarya Jinakirti writes two important volumes in 15th century – 1. Campaka-sresthikathanaka (fairy tales) – Here have three stories and 2. Palagopala-Kathanaka (Jain stories).

Unknown writer's 'Kathakosa' has many fairy tales (Jain stories). Here are some poetries and suktis written in Prakrt language. 'Bhojapravandha' (probably in 16th century) of Ballala or Ballabha is a collection of stories following the King Bhoja of the Kingdom of Dhara. Here are riddles in these stories. In 1580A.D Rajavallabha creates 'Citrasena Padmavati' following the folk stories of Bhojapravandha. Kavikunjara writes 'Rajasekharacarita' or 'Sabharanjanapravandha' where many moral stories were described.

Some authors make stories following the drama Mudraraksasa of Sudraka, such as Mahadeva's 'Mudraraksasakatha' is an important creation on stories in near of 1600 A.D. Anantasarma creates 'Mudraraksasakathanakam' in 17th century.

Hemavijayagani writes 'Katharatnakara' in 17th century. There have 258 stories about foolish, wicked and sly women. An unknown author's 'Bharakatadwatrimika' is a mentionable volume on stories. Basically this was written on the pretention of Saiva Sannyasin.

The next important chapter for Sanskrit stories is translating works. At first we can mention the name of 'Aranyayamini' of Jagadvandhu, which was translated into Sanskrit from 'Arabian Nights' in 19th century. In this century some stories of 'Aesop's Fables' and old Testaments were translated into Sanskrit.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that the seed of Sanskrit Kathasahitya were man's talking and at first we see it in Rgveda as written document, though it was not in the form of literature. This seed was developed in the next noble creations Upanisads and Brahmana literatures. The journey of the Sanskrit Kathasahitya was started with these Akhyanas and Upakhyanas. After that the Akhyanas and Upakhyanas of Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas enriched the development, though we did not get pure literary works on Sanskrit Kathasahitya in that time. Taking elements from these sources stories were developed as Kathasahitya at first in Bauddhajataka, Pancatantra (Fables) and Vrahatkatha. Though Vrahatkatha was elided but its stories and writing style helped to develop the Kathasahitya. Following the stories of Pancatantra the future stories were enriched and developed. Hitopadesa, Kathasaritsagara etc. are the proper examples of these. In this way Sanskrit Kathasahitya was developed day by day and makes way of a new age of Kathasahitya of 19th century.

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