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The aesthetic beauty of *Āryāsaptaśatī* on behalf of it's commentary

Jayanti Paul Choudhury

Abstract

कोषकाव्य [Anthology] is an invaluable composition of Sanskrit poetry. Govardhana's *Āryāsaptaśatī* is an anthology. It is a composition of erotic poems. It is a collection of seven hundred odd verses which is composed in *Āryā* metre. The poet Govardhana portrayed about the sensual amour, separation among young lover of Gaur [ancient Bengal]. The *Āryāsaptaśatī* of Govardhana placed an important position in the Sanskrit literature.

Key Words: Koṣakāvya, Alaṅkāra, kāvya, rasa, śṛṅgāra rasa, śleṣa alaṅkāra, upamā alaṅkāra, Bharatavākyam

Introduction

The Sanskrit language and it's literature are of great importance in Indian culture. The word काव्य refers to the Sanskrit literary style which is supposed to word [शब्द], meaning [अर्थ], attribute [गुण], alaṅkāra [अलङ्कार] and free from all blemishes. In the *Kāvyaśāstra* of Bhāmaha the essence of poetry extended the benevolence of poetic value that depends on the complex of words and their meaning - [शब्दार्थौ सहितौ काव्यम् *Kāvyaśāstra*-1.16] Mammaṭa stated Kāvya is a fusion of word and meaning compounded with quality. Alaṅkāra is affixed with poetic disposition [1]. There are two varieties of Kāvya. One is दृश्यकाव्य i.e रूपक that is performed in front of spectators and the other is श्रव्यकाव्य, which was listened by witty person. कोषकाव्य [anthology] is invaluable composition of Sanskrit poetry. It is a part of Sanskrit दृश्यकाव्य. It is an accumulation of substantial elegant speeches which is depends on four principle object of human pursuit i.e piety धर्म, wealth अर्थ, sensual enjoyment काम, final beatitude मोक्ष. We see rumor, ancient popular talk, gossip, expression of unknown poet in this type of poetry. According to the rhetorician Viśvanātha in the book *Sāhityadarpana*

“कोषः श्लोकसमूहस्तु स्यादन्योन्यानपेक्षकः।

ब्रज्याक्रमेण रचितः स एवातिमनोरमः॥”साहित्यदर्पण षष्ठ परिच्छेदः

“अन्योन्यानपेक्षकः परस्पराकाङ्क्षारहितः श्लोकसमूहस्तु कोषः” हरिदाससिद्धान्तवागीशस्य कुसुमप्रतिमाटीका

Govardhana's *Āryāsaptaśatī* is an anthology. It is a recognition of a collection of seven hundred odd verses, which may be likened to an exquisite "miniature painting". *Āryāsaptaśatī* is a composition of erotic poems. The title of *Āryāsaptaśatī* indicates that, it is a composition of seven hundred odd verses in *Āryā* metre. Most probably the poet Govardhana was impressed by the popularity of the poem *Gāthāsaptaśatī* of Hāla, which was written in Mahārāṣṭrī Prākṛta.

It was believed by many Indologist that Govardhana was one of the literary gems who adored the court of the king Lakṣmaṇasena of Gaur [in Bengal] during 11th Century A.D [2].

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¹ "तददोषौ शब्दार्थौ सगुणावनलंकृती पुनः कापि"

काव्यप्रकाश १.३

² "सकलकलाः कल्पयितुं प्रभुः प्रबन्धस्य कुमुदबन्धोश्च ।

सेनकुलतिलकभूपतिरेको राकाप्रदोषश्च॥" आ.स ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या ३९

The word *सेनकुलतिलकभूपति* in the verse 39 was mentioned by the author as a mark of respect whom some scholars have tried to identify with Lakṣmaṇasena. In an early commentary *Vyañgyārthadīpanā* of Ananta Pandita, it is clearly expressed the fact that the term denotes Pravarasena, the author of *Setubandhakāvya* [3]. Before going to compose his kāvya he pays his tribute to the authors of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and *Brhatkathā*. In the subsequent verses he sings the glory of the greatest classical Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa. The next two verses the poet sings the poetic beauty of Bhavabhūti and Bāṇabhaṭṭa. Then he gives his honour to his father Nīlāmbara, who was like Uśanā or Śukrācārya who was not only a poet but a famous *Smṛti* writer [4].

Commentary is an integral part of writing in Sanskrit works to reevaluate the original composition. Commentary is necessary to understand the original texts. Now-a-days the modern scholars are benefited to find significant evidences that are helpful for the contribution of Sanskrit literature. Here I mention the two commentary of *Āryāsaptasatī*. This poetry has already been published in the '*Kāvyaṃālā Series*' along with a commentary '*Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā*' by Ananta Pandita. The other was a revised edition of Babu Keshi Misra whose purpose of bringing to notice the excellent commentary '*Rasapradīpika*' was written by his laudable great-grand father Mahamahopadhyaya Bhavaninatha Misra, better known as Sachala Upadhyaya. According to M. Krishnamachariar in the book *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* he was stated that "There are commentaries on it by Gokulacandra, by Ananta, son of Tryambaka, by Gangārāma and one anonymous [5].

In addition to these seven hundred verses, *Āryāsaptasatī* contains 54 prefatory verses in the same metre, called the 'granthārambha-vrajyā'. The work has been divided into some sections in alphabetical order, i.e from 'a kāra vrajyā' to 'kṣa kāra vrajyā'. The verses of the poetry are contained mostly on erotic emotions and behaviors of men and women in love and separation. The companionship of a pair of lovers are drawn in a most erotic and fanciful manner like an ideal beloved relation of two noble persons.

“बीजयतोरन्योन्यं यूनोर्वियुतानि सकलगात्राणि ।
सन्मैत्रीव श्रोणी परं निदाघीपि न विघटिता ॥” आ.स वकारब्रज्या
५२०

In some other verses it is stated that love enhances the beauty of happiness.

“वितरन्ती रसमन्तर्ममाद्र्भवावं तनोषि तनुगात्रि ।
अन्तःसलिला सरिदिव यन्निवससि बहिरदृश्यापि ॥” आ.स
वकारब्रज्या ५२५

According to the *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* commentary it is signified that "...बहिस्त्वद्विषयकप्रेमाभावे िप्यान्तरं प्रेम ममातितरामस्ति तद्विषयकमित्यावेद्यते”

The first verse of *Āryāsaptasatī* in the *granthārambha vrajyā* was a prelude by which was invoked the God Śiva and the Goddess Parvatī by the poet.

“पाणिग्रहे पुलकितं वपुरैशं भूतिभूषितं जयति ।
अङ्कुरित इव मनोभूर्यस्मिन्भस्मावशेषौपि ॥” आ.स
ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या १

Śiva and Pārvatī was his tutelary deity. Here Śiva is Paramātmā and Pārvatī is *Mūlaprakṛti* [Nature]. The life of earth is produced for the sake of the union of *Mūlaprakṛti* and *Ātman* i.e. Pārvatī and Śiva. In the commentary *Rasapradīpika* it is mentioned that “यद्वा परमात्मशिवकृतमूलप्रकृतिरूप-पार्वतीपाणिग्रहे प्रकृतिपुरुषसम्बन्धरूपे इति यावत् ।” The wedlock of Śiva -Pārvatī is pointed out the creation of life. In the *Anuśāsana Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* female creatures had originated from Umā, all masculine creatures had originated from Śiva [6].

At that time Erotic poetry was usually cultivated in Prākṛta and the poet Govardhana introduced the amatory poem composed in Sanskrit language for the first time. The poet himself described the following comments on his own style as-

” मसृण-पदरीतिगतयः सज्जनहृदयाभिसारिकाः सुरसाः ।
मदनाद्वयोपनिषदो विशदागोवर्धनस्यार्याः ॥” आ.स ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या
५१

It indicates that Govardhana's *Āryā* verses are gracefully moving, well-styled and fully attired as if an *abhisārikā* [a loving lady who is going to meet her lover by appointment] endowed with rich sentiments is certainly imparting knowledge for one's self love like Brahman in the *Upaniṣad*. In the commentary *Rasapradīpika* it is mentioned that Govardhana liked *Āryā* metre in his composition style. He was favoured in *vaidarbhī rīti* in poetic style. The beloved *abhisārikā* fascinated with the beauty of nine rasa or sentiments specially *śṛṅgāra*. Govardhana composed this verse as a parody as rhetoric significant meaning.

Govardhana asserts in the verse 52 that he had introduced this poetry in Sanskrit language by force because at that time erotic poetry was usually composed in Prākṛta language. In the commentary *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* it is said that at that time Prākṛta language was regarded as the speech of Goddess Sarasvatī for the sake of the beauty in the collection of the poems i.e Koṣakāvya. He has compared his effort with Balarāma raised the river Yamunā of which the water was suitable to flow on a lower plain.

“वाणी प्राकृतसमुचितरसा बलेनैव संस्कृतं नीता ।
मिन्नानुरूपनीरा कलिन्दकन्येव गगनतलम् ॥” आ.स ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या
५२

In the commentary *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* it is personified that “प्राकृतकाव्यसमुचितरसा वाणी प्राकृतसमुचितरसैव । प्राकृतानां साधारणजनानां समुचितः । सुखावहः इत्यर्थः ।”

In Sanskrit literature there are some contradictory views regarding alaṅkāra and rasa. Rhetorician Bhāmaha stated his view in the book *Kāvyaālaṅkāra* that Kāvya is the fusion of śabda and artha which expresses alaṅkāra relating to them. To him poetry is not only a fact of feeling. Poetry is laudable because of embellishments of rhetoric [7]. Daṇḍī denoted that

3 " सेनकुलतिलकभूपतिः सेतुकर्ता प्रवरसेन नाम राजा " *Vyañgyārthadīpanā*
Commentary of the verse 39

4 आर्यासप्तसती, ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या ३०, ३१, ३४, ३५, ३६, ३७, ३८

5 *History of Classical Sanskrit literature* of K. Krishnamachariar p 346

6 " पुलिङ्गं सर्व्वमीशनं स्त्रीलिङ्गं विद्धि चाप्युमाम् ।
द्वाभ्यां तनुभ्यां व्याप्तं हि चराचरमिदं जगत् ॥ " म. भा १३. १३. २३३

7 " न नितान्तादिमात्रेण जायते चारूता गिराम् ।

वक्राभिधेयशब्दोक्तिरिष्टा वाचामलङ्कृतिः ॥ " काव्यालङ्कार १/१६

Alaṅkāra are those attributes that decorate the poetry [8]. On the other hand rasa is regarded as cardinal principle of Indian aesthetics. Mammaṭa carried forward the argument that rasa is the principle object of poetry. Viśvanātha defined kāvya is the composition of sentences full of sentiment or pathos [9]. Govardhana represents the combination of two incessant but distinct views. Rasa is essential for poetry. In the verse 54 the poet very aptly puts his style that beloved lady enjoy with her dear person perceiving with rasa or sentiment even she is without ornament, but except emotions the person is like a wooden figure.

‘रतरीतिवीतवसना प्रियेव शुद्धापि वाङ्मुदे सरसा।
अरसालंकृतिरपि न रोचते शालभञ्जीव॥’ आ.स ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या
५४

According to *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* commentary it is expressed the fact “रसवति काव्ये स्फुटालंकाराहित्ये िपि न चमत्कारहानिरिति रसवत्त्वस्याधिक्यप्रतिपादनमात्रे तात्पर्यम्।”

Here the word sarasā and arasā is written following order and the consonants ra and ta repeated two times so there is *anuprāsa* alaṅkāra. Here *upamā* alaṅkāra is indicated. But rasa is prime. According to aforesaid commentary there is *śṛṅgāra* rasa "njo eꣳ"maagdVr" The author implied the fact that a verse is composed in *śṛṅgāra* rasa and in the absence of *śabdālaṅkāra* is appropriate to compose a superior poetry.

“अकलितशब्दालंकृतिरनुकूला स्खलितपदनिवेशापि।
अभिसारिकेव रमयति सूक्तिः सोत्कर्षशृङ्गारा ॥” आ.स
ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या ४७

According to the *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* commentary ‘शब्दस्य प्राधान्यात्तदलंकारस्यावश्यकत्वोपि तदभावे दोषराहित्यस्यावश्यकत्वोपि केवलोत्कृष्टशृङ्गारवत्त्वेनैव चमत्कारातिशजनकत्वं काव्यस्येति भावः।’ So, in the sense it is said that “नीरसो हि निबन्धो यः सौपशब्दो महाकवेः।”

The application of alaṅkāra is followed suitable rules and regulations. If a verse without any ironical meaning व्यङ्ग्यार्थशून्य i.e there is no emotion sentiment, passion though full of *śabdālaṅkāra* is not an ideal poetry. The verse 48 was composed in *Gaurī rīti*.

“अध्वनि पदग्रहणं मयति हृदयं न वा न वा श्रवणम्।/काव्यमभिज्ञसभायां मञ्जीरं केलिवेलायाम्।” आ.स ग्रन्थारम्भब्रज्या ४८

In the commentary of Anata Paṇḍita it is mentioned ‘अत एव प्रधानगुणभावाभ्यां व्यङ्ग्यसैवं व्यवस्थितेः।’ Irony is essential for improvement of penetrating a poetry. In the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* Viśvanātha represented his statement that “विरतास्वभिधाद्यासु ययार्थो बोध्यतीपरः। सा वृत्तिर्व्यञ्जना नाम शब्दस्यार्थादिकस्य च॥” साहित्यदर्पण २.२४

In some verses worthy alaṅkāra was applied for embellishment of poetry. In the verse 21 it is stated that-

“अतिपूजिततारेयं दृष्टिः श्रुतिलङ्घनक्षमा सुतनु।
जिनसिद्धान्तस्थितिरिव सवासना कं न मोहपति॥” आ.स
अकारब्रज्या २१

Here दृष्टि is *upameya* i.e proper thing and जिनसिद्धान्तस्थिति is *upamāna* i.e. improper element. In the *Vyañgyārtha-dīpanā* commentary it is delineated Vmam means ZoIH\$Zr{ZH\$sm,

On the other hand it was a deity. श्रुति means कर्ण as well as Veda, dmꣳZm means संस्कार and wicked wit. So, in this verse the *sleṣa* alaṅkāra is projected.

Upamā augments the delight of poetry. The poet said-

“अविरलपतिताश्रु वपुः पाण्डुः स्निग्धं नवोपनीतमिदम्।
शतधौतमाज्यमिव मे स्मरशर-दाहव्यां हरति॥” आ.स
अकारब्रज्या ७१

The verse represents *विप्रलम्भ शृङ्गार रस* as feeling separation, disunion. Here When a parted maiden in pleasing appearance united with her most beloved person an incessant shedding tears fell down from her eyes. Here the poet described her tender body with an analogical meaning. In the commentary of Ananta Paṇḍita it is signified that ‘एव च यथा जीर्णज्वरादेर्नाशकं शतवारशालितं घृतं तथा तद्रूपमम चिरकालीनसंतापापनोदकम्।’

In abroad the beloved lad recollected the conjugal happy life.

“शतशो गतिरावृत्तिः शतशः कण्ठावलम्बनं शतशः।
शतशो यामीति वचः तस्याः प्रवासदिने॥” आर्यासप्तशती

Love is accomplished. Love is not decayed whether the life is full of dearth as well as destitution.

“ग्रन्थिलतया किमिक्षोः किमपभ्रंशेन भवति गीतस्य।
किमार्जवेन शशिनः किं दारिद्र्येण दयितस्य॥” आ.स गकारब्रज्या
२१५

At that time courtesans entertained the aristocrat people of the society. Someone advised do not addict spurious love to the prostitutes.

“अविनिहितं विनिहितमिव युवसु स्वच्छेसु वारवामदृशः।
उपदर्शयन्ति हृदयं दर्पणबिम्बेषु वदनमिव॥” आ.स अकारब्रज्या ५६

Men who addicted those spurious love were begun to ruin. They were become a matter of ridicule in society.

“कृत्रिमकनकेनेव प्रेम्णा मुपितस्य वारवनिताभिः।
लघुरिव वित्तविनाशक्लेशो जनहास्यता महती॥” आ.स
ककारब्रज्या १६०

Āryāsaptaśatī is an anthology which depicts socio-cultural circumstances in the ancient Bengal during 12th Century A.D. Govardhana has brought to light various aspects of sensual life. In one side he portrayed the conjugal relationship, overflowing love at the time of puberty and in another side arbitrary sensual amour in the city was also narrated. At that time polygamy was prevailed. An ideal wife tried to win the heart of husband.

“अतिवत्सला सुशीला सेवाचतुरा मनौनुकूला।
अजनि विनीता गृहिणी सपदि सपत्नीस्तनोद्भेदे॥” आ.स
अकारब्रज्या २

At that time the position of women as wife were nothing but complete dependence on their husbands. In a verse we notice beautiful bride was bestowed to poor person at the time of marriage. A beautiful maiden begged with his husband unfortunately for poverty.

⁸ “काव्यशोभाकारान् धर्मानलंकारान् प्रचक्षते।” काव्यादर्श द्वितीयः अध्यायः

⁹ “वाक्यं रसात्मकं काव्यम्।” साहित्यदर्पण १/३

‘रूपमिदं कान्तिरसावयमुत्कर्षः सुवर्णरचनेयम्।
दुर्गतमिलिता ललिते भ्रमसि प्रतिमन्दिरद्वारम्॥’ आ.स रकारव्रज्या
४९२

Woman should respect towards her husband in any situation though her husband was affectionate towards son not to her.

‘अभिनवयौवनदुर्जयविपक्षजनहन्यमानमानापि।
सूनोः पितृप्रियत्वाद्भिर्भति सुभगामहं गृहिणी ॥’ आ.स अकारव्रज्या
४२

During that time profligate ladies were condemned as today.

‘श्रुत्वाकस्मिकमरणं शुकसूनोः सकलकौतुकैकनिधेः।
ज्ञानो गृहिणीविनयव्यय आगत्यैव पथिकेन॥’ आ.स शकारव्रज्या
५७३

The girl loved to sing song skilled to sound lute, flute and taught pet bird.

‘गायति गीत शंसति वंशे वादयति सा विपञ्चीषु।
पाठयति पञ्चशुकास्तव संवादाक्षरं वाला॥’ आ.स गकारव्रज्या
२११

We notice a clear description about the society of ancient Bengal. At that time rich and wealthy people as well as poor people living together. In the same clan one was rich and the other was poor.

‘अप्येकवंशजनुषो पश्यत पूर्णत्वतुच्छताभाजोः।
ज्याकार्मुकयोः कश्चिद्गुणभूतः कश्चिदपि भर्ता॥’ आ.स
अकारव्रज्या ६८

In the commentary of Ananta Pandita it is expressed the view that ‘यद्वैकवंशजन्यत्वोपि दैवाधीनतया कस्यचित्समृद्धिप्रभुत्वे कस्यचिदसमृद्धत्वाप्रधानत्वे इति नात्र खेद उचित इति ध्वन्यते।’

In conclusion the poet commended himself and eulogized his own composition the *Āryāsaptaśatī*.

‘एका ध्वनिद्वितीया त्रिभुवनसारा स्फुटोक्तिचातुर्या।
पञ्चेषुषट्पदहिता भूषा श्रवणस्य सप्तशती॥’ आ.स ६९९

According to the poet the *Āryāsaptaśatī* is an excellent poetry उत्तम काव्य. The act of painting are figurative and rhetorically expressed. When someone read this poetry the *Āryāsaptaśatī* the reader enjoy the sentiment and passion of Bramha. If the verses are articulated together it relishes the mind.

‘कविसमरसिंहनादः स्वराणुवादः सुधैकसंवादः।
विद्वद्विनोदकन्दः संदभौयं मया सृष्टः॥’ आ.स ७००

In the commentary of Ananta Pandita the fact is signified that ‘एवं चैतत्संदर्भश्रवणे न्यकवीनां दर्पहानिरवश्यं भवतीति ध्वन्यते.... वारंवारोच्चारणपरिभाषनादिकं तु ब्रह्मानन्दा-स्वादकृदिति व्यज्यते॥’

In the epilogue or the actor's benedictory speech [भरतवाक्यम्] the author Govardhana made an obeisance to the God Viṣṇu.

‘हरिचरणाञ्जलिममलं कविवरहर्षाय बुद्धिमान्सततम्।
अकृतार्थसप्तशतीमेतां गोवर्धनाचार्यः॥’ आ.स ७०२

We come to know about the lifestyle of citizen of Gaur in ancient Bengal. The sensual amour of well-born society as well as low-born society is penetrated in the *Āryāsaptaśatī*. We look that this poetry is an aesthetic poetry which is full of luscious emotion that entertains the erudite person. Critic Winternitz gives the credit to Govardhana as the introducer of employing Sanskrit *Āryā* metre to popularize erotic poetry. S.K Dey expressed his opinion that "he attains a measure of success, but the verses, moving haltingly in the somewhat unsuitable medium of Sanskrit *Āryā* metre, are more ingenious than poetical, and the lack of flavour, wit and heartiness of Hāla's miniature word pictures ^[10]." The poet Vihārīlā was impressed on this poetry to compose Satsaī, a hindi poetry at 1662 A.D.

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¹⁰ A History of Sanskrit Literature [Vol 1] of S.N Dasgupta and S.K Dey p.371