

Some Linguistic Peculiarities of the *Therīgāthā*

THE *Therīgāthā*, in common with other metrical works of the Pali Canon, presents in its language and syntax, vocabulary and style a remarkable uniformity. This is specially to be seen among the earlier works such as the *Sutta Nipāta*, *Dhammapada*, *Therīgāthā*, *Jātaka-pāli*, the metrical portions of the *Udāna* and *Itivuttaka* and the *gāthās* interspersed with the prose of the four major *Nikāyas*. It is found to a lesser extent in the later metrical works of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* such as the *Apadāna*, *Cariyāpiṭaka* and the *Buddhavaṃsa*. The twin works, the *Peta* and *Vimāna Vatthus*, though essentially preserving the old poetic diction, are brought within an artificial framework which leaves us in doubt as to whether they are to be classed with the earliest Canonical metrical literature or not, while in the case of the *Apadāna* which has undergone a high degree of stylisation there is nothing to warrant its inclusion among the earlier stratum of metrical literature. It has often been asserted that the *gāthās* in the Pali Canon are written in a separate "dialect." However, the evidence indicating a peculiar dialect of Pali, as is commonly understood by the term, is rather scanty, while on the other hand, what we see is a poetical variation of the language of the prose *Nikāyas* as has been necessitated by the literary form adopted to express the ideas embodied in these works. Hence the term "*gāthā-dialect*" should be employed in a special context and with no reference to a dialect as such. The characteristics of the "*gāthā-dialect*" are to be found to a very pronounced degree in the *Therīgāthā* as compared with other old metrical works. The wealth of data found in so short a work of a mere 522 stanzas is most interesting from the point of view of the student of the language. It is not only as regards linguistic peculiarities but also the general diction that the *Therīgāthā* stands out as a clear example of early Pali metrical literature. It is proposed here to enumerate some of these features classed under suitable categories wherever possible.

Vocabulary

A large proportion of the words used in the *Therīgāthā* seems to suggest that a special vocabulary has been reserved for metrical Pali. Some of these words are found in the prose idiom too, but the precise form in

which they occur often presents a variation from the accepted form found in the prose idiom. Some of them present interesting phonological changes and might even suggest the preservation of dialectical forms not already attested in Pali prose. Examples : *ḍāka* Id < Sk. *śāka*, also found in prose Vin. 1,246,248, but generally used in verse cp. Vv. 20-6 as against *sāka* used frequently in Pali (s.v. P.T.S.). The word *chamā* < Sk. *kṣamā*, in oblique cases only, "on or to the ground" occurs at 17d, 88c, 112b, 461d, 494c and 514d, but is not restricted to verse elsewhere. The epithets *asecanaka* lit. unadulterated (\sqrt{sic}) and *ojava* strength-giving, 55b, 196d are used to describe *nibbāna* as at M.I, 114 and S.I, 213. The noun *adhikuṭṭanā* an executioner's block, 58b, 141b, 234b is uniformly used with the verse beginning with *sattisūlūpamā kāmā*. The doublet *bāhā* f. of *bāhu*, essentially a poetical form when used absolutely occurs at 68c and 263b side by side with *bāhu*. The p.p.p. *addita* (\sqrt{rd}) 77b, 89d, 328bd occurs as often as *aṭṭa* 133a (Sk. *ārta*) and is confined to verse. The denominative verb *addiyāmi* // *addita* occurs at 140c as opposed to the frequently recurring *aṭṭiyati* // *aṭṭa* as in the Vinaya phrase *aṭṭiyati harāyati* etc. The adjective *palokina* (\sqrt{ruj}) occurs at 101b as at Sn. 593=S. IV, 205. The poetical forms *jāniyaṃ* 114d, for *ājāniyaṃ*, *saṃ* 136a, for *sakaṃ*, *poso* 296c < (Vc. *pūrṣa*), *vidamsenti* 74a cp. *pahaṃsati*; *gandha* 111d for *gantha*, *laṭṭhi* 291a, 297c instead of the parallel form *yaṭṭhi*, *Lacchim* 419d instead of *-kkh-*, *kuthita* 504d in place of *-kathita* as in *pakkathita*, *khu* 509c for *kho*, *chuṭṭha* 468c, (\sqrt{ksubh}) instead of *chuddha* as at Dh. 41, *chupi* 514d to mean *khipi* and not *chupati*, to touch, are seen to occur in the Therigatha. The adjectives *bhidura* 35a and *pabhaṅguna* 140b are restricted to verse. There is a further contraction of the numeral *cullāsiti* to *cūlāsiti* at 51c. An unusual p.p.p. form *okkhita* Sk. *avokṣita* (\sqrt{uks} to sprinkle) occurs at 145b. The old Sanskrit perfect participle from *vidvān* is represented by both *vidū* and *viddasū*, the latter generally in its negative form as *aviddasū* 164d, 354b while the pf. 3 pl. coincides with *vidū* as at Th. I, 497d. Three old attributive adjectives (containing-*ant-* in the strong cases) are to be seen in *bhāgimā* 204d, *vuṭṭhimā* 487b, (cp. *candimā*) and *puttavati* 300c (like *rūpavati* 298c). The abstract noun *anusitṭhi* 211b alternates with *anusatṭhi* and *anusāsani* 178b. The pronouns *tvam* 206d, 387c etc. and *tuvaṃ* 312c, 327e, 231a etc. are both freely attested while the forms *edisaka* 397d, 465b, *erisa*, *idisa* Th. I, 1118c, *irisa*, *kirisa* 385c, 386c, *kidisa* Th. I, 1187a are seen to occur in verse. The adjective *āharima*, "captivating," 299c is essentially a poetical form. The compound *iṅghālakhu* 386a is explained in the Commentary as *aṅgārakāsu*, "a pit of embers." The word *aṅgāra* may give *iṅgāla* in Prakritic dialects cp. *iṅgāla* in old Marathi, but the aspirate can hardly be

explained except on the basis of sporadic unetymological aspiration,"¹ vide Geiger § 40, Pischel § 206 ff., and *khu* is equally baffling; probably *kāsu* > *kasu* > *k^asu* > *khu* cp. *agāra* < *agga* as in *bhattagga khuragga* etc. The meaning assigned to the cpd. "a pit of glowing embers" Th₂A, 256, leaves no doubt in our minds though the form itself is very doubtful. The noun *olīkā* in *pīlikolīkā* 395c is also of uncertain origin (Munda ?) cp. *olīgalla* s.v. P.T.S. Conjuncts with liquids as in *atraja -tr-* 151d, and *pariklesa -kl-* 191c, 345a are seen to occur as the normal forms. The form *saccadassā* 515d is to be taken as an irregular feminine of *dassī*, for *dassinī*, if it is not a mistake for *saccaddasā*. There is change of gender indicated in *jārāghara* m. 270c in place of the usual neuter and also in *kammakarāni* 340b instead of masculine.

The poems of Ambapālī 252-270, Subhā Jivakambavanikā 366-399, Isidāsī 400-447 and Sumedhā 448-522 are very interesting, *inter alia* from the point of vocabulary. In spite of the vigorous style of Ambapālī's verses she seems to be hard put for words to express all she wants to convey. Some ideas are expressed with the aid of apt similes while the symmetry is badly disturbed by the inclusion of verses which contain no similes. She labours the epithet *saṅha* 255a, 258a, 262a, 264a, 268a and is ever conscious of her *valī*, wrinkles, 256c, 259c, 266c, 269c. In spite of the grandeur of the verses the relatively impoverished vocabulary may crown her ballad with her own description in the concluding simile *apalepapatito jarāgharo* 270c. Subhā's verses bear the stamp of highest antiquity. The nominal forms of interest occurring in them have already been noted and the various participial and verbal forms will be discussed later. Purely from the point of vocabulary the words *hātaka*, *tapaniya*, *dhitikā*, *rahitam*, *bhisanakam*, *kīlanakam*, *panha*, *kīriso*, *sombhā*, *kacillakā* as well as *iṅghālakhu* and *pīlikolīkā* (already noted), can be said to belong to the poetic language while the forms *visatṭhe* for *vissatṭhe*, *pakkate* for *pakkhitte*, *ruppa* for *rūpiya* are evidently of dialectical origin. Isidāsī's verses are a curious combination of old idiom and artificial poetic expression with occasional disregard for grammar (probably a feminine trait!) e.g. p.p.p. *jitā* construed with an object 419d, "we have been robbed of Prosperity," sg. verb with pl. subject at 424ab, *dvijā* used as acc. pl. (a survival of the dual ?) and mixed idiom in 428ab. Words of special interest as belonging to the poetic vocabulary are : *maṇḍa* 400b (not 400c as taken by the P.T.S. text), *kariya* 402b, *abbhudiresum* 402d an analogical form, *valikam* 403a for *vyālikam* = *dosam*, *sunhā* 406d (acc. sg. in *-am* in apposition to *maṃ*), forms *demi* 408d, 409c,

1. Sinhalese editions prefer the variant *iṅgāla*- but it look like a "learned" emendation.

karati 424c and *sacchikari* (all three of which one may see frequently in the Ceylon epics) the dative case cpd. *bhattikataṃ* 413a, the historical future sgg. *vacchaṃ* 415a, 416b, 425c (\sqrt{vas}), *gacchaṃ* 426c (\sqrt{gam}), dative infinitives *kātuye* 418c, *marituye* 426d, old historical forms as *karihiti* fut. 3 sg. \sqrt{kr} 424d, *labhassu* imper. 2 sg. a' pada 432c, *apacissam* iṣ-Aor, 1 sg. 436b, *nillacchesi* si-Aor. 3 sg. of *nir-* $\sqrt{lañch}$ lit. deprived one of the characteristics of a male i.e. castrated, and absolutives *āpucchitūna* 426c and *apakaritūna* 447b which are usually confined in their usage to verse. The forms that invite our attention in Sumedhā's poem are : *sāsanakarehi* dat. pl. < -*bhyaḥ* 448d, *bujjhare* 3 pl. indic, a' pada 453d, *hessami* 460d, *chamā* 461d, *vāreyyam*, "marriage," 464d, 465d, 472d, *hohiti* 465c, *chuttho* 468c, *chaḍḍūna* 469a, *pidhatvā* 480c, *agha* 489b, 491bc, *kuthita* \sqrt{kvath} 504d, *khāhinti* $\sqrt{khād}$ 509c, *anubhosi* 510c, *chupi* 514d, *saccadassā* 515d, some of which have already been noted while the others will be discussed in their appropriate place.

Of the flexional forms used, *isibhi* 206a is a rare instance of the inst. pl. ending -*bhi* being preserved in Pali while in *sāsanakarehi* (*supra*) is to be seen a dative pl. in -*hi* instead of the usual gen. pl. ending used for the dative. The pronominal ending in *kānanasmim* 261a, also rare in old Pali, is to be found in abundance in the later language and here it may have been prompted by exigencies of metre. The acc. pl. form *dvijā* 430d is equally unusual and the change of gender of *ghara* to masculine 270c and of the numeral *ti* to neuter for the feminine *tisso* in *sakhiyo tīṇi janiyo* 518c are definite violations of the rules of grammar.

Sandhi and Samasa

No reference here will be made to sandhis and samāsas which conform to the normal prose idiom but only those forms which present special peculiarities will be touched upon. The behaviour of the final niggahita in sandhi in the Therīgāthā is very interesting ; its elision seems to be favoured throughout, and at the same time when the second member begins with a vowel as in the case of the personal pronoun there is further coalescence of the two vowels thus brought together as a result of the elision of the niggahita. As a rule, it is the initial vowel that is further elided. Poetic expression seems to demand the order *akarim aham* to *aham akarim* and in either case when the two words are joined by sandhi, in prose, the niggahita is changed to *m* but here, almost always, both the niggahita and the initial vowel are elided e.g. *cāri'ham* 79b, 123d, *vicari 'ham* 92c, 133d, *namassi'ham* 87d, *bhuñji'ham* 88d, *asevi'ham* 93b, *nirajji'ham* 93d, *samsari'ham*, 159d, etc. In instances such as *sampativijjh'aham* 149b, and

pahin'esam 276c it is the resultant final vowel on the elision of the niggahita, that is further elided. In the case of sandhis where the second member begins with a consonant the final niggahita alone is elided e.g. *sokāna sambhavo* 138d, *budhāna vandanā* 161d, *hatthapādāna chedanam* 191b, *sukkāna dhammānam* 278c. Both these types of sandhi are restricted to verse whereas the reduction of the final vowel of a word coalesced with a second member which is an auxiliary whose initial vowel is also elided is to be found in both prose and verse e.g. *paṭipanna'mhi* 94c for *paṭipannā amhi*, *aneja'mhi* 106c, *tevijja'mhā* 121d. The forms *koṭar'ohita* 395a, *okassayām'aham* 116b show the mere elision of the final vowel and call for no special attention. There is a large number of sandhis in which an inorganic consonant is augmented to bridge the hiatus between two vowels unlike in prose where the greater percentage of augmented consonants is organic ; e.g. *turiyā-r-iva* 381a, *kinnariyā-r-iva* 381b, *visapatto-r-iva* 386b, *puno-m-aham* 292d, *janamajjhe-r-iva* 394d, *vattani-r-iva* 395a. There is also an example of the semi-vowel replacing the final vowel in *pamuty atthu* with the reduction of -*tt-* > -*t-* 248a.

Of the numerous cpds. found in frequent use in the Therīgāthā mention need be made only of unusual forms such as the *aluk-samāsas*: *uddhamsotā* 12d, *kālanakatā* 219a, *udakecarā* 241d, *pubbekataṃ* 243b, the case-cpds. *abhiññāvosita* 64b, *puttakate* < Sk. -*krte* 303c, *bhattikataṃ* 413a, etc. The bv. cpd. *khaṇātita* 5c is not exclusively poetic. *Rāhuggaho* (qualifying *cando*) 2b is a bv. cpd. and *uttamaṅgabhū* (comy. -*jā*) 253b looks like an old upapada-cpd. The latter can as well be a sandhi of *uttamaṅga* and *bhū* a contraction of *abhū* < Sk. *abhūt*'. All these forms reflect the old poetic language.

Primary Derivatives

There is to be found a fair number of unusual and old Future Passive Participles, Present Participles, Infinitives, Past Participles Passive and Absolutives. As all the forms in the collection belong to old Pali those that call for special attention only will be cited here. F.P.P. :—*appaṭivāniya* (< Sk. *a-prati-vrāṇa-ika*: *vrāṇa* the *guṇa* from \sqrt{vr} *vr̥ṇoti* to obstruct) 55a, *labbham* 308a, *dessā* f. from $\sqrt{dviṣ}$ 416c, *vāreyyam* used nominally "a wooing" from \sqrt{vr} *varati* 464d, 472d and *abhisamvisēyyam* < Sk. *ṛ-viśīrya*-466c. The pr. p. medial *esānā* 283c has a few parallels in old works like Sn. e.g. *kāmayāna* Sn. 767a, and is an old Vedic form. In *dhovim* 412b there is perhaps a contraction of *dhovantim* ; vide Comy. Among the infinitives there is an abundance of historical forms such as *pappotum* 60d

which do not call for special attention, but there occurs a small number of old Vedic dative infinitives which had already disappeared in Classical Sanskrit e.g. *gantave* 332b, *kātuye* 418c, *marituye* 426d and perhaps *etave* v.l. *etave* 291d. The form *santaye* 342b may be a dative of purpose differing from Sk. only as regards the sibilant, though the pure Pali form is *santiyā* but is quite probable that it is analogically modelled on *marituye*. As regards absolutives too the general pattern of old Pali can be observed. Special poetical forms are seen in *ovariyāna* 367b, 368d, 369d an extension of *ovariya* *ava-*√*vr*, *āpucchitūna* 426c, *apakaritūna* 447b and *chaddūna* 469a, the ending *-rūna* being a parallel of *-tvāna*. The forms *olubbha* (√*lamb*, with unctymological aspiration) 17b, 27c, *abhirūhiya* 27d, *nikujjiya* 30b *oddiya* (√*di* with *ava* or *ud*?) 73d, *ādissa* (√*diś* with *ā*) 213a, *āhaniya* 398a and *āhariya* 460c are quite regular and agree with the usual rule in Sk., but *bandhiya* 81b, *chaddiya* 98b, *dakkhiya* (from the future base) 381c, 382c, *jāniya* 388c, *liṅgiya* √*laṅgh* with the loss of aspirate and vowel weakening 398b, and *kariya* 402b do not contain prefixes to justify the formation of the absolute with the suffix *-ya*. Both types, however, belong to gāthā-Pāli though the latter is not attested in such large number in other early metrical works. The later Pāli kāvyas, including the historical epics have adopted this form and used it as the standard one (besides that ending in *-tvā*) for the absolute. Though the ending *-rūna* is fairly well attested *-tvāna* is rarer : see *chetvāna* 103d, 156a. An interesting form is *pidhatvā* 480c not as an absolute but as a rare variant of *pidahati* without the usual spilt-aspirate.

The Verb

Almost all the types of verbal forms belonging to early Pali are attested in the Therīgāthā. Among the numerous forms available a few will be mentioned here. In the indicative 2 sg. *pavechasi* 272b represents a dialectical variation of *payachasi*, but is not unusual cp. *paveche* Sn. 463c and *anuppavecheyya* in the phrase *devo ca sammādhāraṃ anuppavecheyya*. *Sammādhemi* 50c too contains a vowel change *-e-* interesting from a phonological angle ; also cp. *pidhatvā* for the retention of *-dh-*. Other indicatives worthy of note are *vedayase*, 2 sg. medial 237d, *bujjhare* 453d, *acchare* 54b (√*ās* to *sit*) both 3 pl. med ; *pamuccare* 242d passive 3 pl. with the *a* pada ending and *saremhase* 389a med. 1 pl. with subjunctive meaning (vide Geiger § 122). The imperative forms too are numerous e.g. 2 sg. *supāhi* 1a, *sehi* 16a, *ārādhayāhi* 6c, *phusehi* 6a (both bases *phusa-* and *phassa-* are seen to occur cp. *phusayim* 149d, 155d, *aphassayi* 322d, 323e, 324d and *phassaye* opt. 1 sg.), *vajjāsi* 307a from the base *vajja-* extracted from the

optative cp. *vajja* imper. 2 sg. 323a, *vajjam* opt. 1 sg. 308c vide Geiger § 143; medial: *pūrassu* 3a, *sikkhassu* 4a, *yuñjassu* 5a, *paccavekkhassu* 33c, *harassu* 396c, *labhassu* 432c. *bhuñjassu* 484b, *damassu* 509a; passive : *muccassu* 2a; 1 pl. medial : *ramāmase* 370d, 371d. Opt. 1 sg. *ācare* 80d, *adhigacche* 196c, *vajjam* 308c, *icche* 332b, *pihaye* 339d, *patthaye* 341b, *lāgame* 341d; plural : medial, *viharemasi* 375b, vide Geiger § 129; 3 sg. *avasāya* (from *osāpeti*—not with Morris JPTS 1886, *ava-* √*sā sāyayati*) 12a *kayirā* 61a, *nivesaye* 391d, 392d.

The forms of the future tense attested in Th2 are most interesting e.g. 1 sg. *pabbajissam* 292d, *pakkāmissam* 294a both with connecting vowel *i* and contraction, *dassam* 153c (√*dā*), *gaccham* 306e, 426c (*gam-t-sya-*), *vaccham* 414c, 416b, 425c (√*vas* with change to *vat-sya-*), *vihissāmi* 360c (*vi-har-sya->vihissa*), *hessāmi* 460d (*bhaviṣya->hessa-*); plural: *vihissāma* 121c; 2 sg.: *dakkhisi* 232d (√*dr̥s*), and with *-sya-* contracted to *-hi-* in *ehisi* 166d <(Sk. *esyasi*), *padāhisi* 303b <(Sk. *-dāsyasi*), *anubhoḥisi* 510c (Sk. *-bhaviṣyasi*) and *kāhisi* 57b (**karṣya-* usually Sk. *karṣyasi*); 3 sg. with the same contraction, *hehiti* 249d, 250d, 288d, 389d, *hohiti* 465c (from √*bhū*) and *karihiti* 424d. For *vacchati* 294b see *vaccham* ; plural *khāhinti* 509c (√*khād*).

Aorist : Almost all the varieties of the aorist verb are attested among the 1 sg. forms (vide Geiger 158 ff.) e.g. *nādhigam* 122d, *ajjhaham* 339b, 67d, *addasam* 97c, *aparajjam* 418a, *addasāmi* 135a, *phusayim* 149d, 155d, *visodhayim* 120d, *padālayim* 120f, *āpādim* 40c, *upāgacchim* 43a, *byapānudim* 318d, *anussarim* 120b, *sacchākasim* 137d, *dakkhim* (without the augment —Ccmy. *datthum!*) 137c, *upakāsim* 89c, *utthāsim* 96c, *pahāsim* 101c, *upāvisim* 148b, 154d, 178d *apacissam* 436b, *dakkhisam* 84d (see *dakkhim*), *avocam* 124c; plural : *upāvisim* 119a, 3 sg. *upaccagā* 5b, *addasāsi* 390c, *viramāsi* 397a, *āgani* 14b, *abbuhi* 52a, 131a, cp. *abbahi*, *vyapānudi* 52d, 131d, 162c, *vedi* (Sk. *avedit*) 63a; 3 pl.: *upaccagam* 4b, *abbhūdiressim* 402d, and Aor. 3 sg. medial: *amaññatha* 143d and *vidatha* 420d.

Much can be said of the idiom, style and poetic merits of the gāthās of this work, but this will have to be reserved for a later contribution as a study of linguistic peculiarities does not warrant their inclusion here.

N. A. JAYAWICKRAMA.