

Siya-Bas-Lakara and a Theory of Suggestion

S IYA-BAS-LAKARA (*SBL*) — the only classical treatise on poetic theory in Sinhalese and composed in about the 10th century A.D.—is well known to be an abridged Sinhalese translation of the Sanskrit treatise *Kāvyaḍarṣa* of Daṇḍin. Although it is a translation, the Sinhalese author departs from the original Sanskrit text in a few noteworthy instances, especially where he is concerned with the peculiarities of the Sinhalese language as distinct from the Sanskrit. In addition to these, in a rare instance or two, the Sinhalese author makes additional contribution to poetic theory by inclusion of fresh material not found in the original Sanskrit text. The remarks in *SBL* on the concept of an implied sense in poetry is one such significant contribution in which case the Sinhalese verses dealing with the subject have no parallel in *Kāvyaḍarṣa*.

Daṇḍin was not totally oblivious to the function of a suggested sense in poetry. In a few instances he had recognized that words can convey a sense other than the denoted. For example, while dealing with the poetic quality (*guṇa*) named *samādhī* he remarks that some words like *udgīrṇa* (vomitted), *niṣṭhyūta* (spat), *vānta* (vomitted) are found to be appealing if they are employed in their secondary senses, but their primary meanings are vulgar.¹ In the same way, his explanation of some of the poetic figures like *samāsokti*, *pariyāyokti* and *aprustutapraṣaṃsā* involves a recognition of more than one sense in words.² However, nowhere does he directly deal with the subject of words and their meanings in poetic usage—a popular subject of discussion among the later day Sanskrit writers on poetic theory. Hence the comments in *SBL* on the subject are additional. Moreover, they are found (and appear somewhat out of place) at the end of its third chapter immediately after dealing with poetic flaws (*doṣas*); and here it is virtually the last topic to be dealt with in the treatise. This confirms the impression that these are Sinhalese author's own remarks which do not integrate well with the pattern of the original Sanskrit text.

1. *Kāvyaḍarṣa* of Daṇḍin, I—95.

2. *Ibid*, II—205-213, 295-297, 340-342.

The verses under discussion in *SBL* read as follows :—

393. Penenat atbelen—ena arutudu sadatu deka
Yam sada savanatehi heta—hāṅṅenu penenata nam vē.
394. Vena vena duṭu sadin—baṅṅanev pahanin penena
Dānena anumenenarutaṭa—atbelenenarut viyat.
395. Tumul sirurāti mē—dahaval bata nubudi yata
Dahaval nokanu penenata—rā bit belenena arut.³

[A word possesses two senses, (1) *penenat*—the sense that is seen or explicit (i.e. the primary sense), and (2) *at belen ena arut*—the sense that comes (by implication) through the force of (the primary) sense (i.e. the implied sense). The primary sense is that which is expressed as soon as a word falls on the ear.

(On the other hand), the implied sense is different from the primary sense. It is conveyed by a process of inference and is felt (as opposed to the primary sense which is explicit). It is like the pot that is revealed when the lamp is lit (—different from the lamp but perceived only through the aid of the lamp).

(This twofold sense is illustrated by the following example.) ‘This fat man does not eat during daytime.’ The fact that he does not eat during the day is the expressed primary sense. That he eats during nights is the (implied) sense conveyed through (the primary) sense.]

Hence, obviously *SBL* recognizes a twofold sense in words—viz. (1) denotative and (2) implied. This brief comment is of extreme significance due to the fact that this basic concept of the capability of the words in poetic usage of conveying something beyond their primary meanings, formed the nucleus of an advanced theory of aesthetics in Sanskrit—viz. the theory of *Dhvani* (suggestion). This theory which evolved a practicable critique of poetry in Sanskrit, belongs to a more recent date in the history of Sanskrit aesthetics when theoretical speculation reached a new stage of advancement. Hence in this context it is interesting to examine the comments in *SBL* at length and to inquire whether they, in any way, anticipate the Sanskrit theory of *Dhvani*; or whether they could be related to any other theory of poetry in Sanskrit.

3. *Śiṅga-Bas-Lakara*, (ed. D. S. Amarasingha), III—393-395.

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Incidentally, it is not inopportune here to note that *SBL* is not quite independent in its thought, but is conditioned by similar theoretical writings in Sanskrit. For, the analogy brought forth here, (viz. that of the lamp and the pot), and the example quoted (viz. of the fat man) are frequently employed in Sanskrit philosophical treatises which examine words and their functions, and also in works on poetic theory. Obviously, the author of *SBL* was quite conversant with these Sanskrit works.

For the sake of perspicuity, the points stipulated in *SBL* on this subject may be listed as follows :

1. A word possesses two senses—(a) primary and (b) implied.
2. Primary is the expressed sense.
3. The implied sense,
 - (a) is conveyed through the primary sense,
 - (b) is conveyed by a process of inference (i.e. the *vyāpāra* that produces it is inference),
 - (c) is felt and is not outwardly perceived.
4. Analogically, the two senses can be equated to the lamp and an object revealed by its light.
5. An example for the two senses would be, 'This fat man does not eat during daytime'; and here,
 - (a) the fact that the man does not eat during daytime is the primary sense, and
 - (b) the fact that he eats during nights is the implied sense.

Out of these, the statements 3(a), 3(c) and 4 would strongly suggest affinities with the Sanskrit theory of *Dhvani*. In dealing with the nature of their suggested (*vyaiṅya*) sense, the *Dhvani* theorists too explained that this sense is conveyed through the force of the primary sense,⁴ and that this is not expressly stated in words but felt by the responsive reader.⁵ Furthermore, the analogy of the lamp and the pot to illustrate the *vācya* (expressed) or the *lakṣya* (indicated) sense on the one hand, and the *vyaiṅya* (suggested) sense on the other was employed by Ānandavardhana—the chief protagonist of the *Dhvani* theory—too.⁶ Hence, on a cursory view, it may appear

4. *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana, (Kāvya-mālā Series Edition), pp. 50, 99.

5. *Ibid*, p. 93 *et. seq.*

6. *Ibid*, p. 421.

justifiable to equate the twofold sense in *SBL* with the *vācyārtha* and *vyañgyārtha* of the *Dhvani* theorists. As the concept of the primary sense was uniform and undisputed in all Sanskrit writers, the *penenat* (primary sense) of *SBL* is coincident with the *vācyārtha* of the *Dhvanivādins*. But in spite of these similarities, its implied sense does not bear identification with their *vyañgyārtha*. The statements 3(b) and 5 listed above do not leave room for such an identification.

“*Phīno Devadatto divā na bhūikte*” (The fat Devadatta does not eat during the day.) was the standard quotation among Sanskrit logicians for illustrating that valid means of knowledge (*pramāna*) which they called *arthāpatti* (presumption).⁷ Here, the fact that the man does not eat during the day is incompatible with his being fat, and the two propositions could be reconciled only by presuming that he eats during nights. Hence from the above example, the knowledge that the man eats during nights (*rātri-bhojanārtha*) is arrived at through *arthāpatti*—a hypothesis which explains the apparent incongruity of two statements which have been proved to be true.⁸ This type of abstruse reasoning comes within the periphery of logic and not of poetry as the expression involves no poetic appeal. This certainly is not a case of *vyañgyārtha* as comprehended by the *Dhvani* theorists, because in the first instance *vyañgyārtha* involves no logical reasoning. Moreover, *Dhvani* theorists have categorically excluded *vyañgya* from the sphere of *arthāpatti*, and the former is classed under the valid means of knowledge known as *śabda* (verbal testimony).⁹

On the other hand, among Sanskrit literary theorists there existed one group who considered the sense of ‘eating during nights’ adducible from the given example as an instance of *lakṣyārtha*—indicated sense, and not *arthāpatti*. [*Lakṣyārtha* is an extension of the primary sense, where in a particular context a word may indicate a secondary meaning due to the inapplicability of its primary meaning. Thus in an expression such as, ‘This man is a lion’, the word ‘lion’ conveys not its primary sense, but an indicated (*lakṣya*) sense. In poetry, this particular kind of meaning is found utilized as in the case of the figure metaphor.] This view is cited in *Kāvyaṣaṣṭakā* of Mammaṭa in his discussion on the process of indication (*lakṣaṇā*).¹⁰ The given example satisfies all technical conditions of indi-

7. *Kāvyaṣaṣṭakā* of Mammaṭa, (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Edition) p. 45. *Tarkasamgraha* of Annambhaṭṭa, (Nirnaya Sāgara Press Edition), p. 39.

8. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London—1951, pp. 320, 321.

9. Ānandavardhana, *op. cit.*, p. 425 *et. seq.*

10. Mammaṭa, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

cation: the expressed sense is incompatible, and the indicated sense resorted to removes this incompatibility due to its connection with the primary sense. Hence, there is apparent justification to call it an instance of *lakṣaṇā*. Nevertheless, in his discussion, Mammaṭa maintains that this particular instance is not a case of indicated meaning, because to find such meaning here one has to have recourse to elaborate logical reasoning; and to accept *arthāpatti* would be much simpler.¹¹

It is interesting to note that in this discussion that *arthāpatti* is not *lakṣaṇā* Mammaṭa cites the identical quotation cited in *SBL*. While on the one hand this conclusively proves that the type of implied meaning described in *SBL* was not considered by *Dhvani* theorists as instances of suggestion, on the other hand this also clearly shows that this particular example and the type of implied meaning involved in it was a popular subject of discussion among Sanskrit poetic theorists. *SBL* was not the only treatise concerned about this category of implied meaning.

SBL being a treatise on poetic theory, it is not unreasonable to surmise that it is subscribing to the *pūrvapakṣa* refuted in Mammaṭa's discussion—i.e. that the implied meaning derived from the illustration is a case of *lakṣyārtha*. If so, the twofold sense *SBL* recognizes in poetic usage would be (1) *vācyārtha* (denoted meaning) and (2) *lakṣyārtha* (indicated meaning); and the two corresponding functions would be (1) *abhidhā* (denotative) and (2) *lakṣaṇā* (indicative). This fact becomes quite significant when it is considered that this was the theory in vogue among Sanskrit writers prior to the advent of the *Dhvani* theorists; and that this was accepted by the anti-*Dhvani* group even afterwards. In other words, in pre-*Dhvani* as well as post-*Dhvani* days, it was generally agreed without dispute by logicians that words possess a twofold sense—viz. *vācyārtha* and *lakṣyārtha*. [What the *Dhvani* theorists fought for was to establish the existence of the third sense *vyāṅgyārtha* (suggested sense) and the third function *vyāñjanā* (suggestion) of words, as distinct from *lakṣyārtha* and *lakṣaṇā*. Viewed in this light, *SBL* would be representative of the view generally held by theorists of the pre-*Dhvani* period on the subject.

From the point of view of Indian logic and poetic theory, another observation in *SBL* deserves notice. It is remarked (in statement 3(b) of the above list) that the idea of 'eating during nights' from the quoted illustration is derived through the process of inference (*anumenen ena arut*).

11. *Ibid.*

Now, inference—*anumāna*—is another valid means of arriving at correct knowledge according to Indian logic, and with sensory perception (*pratyakṣa*) was considered by most of the logicians as of major significance. Some schools of Indian logic—like the *Naiyāyikas* and the *Bauddhas*—did not accept *arthāpatti* (presumption) as a valid means of knowledge. They included that too within the sphere of *anumāna* (inference). When it is known that the man is fat but does not eat during the day, it is inferred that he eats during nights. Hence as a means of knowledge, *anumāna* covers *arthāpatti* too.¹²

The *Bauddha* (Buddhist) school of logic accepted only two means of knowledge—*pratyakṣa* (perception) and *anumāna* (inference). Hence, the opinion in *SBL* that the particular sense from the given illustration is derivable through *anumāna* (without mentioning *arthāpatti*) would reflect the Buddhist school of thought, for, from both internal and external evidence it is not difficult to surmise that the author of *SBL* would have been a *Bauddha*.

From the point of view of poetic theory, this idea of inference commands further notice. For, in Sanskrit poetic theory, there existed one strong school of thought that upheld a theory of Inference (*anumiti*), with reference to words and their meanings. In this context, one may consider the views of Mahimabhaṭṭa, the author of *Vyaktiviveka*, the chief protagonist of this *Anumiti* theory. His thesis was that words convey a twofold sense—viz. (1) the denoted sense (*vācārtha*) and (2) the inferred sense (*anumeyārtha*). He accepts neither the indicated sense nor the suggested sense of the *Dhvani* theorists, but includes these too within the periphery of *anumeya* (inferred). In other words, those senses considered as *lakṣya* or *vyāṅgya* by other theorists are, in his opinion, obtainable merely through the process of logical inference. Apart from the primary, the only other process of words conveying an implied sense is *anumiti*. To cite his own words, 'Meanings are of two kinds, the expressed and the inferable. Of these, the expressed belongs to the function of a word and is alone called the primary sense. . . From it, another sense which is inferred is called the inferable sense.'¹³ Consequently, he takes great pains to prove that the instances of suggested sense quoted by *Dhvani* theorists are none other than cases of logical inference.

12. *Tarkasaṃgraha* of Annambhaṭṭa, (Nirnaya Sāgara Press Edition), p. 39.

13. *Vyaktiviveka* of Mahimabhaṭṭa, (Nirnaya Sāgara Press Edition), p. 7. The translation is quoted from S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics*, Calcutta—1960, Vol. II, p. 195.

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When the facts that *SBL* expressly mentions the term *anumāna* and that Buddhist logicians included *arthāpatti* in *anumāna* (and consequently the illustration quoted amounting to an instance of *anumiti*) are taken into consideration, the affinity borne by the viewpoint stated in *SBL* with the *Anumiti* theory of Mahimabhaṭṭa is striking. However, before a conclusion is reached, there remains a chronological problem that needs clarification.

It is generally agreed that *Vyaktiviveka* was composed in the 11th century A.D; and consequently its exposition of the theory of *Anumiti* succeeds the date of *SBL* by almost a century. Hence it is impossible to believe that *SBL* received any inspiration from the teachings of the famous exponent of the *Anumiti* theory. Nevertheless, it has been established by recent research that the particular theory was not Mahimabhaṭṭa's own invention, but was an elaboration of a concept already in existence from ancient times.¹⁴ Ānandavardhana—the protagonist of the theory of *Dhvani*—too in his *Dhvanyāloka* (9th c. A.D.) notes and refutes a theory of *anumiti* which seems to have been already in existence and adducible to controvert the theory of *Dhvani*.¹⁵ Furthermore, an eminent Sanskrit theorist of the early 9th century A.D.—viz. Śrī Śaṅkuka—proposed an exposition of the concept of *Rasa* based on the concept of inference. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the concept of *anumiti* was known long before Mahimabhaṭṭa and even before the composition of *SBL*.

When all these facts are taken into consideration, it is possible to believe that *SBL* was subscribing to some rudimentary theory of Inference which accepted the existence of only the primary and the inferred senses in words and from which Mahimabhaṭṭa received inspiration for his theory of *Anumiti* at a later date.

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14. Dr. A. Sankaran, *Theories of Rasa and Dhvani*, Madras—1929, p. 135.

15. Ānandavardhana, *op. cit.*, p. 449 *et. seq.*