

# ANANDA BHĀRATĪ

Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY FELICITATION VOLUME

*General Editors*

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PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF

**Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY FELICITATION COMMITTEE**

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**KRISHNAMURTHIPURAM : MYSORE 570 004**

G. A. Jacob, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1975, p. 108.  
 Ramādwaya's Vedantakaumudī, pp. 340-342  
 BHU Sanskrit Series IX, 1st Edn, Varanasi, 1973  
 R. S. Caturvedi.

Also there is much to be clarified (as indicated in the following paragraph of the present paper) regarding the real position of Tanmātras, bhūta-sūkṣmas, sūkṣmabhūtas, paramāṇus not only in Vedānta schools but also in Sāṅkhyayoga.

Cf. Ratnaprabhā and Nyāyanirṇava on 1.2.22; 2.2 10; 3-1-1. Bhūtasūkṣmas are interpreted as samskāras, bhūtakāraṇas, tanmātras and parts of gross elements. Also vide. Yogavārtika, I-41. Ratnaprabhā, 2-4-7: Anubhūtarūpatram sūkṣmatvam.

Cf. P. T. Raju: Structural Depths of Indian Thought, New Delhi, 1985 pp. 257, 445, 466n.

Quintuplication common to all Vedantic systems is not scientific in the modern sense of the term.

p. 421 Adwaita and Austrian theory: The Self is all-absorbing.

Cf. R. D. Ranade: The Vedānta—the Culmination of Indian Thoughts Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, p. 13.

The treatment of tanmātras is arbitrary:

Cf. Śaḍupaniṣad-bhāṣyam, Vavilla Edition, Madras, 1939 pp. 273-274: Tanmātras are Pūrvāvasthā-s of bhūtas

(on Praśna-Upaniṣad)  
 Vijñānabhikṣu on the Brahma-sūtra, 1.1.2: They are sūkṣmāśas-Yogavārtika (p. 119n) Tanmātras are not paramāṇus as conceived by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas—cf. Yogasūtra I-44 (Bharatiyavidya prakasan, Varanasi 1982).

## IN PRAISE OF POETS: ON THE HISTORY AND FUNCTION OF THE KAVIPRASAMSA

SHELDON POLLOCK

### I

IT is a striking fact that many works of Sanskrit (and sanskritizing) literature contain, typically near their commencement, some sort of praise of earlier poets. It is almost as striking that neither traditional *alaṅkāra* theory nor modern literary study of Sanskrit poetry seems to have taken much note of this. Here I want to offer a very preliminary (and therefore unavoidably superficial) historical survey of some of the material illustrating this convention, and to speculate briefly on its possible functions.

That poets typically know and do more than either descriptive or prescriptive theory is adequate to address is no cause for surprise, yet the absence of discussion of the *kaviprasamsā* in the *alaṅkāraśāstra* tradition remains curious. Bhojadeva is the one rhetorician I find (besides those like Hemacandra that depend on him) who mentions the trope. This is addressed in his discussion of *prabandhālaṅkāra* or "ornaments" pertaining to the literary work as a whole *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, chapter 11, the most elaborate treatment of the subject in the literature.<sup>1</sup> Among these is a category of "verbal ornaments" (*śabdālaṅkāras*) that includes: beginning the poem with an expression of homage, a prayer, and the like (*namaskārādyupakramatvam*); various conventions for actually introducing the composition (? *sambandhādimaḍḍi-vākyatvam*); linguistic *tours de force* like the *gomūtrikā*, the single consonant verse, etc. (*duṣkara [sama?] saṃskṛtādivākyatvam*); ending a chapter with a meter different from that

in which the chapter is composed (*bhinnavyūttasargāntatvam*); concluding the poem with an allusion to the poet's particular intention in the poem, his personal deity, his name, etc. (*kavibhāvānkītasamāptitvam*). Each of these subcategories is itself complex; the first includes, for instance, *namaskāra*, *stuti*, *āśīh*, *vastunirdeśa* and *vastūpakṣepa*. The second subcategory, *sambandhādīmadādivākyatvam*, includes *svavaṃśādikīrtana* (beginning the poem [after the prayer, etc.] with an account of the poet's family), *vaktavyārthapratijñāna* (a declaration of the subject matter of the work, *taṭprajoyanopanyāsa* (an assertion of the aims of the poem), *durjanasujanavarūpam* (a description of unfair and fair critics), and *kaviprasāṃsā*. On this last Bhoja has no comment, and only exemplifies it by a passage from a (lost) Prakrit poem named *Rāvaṇavijaya*: "A poet can see into a poet's heart by means of just a pair of his words, as if with two eyes, and know whether the work as a whole is turbid or clear."<sup>2</sup> In Bhoja the trope thus refers, apparently, to praise of poetry in general, not the celebration of individual poets.

The rhetorical device that, for complex reasons to be adumbrated below, names and praises individual poets begins, so far as I have been able to determine, with Bāṇa in the midseventh century. It is not to be found in Aśvaghoṣa or other early Buddhist poets, nor in Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, or Māgha, or the earlier plays. This is not to say that none of these poets ever refers or alludes to predecessors. Kālidāsa, as everyone will recall, has the *pāripārśvika* remark to the *sūtradhāra* at the beginning of *Mālavikāgnimitra*, "How can you ignore the work of the great poets—men like Dhāvaka [v.l. Bhāsa], Saumilla,<sup>3</sup> Kaviratna [v.l. Kaviputra]—and present the work of a contemporary poet like Kālidāsa?" to which the director answers with the memorable verse, "Not every work of literature is good just because it is old," etc. (*purāṇam ity eva na sādhu sarvam*, etc. 1.2). The implication of a canon of poetry and the intimation of the poet's place in it, which I'll suggest are part of what the *kaviprasāṃsā* does, are just perceptible in Kālidāsa's statement here; whereas the topos of newness (another central component of the ideology of Sanskrit

poetry that has been largely ignored) as we shall see often accompanies and informs the *kaviprasāṃsā*, and constitutes perhaps its precondition.

Prior to Bāṇa we find the trope used only more or less as Bhoja had described it. Subandhu, to cite just one instance, in the prelude to his masterpiece *Vāsavadattā*,<sup>4</sup> concentrates on the *durjanasujanavarūpam* (vss. 5-9), and appends to this a somewhat more specific observation on poetry and its greatest patron, which incidentally articulates a counter-discourse on novelty: "True poetry is dead, the 'modernists' are having their day [*navakā vilasanti*], it has become a free-for-all [lit. "who will not devour/follow whom?" *carati no kaṅkaḥ*], now that Vikramāditya, 'Sun of Power' on earth has, like a deep pond, been reduced to his fame/bed [mud] [i.e., has perished]" (vs. 10). The critique of critics as we find it in Subandhu, for its part, constitutes another important convention found throughout the tradition, from Bhavabhūti to Jagannātha, and one largely ignored in post-traditional analysis of Sanskrit poetry. Whatever else it might do it serves to situate a poem, at its very commencement, in a field of social no less than aesthetic power—that is, in the high-stakes game of patronage at the royal court. Again, this seems to me closely related to the trope *kaviprasāṃsā*, which after all is informed by current critical opinion, but the praise of specific poets themselves is absent in Subandhu.

Why the device originates when it does, why with Bāṇa, and why only in the *Harṣacarita* are questions for which I can provide no answers at present. That is the midseventh century that first sees the deployment of the trope seems to be corroborated by other evidence. It appears to be the case that no poet is named in any epigraphical record (aside from the composer of the epigraph itself) prior to the well-known Aihole inscription *śakasamvat* 556 (AD 634). Here the poet Ravikīrti, as is well-known, claims to have "attained by his poetic skill the fame of Kālidāsa and Bhāravi" (*kavitāsri-takālidāsabhāravikīrtiḥ* [sic], *EI* 6 [1901-2]: 7.18; a poem in dedication of a Jain temple built by the poet). (It was of course the patron of Ravikīrti, Pulakeśin II, who defeated

Harṣa, the patron of Bāṇa.) Whether I am right about Bāṇa's innovation, what is certain is that the shape, so to put it, of the praise-poem motif will not much change in the centuries following Bāṇa, so we do well to take note of his usage.

Bāṇa begins the poetic ecomium with *namaskāra* to Vyāsa ("Homage to the all knowing Brahmā of poets, Vyāsa, who by means of his speech made the pure [Mahābhārata], as [Brahmā] makes [Bhārata-] varṣa pure by means of the Sarasvatī river," vs. 3). This is followed by more general reflections on poetry (vs. 4, with their superficial chatter bad poets are like cuckoos; vs. 5, truly creative poets as *śarabhas*; vs. 6, a poet/thief may remain undetected for a while, but he'll be found out in the assembly of the wise; vs. 7-8, the "national geography" of literary styles, *mārgal rīti*—discussed here I believe for the first time—and of poetic *guṇas*). It is vs. 10ff. that the actual praise-poems commence. These celebrate eight authors (or texts): the *Vāsavadattā* (which crushes the pride of other poets, vs. 11) Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra (praised for his language, vs. 12); Sātavāhana (praised for his pure or authentic description, *jāti*, vs. 13); Pravarasena (vs. 14); Bhāsa (references to the qualities of the plays, vs. 15); Kālidāsa (praised for his sweet *sūktis*, vs. 16); the *Bṛhatkathā* (vs. 17); Āḍhyarāja (vs. 18)<sup>6</sup>

This catalogue is notable for several features that will be preserved and elaborated on in the later development of this convention (and for one that will not be). Consider first the genre variety represented here. Although Bāṇa seems to suggest (vs. 10) that he is concerned first and foremost with *ākhyāyikā* poets, he deviates from this in his list, which almost by design provides a survey of the great representatives of the great poetry: *itihāsa*, *Kathā*, *ākhyāyikā*, *mahākāvya*, *muktaka*, and *nāṭaka*. This genre diversity is paralleled in point of the literary languages the list comprises, which includes, besides Sanskrit, (Māhārāṣṭrī) Prakrit and Pāisācī. Among these no hierarchy whatever is established. The features for which poets or poems are praised are noticeably vague, and sometimes none whate-

ver is mentioned; in the case of Pravarasena, for instance, he is celebrated precisely on account of his celebrity (*kirtih pravarasenasya prayātā...param pāram*). Significant, too, are the absences. No Buddhist or Jain poet is mentioned, an omission that will be rectified in due course only for the latter and only in a rather limited sense. An enigmatic absence, the most "present absence," is that of Vālmīki. In the entire history of the *kaviprasamsā* so far as I can construct it only in Bāṇa's catalogue is his name wanting.

With this typology in mind, I want very briefly to chart several points—some more, some less prominent—in the historical development of the *kaviprasamsās*.

One of the more elaborate of the post-Bāṇa examples is that of the *Avantisundarikathā*, which I see no reason whatever not to ascribe to Daṇḍin (or more precisely put, to place no later than the end of the seventh century and in the Pallava cultural formation).<sup>6</sup> As is well-known, this is a very fragmentary text but fortunately the *kaviprasamsā* section is reasonably well preserved. Daṇḍin eulogizes Vālmīki (vs. 2 [fragmentary]: "From whose mouth came that sweet stream of honey called the *Rāmāyaṇa*"); Vyāsa (vs. 3: "Praise to the sage who even before him [i.e., before Vālmīki?] endowed human automata with consciousness by means of the magical art of the *Mahābhārata*");<sup>7</sup> Pāṇini (? vs. 4 [fragmentary]: "That which has been the instructor of words...."); Subandhu (vs. 6: he, "they say, escaped from the bondage of Bindusāra, but then Vatsarāja bound his heart...."); *Bṛhatkathā* (vs. 7); Śūdraka (vs. 9: "Having repeatedly conquered the world with his clear sword blade Śūdraka stabilized it with words relating to his own deeds"); Bhāsa (vs. 11: "Though departed Bhāsa remains [in the world] with his body that is his plays, with their limbs, the *mukha*, etc., well distributed, with their *lakṣaṇas* and *vṛttis* clearly revealed"); King Sarvasena<sup>8</sup> (vs. 12 [fragmentary]); vs. 13: "Fifty-six are the great poets who are authorities for us, men who show us the true things of this world [*sadvastudarsinah*],

standing before us like bridges [*setu*"]; Kālidāsa (vs. 15: he "purified the Vaidarbha path, and his words, totally under his control [*? nirvivaśāh*, dub.], were spread with liquid honey"); Nārāyaṇa (vs. 17: "He who was able to cross through the three worlds with a mere three steps/words, is it surprising that he, Nārāyaṇa, could have done so with three *kāvya*s?"); "the first poet" (vs. 18 [name missing]); Mayūra (vs. 19: "It is amazing that though pierced by the sharp-headed Bāṇa/arrow, Mayūra remained unperturbed and did not give up his playful expressiveness"); Dāmodara (vs. 22 [fragmentary]: "the lovely sound born from the flute of Dāmodara can captivate even animals"). (Little in the remaining verses of the prelude is intelligible.)

Vākpatirāja, *Gauḍavaho* (ca. AD 730), provides by way of introduction some general remarks on poetry (vs. 66: Poets can make the real unreal, the unreal hyper-real, and the real as real can be [just the opposite of Prajāpati];<sup>9</sup> vs. 84: The first poets, thanks to their times, could wander on paths without constraint; vs. 85: They saw everything on these paths, it is true; but if one breaks boundaries now, everything can appear new). In the course of the poem itself (vss. 798-800) he praises the poets Kamalāyudha, Bhavabhūti, Jvalanamitra, Kuntideva, the "Raghukāra", Subandhu, and Hārīcand[r]ja.

In the fascinating inaugural work of old Kannada literature, the *Kavirājamārga* ascribed to King Nṛpatuṅga Amoghavarṣa (AD 814-77),<sup>10</sup> Kannada prose writers are praised (1.29: Vimala, Udaya, Nāgārjuna, Jayabandhu, Durvinīta), and, as the greatest of the Sanskrit prose stylists, Bāṇa (1.25-26; mention is made of the *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī*). The list of the most "vaunted [Sanskrit] poets, who made possible the creation of great poetry", is "Gupāsūri (?), Nārāyaṇa, Bhāravi, Kālidāsa, and Māgha, the greatest poets in terms of the production of *mahākāvya*s" (1.31).<sup>11</sup> This is followed by a catalogue of the best Kannada writers of verse:

Parama Śrīvijaya, Kavīśvarapaṇḍita, Chandraloka-pāla (?), "their pre-eminent exposition of the matter of a poem became the defining mark of poetry from then on for evermore (*niratīśayavastuvistaraviracane lakṣyaṃ tadādya kāvyakkemḍum*).

The numerous *kavistutis* of Rājaśekhara (ca. AD 900), a genre in which he seems to have specialized, will have to await analysis elsewhere, for they are preserved largely in anthologies and not in his literary works.<sup>12</sup> I want to note here only a passage in the *Kāvyaṃimāmsā* where Rājaśekhara cites what he purports to be an ancient *sabhā* inscription from the court at Ujjain, where "Kālidāsa, Meṅṭha, Amara, Rūpa, Sūra [sic], Bhāravi, Haricandra, Candragupta, were tested" in poetry (p. 55). Despite some obvious difficulties for the positivist in this account, its *literary-historiographical interest* as such is something we do well to register, as I suggest below. Dhanapāla's *Tilakamañjarī* (composed at the court of Muñja of Dhārā, ca. AD 970), begins with a long praise of poets, including: Vālmiki and Kānīna (=Vyāsa) (vs. 20); "He who took a drop from the *Bṛhatkathā* and made it into Sanskrit tales" (vs. 21); Pravarasena (vs. 22); [the author of the] *Taraṅgavatī* [=Pālinna] (vs. 23); Jivadeva (vs. 24); Kālidāsa (vs. 25); Bāṇa (vss. 26-7); Māgha and Bhāravi (vs. 28); Bhavabhūti (vs. 30); Vākpatirāja (vs. 31); Bhadrakīrti, "the Crestjewel of the Śvetāmbara sect" (32); Yāyāvāra (Rājaśekhara, vs. 33); Mahendrasūri [?] (vs. 34); Rudra, author of the *Trailokyasundarī* (vs. 35); Kardamarāja (vs. 36).

The great old Kannada *campū Sāhasabhīmavijaya* (or *Gadāyuddha*) of Ranna, written in AD 982 in honor of *yuvārāja* Iṅgavabedaṅga Satyaśraya of the reconstituted Cālukyan dynasty, provides a *kavipraśamsā* of the two great epic poets, and then praises Kālidāsa for his "gentle verse," and Bāṇa for his skill in writing prose:

negaḷdudu rāmāyaṇamum

negaḷdudu bhāratamum ā mahākavigaḷinā

negaḷdar vyāsar vālmī-

kigaḷene negḷdubhayakavigaḷemagabhivandyar (1.8)  
mṛdupadyaracaneyoḷ kā-  
ḷidāsanuṃ gadyaracaneyoḷ bāṇanumuṃ  
kāda kavigaḷenisi negaḷdar  
adaḷim satkavigaḷ irvar emag abhivandyar (1.9)

*Udayasundarī* of Soṭṭala (ca. AD 1050) in the first chapter pays homage to Bāṇa and Abhinanda, in the eighth chapter to Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Bhartṛmenṭha, Kālidāsa, Bāṇa, Bhavabhūti, Vākpatirājasūri, Abhinanda, Yāyāvara, Kumāradāsa, Bhāsa, and Soṭṭala himself.<sup>13</sup>

One of the greatest of Kashmiri biographical *mahākāvya*s, the long-ignored *Prthivīrājavijaya* (ca. 1190; anon., though the author may have been Jayānaka, cf. 12.63, 68),<sup>14</sup> opens with a verse (vs. 3) in praise of Vālmiki (calling the *Rāmāyaṇa* a poem "as true as the Veda", cf. the com. Jonarāja on 1.5), eulogizes Vyāsa (vs. 4), then, it would appear, Bhāsa (vs. 5), and again the *Ādikavi* (vs. 31). The prelude contains in addition a sustained account of *durjanasujanavarūpam* (a kind of *apologia pro poesia sua*, perhaps a Kashmiri fashion; compare *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* 1.9-24).

In his *Āryāsaptasatī* (ca. 1200, at the court of Lakṣmanasena of Bengal) Govardhana begins his *kavistuti* with Vālmiki (praised for his *alaṅkāras* and colorful sounds, vs. 30; cf. vs. 32, "With the *Rāmāyaṇa* available, what need for any other poem?"); proceeds to Vyāsa ("His words are the essence of the world, and his *Bhārata* is the reason Sarasvatī is called Bhārati," vs. 31); and Guṇādhyā (vs. 33), of the three of whom he then asserts "Sarasvatī is like the Gaṅgā, divided up into three streams, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Bhārata*, and the *Bṛhatkathā*" (vs. 34). Kālidāsa is then the subject of a verse out of the mold ("The words Kālidāsa are like love-making: both give pleasure even at the time of instruction [when we are learning Kālidāsa and learning lovemaking], since they are filled with/are like the cooing of a woman, which is soft, sweet, and full of meaning,"

vs. 35); this is followed by pun-filled eulogies of Bhavabhūti (vs. 36) and Bāṇa (vs. 37)

By contrast, in his *Gītagovinda* (possibly also ca. 1200, at the court of Lakṣmanasena of Bengal; I ignore for now the problem of the authenticity of the verses), Jayadeva focuses in the one *kaviprasamsā* verse on his contemporaries, mentioning Umāpatidhara, (Jayadeva), Śaraṇa Govardhana, Dhoyi (1.4).

The *Kirtikaumudī* of Someśvara (ca. AD 1250)<sup>15</sup> provides in vss. 1.7ff. *kavistutis* on Vālmiki, Vyāsa, Kālidāsa, Māgha, Bhāravi, Bāṇa, Dhanapāla, Bilhaṇa, Hemasūri, Nīlakaṇṭha, Prahlādanadeva, Bhoja, Muñja, Naracandra, Vijayasena, Subhaṭa, Harihara, Yaśovīra.

These examples of the *kaviprasamsā* forming part of the prelude of a poem should suffice to give a sense of the scope and character of the trope. It is in fact likely to have been an even more frequently followed convention than any survey can indicate. This is suggested by the fact that this type of verse later was excerpted to constitute a subsection (typically *kaviprasamsāvraja*) in the great medieval literary anthologies, starting with the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* (AD 1110-30, at the Jagaddala monastery, E. Bengal). But I leave these out of consideration here since they add little of either conceptual or historical value for the genre of the *kaviprasamsā*, except for those verses—some of them suggestive of the larger cultural issues—of a poet's *self-praise*. I would call attention here only to one of these verses (it is ascribed in the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* [1733] to the great Pāla poet Yogeśvara, in the *Saduktikarṇāmrta* [vs. 2129] to Abhinanda): "That path where Bāṇa once had daily passed /and which again was found by Bhavabhūti;/which came to be well worn by Kamalāyudha,/and long was used by Keśaṭa;/ the dust of which was honored by the touch/of Śrī Vākpatirāja:/by grace of God that path still opens/to a certain man of genius" (trans. Ingalls). One can easily imagine such a verse located in the prelude to a collection of the poet's writings.

## II

How can we theorize the "poems in praise of poets" that form a basic convention of so much Indian poetry over a period of perhaps 600 years? I see at least three potentially suggestive ways of thinking about it: The *kaviprasamsā* is one form that *literary history* has taken in early South Asia; it is one of the key mechanisms of *canon-creation* and *classic-creation*; and it is part of a strategy of the self-canonization of the work that the *kaviprasamsā* introduces.

The *alamkāraśāstra* originated, as many other cultural discourses in early India, as a prescriptive discipline. It is not, I believe, until the Kashmiris in the eighth century began to explore, not what poetry should be, but what it is that *ālamkārikas* began to cite actually existing poetry in their analyses (Vāmana seems to be the first to do so). This (in the widest sense) historical concern, however, was never developed very far; *sāhityaśāstra* remained interested more in how poetry worked, and less in where it came from, or when.

The poets, however, for their part clearly saw themselves as situated within a historical progression—not necessarily as a progression of linearity, but a historical sequence nonetheless. (Do practitioners typically have this diachronic interest, in contrast to the synchronic focus of theoreticians?) It is perhaps this same "historical" spirit that accounts for the concept of the conservation or circulation of poetic energy that we find in later poetry, as in Rājasekhara's account of his creative genealogy in *Bālārāmāyaṇa* (1.16): "Long ago there was a poet who arose from within an anthill; he then became Bhartṛmenṭha; then had the name Bhavabhūti, and now is become Rājasekhara."<sup>16</sup> The *kaviprasamsā* was the mechanism by which Indian poets gave expression to the tradition, and thereby wrote their own history of literature. This is a literary history that, while sometimes uncertain in its chronology (witness the assemblage at the court in Ujjain according to Rājasekhara and of course later the impossibilities of the *Bhojaprabandha*), is nevertheless often remarkably adequate in terms of

chronology (as in *Avantīśundarikathā*, *Dhanapāla*, or *Someśvara*).<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, this literary history is that of a *multilingual* literature, but a multilinguality that is limited. There is no narrow "Sanskrit" literary history, but rather Sanskrit-Prakrit-Apabhraṃśa literary history, a multilinguality that of course the *sāhityaśāstra* tradition had affirmed from as early as Bhāmaha (*Kāvyaśāstra* 1.16; cf. Namisādhu on *Rudraṭa Kāvyaśāstra*, p. 13; *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.32). By contrast, however, *deśbhāṣā* literature—literature such as certainly existed (in Kannada, Tamil, and elsewhere) that is not makable or consumable except within the narrow confines of the region—is so far no part of this history, except in *deśbhāṣā*-texts themselves (witness the *Kavirājamārga*). For these literary historians, something gets to count as "literature" only if it communicates at some transregional, indeed "protonational" level; it is *Indian* literature *avant la lettre*. Another, more cultural-critical way to think of literary language at this period is that "literature" signified the use of *learned* language, it was thus a function of the *privilege of literacy*, and the very means of *reproducing* that privilege. (This was to change, to some degree, with the explosion of the vernacularization of subcontinental literature from the beginning of the second millennium on).

This history of literature "from the inside" is at the same time the creation of a *canon* of literature. The canon of early Indian literature, self-evidently, is not the invention of hegemonic European Orientalists or nineteenth-century printers (who served merely to confirm and objectify the tradition), but rather of Indian poets themselves actively engaged in the arenas of cultural (and social) power that literature represents. Canons can mean and effect several things. First, canonization through the *kaviprasamsā* works to create the fact and the idea of the *classic*. This is a complex and important, if rarely discussed issue in the cultural history of early India, and I can only adumbrate the question here.

I noted already in reference to Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* that the injunction to "make it new" was to become central

to Sanskrit poetry. Bāṇa suggests something of the same in the introduction to *Kādambarī* (vs. 9, *haranti kaṃ na...navaiḥ padārthair upapāditāḥ kathāḥ*). *Navatā* functioned as an important evaluative criterion for Anandavardhana (*Dhvan-yāloka* 4.6-7 15ff.), while Rājaśekhara more stipulatively asserts, "The great poet is the one who can find something new to say, some new verbal expression, some new signifi- cation, who writes out something first-time" (*Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* p. 62).<sup>18</sup> At the same time, however, there seems to have been a pronounced counter-discourse. I've already mention- ed Subandhu, who in *Vāsavadattā* has harsh words for the "moderns"; one might cite as well Vallāṇa (an intriguing poet to whom fate has been unkind in what it chose to preserve of his work): *arvācīnavacaḥprapañcasukhinām duḥśikṣi- tānām puraḥ*, etc. ("[Why display your precious treasures] before boors, who are only interested in the babble of the moderns" [*Saduktikarṇāmṛta* 2140]). I don't want to exaggerate the division between tradition and innovation in literature; these tendencies are far more complementary than reductive (and selective) quotation might lead us to believe. But different conventions serve to establish (relative) predominance, and the *kaviprasaṃsā* does this effectively for the traditionalism of Sanskrit poetry. It not only celebrates the best in the tradition but thereby *creates, constitutes* the tradition, with its models and paradigms. What also merits comment, however, is how rarely we learn in the *kaviprasaṃ- sās* anything substantial about why a given poet deserves his place as a classic. Poets continue to transmit a list of "classics" simply because they are classic; reproduction is its own justification. Perhaps an instance of the self-mysti- fication of classicism, wherein status-as-classic is its own self-constituting value?

Canons, to be sure, simultaneously create margins or boundaries, making claims for cultural ascendancy of what is inside the boundary, and devaluing what is outside. "Literature" for the *kaviprasaṃsā*, at least as we discover it *in situ*, in the literary compositions of the poets themselves (and not the anthologies), does not include, for one thing, Buddhist writing. No one, for example, ever mentions

Dharmakīrti, who to judge from his extant fragments possessed the most individual voice in seventh-century Indian poetry. This silence is all the more remarkable in the case of Aśvaghōṣa (who may have invented the *mahā- kāvya*), Mātṛceta (probably the single most prominent hymnist of Indian antiquity), Āryaśūra and so on.<sup>19</sup> Jain writing attains canonical status only among writers who are themselves Jain (e.g., Dhanapāla), whereas women's writing goes altogether by the board. (Here the anthologies do imply a more complex picture; see for example Rājaśekhara's *kavistutis*, especially the *Sūktimuktāvalī* of Jalhaṇa, pp. 42ff., vss. 91-96). But more extensive inspection of materials, and some correlation with what we can figure out about pedagogical practices—for "canon", though it may, as in India, be the self-fashioning of the creative tradition, remains above all *what gets taught*—might show far more negotiating in the construction and revision of the "classical canon". Then again, there will remain absences that don't yield so easily to sociological explanation—especially puzzling is that of the two most important *muktaka* poets of all Indian antiquity, Bhartṛhari and Amaru.<sup>20</sup>

In introducing a literary work a praise-poem not only places the author in some kind of literary tradition, and thereby creates history and makes a canon. At the same time this trope of genealogy and canonicity aims to indicate the *author's own place* within history and to articulate a claim for space within this canon; and it does so by virtue of its very presence as prelude to his work (the *svaprasaṃsā* of a Yogeśvara or a Murāri (SRK 50.4) is therefore redundant). *Kaviprasaṃsā*, accordingly, is not only literature-as-the-practice-of-literary-history, canon-and classic-creation, or the tracing of a "horizon of expectation" and index of reading mode (that is, "read me as you've read these other poets"), but equally important a technique, by reason of its presence in his book and his own affiliation with the tradition thereby postulated, of the author's gesture toward self-canonization and the glory (*yaśas*) that is one of his principal aims (*Kāvya-prakāśa* 1.2).

## Notes and References

1. Ed. G. R. Josyer (Mysore : Coronation Press, 1963), Vol. 2, pp. 472-3. Most of this discussion is absent in the *Sarasvatikanṭhābharaṇa* (ed. Kedarnath Sarma [Vnranasi : Chaukhambha, 1987], pp. 305-7).
2. Cf. also Hemacandra, *Kavyānuśāsana* (ed. Parikh and Kulkarni [Bombay : Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, pp. 456 and 512.
3. Somila is the author of the *Sūdrakathā*, which is cited in Bhojadeva's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. Cf. also *Sūktimuktāvalī* of Jalhaṇa, p. 43, vs. 49, where in a verse attributed to Rājaśekhara "Rāmīla and Somila" are mentioned as joint authors of the *Sūdrīkathā* (sic).
4. Ed. R. V. Krishnamachariar (Srirangam : Śrī Vani Vilas Press, 1906).
5. Of Haricand[r]a, who is mentioned in other *kaviprasāmsās*, nothing is known. The Prakrit *ākhyāyikā* of Āḍhyarāja is cited in the *Sarasvatikanṭhābharaṇa*; four stanzas are attributed to him in *Sattasā* (66, 169, 219, 235).
6. Pace Lienhard and others, (Siegfried Lienhard, *A History of Classical Poetry : Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit*. [Wiesbaden : Otto Harrassowitz, 1884], pp. 234-5). I see I am in agreement with V. Raghavan. *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (Madras : Punarvasu, 1978), p. 822.
7. martyayantreṣu caitanyaṃ mahābhāratavidyayā | arpayāmasa tatpurvaṃ yas tasmai munaye namaḥ || (i.e., human beings who theretofore had been mere mechanical entities ?).
8. This poet is to be distinguished from Pravarasena, cf. *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* vol. 2, p. 474.
9. ṭhiyam aṭṭhiyam va dīśai aṭṭhiyam pariṭṭhiyam va paḍihai | jaha-saṃṭhiyam ca dīśai sukaiṇa imāom payāo || (sthitam asthitam iva dṛśyate asthitam pariṣṭhitam pratibhāti | yathāsaṃsthitam ca dṛśyate kavīnām etaḥ padavyaḥ ||).
10. Ed. K. Krishnamoorthy (Bangalore : IBH, 1983).
11. The verse in Kannaḍa runs: praṇṭa-guṇasūri-nārāyaṇā-bhāravi-kāḷidāsa-māghādigaḷi | gaṇidadoḷe mahākāvya-praṇayaman āgisidar amaḷa-kavi-vṛṣabharkaḷi ||
12. "Numerous", that is, if we are to believe the ascriptions in the anthologies. See for instance *Sūktimuktāvalī* of Jalhaṇa pp. 42ff., vs. 45 (Pāṇinī); vs. 46 (Vararuci, author of *Kaṇṭhābharaṇa*), vss. 58-9 (Bhāravi and Māgha); vs. 60 (Kālidāsa) vss. 64-5 (Bāṇa); vs. 68 (Mayūra); vs. 69 (Dhroṇa [Ghroṇa ?]); vs. 70 (Divākara); vs. 71 (Trilocana, author of *Parthavijaya*); vs. 72 (Gaṇapati, author of *Mahāmōḍa*); vs. 73 (Pradyumna); vs. 74 (Daṇḍin); vs. 76 (Kumārādāsa); vs. 77 (Ratnākara); vs. 78 Ānadavardhana); vs. 81 (Bhīmaṣa, the king of Kālaūjara who wrote a play called *Svapnadaśanana*); vs. 82 (Kalacuri); vss. 83-4 (Akāḷajalada); vs. 85 (Gonandana); vs. 86 (Kulaśekhavararma); vs. 87 (Dhanaūjaya); vs. 88 (Surānanda); vs. 89 (Tarala); vs. 90 (Śaṅkara); vs. 91 (Śīlābhāṭṭārikā [and Bāṇa]); vs. 92 (Vaikaṇanītamba); vs. 93 (Vijayāṅkā); vs. 94 (Lāṭi? Prabhu[r]devī?); vs. 95 (Subhadra); vs. 96 (Vijjā kā)

13. See the introduction to *Kāvyamīmāṃsā of Rājaśekhara* (ed. C. D. Dalal et al. Baroda : Oriental Institute, 1934], third ed.), p. xxviii.
14. Ed. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha and Chandradhar Sharma Guleri (Ajmer : Vedic Yantralaya, 1941).
15. Ed. Puṇyavijaya Sūri (Bombay : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1961). Singhi Jain Series 32.
16. Cited with variants also in *SRK* 50, 22 (1719) and in *Sūktimuktāvalī* p. 44, vs. 61. Cf. also the phenomenon of "Abhinavakālidāsa", Abhinavabhūti", or in the South, especially Karnāṭaka, "Kumāravāyasa," "Bālavālmiki", etc.
17. It is noteworthy, too, that so little of this literary history has been lost to us. Almost miraculously—though in fact it is no miracle but testimony to the longterm historical reverence for literature in India—the vast majority of this literature is extant; how few are the great texts (the Pāisāci *Bṛhatkathā*, Bhartṛmenṭha's *Hayagrīvavadha*; the work of Kamalāyudha or of Haricandra—and alas, the collected poems of Dharmakīrti) that we are missing.
18. śabdārthoktiṣu yaḥ paśyed iha kṛmcana nūtanam | ullikhet kīmcana prācyam manyatām sa mahākaviḥ || The third *pāda* is not altogether clear to me (perhaps "[but] suggests something old") See also *SRK* vs. 1729 (Dharmakīrti strikes out on a new path); Vākpatirāja, *Gauḍavaho* 84-5 (noticed above); cf. Rājaśekhara *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* p. 62.9, where he cites this verse); Bilhaṇa, *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* 1.15 : "To pass beyond the old styles/ways from a superabundance of inventiveness of language merits the highest praise—as much as do the breasts of a beautiful woman that burst her bodice for fullness" (pauḍhiprakarṣeṇa purāṇaritivyatikramaḥ ślāghyatamaḥ padānām).
19. Is the "Sūra" (sic) of Rājaśekhara's account of the Ujjain *sabhā* the Buddhist poet? As would be expected he is mentioned (as "Sūra") in *SRK* 50.1, along with Subandhu, the "author of the *Raghu [vaṇśa]*," Dākṣi-putra, Haricandra, Bhāravi, and Bhavabhūti (though Aśvagoṣa is not).
20. Bhartṛhari, so far as I can see, is not mentioned anywhere in *kaviprasāmsās*, "Amaru" (despite Ānanda's enchantment with and use of his work) is commemorated in only one praisepoem—written by his most illustrious commentator, Arjunadeva (cf. *Sūktimuktāvalī* p. 48, vs. 101).