Similes in the *Avadānakalpalatā*

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1. Introduction The *Avadānakalpalatā* (Av-klp), a collection of Buddhist legends in 108 chapters, was written by the Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra (ca. 990–1066 CE). The thirty-first chapter of this work is devoted to the depiction of the legend of Kalyāṇakārin. Of the 70 verses that constitute the legend, verse 32 deserves our attention from the point of view of poetics. The text goes as follows:

Av-klp 31.32: *lalanāsulabhāṃ lajjāṃ mamedaṃ tvadgatam manaḥ | akṛtajñāna iva prītim na saṃsmarati mānada ||* (O benevolent one! Just as one who is not grateful for others’ kindness never recollects the kindness, similarly my mind, filled with thoughts of you, never recollects the feeling of shame women should have.)

Kṣemendra uses a simile comparing the human mind (“manas”) and a feeling of shame (“lajjā”) to one who is not grateful (“akṛtajñāḥ”) and kindness (“prītim”), respectively. According to Sanskrit poetic theorists, a simile must be constructed so that the standard of comparison can agree in gender, number, and case with the subject of comparison. In the simile in question, the word *manas* is neuter in gender, while the word *akṛtajñāḥ* is masculine in gender. Why does Kṣemendra not construct the simile within the confines of the rules laid down by theorists? This is the question this paper aims to answer.

2. Rasa In *Mālatīmādhava* 9.10, the dramatist Bhavabhūti (eighth-century CE) employs a simile in which the standard of comparison does not agree in gender and number with the subject of comparison. The text goes as follows:

*Mālatīmādhava* 9.10: *sarasakusumāsāir āṅgāir anāṇgamahājyārasā, ciraṃ aviratamāthī sūdhaḥ pratikṣanadārunāḥ | trṇam iva tatāḥ prāṇān moktuṃ mano vidhṛtaṃ tayā, kim aparām ato nirvīḍham yat karārpanāsāhasam ||* (In her body as delicate as a fresh flower she endured [the suffering of] a raging fever of love, which continuously afflicted her, and which came to her at every moment. She then resolved to give up her life, just as one resolves to give up a blade of grass. I do not know what else to say other than that she had the temerity to perform a marriage ceremony.)

Here, the dramatist compares a human life (“prāṇān”) to a blade of grass (“trṇam”). The
word *prāṇān* is masculine in gender and plural in number, whereas the word *tṛṇam* is neuter in gender and singular in number. It is interesting to note that Jagaddhara (thirteenth- to fourteenth-century CE), one of the commentators on the *Mālatīmādhava*, advances the view that the simile cannot be regarded as defective because the disagreement in gender and number is acceptable due to poetic sentiment (*rasa*).\(^3\) Unfortunately, the commentator does not explain which sentiment is suggested in *Mālatīmādhava* 9.10. We can nevertheless find the key to answering this question in the stage direction and the preceding dialogue between Mādhava and Makaranda. The text runs as follows:

Mālatīmādhava 305.1–306.4: *tataḥ praviśato mādhavamakarandau*  
Makaranda | *sakarunam niśvasya* | *na yatra pratyaśām anupatati no vā rahayati, pratiksiptam cetaḥ praviśati ca mohāndhatamasam | *akincit kurvānāḥ paśava iva tasyām vayam aho, vidhātur vāmatvād vipadi parivartīmahā ime* | 9.8 ||  
Mādhava | *hā priye mālati kvāsi* | *katham avijñātatattvam adbhutaṃ jhaṭiti paryavasitāsi | *nanv akarunye prasīda sambhāvaya mām*  
(Then enter Mādhava and Makaranda.)

Makaranda: (sighing piteously) "Like cattle, being unable to find a way of achieving our intention, we, towards whom the Supreme God feels hostility, suffer adversity, in which the hope [that Mālatī is still alive] neither creeps into our hearts, nor fades away, and in which our hearts sink into the darkness of delusion."

Mādhava: "O my dear Mālatī! Where are you? I wonder, why did you, keeping the truth from me, suddenly leave me behind? O cruel one! Please console me!"

Mādhava, the hero, searching for his beloved Mālatī in vain, is in the depths of despair. Let us then turn our attention to dramatic theory. The dramaturge Dhanamjaya (ca. tenth-century CE) wrote the *Daśarūpa*, a treatise on Hindu dramaturgy. The fourth chapter of the treatise is devoted to the definition of the eight sentiments listed by Bharata, the author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The definition of a tragic sentiment (*karuṇa*) is given as follows:

*Daśarūpa* 4.75–76: *istāṇāśād aniṣṭāpteḥ śokātmā karuṇo 'nu tam | niḥśvāsocchvāsaruditastambhaprabhā pralpitādayah || svāpāpaśmāradināyādhiranālasanabharavanamāḥ | viśādajadatontmadacintādyā vyabhicārināḥ* | (Haas 1912: 146: "The Pathetic Sentiment (*karuṇa*), with [the Permanent State] Sorrow (*śoka*) as its essence, [results] from loss of something cherished and from attaining of something undesired. In consequence of it [there occur] heaving of sighs, drawing of sighs, weeping, paralysis, lamentation, and the like [as Consequents]; the Transitory States [occurring in connection with it] are Sleeping, Epilepsy, Depression, Sickness, Death, Indolence, Agitation, Despair, Stupor, Insanity, Anxiety, and so forth.")

One can find the word *niśvasya* (“sighing”), which is, according to Dhanamjaya, used to de-
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scribe the symptom (anubhāva) of a tragic sentiment, in the stage direction preceding Mālatīmādhava 9.8. It must also be remembered that the hero suffers from the loss of his beloved (iṣṭanāśa), which is the determinant (vibhāva) of the same sentiment. We can therefore say that a tragic sentiment is suggested in Mālatīmādhava 9.10.

The dramatist Rājaśekhara wrote the drama Bálarāmāyaṇa at the request of King Mahendrapāla (ninth- to tenth-century CE). Of the eighteen similes employed in the drama, two are not constructed so that the standard of comparison can agree in gender with the subject of comparison. Let us look at the similes in question:

Bálarāmāyaṇa 7.43: ihārṇavamahārṇassu potapātram iva sthiram | drutam ārabhyatāṃ setur akharvah parvatottamaiah || (Just as one builds a durable ship, similarly you should immediately build a huge bridge made of the best of mountains over rough water.)

Here, a bridge (“setur”) is compared to a ship (“potapātram”). The word setur is masculine in gender, whereas the word potapātram is neuter in gender.

Bálarāmāyaṇa 10.12: nādau na madhye nānte ca sītāyā havyalehini | śuddhasyeva suvarṇasya jāto varṇaviparyayaḥ || (Just as a piece of refined gold never changes color in a furnace, similarly Sītā never changed color in the middle of the fire from beginning to end.)

The dramatist compares Sītā (“sītāyāḥ”) to a piece of gold (“suvarṇasya”). While the word sītāyāḥ is feminine in gender, the word suvarṇasya is neuter in gender. Let us next consider the definition of a marvelous sentiment (adbhuta), as given in Daśarūpa 4.72cd–4.73. The text goes as follows:

Daśarūpa 4.72cd–4.73: atilokaiḥ padārthaiḥ syād vismayātmā raso ’dbhutaḥ || karmāsya sādhuvādāś ruvepathusvedagadgadāḥ | harśāvegadhṛtiprāyā bhavanti vyabhicāriṇaḥ || (Haas 1912: 145: “The Marvelous Sentiment (adbhuta), whose essence is [the Permanent State] Astonishment (vismaya), [is caused] by supernatural things [as Determinants]; it has as its result (karma) [i.e. as Consequents] exclamations of surprise, weeping, trembling, sweating, and stammering; the Transitory States [occurring in connection with it] are generally Joy, Agitation and Contentment.”)

It is difficult to answer the question of which sentiment is suggested in Bálarāmāyaṇa 7.43 and 10.12. Attention needs to be paid to the context of the verses in question. Let us take a glimpse at the stage direction immediately following Bálarāmāyaṇa 7.43. The text runs as follows:

Bálarāmāyaṇa 191.20: sarve vismayānte || (All are astonished.)
We can find the word *vismayante* (“[All] are astonished”), which is used to describe the basic emotion (*sthāyibhāva*) of a marvelous sentiment. Next is an examination of the dialogue between Lāṅkā and Alakā that immediately follows Bālarāmāyaṇa 10.12. The text goes as follows:

Bālarāmāyaṇa 282.21–283.5: Lāṅkā | *anucidaārī* hudavaho jaṃ janaataṇayāsuddhikāraṇam bhedi?
---|---
Alakā | sakhi sarvāṅghairanyayamathā | *śuddhāyāḥ* ka ivātra śodhanavidhiḥ svāh saindhavānām apām., pūtām paripūtaye kim aparām tat te sakhi manyate | lāvanyāmṛtasāraṇibhir nirvāṇarocirlo, nirdagdhum kalayāpi *hanta* na śikhī śaktō bhavan maithilim || 10.13 ||
Lāṅkā: “We are amazed at the fire, which purified the daughter of the king of Mithila [from sin]. did.”
Alakā: “O my friend endowed with golden limbs! How indeed, in this world, one can purify the woman free from sin from sins? How else one can purify the limpid waters of the Ganges? Therefore, I, who is none other than your friend, suppose, alas, the daughter of the king of Mithila could not be burned in the fire, whose flame was extinguished by the stream of ambrosia which is none other than dazzling beauty.”

The dramatist employs the words *anucidaārī* (“working a miracle”) and *hanta* (“alas”), which are used to describe the determinant and the symptom of a marvelous sentiment, respectively. Thus, we may say that there is theoretical justification for the use of a simile in which the standard of comparison does not agree in gender or number with the subject of comparison.

3. **The Sentiment Suggested in Av-klp 31.32**

The fact that dramatists give greater importance to suggesting a sentiment than to constructing a simile within the confines of poetic rules points to the possibility that Kṣemendra suggests a particular sentiment in Av-klp 31.32. Before considering this possibility, it is important to grasp the definition and classification of an erotic sentiment, as given in Daśarūpa 4.45,47–48. The text runs as follows:

Daśarūpa 4.45,47–48: *ramyadeśakālākālaśabhogādisevanaiḥ* | *pramodātmā* ratiḥ saiva yūnor anyonyaraktayoh | *prahrṣyamāṇā* śṛṅgāro madhurāṅgavicesittaivaḥ | ayogo viprayogaś ca sambhogaś ceti sa tridhā | *tatrāyogo* ’nurāge pi navayor ekacittayoḥ | pāratantryena daivād vā viprakarṣād asamgamah || *daśāvasthaḥ* sa tatrādāv abhilāṣo ’tha cintanam | smṛtir guṇakathodvegapralāponmāda samjvarāḥ | jadatā maraṇaṃ ceti duravasthaṃ yathottaram ||
(Haas 1912: 130: “Love (*rati*) is essentially delight [manifested] in fondness for lovely places, arts, occasions, garments, pleasures, and the like. That [feeling] on the part of two young persons mutually enamored, [which is] gladsome [and manifested] by tender gestures, [constitutes] the Erotic Sentiment (*śṛṅgāra*).” Haas 1912: 131–132: “[The Erotic Sentiment] is of three kinds: Privation (*ayoga*), Separation (*viprayoga*), and Union (*sambhoga*). Of these, Privation (*ayoga*) is impossibility of being united on the part of two young persons with but a single thought, because of
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their separation through dependence on others by fate, even though a passion exists [between them]. It has ten stages. At first [there occurs] in it Longing (*abhilāṣa*), then Anxiety (*cintana*), Recollection (*smṛti*), Enumeration of [the loved one’s] Merits (*guṇakathā*), Distress (*udvega*), Raving (*pralāpa*), Insanity (*unmāda*), Fever (*saṃjvara*), Stupor (*jaḍatā*), and Death (*maraṇa*); those are the unfortunate stages in due order.”

It is difficult to find words indicating that an erotic sentiment is suggested in Av-klp 31.32. Instead, we turn our attention to Av-klp 31.27–28. The text goes as follows:

Av-klp 31.27–28: *tasya gopapateḥ patnī gītāvīṇāvicakṣaṇāḥ | paśyantī rājatanayaṃ prayayau sābhilāṣatātāṃ || kṛtopadeśā satataṃ kuṭilā vīṇaye vā sa | mūrcchantī navarāgeṇa sotkaṇṭhā samacintayet ||* ([27] Seeing the prince, the wife of the leader of the cowherds, who was versed in singing a song and playing a lute, felt a sexual desire for him. [28] [The notes of] his lute seemed as if they had caused her, to whom [her husband] always gave advice, to lose all shame. Being unable to practice discretion because of newly aroused sexual passion, she, longing for the prince, went into deep thought.)

Here, one can find the words *abhilāṣa* (“a sexual desire”) and *vīṇayā* “[the notes of] a lute”). The former is used to describe the first stage of the development of an erotic sentiment experienced by lovers suffering privation (*ayogaśṛṅgāra*), and the latter is used to describe the determinant of an erotic sentiment. There can be, therefore, little doubt that Kṣemendra suggests an erotic sentiment in Av-klp 31.32.

4. Conclusion  A brief survey of examples of similes with defective constructions leads one to the following conclusion: (1) From Jagaddhara’s commentary on *Mālatīmādhava* 9.10 one can infer the existence of a literary convention that allows a poet not to adhere to the strict rules concerning the construction of a simile on the condition that a sentiment is suggested within a given context. (2) In *Bālarāmāyaṇa* 7.43 and 10.12, where a marvelous sentiment is suggested, the dramatist Rājaśekhara uses a simile in which the standard of comparison does not agree in gender with the subject of comparison. This fact reduces the possibility that the literary convention had died out at the beginning of the tenth century CE. (3) The fact that Kṣemendra does not construct a simile in accordance with poetic rules does not necessarily mean that he neglects to satisfy the requirements for the construction of a simile. A plausible interpretation is that, the poet, in accordance with the convention of dramatists, gives priority to the suggestion of a sentiment over the construction of a simile within the confines of poetic rules.

In classical Sanskrit poetry, a poet, observing prosodic and grammatical rules, must not only suggest sentiments but also adorn his text with ornaments of sound (*śabda*) and meaning
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(artha). After the late classical period, in which regulations left little room for poets to deviate from the norm, the complexity of the rules concerning the use of ornaments of speech increased. Presumably it was not an easy task for a poet to use ornaments of speech in accordance with the rules laid down by poetic theorists, which resulted in the convention that priority is given to sentiments over figures of speech. The idea behind this convention seems to be that stylistic defects cannot be perceived by the audience who, feeling deep empathy for characters, primarily enjoys the experience of a variety of sentiments suggested in a drama.

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Notes

1) For a Japanese translation of the thirty-first chapter of the Av-klp, see Hikita and Ōba 2015.
2) See Yamasaki 2016, 41[374]–44[371].
3) Jagaddhara on Mālatimādhava 9.10 (381.9–10): \textit{trnam ivety atra liṅgvacanabhede nopamādoṣo bhavati | rasāntargatatvena dhīmatām anudevēgāt | yatrodvego na dhīmatām iti dandivacanāt |} A quarter of a verse from Dandin’s Kāvyādaśā (2.51) is here adduced as evidence in support of Jagaddhara’s view. In the Kāvyādaśā the word \textit{rasa} is used as a general term for “sweetness.” Consideration of Jagaddhara’s commentary on Mālatimādhava 5.16, however, reveals that the commentator uses the same word as a poetic term for “sentiment.” For details on the word \textit{rasa} as used in the Kāvyādaśā, see Kawamura 2016.
4) Bālarāmāyaṇa 1.13, 24. 2.26, 41. 3.11. 4.42, 49. 5.13, 50. 77. 6.8. 52. 743. 8.51. 9.25. 10.12. 26. 72. 5) chāyā: \textit{anucitakārī hutavaho yaj janakatanayāśuddhikāramam bhavati |} Eleven verses from the works of Bhavabhūti and Rājaśekhara are quoted in Kṣemendra’s \textit{Aucityavicāracarcā}. Three of them are ascribed to the former, and the remaining eight to the latter.

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