On Ornaments of Speech in Gopadatta’s *Saptakumārikāvadāna*

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1. Introduction

The *Saptakumārikāvadāna* (SKA) by Gopadatta, a Buddhist poet active between the fifth and eighth centuries CE, is a poem on the story of the seven daughters of King Kṛkin. This work is written in a mixture of prose and verse and is divided into three parts: an argument between King Kṛkin and his seven daughters (verses 1–36), a description of a charnel ground (verses 37–75), and an argument between Indra and King Kṛkin’s daughters (verses 76–130). Gopadatta, who bases his version of the SKA on that which can be traced to the *vinaya* of the Mahāsaṃghika-Lokottaravādin school, uses a wide variety of ornaments of speech (*alaṃkāra*). Hahn 1983, who explores the literary background of the SKA from the perspective of meter, leaves out of consideration not only the ornaments of speech used by Gopadatta but the classical Sanskrit poetry and poetics of the poet’s period. This paper considers what literary tradition influences the SKA, focusing on the examples of the ornaments of sound (*śabdālaṃkāra*), particularly the repetition of the same string of syllables.

2. Examples of the Repetition of the Same String of Syllables in the SKA

Of the 130 verses of the SKA, eight exemplify the repetition of the same string of syllables. The examples are classified into four types: (a) *yamaka*, (b) *lāṭānuprāsa*, (c) pseudo-*yamaka*, and (d) mixture of *yamaka* and *lāṭānuprāsa*. Let us consider each of these in detail.

2.1. *Yamaka*

*Yamaka* is an ornament of sound in which a part of a verse is repeated twice or more with different meanings, as in *kamalini malini*. In the SKA, we find two examples of
yamaka: one in which the repeated strings of syllables are contiguous (avyapeta), and the other in which the repeated strings are noncontiguous (vyapeta). The text in which the former example is found runs as follows:

[SKA 17]

vaidūryānilamṛduśādvalakaṇcukāni nānaprakārakusumapratākarāṇī |
etāni vo madakalālīkulākulāni kriḍāvanāny abhimatāni bhavantu kanyāḥ ||

O my daughters! May these pleasure groves, covered with soft grass as green as an emerald, radiant with heaps of various flowers, and swarming with buzzing bees, be the objects of your desire.

Here, the string of syllables ku-lā is repeated contiguously in the middle of the third pāda, where the strings are analyzed as the nom. pl. n. form of the compound noun consisting of kula, “a swarm [of bees]” and ākula, “filled with.”

The example of noncontiguous yamaka is found in the following verse:

[SKA 6]

āstīrṇakomalavicitrakuthodareṣu svairaṃ vihṛtya bhavanaṃ kathāṃ bhavatyah |
sprakṣyanti durjanananuśamam śmasānabhūmim sitāsthīkalapracarottarīyām ||

Having amused yourselves freely in the houses, where soft carpets of different colors were laid, why do you think of feeling the surface of a charnel ground covered with numerous fragments of pale bones and unfavorable because of the spirits of the evil dead?

The repetition of the string of syllables bha-va occurs noncontiguously in the middle of the second pāda. The two strings are separately analyzed as the loc. pl. n. form of the noun bhavana (“house; mansion”) and the voc. pl. f. form of the noun bhavatī (“you”).

2.2. Lāṭānuprāsa

Lāṭānuprāsa is a type of ornament of sound in which a word is repeated with no change in meaning but with a change in intention (tātparya) in a sentence. Lāṭānuprāsa is distinguished from word reduplication, which is used to indicate the repetition of an action (e.g., pacati pacati, “He cooks repeatedly”) or pervasion (puruṣah puruṣo nidhanam upaiti, “Every one dies”). Examples of lāṭānuprāsa are given by the Kashmiri poetician Udbhaṭa (ca. eighth century CE), who devotes considerable thought to the classification of the same ornament of speech.

[Kāvyālaṃkārasārasaṃgraha 1.*8]

kvacid utphulla kamalā kamalābhrāntaṣpadā |
In this verse, the final word of the preceding pāda recurs in the beginning portion of the succeeding pāda: kamala, “lotus” (pāda a—pāda b); ṇaḥkāṁ, “loud” (pāda c—pāda d). For example, in pāda a, the word kamala is intended to convey lotuses as agents with respect to the action denoted by the verbal noun utphulla (< ut-phull, “to open”), whereas in pāda b, it is intended to convey them as loci with respect to the action denoted by the past participle bhrānta (< bhram, “to wander”).

In the SKA lāṭānuprāsa is employed in verses 9, 22, 33, and 88.

[SKA 9]
kenāpy anarthaḥ prasādāḥ prayuktam etat suhṛtvaj chantam humayum vicitram |
| kasyātra kah katham iha svajano jano vā svapnendrajālasadrśah khalu jivalokaḥ |

Someone who takes delight in what is worthless uses these various artifices in the form of friends, families, or kinsmen. How can anyone distinguish relatives from nonrelatives in this world? This world of the living is indeed compared to a dream or a magical trick.

[SKA 22]
visayair na hi tṛptir indriyānāṁ viṣayāḥ bhavyaśaviṣeṣaghasmarāṇāṁ |
bhavatīti vicinty buddhimantaḥ prayatante bhavabandhanakṣayāya |

“The sense organs, which are exceedingly attached to the repeated pursuit of their objects, cannot be filled to satisfaction with their objects.” Having thus considered, the wise strive for liberation from the bonds of existence.

[SKA 33]
tad alaṁ paraṇāmadarūṇais taiḥ priyabandho priyāsamo gamābhilāsaiḥ |
dhruvam eva hi viprayogadukhham priyasamyo garaṭāśayā labhante |

O dear father! It is therefore useless to have a desire for sexual union with one’s beloved, which has harsh consequences. It is well known that one’s heart that delights in union with one’s beloved surely suffers grief at separation from the beloved.

[SKA 88]
yasyāveṣaṁ sphurtisanayanā daśadantacchadāntāḥ |
pāpaḥ pāpaṁ na rakaṁ aśivaṁ kurvate tatçāyena |
naivokkhāto munibhir api yaḥ sīrpaṁ nāṁ bāhakāsais |
tan naḥ śakra vyapayasa manākṣataraḥ krodhasarpam |

When the miserable, whose eyes are throbbing, bite their lips in anger, they are precipitated into a miserable and dreadful hell. Even sages who live on a small amount of water dropping on fallen leaves cannot overcome their anger. O Śakra! Repel the snake in the form of anger from the hole in the form of our hearts!
The words *jana* ("person"), *viṣaya* ("object of sense organ"), *priya* ("one’s beloved"), and *pāpa* ("miserable") are repeated in SKA 9, 22, 33, and 88, respectively. I explain only one example, in verse 33. The word *priya* is repeated three times: at the beginning of the second and fourth *pādas* and in the middle of the second *pāda*. The word in question occurring at the beginning of the second *pāda* is intended to convey one’s beloved as a relative; at the beginning of the fourth *pāda* and in the middle of the second *pāda*, it is intended to convey one’s beloved as an instrument with respect to the action denoted by the verbal nouns *saṃgama* (< *saṃ*-gam, “to have intercourse with”) and *saṃyoga* (< *saṃ*-yuji, “to unite”), respectively.

### 2.3. Pseudo-*yamaka*

The following repetition of the same string of syllables seems to be *yamaka*. However, it does not meet the conditions for *yamaka*; therefore, it can be defined as a pseudo-*yamaka*.

[SKA 19]

> upāvijītā jalataramgalāsakair navamālikākāsumagandhagandhibhiḥ |
> pavanair īhāva grhakānane ratiṃ kurutāṅganāh parabhṛtopakhājite |

O ladies! Fanned by the breeze, blowing hither and thither like waves and fragrant with the perfume of flowers woven into fresh garlands, you should take pleasure in the garden of this palace, where cuckoos are cooing.

Note the string of syllables *gandhagandhibhiḥ*. The string of syllables *gandhi* follows the string of syllables *gandha*. The two strings cannot be phonemically identical. Hence, *gandha-gandhi* is deemed pseudo-*yamaka*.

### 2.4. Mixture of *Yamaka* and *Lāṭānuprāsa*

A mixture of *yamaka* and *lāṭānuprāsa* is found in the following verse:

[SKA 29]

> bhavanesu narendra bhāgadheyyāṃ upayuyāni bhavāntarārjītāni |
> muśitā iva hinadinacittā bhavakāntārāprāyaṇā bhavanti |

The happiness to be enjoyed in these houses is that achieved [through the good deeds performed by us] in previous existences, Your Majesty. Those who are wretched and miserable are, like those who were stripped of all their possessions, devoted to the wilderness in the form of existence.

The string of syllables *bha-va* is repeated four times: at the beginning of the first and
fourth पादas and in the middle of the second and fourth पादas. The first string of syllables bhavaneṣu and the final bhavanti form a yamaka. The strings of syllables bhavāntara and bhavakānta form a lāṭānuprāsa: The word bhava (“existence”) is repeated with the same meaning but with different intentions. Furthermore, the string of the second पादa is not phonemically identical to that of the first or the final पादa (bhavāntara).

3. Poetic Background of the SKA

Three points are noted about the repetition of the same string of syllables employed in the SKA: (1) Lāṭānuprāsa is used more frequently than yamaka; (2) in the example of a mixture of yamaka and lāṭānuprāsa, the rule requiring the phonemic identity of strings of syllables is violated; (3) and lāṭānuprāsa is not strictly distinguished from yamaka. In considering these points, Gopadatta likely wrote the SKA when poeticians had not yet expended substantial effort in defining and classifying the ornament of sound, yamaka. We can, however, adduce two pieces of evidence that present another possibility. First, the style (rīti) of the SKA is characterized by the relatively frequent use of compound words comprising more than eight words; the style bearing such a characteristic is, according to the poetician Rudraṭa (ca. ninth century CE), called gauḍī. Perusing the poem shows that 8 of the 130 verses contain a compound word consisting of more than eight words. It is well known that earlier poets, such as Kālidāsa (ca. fifth century CE), tend to avoid using long compound words. Second, Gopadatta uses a wide variety of meters, being particularly fond of mandākrānta and śārdālavikṛṣṇa, which are rare in the works of earlier poets. These pieces of evidence reduce the possibility that the SKA was written in a period previous to the establishment of a clear definition of yamaka.

Notably, there are similarities between the examples of the repetition of the same string of syllables in the SKA and those in dramatic works (drṣyakāvya), especially in the Uttararāmacarita by Bhavabhūti (ca. eighth century CE). As Stchoupak 1968, xxxvi–xxxix, xlv–xlvi indicates, Bhavabhūti uses ornaments of sounds throughout the play. What draws our attention here is that he employs lāṭānuprāsa and pseudo-yamaka more frequently than yamaka: only 5 of 20 examples of the repetition of the same string of syllables can be classified as yamaka, whereas the remaining examples as either
lāṭānuprāsa or pseudo-yamaka. Moreover, we find a few other stylistic similarities between Gopadatta’s works and those of Bhavabhūti. Considering these stylistic features suffices to convince us that the SKA by Gopadatta, who was thoroughly familiar with the dramatic works of his contemporaries, dates back to no earlier than the seventh century CE, when Indian court poetry and dramatic literature flourished.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion:

1. In the SKA, Gopadatta uses the repetition of the same syllables without distinguishing yamaka from lāṭānuprāsa and pseudo-yamaka, which does not necessarily imply that the definitions of yamaka given by poeticians were not known to him.

2. The examples of the repetition of the same string of syllables in the SKA show remarkable similarities to those in the Uttararāmacarita by Bhavabhūti. This strongly suggests that Gopadatta, who was conversant with dramatic literature, employed in the SKA poetic devices of which seventh- and eighth-century dramatists had been particularly fond.

What requires further study is whether the same is true of the examples of the repetition of the same string of syllables in Gopadatta’s Jātakamālā, a collection of Buddhist legends in 16 chapters.

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Notes

1) See Dargyay 1978: 46–52. 2) I omit verse 15, which is a verbatim quotation from Mārkandeyapurāṇa 8.118. 3) For the definitions and classifications of yamaka given by Indian poeticians, see Gerow 1971: 223–238. 4) Utkara must be considered as the bahuvrīhi compound that is to be analyzed as udgataḥ karo yasmāḥ, “from which a ray is emitted” (i.e., “radiant”). See Alaka’s commentary on Haravijaya 5.141. 5) I render kuthā as “carpets.” See Gopadatta’s Sarvamdadajātaka 27. 6) For the definitions and classifications given by Udbhaṭa and others, see Gerow 1971: 105–106. 7) Only two examples of the verse written in the gauḍī style occur in the Kirātārjunīya (comprising 1,091 verses) by Bhāravi (ca. sixth century CE), whereas at least 28 examples appear in the first chapter (consisting of 69 verses) of the Haravijaya by
Ratnākara (ca. ninth century CE). All the verses of the Kirātārjunīya are written in either measure meters or syllabic meters consisting of four lines, each of which contains fewer than 18 syllables. For a list of all the meters used by Bhāravi, see Kühnau 1890: 25–26.

Verses 4.21, 5.6, 12, 6.2, 14. Lāṭānuprāsa: verses 1.15, 22, 5.7, 15, 24, 6.8, 7.20; pseudo-yamaka: verses 1.5, 21, 4.10, 5.4, 6.24, 37, 42.

See Yamasaki 2016: 48–51.

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