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MAGADHI PRAKRIT IN SANSKRIT DRAMA

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Indroduction :

The real specimen of Māgadhī is found in Sanskrit dramas. From the time of Ashvaghosh (1st century A.D.) down to the time of Kālidāsa (5th/6th centuries A.D.) or even later than that till 1000 A.D., Māgadhī specimens are gathered from the following Sanskrit dramas. In Ashvaghosh *Sāriputra-prakara□a*[i] though fragmentary, some specimens of Māgadhī are found. Though the features which the later Prakrit grammarians sanctioned are not fully available in Aśvaghoṣa's drama as in the case of Aśokan edicts, the passages of Māgadhī Prakrit in the *Sāriputra-prakaraṇa* are the earliest specimen of Māgadhī literature as far as our knowledge goes.

In the *Sāriputra-prakaraṇa*, three Prakrits are used of which one is Māgadhī which is spoken by the Duṣṭa. It may be said in other way that the utterance of the Duṣṭa is almost analogous to Māgadhī which is not very much different from Māgadhī described by the Prakrit grammarians. The features of Māgadhī which it maintains is *l* in place of *r* and only palatal *ś* as the representative of the three sibilants and *e* occurs in place of nominative singular of *a* stem. But the hard letters do not act as soft, such as, *bhoti* and the intervocalic soft consonants, on the other hand, do not undergo to elision, for example: *kumudagandha*. Frequent use of *n* rather than *ṇ* (eg. *kālanā*), presence of the full form of consonants, such as *hāngho* (*haṇho*) and *bambhano* (*bamhaṇo*) remain stable in Aśvaghoṣa. Keith[ii] thinks that the development of the later form of a conjunct was perhaps unknown to Aśvaghoṣa. He mentions that Aśvaghoṣa uses *jj* rather than *ry* in place of *rj cch* remains constant for *śc*. In the very same way Aśvaghoṣa does not follow the original rule of Māgadhī on the respective issue. In his drama *kkh* remains, rather becoming *sk* or *hk*, in place of *kṣ*, *ṭṭh* stands for *ṣṭ* or *ṣṭh* against *sṭ*, *ahakam* stands *ahake*, *hake* or *huge*.

Keith[iii] has further said that the old Māgadhī is spoken by the Gobaṃ. It has a few similarities with Māgadhī. In it, *l* for *r* and *e* becomes in nominative singular of *a* stem, but *s* is used in place of *ś* as in Ardhamāgadhī. In it dental becomes for cerebral, for example, *vaṇṇa*, the vowel before the suffix -*ka* becomes lengthened (*vannikāhi*), *pupphā* occurs in accusative neuter plural, and the example of an infinitive is *bhuṃjitaye* (*bhuñjittaye*). In this drama, hard consonants are not unchanged and there is no loss of intervocalic consonants. *ḷ* occurs in place of *l* and the instrumental singular *āhi* occurs instead of nasal sound. Old Māgadhī is more similar with Māgadhī rather than Ardhamāgadhī.

In the opinion of Keith[iv] the difference between the old Māgadhī and its later development with regard to its characteristic features actually points out the variation of period. The same is found in metrical inscription of Aśoka in Jogimārā cave on the Ramgarh hill.

After Aśvaghoṣa comes Bhāsa (2nd/3rd century A.D.). Chronologically whether Aśvaghoṣa is earlier to Bhāsa is a matter of dispute. But generally in the books of Sanskrit literature as written by Keith, Dasgupta and De, and others Bhāsa is placed after Aśvaghoṣa. In any case both Bhāsa and Aśvaghoṣa are the earliest Sanskrit dramatists who have used Māgadhī in their respective dramas, and

the features of Māgadhī are generally regarded as archaic, because the main important features of Māgadhī as given by Prakrit grammarians are not fully found there. However, the characters who use Prakrit in Bhāsa's dramas are numerous[v].

Bhāsa[vi] has used Śaurasenī, Māgadhī and Ardhamāgadhī in his dramas while Aśvaghoṣa used their older forms. Aśvaghoṣa in his dramas placed Māgadhī as the dialect of Duṣṭa, the bad characters of Magadha. Even Māgadhī has another style (i.e. Ardhamāgadhī) among those Prakrits.

The nature and characteristic features of the Prakrit language of Bhāsa may be compared with Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa. *ṭ* and *t* in the language of Aśvaghoṣa become *ḍ* and *d* respectively in Bhāsa's dramas. In Kālidāsa's dramas intervocalic *k g c j t d p y v* and *y* are lost, but this rule in the dramas of Aśvaghoṣa is not fully maintained at all. Besides this, many contrasts in Māgadhī are prominent in Aśvaghoṣa; such as, *y* does not move into *j*, initial *n* and medial ´ are not systematically used by him and the aspirates *kh, gh, th, dh, ph* and *bh* are not reduced into *h*.

So many Prakrit rules and its usages are perhaps unknown to Aśvaghoṣa. In case of conjunct consonants, Aśvaghoṣa differs from Bhāsa and Kālidāsa. In Bhāsa's dramas ññ and *ṇṇ* stand for *jñ*. Keith[vii] considers the latter perhaps wrong. On the other hand, Bhāsa does *ṇṇ* in place of *ny* and *ṇy*, but in those places Aśvaghoṣa uses *ññ*. In case of compensatory lengthening of a vowel, the elision of a consonant is not known to Aśvaghoṣa. The similarity in using of a short vowel and a double consonant which ultimately alter the long vowel and the single consonant do not take place in Aśvaghoṣa's work. In the same context Bhāsa has used evva, *evvaṃ*, *jovvana*, *devva*, *ekka* etc. But in place of *ry,* Bhāsa like Aśvaghoṣa, has done *yy* instead of *jj* as done by Kālidāsa. So many inflexional differences between Aśvaghoṣa and Bhāsa are not clear to us. Keith[viii] says that the accusative plural of neuter *a* -stems becoming *āṇi* and *āiṃ* are found as well.

Likewise in case of accusative masculine plural *ani* occurs in the Ardhamāgadhī of Aśokan inscription[ix] *aṇi*. The locative singuilar of feminine becomes *āaṃ* and not *āe* as done in the later period. *attāṃaṃ* occurs in place of *attāṇaaṃ*. To indicate 'we' Aśvaghoṣa uses *vayam*, Kālidāsa *amhe*, but Bhāsa takes both and *vaaṃ* also. In genitive singular, Bhāsa uses both *amhāaṃ* and *amhā´aṃ*, but Aśvaghoṣa does only *amhākaṃ* in his works. The root *dṛś* becomes *dass* and *daṃs*, is represented by *gaṇhadi* and not *geṇhadi* as found in later. And this is found in the works of Aśvaghoṣa. The older form of *karia* and *gacchia* or *gamia* is changed into *kadua* and *gadua*, *alaṃ* turns into *mā* with gerund.

Keith[x] says that the above mentioned characteristic features are also included in Māgadhī and this Māgadhī is something variable in two forms, one is of *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* and the *Cārudatta* and the other is of *Pañcarātra*. These two are *ṣ* and *o* in place of *ś* and *e* respectively. In most cases Aśvaghoṣa does not maintain the proper grammatic rules, such as, *sṭ* for Sanskrit *ṣṭh* or *ṣṭ*, *śc* for *cch*, *sk* or *hk* for *kṣ*. In place of *ahake* (later *hage*), there occurs *ahakam* and *ny* becomes *ṇṇ* rather than *ññ* in Aśvaghoṣa.

It is in the *Mṛcchakaṭikam* of Śūdraka (2nd/3rd century A.D.), we have a variety of Prakrit dialects. It is in this drama only that we find not only Māhārāṣṭrī, Śaurasenī and Māgadhī, but also Śākārī, Āvantī, Ḍhakkī, Prācyā, Dākṣiṇātyā etc. We do not know yet any Prakrit drama in the earliest time where such varieties of Prakrit are available. It is surprising also to note that the features of Śākārī,

though given by later Prakrit grammarians like Puruṣottama, Rāma Tarkavāgīśa and Mārkaṇḍeya, do not practically tally with the features of śākārī as given by Śūdraka in depicting the character of Śakāra. However, if we rely on the editions as prepared by Godabole, Paranjape, Nerurkar, Karmarkar and others, we do not find really the features of śākārī as depicted by later Prakrit grammarians mentioned above. It is also strange to note that Vararuci being the earliest Prakrit grammarian belonging to the 5th/6th century A.D. has not recorded any features of śākārī dialect, even though *Mṛcchakaṭika* seems to be earlier than Vararuci. However, as the editions of Godabole contain different readings in the footnote, we can sometimes trace some of the features of Māgadhī as recorded by Prakrit grammarians. Hence, I have consulted Godabole's edition of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

In the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, Māgadhī is spoken by the shampooer who turns to a monk later, Sthāvaraka, servant of Śakāra, Saṃsthānaka, Kumbhīlaka, servant of Vasantasenā, Vardhamānaka, servant of Cārudatta, and the little Rohasena, son of Cārudatta. Śakāra speaks śākārī and the two Caṇḍālas cāṇḍālī. The chief gambler speaks in Ḍhakkī. The manuscripts show the utterance of Rohasena which is described as Māgadhī is almost put in the other way of Śaurasenī.

According to Pṛthvīdhara, śakāra, the brother-in-law of the king, speaks śākārī. This śākārī is suggested by Kramadīśvara (5.96) to be a form of Apabhraṃśa[xi], Mārkaṇḍeya has given its characteristic features in the 13th chapter of his Prakrit grammar. Bharata (17, 53) says:

शबराणां शकादीनां तत्स्वभावश्च यो गणः
शकार भाषा योक्तव्या पाञ्चाली पुल्कसादिषु

And in the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*:

"शकाराणां शकादीनां शाकारीं सम्प्रयोजयेत्"

In Godabole's edition, we see that *y* has been used before palatals, for example, *yciṣṭha* for *tiṣṭha*. But the pronunciation of this *y* is weak. Mārkaṇḍeya thinks that it should be used in Māgadhī and Vrācaḍa- Apabhraṃśa.

After Śūdraka comes Kālidāsa (5th/6th century A.D.). Kālidāsa has three dramas - *Mālavikaāgnimitram*, *Vikramorvaśīyam* and *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*. Of these three, only the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* has some passages of Māgadhī in the sixth act as spoken by the fisherman and the police officers. The brother-in-law of the king uses a language which is analogous to śākārī. But Keith[xii] suggests that his language is neither Śākārī or Māgadhī, nor Dākṣṇityā, but Śaurasenī in general. It is, indeed, true to say that Māgadhī passages of the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* are very corrupt. Since the time of A.L.Chesy (1830 A.D.), several scholars, such as, Böhtlink(1842), Monier Williams(1853, 2nd edition 1876), Fr. Bollensen (1880), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1880), Pischel (1886, 2nd edition 1900), and many others have edited the text consulting many manuscripts and giving variants in the foot notes. It is interesting to note that almost all the editors are not unanimous in selecting the readings of the Māgadhī passages in the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*. Though basically the texts are the same, there are some passages or verses which are not found in others at all. These differences in reading of the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* have given us impetus to group them into three categories known as recensions. It is guessed that there were three recensions of the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* - Northern, Bengal and Southern recensions. Northern recension is represented by Monier William's edition, the Bengal

recension is represented by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and then by Pischel, and the Southern recension is suggested by Bollensen (1880). The Prakrit passages of the sixth act of the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* in all these recensions also suffer from these types of irregularities. It is, at times, very difficult to bring out the feature of Māgadhī, if different editions are consulted. Pischel thinks that he has carefully edited the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*, but when the reading is not corroborated with the features of Māgadhī as given by Hemacandra, he has corrected the passage according to the grammar of Hemacandra. Though by this method he has represented the text in a faithful manner, one question can be raised linguistically. When the text represents the Bengal recension, it means that the text belongs to the group of the eastern Prakrit grammarians. As a result, the Māgadhī passages of the Bengal recension should be rectified or corrected with the help of the eastern Prakrit grammarians. For example, in Pischel's edition, we have *peskadi* as given by Hemacandra (4.297), whereas, according to the eastern Prakrit grammarians it should be *peśkadi*. It seems also logical that instead of dental *s*, it should be palatal *ś* in Māgadhī, be it conjunct or non-conjunct. However, we have, at least, the evidence of conjunct consonant with palatal ś as given by the eastern Prakrit grammarians, such as Puruṣottama, Rāma Tarkavāgīśa and Mārkaṇḍeya. The Cowell's edition of Vararuci's *Prākṛta Prakāśa* containing a chapter on Māgadhī dialect, though not found in all the manuscripts except a few, does not help us much in determining the features of Māgadhī. In fact, in a sense Vararuci, though belongs to the eastern school, is very much similar to Hemacandra with regard to the features of Māgadhī at least, as given by Cowell. However, three recensions of the *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* in terms of Māgadhī have been taken into consideration. In the other two dramas, there are no Māgadhī passages.

After Kālidāsa,the Sanskrit dramas where we find the Māgadhī passages are the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* of Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa (before 800A.D) and the *Mudrārākṣasa* of Viśākhadatta (9th century A.D.). Though the Māgadhī passages in these two dramas are not really very remarkable, because of late origin, it is consulted in order to show how far these two authors have followed the features of Māgadhī as laid down by later Prakrit grammarians. Bhaṭṭaṇārāyaṇa has used Māgadhī in the third act of the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* through Rākṣasa and his wife. The following rules have been maintained through their speeches *-e* for nominative singular of both masculine and neuter *a*-stem, *l* stands for *r*, *ā* in place of vocative singular of *a*-stem.

Viśākhadatta in the *Mudrārākṣasa* arranged Māgadhī only for a few characters. The Jaina monk, the two Caṇḍālas, Siddhārthaka and Samiddhārthaka, a servant and an envoy deliver Māgadhī as their dialect. Some peculiarities of Māgadhī may be mentioned in this connection. Here in the *Mudrārākṣasa*, *ññ* stands for *ṇṇ* and Sanskrit *ny*, *hk* for *kṣ*, *śc* for *cch*, *sth* becomes *st*, *ṣṭ* and *ṣṭh* turn into *ṣṭ* and regular use of *ś*, *l* and *e* are to be noticed.

Likewise in Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodaya* (11th-12th centuries A.D.) the disciple of Cārvāka and the messenger from Orissa speak Māgadhī, the bards and the spy in the *Lalitavigraharājanāṭaka* speak Śākārī, the subdialect of Māgadhī, the elephant drivers in the *Mallikāmārutam*, the scoundrel, the Caṇḍālas in *Caṇḍakauśikam* have used Māgadhī as their own dialect.

Conclusion

The above survey of Māgadhī passages in Sanskrit dramas is not sufficient enough to form any idea on the Māgadhī language. But these are consulted only to show that the Māgadhī language was used

in literature or in Sanskrit dramas which is very significant from the linguistic point of view. This survey will give us some ideas about the antiquity of the language. From the 4th/3rd century B.C. till the 10th century A.D., there was a flow of the use of language among the speakers of the then India. They can be grouped in three ways. In the first stage, the earliest specimens are represented by Aśokan inscriptions in Dhauli and Jaugaḍa edicts. In this stage all the features of Māgadhī as given by the later Prakrit grammarians are not fully developed. In the second stage, still archaic, the Māgadhī Prakrit as represented by Aśvaghoṣa and Bhāsa are not fully developed, but there are some more Māgadhī features in them than by the Aśokan inscriptions. In the third stage, beginning from Śūdraka down to Kṛṣṇamiśra the Māgadhī passages are more or less of the same type as described by the grammarians. Though the varieties of Māgadhī Prakrit as found in the Mṛcchakaṭika are not available anywhere else in the Sanskrit dramas, the question of their antiquity cannot be ascertained owing to any definite proof. It is a fact worth noting here that the features of Māgadhī as given by all the Prakrit grammarians, both eastern and western, are not fully available in the existing Sanskrit dramas, even though the grammarians have described the features some times at a great length. However, these literatures as are available in Sanskrit dramas have been considered.

References :-

[i]. See Henrich Lüders, Bruchstucke Buddhistischer Dramen, SBAW, 1911, pp.388ff.
[ii] Sanskrit Drama, p.86.
[iii] ibid. p.87.
[iv] ibid. p.88.
[v] ibid. p.120.f.
[vi] For Bhāsa's Prakrit, see Wilhelm Printz, Bhɇsa's Prakrit, Frankfurt, 1921, translated into English by P.V. Ramanujaswami, journal of the Shri Venkateshwara Oriental Institute, IV, 1943, pp. 1 - 20, 103 - 22.
[vii] ibid. p.121.
[viii] ibid. p.122.
[ix] *Ani* in Pali, ani in the Ardhamāgadhī of the Jain Canon, Lüders, SBAW, 1913, pp. 999ff.
[x] Sanskrit Drama, p. 74.
[xi] S.R. Banerjee's Prākṛtādhyāya of Krama dīśvara, Prakrit Text Society, 1980, cf. Larsen's Institutions Language Prakritikae, p. 21.
[xii] Sanskrit Drama, P.166.