CHAPTER 1—SANSKRIT AND PRAKRIT*

Sanskrit and Prakrit.

The word Maharashtra occurs fairly late in Sanskrit literature and its earliest occurrence does not go beyond the early centuries of the Christian Era. But particular parts of the region which comprise the State of Maharashtra appear to have been colonized by speakers of Indo-Aryan at a much earlier age. Thus while Vidarbha by itself occurs not earlier than in the Mahabharata and the Puranas, Vidarbhi-Kaundinya 'name of a preceptor' occurs in the Satapatha Brahmana and Vaidarbha 'name of a king of the Vidarbhas' occurs in the Aitareya Brahmana. Thus, towards the close of the Brahmana period of Vedic literature Vidarbha seems to have been colonized by the speakers of Old and Middle Indo-Aryan, and a new secular literature seems to have grown there developing certain regional features in its style to have been specifically recognized as the Vaidarbhi Riti or Vaidarbhi style, in opposition to similar regional dictions or styles referred to as Gaudi, Panchali, Lati, Avantika and Magadhi. These names are indicative of the fact that there was a growing secular literature which developed certain regional styles, one of which, the Vaidarbhi was highly praised by critical readers of literature and style. The development of Middle Indo-Aryan literature which appears to have taken place alongside that of Sanskrit also gives us names of Middle Indo-Aryan languages which are geographically oriented. The earliest Prakrit grammars, those of Chanda and Vararuchi, probably not later than the 2nd century A.D., already recognize Maharashtri as the Prakrit par excellence, and is the first to be analysed and described in their grammatical treatises. This region was also known as the Dakshinapatha and was known to the early historical writers in this form. Patanjali, the author of Mahabhashya, trenchantly refers to the author of the Varttika 'yatha laukikavaidikeshu' as a Dakshinatya: Priyataddhita dakshina-ya" yatha loke cha vede cha " iti prayoktavye yatha laukikavaidikeshu iti prayunjate'. In as much as Patanjali lived in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. and refers to the author of the Varttikas on Panini's Ashtadhyayi as a 'southerner' or by implication a resident of what we may now recognize as a part of Maharashtra.

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It might be presumed with the other factors noted above that an analytical study of Sanskrit descriptive grammar was being pursued in Maharashtra by the middle of the 4th century B.C. If the author of these Varttikas lived in Maharashtra he will then be one of the earliest of Sanskrit authors to hail from this region.

The tradition in linguistic studies so worthily transmitted by the Varttikakara seems to have flourished in this region for a long time. According to information given by Huan Tsang and by Taranatha in his History of Buddhism, Sarvarman received the new grammar Katatran from Karttikeya during the reign of Satavahana, some time during the 1st century A.D. During the same period Gunadhya, some time a minister of Satavahana, is supposed to have received the famous Brihatkatha from a pishacha called Kanabhuti, composed in the Paishachi language. To approximately the same period belongs the famous anthology Sattasai attributed to Hala or Shalivahana, lyrics culled and selected from what must have been an extensive poetic literature in Maharashtri Prakrit.

During the first five centuries of the Christian Era, after the downfall of the Satavahana dynasty, there are hardly any references to Old and Middle Indo-Aryan literature produced specifically in Maharashtra; but within this region are to be found the earliest of Prakrit inscriptions after those of Ashoka and Kharavela and a fairly large number of mixed Prakrit and Sanskrit inscriptions. The most important of the Sanskrit inscriptions is the one composed by a Jain poet Raviñirì for Pulakesi II at Aihole (A.D. 610—639) in which references to Kalidasa and Bharavi are to be found. The style of the inscription gives concrete evidence to the gradual development of literature in India in general and in Maharashtra in particular. In A.D. 783 or Saka 705 was composed the Hari-vamshapurana (of the Digambara sect) by Jinasena, while Vallabha, the son of Krishna was ruling over the south. R.G. Bhandarkar, identifies him with Govinda II who, in the Kavi and Paithan grants is called Vallabha.

Jinasena, the author of Parshvabhuyaday (a composition which utilized the text of Kalidasa's Meghaduta by Samasyapurana) and Adipurana (the first half of the Mahapurana) wrote during the reign of Amoghavarsha who was his disciple. Gunabhadra another disciple of Jinasena wrote the Uttarapurana as the second half of the unfinished Mahapurana. During the same period an important work on the philosophy of Digambara Jains was composed (in Saka 759 or A.D. 837). Sarasamgraha by Viracharya is a Jain mathematical work and was composed during the reign of Amoghavarsha, and Digambara Jains attribute the composition of Prashnottaramalika to king Amoghavarsha himself.

In the middle of the 9th century A.D. Shridhara composed his Ganitasara under Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha. To this very period belongs Shakatayana, founder of a new system of Sanskrit grammar called Shabdanyahsana, and author of Amoghavritti, on the
basis of an historical event mentioned by him as an illustration of his rule, during the reign of Amoghavarsha (circa 814—circa 878 A. D.).

Although Rajashekhara spent most of his time at Kanauj or Tripuri he must be regarded as one of the great writers of Maharashtra." According to Dr. Altekar, in a Banaras manuscript of one of Rajashekhara's work he is described as the crest jewel of Maharashtra; he was a member of a family called Yayavara of Maharashtra and his wife Avantisundari was a princess of the Chahamana family. Among the works composed by Rajashekhara must be mentioned: Balaramayana, Balabharata, Vid-dhashalabhanjika and Karpuramanjari, all dramas, the last of which is a Sattaka composed entirely in Prakrit; Bhuvanakosha, a work giving detailed geography; kavyamimamsa, a work on Alankara and Harivilasa, a Savanamarthakavya, referred to by Hemachandra. Rajashekhara is attributed to a period circa 900 A. D.

Trivikramabhatta composed the Navsari inscription of A. D. 915 during the reign of the Rashtrakuta king Indra III and two works, Nalachampu and Madalasachampu, and may perhaps be regarded as the initiator of a new type of composition, the Champu. The Digambara Jain Somdeva wrote the Yashastilakachampu in Saka 881 (c. 959 A. D.) during the reign of Rashtrakuta king Krishna III. He claims therein that no other author has used as many words as he has utilized in composing this work and it is certainly remarkable that his claim has consideration to our respect at his resourcefulness. Among other works attributed to Somadeva are Nitivakyamrita, Shannavatiprakarana, Yuktichintamani, all of which are available either in print or in manuscripts, and at Mahendra-Matalisanilapa mentioned in the colophon to his Nitivakyamrita.

During the reign of the Rashtrakuta king Krishnaraja III who ruled over the Deccan between A. D. 939 and 967, Halayudha composed his Kavirahasya, a eulogy of this king, illustrating verbal forms. His Abhidhanaratnamala, a lexicon, has merited frequent mention in Sanskrit commentatorial literature and is a treasure house of words. He is also the author of a commentary Mritasanjivani on Pingala’s Chandahsutra the title perhaps being reminiscent of the part he has played in reviving Pingala’s original work in Maharashtra.

Another champu, the Udayasundarikatha was composed in circa 1000 A. D. by Soddhala who described himself as a Vallabha Kayastha of Lata, during his stay at the court of King Mummuniraja of Konkan. He was patronised by Chitta, Nagarjuna and Mummuniraja. During the reign of Jayasimha II of the Chalukya dynasty, A. D. 1015—1043, his fellow student and pupil of Matisagara composed the Rupasiddhi in the tradition of the Shakatayana school.
One of the earliest writers in Marathi is Shripatibhatta who composed a Marathi commentary on his own work entitled *Jyoti-sharatnamala*. A manuscript of this work is still preserved in the Darbar library at Katmandu. Shripati was born in the year 999 A.D. as son of Nagadeva and grandson of Bhatta Keshava. In all nine works are known to have been composed by him: (1) *Dhikotikarana* in Saka 961 or A.D. 1039, (2) *Dhruvamanasakarana* in Saka 978 (A.D. 1056); (3) *Siddhantashekhara*; (4) *Jatakapaddhati*; (5) *Patiganita* or *Ganitatilaka*; (6) *Shripati-nibandha*; (7) *Daivajnyavallabha*; (8) *Ratnasara* and; (9) *Jyotisha-ratnamala*.

Under the Kadamba king Kamadeva, Kaviraja, probably the same as Mahadevabhatta, composed the *Raghavapandaviya*, a *dvisamdhana kavya*, c. 1113 A.D., and a precursor of such recondite compositions of a later age.

Someshvara III succeeded Vikramaditya II in A.D. 1127 in the Chalukya dynasty and was the author of an encyclopaedic work called *Manasollasa* or *Abhilashitarthachintamani*. It is a rich mine of information on the cultural life of that period and is indispensable for a study of that period. Vidyamadhava was a poet in his court and composed the *Parvati-Rukminta* another *dvisam dhana kavya*.

Under the patronage of Rajaraja Chola II, son of Kulottunga II (A.D. 1146-73) Keshava composed the *Nanartharnavasamkshepa*, one of the biggest homonymous lexicons known.

Bilhana, the Kashmirian poet, was raised by Vikramaditya II to the dignity of a *Vidyapati* or Chief Pandit; he wrote the *Vikramankadevacharita*. During the period that this king was ruling in Kalyana (A.D. 1076—1126), Vijnyaneshvara also lived there and composed his *Mitakshara*, which is presumably a commentary on *Yajnyavalkyasmruti*, but in reality an independent digest of *Smriti* materials and merits consideration as a very authoritative contribution to *Smriti* literature. Apararka, another commentator on Yajnyavalkya, was a prince of the Shilahara family of Northern Konkan and was on the throne in Saka 1109 (or A.D. 1187). Like Vijnyaneshvara's work it is in the nature of digest, and is more voluminous and extensive than the *Mitakshara*.

Maharashtra's preoccupation in the field of linguistics is once again illustrated by the fact that Somadeva, a resident of Ajurika (modern Ajre in the Kolhapur district) composed a commentary on *Jainendravyakarana* entitled *Shabdarnavachandrika* in the year A.D. 1205.

Jalhana, son of Lakshmihara or Lakshmidiva, was commander of the troops of elephants and fought with Krishna's enemies and was his minister during A.D. 1247—60 and compiled the *Suktimuktavali*, an anthology of the choicest lyrics to be found in Sanskrit literature.
One of the most comprehensive treatises of music is the *Sangita-ratnakara* of Sharangadhara composed in the reign of Yadava king Singhana of Devagiri who ruled between A.D. 1200 and 1247. Sharangadhara was the son of Soddhala (who was a son of Bhaskara), a native of Kashmir, who settled down in the Deccan and became *Shrikananadhipa* or Chief Secretary in the reign of Singhana and his two predecessors. Changadeva, grandson of Bhaskaracharya and son of Lakshmishvara was chief astrologer of Singhana.

Hemadri, the celebrated author, principally of works of *Dharma-shastra*, and popularly known in Maharashtra as Hemadpant, was the son of Kamadeva, and grandson of Vasudeva of vatsagotra, and flourished during the reigns of Mahadeva (A.D. 1260—70) and Ramachandra (A.D. 1271—1309) and was minister to both of them. His most famous compilation is the (1) *Chaturvargachintamani* which is an inexhaustible mine of information in *Dharmashastra*, voluminous in extent and all-comprehensive in its nature. Besides this, he is also the author of (2) a commentary on Shaunaka’s *Pranavakalpa*, (3) *Kaivalyadipika*, a commentary on *Muktaphala* by Bopadeva, (4) * Shraddhakalpa* according to the rules of Katyayana and (5) *Ayurvedarasayana*, a commentary on *Ashtangahrdaya* of Vaghbhata. As minister of the Yadava king Mahadeva he was in charge of the imperial records at Devagiri. Bopadeva, the author of *Muktaphala*, was one of Hemadri’s protégés in the court of the Yadavas, and was the son of a physician named Keshava and a pupil of Dhanesha. From the internal evidence regarding parentage, he appears to be identical with the author of *Mugdhabodha*, a new system of Sanskrit grammar. This is one more illustration of the fact that linguistic study was a vital aspect of Maharashtrian scholarship which has continued unabated from the time of the great Varttikakara.

The tradition of Vijnanesvar, Apararka and Hemadri seems to have continued in the succeeding centuries, for in *Nrisimhaprasada*, an encyclopaedic work on *Dharmashastra*, by Dalapati, we have evidence of continued scholarship in this direction some time during the period A.D. 1409—1512. This Dalapati was the son of Vallabha and a pupil of Surya Pandita, and was an officer of Ahmad Nizamshah of Ahmadnagar.

According to tradition Gunadhya’s *Brihatkatha* originated in the Deccan, in the Vindhya region, in a medium which has been designated as *Paisachi*, probably during the 1st century A.D. It has been the chief source, besides the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, for inspiring subsequent literature in Sanskrit as well as in Prakrit. The *Brihatkathamajari* of Kshemendra and the *Kathasaritsagara* of Somadeva are Sanskrit renderings of the original *Brihatkatha* and arose in the Kashmir valley. Western India, including the States of Maharashtra and Gujarat have been the chief areas in which Prakrit literature developed and thrived, primarily through the spread of Jainism. While secular literature is attested to in the anthology *Sattasai* attributed to Hala, the principal contributions came from adherents of Jainism. During the first half of the first
millennium a large number of Prakrit mixed inscriptions are found studded all over the Deccan, gradually replaced by Sanskrit from the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. While Sanskrit continued to be the principal medium for literary composition, Prakrit seems to have played an important role. We find, for instance, that Harisena, author of \textit{Dhammaparikha}, originally a resident of Chitor in Mewar, migrated to Achalapura and composed this work in 987 A.D. This Achalapura has been identified with modern Ellichpur in Amravati District.

It is in the field of \textit{Apabhramsha} literature that we find significant activity in Maharashtra. Pushpadanta must be regarded as the greatest \textit{Apabhramsha} poet of India. He composed his principal works at Manyakheta under the patronage of the ministers of the Rashtrakuta King Krishna III, during the second half of the tenth century. Among these are (1) the \textit{Mahapurana}, (2) \textit{Jasaharachariu} and (3) \textit{Nyakumarachariu}. Another \textit{Apabhramsha} work, the \textit{Karakandachariu}, of Kanakamara gives a description of the Jain caves in the vicinity of Osmanabad, and may presumably have been composed in the Deccan in circa A.D. 1000.

The contribution of Maharashtra to Sanskrit (and Prakrit) literature cannot be measured only by the number of works produced within that geographical area of Maharashtra. Quite a respectable number of Maharashtrian scholars migrated outside, probably in search of royal patronage, and settled down elsewhere to make their great contributions to literature. Thus Bhavabhuti who ranks only next to Kalidasa as a great Sanskrit dramatist lived in Padmapura, probably in Vidarbha. He belonged to a pious and learned Brahmin family of \textit{Kashyapa gotra}, followed and taught the \textit{Taittiriya} branch of the \textit{Krishna Yajurveda}, duly maintained the Five Fires, performed \textit{soma} sacrifices, and bore the surname of Udumbara. He was a deep scholar learned in the different branches, but this scholarship sat lightly on him. He wrote the three great dramas: \textit{Malati Madhava}, \textit{Uttararamcharita} and \textit{Mahaviracharita}. All his plays were enacted at the fair of Lord Kalapriyanatha, at Kalpi. Similarly Shudraka, the author of \textit{Mrichchhakatika}, whose history is shrouded in mystery, is associated with various cities, like Vidisha, Pratisthana, Vardhamana and other places. If he happens to be from Pratisthana, he is definitely associated with Maharashtra.

The last five hundred years in the history of Maharashtra have produced quite a legion of scholars whose contributions have come to light during the current century. Lolimbaraja was the son of Dinakarabhatta Joshi of Junnar, Poona district. He is popularly known as the author of a commentary in Marathi on the 10th \textit{skanda} of the \textit{Bhagavatapurana}. He composed the \textit{Harivilasakavya} in A.D. 1583. Professor Gode recognised Lolimbaraja II, author of \textit{Vaidyajivana}, \textit{Vaidyavatamsa}, \textit{Chamatkarachintamani} and \textit{Ratnakalacharita}, indicating the following facts: There is no evidence in \textit{Harivilasakavya} to prove that its author belonged to Maharashtra while Lolimbaraja II gives his parentage as shown above and has a number of Marathi works to his credit.
Bhaskara Apaji Agnihotri was a Deccani Brahmin of the Kashyapa Gotra and a Deshastha Rigvedi Brahmin. He wrote a work on Anatomy entitled Sharira Padmini which, according to the chronogram, was composed in Samvat 1735. His Padyamritatarangini was composed in A. D. 1676. He has also another work entitled Smritiprakasha.

In a work called the Prabhu-Prakarana some 33 verses are quoted as the composition of Shambhuraja or Sambhaji. From an examination of the manuscript Prof. Gode came to the following conclusions: (1) The title of the verses taken together was Kayasta-Prabhu-Nirmaya, (2) the verses were composed by Keshava Pandit by the order of Shambhuraja or Sambhaji and, (3) the verses were compiled by one Ramachandra Jyotirvid of Kalyan in Saka 1597 or A. D. 1675. He also comes to the conclusion that this Keshava is the author of Rajaramcharita, and appears to have compiled a work on Dharmashastra called Dharmakalpalata.

Between 1675 and 1700 Raghunath wrote a work on dietetics called Bhojanakutuhala while he was a protege of Queen Dipabai, wife of Ekoji Bhosle of Tanjore and step brother of Shivaji, the Great. He gives us a list of his earlier Sanskrit works like Sahitya-kutuhala, Prayashchittakutuhala, Janardana Mahodadhi, Dharmamritamahodadhi and Kashimimamsa. Anantadeva, son of Apadeva and author of Mimamsakaustubha (1675—1700) appears to have been the guru of Raghunath. Apadeva (1600—1650) himself was the author of Mimamsanyayaprakasha. From Prof. Gode's deep study of the problem of his ancestry it is clear that this Raghunath is the grandson of Raghunath Navahast.

One of the important branches in which Maharashtrian scholars excelled themselves was the writing of commentaries. Nilkantha Chaturdhara has written an extensive commentary on the Mahabharata (1680—93). In an interesting paper on "Some Authors of the Arde Family" Prof. Gode fixes the date of Krishnabhatta between A.D. 1750 and 1825, and Aufrecht mentions 74 works of this author. His father Ranganatha (1700—1775) wrote the Dashakumarapithikasara.

Raghunatha Manohara, son of Bhikambhatta and grandson of Krishna Pandit composed the following works: (1) Vaidyavilasa on medicine (1697 A.D.), (2) Chandoratnavali, a work on prosody mentioned and quoted in Kavikaustubha, and (3) Kavikaustubha on poetics.

Harikavi alias Bhabubhatta was a poet attached to one Shambhuraja of Nandurbar and composed the following works: Shambhuraja-charita (in 1685), (2) Haihayendracharita and its commentary, and (3) Subhashitaharavali.

In the field of Champu Keshavabhatta of Punyastambha (Pun tambe) composed the Nrisimhachampu. Keshavabhatta appears to have lived at some period between A.D. 1450 and 1575 under the patronage of Umapati Dalapati, son of Govinda Dalapati.
Among commentators reference may be made to one Vasudeva who wrote a commentary on Rajashekharas’s Karpuramanjari. He lived at some period between 1450 and 1700 A. D. and appears to have been a resident of Maharashtra, for he records vernacular equivalents in his commentary by prefixing or suffixing to them (Maharashtra)—bhashayam.

Even during the decadent period between the 18th and 19th centuries Maratha rulers were patrons of learning, as may be demonstrated by the fact that Vancheshvara alias Kutti Kavi, descended from Govinda Dikshita, the well known minister of Achyutadevaraya of Vijayanagar (1529—42), who was born in A.D. 1780 and died in 1860, stayed with the Patwardhan Sardars in the Southern Maratha Country, and produced a large number of works of which the following may be mentioned in illustration: (1) Hiranyakeshisutrayakhya, (2) Dattachintamani, (3) Bhattachintamani, and (4) Mahishashatakvyakhya. Most of these were composed between 1816 and 1828.

This tradition of compiling or composing literary works went hand in hand with royal patronage and the preservation of learning. The Peshwas established a Dakshina Fund which they distributed annually to learned scholars from all parts of India, and were themselves interested in the collection and preservation of manuscripts. The Vishrambag Collection which is included in the government collection of manuscripts originally deposited in the Deccan College and since transferred to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute forms a part of such a collection, and it is on record that both the Peshwas and their generals were in the habit of purchasing manuscripts even when they were on a route march or engaged in hostilities. Private collections of manuscripts have not been fully investigated; but there is enough evidence to show that hand transcription as a means of multiplying manuscripts continued right up to the 19th century even after printing had been introduced, and great deal of history may be recovered if the colophons of such manuscripts during the past 400 years are studied. In the creation of literature and its preservation and cultivation Maharashtra has played a noble role, and that tradition has continued even to the present day. The late Mahamahopadhyaya Vasudeva Shastri Abhyankar was one of the last stalwarts of that changing age who not only preserved the ancient heritage through traditional mastery of the different Shastras, but made new contributions by writing critical commentaries in Sanskrit on some of them, thus lending continuity to that spirit of enquiry and enterprise which took our scholars to Banaras. The school of Nagesha or Nagojibhatta is an outcome of the Maharashtrian contribution to Sanskrit learning, and though established in Banaras, continued to inspire and guide the work in the original State. The numerous research and teaching institutes in Maharashtra for the preservation and propagation of Sanskrit have pioneered new ventures, and there is evidence of a new Sanskrit journalism in the publication of two fortnightlies and a daily from Poona. The vitality of Sanskrit is finding a new vehicle to manifest itself and to inspire and inform the work that is bound to result from the development of the regional languages.