

A brief discussion on Champu-Kavya

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Abstract

Poetry in which there is prose, there is also poetry, that is a mixture of prose and poetry. It is called Champu. Poetic Arthagaurava, Poetry Arthagaurava and Ragamayatva both together produce more miracles in Champukavya. In Champukavyas, the amount of prose is almost the same. No one part is more. The poet is cautious in this matter. Champukavya is a refined form of prose-poetry. Although a mixture of prose is found in Yajurveda. Yet it is not of Champu type. The form of Champu is not visible even in the Palijatak texts written in prose-verse. Therefore, the Jatakamala composed by Aryasuri can be called the original source of Champukavya.

Keywords: Champu, poetry, prose, genre, vedic period

Introduction

Champu or Chapu-Kavya is a genre of literary composition in Indian literature. The word 'Champu' means a combination of poetry and prose. A champu-kavya consists of a mixture of prose (Gadya-Kavya) and poetry passages (Padya-Kavya), with verses interspersed among prose sections. Champu kavyas were begun in Sanskrit by Thrivikramabhatta and after carried out by other eminent personalities of Sanskrit literature. It is a literary style which got inspired from the panchathantra style where the story is written in prose and the essence is explained in verse. That was turned upside down in the case of Champu Kavya where the prose portion described the essence where as the verse went on narrating the story. The first champu kaavya was nala champu by thrivikramabhatta.

Research methodology: In this paper qualitative research methodology is applied with analytical view.

Origin: Champu kavya is said to have originated during the Vedic period, with evidence of it in the Ithareya Brahmins Harishchandropakyana. It also appears in the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, and other Mahakavyas. Champu kavya developed into a distinctive style of classical poetry between the 12th and 14th centuries AD. It's used in many works, including Panchatantra, Hitopadesh, Champu-Bharata, Champu Ramayana, Sri Ramanuja Charitra Champu Kavyam, and Nala Champu. Champu verses are also used in Odissi Classical music, where they're composed as dialogues between characters and sung to traditional ragas and talas.

Definition: Champu or chapu-kavya (Devanagari: चम्पू-काव्य) is a genre of literary composition in Indian literature. The word 'Champu' means a combination of poetry and prose. A champu-kavya consists of a mixture of prose (Gadya-Kavya) and poetry passages (Padya-Kavya), with verses interspersed among prose sections.

Various type of champu-kavya: Champu is a type of Sanskrit literature that combines prose and poetry. It uses rhythmic words, metaphors, similes, and everyday vocabulary. Some examples of Champu kavya include:

- Prahādacharita: Written by Rama Varma Parikshith Thampuran, the former Maharaja of Cochin
- Sri Gopala Champu: Written by Jiva Gosvami
- Sri Janraj Champu: An 18th century biographical work by Krishna Dutta, the court poet of Maratha king Janoji Bhonsle. It covers the history of Raghuji Bhonsle and his sons, and also includes stutis written by the king to Hindu deities
- Champuramayana of Bhoja: A popular Champu kavya known for its beautiful expressions. The Balakanda of this poem is often studied in graduate-level exams.

A narrative in mixed prose and verse is called a campu. Powerful picturesque descriptions are expressed in verse, while the narrative part is carried on generally in prose. We have got instances in puranas where prose comes amidst verses. But there are more instances in classical period of this recognized class. It is only after the age of Maha kavyas and the prose romance that the campus could have begun to rise, since they contain a combination of enumerates the campu as a class of literature, no work of such the ornate type of prose and verse. Though, Dandin in his Kavyadarsa an early dare has come down to us. But after 10th century A. D. , campus became very popular and they were largely composed in South India.

Trivikrama Bhatta's Champu: Trivikrama was the son of Devaditya, who adorned the court of Rashtrakuta King Indra III towards the beginning of the 10th century A. D. He mentions Bana in the introductory verses to his work Damayanti Katha or Nalacampu. Bhoja of 11th century A. D. the author of Sarasvatikanthabharana mentions this poet. This is an incomplete work with 7 chapters. According to this poet ordinary expressions are not appreciable for poetry and so, long and cumbersome compounds, feats of double meanings are abundantly used in this work.

Somadeva's Yasastilaka campu: Harikesari of 10th century A. D. belonging to Chalukya race patronised the poet Somadeva who has written a campu by name Yasastilakacampu. In 7 Asvasas the book relates the story of king Yasodhara, Lord of Avanti, his conversion to Jaina

faith, his assassination and rebirth. The last three chapters are the explanatory of the sacred text of Jainism. There are plenty of moral and ethical sentiments in this works which makes it more a didactic composition than a literary performance.

Bhoja's Ramayana campu: Bhoja was the celebrated king of Dhara, ruled between 1018 and 1063 AD. Ramayanacampu or Bhoja campu or campuramayana is ascribed to him. An uncertain tradition says that Bhoja composed the prose portions and Kalidasa the verses, while the later, and was temporarily recalled to life by the magical power of King Bhoja. Bhoja composed only up to the end of Sundarakanda while Lakshmanakavi of some later date wrote the Yuddhakanda. All kinds of meters are employed and the prose portion is full of long compounds after the manner of gadyakavyas. The poetic sentiments and descriptions are fine, though familiar. This campu is very popular among the lovers of Ramayana.

Anantabhatta's Bharata campu: This work has a fairly wide vocabulary and a great variety of figures of speech and metres. This has beautifully summarised the Mahabharata. He seems to have written Bhagavata Campu also to complete Abhinava Kalidasa. Narayan Bhattadri the author of Narayaniyam quotes frequently from this campu. He belonged to 15th cent. A. D.

Cidambara Kavi's Bhagavata campu: Cidambara of 17th century AD. patronised by King Venkata – I of Vijayanagar, has composed Bhagavatacampu describing the story of Krishna, Panchakalyanacampu describing simultaneously the stories of the marriages of Rama, Krishna, Visnu, Siva and Skanda. He has written a Mahakavya by name Raghava-pandava-yadaviya.

Kumarasambhava campu of Raja Serfoji – I: Raja Serfoji I who ruled Tanjore between 1712 and 1727, A. D. a great patron of poets and an artist, wrote his Kumarasambhavacampu. It bears close similarity in language and subject matter to the poem on that topic by Kalidasa.

Nilakanta Dikshita's Nilakantavijaya campu: Nilakanta Dikshita of 17th A. D composed his Nilakantavijayacampu describes in 5 chapters the story of churning of milky ocean by Devas and Asuras and the part played by Siva to save the world by taking the halahala poison which arose out of the ocean. This episode accounts for Lord Siva's name as Nilakanta. His style in Sivalilarnava is very simple and graceful while that in the campu is full of long compounds.

Venkatadhvari's Visvagunadarsa campu: During the later part of 18th century a poet by name Venkatadhvari son of Raghunatha and Sitamba, wrote his popular campu called Visvagunadarsacampu. Two Gandharvas, Vishvasu and Krishanu by name, fly over the earth, in their aerial car, debating the merits and defects of several important places of pilgrimage, professions, institutions etc. One of these two Gandharvas, Krishanu always condemns them on several grounds and the other Vishvasu after refuting him, points out the merit and the greatness. Thus, in the form of a dialogue the poet's opinions about the brighter and darker

sides of things are all brought out very powerfully. This work was intended to expose the fault in the customs and manner of his time.

Jivandharacampu of Harichandra: Jivandharacampu a jaina work by Harichandra (10th cent A. D) tells the life story of Jivaka or Jivandhara. It is a work with artificial style.

Works in champu style:- Following works in champu style are discussed.

Kannada: Adikavi Pampa, the Adikavi, one of the greatest Kannada poets of all time and one among the ratnatrayaru, pioneered this style when he wrote his classical works, Vikramarjuna Vijaya (Pampa Bharata) and Adipurana in it, around 940 CE, and which served as the model for all future works in Kannada.

There is evidence to believe Gunavarma I, the poet who flourished at the court of King Ereyappa (864-913 C. E), was the first poet to compose Kannada Champu Kavyas. His work includes Harivamsha and Shudraka.

In Kannada literature, this metre was popularised by the Chalukya court poets, like Adhikari Pampa (902 CE -975 CE), who wrote his Adipurana in Champu style popularizing it. Also known as champu-kavya) was the most popular written form from the 9th century onwards, although it started to fall into disuse in the 12th century. When people moved towards other Sanskritic metres like tripadi (three line verse), the satapadi (seven line verse), the ashtaka (eight line verse), the shataka (hundred-line verse), hadugabba (song-poem) and free verse metres.

Other works in Hoysala period were also in this style.

Telugu: Odia literature is also replete with the champu style poetry. Kabisurjya Ratha, Banamali Dasa, Dinakrushna are some of the most famous poets who wrote Champu.

In Odia literature too, there are numerous works in this genre. There is an added feature though- a Champu in Odia usually has 34 songs, one for each consonant of the alphabet. This rule, though absent in Sanskrit definitions is followed in most of the creations of the Champu genre in Odia. All lines of a song start with its assigned letter. The most famous work is 18th century poet Kabisurjya Baladeba Ratha's Kisorachandrananda Champu, often shortened to simply Kisor Champu. It narrates the tale of Radha and Krishna's romance in 34 Odissi songs set to different ragas & talas. The Champu is one of the most important works of Osissi music.

Sanskrit: Prahladacharita is a Sanskrit work written by Rama Varma Parikshith Thampuran, former Maharaja of Cochin is in Champu style.

Sri Gopala Champu of Jiva Gosvami is in champu style. Sri Janraj Champu is an 18th century Sanskrit biographical work on history of Raghuji Bhonsle and his sons written by Krishna Dutta, court poet of Maratha king Janoji Bhonsle. The champu also contains stutis directly composed by the Maratha king to Hindu deities Godavari, Kali and Shiva.

Conclusion: Champu kavyas were begin in Sanskrit by Thrivikramabhatta and after carried out by other eminent personalities of Sanskrit literature. It is a literary style which got inspired from the panchathantra style where the story is

written in prose and the essence is explained in verse. That was turned upside down in the case of Champu Kavya where the prose portion described the essence where as the verse went on narrating the story. The first champu kaavya was nala champu by thrivikramabhata.

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