Indian Literature in Southeast Asia

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This article traces the influence of Indian literature in Southeast Asia. There are two levels at which this influence may be found: in art and religion, and in literature. In literature, the Indian influence is in the following forms: themes and motifs, direct borrowing of Sanskrit originals, and re-narration in Old Javanese, Old Malay and other local languages.

Perhaps the most important feature of Indian presence in Southeast Asia is the existence of a literature very much Indian in origins, or even orientations, in the latter's cultural heritage. Side by side with art and religion, this literature reached its efflorescence between the seventh and the 13th centuries of the present era. It may be interesting to note that the development of Indian literature in Southeast Asia was contemporaneous with that of art and religion, each contributing to the deepening of this influence in the region.

The earliest influx of Indian culture into Southeast Asia may be dated towards the last years of the second century (c. 197 A.D.) with the appearance of an inscription in Funan (now Cambodia) in Sanskrit language and in the script closely related to the South Indian Pallava Grantha. There has been reference to a pre-Christian influence of Indian culture in the area. This is however speculative, for the evidences are without inscriptional associations. By the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., inscriptions in perfect Sanskrit and in Pallava Grantha script appear in steady profusion, side by side with highly sanskritized Javanese and Malay, Cham and Cambodian. The zenith of Indian cultural influences would be about the late seventh century, when Sri Vijaya comes

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into the full light of history, through the last days of the Madjapahit in the early 14th century. These are, of course, in terms of the inscriptional evidence. But the other evidences, e.g. art, religion and literature, the latter being the subject of the present essay, shall be dealt with very shortly.

Indian literature in Southeast Asia may be viewed in the light of two levels of its influx into the region. The first level is its utilization in the art and religion, which is not the subject of this essay, but on which remarks will be made at the end of this work. The second level is the main concern of this essay, which may be viewed in terms of the following points: Indian themes and motifs; direct borrowing of Sanskrit originals; and re-narration in Old Javanese, Old Malay and other local languages.

Pancatantra: Popular Source of Indian Themes

One of the most popular sources of Indian themes and motifs in the literature of Southeast Asia is the **Pancatantra**, a cycle in five parts, which shall be taken for a **locus classicus** in illustrating this point. The **Pancatantra**, meaning "Five Treatises," is in theory a book of instruction in **niti**, or the conduct of one's affairs, especially intended for kings and statesmen. The little or short tales are contained within the framework of a narrative which tells how a king was distressed at the evil and stupidity of his sons, and entrusted them to a sage who reformed them in six months by telling them a series of fables.[1] The themes and motifs in the fables are the main interest of this essay, although I shall not give details, except to refer to an illustration from another great Indian cycle, the **Kathasaritsagara**, or "streams in the ocean of stories" (see below).

From the **Pancatantra**, there is the "Counting the Chicks Motif" or "The Brahman Who Built Castles in the Air." The story runs thus—

> There was a certain Brahman's son who was plying his studies. He received sacrificial offerings of food in the house of a certain merchant. And when he did not eat there, he received a measure of grits. One time the Brahman was lying on his bed underneath that jar, which he had hung on a wall-peg, having taken a nap in the daytime and waked up again and he was meditating thus: "Very high is the price of grain, and still higher grits, which are food all

[1] A. L. Basham, **The Wonder That Was India** (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. 450.

prepared. So I must have grits—worth as much as twenty rupees. And if I sell them I can get as many as ten she-goats worth two rupees a piece. And when they are six months old they will bear young, and their offspring will also bring forth. And after five years they will be very numerous, as many as four hundred. And it is commonly reported that for four she-goats you can get a cow that is young and rich in milk, and that has all the best qualities, that brings forth live calves. So I shall trade those same she-goats for a hundred cows. And when they calve, some of their offsprings will be bullocks, and with them I shall engage in farming and raise plenty of grain. From the sale of the grain I shall get much gold, and I shall build a beautiful mansion of bricks, enclosed by walls. And some worthy Brahman, when he sees what a great fortune I have, with abundance of men-servants and maid-servants and all sorts of goods, will surely give me his beautiful daughter to wife. And in the course of time I shall beget on her body a boy that shall maintain my line; strengthened by the merit I have acquired, [he] shall be long-lived and free from disease. And when I have performed for him the birthrite and other ceremonies in prescribed fashion, I shall give him the name of Somasarman. And while the boy is running about, my wife will be busy with her household duties at the time when the cows come home, and will be very careless and pay no heed to the lad. Then, because my heart is completely mastered by love for the boy, I shall brandish a cudgel and beat my wife with my cudgel."

So in his reverie he brandished his cudgel and struck that jar, so that it fell down, broken in a hundred pieces all over himself, and the grits were scattered. Then that Brahman's body was all whitened by the powdered grits, and he felt as if awakened out of a dream and was greatly abashed, and the people laughed at him.[2]

Variations on a Theme

This motif is also found among the various ethnic groups in India like the Panjabi and the Santali. In Panjab, it is a village idiot who breaks a large jar of butter; in Santal, it is a servant who breaks a pot full of oil; and another, a poor brahman who breaks a pot of flour.

In Malay, the motif is woven in the story of a man named Mat Janin who was hired to harvest coconuts. His promised wages would be two coconuts from each of the 25 trees that he shall climb.

[2] **Kathasaritasagara**, Fifth Treatise, pp. 228-229.

When he reaches half-way, he begins to think about what he will do with 50 coconuts. He will sell them at one cent each, thus having 50 cents, for which he will purchase cheap nuts getting 60. Pressing out the oil, he gets ten cents profit. After that he buys fowls, then ducks, goats, buffaloes, elephants. The elephants will bring him a herd, out of which he will get a large amount of money, with which he will buy a ship with cargo. He sails to some other country and marries the daughter of the king. All the pleasures of royal life will be his to boot. Such will be his life, till when he is busy playing chess, the princess calls him. ". . . One of her maids will come and say, 'The princess invites my lord to go in and partake of some slight refreshment.' 'I don't know whether it is really to partake of some refreshment or whether she wants me to fondle her again. Anyhow, I won't worry about her.' A little while after, the princess herself will come and say, 'This fellow was invited to come in but he never paid the slightest attention. Very well, we shall see.' Still I pay no attention to her. In a little while, she comes near me. Then king's son will say, 'Mate.' 'Is that really so?' I will say. 'Mate.' says the king's son again. 'Come along and have your food now,' she will say. But I will say, 'Wait a bit, I have beaten." While this is going on, the princess will dig me on the ribs on the right side, but I will twist away to the left. Then she will poke me on the left hand side, but I will dodge to the right.' "

While he was acting this little piece of dramatic thought, Mat Janin failed to notice that his grip on the coconut leaf was loosened. So he fell and died.[3]

The Philippine paradigm need not be elaborated on for it is indeed familiar to those in folklore scholarship. The paradigm is the song, "Maria Went to Town." One can see the "thread that runs through" all these folk literature without being over-enthused in these resemblances of motif and theme.

"Sound-for-a-Smell" Motif

A second and final illustration would be the theme revolving around the "Sound-for-a-Smell" motif. This motif was dealt with in my book,[4] hence details of the discussion shall not be given; rather a brief outline may be presented here.

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[3] Juan R. Francisco, **Indian Influences in the Philippines** (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1964), p. 244.

[4] **Ibid.**, pp. 231-236.

This motif has its proto-types in India, and provides interesting folk story motif in Malaya as well as in other areas, including the Philippines. R. O. Winstedt, writing on the origins of Malay folk tales, shows that the Malay tale of the mouse-deer giving verdict over the claim of a rich man on a poor fellow and his wife, who grew fat on the appetite got from the smell of food that is cooking and roasting in the rich man's kitchen is Indian in origin. There are many variants of this tale all over Malaya. A similar tale is found in Laos.

In India, the **Kathasaritsagara**[5] tells of a rich man who promises to pay a musician for singing, but later protests, "you gave me a short-lived pleasure to my ears by playing the lyre, and I give you a short-lived pleasure to your ears by promising you money." In the **Bhisapuppha Jataka,**[6] the Brahmin smells a lotus but he is told by a goddess that it is a crime thus to steal perfume.

There is a similiar tale in the Philippines, but which is known in fiction. Needless to say, this is one of the short stories of the late Carlos Bulosan entitled "My Father Goes to Court," and the story need not be retold because everyone in the field of literature is familiar with it. This story is supposed to have its setting in Binalonan, Pangasinan. However, there is in Batangas a tale similar to the Malay Pelandok (mouse-deer) tale[7]. In brief, the tale may be cited here:

> Juan always passed by a rich man's house while cooking was going on. Juan, usually always hungry and fatigued, inhaled the fragrance and aroma of the food and was satisfied. The rich man, learning of Juan's satisfaction derived from the rich man's food's aroma, demanded payment. Unable to pay, Juan was brought before the king. The king commanded the servant to fetch two silver coins and placed them on the table. "Now, Pedro (the rich man), come here and smell the coins. As Juan became satisfied with the smell of your food, so now satisfy yourself with the smell of the money."

Looking at the **Pancatantra**, for instance, as the **locus classicus** for the paradigm, it has been found not only in motif and theme, but also in versions in Siamese, Laotian, Balinese, Javanese and Madurese literatures. These versions owe their forms from the Sanskrit South Indian

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[5] C. H. Tawney (tr.), **The Ocean of Story,** Vol. V-X, pp. lxiii, 132-133.

[6] The Jataka [Stories of the Buddha's Former Births] (Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 191-192.

[7] Dean S. Fansler, **Filipino Popular Tales** (Pennsylvania: Folklore Associate, 1965).

Pancatantra, which is dated within the period of the Sri Vijaya and Madjapahit island kingdoms. This South Indian version which formed the ancestor of these local literatures was an unknown Tamil **Pancatantra.** What is interesting is that by about 1736, this Indian cycle of tales reaches Malaya via the Arabic **Kalilah Wa Dimnah,** which is dated circa 750 A.D., now with the title **Hikayat Kalila dan Damina,** and it becomes the source of a new Javanese (1878) and Madurese (1879) **Pancantra.**

In so far as the literature is concerned, there has not been found original Sanskrit or Tamil versions of any Indian literary piece in Southeast Asia, except the thousands of inscriptions found throughout the area. These inscriptions possess literary qualities, but they are primarily accounts in verse styles of the exploits of the rajas and maharajas inscribing them. Another type of inscriptions are those dedicatory verses addressed to the gods and deities—all Hinduistic as well as Buddhistic—for the good fortune of these rajas and their subjects. They are very much Indian in feeling and sentiment.

These inscriptions do not necessarily reflect the Indian literary tradition, per se. As accounts of exploits of mythical and culture heroes in authentic Sanskrit style and poetics, these inscriptions, however, reflect full understanding of the Sanskrit language—considering that the inscribers belong to a region whose linguistic heritage is entirely alien to that of the language used.

The flowering of Indian literature in Southeast Asia is seen (only?) in the re-narration of epic, even religious, plots, themes and whole episodes, in the local languages at the time—like Old Malay, Old Javanese, Madurese, Balinese, Siamese, Khmer, Cham, etc. The **Pancatantra,** not to mention the equally widespread **Kathasaritsagara,** has found home in even the most isolated language and literature in the region. The epic stories of the **Ramayana** and the **Parva-s** [the term **Mahabharata** is not known in the Southeast Asian locus because the epic was not introduced as one whole piece] are retold in the local languages. The epics shall be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Part II. Indian Literature in Southeast Asia

Mainland and Peninsular Southeast Asia. The most important Indian literature which filtered into Cambodia and Siam is the **Ramayana** epic. In Siam, the **Ramayana** is known as the **Ramakien,** which is more or less a copy of the Indian story of the South Indian version. While there seems to be no known local texts of the **Ramayana** in Cambodia, it may be

safe to assume that the Cambodian ballet which takes for its background story that of the **Rama** epic is based on some texts that have not yet seen print outside Cambodia. Similarly, the source of inspiration of the famous sculptures in bas reliefs in the Angkor Wat and the Angkor Thom are certainly based on texts derived from the **Mahabharata.** There are also known texts in legend form of the Rama story in Annam and Champa (now respectively North and South Vietnam).

Both the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata** epics are known in the Malay Peninsula. But according to the evidences, the epics are more or less versions from the Indonesian, or more precisely, the Old Javanese (see below for more details on these Indonesian versions). Indeed, the Malay texts show already some Islamic infusions which, in one way or another, may show Indo-Javanese Islamic development of these versions. Or these Islamic elements may have been infused into the texts at a period of the epic's development in Malay soil.

R. C. Majumdar[8] gives a more precise picture of this development. He writes—

> The Indian influence is equally clear in the numerous stories and fables with which Malayan literature abounds. Even the heroes of Malay romances bear Indian names. It may also be added that the Malay language abounds in Sanskrit words.
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> The Indo-Javanese influence is clearly proved by the Malayan versions of Bhomakavya, Hikayat Maharaja Boma, and Bhismasvarga, and also the numerous Pantji-texts, such as Hikayat Cheket Waneng Pati, Hikayat Panji Kuda Sumiran, Hikayat Jaran Kinanti Asmarandana, Hikayat Panji Susupan Mesa Kelana, and Hikayat Naya Kusuma.

In spite of all the very clearly Indian character of these pieces of literature, one of the most noticeable traits that may be pointed out is the presence of, or references to, many Islamic practices and beliefs in these works. This may only be explained in terms of the attempt of the Malays to make these relevant to the new orientation—Islamic institutions and religion.

Insular Southeast Asia. The area in Southeast Asia where Indian literature had flourished very extensively is the Indonesian Archipelago,

[8] R. C. Majumdar, **Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East,** Vol. II-Suvarnadvipa, Part 2 (Calcutta: Modern Publishing Syndicate, 1938) pp. 97-98.

particularly in the islands of Java and Bali. The literature falls under definite periods of the development, **e.g.**, Old Javanese, Middle Javanese, and New Javanese, within the context of the development of the Indonesian languages. Old Javanese indicates the language which was current up to the fall of Madjapahit and the Middle Javanese indicates the use of Javanese in Bali. New Javanese falls beyond the Hindu period of Indonesian language development; hence the literature of this period shall not be touched upon in this essay, although it is probable that there are survivals of the Indian language and literature overlay in contemporary Indonesian language and literature.

Indian overlay in the Old Javanese literature was not only confined in literature per se but in other aspects of literary culture, like the **Amaramala** and **Amarakosa,** Sanskrit lexicons of great importance; the **Sang Hyang Kamahayanikan,** a Buddhist Mahayana text, and many others. The main concern of this brief note, however, lies in the Indian literary tradition in Old Javanese. For this purpose, furthermore, the discussion is confined to the most popular Indian literary pieces which are familiar to students of Southeast Asian culture and history. These are the two great Indian epics—the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata.**

The Old Javanese **Ramayana** subject matter agrees well with that of the Sanskrit **Ramayana,**

> but it concludes with the reunion of Rama and Sita after the fire ordeal of the latter, and does not contain the story of her banishment and death. Some portions of this work, particularly in the last two Sargas or Cantos, have no corresponding passages in Valmiki's Ramayana, and are probably local additions. These portions may, however, be interpolations of a later date. The style is rich but simple, though occasionally the author makes an attempt to show off his learning.
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> The Old Javanese Ramayana is not a translation of the Sanskrit epic, but an independent work. Kern held the view that its author did not know Sanskrit and must have derived his materials from other sources. It may be noted here that the story of Ramayana had a wide currency, and we have both Malayan and Balinese versions of it, viz., Seri Rama and Rama Kidung.[9]

[9] **Ibid.,** p. 65.

Mahabharata in Old Javanese Literature

The **Mahabharata** is not known as such in Old Javanese literature. Rather, it was known as **Parva,** because the epic was not introduced as one whole literary piece. It reached Java in individual **parvas,** the most well known of which are the Adi-Parva, Virata-Parva, Bhisma-Parva, Asrama-Parva, Mausala-Parva, Prasthanika- Parva, Svargarohana-Parva and the Udyoga-Parva. The **Bharata Yuddha,** dated 1135-1157 A.D. (the reign of Jayabhaya), is based on the Udyuga, Bhisma, Drona, Karna and Salya Parvas—the parvas that deal with the great war. All these are in prose and follow closely the original epic, but more condensed. "Their style is very primitive and lacks literary merit. Their importance, however, can not be over-estimated, as they made the Great Epic popular in Java and supplied themes for numerous literary works which exhibit merits of very high order."[10]

Poetry in Old Javanese was known as **kakawin** from **kavi** meaning **Kavya;** and their subject matter is derived mostly from the Indian epics and **puranas,** some of which may be briefly described:[11]

1. Indravijaya—story of Vrtra's conquest and death, followed by that of Nahusa who secured the position of Indra for a small period;

2. Parthayajna—describes Arjuna's asceticism by means of which he obtained weapons from Siva;

3. Vighnotsava, written by a Buddhist, describes the exploits of a Yaksa king named Vighnotsava and particularly his fight with the **Raksasa** king Suprasena;

4. Bratasraya is a later development of the same theme;

5. Harisraya—describes how the gods, threatened by Malyavan, king of Lanka, seek, at first, the help of Siva, and then of Visnu, who kills Malyavan and restores to life, by **amrta** or nectar, the gods who perished in the fight;

6. Harivijaya—describes the churning of the ocean by gods by means of the Mandara mountain;

7. Kalayavanantaka—describes, after the story given in Visnupurana, how Kalayavana invaded Dvaraka to avenge the death of Kamsa, and was ultimately reduced to ashes by Mucukunda, with whom the fugitive

[10] **Ibid.,** p. 66.
[11] **Ibid.,** pp. 71-72.

Krsna had taken shelter. It also describes how Arjuna carried away Subhadra when the Andhakas and Vrsnis were celebrating a feast on Raivataka;

8. Ramavijaya—theme is the defeat of Sahasravahu Arjuna by Parasurama, son of Jamadagni and Renuka;

9. Ratnavijaya—describes the fight between Sunda and Upasunda over Tilottama;

10. Parthavijaya—based on an episode from Bharata-yuddha, viz., the death of Iravan, son of Arjuna and Ulupuy, and of Nila; and

11. An unnamed and incomplete Kakawin—gives the story of Udayana and Vasavadatta in a modified form. Satasenya of the lineage of the Pandavas had two sons, Udayana and Yugandarayana. The abduction of Angaravati, princess of Avanti, by Udayana forms the plot of the Kakawin.

Balinese Literature

Almost all the Balinese (Middle Javanese) literature is based on translation or versions of Old Javanese works, and have been divided into eight (nine actual count) classes, according to their subject matter:[12] For this essay, however, only the works pertaining to literature (per se) shall be referred to. The others shall be bracketed as they do not necessarily fall within the purview of this essay.

I. Balinese translation or version of Javanese works—Seven Balinese poems may be mentioned here, **e.g.**, Adiparva Kidung, Rama Kidung, Bharatayuddha Kidung, Bimasvarga, Arjunavivaha, Vrttasancaya, Calong Arang, Variga Kidung and one prose text, Uttarakanda. Mention may be made of another work called Viratantra which describes an episode from the Ramayana, viz., the fight between Kumbhakarna and Hanuman.[13]

[II. Religious, philosophical, didactic and mythical works.[14]]

III. Kavyas or fictions in poetry. (a) The poem called Cupák belongs to a class which is very popular in all Austronesian languages. In the Sundanese, this class of literature is known as Kabayan. The principal characteristic of this class of poems is that it depicts the hero in all kinds of undignified situations so that he is represented as a coward, and braggart, gluttonous, liar, faithless, etc.[15]

[12] **Ibid.**, pp. 89-97.
[13] **Ibid.**, p. 89.
[14] **Ibid.**, p. 90.
[15] **Ibid.**, p. 91.

(b) Rara Vangi-Rara Vangi, a beautiful maiden of Badung, was in love with Ranapati, but as the king was after her she fled to Banjar. The king of this latter place also fell a victim to her charms. He contrived to have Ranapati put to death and Rara Vangi was forcibly taken to the palace. But as soon as the king approached her she stabbed herself to death. The king, mad with despair, killed all his wives and went to the forest where he died. But Ranapati and Rara Vangi were united in heaven, while the dogs of hell awaited the soul of the king of Banjar. Ranapati and Rara Vangi were reborn in earth, punished the king of Badung, and returned to heaven.

(c) Buvang Sakti—The hero, originally called Jayamrta, was named Buvang Sakti by the king of Manangkabo whom he served. He then killed a tiger and a rangsasa (raksasa) and lastly the king of Pancanagara, whose widow Devi Sitarun he married. Later he was taken prisoner and killed.

(d) Japatvan—Japatvan, the hero, went through the grace of gods to heaven to bring back his elder brother's wife who had died shortly after her marriage. After drinking Amrta there he came back and became king. The author gives a detailed description of hell and shows acquaintance with Vayupurana and Adiparva.

(e) Mantri Java—Mantri Java goes from Java to Bali and falls in love with princess Pacar Cinamburat. As he returns without her, she follows him and they get secretly married. The mother of Mantri Java becomes angry and orders him to marry the princess of Limbur. The latter, by means of spells, makes her husband forget Cinamburat, whereupon the latter kills herself. But soon the hero frees himself from the charms of Limbur and Cinamburat is restored to life. Now they get married with the permission of the parents while Limbur falls into disfavor and dies.

(f) Purvajati—The hero leaves his two wives, but their two sons when grown up, go out in search of their father. In the course of their wandering they fight with a raksasa, a garuda, a tiger, a lion, and an elephant. At last they meet Adi Guru who asks them to fight with Sindhuraja as he abducted their mothers. These two come to hell on account of their faithlessness to their husband, but, on the intercession of their children, go to heaven.

Poems of the Panji Cycle

(g) There are also poems that belong to the Panji cycle, among which two deserve special mention, viz., Megantaka or Mantri Malaka

and Begus Umbara or Mantri Koripan. Among other less known works may be mentioned Pakang Raras, where Siva and Narada play some part.

Megantaka—Hambara Pati, crown prince of Hambara Madija, meets Hambara Sari of Nusa Hambara. They fly and were shipwrecked. The princess reaches the Malacca coast. Prince Megantaka meets the princess during hunting and carries her to his palace. Hambara Pati, too, comes to Malacca court, meets his beloved, and escapes with her to Hambara Madija. He comes alone to the palace of his father, is forced to marry the hideous Limbur, and the latter secretly puts Hambara Sari to death. Hambara Pati, however, flies from his wife and discovers the dead body.

Mengantaka invades Hambara Pati's land, defeats him, enters the capital, and finds the dead body. We next find the soul of Hambara Sari in heaven. The nymphs Suprabha and Tilottama bring her back to earth. Megantaka and Hambara Pati meet the princess and all come back to the court of Hambara Madija.

(h) Dreman—A man named Jatiraga had two wives. The first, Tanporat, was an ideal virtuous wife, while the second, Dreman, was a capricious, bad-tempered, haughty and prodigal woman. Nevertheless the good-natured but weak Jatiraga favored the younger Dreman and poor Tanporat had a hard lot. She, however, bore her misery without demur and with ideal patience. Dreman died and was carried to hell. Jatiraga died in grief for her and also went to hell for the ill-treatment of his wife. Tanporat died after a long time and went to heaven for her virtuous conduct. There, to her great regret, she did not find her husband and learned that he was suffering in hell. Without a moment's hesitation she decided to give up the bliss of heaven for the pleasure of living with her beloved husband in hell. Then the gods intervened and brought the husband to heaven.

The poem depicts the ideal virtue and chastity of a woman.

(i) Raden Saputra—or Ratna Manik, so-called after the hero and the heroine. The hero goes to the cemetery and fights with tigers and spirits. There he sees—in dream the beautiful heroine, and the latter also sees him in dream at the same time. He meets her while bathing and the two get married. On hearing this Detya Putih, King of Giri Kancana, attacks him. (Manuscript ends here.)

(j) Lingga Peta—The poem describes the virtues of the poor but beautiful courtier of this name. The king loved him on account of his beauty, loyal devotion, and charming manners. His beauty made him a great favorite of the young girls, but Lingga Peta never yielded to their

temptations. A cunning plot was laid by the courtiers who were jealous of his reputation and royal favors, and Lingga Peta was put to death. When an inquiry was made as to the cause of his death, the father of a girl named Hi K'toet Lajang said that as the hero wanted to outrage the modesty of his daughter, he had killed him. But the gods intervened and restored Lingga Peta to life. He was born in a noble family and ultimately became king.

[IV. Historical Poems.]

V. Poems dealing with stories and fables. (a) The "Tantri Bali" agrees generally with the Javanese Tantri books; (b) Gunakaya is a different reduction of Tantri Bali; and (c) the numerous Satva texts belong to this class and contain folk tales, both of men and animals.

[VI. Dharma-Laksana, a book on Silpasastra, exists only in one corrupt manuscript. It is attributed to Visvakarma and must have been based on an Indian original or a Javanese translation of the same.

[VII. There are, besides poetical works on medicine (e.g., the poem of Neling), birds (Kidung Paksi) and erotics (Tanjung Biru, Nalig, etc.)

[VIII. Sylvain Levi refers to a gramatical work, Karakasamgraha, with a Balinese commentary which cites Panini. (It is a short treatise on the different functions of the word in reference to the verb as expressing action.[16]

[IX. The works called Wariga enjoy a good reputation in Bali. These are the calendars for calculating time, and correspond to the Indian Panjika. x x x The Balinese have lunar months, but by intercalary months they transform them into a solar system. There are twelve months, all having the usual Sanskrit names, but ten of them (i.e., all except Jyaistha and Asadha) have also corresponding Balinese names.]

My studies on the Indian elements, perhaps not even overlay, in Philippine literature have been expounded in great detail in my book **Indian Influences in the Philippines with Special Reference to Language and Literature** (University of the Philippines 1964). They need not be elaborated on here. But I may state that a few of my views therein have been modified in a brief essay which was published in the Adyar Library Bulletin (Madras, India, 1968). Included in these brief notes, however, is an appendix dealing on the presence of the **Ramayana** in miniature in Maranaw literature (see below).

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[16] Slyvain Levi, **Sankskrit Text From Bali** (Baronda: Oriental Institute, 1933), p. xxxi.

Part III. Notes on Indian Poetics in Southeast Asia

One of the interesting developments of Indian literature in Southeast Asia is the adoption or utilization of the aspects of Sanskrit poetics. This implies a thorough acquaintance with the language and the literature written in it. However, in most cases the Sanskrit is corrupt, according to Levi[17]; corrupt though it was the rules of Sanskrit poetics still governed these literary compositions. Apart from literary productions where Sanskrit poetics, the rules and aspects of which are utilized extensively, the inscriptions are, indeed, the most important sources of the study of Sanskrit poetics in the region. Romesh Chandra Majumdar[18] wrote with authority about this phenomenon in Southeast Asia:

> Many of the Sanskrit inscriptions are written in beautiful and almost flawless Kavya style, exhibiting a thorough acquaintance with the different metres and the most developed rules and conventions of rhetoric and prosody. .....The authors of these inscriptions possessed an intimate knowledge of the Indian epics, kavyas, and Puranas, and philosophical and mythological conceptions.

So far, mention of these aspects of Sanskrit poetics have been made without defining what they are. These are style, meter, and feeling or sentiment. By style, it refers to the **Kavya** style. This term means "a poetic composition with a coherent plot by a single author (as opposed to **Itihasa**, whose authorship is diffused and sometimes unidentified)." The word is derived from the term **Kavi**, meaning "a poet, a sage"; and literally, therefore, **Kavya** would mean "that which is endowed with the qualities of a sage, or poet; descended or coming from a sage; prophetic, inspired, poetical." In the compositions, whether derived from the epics or puranas, and the inscriptions, the style most frequently used is the **kavya.**

When the **Kavya** style is used, necessarily employment of meter or **pada** becomes inevitable. Meters in Indian poetics are "quantitative, based on the order of long and short syllables. . . . a syllable [is] counted as long if it contained a long vowel (a, i, u, r, e, o, ai or au) or

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[17] **Ibid.**

[18] R. C. Majumdar, **Inscriptions of Kambuja,** The Asiatique Society Monograph Series, Vol. III (Calcutta), pp. xvii.

a short vowel followed by two consonants."[19] The Indian poet has a choice of many meters when he composes his poetry. In Southeast Asia, as the epics (**Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**) are the chief sources of literary productions, the **kavya** style is the most predominant, and, therefore, the **sloka** meter is used especially. The **sloka** consists of four quarters of eight syllables each, the first and third normally ending with the cadence ∪ — — ∪̲ , and the second and fourth ∪ — ∪ ∪̲.

Other meters are, of course, used. Take the Old Javanese **Mahabharata** and its Sanskrit introductory verses in Balinese literature. The **Adiparva** begins with three Sanskrit stanzas, the first clearly an **arya.**[20] The **Virataparva** starts with a **sardulavikridita,** the following stanza an **indravamsa;** the **Bhismaparva** with a **sragdhara** and the second, a **vasantatilaka**. All the meters may be cited as they are used in the poetics of Southeast Asia. But an idea of the schemata of these meters mentioned above may briefly be described.

The **arya** (the Lady) is a quarter with seven syllables for the first and fourth lines, and eight and six syllables respectively for the second and third lines. The **sardulavikridita** (The Tiger Sport) is four lines with 19 syllables each line (— — — ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∪ — / — — ∪ — ∪ ∪̲); the sragdhara (The Girl with a Garland) is four lines with 21 syllables (— — — — ∪ — — / ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ — / — ∪ — — ∪ — ∪̲); the **vasantatilaka** (the ornament of spring) is four lines with 14 syllables (— — ∪ — ∪ ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪̲); and the **Indravamsa** (Indrals lineage) is four lines with 12 syllables, with a long first syllable (— — ∪ — — ∪ ∪ — ∪ — ∪ ∪̲).

The third aspect of Sanskrit poetics discerned in Southeast Asia is that of feeling or sentiment called in Sanskrit **rasa**. In broader perspective, it is in literature the prevailing sentiment in human character. There are ten **rasas** known in Sanskrit literature—**srngara** (love); **vira** (heroism), **bibhatsa** (disgust), **raudra** (anger or fury); **hasya** (mirth); **bhayanaka** (terror); **karuna** (pity); **adbhuta** (wonder); **santi** (tranquility or contentment); **vatsalya** (paternal fondness).

All these sentiments could be found as one reads through all the pieces of literature in Southeast Asia based on the Indian. Take, for instance, the abduction of Sita, and the events that followed; or the exile of the Pandavas from their kingdom, the events of the war and the aftermath. All these express the **rasas** in no uncertain terms.

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[19] Basham, **Ibid.**, p. 508.

[20] Levi, **Ibid.**, p. xxxiii.

IV

Concluding Remarks

The most important development of **Sahitya** or literature in India is that secular and religious literatures do not seem to show any sharp differentiation. From the Vedas, to the epics, to the Brahmanas, through the Upanishads throughout the history of Indian literature, the stories told have religious merits in spite of the fact that they are also told for entertainment. The Vedas, when recited in public, is not just for the joy of listening to the tales, but the symbolisms of these stories told many times over earn for the listener religious merits. The eternal conflict between evil and good are depicted in the conflict, for instance, between Indra and the Panis, or between Vayu and Megha, between the **devas** and **asuras**, etc.

Similarly, the epics have the same effect upon the listener. It functions within the context of the cultural milieu of the Indian. It was this writer's singular fortune to sit and listen, in a public gathering especially convened, to the recitation of the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata**. While he went there for purposes of entertainment and curiosity, the Indians attended these sessions for many reasons—one of which is for earning merits in life. Because the episodes are also symbolic of the continuing conflict between good and evil, the Indians use them to soothe their own longing for spiritual nourishment and liberation. The singers or chanters, themselves being **panditas** or **gurus**, are the vehicles through whom the gods—Visnu, Siva, and Brahma—become alive to the listeners and devotees.

As this writer went into the hall with an open and curious mind, he left the meeting infused by the solemnity of the occasion, the entertainment function of which is now absorbed in spirituality that spontaneously pervaded the congregation.

In Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaya, Java and Bali—localities with which he is far more familiar—the sharp dichotomy of the secular and religious nature of this literature is lost sometimes more so than in the Indian continent. For as this literature is absorbed by the Javanese, Balinese, and Malay, the secular function is indeed lost in the religious function. This may be illustrated with the development of the **wayang** in these areas. The **wayang** is the shadow play, an art form which takes for its themes and motifs those that are found in the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata** versions in the region (see below for details on art, religion

and literature). Watching the play itself and at the same time listening to the recitation of the stories by the **dalang** or **pedanda,** as he manipulates the characters of the shadow-play, creates in the audience awe and reverence not only for the characters as they play their roles according to the story, but also for the **dalang** who becomes a deity incarnate.

In India, as well as in Southeast Asia (which is indeed influenced by the former), themes in art are representations of the literature which definitely possess or assume religious character. Needless to say, the representations of the Buddhist literatures—like the **Jatakas,** the **Avadanamala,** the **Satakamala,** etc.—in the Barabudur; or the **Ramayana** in the temple of Lara Jongrang in Prambanan; or the **Mahabharata** in the walls of Angkor Wat, are indications of this fusion.

Religion, art and literature are even fused in the assumption of historical figures like Airlangga and his consort upon their death. Airlangga assumed the aspect of Visnu riding upon his vehicle, Garuda, as he vanquished the enemies of his devotees as we know it in the Puranas; and his consort assumed the aspect of the Sakti or consort of Visnu, Laksmi, the goddess of wealth, upon her death.

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