

RIVISTA DEGLI STUDI ORIENTALI
NUOVA SERIE

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FABRIZIO SERRA EDITORE

Pisa · Roma

Casella postale n. 1, Succursale 8, I 56123 Pisa

Uffici di Pisa: Via Santa Bibbiana 28, I 56127 Pisa,
tel. +39 050542332, fax +39 050574888, fse@libraweb.net

Uffici di Roma: Via Carlo Emanuele I 48, I 00185 Roma,
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PEDAGOGY, PLAYFULNESS, AND INNOVATION IN DAṆḌIN'S CONDENSED SPEECH

YIGAL BRONNER

Why was Daṇḍin's *Mirror of Literature* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*), a text that swept much of Asia and inspired so many translations, adaptations, commentaries, and literary responses in a variety of languages, so successful? This paper highlights some of the *Mirror's* key innovative agendas by examining one small section of the work, the passage defining and exemplifying the ornament "condensed speech" (*samāsokti*). More specifically, the paper examines Daṇḍin's dramatic redefinition of this device in comparison to what we find in the work of his most important predecessors, Bhāmaha and Bhaṭṭi. Daṇḍin expanded this ornament to include various types of insinuation, thus making it a powerful suggestive device, not unlike the aesthetic-semantic force that Ānandavardhana later called *dhvani*. Daṇḍin, moreover, used the subcategories of condensed speech to showcase his new pedagogy and playfully to illustrate the complex metatropic effects of poetry: its ability to play with the precedents of earlier poets and with the underlying poetic convention.

KEYWORDS: Daṇḍin, Bhāmaha, Bhaṭṭi, *samāsokti*, Ānandavardhana, Ratnaśrījñāna, playfulness, pedagogy, innovation

LIKELY written around the year 700 in Kanchipuram, Daṇḍin's *Mirror of literature* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*) is one of the most successful texts on poetics in human history. The book travelled widely in South, Southeast, and possibly East Asia and inspired many translations, adaptations, commentaries, and literary responses in a variety of languages. Indeed, in several localities, most notably the western Deccan, the island of Sri Lanka, and the Tibetan and the Mongolian plateaus, a rendition of the *Mirror* was, by design or in hindsight, a foundational moment of literature «in our own language» (*siyabas*), as the title of the Sinhala reworking of Daṇḍin's text (*Siyabaslakara*) indicates. Moreover, adaptations of Daṇḍin's work had a dramatic impact even on worlds with their own long histories of literary praxis and theory, as can be seen in the case of Tamil. And in some cases – the most remarkable example is Tibetan – the *Mirror* continues to be a dominant literary model well into the twenty-first century.

But the significance of the Daṇḍin phenomenon has rarely been noted, let alone explored and explained.¹ There are several possible reasons for this mas-

¹ The important exception is the work of Sheldon Pollock, who notes, «Measured by the crudest quantitative standards – miles travelled, size of readership, kinds of language traditions influenced, numbers of translations and adaptations and borrowings – Daṇḍin's [work] ... can safely be adjudged the most important work on literary theory and practice in Asian history, and, in world history, a close second to Aristotle's *Poetics*» (POLLOCK 2005: 637).

sive lacuna. First, a meaningful study of the multifaceted career of the *Mirror* requires access to texts in a variety of languages, and data about its readership and distribution must be sought in diverse and remote regions, a task beyond the capabilities of any one person. Second, there is a strong prejudice among Indologists against early works on Sanskrit poetics, including Daṇḍin's. In most standard accounts, works such as the *Mirror* are viewed as primitive formulations that were eventually eclipsed by Ānandavardhana's celebrated ninth-century text from Kashmir, *Light on suggestion* (*Dhvanyāloka*), and its authoritative commentary by Abhinavagupta.² If aspects of the *Mirror* can partly explain its astonishing success, modern scholars have regarded them with a collective blind spot.³ The result is that we know little about this text and its afterlife. Why did the *Mirror* enjoy such extraordinary success? How, when, and where did it travel? And what happened in its encounters with both nascent and thriving literary cultures? These are questions that still require serious attention.⁴

The purpose of this essay is more modest. My aim is to take a fresh look at Daṇḍin's textual practices and objectives by examining a single, well-defined case study. An almost random choice is Daṇḍin's discussion of *samāsokti*, or «condensed speech», which occupies 9 of the 365 verses that make up the second chapter of the work. This chapter, by far the longest of the work's three, is dedicated entirely to literary ornaments (*alaṅkāra*), which Daṇḍin defines as «the elements that make literature beautiful».⁵ Scholars still lack a proper understanding of how ornaments work in the *Mirror*, both individually and as a system, and a close look at the discussion of one of them can shed much-needed light on this question.

Daṇḍin, in typical fashion, did not invent *samāsokti* or coin its name.⁶ Rather, he borrowed it from earlier texts, even though the borrowing involved considerable retooling. In order to realize how Daṇḍin redesigned this tool and fitted it into his newly designed kit, we must first examine its earlier instances. Therefore, I begin by exploring the relevant portions of Bhāmaha's *Ornaments of literature* (*Kāvyaślokaśāstra*) and Bhaṭṭi's *Killing of Rāvaṇa* (*Rāvaṇavadha*), two earlier texts that present instances of *samāsokti*.⁷

² For an example of such a standard account, see DE 1960.

³ Indeed, to the extent that modern scholars have been interested in Daṇḍin's work, their investigation has largely been guided by questions of its absolute and relative chronology (BRONNER 2012).

⁴ A large group dedicated to the study of the Daṇḍin phenomenon convened for five months at the Israeli Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS) in Jerusalem (September 2015-January 2016), and we are now working on a volume of essays dedicated to it. We wish to thank the IIAS for generously hosting our activities.

⁵ KĀ 2.11ab: *kāvyaśobhākarān dharmān alaṅkāraṇ pracakṣate*.

⁶ Of the thirty-five ornaments in Daṇḍin's second chapter, only one, *āvṛtti* (KĀ 2.116-119), is not previously recorded.

⁷ The dates of Bhāmaha and Bhaṭṭi are far from certain, although we can say with confidence that Bhāmaha predated Daṇḍin (BRONNER 2012). Bhaṭṭi, by most estimates, flourished c. 600 (FALLON 2009: xx1), and it seems reasonably safe to assume that Daṇḍin knew his work as well (see below). The relative chronology of Bhāmaha and Bhaṭṭi still awaits investigation. My working hypothesis is that Bhaṭṭi was later and was well acquainted with Bhāmaha's work, although this hypothesis has little bearing on my arguments in this essay.

CONDENSED SPEECH BEFORE DAṆḌIN

What is condensed speech? Bhāmaha defines it as a device where the use of equivocal modifiers calls to mind a second modificand, which is thus understood or suggested (*gamya*) despite not being spelled out. Here is his pair of verses that briefly define and exemplify the device:

yatrokte gamyate 'nyo 'rthas tatsamānaviśeṣaṇaḥ |
 sā samāsoktir uddiṣṭā samkṣiptārthatayā yathā || KA 2.79
 skandhavān rjur avyālah sthiro 'nekamahāphalaḥ |
 jātas tarur ayaṃ coccaih pātitaś ca nabhasvatā || KA 2.80

Condensed speech was defined as a statement where, thanks to the employment of equivocal modifiers, a second entity / meaning (*artha*) is implied. It is so called because of the semantic compression involved. For example:

Dependable, upright, free from snakes,
 deep rooted, lavish with fruits –
 this tree stood tall before the storm
 brought it down.

Bhāmaha's definition is brief and dense, his example comes with no self-annotation, and we do not possess any old commentary on this passage.⁸ Still, the illustration is reasonably clear and sheds considerable light on the definition. A tree (*taru*) is being described, and a second entity – a generous patron or king – is implied by means of modifiers that equally apply to him. These include adjectives such as *skandhavān* (possessing a [strong] trunk or, in the case of a man, dependable shoulders, or strong troops), *avyāla* (hosting no snakes or avoiding the company of dishonest characters), and *anekamahāphala* (lavish with fruits or rewards). In other words, Bhāmaha employs an arboreal vocabulary that in Sanskrit easily lends itself to the portrayal of a benevolent benefactor, although producing an English version requires some adjustments. This effect hinges on the existence of a long-standing poetic practice of likening monarchs to trees that provide shelter and yield fruits.

Even this short description illustrates the potentially complex, hybrid nature of condensed speech. In one sense, it is an analogy. It is not by chance that Bhāmaha's definition includes the word *samāna*, which entails the use of equivalent or equivocal modifiers, and the corresponding language in the example clearly implies an actual homology between tree and man. Thus the device resembles other ornaments that form a variation on the simile

⁸ Only scattered bits from the *samāsokti* passage are found in the highly fragmented manuscript of Udbhaṭa's mostly lost *Vivaraṇa* published in GNOLI 1962 (see fr. 36-37a). It is interesting, however, that these include a partial citation of another example, *upodharāgeṇa*, which later became the primary example of *samāsokti* in Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* (p. 109). See Ingalls, Masson, and PATWARDHAN 1990: 137-141.

(*upamā*), such as «the yoke of equivalence» (*tulyayogitā*) and «in doubt» (*sasandeha*).⁹ At the same time, the ornament is also defined by its mode of signification, not unlike the Greek allegory. As Bhāmaha explains, the ornament's «semantic compression», that is, its ability to convey an added meaning (*artha*) on top of its literal import, explains its nature and name. In this it resembles another set of Sanskrit ornaments that are based on their suggestive mode and include «roundabout speech» (*paryāyokta*) and «praise of the irrelevant» (*aprustutaprasāṃsā*).¹⁰ Moreover, the illustration appears to show that the device also involves *śleṣa*, that is, an «embrace» of signifiers or signifieds.¹¹ In other words, the ornament depends at least partly on the language-specific coalescence of meanings in words such as *skandha* (trunk/shoulder/troop) and *vyāla* (snake/villain). Finally, like the ornament «flavored» (*rasavat*), the example can give voice to an intensified emotional flavor (*rasa*), in this case lament or pathos (*karuṇa*), as the speaker bemoans the demise of his patron. The indirect, allegorical nature of *samāsokti* may even naturally lend itself to emotionally charged statements.

Note, as an aside, that Bhāmaha's emotional pitch is interesting. There is nothing unusual in comparing one's generous patron to a lush tree, and typically this praise is meant to bring about fulfillment of the poet's wish. But in Bhāmaha's examples, the emphasis is just as often on the acute rarity of such fruitful sponsors (see, for example, KA 2.36) or, in this case, the pain resulting from their sudden loss. These and other hints in his work tempt one to speculate about Bhāmaha's career in this connection.¹²

Be that as it may, the hybrid nature of *samāsokti* explains some of the challenges that this ornament posed to later thinkers, who tried to differentiate it from similar devices involving analogy, insinuation, and punning, as well as from the emerging tendency to define poetry not by this or that ornament but by its semantic capacity of suggestion (*dhvani*, *vyañjana*), and primarily the suggestion of emotional flavors (*rasa*).¹³ But we should be careful not to view *samāsokti* anachronistically as a problem awaiting solution. All the different elements that I have mentioned can be seen as responsible for the unique and distinct flavor of condensed speech, a flavor that the tradition recognized and tried to preserve. Thus, despite the major theoretical changes that the discipline of Sanskrit poetics underwent, no one chose the easy option of eliminating *samāsokti* or subsuming it under another category.

Another early instance of *samāsokti* is found in Bhaṭṭi's *Killing of Rāvaṇa* (*Rāvaṇavadha*), better known as *Bhaṭṭi's poem* (*Bhaṭṭikāvya*). This work narrates the story of Rāma and, at the same time, is designed as an introduction to Sanskrit's cosmopolitan cultural package, primarily grammar and poetics.

⁹ See KA 3.27-28 and 3.43-44, respectively.

¹¹ See KA 3.14-20. For a discussion of this ornament in Sanskrit poetics, see BRONNER 2010: 195-230.

¹² BRONNER 2009: 182-183.

¹⁰ See KA 3.8-9 and 3.29-30, respectively.

¹³ See Cox in this issue.

Its tenth chapter, for example, is dedicated to a systematic illustration of all the ornamental tools in the poet's kit. Because this is not a discursive text but a poem, no formal definitions are offered, but we are lucky to have the work of the commentator Jayamaṅgala (date unknown), who regularly pairs Bhaṭṭi's verses in this chapter with Bhāmaha's definitions of ornaments and often elucidates how the example fits Bhāmaha's stipulations. Here is the verse that Jayamaṅgala identifies as illustrating condensed speech:

*sa ca vihvalasattvasaṃkulaḥ
pariśuśyann abhavan mahāhradaḥ |
paritaḥ paritāpamūrccitaḥ
patitaṃ cāmbu nirabhram īpsitam II BhK 10.42*

Rattled by a rampant monster and dried
by unabating heat, the great lake lay
unconscious when the longed-for rain
fell cloudlessly.

This is a description of lonely Rāma just after Hanūmān has given him the first news that Sītā, his missing wife, is alive. Rāma, of course, is not mentioned in the verse, which instead depicts a «great lake». But the description is equivocal as Jayamaṅgala explains: the rampant water monster that afflicts the lake is Rāma's restless heart (both denoted by *sattva*), the scorching heat is his pain of separation (Rāma is by now entirely emaciated), and the water falling from cloudless skies is the monkey's message that Sītā is alive, arriving miraculously when all hope has been lost.¹⁴

Note the profound complexity of this verse. To begin with, it seems to build less on poetic clichés than on the immediate narrative context and a set of striking lexical choices. These involve semantic «embraces» (*śleṣa*) that are more pronounced than in Bhāmaha's illustration (as in the case of *sattva* for «monster» and «heart»), and a vocabulary that conflates both registers in surprising ways. Thus the word *mūrccita*, «unconscious», naturally lends itself to the portrayal of the insinuated protagonist, Rāma, and only figuratively to the supposedly depicted lake, while «dried» (*pariśuśyann*) has the opposite trajectory.¹⁵ These lexical choices are tied to the verse's layered figuration. On top of condensed speech, it showcases the aforementioned «embrace» (*śleṣa*), as Jayamaṅgala explicitly notes; an underlying metaphorical

¹⁴ Jayamaṅgala ad BhK 10.42: *sa ca rāmo mahāhrado mahāhradasamaḥ sītāvirahād vihvalenākulena sattvena cetasā saṃkulo vyāptaḥ. pariśuśyañ choṣam upagacchan paritaḥ samantāt paritāpamūrccitaḥ śokasantāpena mūrcchānvito 'bhavad bhūtaḥ. anantaraṃ cāmbu jalam sītāvartāśravaṇam īpsitam abhipretaṃ nirabhram ākasmikaṃ patitam ity eko 'rthaḥ. mahāhradaḥ pariśuśyan vihvalaiḥ sattvair matsyādibhiḥ saṃkulo vyāptaḥ. paritāpamūrccito 'arkatāpānvito 'bhavat. ambu ca nirabhram vinā meghena patitam iti dvitīyaḥ.*

¹⁵ Alternatively, when modifying the lake, *mūrccita* can be taken as meaning «solidified» (or «thoroughly viscous» in Fallon's translation; FALLON 2009: 237). If so, this would be another instance of *śleṣa*. However, neither Mallinātha nor Jayamaṅgala gloss the word in this way.

identification (*rūpaka*), which is how the famous commentator Mallinātha identified the verse's main figure; a subtle ascription of human motivations to nonsentient entities (*utprekṣā*), in this case the rain; and a hint that Hanūmān's message was a lifesaving medication for Rāma, a hint that the Javanese poet intensifies in the so-called *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa*, an adaptation of *Bhaṭṭi's poem*.¹⁶ All these figurative elements are topped off by the verse's emotional makeup, which is also intense or condensed and includes, in addition to pathos (*karuṇa*), the flavors (*rasa*) of love in separation (*vīpralambhaśṛṅgāra*) and marvel (*adbhuta*).

Finally, note the level of narrative compression. Not one but two pairs of entities are intimated in a condensed way: first, the miserable Rāma, in the guise of a dried lake, and, second, Hanūmān's miraculous appearance with wonderful news, like rain falling from a cloudless sky. In retrospect, the same can be said of Bhāmaha's somewhat simpler example, which suggests the patron-king's former generosity and his eventual succumbing to some «storm». These early examples show that condensed speech lends itself not so much to the creation of similarity or identification as to the narration of abridged interpersonal dramas with a structure of «before and after», and that through this narrative structure it exerts a strong emotional impact. In fact, it is tempting to speculate that if Bhaṭṭi knew Bhāmaha's work, he used Bhāmaha's illustration as the before of his after but replaced its sad coda with a miraculous, last-minute happy ending involving the patron's survival. None of these complexities appear in Bhāmaha's terse definition, even though his and Bhaṭṭi's illustration strongly suggest that *samāsokti* was cherished for such intricate effects. As we shall now see, Daṇḍin's treatment of this ornament strongly confirms this impression.

TAKE 1: DAṆḌIN ON CONDENSED SPEECH

Turning to Daṇḍin, we find for the first time in the history of Sanskrit poetics an extended discussion of condensed speech, which, although closely indebted to those of both of his predecessors, vastly expands its scope. It is easy to divide Daṇḍin's discussion into three distinct parts, and I will deal with them separately, in the order of their appearance in his text. The first part consists of a definition, an example, and an explanation of the example, a novel combination. We find rare hints of this combination in Bhāmaha,¹⁷ but in Daṇḍin's *Mirror* it becomes one of the cornerstones of a new style of pedagogy (more on this later):

¹⁶ Mallinātha takes the pronoun *saḥ*, «he», to refer to Rāma as identified with the lake; he also sees here an element of *atiśayokti*, or intensification (ad BhK 10.40). For the Javanese version, see OJR 11.47-48. For similar figurative intensifications, see Bronner and Creese forthcoming.

¹⁷ For such rare instances in Bhāmaha, see KA 3.8-9 (*paryāyokta*) and 3.14-3.16 (*śleṣa*).

vastu kiñcid abhipretya tattulyasyānyavastunaḥ |
uktiḥ saṃkṣiptarūpatvāt sā samāsoktir iṣyate || KĀ 2.203
piban madhu yathākāmaṃ bhramaraḥ phullapañkaje |
apy asannaddhasaurabhyaṃ paśya cumbati kuḍmalam || KĀ 2.204
iti prauḍhāṅganābaddharatilāsyā rāgiṇaḥ |
kasyāñcid api bālāyām icchāvṛttir vibhāvvyate || KĀ 2.205

Condensed speech is when one uses a compressed form of speech to speak of one entity / narrative (*vastu*) while aiming at another entity / narrative (*vastu*) that is analogous:

The bee sipped honey to its fill
 from a flower in full bloom.
 Look! Now it's kissing a bud
 that is yet to develop a scent.

This is what is being evoked here: a playboy who had a long love affair with an experienced woman is now infatuated with an adolescent girl.

There is much to be said about Daṇḍin's initial presentation of *samāsokti*. First, note the move to broaden the definition, as is most immediately apparent in what is absent from it. Condensed speech is no longer defined by its specific choice of equivalent modifiers (a topic to which Daṇḍin will shortly return), or at least not only by equivocal modifiers in the strict sense of adjectives. Thus the definition can be taken to imply that any pragmatic strategy can bring about the effect of intimating Y while speaking of X so long as the two are in some sense analogous. It is significant, moreover, that the X and the Y involved in this compressed mode of speaking are no longer referred to as *arthas*, that is, things or meanings, but as *vastus*, which can also refer to narratives or plots. This shift is unlikely to be random, and Daṇḍin may have introduced *vastus* precisely in order to make room for ministories with a set of several characters and a «before and after» structure. In other words, the notion of *samāsokti* is broadened both in terms of the mode of insinuation it entails (which now seems unrestricted) and in terms of what gets insinuated (whole narratives).

Note also the new focus on intentionality, in the definition's mention of the speaker's «aiming» or intending (*abhipretya*), and on the receptive, imaginative response «evoked» (*vibhāvvyate*) in the reader's or listener's mind, pointed out in the last verse (KĀ 2.205), where the illustration is explained. I cannot discuss this in detail here, but I believe that Daṇḍin expands both the ornament of «evocation» (*vibhāvanā*, discussed just before condensed speech) and condensed speech as a pair of powerful suggestive figures. The former is no longer about positing an effect in the absence of its standard cause, as it was for Bhāmaha, but about summoning up an alternative cause (*yat kiñcit kāraṇāntaram*), and the latter is no longer about positing a second modificand by using equivocal modifiers, but about conjuring up an alternative analo-

gous story.¹⁸ Therefore, both ornaments by definition require not just the speaker's clever insinuation but also the reader's imaginative cooperation.

Thus condensed speech as understood by Daṇḍin comes close to later Kashmiri notions of suggestion (*dhvani*), and it is not by chance that Daṇḍin's most important commentator, the Sinhalese monk Ratnaśrījñāna, chose the definition of this ornament as the only passage in his long and erudite commentary in which he acknowledged this new theory. In fact, he ended his exposition of the ornament's definition by noting, perhaps somewhat dismissively, «And this very [ornament] has been dubbed 'suggestion' (*dhvani*) by others», a comment that is then followed by a quotation from Ānandavardhana's definition of *dhvani*. As he further explained, both in condensed speech and in suggestion the explicit statement is subordinated to the main meaning that is suggested as the real import of the sentence.¹⁹ I should add that Ānandavardhana never wished to limit suggestion to cases based on analogy between the explicit and suggested meanings. I should also say that there are many other devices in Daṇḍin's *Mirror* that involve insinuation. Still, it is easy to see how Daṇḍin's vastly expanded *samāsokti* anticipates the discourse of later Kashmiri thinkers, and it is probably significant that this device is the first to which Ānandavardhana turns in the beginning of his book, when he tries to differentiate ornaments from his new notion of *dhvani*.²⁰

If we examine Daṇḍin's illustration, we realize at once that it fits the vastly broadened vision of his definition. In Bhāmaha's example verse about the tree, the condensation of an additional meaning was primarily the function of equivocal or punned adjectives (*viśeṣaṇa* in the strict sense of the word). But Daṇḍin's first illustration about a bee sipping honey from different flowers is based neither strictly on adjectives (although adjectives such as *phulla*, «in full bloom», do play a role) nor on puns. Rather, much hinges on the verb *cumbati* («kisses»), which is loaded and better fits the suggested erotic message, not unlike the participle *mūrcchita* («unconscious») in Bhaṭṭi's depiction of the lake. Equally important is the intersubjective connection between the speaker and the listener based on context and nonlinguistic signs, and it is significant that the verse includes a word that betokens these in the interjection «Look!» (*paśya*), which also calls attention to the dramatic situation in which this verse is uttered. It is not entirely clear whether the speaker is directing the listener's gaze to a bee atop a bud in a garden, in which case the romantic affair is probably in the immediate context of their conversation (or the talk of

¹⁸ On *vibhāvanā*, compare KA 2.77-78 and KĀ 2.197-202.

¹⁹ Ratnaśrījñāna ad KĀ 2.203: *iyam eva cānyair dhvanir iti vyavahriyate. yad āhuḥ: yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanikertasvārthau | vyāñktaḥ kāvyaviśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ || [Dhvanīyāloka 1.13].* See also his comments ad 2.205: *vibhāvīyate pratiyate. na tu sākṣād ucyate. tato 'yam evārtho vidheyatvāt pradhānam. śabdārthas tūpasarjanibhūtas tatparatvābhāvād vākyaśyete.*

²⁰ Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanīyāloka*, p. 109: *samāsoktau tāvat.*

the town), or whether he or she is actually pointing at a man who is courting an adolescent girl. But in either case, the speaker's «Look!» is laden with a facial expression, a nod, or an added intonation, all of which invoke a shared contextual knowledge. These extralinguistic signs are central to the expanded horizons of condensed speech, now envisioned as capable of pragmatic insinuation rather broadly defined.

Then there is the clearly erotic content of the verse. Recall that both of Daṇḍin's predecessors illustrated *samāsokti* only in the context of political praise poetry (Bhāmaha) or in depicting the exiled king Rāma (Bhaṭṭi). In a typical move, Daṇḍin identifies a thematic lacuna here and shows that condensed speech is also highly useful in courtly love poetry. It can be speculated, moreover, that this move was partly inspired by Prakrit love poems, which often involve such insinuations, and perhaps even by Tamil poetry from his immediate surroundings.²¹ In fact, there is an added level of meaning in this example in that it echoes at least one known Prakrit poem from Kālidāsa's famous *Abhijñānaśakuntala*. In act 5 of this play, the hero, Duṣyanta, overhears a verse directed at him from backstage by one of his lovers, Haṃsapadikā, who bemoans his neglecting her in favor of a rival:

aḥiṇavamahulohabhāvio taha paricumbia cūamañjarim |
kamalavasaimettaṇivvuo mahuara vīsario si ṇaṃ kaḥaṃ || Kālidāsa, *Abhijñānaśakuntala* 5.16

Ever greedy for fresh nectar,
how, honeybee, did you forget
the kiss of the mango blossom
and settle, instead, on the lotus's face?

It is easy to see the similarities between this stanza and Daṇḍin's example. Both imply a romantic triangle wherein the lover drifts bee-like to a newly blossomed relationship and forgets a former love interest, and both share the key lexical items for honey and kissing.²² Note, also, that both verses involve a lotus, although with an interesting inversion on Daṇḍin's part, for whom this flower is the old lover rather than the new one. Another similarity is that the message of Kālidāsa's verse, too, is spelled out when Duṣyanta deciphers Haṃsapadikā's rebuke and sends the poor Vidūṣaka to appease her. However, there is more to this verse than first catches the ear. In a play that is all about

²¹ Here, too, as with nearly every ornament in the book, he provides examples both from the erotic and heroic-political realms (Tamil: *akam* and *puṇam*). Only four of Daṇḍin's thirty-five ornaments are illustrated only with political poems: *aprustutaprasaṃsā* (KĀ 2.338ab-2.340), *vyājastuti* (2.341-2.345), *nidarśana* (2.346-2.348), and *parivṛtti* (2.353-2.354); two of these have only one example each. As for the languages in question, no mention of Tamil is found in the *Mirror*. Prakrit, by contrast, is mentioned (KĀ 1.32-39), and Daṇḍin avows his preference for poetry in Vaidarbhī style (KĀ 1.40-105), the description of which seems close in nature to Prakrit poetry. Daṇḍin's ancestors came from Vidarbha (DAṆḌIN, *Avantīsundarī*, pp. 1-10).

²² Compare *paricumbia* to *cumbati* and *mahu* to *madhu*. I am grateful to Whitney Cox for first bringing this intertextual connection to my attention.

memory and forgetfulness and in the context of earlier episodes involving Duṣyanta, a bee, and his forgotten beloved Śakuntalā, the stanza also directs the hero-listener to retrieve his repressed memories of this true heroine of the play.²³ Indeed, the verse directly triggers additional reflections in Duṣyanta, who next turns to utter one of the most cherished verses in the Sanskrit canon: *ramyāṇi vikṣya*.²⁴

Some of these additional resonances are perhaps no longer detectible in the verse from Daṇḍin's *Mirror*, where the emphasis, as the author explains, is on the lover's loss of interest in an older partner and his flirtatious behavior towards a youth. But we can certainly see in Daṇḍin's verse a playfulness that is manifest on various levels: the bee, sipping honey to its fill and then moving to another flower; the speaker, nudging the listener («Look!») while delivering his or her clever insinuation; and the author, who has used old honey from Kālidāsa and possibly other sources, but did so with a twist and order to create a fresh flavor. Daṇḍin, I believe, is calling attention to the playfulness inherent in condensed speech, as well as to that entailed by his overall poetic-pedagogical project, where there is an abundance of such echoes.²⁵ And indeed, more playfulness is in store.

TAKE 2: DAṆḌIN ON THE USE OF MODIFIERS

In theory, this first triad of verses – a definition of *samāsokti*, an illustration, and an explanation – could have been enough, and it is certainly more extensive than Bhāmaha's original terse treatment. But Daṇḍin has far more ground to cover. He turns first to the technique of modification Bhāmaha stipulated and exposes it as restrictive:

viśeṣyamātrabhinnāpi tulyākāraviśeṣaṇā |
asty asāv aparāpy asti bhinnābhinnaviśeṣaṇā || KĀ 2.206
rūḍhamūlah phalabharaiḥ puṣṇann anisam arthinaḥ |
sāndracchāyo mahāvṛkṣaḥ so 'yam āsādito mayā || KĀ 2.207
analpaviṭapābhogaḥ phalapuṣpasamṛddhimān |
sacchāyāḥ sthairiyavān daivād eṣa labdho mayā drumah || KĀ 2.208
ubhayatra pumān kaścīd vṛkṣatvenopavarṇitaḥ |
sarve sādharmaṇā dharmāḥ pūrvatrānyatra tu dvayam || KĀ 2.209

This [ornament] entails common modifiers while the modificand alone is distinct. But another variety exists, entailing [a mixture of] distinct and common modifiers:

²³ On the relationship between the two bees, see SHULMAN 2016: 408.

²⁴ On the topic of memory in this play, see SHULMAN 2001.

²⁵ Other instances of such echoes include the illustration of the emotional flavor (*rasa*) of grief, which is almost a verbatim quote from Aja's lament in the *Raghuvamśa* (compare KĀ 2.284 and RV 8.57), the first pair of examples of «embrace» (*śleṣa*) that include a nod to Subandhu (compare KĀ 2.309-310 and VD 245, 355), and the culminating example of «distinction» (*vyatireka*), which is an unmistakable gesture to Bāṇa (compare KĀ 2.195 and BĀṆA, *Kādambarī*, p. 221; I am grateful to H. V. Nagaraja Rao for this last reference).

The roots are firm, the fruits abound –
they're supplied nonstop for the asking –
and the shelter is lavish.
I've come to the right grand tree.

The swathe of boughs is not small,
and there is a wealth of fruits and flowers.
The shelter is good, and its giver is strong:
Thank God I found this tree.

In the above two examples a certain man is described as a tree. But in the former all the modifiers equally apply to both tree and man, while in the latter only two of them do.

The same agendas that are conspicuous in Daṇḍin's opening statement on condensed speech are visible here as well. First, it is easy to notice the continued focus on pedagogy. Daṇḍin showcases another mainstay of his new style of teaching: a pair of illustrations that are carefully constructed to keep all variables constant (in this case, topics, imagery, and vocabulary) except for the one taught, namely, adjectives that are unequivocal.²⁶ Indeed, to make things clearer, Daṇḍin draws attention to this method in yet another follow-up note («In the above two verses...»). I should add, though, that what is meant to be crystal clear to a reader of Sanskrit poetry may seem obscure to a reader who is less familiar with its poetic conventions. That a phrase such as «the roots are firm, the fruits abound» is applicable to the patron's being grounded and generous, whereas references to flowers and boughs are strictly applicable to a tree, requires intuitions that are specific to Indic poetic precedents. These conventions can be easily lost in translation, and this is one case where Daṇḍin's carefully crafted mode of presentation seemed highly confusing to some Tibetan translators.²⁷ This interlingual complication, however, should not distract us from the groundbreaking nature of Daṇḍin's pedagogy in Sanskrit.

Second, Daṇḍin continues to be fascinated by ways in which the scope of condensed speech can be broadened. Here he breaks away from Bhāmaha's stipulations and allows some of the modifications to remain specific to the literally described entity even as others continue to cut both ways. It is interesting to speculate what may have prompted him to dedicate four out of nine verses in the section on *samāsokti* to what may seem to us a minor technical point. Perhaps Daṇḍin wanted to show his readers that the insinuation involved in this device may work in subtler ways than in Bhāmaha's example because it is based less on the specific choice of words and more on the context, be it immediate or rooted in poetic convention. It is also possible that he

²⁶ Example of such pairs include KĀ 1.63-64 (*grāmyatā*), 2.309-310 (*śleṣa*), and 3.174, 178 (different types of *virodhadoṣa*).

²⁷ See Bhum and Gyatso in this issue.

wanted to stress again that in comparing one entity to another, not all their attributes need to have a perfect match, as he does elsewhere in his book.²⁸ He may also have been responding to instances in the practice that had a mixed pattern of modification and that Bhāmaha's definition could thus have been taken to exclude. Finally, Daṇḍin perhaps saw another opportunity for a dig at his important predecessor; he was generally loath to miss such opportunities.²⁹

This is related to the third recurring feature of Daṇḍin's discussion, its playfulness, this time manifest in the way the author echoes his important pair. It is clear that Daṇḍin's pair of examples reworks Bhāmaha's original illustration involving a tree, but it should also be clear that in addition to his different use of adjectives, Daṇḍin ends both illustrations with a positive twist. These are no longer poems bemoaning the loss of a great man who succumbed to a perfect storm; instead, they are about the poet's success in securing a stable and thriving benefactor (a point repeated in both examples). This twist is perhaps a wry joke about the hard time Bhāmaha had with his patrons or an encouraging message to poets in the making, who need to know that good opportunities lie ahead. But like Kālidāsa in his verse, Daṇḍin is also indicating that more can be condensed in *samāsokti* than merely an additional entity. Put differently, the *vastu* invoked through this ornament is always also some intertext, whether or not it is as easily identifiable as in the case of Bhāmaha's and Kālidāsa's works.

TAKE 3: IN SEARCH OF THE UNPRECEDENTED (AND ITS PRECEDENTS)

This conclusion is strengthened by Daṇḍin's last playful statement, where he presents another subtype of condensed speech. Here the example is offered first and is then followed by a verse supplying the name of the subtype and a brief exposition:

nivṛttavyālasam̐sargo nisargamadhurāśayaḥ |
ayam ambhonidhiḥ kaṣṭam̐ kālena pariśoṣyate || KĀ 2.210
ity apūrvasamāsoktiḥ pūrvadharmanivartanāt |
samudreṇa samānasya puṁso vyāvṛttisūcane || KĀ 2.211

Snakes were strictly disallowed,
 and sweetness flowed naturally
 from this ocean. How tragic
 that it eventually dried.

This is «unprecedented condensed speech» because in suggesting the loss of a man who is like an ocean, its conventional attributes are inverted.

²⁸ See Daṇḍin's notes on flaws of the simile and their remedies (KĀ 2.51-56) or his category of *sav-iśeṣanarūpaka* (KĀ 2.81-82), to give only two examples.

²⁹ For more on such digs, see BRONNER 2012: 80-84.

By now there should be little surprise that Daṇḍin's example is based on those of his two main predecessors. This is true even of the vocabulary, where the words «snakes» in «snakes were strictly disallowed» (*nivṛttavyālasamsargaḥ*) and «dried» (*pariśoṣyate*) are reminiscent of Bhāmaha and Bhaṭṭi, respectively.³⁰ The combination, however, is more complex. The basic image of a large body of water that dried is lifted from Bhaṭṭi, but with a twist. The lake is turned into an ocean, but no miracles occur in the end, and this body of water ends up evaporating, its dimensions notwithstanding. This sudden elegiac turn seems inspired by Bhāmaha's tree example, but again with a slant. The patron dies not as a result of a sudden loss to a «storm» that befell him but naturally, with the passing of time (*kālena*) – an insinuation that seems safer and politically savvy. In the context of all of this twisting and turning, the name Daṇḍin gives this type of condensed speech, «unprecedented» (*apūrvā*), and the explanation he offers about the inversion (or negation) of precedents it entails (*pūrvadharmānivartanāt*) can be taken also to refer to his reworking of his predecessors.

Indeed, the implications of these last two verses are potentially broader. How, we may ask, does poetry reinvent itself to say something new (*apūrvā*) despite working with a relatively small set of topics and conventions that are all too familiar (*pūrvā*)? Daṇḍin's explanation of the illustration calls to mind, albeit in an appropriately condensed manner, one method for rejuvenation from the many that later thinkers explored at great length.³¹ For him, it would seem, the key is some mode of inversion (*nivartana*) of materials from prior texts. These texts need not necessarily be identifiable, although Bhāmaha, Bhaṭṭi, and Kālidāsa are happily thrown into the mix and get inverted in innovative ways. Rather, they are the language of poetry, regardless of a specific citable precedent.

Several such prior utterances can be heard in the verse about the ocean that dried. First, there are some factual statements (*svabhāvokti*), whose aesthetic value Daṇḍin famously endorsed: the ocean is salty, it is home to many serpents, and it never dries. These are the statements that the verse inverts, and therefore, they work like presuppositions that need to be activated while they are set aside. Second, there is the extremely common comparison (*upamā*) of a king to the ocean based on a variety of commonalities. As Ratnaśrījñāna notes in his commentary, these commonalities begin with «depth», and they too are activated or suggested in Daṇḍin's example (*gāmbhīryādāv api samānasyeti gamyata eva*).³² This similarity, too, is then inverted by the verse's dis-

³⁰ See KA 2.80 (*avyāla*) and BhK 10.42 (*pariśoṣyan*).

³¹ See BRONNER, SHULMAN, and TUBB 2014: 20-26.

³² Ratnaśrījñāna ad KĀ 2.211. For this notion of presuppositions, see CULLER 1976: 1390-1393; BRONNER 2010: 214-226.

inction between the king and the ocean: the king, it is suggested, is sweet and snake-free, unlike the ocean. Incidentally, stating the superiority of a king over the ocean is the main topic of Daṇḍin's illustrations of the ornament called «distinction» (*vyatireka*).³³ Finally, we have a hint of a «contradiction» (*virodha*), in that the ocean described ends up dried. This can be taken as a profound comment on the incomprehensible loss of someone larger than life, but it can also serve as a reflexive and therefore playful remark that calls the bluff of the basic comparison of man and sea – one final inversion.

In his discussion elsewhere in the *Mirror*, Daṇḍin showcases two aesthetic principles that I believe are central to his understanding of figuration. These I call modularity, or the ability to create and codify new expressions by combining distinct ornamental modules, and metatropicity, or the ability of each ornament to presuppose, suggest, and estrange a whole train of prior ornaments. Typically, Daṇḍin showcases these principles by creating, for each ornament, many subtypes that are based on other such figures. This is a topic I plan to expand on elsewhere, and I cannot discuss here at length. But I would like to end this section by suggesting that both principles are present in Daṇḍin's discussion of condensed speech, albeit in a highly condensed manner.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Daṇḍin's short exposition of *samāsokti* showcases some of the key components of a poetics that, I believe, proved uniquely attractive to readers throughout Asia. I conclude by briefly highlighting three of these components. The first is Daṇḍin's new mode of teaching, which includes a systematic explanation of the examples (note that he took care to spell out the scenario suggested in every one of his illustrations) and tools such as a pair of examples that differ only in their use of the variable being taught (again with an explanation to that effect). The second is Daṇḍin's expansion of theory in ways that respond to and enrich the possibilities of the practice. In the case of condensed speech, we have seen that he allows insinuation that is not dependent on a single mode of modification and that makes room for entire mininarratives (political and love-related), account for figurative complexities inherent in this device, demonstrate its pragmatic interplay between the speaker's intention and the reader's imaginative reception, and illustrate the vast intertextual potentials of *samāsokti*. Both of these components are closely related to a third central feature, the playful nature of poetry. By playfulness I refer to the engagement with and estrangement of prior texts, whether they are specific, as in the cases of Bhāmaha, Bhaṭṭi, or Kālidāsa, or simply the stuff of poetic convention. Such playfulness necessarily opens up space for reflec-

³³ KĀ 2.178-185.

tion (for readers) and innovation (for poets), and therefore, it is at the heart of Daṇḍin's pedagogy, far more than any methodical presentation.

What Daṇḍin taught, discursively or by example, was absorbed by readers from Tibet to Sri Lanka and from the western Deccan to Burma and Java. It is thus no surprise that many later writers sought to do unto Daṇḍin what he had done to his predecessors, effectively outdaṇḍinizing him. There exists, for example, a rich corpus of poems that depict lovers as bees ever seeking old and new flowers and correspond with Daṇḍin's illustration in a variety of ways that lie outside the scope of this essay.³⁴ Still, each such verse is condensed precisely by its echoing of Daṇḍin's illustration of *samāsokti* and in ways that he had already demonstrated. With every layer of condensation, Daṇḍin is at once compressed and given depth, defeated and allowed to celebrate his victory.

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³⁴ For a brief note on this body of poems, see Bronner's afterword in this issue.

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