

The *Abhisāra*-verses of the *Sūktimuktāvalī* Studies on the *Sūktimuktāvalī* II: Women Going to Assignations

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ABSTRACT

This article is the second in a series in which we present the Sanskrit text of selected *paddhatis* (sections) of the *Sūktimuktāvalī* (SMĀ),¹ together with an annotated verse translation. In this instalment two *paddhatis* that are related to the theme of the *abhisārikā*, the young woman who sallies out (usually at night) for a secret meeting with a lover, are presented. In two appendices we discuss this topos and its early development in classical Indian poetry, especially in Sanskrit and Prakrit, also taking theoretical literature of *nāṭyaśāstra*, lexicography, *kāmaśāstra*, and *alaṃkāraśāstra* into consideration.

KEYWORDS

Sūktimuktāvalī, *muktaka* poetry, *abhisārikā*, Sanskrit literature, poetry anthologies

INTRODUCTION: *ABHISĀRIKĀ*-VERSES IN THE *SŪKTIMUKTĀVALĪ*

Two sections of the SMĀ are dedicated to the topic of *abhisāra*: the *abhisāre kāmijanapralāpa-paddhatiḥ* and the *abhisārikāpaddhatiḥ*. They form a nice pair, in a way which is unique in this anthology, the first giving the man's and the second the woman's perspective on *abhisāra* (though the first one begins in fact rather with even much more general reflections on the power of love).

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¹ The *Sūktimuktāvalī* is a large anthology of *muktaka* poetry produced in 1257 CE at the Yādava court in the Deccan. For our first article in this series see Dezső and Isaacson 2024.

The leitmotif of the former *paddhati* appears to be *yuktāyuktavicāra*, ‘reflection on what is right or wrong’, or more in particular the lack of such reflection on the part of the lovers. Verses 1–6 have a general (in the case of 1 and 2 ethical) nature, and are not necessarily ‘lovers’ talk in the context of assignation’, as they were apparently read as being by the anthologist(s). Some of them are anonymous and found only in this anthology (1 and 7), others are attributed to Bilhaṇa (2), Gotrānanda (8), and Ākāśapoli (11). Two verses might come from the *Vikramacarita* (3 and 4), two are from the *Nalacampū*, and two from Harṣa’s *Ratnāvalī* (9 and 10). The last verse (11) provides an upbeat conclusion for this section with the man whose new lover has arrived.

Most of the verses in the *abhisārikāpaddhati* are anonymous, but are found in other *subhāṣita*-collections, too. One verse is attributed to Harihara (8), one to Bilhaṇa (10, from his *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*), and one is borrowed from the *Sūktiratnākara*. There seems to be a clear intentional sequence in this section; one could even construe the verses as telling the story of an assignation, from planning and practicing, through the actual journey, to the rather disillusioning end: the man is not coming. Yet the very last verse has perhaps a touch of something beyond disillusionment; a sense of the *abhisārikā* freeing herself from the obsessive, and potentially self-destructive, love, and walking away. This might in part reflect the anthologists’ personal attitude, which the preceding *paddhati* already suggested might be in part disapproving of the *abhisārikā*’s transgression of conventional morality.

The two *paddhatīs* develop distinct but complementary themes. The first section, *abhisāre kāmijanapralāpapaddhatiḥ* (‘Lovers’ Talk in the Context of Assignation’, or ‘Lovers’ Talk About Assignation’), opens with ethical reflections. The programmatic first verse emphasizes that lovers’ hearts reject *yuktāyuktavicāra* (‘reflection on right or wrong’), desiring what is socially condemned, difficult to obtain, and morally dubious. This theme of love overriding reason and propriety runs throughout, with verses highlighting how Kāma can incapacitate the wise, mock the pure, and demean the steadfast. The section includes verses about the practical difficulties and consequences of assignation—people looking for faults, vigilant husbands, malicious gossip—yet ultimately celebrates the moment when the lover arrives, with the ‘lucky man’ welcoming his new beloved who has successfully completed her first *abhisāra*. The emotional arc moves from general reflections on love’s power through the anxieties of waiting to the joy of successful rendezvous.

The *abhisārikāpaddhatiḥ*, by contrast, tells a more linear and ultimately darker story from the woman’s perspective. It begins with her contemplating the journey ahead and questioning how the bodiless Love will guide her. The verses then progress through preparation (practicing the route at home with closed eyes, dressing in dark clothes to blend with darkness), the actual journey (battling wind, rain, mud, fear of detection), arrival at the rendezvous point, and finally disillusionment. The narrative structure seems deliberate: from planning through execution to disappointment. The penultimate verse catalogues everything the woman has sacrificed—her reputation, family honour, virtue, the path to both worlds—only to have her lover fail to appear. The final verse, with its striking repetition of forms of *yā-* (‘let us go, let us go; he is gone... gone... gone’), suggests not mere disappointment but liberation, as the woman chooses self-preservation over self-destruction, walking away from obsessive love.

The thematic contrast is significant. Where the male perspective focuses on generalities about love’s power and culminates in satisfaction (the beloved has arrived), the female perspective is intensely physical and practical—concerned with mud, anklets clogged with dirt, tilak-marks destroyed by wind, the terror of thunder—and ends in abandonment. The male section treats *abhisāra* somewhat abstractly, even playfully at times; the female section makes visceral the

actual costs and dangers the woman faces, though occasionally with a touch of humour. This difference may reflect the compilers' awareness that while the man waits in relative safety and comfort, the *abhisārikā* risks everything: her body to the elements and dangerous paths, her reputation to gossips, her family's honour to scandal, and ultimately her life to heartbreak.

ABHISĀRE KĀMIJANAPRALĀPAPADDHATIḤ (LOVERS' TALK IN THE CONTEXT OF ASSIGNATION)

1.

yad yal lokavirodhi yac ca bahuśaḥ kleśāvahaṃ sarvathā
yac cātyantasudurlabhaṃ yad api vā pāpapradhānaṃ sadā |
tat tat kāmijanasya vāñchati manaḥ svairapracārotsukaṃ
yuktāyuktavicārarodhi tad aho vāmaṃ manaḥ kāmīnām ||
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

What goes against the ways of common people,
Brings pain in every way repeatedly,
What is extremely difficult to get,
Or even what is always full of sin —
It is those things that lovers' hearts desire,
Eager to gratify themselves alone.
Ah, contrary indeed are lovers' hearts,
Rejecting every thought of right or wrong!

If the repetition of 'lovers' hearts' in the verse translation seems inelegant, exactly the same charge can be laid against the Sanskrit with *kāmijanasya ... manaḥ* and *manaḥ kāmīnām* in the third and fourth quarters respectively (likewise *-virodhi ... -rodhi* in the first and the last quarters may seem a clumsy rather than a charming repetition).

One might well wonder why this verse has been chosen to stand at the head of the two sections that deal with *abhisāra* / *abhisārikās*. Often the stanza placed at the beginning of a section is one which is particularly famous or is a strikingly elegant one, or at least in some way seems fitting for that position of honour. This verse seems not to be famous (we have found no other attestation of it); we see no particular elegance in its formulations; and one might even question why it should be read as an *abhisāre kāmijanapralāpaḥ* at all. As for the last of these points, however, it seems clear that for the anthologists Bhānu & Jalhana the expression *yuktāyuktavicārarodhi*, 'rejecting every thought of right or wrong', was felt to point strongly at the context of *abhisāra*. Note the similar *yuktāyuktavicāraṇā* of verse 5 of the *abhisārikāpaddhati* below (within this anthology it is only in these two verses that such a compound occurs), and the second half of verse 3 below, which while not using exactly that expression has the same idea; see also our comments on verse 2 below. Is it this moral dubiousness of the *abhisāra* that the compilers thought so important that they wished to place at the head of these sections a verse that seems to highlight only that? If so, it is not necessarily, perhaps, because they wished to take themselves a moral high ground, expressing mainly disapproval of such assignations; there is a possibility at least that this going against normally accepted conduct could be felt as enhancing the *śṛṅgārārasa*, showing its intensity (as is certainly the case in verse 5 of the *abhisārikāpaddhati*).

2.

madhur māsō ramyo vipinam ajanam tvaṃ ca taruṇī
 sphuratkāṃāveśe vayasi vayam apy āhitabharāḥ |
 vraja tvaṃ vā mugdhe kṣaṇam iha vilambasva yadi vā
 punas tāvaj jātaḥ piśunavacasām eṣa viṣayaḥ ||
 (bilhaṇasya)

(śikharinī)

= SRK 1693 (vallaṇasya), śss 836, PĀ 249.

a. madhur māsō ramyo] SRK SMĀ, vasantaḥ sannaddho śss PĀ

b. āhitabharāḥ] SRK SMĀ śss, āhitapadāḥ PĀ

c. vraja tvaṃ vā mugdhe] SMĀ śss, vrajatv ambā mugdhe SRK, vraja tvaṃ vā rādhe PĀ • iha] SRK SMĀ, atha śss PĀ

d. punas tāvaj jātaḥ] SMĀ, sphuṭas tāvaj jātaḥ SRK, sphuṭam tāvaj jātaḥ śss, sphuṭam jātas tāvac PĀ • piśunavacasām eṣa viṣayaḥ] SRK SMĀ, piśunavacanānām avasaraḥ ŚSS, caturavacanānām avasaraḥ PĀ

The month of Caitra's lovely. In this grove
 There's no one. You are young; I of the age
 When Love so patently possesses men.
 So I am all for this. Go, silly girl,
 Or else stay here with me a little while.
 In any case, for sure the gossips' tongues
 Will wag about us both before too long.

The attribution to Bilhaṇa is not certain in view of the fact that the SRK gives Vallāṇa as its author and that only two manuscripts of the SMĀ seem to contain it. Cox is probably right in thinking that it is a scribal error (Cox 2021: 873 and fn. 17). Note that Vidyākara, the compiler of the SRK, shows no sign elsewhere of knowing Bilhaṇa's poetry. If, however, the compilers of our anthology really did believe this verse to be Bilhaṇa's, that may have been the reason for it being placed at this prominent position, right after the programmatic first verse. As Cox has pointed out (2021: 869ff.), Bilhaṇa has a special place in the hearts of our anthologists.

The force of the compound *āhitabhara* is not transparent to us, even though it seems clear that it must be a *bahuvrīhi*. Hence we are also not sure whether the expression at the beginning of the second quarter is an absolute locative or whether the locative depends rather on *āhita* ('placed on'). The sole other occurrence of this compound that we are able to locate is a well-known one, in *Śiśupālavadha* 2.69, where it is feminine, qualifying *bhāratī*. There Vallabhadeva glosses the word with *arpitārthagauravām*; Mallinātha too says that *bhara* means *arthagaurava*. Perhaps one can by extension say that *bhara*, 'burden, load' can mean *gaurava* more broadly. But can one also take it in the sense of 'respect, respectful attention'? After all, in the *Śiśupālavadha* it is more something like 'weightiness / gravitas' that appears to be meant.

The variant *āhitapadāḥ* might be a secondary one introduced to clarify an unclear expression. It gives most naturally the sense 'one who has set foot in' (in which case the locative would practically have to be construed with *āhita*). In that case the second line rather clearly would mean something like 'I too, just like you, am a teenager'. But can we take the variant as a reliable guide to the sense of the (more probably original) *āhitabharāḥ*?

Alternatively, as an anonymous reviewer suggested, the second *pāda* could perhaps be interpreted as ‘I have *so much* respect for the age [i.e. yours] when the inrush of desire is plain to see’.

For the moment we have preferred an alternative, with the locative understood as absolute, and the compound taken in the sense of ‘one who has put weight on, i.e. put attention on’, with the focus of that attention being not explicit but to be understood as perhaps ‘you’ or ‘the amorous mood that is natural to our age and to this time of Spring and this suitable place.’ Ingalls too seems to have understood the locative as absolute, while translating it quite freely; but his rendering of *āhitabharāḥ* as ‘well-equipped’ (presumably intended archly) seems to us hard to justify.

The feeling of the verse seems to clearly be that of a chance encounter between two people, perhaps more likely to not have had any love relationship before, rather than a deliberate, agreed on, *abhisāra*. The motivation of the compilers may have been, we suggest, again related to the idea of *abhisāra* as incompatible with *yuktāyuktavicāra*; did they read the verse as the reply of the young man to the woman’s saying ‘don’t; people will talk’?

3.

kim u kuvalayanetrāḥ santi no nākanāryas
tridaśapatir ahalyāṃ tāpasīm yat siṣeve |
hṛdayatṛṇakuṭīre dīpyamāne smarāgnāv
ucitam anucitaṃ vā veti kaḥ paṇḍito ’pi ||
(*mālinī*)

= VC vi.1 (p. 30) VP 9.5 (p. 27) KR 4.87.2, STP p. 263, MSS 10489.

a. nāka°] Σ, nāki° KR

b. tāpasīm yat siṣeve] Σ, viprabhāryām ayāsīt STP

c. dīpyamāne] SMĀ KR STP, dahyamāne VC VP

Are there no heavenly ladies, lily-eyed,
That Indra, king of gods, pursued Ahalyā,
The anchoress? When passion burns ablaze
Within the straw hut of the heart, who knows,
Even if he is wise, what’s right or wrong?

The SMĀ is the oldest firmly datable source of this verse (the dates of Śivadāsa’s *Vetālapañca-viṃśatikā*, of the *Vikramacarita*, and of Revaṇārādhya’s *Smaratattvaprakāśikā* are difficult to pin down; it is not impossible that one or more of them predates the SMĀ, but we believe that that is not very likely at all; the *Kathāratnākara* was written around 1600).

Of the variant readings, *dahyamāne* for *dīpyamāne* is of some interest, for it slightly changes the feeling of the third quarter. It is more likely that fire should be described as *dīpyamāna*, ‘blazing’, but more likely that a straw hut should be *dahyamāna*, ‘being burnt’. With the latter reading, therefore, the absolute construction would be *hṛdayatṛṇakuṭīre dahyamāne*, and the sense of the whole line would be as Edgerton (following that reading) translates: ‘When the heart is burning in the fire of love like a straw-hut.’ Or could *dīpyamāne* have been preferred because of the vowel assonance (*ṭī - dī*) even though it was meant to refer to the hut? On the whole though, it seems

more natural to think of the fire blazing within the hut, simply because it is natural to think of love as being within the heart.

We differ from Edgerton (who agrees closely in his translation with Böhtlingk (*Indische Sprüche* no. 1772) in taking *santi* in the first quarter as existential rather than copulative.

In the vc, which is a good candidate for being the anthologists' source (see the commentary on the next verse), the context is not that of *abhisāra* at all. Instead, the verse is spoken disapprovingly by the minister of a king who loves his queen so much that he even shares his throne with her.

4.

vikalayati kalākuśalaṃ hasati śuciṃ paṇḍitaṃ viḍambayati |
adharayati dhīrapuruṣaṃ kṣaṇena makaradhvajo devaḥ ||
(*āryā*)

= NC 5.66, VC vi.3 (p. 30).

The dolphin-bannered god can in no time
Deprive the artist of artistic skill,
Cast mockery upon the pure, deride
The scholar and demean the firmest man.

This verse is found in the *Nalacampū*, but strikingly enough it seems here not to be attributed to Trivikramabhāṭṭa, for verses 5 and 6 below are followed by *trivikramabhāṭṭasyaitau*, not *trivikramabhāṭṭasyaite*. Of course, it is possible that the attribution was corrupted during transmission.² Since it is also found in the vc, separated by only one verse from our verse 3 above, it seems natural to suspect that the vc, or some similar recension of the vc, may have been the source here. If so this might be counterevidence to Sternbach's proposal that the vc 'could not have been composed before the thirteenth century, A.D.' (Sternbach 1964: 413), or at least to his further proposal that 'it is most likely that the authors or compilers of the vc borrowed from the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*' and that, if so, 'the vc could not have been composed before the first decade of the fourteenth century, A.D.' (*ibid.* 414).

This too is a verse that need not be related to *abhisāra* at all and has indeed no relation to that in either the NC or the vc.

5.

na gamyo mantrāṇaṃ na ca bhavati bhaiṣajyaviṣayo
na cāpi pradhvaṃsaṃ vrajati vihitaiḥ śāntikaśataiḥ |
bhramāveśād aṅge kam api vidadhad bhaṅgam asamaṃ
smarāpasmāro 'yaṃ bhramayati dṛśaṃ ghūrṇayati ca ||
(*śikhariṇī*)

= NC 7.17, BHŚT 126.

² Krishnamacharya points out in his introduction (p. 13) that *etau* and *ete* seem sometimes to be confused (cf. Cox 2021: 877 n. 30).

- b. vihitaiḥ] SMĀ NC, vividhaiḥ BHŚT
 c. kam] SMĀ NC, kim BHŚT

Spells don't affect it, nor can medicine
 Alleviate it, nor does it dissolve
 Even by hundred rites of expiation.
 It wrecks the body in a special way
 Possessing it with fantasies (or *shaking*) —
 This epilepsy-demon, Passion, makes
 The eyes of people roll about and wander.

As with the preceding verses, here too the anthologists have chosen to put under the heading of lovers' talk about *abhisāra* a verse which simply comments on the powerful effects, in this case very physical ones, of strong love. The context in the source (to which the attribution is in effect explicit, since the author is given after the next verse as Trivikramabhaṭṭa), the NC, has no mention of *abhisāra*, and the verse does not seem in any way gender specific.

It is striking that the SRK contains a verse (no. 1270; MSS 175) in the same *śikhariṇī* metre and with exactly the same opening phrase, *agamyo mantrāṇām*. It too compares metaphorically something to a disease, but in this case, it is just to disease in general (*vyādhi*) rather than epilepsy in particular, and it is not Love that is being compared but evil-minded people. The similarity extends however to several other ideas/phrases, so that it cannot possibly be coincidental. The SRK verse is not attributed, and it seems not to be found in any other source, so it is hard to determine whether it is calqued upon the NC verse, or whether there is some other, perhaps much more complex, explanation of their similarity.

6.

pauṣpāḥ pañca śarāḥ śarāsanam api jyāsūnyam ikṣor latā
 jetavyaṃ jagatāṃ trayāṃ pratidinaṃ jetāpy anaṅgaḥ kila |
 ity āścaryaparamparāghaṭanayā cetaś camatkārayan
 vyāpāraḥ sutarāṃ vicārapadavivandhyo vidher vardhatām ||
 (trivikramabhaṭṭasayitau)
 (śārdūlavikrīḍita)
 = NC 7.18.

- d. vardhatām] SMĀ, vandyatām NC

His arrows are but five, and made of flowers;
 His bow a sugar-cane, and with no string;
 Each day he aims to conquer the three worlds;
 And yet, they say, this victor's bodiless!

Long flourish, then, the work of the Creator
 Producing thus a string of miracles
 That thrill the mind—and yet at the same time
 Devoid completely of all rhyme and reason!

Apart from the fact that this follows in the *Nalacampū* directly after the verse the anthologists included just now as the fifth, it is likely to have been the phrase *vicārapadavīvandhya* that led the anthologists to put this verse, a very general reflection on Love, in fact, here. Note though that this time it is not an *abhisārikā*, nor a lover in general, who is said to lack *vicāra* but Brahmā himself, for creating the universe in the way that it is.

7.

pañkaḥ kuṅkumakardamaḥ kisalayaśreṇī sphuratkaṇṭakāḥ
pāśāṇā viṣamā mṛṇāvalayāny andhaṃ tamaś candrikā |
bhūmir gokhurakarkaśā pravitatā śayyā tathā komalā
saṃketotsavakāmināṃ punar aho vāmā hi kāmasthitiḥ ||
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

Mud in the place of turmeric paste; for row
Of tender leaves, just trembling thorns;³ for wreaths
Of lotus-fibre, rugged stones; for moonlight,
Pitch darkness; and instead of a soft bed
The spacious earth, made bumpy by cows' hoofprints —
Yet ah! how charming is the state of Love
For lovers at the feast of rendezvous!

We have not located any other occurrence of this somewhat unusual verse, the first of this section which sounds as if it could have been intended as the words of a man who has a rendezvous (though even here it could equally well be a comment of a third person, neither the man nor the woman, the voice of the poet himself for instance). In *pāda* b we took *valaya* to mean 'circle, ring, wreath', because rough stones seem to be strange substitutes for bracelets (the usual meaning of the word). In *Ānandakanda* 1.15.495 (Radhakrishna Sastri 1952: 251) we find the expression *mṛṇāvalayodbhāśiśayyā*, possibly referring to circles of lotus-fibre placed on the bed for cooling the body. In the last quarter, *vāmā* could also be taken in the sense of 'contrary' or even 'unfavourable'; but the particle *punaḥ* suggests, we think, a contrast, so we have not opted for this possibility.

8.

cetaḥ kātaratāṃ jahīhi hṛdaya sthairyam dadhīthāḥ kṣaṇam
prāptā sā smaramāṅgaṇavaraṇagaṇatrāṇauśadhiḥ preyaśī |
yena śvāsataṅgasaurabhamiladbhṛṅgāvalīvāraṇa-
krīḍāndolitabāhukaṅkaṇaraṇatkāro muhur mūrchatī ||
(*gotrānandasya*)
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)
= SRK 1641, SKA 1045, MSS 14481.

³ One would usually expect *sphuratkaṇṭakāḥ* to be a *bahuvrīhi* compound, but here it seems to be impossible.

- a. jahihi hṛdaya sthairyam dadhīhāḥ kṣaṇam] SMĀ, vimuñca jhaṭīti svāsthyam samālambyatām SRK, jahihi sapadi sthairyam samālambyatām SKA
 b. prāptā sā] SMĀ, prāptāsau SRK, āyātā SKA • °gaṇa°] SMĀ, °pari° SRK SKA
 c. yena] SMĀ, yasyāḥ SRK SKA • °taraṅgasaurabhamilad°] SMĀ, °samīrasaurabhapatad° SRK SKA
 d. kṛīḍāndolitabāhukaṇkaṇaraṇatkāro] SMĀ, kṛīḍāpāṇividhūtikaṇkaṇajhaṇatkāro SRK, kṛīḍācañcalapāṇikaṇkaṇajhaṇatkāro SKA

Abandon fearfulness, my mind!
 Be firm a moment now, my heart!
 Since now my darling has arrived,
 The medicine to treat my wounds
 Inflicted by the Love God's shafts.
 For, step by step, the ting-a-ling
 Of bangles as she waves her arms
 To ward away (though playfully)
 The bees that fall together on
 The fragrance of her panting breath
 Coming in waves—that sound now swells!

The verse is found in all three of the great old collections (among the miscellanea in SRK, in the *śṛṅgārpravāha*, under the heading of *nāyikāgamana* in SKA), albeit with a number of variants. The two eastern anthologies are somewhat closer to each other in their readings than either is to the SMĀ. In any case the variants do not change the sense significantly, though perhaps one could say that the SRK's form of the verse sounds slightly gentler or softer, for instance in having *samīra* instead of *taraṅga*, and *pāṇi* instead of *bāhu*. Even with the SRK readings, however, we are not sure that Ingalls's characterisation of the verse as an 'excellent' one which 'expresses charmingly a lover's access of joy as he hears his approaching mistress' is entirely apt. Is there not a comic touch in the exaggerated theatricalism of its opening, and the contrast with the shaken hands, or even, in the SMĀ readings, waving arms, with which the lady who is to save the speaker from terror and the arrows of Kāma herself tries to ward off the bees that are attracted by her heavy breathing? If the readings of the SKA are regarded as secondary, have they been introduced in order to deliberately heighten this possible comic effect? In any case, however, the verse seems aptly included by our anthologists under this heading of *abhisāre kāmijanapralāpaḥ*...

9.

samārūḍhaprītiḥ praṇayabahumānād anudinaṃ
 vyalikaṃ vikṣyedaṃ kṛtam akṛtapūrvam khalu mayā |
 priyā muñcaty adya sphuṭam asahanā jīvitam aho
 prakṛṣṭasya premṇaḥ skhalitam aviṣahyaṃ hi bhavati ||
 (śrīharṣasya)
 (śikhariṇī)

= RĀ 3.15 (Cappeller v. 59.), śṛp 30.155, Arjunavarman *ad* Amaru 30, DRA *ad* 1.40 (p. 40).

a. samārūḍha°] SMĀ RĀ ŚRP, samārūḍhā RĀV/ DRA Arjuna; °prītiḥ] Σ, °prīti° ŚRP; anudinam] RĀ SMĀ Arjuna, pratidinam DRA ŚRP

c. aho] SMĀ Arjuna, asau RĀ ŚRP DRA

With fondness and with mutual respect, each day,
Her love increases. Surely when my wife
Perceives the treachery I have committed
(For the first time, forsooth) she will today,
Not bearing it, alas, give up her life.
Love of such strength does not endure offense!

The context in Harṣa's play, from which this verse is quoted, is that of a rendezvous indeed, though one which did not take place; rather than meeting his new beloved Sāgarikā, the king (the famous hero Udayana) encountered his own wife, Vāsavadattā, disguised as Sāgarikā. His love for Sāgarikā having thus been disclosed, he reflects in anguish on the possible consequences for Vāsavadattā, whom he also still loves. Included here without that context, one could imagine it to have broader application, as potentially an expression of the feeling of any married man whose rendezvous with a new lover, who came out as *abhisārikā* to meet him, has been discovered by his wife.

The variants for the most part do not change much, but with *samārūḍhā prītiḥ*, which two testimonia and some manuscripts of the play attest, we would have to take the first quarter as a separate sentence. It would then not be entirely clear whether it is the queen's love alone or the love of both, queen and king, that is said to be *samārūḍhā*. The *bahuvrīhi* that we have in our anthology, and that Cappeller accepted in his edition of the play, seems a little more natural to us, although the qualifier is somewhat far from its headword *priyā*. The reading of the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* edition does not seem to work smoothly; perhaps it is an error for *samārūḍhaprītiḥ*.

10.

praṇayaviśadāṃ vaktre dṛṣṭiṃ dadhāti na śaṅkitā
ghaṭayati ghaṇaṃ kaṇṭhāśleṣe balān na payodharau |
vadati bahuśo gacchāmīti prayatnadhṛtāpy aho
ramayatitarāṃ saṃketasthā tadāpi ca kāmīni ||
(amarukasya)
(*hariṇī*)

= RĀ 3.9 (Cappeller v. 53), SRK 824 (śrīharṣasya) SĀ 2058, DRA ad 1.39, ND 1.53 (p. 74)

a. vaktre dṛṣṭiṃ dadhāti na śaṅkitā] SMĀ, vaktre dṛṣṭiṃ dadāti viśaṅkitā SRK, dṛṣṭiṃ vaktre dadāti na śaṅkitā RĀ DRA ND SĀ

b. °śleṣe] Σ, °śleṣaṃ SĀ; balān na payodharau] SMĀ, rasān na payodharau RĀ DRA ND, sakampapayodharā SRK, na sāndrapayodharā SĀ

d. tadāpi ca] SMĀ, tathāpi hi Σ

Anxious, she does not cast a glance that shines
 With love upon his face. She hugs his neck
 With force but fails to press her breasts against
 Him tightly. Even when he holds her back,
 She keeps repeating that she's leaving. Still,
 An amorous woman causes all the more
 Gratification at the rendezvous!

The attribution to Amaru is very surprising, to say the least. We are not aware of any other source that makes the same attribution; and our anthologists have just correctly attributed the preceding verse, which is from the same act of the same play, to Śrīharṣa. Could they have had a moment of confusion, caused by the fact that in content and feeling (behaviour on the part of the woman that seems to indicate reluctance causing even more delight to her lover) the verse is somewhat similar to a few verses in the *Amaruśataka* (e.g. 32 (*saṃdaṣṭā...*), 37 (*paṭālagne...*). Or is this a case where the attribution was added later (or changed in transmission) and the confusion is another's?

In the context in which it appears in the *Ratnāvalī* the verse is, precisely, the words of the man waiting for his lover to come to him as an *abhisārikā* (though it is not night, and the journey that Sāgarikā has to make is not a long and arduous one); but even if the anthologists did not remember the source and hence the context, the content of the verse is sufficient reason for them to include it in this *paddhati*.

11.

āyātāsi vimuñca vepathubharaṃ dr̥ṣṭāsi kiṃ kenacin
 nīlaṃ colam amuṃ vimuñca haratu svedaṃ niśīthānilaḥ |
 ity antarbhayasannakaṇṭham asakṛd yāmīti talpātithir
 jalpantī parirabhyate sukr̥tinā svairaṃ navasvairinī ||
 (ākāśapoleḥ)
 (śārdūlavikrīḍita)

= PV 380 (jagajjīvanasya), śP 3779, RRP 3.22, SA 308, MSS 5090.

a. kiṃ kenacin] SMĀ RRP, kenāpi no PV śP SA

c. ity antar^o] Σ, ity ukte RRP • talpātithir] SMĀ, talpaṃ gatā Σ

d. jalpanti] SMĀ RRP SA, trasayanti PV śP • sukr̥tinā] SMĀ RRP, sukr̥tibhiḥ PV śP SA

'You've come! Don't tremble so! Did no one see you?
 Take off that dark blue blouse, let night's cool breeze
 Dry up your sweat.' Only a lucky man,
 So saying, can embrace, just as he wills,
 A girl, guest to his bed, a first-time wanton,
 While she, throat choking with her nervousness,
 Murmurs, time and again, 'I'm going now!'

The section ends on an almost exultant note with this attractive verse, the ‘lucky man’ welcoming his new lover who has successfully completed her first *abhisāra*. The following *paddhati* shifts perspective, and together with that time shifts as well, back to the very beginning: the lady contemplating setting out, at night, to meet her lover.

ABHISĀRIKĀPADDHATI

1.

hṛdaye dayitena hr̥te vapuṣi savepathuni pathi nirālambe |
 ayi kathaya katham anaṅga priyagr̥ham abhisārikāṃ nayasi ||
 (āryā)
 = sĀ 1936.

b. °ālambe] sMĀ, °āloke sĀ

Her lover stole her heart, her body trembles,
 There’s no support along the path — ah say,
 Bodiless God of Love, how will you lead
 The venturesome lady to her darling’s house?

The opening verse, unattributed both here and in the sĀ, the only other source in which we have found it (and in which, as here, it is the first of the section), evokes the difficulties which the *abhisārikā* faces, as well as the fact that Love is expected to be on her side. But, bodiless as he is (this kenning for Love seems clearly intended to be suggestive), and her situation being so difficult and lacking in anything else that could help her, how will he succeed in bringing her safely to her destination, here the house of her beloved?

It is worth noting the rather subtle, and very pleasing, alliterative effects: *daye* ~ *dayi*, *vapu* ~ *vepa*, *pathuni* ~ *pathi ni*, *yikatha* ~ *yakatha*. Perhaps one could say that these near-twinings suggest that the *abhisārikā* indeed is accompanied, not alone, on her journey.

The variant of the sĀ, making the path ‘without light’ instead of ‘without support’ may seem slightly more banal, since the *abhisārikā* is hardly ever depicted as going to a rendezvous by daylight. On the other hand, the sMĀ’s reading might be said to give an even stronger sense of the physical difficulty involved. It is not just that the lady may not be able to see her way; without some support she may not even be able to move forward but get stuck in the dense mud that the downpour of rain has produced. Note that in the immediately following verse the path is qualified as both *pañkacita* (to which our *nirālambe* could correspond) and *ghanāndhatamasa* (similar in sense to the sĀ variant). A path is described as *nirālambe* also in the verse sKĀ 1502, where it is an army that is facing the difficulty of going on a road that is ‘without support’. Compare also *mahāpañke nirālambe* (this time without a noun meaning ‘path’ as head-word; instead here *mahāpañka* is a noun rather than a *bahuvrīhi* adjective) in *Mahābhārata* 11.7.10.

2.

mārge paṅkacite ghanāndhatamase niḥśabdasamcārayā
 gantavyādyā mayā priyasya vasatir mugdheti kṛtvā matim |
 ājānūddhṛtanūpurā karatalenāchādyā netre bhṛśaṃ
 kṛcchrenāttapadasthitiḥ svabhavane panthānam abhyasyati ||
 (śārdūlavikrīḍita)

= SRK 826, SĀ 1948, ŚP 3614, SSN *abhisārikāpaddhati* 2 (p. 226).

a. paṅkacite ghanāndha°] SMĀ ŚP, paṅkini toyadāndha° SRK SĀ SSN • °samcārayā] SMĀ ŚP SSN,
 °samcārakam SRK SĀ

b. gantavyādyā mayā priyasya] SMĀ ŚP, gantavyā dayitasya me 'dya SRK SĀ SSN

d. kṛcchrenātta°] SMĀ, kṛcchrenāpta° ŚP, kṛcchrāl labdha° SRK SĀ SSN

‘I must go on a muddy path today,
 In pitch-black darkness and with silent steps
 To my beloved’s house.’ Once thus resolved,
 The guileless girl pulls right up to her knees
 Her anklets, covers tightly with her palms
 Her eyes, and, barely managing to walk,
 She practices the journey in her home.

This verse seems to be modelled on *Sattasāi* W 249:

ajja mae gaṃtavvaṃ ghaṇaṃdhaāre vi tassa suhaassa |
 ajjā ñimiliacchī paaparivāḍiṃ ghare kuṇāi ||

‘Today I must go to that handsome man even in pitch-darkness.’ The lady paces up and down at home with her eyes closed.

Bhuvanapāla (verse 202) reads *ajjhā* (this is also the reading of one of Weber’s manuscripts), glossing it as *taruṇī* and *upabhogayogyā yuvatīḥ*, ‘a young woman suitable for lovemaking.’ Hemacandra gives the following synonyms for *ajjhā* in his *Deśināmamālā* (1.50): *asatī*, ‘unchaste woman’, *śubhā*, ‘beautiful / virtuous woman’, *navavadhū*, ‘newly-married woman’, *taruṇī*, ‘young woman’. Vemabhūpāla’s version of the verse reads as follows (Upadhye 1970: 17):

ajja mae gaṃtavvaṃ tassa sāsaṃ ghaṇaṃdhaāre tti |
 bālā ñimilī*acchī (*em.*: °acchi *ed.*) paaparivāḍiṃ ghare kuṇāi ||

‘Today I must go to him in pitch-darkness.’ The innocent young girl paces up and down at home with her eyes closed.

Śṛṅgāraprakāśa 27.59 (an example of *dhvāntaparīkṣā*, ‘the examination of darkness’) is the same verse with Weber’s readings, except for *ajjā*, in the place of which Bhoja read *bālā*. *Bālā*, and even *ajjhā*, are closer in meaning to the *mugdha* of the Sanskrit verse than *ajjā*, and the verse

does seem to depict a naïve young girl rather than a noble lady. Weber's reading *ajjā* is therefore perhaps not to be preferred.

The *smā* verse could be labelled as a *naṭanepathya* ('actor's costume') type of borrowing according to Rājaśekhara's classification, when 'something composed in a certain language is translated into another language' (*anyatamabhāṣānibaddhaṃ bhāṣāntareṇa parivartyate*).⁴ Rājaśekhara's example is the 'translation' (or rather transcreation) of a *Sattasāi*-verse into a Sanskrit *mandākrāntā*. In that case, too, it is not a word for word translation (the Sanskrit stanza is much longer than the Prakrit *āryā*, and it contains more details), but whole expressions of the Prakrit poem are repeated in the Sanskrit verse. In our case the imitation is a bit freer (though one should note that the author might well have known the source verse with the reading *bālā*).

3.

mūrtir niladukūlinī mṛgamadaiḥ pratyāṅgapatrakriyā
bāhū mecakarātnakaṅkaṇabhṛtau kaṇṭhe masārāvalī |
vyālabālakamañjarīkam alikaṃ kāntābhisārotsave
yatsatyam tamasā mṛgākṣi vihitam veṣe tavācāryakam ||
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)
= KM p. 77–78.

b. masārāvalī] KM, 'mbusārāvalī *smā*

c. °mañjarīkam] *smā*, °vallarīkam KM

Your body's covered by a dark silk garment;
Each limb has patterns traced with musk; your arms
Bear turquoise bracelets; and a sapphire chain
Graces your neck; your hair falls on your forehead
Just like a spray — I swear, O doe-eyed girl,
At night to rendezvous with your beloved,
Professor Darkness taught you how to dress.

The reading of the KM in the second *pāda*, *masārāvalī*, is clearly to be preferred to the senseless (*a*)*mbusārāvalī*. In the third *pāda*, the KM-reading *vyālabālakavallarīkam*, with the young girl's hair compared to creepers rather than flower-clusters, is certainly possible. The *rūpaka alaka-vallarī* is a rather common one. But *alakamañjarī* is also attested, for instance in the first verse of the section of the *smā* on dawn breezes (*prabhātavāyavaḥ*).

If one construes the *padhati* as more or less telling a story, one might say that after practicing walking without being able to see (a practice which does not need to be a 'full-dress rehearsal'), the young lady has now dressed herself, and in doing so she has not only aimed to look her best but also to present not too bright or reflective an appearance. This idea can to some extent be found also in the depictions in paintings, see the discussion below.

In the KM, the verse is an example of the *parapurapraveśa*-type ('entering the body of another person', i.e. possession) of poetic borrowing, 'where the source may be the same, but the ar-

⁴ *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, Dalal, Sastry and Sastri 1934: 66.

rangement of the trappings is very different’ (*mūlaikyam yatra bhavet parikarabandhas tu dūrato ’nekaḥ*, Dalal, Sastry & Sastri 1934: 64). More precisely it belongs to the *tadvirodhin* subtype, in which ‘the idea is arranged in a way that contradicts the former meaning’ (*pūrvārthapratipanthinī vasturacanā*, Dalal, Sastry & Sastri 1934: 77). In the model verse in the KM, the outfit of the woman is all white, and she is asked if she learned it from the autumn moon. See also SRK 832 (attributed to Bāṇa), in which the *abhisārikās*, wearing an all-white outfit, become invisible in the spreading moonlight. This idea, opposite to the more common one in which the moon is a danger to the *abhisārikā* because she may more easily be noticed (see *Setubandha* 10.65 quoted below in Appendix II), is also a very old one, already attested in a *Sattasāi* verse (W 609) that is also quoted in the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (15.431 and 27.65) first as illustration of the *abhisārikā* as one of eight types of *nāyikā* and again as an example of *abhisaraṇa* by moonlight, and in the *Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharaṇa* (5.400) as one of thirty-two types of *nāyikā*:

gammihi tassa pāsaṃ suṃdari mā tuara vaḍḍhaū miamko |
duddhe duddhaṃ miva caṃḍiāi ko pecchaī muhaṃ de ||

‘You will go to meet him, my beauty, do not hurry, let the moon grow full. Like milk in milk, who will see your face in the moonlight?’

A *Sattasāi*-verse, which is a variation on the same theme, is quoted in the *Dhvanyāloka* (ad 1.4, Krishnamoorthy 1982: 10) as an illustration of *dhvani* where the explicit meaning is a prohibition, while the suggested meaning is neither an injunction, nor a prohibition:

de ā pasia ṇivattasu muhasasijoṇhāviluttatamaṇivahe |
ahisāriāṇa vigghaṃ karosi aṇṇāṇaṃ vi haāse || (*Sattasāi* W 968)

‘I beg you, please, turn back! You dispel the mass of darkness with the moonlight of your moon-like face [and so] you also create an obstacle for other *abhisārikās*, you wretched woman.’

Returning to *abhisārikās* in white, in Daṇḍin’s *Kāvyādarśa*, we find the following verse as an illustration of *atiśayokti* (2.213, Thakur and Jha 1957: 135):

mallikāmālabhāriṇyaḥ sarvāṅgīṇārdracandranāḥ |
kṣaumavatyō na lakṣyante jyotsnāyām abhisārikāḥ ||

The *abhisārikās*, who wear jasmine garlands, who have fresh sandal paste smeared on the entirety of their bodies, and who are dressed in white linen, are invisible in the moonlight.

In his commentary Ratnaśrījñāna defines *abhisārikā* as follows (Thakur & Jha 1957: 135): *abhisārikā madanaśara*tāḍyamāna* (manuscript NAK 1/468 = NGMPP B 16/12. folio. 9 recto : °tādadahyamāna° ed.) *manasaḥ svayam eva kāntāntikam upayāntyaḥ striyaḥ. tās ca durdinā-bhisārikāḥ śaradabhisārikā ityādayo hy (?) a[nya]troktāḥ. iha śaradabhisārikāḥ vivakṣitāḥ*,

‘*Abhisārikās* are women who go forth to their lovers by themselves, their hearts being battered by Madana’s arrows.⁵ And they are elsewhere taught to be “*abhisārikās* on rainy days”, “*abhisārikās* in autumn”, etc. Here “*abhisārikās* in autumn” are meant.’

Vāmana quotes a comparable verse, also as an illustration of *atiśayokti* (*ad Kāvyaśāstra* 4.3.10, also quoted by Mammaṭa in *Kāvyaaprakāśa* 10.557 as an example of *sāmānya alaṅkāra*):

malayajarasavilīptatanavo navahāralatāvibhūṣitāḥ
sitataradantapatrakṛtavaktraruco rucirāmalāṃśukāḥ |
śāśabhṛti vitatadhāṃni dhavalayati dharām avibhāvyatām gatāḥ
priyavasatiṃ prayānti sukham eva nirastabhiyo ’bhisārikāḥ ||⁶

Their bodies smeared with sandal paste, adorned with new pearl necklaces, their faces shining with very white ivory earrings, they have become unnoticeable as the moon whitens the ground with its spreading light — the *abhisārikās* go to the houses of their lovers with no care in the world, their fears effaced.

4.

jano durvañcyo ’yaṃ kulam amalinaṃ vartma viṣamaṃ
patiś chidrāṇveṣi praṇayivacanaṃ duṣpariharam |
ataḥ kācit tanvī rativihitasamketagataye
grhād vāraṃ vāraṃ nirasarad atha prāviśad atha ||
(*śikhariṇī*)

= SRK 830, SKA 776, śP 3618, MSS 14824.

a. jano] SMĀ śP, patir SRK SKA • durvañcyo] SMĀ, durvañco SRK SKA, durvarjyo śP • kulam amalinaṃ] SMĀ śP, vidhur amalino SRK SKA

b. patiś] SMĀ śP, janaś SRK SKA

d. nirasarad] SMĀ SRK SKA, niragamad śP

‘These people can’t be tricked so easily.
My family is so far without stain.
The road is rough; my husband vigilant
To find out failings. Yet my lover’s words—
How can I not obey them?’ With such thoughts
A certain lady set out from her house
To go to where she had agreed to meet
For love-making, but then returned once more,
And again left it, time and time again.

⁵ Cf. SKĀ 5.119 (vol. 3, p. 930) *puṣpeṣupīḍitā kāntaṃ yāti yā sābhisārikā*

⁶ We have noted no variant in this verse, but we cannot identify the metre.

The first half gives four reasons why the lady should not go; against those is set a single reason why she should, namely that her lover has begged her to. This is, at least, what we think is most likely to be meant. Note, however, that both Ingalls and Satya Vrat Varma in the MSS (no. 14824) take this differently. Ingalls seems to think that the *praṇayi* here could be the lady herself and the *vacanam* her promise to go, while Satya Vrat Varma, perhaps because of having—wrongly, we would say—taken *jana* at the beginning to refer to the lover takes here *praṇayi* to refer to the lady's friends. That she nonetheless hesitates shows, then, that the single argument in favour of going (or the love which is what makes that argument a powerful one) is sufficient to balance all the arguments against.

The variant *durvañca* (with the suffix *khal*) is perhaps a more natural usage, but we decided to keep *durvañcya* because it is the reading of SMĀ and the ŚP's reading *durvarjya* also seems to give it some support.

In the first two *pādas*, the readings *jana* and *pati* are interchanged in SRK and SKA. Perhaps the readings *patir durvañcyo* and *janaś chidrānveṣi* are more intuitive: it is the husband who is primarily cheated, and it makes good sense to say that people in general (or the people of the household) are prone to find faults. Note that in the following verse it is *loka*, corresponding to *jana* here, that is said to be intent on fault finding. However, the SMĀ reading, again supported by the ŚP, can also make quite good sense: it is not only the husband but all the people (of the community or of the household) that have to be hoodwinked, and husbands can indeed be intent on finding fault with their wives, either in general or specially concerning any possible interest they might show in other men.

In the first *pāda* the readings are similarly divided between SMĀ & ŚP's *kulam amalinaṃ* vs. SRK & SKA's *vidhur amalino*. In the case of the former, the implication is that because of the purity (and presumably the good reputation) of the family her actions will be considered all the more scandalous and reprehensible. The reading of the two Bengali *subhāṣita*-collections, however, concerns a very simple practical problem of here and now: a bright moon will mean that the lady is much more likely to be spotted as she slips out of the house and makes her way to the illicit rendezvous.

An early verse describing the nervousness of the girl setting out for the first time is *Sattasaī* (W) 187:

āassa kiṃ ṇu kāhaṃ kiṃ vocchaṃ kaha ṇu hohii imaṃ ti |
paḍhamuggaasāhasaāriāi hiaaṃ tharaharei ||

‘What shall I do for him when he comes? What shall I say? How will this all turn out?’ So thinking, the heart of the girl who is about to act rashly for the first time goes tatum-tatum.

In Weber's reading, *āassa* is to be taken as equivalent to Sanskrit *āgatasya* (as Gaṅgādhara explicitly reads and explains). *āassa* for *āgatasya* is grammatically possible (beside *āgaassa*), see *Siddhahemacandra* 8.1.268 (cf. Pischel 1957, §167).

Bhuvanapāla (verse 387 in his version) reads the first word as *ayasassa* (= *ayaśasaḥ*). With this reading the sentence means, ‘What shall I do regarding public shame?’ This reading makes the verse more parallel to SMĀ *abhisārikāpaddhati* 4; but it seems much less naturally consistent with the rest of the verse.

The verse is quoted in *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (27.73) as an example of *abhisāraṇasādhvasa* (sic; we suspect that this is a typo for *abhisāraṇa-*) and also as a verse illustrating *samāgamacintā* (29.15); Bhoja also knew the verse with the initial word *āassa*, and the onomatopoeic word appears in his version as *dhaḍadhadei* in the first occurrence, and as *tharaharei* in the second (was it emended to agree with the *Sattasāi*?).

5.

chidrānveṣaṇatatparaḥ priyasakhi prāyeṇa loko 'dhunā
rātrīś cāpi ghanāndhakārabahulā gantum na te yujyate |
mā maivaṃ sakhi vallabhah priyatamas tasyotsukā darśane
yuktāyuktavicāraṇā yadi bhavet snehāya dattaṃ jalam ||
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

= ŚP 3619, SA 291, MSS 14625.

b. °bahulā] SMĀ SA, °bahalā ŚP

'Dear friend, people these days are occupied
With looking out for faults. The night is dense
With darkness black as pitch. It is not right
For you to go.' 'Don't speak like that, my friend.
My lover is to me the most adored!
I long to see him. If we start to brood
On what is right or wrong, then love is dead!'

The occurrence of a verse with the same fourth quarter among a series of stanzas which are said to be completed *samasyā*-verses in the Jain *Vijñaptimahālekha*⁷ (dated *saṃvat* 1431, see Jinavijaya 1960: 34), is very interesting. It cannot perhaps be taken as proof, though, that the verse that we have here was also composed as a solution to a *samasyā* competition; it is equally conceivable, indeed more plausible, that this verse is the original whose snappy and, at the same time, somewhat emotional sounding fourth quarter was recognized as a good line for use in such a task. At least our verse somehow sounds more homogenous, in one voice (albeit with two speakers), whereas in the *samasyā* verse the first three lines feel more laboured, seeming rather obviously to be from a different hand from the final quarter. Here is the stanza from the *Vijñaptimahālekha* (Jinavijaya 1960: 23):

lokāstokatayā pravṛttavati *vā (*em.* : cā° *ed.*) saṃgharṣabhāve 'tyuraḥ-
peṣaṃ vīkṣya viśaṃsthulāḥ priyatamāḥ sauviḥ parāśleṣataḥ |
kruddhā yatra nivāritāḥ saḥacarās tābhiḥ priyāḥ sāmpratam
yuktāyuktavicāraṇā yadi bhavet snehāya dattaṃ jalam ||

⁷ Jinavijaya 1960: 1–34. This letter was sent by Jinodayasūri from Pattanapura (Pāṭan) to Lokahitācārya in Ayodhyā. Its florid style emulates the prose of such great authors as Bāṇa and Dhanapāla.

There are so many people around, or a[n accidental] collision may happen, closer than chest-to-chest combat⁸ — if lovers in such cases become angry on seeing their beloved women being confused because of someone else pressing against them, and then are spurned by those women, [even though] those women love them — if one starts pondering over what is right or wrong, love is doomed!

If our translation seems convoluted, this reflects what we find a convoluted, not to say clumsy, expression in the Sanskrit, although the idea, if we have understood it successfully, is perhaps a not uninteresting one, with some humour. The usages of *sauvīḥ* (a rare form) and *atyurahṣeṣam* suggest perhaps that the author may have been more grammarian than poet.

6.

tamaḥ śāntaṃ śāmyatv ayam uditā evendur udiyān
mayā gamyaṃ tatra priyasakhi sa yatra priyatamaḥ |
grhagrāhotsaṅge śatam iva yugānāṃ gatam aho
niśā ced evaṃ syād ayi kathaya ko mṛtyur aparaḥ ||
(śikhariṇī)
= MSS 16102.

‘Darkness has ended...’ ‘Let it end!’ ‘The moon
Has risen...’ ‘Let it rise! I needs must go,
Dear friend, where my beloved is! It seems,
A hundred eons slipped away inside
The belly of this crocodile, my house!
If night will be the same, then tell me, dear,
What other death is there apart from this?’

The lady’s friend points out that the circumstances are not propitious for sallying forth: it is no longer dark, the moon has risen. The undesirability of moonrise, for the *abhisārikā*, can be said to be a topos of its own: Bhoja has *candrodayanindā* as one *abhisārikā*-related topic in *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* 27 (where it is followed by the very similar *candratiraskāra*, different mainly in that it is the moon directly, not his rising, that is reviled). Here the lady is however, in spite of moonrise, all fire and passion for going to meet her lover. The day, during which she had to remain in her home without seeing the lover, has passed as if it were eons; if, because of moonrise, she has to spend the night there too, this will be equal to, or worse than, death.

We are not entirely sure of the intended sense of *grāha* here. Might it mean ‘prison’? This meaning is, however, not attested in our dictionaries.

That a day, or time in general, seems to stretch into aeons when separated from one’s beloved is of course a common idea, the whole world over. A witty verse from the *Sattasaī*, with the Prakrit equivalent for *yuga* as in our verse, is W 847:

⁸ Cf. *Kāśikā ad Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.4.55: *urahṣeṣam yudhyante* (an example of a particular usage of *ṇamul*).

cirajīvittaṇakamkhiri mā tamma rasāaṇehi athirehi |
virahaṃ pavajja jāamti jeṇa juadīharā diahā ||

O you, young girl, who wishes to live long,
Trouble yourself no more with doubtful potions.
Arrange that he, your lover, goes away,
And every day will be as long as eons.

From the man's perspective, what might come to mind first is a very fine *puṣpitāgrā* verse from the *Vikramorvaṣīya* (3.22):

anadhigatamanorathasya pūrvaṃ śataguṇiteva gatā mama triyāmā|
yadi tu tava samāgame tathaiva prasarati subhru tataḥ kṛtī bhaveyam||

Before, when I had not attained my wish,
The night passed by as if it were a hundred.
But if, my beauty, when we are together
It stretches out that way, I'll be content.

7.

nirīkṣya vidyunnayanaiḥ payodo
mukhaṃ niśāyām abhisārikāyāḥ |
dhārānīpātaiḥ saha kiṃ nu vāntaś
candro 'yam ity ārtataraṃ rarāsa ||
(*upajāti*)

= SĀ 1943 (pāṇineḥ), AS p. 87, KĀ p. 71, AK p. 254, CM p. 63, SP p. 116.

d. rarāsa] SMĀ SĀ AS SP, rarāse KĀ AK CM

When with its lightning-eyes the raincloud saw
A venturesome woman's face at night, it cried
Most painfully, because it thought, 'Have I
Disgorged the moon together with my showers?'

In Ruyyaka's interpretation, in this verse an implicit 'ascription' (*utprekṣā*) is based on a partial, not punning metaphor (*ekadeśavivarty aśliṣṭaṃ rūpakam*).⁹

A rather original verse; the comparison of a woman's face with the full moon is of course extremely common, but in the context of the *abhisārikā* that comparison is more often used as part of the trope of the woman becoming invisible by her brightness merging with the white moonlight (cf. the verse *Sattasāi* W 609 and similar verses quoted above in the commentary on *abhisārikāpaddhati* 3). Here the perspective is not of a possible human observer but that of a cloud, who breaks into a panic.

⁹ See also the discussion in Cox 2017: 157–158.

8.

mandam nidhehi caraṇau paridhehi vāso
 nīlam pidhehi valayāvalim aṃśukena |
 mā jalpa sāhasini śāradacandrakānta-
 dantāṃśavas tava tamāṃsi samāpayanti ||
 (hariharasya)
 (vasantatilakā)

= SKA 777 (nālasya), PĀ 194, ŚP 3620, SA 312, KKV p. 38, SSN 25.1.

ab. vāso nīlam] SMĀ ŚP SA KKV SSN, nīlam vāsaḥ SKA PĀ

b. aṃśukena] SMĀ, añcalena SKA ŚP PĀ SA KKV SSN

c. °kānta°] SMĀ ŚP SĀ SSN, °kānti° SKA PĀ, °kāntā KKV

Tread softly, wear dark clothes, and with your mantle
 Cover your bracelets! Do not say a word,
 You reckless woman, lest your shining teeth,
 Bright like the autumn moon, should end the darkness.

Amaracandra in his autocommentary on the *Kāvyaikalpalatāvr̥tti* quotes the verse as an illustration of *prthagupasargaḥ*, when the same verbal root is used with different prefixes throughout the verse.

The principal danger to this *abhisārikā* is her own brightness, that is the brightness of her teeth. It might not be a distortion of the feeling if one were to translate freely ‘Above all, don’t speak, reckless woman!’ A somewhat similar verse is found in the *Sattasāi* (W 415, also quoted in the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* to illustrate *saṃketāpacāra* ‘faultiness of the rendezvous’): an older woman advises the young girl not to go out as an *abhisārikā*, as her radiantly bright beauty will make her all the more easily visible in the dark.

coriaraasaddhālūṇi mā putti bhammasu aṃdhaārammi |
 ahiaraṃ lakkhijasi tamabharie dīvaasiha vva ||

‘My girl, who are longing for stolen sex! Do not wander about in the dark! You will be seen even more when everything is covered by night, like the flame of a lamp.’

Teeth are of course normally described as blindingly white; and the conceit that they emit white light like moonlight is very common.¹⁰ A verse in the *Śṛṅgārahārāvalī* (a collection of *śṛṅgāra* verses by one Śrīharṣa, possibly, as its editor opines, the Śrīharṣa famous for his *Naiṣadhacarita* and *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, works of celebrated difficulty) has the moonlight from the lady’s teeth dispelling (here mental) darkness, as the speaker of our verse imagines happening (Shah 1956: 2):

¹⁰ See e.g. *Harṣacarita* 1: *daśanajyotsnāsnapitadinmukhaiḥ punaḥ punar nabhasi saṃcāriṇaṃ candrālokaṃ iva kalpayantam* (Kane 1997: 9)

vidrāvayati sampūrṇo māninīmukhacandramāḥ |
dantacandrikayā nūnaṃ viyogavibhavaṃ tamaḥ || 6||

The full moon of the scornful lady's face will surely dispel, by the moonlight of her teeth, the (mental) darkness arising from separation.

The verse may be spoken by a go-between to the man whose wife has quarrelled with him in jealous anger; she encourages him to think that if he goes to her, his wife's anger will end and she will speak or/and smile, and all will be well.

A reference to the bright moonlight-like light from teeth dispelling darkness might have reminded many readers of a famous verse from the *Raghuvamśa* (2.46), which nearly all such readers would have read already as children, though in that verse it is the teeth of a lion (actually an illusion created by the cow Nandinī to test king Dilīpa) that are said to shatter the darkness of the mountain's caves:

athāndhakāraṃ girikandarāṇāṃ daṃṣṭrāmayūkhaiḥ śakalāni kurvan |
bhūyaḥ sa bhūteśvarapārśvavartī kiṃcid vihasyārthapatim babhāṣe ||

Thereupon, laughing a little, and splintering the darkness of the mountain caverns with the shafts of light from his fangs, the servant of the lord of spirits spoke to the lord of wealth once more.

9.

abhisaraṇarasah kṛśāṅgayaṣṭer
ayam aparatra na vīkṣitaḥ śruto vā |
ahim api yad iyaṃ nirāsa nāṅghrer
nibiḍitanūpuram ātmanīnabuddhyā ||
= SKA 782 (dhūrjaṭeḥ), MSS 2347.
(*puṣpitāgrā*)

c. nirāsa nāṅghrer] *conj.* Krishnamachariar SKA, nirāsātāṅghrer SMĀ

This passion of the slender girl
For going on her rendezvous
Has not been seen, has not been heard,
Before in any other.
For, thinking that it served the turn,
She did not fling far from her foot
The snake that hugged her anklet.

The translation offered in the MSS takes *ātmanīnabuddhyā* as 'under her impression that it was part of herself (the anklet)'. We are not sure that this makes sense at all; but in any case, it should not be forgotten that the *kha* suffix in *ātmanīna* is taught by Pāṇini in the sense of 'beneficial

for x' (5.1.9). We have followed this sense in our translation, assuming the main point to be that the special *abhisaraṇarasa* of the girl is shown by the fact that, thinking that the snake would help her in successfully meeting her lover (because, pressing itself closely against her anklet, and thereby pressing the anklet against her foot, it will stop it from jingling), she tolerated having such a feared animal coiled around her. However, the word seems ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so. As our dictionaries tell us, *ātmanīna* can also mean 'a living being'; with this in mind one could construe the word with *nibiḍitanūpuram*. The snake presses itself against the anklet thinking it to be not an insentient ornament but alive, namely another snake, and potential mate. The verse seems to also suggest a possible parallelism between the lady and the snake, even though the latter is apparently male; both are out at night, in inclement weather, and taking risks, in the hope of union with a beloved. If this reading is preferred, one might then even fancy that the reason that she does not attempt to shake the snake off could be not only her wish for silence but also a sense of sympathy for the animal, who is just as much under the sway of Kāma as she is.

10.

nayasva pāraṃ pulinadvayānugāṃ
 taraṅgaḍolām adhiropya mām itaḥ |
 praśīda yāvan na niśā pradīryate
 yaśāṃsi te gāyatu pāṃsulājanah ||
 (bilhaṇasya)
 (vaṃśastha)
 = VDC 13.80

b. °ḍolām] SMĀ, °dolām VDC

c. pradīryate] SMĀ, vidīryate SMĀKA, viśīryate VDC

Put me upon the swing that is your waves
 That oscillate between the sandy banks
 And bring me over to the other shore
 While night has not yet ended. And for this
 May wanton women ever sing your fame!

In the VDC this is part of a section in which the king describes the rainy season to his beloved, reporting the words spoken by *abhisārikās* at night to the flooding rivers which bar their way. The actual force of the imperative in the final verse-quarter is presumably: if you agree to my request, and bring me across yourself so that I can meet my lover, amorous women like myself will sing your praises.

11.

agre dhanuṣśarakaraḥ svayam asti kāmāḥ
 paścāt tvarā śāsadharaodayasaṃśayotthā |
 dhvāntaṃ dināntavikasadvibhavaṃ samantāt
 kim kevalā pathi vadhūr dayitābhisāre ||

(*sūktiratnākarāt*)

(*vasantatilaka*)

= MSS 235.

In front the God of Love himself
With bow and arrows in his hand.
Behind is Haste, born from the fear
Of moonrise. All around, the Dark,
Intensifying at day's end.
Is then the *abhisārikā*
Alone upon the path when she
Is stealing forth to meet her love?

For all that the *abhisārikā* is usually alone on the path (though as we have seen occasionally she is accompanied by a friend or go-between), or has only snakes as her companions, poets regularly fancy that Love, whom she may be said to serve, accompanies and protects her. This was perhaps already suggested in the first verse of this *paddhati*; in this one Kāma is explicitly said to be walking in front of her, like a bodyguard armed to the teeth. (One might take this to be Love's answer, in fact, to the question that he was asked in that first verse.) A better-known verse with the same idea, but presented in a dialogue, is *Amaruśataka* 71 (= SRK 816):

kva prasthitāsi karabhoru ghane niśithe
prāṇādhiko vasati yatra janaḥ priyo me |
ekākinī vada katham na bibheṣi bāle
nanv asti puṅkhitaśaro madanaḥ sahāyaḥ ||

'Where are you going, smooth-thighed girl, in this dark moonless night?'
'To where my lover lives, that man who's dearer than my life.'
'Tell me, my child, aren't you afraid alone here on the path?'
'But surely Love is here, my guard, with his sharp, feathered shafts.'

This verse is also quoted by Bhoja in his śṛṅg (27.76) as an example of *abhisanaṇṇotsāha*, after another Sanskrit verse, in which Kāma also has his bow ready.¹¹

12.

vātoddhūtamukhapraṇaṣṭatilakā toyārdranīlāmśukā
meghānām ninadena bhītaḥṛdayā gatvā priyaśyālayam |
dvāraṃ necchati lajjayā pralapitum dehīti varṣāhatā
pādaū nūpurakardamapratihataū saṃśabdayanti sthītā ||
(*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

= sA 1950, śP 3611, SSN abhisārikāpaddhati 3, sA 297.

¹¹ The text of this verse seems to us unsatisfactory here. The same verse is quoted a second time (29.68, followed by the same Amaru-verse), as an illustration of *svayaṃpravṛttiḥ*, with a number of differences of reading; some of those certainly, and perhaps even all, should be preferred.

- a. vātoddhūta°] Σ, pāthodhauta° ssn • °mukha°] smā, °mukhī Σ • prañāṣṭa°] smā sā śp, pramṛṣṭa° ssn, prañāṣṭa° sA, • toyārdraṇīlā°] smā sA, toyārdralīnā° śp, sālaktarakṭā° sā ssn
 b. °hrdayā] Σ, °vadanā sA • gatvā] Σ, matvā° ssn
 c. dehīti] Σ, devīti ssn

Her tilak-mark destroyed upon her face
 Buffeted by the wind, her dark blue clothes
 Wet through, the thunder frightening her heart,
 She steals out to her lover's house, but then
 She is too shy to say, 'Unlock the door!'
 She's standing there, rain pelting down on her,
 Making her feet announce that she's arrived,
 Although the mud is clogging up her anklets.

We record the readings of the ssn as printed, even though we believe that several of them ought to have been emended (*matvā* is very likely to be a simple scribal error for *gatvā*, and *devīti* seems as good as impossible, not so much because the lady could not have called on the Goddess for help but because we would then have to construe *dvāram* as direct object of *pralapitum*, or not at all).

Only the smā reads the two first qualifiers of the *abhisārikā* in compound. With the compound, it might also be possible to take *vātoddhūtamukha°* not as another qualifier of her, compounded in a *viśeṣaṇasamāsa* type of *karmadhāraya*, but as the *apādāna* from which the *tilaka* has been removed, in other words with a fifth case, ablative, relationship to the following. The variant of the ssn might seem attractive, giving a causal relationship between the two qualifiers: the tilak-mark has been destroyed because her face has been washed with rain. If the other readings were the same as in the smā, there would then seem to be some overlap with *toyārdraṇīlāmśukā* and with *varṣāhatā*; perhaps for this reason we find in the ssn *toyārdraṇīlāmśukā* replaced with *sālaktarakṭāmśukā* (a reading also attested in the sā, without being there combined with *pāthodhauta°*). *sālaktarakṭāmśukā* seems however intrinsically somewhat implausible. At least we are not aware of references to clothes dyed with lac in Sanskrit literature, although the use of lac as a dye for cloth/clothes appears to be perfectly possible; nor does it seem likely or natural that we are supposed to take this as a clue for some accident having befallen through which the lac which the lady is likely, perhaps, to have on her hands and feet has become smeared on her garment. An *abhisārikā* wearing red clothes, instead of clothes that are dark, is also somewhat unusual in the literature, although in the painting tradition sometimes one of her garments may indeed be red, as the picture here included shows (Fig. 1).¹²

¹² The parallelism between lightning above and snake below, very visible in *abhisārikā* paintings, may be traced back, arguably, to the *Ṛgveda* (see Brereton 2019: 541).

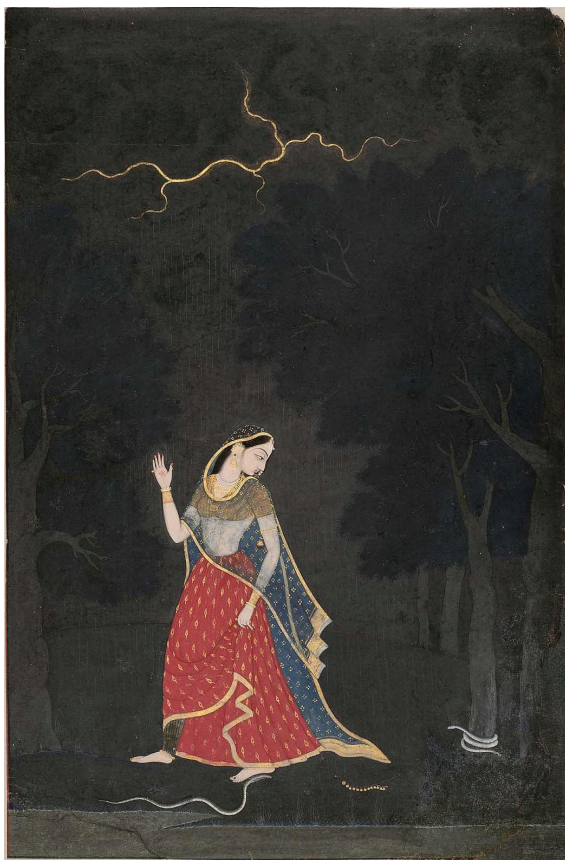


Fig. 1 Mola Ram: Abhisarika Nayika

(“The Heroine Going to Meet Her Lover at an Appointed Place”)¹³ gouache and gold on paper, ca. 1800; Ross-Coomaraswamy collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

We interpreted the compound *nūpurakardamapratihatau* as a kind of inverted *bahuvrīhi*, equivalent to *kardamapratihatanūpurau*. *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.2.37, *vāhitāgnyādiṣu*, teaches that the *niṣṭhā*-part (past participle) of the *bahuvrīhi* may optionally be placed first in such compounds as *āhitāgni*, so one can say both *āhitāgniḥ* and *agnyāhitaḥ*, *jātaputraḥ* or *putrajātaḥ*, etc. (cf. Speyer 1886: 169).

The expression *dvāraṃ dā-* means not, as one might think, ‘to show the door to somebody’, but ‘to open the door for someone’. An early attestation of this expression in a *kāvya* text is in *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* 21 (Lüders 1926: 148), *tatas tena bhartrā procyate dehi dvāraṃ*.¹⁴ Synonyms of *dā* are of course also possible, for instance in Śaṅkara’s *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya ad* 5.10 (vol. 10, p. 716): *so ’pi* (i.e. *ādityaḥ*) *evaṃvida upāsakāya dvāraṃ prayacchati*.

¹³ <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/97/Abhisarika-nayika-mola-ram.jpg>

¹⁴ Interestingly, Huber’s (1908: 118) translation from the Chinese version does not reflect this sentence.

Regarding the usefulness of anklets, the *viṭa* makes the following observation in the *Dhūr-taviṭasaṃvāda* (Dezső and Vasudeva 2009: 400):

prathamasaṃmāgamanibhṛtaḥ katham ātmanivedanaṃ janaḥ kuryāt |
pādasṇṇanarabhaso yadi na syān nūpuraninādaḥ ||

How could someone silent on the first date announce herself if her anklets did not tinkle intensely because of her shaking feet?

13.

ambhojākṣyāḥ puravalatādhāmnī saṃketabhājaś
cetonāthe cirayati bhṛśaṃ mohanidrāṃ gatāyāḥ |
svacchaṃ nābhihradavalayitaṃ kāntaratnāṃśujālaṃ
toyabhrāntyā pibati hariṇī vismayaṃ ca prayāti ||
(*mandākrāntā*)

= śP 3615, RJ 4.101 (p. 121.), MSS 2601.

a. °dhāmnī] SMĀ śP, °keli° RJ

b. cirayati bhṛśaṃ] SMĀ śP RJ, ramayati ciraṃ SMĀKHA SMĀCA

c. nābhi°] SMĀ, nābhī° śP RJ

The lady, lotus-eyed, who in the park
Had reached the arbour of their rendezvous,
Fell into senseless sleep because the man,
Lord of her heart, was so unduly late.
A doe comes now, mistakes the limpid rays
Of lovely gems ringing her pool-like navel
For water; laps at them, and is surprised.

The variant of two SMĀ manuscripts, *ramayati ciraṃ* for *cirayati bhṛśaṃ*, seems not cogent to us (apart from the fact that it seems to go against the tone of the concluding verses of the chapter, which seem to point towards an unhappy rather than a happy outcome of the *abhisāra*); would the lady have fallen into a *mohanidrā* while her lover is making love to her (and ‘for a long time’ as if his activity were a bore to her)? And the qualifier *saṃketabhājaḥ* in the first line seems also somewhat incongruent to us if the appointment comes off as planned and the two make love; the word, in the singular qualifying the lady, is rather intended to set up the contrast between one of the two coming and the other being late or not coming at all. The reading seems so inapposite that rather than being an attempt to ‘improve’ the verse we suspect that it may be the result, at least in part, of an accidental confusion of syllables (perhaps then secondarily ‘fixed’ in an unfortunate way).

The variant of the *Rasikajīvana* in the first quarter seems not entirely satisfactory; presumably it would have to qualify the lady as ‘having come to a rendezvous for play among the vines in the city park.’ But the compound *kelisaṃketa* is suspect; no other attestation can be found at present,

and there is no need to tell the reader or hearer what the purpose of the rendezvous is. Likewise, to have just ‘the vines’ (or ‘the shrubbery’) as the place for this rendezvous seems to us a trifle odd.

In this verse it at first may seem not certain whether the man will come or not (though compare our remark above on the singular *saṃketabhājaḥ*). The *abhisārikā* has safely reached the meeting place in a park, but her beloved is not there, he is late. She falls asleep; the description in the second half of the verse of what happens then is a striking image which not only is meant to show how beautiful she is but also probably has a symbolic implication. The lady herself, who is at the moment under the influence of delusion (the expression *mohanidrā* is significant, we think), is going to be disappointed like the doe; what seemed to the doe to be lifegiving water was only the cold light of gems, and what seemed to the lady to be true love on the part of the man she has come out to meet will likewise turn out to be only a flashy illusion. We are to conclude, therefore, that the awakening from her *mohanidrā* will be not to the embrace of her lover but to the hard reality of his non-appearance.

14.

jñātaṃ jñātijanaiḥ praguṣṭaṃ ayaśo dūraṃ gatā dhīratā
 tyaktā dhīḥ pratipādito 'py avinayaḥ sādhvīpadaṃ projjhitam |
 lupṭā cobhayaḥlokaśādhupadavī dattaḥ kalaṅkaḥ kule
 bhūyo dūti kim anyad asti yad asāv adyāpi nāgacchati ||
 = SKA 667, śP 3616, śSS 857. MSS 15433.
 (*śārdūlavikrīḍita*)

- a. dhīratā] Σ, 'dhīratā SMĀ
- b. dhīḥ] SMĀ, hrīḥ SKA śP, bhīḥ śSS
- c. °lokaśādhū°] Σ, °sādhuloka° SMĀ

My relatives have come to know,
 My shame is being trumpeted,
 My mettle headed for the hills,
 I've given up on common sense,
 Embraced bad conduct, left behind
 The path of decent women, lost
 That's good for both worlds. I've disgraced
 My kith and kin. O go-between,
 What's left to do? He's still not come.

There are two points on which the transmission of the SMĀ differs from that of the three other sources known for this verse (*'dhīratā* for *dhīratā* is a matter of interpretation not of reading, and the editor of SMĀ's choice seems obviously bad, to the point of needing no discussion). In the first, where the SMĀ has *tyaktā dhīḥ*, the variant *tyaktā hrīḥ* may seem more natural or more attractive to some, all the more, perhaps, since one could see the abandoning of modesty or shame and the embracing of bad conduct as a neat pair. However, *tyaktā dhīḥ* seems at least a perfectly possible reading—one can well imagine that now that the *abhisārikā*'s family knows about her affair they

have often told her that she is being incredibly stupid, has lost her mind, or the like—so we have hesitantly retained it. One should also note that the poet has introduced several chimes of sound, *anuprāsas* of one sort or another, and with the reading *dhīḥ* we have another such, echoing the sound of *dhīratā*. As for the reading of the śss, *tyaktā bhīḥ*, this too is not impossible but seems not particularly attractive; each of the items in the first half should express something that is clearly undesirable, which seems debatable in the case of abandoning fear.

In the third quarter, however, the reading of the *SMĀ*, alone against all other sources, appears less acceptable, and we have judged it more probable that there is an error in the transmission of our anthology. Such a metathesis of compound elements is not too rare or too hard to account for; one of the elements, *sādhū*, say, might have been omitted, written in the margin or between the lines, and subsequently inserted in the wrong place. In any case we think that it is certain that *ubhaya* should qualify *loka*,¹⁵ and *sādhū* should qualify *padavī*. In °*sādhupadavī*° we have again a nice echo of *sādhvīpadam* in the previous line. The variant reading still has chimes, but surely the poet, who is far from unskilled (although his *api* in the second quarter may be only for the sake of the metre), is more likely to have written the natural and more charming-sounding *luptā cobhayaalokasādhupadavī*.

It might be objected that the use of particles in the first half of the verse is not natural, and that both *api* and *ca* have been used mainly to fill up the metre. But it is not impossible to give both an appropriate sense. That is not very easy with the *api*, it is true, but if it is taken as *bhinnakrama*, the prose order being something like *avinayo 'pi pratipāditaḥ*, one might perhaps take the *api* as having the force 'not only have I given up wisdom (or common sense), even bad conduct I have embraced'. The *ca* may seem likewise hard to justify; but it is possible to feel *dattaḥ kalaṅkaḥ kule* not as the final member of the list, but a separate item. What precedes, ending with *ubhayaalokasādhupadavī luptā* can be understood to be the consequences for the lady herself, in which case the *ca* is used as linking the last member of a list.¹⁶ In contrast, *dattaḥ kalaṅkaḥ kule* goes beyond the consequences for her personally, introducing the idea of a larger, more pervasive, and possibly longer-lasting, ill consequence for her entire family.

15.

uttiṣṭha dūti yāmo yāmo yātas tathāpi nāyātaḥ |
yātaḥ param api tiṣṭhej jīvitanaśo bhavet tasyāḥ ||
(āryā)

= DRA ad 2.26, ASA ad 4.37, SD ad 3.83, SĀ 1940, PĀ 215 (kaṅkasya), SA 283 (kaṅkasya), RK ad 32 (example 41), MSS 6530.

c. tiṣṭhej] *SMĀ*, jīve] DRA SD PĀ SA, jīvati SĀ

d. °nāśo] *SMĀ*, °nātho Σ • bhavet tasyāḥ] Σ, bhavatv asyāḥ SĀ

cd. in RK ASA: mithyāpralāpaṣile viśvāsaḥ kutra dhūrte 'smin

¹⁵ The two worlds are this one and the next; the path of proper conduct, according to *dharma*, is the one that is good for, in the sense of bringing good karmic consequences in, both this life and the one after it.

¹⁶ Normal usage is that given *n* items we may have *n* occurrences of *ca*, one after each item (the most emphatic possibility), *n*-1, with the first item lacking a *ca*, or 1, in which case it goes with the final item: so, e.g. *w ca x ca y ca z ca*, or *w x ca y ca z ca*, or *w x y z ca*. It is the last of these that one may be able to argue for here.

Get up, you go-between, and let us go!
 Three hours have gone and yet he has not come.
 That woman who would wait even beyond
 This point, will in the end lose life itself.

The readings found in the *smā* appear to be unique. The majority of sources have the same reading in the second half that is found in the oldest one known to us, the *DRA*: *yātaḥ param api jīveḥ jīvitānātho bhavet tasyāḥ*, ‘Let him be the lord of the life of that woman, who can live even beyond this’. With that reading the feeling seems to be ‘If there is a woman who can endure waiting for him even longer than this, let her have him; but as for me, I cannot endure it (and, perhaps, leave now, but expecting to die of a broken heart)’. However, we find the *smā* readings, whether they be secondary or not, attractive. One might also consider the possibility of *jīvitānātho*, alone, being an error in the transmission of the *smā*; in other words, the possibility that the compilers Bhānu & Jalhaṇa actually read the second half *yātaḥ param api tiṣṭheḥ jīvitānātho bhavet tasyāḥ*. That would be similar to the reading of the *DRA*, etc., except that the *tiṣṭhet* instead of *jīvet* would suggest not that the *nāyikā* is leaving with the expectation of dying, only that she is leaving, having had enough. ‘If a woman can be found so meek and doormat-like that she will wait even longer than this, she may have him as her husband, and good luck to her; for my part, this is enough.’ With the reading that is actually transmitted in the *smā* the lady is neither as docile as in the *DRA* version, nor as feisty as in the reading we have just considered (which, it should be remembered, is a purely hypothetical one); instead, with what might be called a psychologically realistic sense of self-preservation she is putting into words the feeling that to wait longer would be self-destructive. Better to end the waiting, and by implication, probably, to give up this love or hope of love.

A completely different second line is attested in two South Indian works of *alaṅkāraśāstra*, *rk* and the *asa*; it may be translated ‘how could one trust in this habitually lying rogue?’ There is nothing very wrong, but also nothing particularly attractive about this variant. Note that it lacks one further iteration of syllables which sound, at least, as if they form a word derived from *√yā*. This repetition forms a special charm of the verse, particularly in the versions which begin the second half too with *yātaḥ*. Highlighting just those syllables gives the feeling of a cry ‘let us go, let us go; he is gone ... gone ... gone’.

OTHER REFERENCES TO *ABHISĀRIKĀS* IN THE *SŪKTIMUKTĀVALĪ*

Hemantapaddhati 16

anye hi duḥkham ṛtavaḥ prathayanty ahobhiḥ
 sūryāṁśuluptatimirair abhisārikāṇām |
 hemanta eṣa himaruddhasahasradhāmā
 kāmam karoti divaseṣv api śarma tāsām ||
 (sarvadāsasya)
 (vasantatilaka)
 = MSS 1830.

The other seasons truly aggravate
 The misery of *abhisārikās*
 With days when sunrays carry off the dark.
 But winter now, when mist obscures the sun,
 Raises their spirits even in the day.

No other source of the verse has been identified. The *Sūktimuktāvalī* appears to be the oldest source for verses by Sarvadāsa, a.k.a. Śarvadāsa (see Sternbach 1980: 588). It is unusual to have *abhisārikās* described as out to meet their lovers in winter (though see the passage from Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary quoted above in which *hemantābhisārikās* are one of the types distinguished by some); this verse, however, suggests that winter is the best time for them since even the days are dark enough for them to go out unseen!

Andhakāravarnanapaddhati 4
 nītāḥ kvāpy abhisārikā iva diśo 'py udgāḍharāgodayā
 yenotplāvitamanmathena tad idaṃ niḥśaṅkam ujṛmbhate |
 sambhogāntaśayāluśailatanayādoḥpāśanirbhartsiton-
 milannīlīmanīlakandharagalaspardhāvaliptaṃ tamaḥ ||
 (madanasya)
 (śārdūlavikrīḍita)

Darkness, increasing Love, has led away,
 No one knows where, the points of compass too,
 In which deep redness had appeared, just as
 It's led away the *abhisārikās*
In whom deep passion has appeared; and now
 It spreads here unrestrained and proudly rivals
 The throat of the blue-throated Śiva when
 Its hue becomes more manifest because
 It's menaced by the noose-like, slender arms
 Of Pārvatī, drowsy from making love.

On Madana, the teacher of the Paramāra king Arjunavarman in Dhar (Malwa) in the early thirteenth century, many of whose verses are included in the *smā*, see Dezső and Isaacson 2024: 74–75. The long compound qualifying *tamas* in the third and fourth quarters is slightly unclear to us. *nirbhartsita* usually means 'threatened, menaced,' an action that is basically verbal in character (as for instance in the only other occurrence of the word in our anthology, in verse 3 of the *jātipaddhati*, where a traveller sets out when verbally *nirbhartsita* by his angry wife). Here however, for one thing, it may well be possible that the word is used not as a participle but a neuter noun expressing action (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.3.114). And there can hardly be a literal action of threatening verbally, since it looks as if the agent is Pārvatī's arms. Is the goddess choking her husband, making his throat even more livid than usual? That would be a strange thing to do for a sleepy wife. Another, perhaps stronger possibility is that when she sleepily embraces him, her white arms menace the blackness of his neck, white being a natural adversary of black; *unmilannīlīman* then might be intended to suggest that Śiva's neck looks all the darker because of the contrast.

As for the *abhisārikās* themselves, this verse conveys only perhaps that darkness is expected to make them disappear, become unfindable; the same thing that it does to the directions. This may be intended to let the reader recall the idea that the *abhisārikās* will typically wear dark clothes. Evidently *udgāḍharāgodaya*, a *bahuvrīhi*, is intended to be punningly applicable to both the directions and the *abhisārikās*, the former having the arising of intense twilight redness, and the latter the arising of intense passion, so strong that they are impelled to sally forth to meet their beloveds.

APPENDIX I: THE TOPOS OF *ABHISĀRA* IN THEORETICAL LITERATURE

For the theoretical literature we take as cut-off point the beginning of the thirteenth century, thus limiting ourselves to works that could have been known to the anthologists of the *Sūktimuktāvalī*. For a detailed overview also discussing later Sanskrit works on poetics as well as Hindi works on *nāyikābheda*, see Sudyka 2007.

The *Amarakośa* gives the following definition of *abhisārikā* (2.5.547): *kāntārthinī tu yā yāti saṃketam sābhisārikā*, ‘a woman who, longing for her lover, goes to a rendezvous, is an *abhisārikā*’. This definition does not specify the time of day (in daylight or at night), the season, or the place (the lover’s house or somewhere else) of the assignation; on the other hand, it puts into focus the active role of the woman in seeking out her lover.¹⁷ These *Amarakośa* commentaries also all quote the definition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (22.220, Kavi, Kulkarni & Nandi 2003: 209, one of the eight kinds of heroines):

hitvā lajjam tu yā śliṣṭā madena madanena ca |
abhisārayate kantaṃ sā bhaved abhisārikā ||

On the other hand, the woman who, giving up shame, embraced by intoxication and love, goes out to her lover, is an *abhisārikā*.¹⁸

The verb *abhisārayate* seems to be a causative form at first sight, and one might understand the verse as ‘the woman who makes her lover approach [her]’. But this is probably not the intended meaning. Abhinavagupta in his commentary (Kavi, Kulkarni & Nandi 2003: 209) on the verse says the following: *abhisaraḥ sahāyaḥ, tasya vyāpāreṇa priyatamam atikrāmati*, ‘*abhisara* means “attendant”, with the help of his work, [she] catches up with / heads out to (?) her lover’. Abhinavagupta’s involved grammatical justification of this interpretation is not entirely clear to us (the text of the edition might also be corrupt), but it seems that he wishes to explain *abhisārayati* on the analogy of such forms as *satyāpayati*, ‘speaks the truth’, *atihastayati* / *hastayati*, ‘overtakes on

¹⁷ Sarvānanda (Gaṇapati Śāstrī 1915: 266), Kṣīrasvāmin (Sharma and Sardesai 1941: 135), and Rāyamukūṭa (Dutta 1973: 344), three commentators of the *Amarakośa*, all explain the grammatical form of the word *abhisārikā* as being a *ṇvul* derivation from the root √*sr* (on the basis of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.1.133: *ṇvultṛcau*).

¹⁸ The first *pāda* of this verse is quoted differently in the *Amarakośa*-commentaries: Kṣīrasvāmin (Sharma and Sardesai 1941: 135) reads *hitvā lajjābhaye śliṣṭā*, ‘giving up shame and fear, embraced by...’, while Sarvānanda (Gaṇapati Śāstrī 1915: 266) and Rāyamukūṭa (Dutta 1973: 344) read *hitvā lajjam samākṛṣṭā*, ‘giving up shame, pulled by...’.

an elephant’, *aśvayati*, ‘overtakes on a horse’.¹⁹ In this way Abhinavagupta adds a third person to the rendezvous: a companion who helps the *abhisārikā* in her endeavour. Though this is by no means impossible, and we do see for instance in the *Mr̥cchakaṭīka* (Act Five) that Vasantasenā is accompanied by a *viṭa* on her way to Cārudatta’s house on a rainy night, ‘wearing the beautiful dress of an *abhisārikā*’ (*ujjvalābhisārikāveṣeṇa*, Acharya 2009: 240),²⁰ nevertheless we are doubtful whether the author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* verse also had such an attendant in mind. After all, there are many examples of *abhisārikās* venturing out alone into the damp night.

Interestingly, *Daśarūpaka* 2.27 (Venkatacharya 1969: 108) includes both the non-causative and the causative forms of the verb *abhisṛ* in its definition: *kāmārtābhisaret kāntaṃ sāraved vābhisārikā*, ‘the *abhisārikā*, afflicted by desire, should go to her lover or she should make him go to her’. The first kind is illustrated in the commentary by a verse from the *Amaruśataka* (no. 31 in the text with Arjunavarmadeva’s commentary), in which a naïve *abhisārikā* is asked why she is so cautious and fearful otherwise when she is practically ‘beating the drums’ (*āhataḍiṇḍimā*) with her jingling ornaments. The second kind is exemplified by a verse from the *Śiśupālavadha* (9.56), in which a woman instructs a go-between to speak with her lover so that he treat her with compassion (and presumably come to her, though this is not made explicit in the verse). It is conceivable that Dhanañjaya was compelled by the curious definition in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to include a causative form in his own description, but he clearly felt that using *only* the causative would be inadequate.²¹

Compared to the *Amarakośa*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* mentions the aspect of shame, and also fear, if we follow Kṣīrasvāmin’s reading, as to be overcome: indeed, many poems foreground the audacity of the *abhisārikā*, who is ready to risk public humiliation and the dangers of the road. As for what ‘embraces’ or ‘pulls’ her, ‘love’ is natural enough, but *mada* (‘intoxication’) might sound a bit curious perhaps. Abhinavagupta says, *mado madyakṛtaḥ. cakārād dvayaṃ vadan madanasyaiva prādhānyam āha*, ‘Intoxication is produced by alcohol. With the word *ca*, saying both he expresses the primacy of love alone’.²²

Like the *Amarakośa*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* verse does not specify the place of the rendezvous. In the *abhisārikāpaddhati* of the *smā*, in three verses (1, 2, 12) the *saṃketasthāna* is the lover’s house, in one verse it is a grove / park (13), while in the beautiful final verse of the *paddhati*, with the lady calling on her female companion to rise and leave with her, it seems likely that they have not been waiting in the lover’s house, and one might guess that it is likely to be again a sylvan setting,

¹⁹ Cf. *Kṣīratarāṅgiṇī ad Dhātupāṭha* X. 368 (Liebich 1930: 195).

²⁰ The ‘Bhāsa’-play *Cārudatta* finishes just before she sets out: (Devadhar 1951: 247: *edaṃ puṇa ahiṣāriāsahābhūdaṃ duddiṇaṃ uṇṇamidam*).

²¹ The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*’s exposition (4.26, Shrigodekar and Gandhi 1999: 203) follows suit: *saranti sārāyanti vā riraṃsur abhisārikā*, ‘an *abhisārikā* is a woman who wants to make love going forth or making someone go’, and the commentary: *saranti svayaṃ tasya pārśve, sārāyanti vā taṃ priyaṃ ātmasamīpe, riraṃsuḥ suratārthini nāyikābhisārikā. atra nāyikāyāḥ priyasannidhau gamanam iti bheda iti*, ‘going forth herself to him, or making her lover go to herself, wishing to make love, i.e. desiring sex: such a heroine is an *abhisārikā*. Here the distinction is based on the fact that the heroine goes out to her lover.’ In view of the last sentence, it seems that for the authors of the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* the defining characteristic of an *abhisārikā* should be that she goes out, which probably means that they might have found awkward the idea that an *abhisārikā* only ‘causes the man go out’, but herself stays put. The definition we find in Rudrabhaṭṭa’s *Rasakalikā* (Sankaranarayanan 1988: 26) is practically the same as the one in the *Daśarūpaka* (only the *Rasakalikā* reads *smarārtā* instead of *kāmārtā*), and even the two examples are identical. After the verses, Rudrabhaṭṭa adds, *iyaṃ ca bhūtisaṃbhramādiyuktā*, ‘and she is afraid, confused, etc.’ (though this line is missing from some manuscripts).

²² Kavi, Kulkarni & Nandi 2003: 209. For drunken *abhisārikās*, see e.g. *Setubandha* 10.62.

but there is no absolutely clear clue. In Prakrit poetry, as Bhoja remarks, the sesame field and the lotus-pond are two favourite meeting places (*Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharana*, as part of a digression prompted by verse 2.78, quoted as an illustration of *prakīrṇaghaṭanā śayyā*, see Siddhartha 2009. vol. 1: 200).

In *Nāṭyaśāstra* 22.226ff (Kavi, Kulkarni & Nandi 2003: 211), three kinds of *abhisārikās* are described: the courtesan (*veśyā*), the well-born woman (*kulajā*), and the handmaid (*preṣyā*). The courtesan is said to be intoxicated (*samadā*), surrounded by her attendants (*parijanāvṛtā*), and heavily ornamented (*nānābharaṇacitrāṅgī*, 22.227). The well-born lady goes making herself small (*saṃlīnā sveṣu gātreṣu*), she is fearful, bows her head, and covers herself with a veil (*trastā vinamitānanā / avagunṭhanasaṃvītā*, 22.228). The handmaid stammers from intoxication (*madaskhalitasamṛpā*), her flirtatious eyes are wide open (*vibhramotphullalocanā*), and with a reel-ing gait (*āviddhagatisaṃcārā*) she goes elatedly (*samuddhatam*, 2.229). Then the *Nāṭyaśāstra* specifies how the *abhisārikā* should wake up her lover if she finds him asleep: the lady of good repute with her ornaments (with the sound of her anklets, according to Abhinavagupta), the courtesan with cool scents, and the handmaid by fanning him with her garment (22.231). This might imply that the place of the rendezvous is her lover's house, and it is nighttime, though he might also have fallen asleep elsewhere and at another time.

Rudraṭa's first definition in his *Kāvya-lāṅkāra* is found among a series of verses deemed interpolations by Namisādhu (Durgāprasād and Paṇṣīkar 1928: 154):

abhisāriketi seyaṃ lajjābhaya-lāghavāny anālocya |
abhisarati prāṇeśaṃ madanena madena cākṛṣṭā ||

An *abhisārikā* is a woman who, not taking into consideration shame, danger, and dishonour, goes forth to the lord of her life, drawn by love and intoxication.

This verse is similar to the one in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and especially to its versions known to the commentators of the *Amarakośa*. Rudraṭa's second definition (12. 42–43, Durgāprasād and Paṇṣīkar 1928: 155) contains a doubly threefold classification, different from the one in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*:

abhisārikā tu sā yā dūtyā dūtena vā sahaikā vā |
abhisarati prāṇeśaṃ kṛtasamketā yathāsthānam ||
kāñcyādiraṇatkāraṃ vyaktaṃ loke prayāti sarvastrī |
vṛṣṭitamojyotsnādicchannaṃ svīyā parastrī ca ||

An *abhisārikā* is a woman who, having made a rendezvous, goes out accordingly to the lord of her life together with a female or male go-between or alone. The common woman (i.e. *veśyā*) goes openly in public, with her girdle etc. jingling. One's own wife and the wife of another [go] covered by rain, darkness, moonlight, etc.

Here we see the optional presence of a companion, something Abhinavagupta wanted (perhaps partly because of his concern about the apparently causative form *abhisārayate*) to read into the *Nāṭyaśāstra* definition. The place of the rendezvous is not specified, but it is said to be prearranged. As for the various kinds of *abhisārikās*, the handmaid is missing from Rudraṭa's list, while the *svīyā* and the *parastrī* could both be regarded as *kulajās* (their behaviour also matches that of the well-born lady in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*).

Rudrabhaṭṭa defines the *abhisārikā* in his *Śṛṅgāratilaka* as follows (1.145–146, Pollock 2018: 78):

yā nirlajjīkṛtā bādhaṃ madena madanena ca |
abhiyāti priyaṃ sābhisāriketi matā yathā ||

A woman who, made truly shameless by intoxication and by love, goes out to her lover, is held to be an *abhisārikā*, as in the following verse:

no bhītaṃ taḍito dṛṣā jalamucāṃ taddarśanākāṅkṣayā
no garjir gaṇitā bhṛṣaṃ śrutisukhaṃ tadvāci saṃcintya ca |
dhārāpātasamudbhavā na ca matā pīḍā tadāliṅganam
vāñchantyā dayitābhisāraṇavidhau tanvyā paraṃ tatvare ||

Her eyes were not afraid of the lightning of the clouds, because they were yearning to see him, and she did not reckon greatly with the thunder, thinking of the pleasure his words would give to her ears, nor did she think of the pain caused by the pelting shower, as she was longing for his embrace — instead the slender girl hurried in going forth to her lover.

The definition is again reminiscent of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and it is noteworthy that *abhisāraṇa* is clearly not used in the causative sense, even though it seems to be derived from the causative stem. In 1.151 (Pollock 2018: 81), Rudrabhaṭṭa enumerates three kinds of *abhisārikās*: well-born lady (*kulajā*), the wife of another (*anyāṅganā*), and courtesan (*veśyā*); here perhaps *kulajā* corresponds to Rudraṭa's *svīyā*.

In Mammaṭa's *Kāvya prakāśa*, we find two consecutive verses (3.19–20, Jhalakikar 1983: 77) that can be fitted into the context of *abhisāraṇa*:

suvvāi samāgamissadi tujjha pio ajja paharametteṇa |
emea kitti ciṭṭhasi tā sahi sajjesu karaṇijjam || (= *Sattasaī* W 962)

‘We hear that your husband will come here today in just a couple of hours. Why are you staying put? You should prepare, my friend.’

Mammaṭa's comment on the verse is as follows: *atropapatiṃ praty abhisartuṃ prastutā na yuk-tam iti kayācin nivāryate*, ‘Here a woman who is about to go out to her lover is stopped by another woman with the hint “it is not suitable [because you do not have as much time as you expected before your husband returns].” This is the next verse (Jhalakikar 1983: 78):

anyatra yūyaṃ kusumāvacāyaṃ
kurudhvam atrāsmi karomi sakhyaḥ |
nāhaṃ hi dūraṃ bhramituṃ samarthā
prasīdatāyaṃ racito ’ñjalir vaḥ ||

‘Gather flowers somewhere else, I’ll do it here, my friends. For I am not able to wander far away. Please oblige me, I am begging you.’

Mammaṭa's commentary: *atra vivikto 'yaṃ deśa iti pracchannakāmukas tvayābhisāryatām ity āśvastām prati kayācin nivedyate*, 'Here a woman is giving the following information to her confidante, "This place here is going to be empty of people, so make my secret lover come out to me". According to this interpretation, the *abhisārikā* does not go forth (*abhisarati*) herself, but makes the man come to her with the help of her confidante, so she performs the causative action we saw explicitly mentioned in the *Daśarūpaka*. Interestingly, the text of the *Kāvyaaprakāśa* has variants at this point: the edition with the *Samketa* commentary reads *tvayā visarjya iti* instead of *tvayābhisāryatām iti* (Parikh 1959: 33). Narendraprabhasūri's *Alaṅkāramahodadhi* contains the same verse and an almost identical commentary, but it reads *tvayā prasthāpya iti* (Gandhi 1942: 51). Could it be the case that some transmitters of the *Kāvyaaprakāśa* and Narendraprabhasūri felt uneasy about using *abhisr* in a causative sense?

Sāgaranandin (perhaps thirteenth century) gives the following definition in his *Nāṭakalakṣaṇaratnakośa* (Dillon 1937: 107, l. 2572): *yā tu dūtīm anapekṣya gacchati sābhisārikā*, 'a woman, however, who goes out without caring about a go-between, is an *abhisārikā*. Interestingly, in Sāgaranandin's scenario the *abhisārikā* must go alone, not accompanied by a *dūtī*. He differentiates two kinds (ibid. ll. 2573–2575): *tatra kulajā patiprārthitā yāti, yathā padmāvatī vatsarājam. veśyā tv aprārthitaiva, yathā rambhā nalakūbaram*, 'Among them, the well-born woman goes when asked out by her lord, as Padmāvatī [goes out] to Vatsarāja.²³ The courtesan, however, [goes] without being asked at all, as Rambhā [goes out] to Nalakūbara.²⁴ Then Sāgaranandin quotes a couple of verses without attribution, the first of which, describing the *kulajā*, is very close to *Nāṭyaśāstra* 22.228, except it adds the qualification *mūkibhūtavibhūṣaṇā*, 'with her ornaments having become silent'. Then follows another verse on the *kulajā*, adding such attributes as *vepamānoruyugalā*, 'her pair of thighs shaking', *cakitā ca pade pade*, 'trembling at every step', and *śvāsāyāsitarvāṅgī*, 'her whole body strained by panting'. The next verse is almost the same as *Nāṭyaśāstra* 22.229, but while there it describes the *preṣyā*, 'handmaid', here it characterises the *veśyā*, 'courtesan'. Two more verses continue the description of the *veśyā* (ll. 2582–2585):

vakratām dadhatī mārge yathā śloke kavir navaḥ |
 niścayaṃ na samabhyeti padoddhārāvaropaṇe ||
 kumudodarakuṭīm śūnyāṃ kurvatī madhupāyibhiḥ |
 nijāmodāhṛtair veśyā kāntaṃ yāty abhisārikā ||

Adopting a crooked manner on her way, like a novice poet in his verse, she raises and lowers her steps hesitantly / *the poet cannot decide which word to take out and which one to put in*. Emptying the enclosed space inside the lily of bees, since they are attracted by her fragrance, the courtesan *abhisārikā* goes out to her lover.

²³ This may be a reference to Viśākhadatta's lost play, the *Abhisārikāvañcitaka* (see Raghavan 1978: 865–867).

²⁴ A play called *Rambhābhisaraṇa* by Nārada is mentioned in the *Vajranābhavadha* (aka *Pradyumnottaracārīta*), an addition to the *Harivaṃśa* (see Warder 2004: 883), and it is also written into Ravivarman's *Pradyumnābhūdāya* (around 1300, see Warder 2004: 886ff). On the other hand, Sāgaranandin quotes from an otherwise unknown play called *Rambhānalakūbara* (Dillon 1937: 40, ll. 949ff).

Since Sāgaranandin accepts only two kinds of *abhisārikās*, in his classification it is not the hand-maid, but the courtesan who is intoxicated. The reference to her strong perfume, however, tallies with the stipulation seen in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (22.231) that the courtesan should wake up her lover with her scent.

Sāgaranandin distinguishes nine times when women head out to meet their lovers (ll. 2586–2598): *śyāmāpradoṣa*, ‘the early part of the night’, *candrodaya*, ‘moonrise’, *durdina*, ‘rainy day’, *tuṣārapāta*, ‘snowfall / Scotch mist’, *hemantaniśā*, ‘winter night’, *nidāghamadhyāhna*, ‘summer noon’,²⁵ *kolāhala*, ‘commotion’, *vātālī*, ‘gale’, and *maha*, ‘festival’. Then he adds: *ma-danavidhuritānām nāsti kāla iti kecit. kulajāyāḥ punaḥ śyāmāpradoṣa eva*. ‘Some say that for those depressed by love there is no [fixed] time. But for the well-born woman, [the right time is] only the early part of the night.’ A nice verse closes this section (Dillon 1937: 108, ll. 2590–2593):

dūtīm āgamayasva mā vraja sakhi svairā prakṛtyaiva sā
vakraikṛtya dhanur na paśyasi cirād anveti mām manmathaḥ |
mārgo ’yaṃ janasaṃkaṭo viṭapini nyasyāmi kiṃcit tamaḥ
sāndraṃ nanv abhisārikāsu kṛpayā bhrāmyanti khadyotakāḥ ||

‘Call for a go-between. Do not go [alone], my friend.’ ‘She is wilful by her very nature. Don’t you see that Kāma has been following me for a long time, bending his bow?’ ‘This road is crowded with people.’ ‘I will pause for a while at a tree.’²⁶ ‘It is pitch dark.’ ‘Surely fireflies are buzzing around out of compassion for the *abhisārikās*.’

The *Kāmasūtra* mentions the *abhisārikās* in the context of the evening routine of the man about town (*nāgaraka*, 1.4.23–25, Shastri 1929: 43–44):

pradoṣe ca saṃgītakāni. tadante ca prasādhite vāsagrhe saṃcāritasurabhidhūpe saśahāya-sya śayyāyām abhisārikāṇām pratikṣaṇam. dūtīnām preṣaṇam, svayaṃ vāgamanam. āgatānām ca manoharair ālāpair upacāraiś ca saśahāyasyopakramāḥ. varṣapramṛṣṭanepathyānām durdinābhisārikāṇām svayam eva punarmanḍanam, mitrajanena vā paricaraṇam.

And in the evening, there are concerts. After those, when the bedchamber has been decorated and fragrant incense has been carried around, together with his companions he waits on the bed²⁷ for *abhisārikās*. He sends out go-betweens, or they come themselves. When they come, he and his companions receive them with pleasant conversations and attentions. He restores himself the make-up of those *abhisārikās* who have come in damp weather and whose cosmetics have been smudged by the rain, or makes his friends wait upon them.

²⁵ *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* 4.179 (Siddhartha 2009, vol. 2: 718) is a fine example of this.

²⁶ This could also mean ‘I shall deposit something on a tree’, but we do not see how this meaning could be fitted into the context.

²⁷ The commentator Yaśodhara in his *Jayamaṅgalā* (thirteenth century) opines that ‘on the bed’ is to be understood as ‘near the bed’, for the man ‘should not sit on the bed yet, in order to convey his respect and affection’ (*śayyāsamiṇe sthitasya. gauravānurāgahyāpanārthaṃ na tāvad adhyāsita śayyām*).

The commentator Yaśodhara gives the following analysis of the word *abhisārikā*: *ābhimukhyena kāntaṃ sarantīty abhisārikāḥ*, ‘they are [called] *abhisārikās* because they go to their lovers [directly] heading towards [him].’ He wants to read *svayaṃ vā gamanam*, and explains it as follows: *saṃketitakālātikrame tatsaṃpreṣaṇe ’pi mānād anāgame svayaṃ vā gamanam*, *gauravānūrāgakhyāpanārtham*, ‘If the agreed time of the rendezvous has passed, and even though he has sent out [go-betweens], [she] still does not come out of pride, alternatively [he] can go himself, in order to convey his respect and affection.’ The ‘pleasantness’ of the conversations and services is fleshed out by Yaśodhara as follows: *svāgatam, idam āsanam, āsyatām. sādhu kṛtaṃ dayite yad āgatāsi. tvatpratibaddhajīvita evāsmi. tat kimiti kālo ’tikrāmitaḥ? ityādibhir ālāpaiḥ*. ‘He should say things like “Welcome! Here is a seat, please sit down. Well done, my darling, that you have come. My life is tied to you alone. So why did you delay?” It seems Yaśodhara wants to understand *paricaraṇam* as a separate sentence, meaning ‘massage, fanning, etc.’ Finally, he remarks that all this should be done for women who do not belong to the household (*etad bāhya-striṣu, nāntardāreṣu*).

APPENDIX II: ABHISĀRIKĀS IN EARLY CLASSICAL LITERATURE

In surveying literary works, we have restricted ourselves to discussing more fully only those composed before ca. 500 CE, since the quantity of literature would otherwise be too vast for our present scope. By ca. 500 CE it appears that the major features of the *topos* were fully developed.

When did the *abhisārikā* first make her entrance in Indian literature? The poetry of the *Ṛgveda* is very different from *kāvya* and very little of the Vedic poetic *imaginaire* lived on in classical poetry. Even if we find certain similarities, they might be purely coincidental. Nevertheless, there is one simile in the *Ṛgveda* that is perhaps worth mentioning: Uṣas, the goddess of Dawn, is compared to a woman sallying forth to a rendezvous:

jānaty āhnaḥ prathamāsya nāma śukrā kṛṣṇād ajaniṣṭa śvitīcī |
ṛtāsyā yōṣā nā mināti dhāma āhar-ahar niṣkṛtām ācārantī || 1.123.9
Knowing the name of the first day, gleaming, bright-faced, she has been
born from the dark.

She does not violate the ordinance of truth, every day going to the
appointed place like a maiden to a rendezvous. (Trans. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 286)

tānīd āhāni bahulāny āsan yā prācīnam úditā sūryasya |
yātaḥ pári jārā ivācāranty úṣo dadṛkṣé ná púnar yatíva || 7.76.3
Those were the days: the many days through which, at the rising of
the sun,
you became visible, o Dawn—faring forth thence toward the east-facing
(sacrifice), like (a maiden) faring forth to her lover, not like one going
(home) again. (Trans. Jamison and Brereton 2014: 978)

There are many uncertainties around the interpretation of these verses.²⁸ In 1.123.9c Jamison and Brereton translate *ná* twice: first as a negation, and then as a simile marker. If, however, one took *ná* only as a simile marker, the verse could mean that Dawn *does* violate the law of *rta*, like a young woman going to the appointed place [of the rendezvous]. But it seems unlikely that Dawn is charged with transgression. Alternatively, and this seems to us the most likely interpretation, one could take *ná* only as a negation and understand the figure as a metaphor rather than a simile (notice that *ná* appears in the same metrical position below in 7.63.3d where it is most probably a negation). In the following verse (1.123.10) we see Dawn going to the Sun, revealing her breasts, smiling radiantly. The syntax of 7.76.3, as Jamison and Brereton (n.d.: 50) remark in their commentary, ‘is difficult to [dis]entangle’. In this case, Jamison and Brereton take the east-facing sacrifice as the masculine goal of Dawn coming from the east, corresponding to *jāré* ‘lover’ in the simile. This, together with *ná púnar yatīva* as ‘not like one going (home) again’, suggests a married woman going to a rendezvous with her lover, something we often see in *abhisāra*-situations in later *kāvya*.

The most famous *abhisāra*-like episode in the great epics is perhaps the fatal rendezvous between Bhīma (pretending to be Draupadī) and Kīcaka in the *Virāṭaparvan*. Here the tryst is referred to as *saṃgama* (4.21.11, 25), *samāgama* (4.21.23, 31), and *saṃketa* (4.21.40); it happens at night at an appointed place (the dance pavilion). The word *abhisāra* or its cognates are, however, not used.

We do not find *abhisārikās* in the works of early Buddhist Sanskrit poets. The Prakrit anthology of the *Sattasāi*, however, the core of which probably goes back to the Deccan and the early centuries of the common era, contains a fair number of verses that can be interpreted as describing an *abhisāra*-situation. Bhoja quotes many of these as *abhisārikā* verses in his *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (mostly in chapter 27; we cite a couple of them above as parallels to the *smā* verses). The word *ahisāriā* itself is found in the famous verse quoted by Ānandavardhana as an illustration of *dhvani* (W 968, quoted above in our commentary on *abhisārikāpaddhati* 3), while W 767 has the word *ahisāraṇa* (= Bhuvanapāla 608):

ucchaṃgiyāḥ paññā ahisāraṇapaṃkamaliṇaperamte |
āsaṇnapariyaṇo via sea cciya dhuvaḥ se pāe ||

Taken onto his lap by her husband, her sweat itself, like a servant waiting on her, washes her feet, the edges of which are dirty with the mud from her sallying forth²⁹ [to meet him].

Weber quotes the commentary of Sādhāraṇadeva, who thinks that the verse describes the marital happiness (*saubhāgya*) of a rainy night *abhisārikā*, and her passion for her husband (*priyānurāga*). Weber suggests that the verse is about a newly-wed couple, who still live in separate households, and the young wife has to go out in secret from her father’s house to meet her husband.³⁰ Another *Sattasāi* verse (W 646 = Bhuvanapāla 692 = Gaṅgādhara 7.44), as Weber points out,

²⁸ We are grateful to Dr. Máté Ittész for his insightful comments on the syntax of these verses.

²⁹ Note that *ahisāraṇa* is not used in the causative sense here.

³⁰ From their translation it seems that Khoroché and Tiekén (2009: 126) thought the verse was describing a cheating situation (‘Washing the mud of last night’s assignation...’), but we find this interpretation less likely.

refers to the separation of the young couple after the ceremony on the fourth day after the wedding (*caturthīmaṅgala*, i.e. *caturthīkarman*).³¹

While W 767 is an example of a married woman going out to meet her husband (she falls into the category of Rudraṭa's *svīyā abhisārikā*), in W 685 (= Bhuvanapāla 622) the husband comes (probably to his father-in-law's house) to visit his wife:

avarāṇhāgaajāmāuassa viṇṇei mohaṇukkaṃṭhaṃ |
vahuāi gharapaloharamajjaṇapisuṇo valaasaddo ||

When the son-in-law comes in the afternoon, his longing for sex is doubled by the sound of bracelets betraying his wife is taking a bath in the back garden of the house.

This scene might be classified as an *abhisāraṇa* in the causative sense: she makes her husband come to her.³²

Kālidāsa seems to have been rather fond of the *abhisārikā* theme, particularly in the context of describing the refinement of urban culture. In *Meghadūta* 37 the *yakṣa* informs the cloud that when he arrives in Ujjayinī women will be going to their lovers' houses at night, and he asks the cloud to show them the way with its lightning, but not to be too loud with its downpour and thunder, because they are easily frightened (*viklavās tāḥ*).³³ Here the place of the rendezvous is the house of the lover, just as in the *Kāmasūtra* and in *smā abhisārikāpaddhati* 1, 2, and 12. In *Meghadūta* 70, the *yakṣa* praises his hometown, the heavenly city Alakā, as a place where the cloud will see in the mornings the tracks from the night before of celestial *abhisārikās*, marked by various things dropped on the way: *mandāra* flowers, golden lotuses, and snapped pearl necklaces. Here there is no indication of whether the meeting-place is the man's house or somewhere else.

In Kālidāsa's epic, the *Raghuvamśa*, the *rākṣasī* Tāṭakā is compared to an *abhisārikā* in a fine punning verse (11.19):

rāmamanmathasāreṇa tāḍitā duḥsahena hṛdaye niśācarī |
gandhavadrudhiracandanokṣitā jīviteśavasatiṃ jagāma sā ||

The prowler of the night / *abhisārikā*, struck in her heart by the unbearable arrow of that love god Rāma and spattered with the pungent-smelling sandal that was her own blood, departed for the house of the lord who rules over lives (i.e. Yama, Death) / *of the lord of her life* (i.e. *her lover*).

³¹ The verse says that the hands of the bride and groom, holding tightly one another, weep, as it were, with drops of sweat. During the ceremony the couple hold hands (the groom has to hold different fingers of the bride, depending on whether they want daughters, sons, or both, cf. *Āpastambagrhyasūtra* 2.4.9–15). Gaṅgādhara in his commentary on the verse says: *caturthīm kṛtvā jāmātā svagrhaṃ gacchatīti lokavyavahārāḥ*, 'having performed the *caturthī*, the son-in-law goes to his own house — this is the custom'.

³² W 822 describes a similar scene.

³³ In the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* this verse is quoted as an example of *dhvāntaparikṣā*, 'the examination of darkness' (27.60).

In the description of the deserted Ayodhyā in the same poem we read that at night the *abhisārikās*, probably going to their lovers' houses (though this is not made explicit), used to contribute to the splendour of the prosperous city with their shiny anklets, but now their place on the royal highway has been taken by female jackals searching for prey with the torches of their mouths (16.12). In the following chapter, the Goddess of Victory (*jayaśrī*), who loves heroes, approaches king Atithi like an *abhisārikā* (17.67).

In Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, in the description of the Himalayan city of Oṣadhiprastha, luminescent herbs show the way to *abhisārikās*, who are not aware of the darkness even on rainy nights (6.43). In Rati's lament, Kāma's wife asks who will let women reach their lover's houses at night on the city road covered by darkness (4.11); presupposing, clearly enough, the idea of Kāma as the companion and in a sense even the bodyguard of the *abhisārikā*.

Finally in the third act of Kālidāsa's play, the *Vikramorvaśīya*, the celestial maiden Urvaśī enters flying in the sky (*ākāśayānena*), at night, dressed as an *abhisārikā*, together with her friend Citralekhā. They are going to the palace of Purūravas. Urvaśī describes her attire as 'decorated with sparse jewellery, complete with a dark blue mantle' (*appāharaṇabhūśido ṇīlaṃsuaparigga-ho*, Velankar 1961: 45).

The *abhisārikās* in Kālidāsa's works conform well to the 'classical' conventions: they sally forth on (rainy) nights, in cities, wearing dark dress, sandal paste, and (shiny but sparse) jewellery. These descriptions suggest that by Kālidāsa's time this character was already well-established in *kāvya* literature, although we cannot exclude that to some extent the conventions were actually developed by Kālidāsa.

In Pravarasena's *Setubandha* (possibly contemporaneous with Kālidāsa), the long description of nightfall in Laṅkā also contains a reference to *abhisārikās* (10.65):

ahisāraṇaṃ ṇa geṇhaī ṇa saṃṭhavei alaṃ ṇa pucchaī dūiṃ |
candāloapaḍihao³⁴ vevāi mūḍhahiao vilāsiṇisattho ||

Wanton women do not undertake to sally forth, do not make their coiffure, do not question the go-betweens. Thwarted by the moonlight, they tremble with confused hearts.

In this verse bright moonlight hinders the *abhisārikās* in their enterprise and practically paralyses them. Another verse in the same section could be interpreted to describe *abhisāraṇa* in a causative sense (10.79, following the reading of the *Setutattvacandrikā*, cf. Handiqui 1976: 139):

avalambijjāu dhīraṃ ṇa hu³⁵ so ehii aiggae vi paose |
ia dūhi tulijjāi paḍhamāṇapiamo vilāsiṇisattho ||

Wanton women, whose lovers have already been brought there, are tested here by the go-betweens, saying 'Stay firm, definitely he is not coming, even when evening has passed.'

³⁴ Harṣapāla reads °*vimuhio* (°*vimohito*) (fol. 127v).

³⁵ *hu* is also supported by the manuscript of Harṣapāla's commentary (fol. 129v).

Here it seems that the go-betweens have first brought the men to the place of assignation; they hide there, and they then bring the ladies, and to test their feelings (possibly at the suggestion of the men) instead of telling them that they are already waiting say that the ladies must steel themselves for a long, long wait. Presumably the place of meeting is neither the house of the man nor that of the woman, so there is both *abhisaraṇa* and causative *abhisāraṇa* here.

Several commentaries on 1.34–35 (quoted in Handiqui 1976: 188–189) interpret *lacchisaṃgāhaṇavapaose sarae*, ‘autumn which was evening for Lakṣmī in her endeavour to choose [her lover] herself’, as a reference to the goddess of victory acting as an *abhisārikā*. Not all commentaries take this to be the idea, though, and *svayaṃgrāha* is not an expression that very naturally suggests *abhisaraṇa*, we think.

One of the *Caturbhāṇī*, a collection of four *bhāṇas*, monologue plays, that might have been composed around the Gupta period (though their dating is far from certain), is called *Ubhayābhisārikā*, ‘Both Sally Forth’,³⁶ in which the two young lovers on their way to their rendezvous meet halfway. In another *bhāṇa* in the same collection, the *Padmaprābhṛtaka*, ‘The Lotus Gift’, the *viṭa* (‘playboy’) asks a pining courtesan why she does not sally forth herself to meet her haughty lover. The verb form used in the sentence, *tataḥ kim idānīm nābhisāryate*, ‘Then why don’t you go to him?’, is the familiar causative looking form in a non-causative sense. Finally, in the *Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda*, ‘Rogue and Playboy Confer’, the *viṭa* points out that jingling anklets render good service to an *abhisārikā* who is silent on the first date by announcing her arrival (verse 64, cf. verse 12 of the *abhisārikāpaddhati* above).

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³⁶ On the formation of the title, see Venkatacharya and Warder 1967: 9–14.

ABBREVIATIONS

ac = ante correctionem

pc = post correctionem

em = emendation

conj = conjecture

om = omits

vl = varia lectio

l. = line

ll. = lines

Σ = all witnesses except one

AS = *Alaṅkārasarvasva* (DURGĀPRASĀD & PARAB 1893)

ASA = *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha* (KRISHNAMACHARYA & SARMA 1949)

AK = *Alaṅkāraukaustubha* (ŚIVADATTA & PARAB 1898)

BHŚT = Bhartṛhari's *Śatakatraya* (KOSAMBI 1948)

CM = *Citramīmāṃsā* (ŚIVADATTAŚARMAN & PARAB 1941)

DRA = *Daśarūpakāvaloka* (VENKATACHARYA 1969)

IS = *Indische Sprüche* (BÖHTLINGK 1966)

KĀ = *Kuvalayānanda* (ĀCĀRYA 1947)

KKV = *Kāvyakalpalatāvr̥tti* (BETAI 1997)

KM = *Kāvyamīmāṃsā* (DALAL, SASTRY & SASTRI 1934)

KR = *Kathāratnākara* (MUNICANDRASŪRI 1997)

MSS = *Mahāsubhāṣitasāṅgraha* (STERNBACH *et al.* 1974–2021.)

NC = Trivikramabhaṭṭa's *Nalacampū* (ŚARMA 1932)

ND = *Nāṭyadarpana* (SHRIGODEKAR & GANDHI 1999)

PĀ = *Padyāvalī* (DE 1990)

PV = *Padyaveṇī* (CHAUDHURI 1944a)

PW = O. Böhtlingk 1879–1889. *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch in kürzerer Fassung*. St. Petersburg: Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

RĀ = *Ratnāvalī* (CAPPELLER 1909)

RJ = *Rasikajīvana* (CHAUDHURI 1944b)

RK = *Rasakalikā* (SANKARANARAYANAN 1988)

RRP = *Rasaratnapradīpikā* (DANDEKAR 1945)

SĀ = *Subhāṣitāvalī* (PETERSON 1886)

SA = *Sabhyālaṅkaraṇa* (TRIPATHI & SHASTRI 1993)

SKA = *Saduktikarṇāmṛta* (BANERJI 1965)

SKĀ = *Sarasvatikaṇṭhābharaṇa* (SIDDHARTHA 2009)

SMĀ = *Sūktimuktāvalī* (KRISHNAMACHARYA 1991)

— SMĀKA = manuscript *ka* of the edition

— SMĀKHA = manuscript *kha* of the edition

— SMĀGA = manuscript *ga* of the edition

— SMĀGHA = manuscript *gha* of the edition

— SMĀCA = manuscript *ca* of the edition

ŚP = *Śārṅgadharapaddhati* (PETERSON 1888)

SP = *Samanvayapradīpa* (HAHN 2008)
 SRK = *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* (KOSAMBI & GOKHALE 1957)
 ŚRP = *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (DWIVEDĪ 2007)
 SSN = *Subhāṣitasudhānidhi* (KRISHNAMOORTHY 1968)
 ŚSS = *Ślokaśārasaṅgraha* (NAKAMURA, forthcoming)
 STP = *Smaratattvaparakāśikā* (SCHMIDT 1904)
 VC = *Vikramacarita* (EDGERTON 1926)
 VDC = *Vikramāṅkadēvacarita* (BÜHLER 1875)
 VP = *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* (UHLE 1881)
 W = the number of the *Sattasāi* verse in WEBER 1881.

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