

LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE SIRI PÂDDANA. SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

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With this short paper, I am keeping a promise to the late Prof. Lauri Honko: to devote attention to the literary aspects of the Siri Pâddana, which he recorded and published (Honko 1998, Honko et al. 1998). Sadly, Prof. Honko is no longer around to criticise the analysis. As a paper has necessarily to be brief, I am assuming that my reader is familiar with Prof. Honko's work and I will not retell the content of the story here (see Honko 1998: 605-631, with the summary of the story's content). The pâddana consists of five stories. The first three are independent self-contained stories; the fourth and fifth stories are closely connected and are differentiated on the basis of a shift in the identity of their protagonists.

First story: Restoration of the temple at Lôkanâdu (Honko 1998: 605-608; paragraphs 1-5)

This story belongs to the genre of oral sacred legend (on this genre, see Jason 1975a; 1975b, ch. 4.2.2.1; and 1977, ch. 4.1.2.1). The people neglect the worship of Îsvara and the maintenance of his temple at Lôkanâdu. Divinities inflict illness upon the responsible elder; and when told the reason for his illness, the elder restores the temple and reinstitutes worship. As a reward, he recovers and is granted offspring. The child appears in the second story: the elder finds a baby girl in a flower, whom he names Siri.

Second story: The making of divinity Kumara (Honko 1998: 608-615, paragraphs 6-21)

This story narrates Siri's biography. It shows affinities to the "bow-song" stories (see Blackburn 1989 and Jason 1989, Type 706 *E): an innocent human is insulted and harmed by other humans; his/ her righteousness gives him/ her the power to transform into a divinity/ demigod. In the case of our story, Siri is insulted by her husband who prefers a harlot to her.

In the course of the story, Siri loses all her social ties: her father dies, her husband divorces her, her family estate is taken from her, upon which she burns down the manor house; her son and maidservant Dâru abandon her.

Her transformation into a divinity in this second story, is projected onto her son Kumara and Dâru who go to "mâya" (the spirit world). Kumara

transforms into a divinity, while Dâru drops from the story. Siri's transformation into a divinity is postponed until the third story; there however, it is not motivated.

Into the story are woven the sacred legend of a vow (para. 13) and its final fulfilment (para. 20) and several legends of magic very typical of Indian oral literature: Character A (human or preternatural) arouses the anger of Character B (who has preternatural qualities). B curses A; the curse magically takes effect and only the one who invokes the curse can set conditions for the undoing of its effects (see Jason 1999). In our story, Siri curses Yīrabadra (para. 19.), the Brahmin of Ambadottu (para. 20) and the people who refuse her food (para. 21). Siri works several miracles. When a boatman refuses to ferry her across a river, she makes her son float on a banana leaf, in the wake of which the waters divide so that Siri and Dâru can walk through (para. 19). When the Brahmin of Ambadottu refuses to allow her to worship at the temple, she prays and the whole ritual, with officiating priests, miraculously appears (para. 20.); Siri prays and her baby son speaks (para. 21).

In this story, the pair of women in conflict are the legal wife (Siri) and the concubine (the harlot). There is no connecting link between this second story and the third story, but the heroine's identity is an element, which has no narrative value.

Third story: The making of divinities Siri and Samu (Honko 1998: 615-619, paragraphs 22-31)

This story is an enlargement of Siri's biography, inserted between the story about the insults, which she innocently suffers, and her transformation into a divinity. In the second story, Siri has successively lost all her ties to the world: her adoptive father (in para. 14); her parental estate (in paras. 16 and 17); and her husband (in para. 18).; She fulfils her vow and thus finishes her earthly-human obligations (in para. 20); her son and maidservant ask her to send them to the non-human realm "mâya" (in para. 21). In the third story, new ties are established: she acquires two brothers (in para. 22) and a new husband (in paras. 23-27). The story serves to connect Siri to the next generation of heroines: it is Siri who, with Kumara's help, gives birth to Sonne. Her role in the narrative is thereby finished and she finally transforms into a deity. Kumara serves as a link to the fourth story: he transports Sonne to her future family.

Thus, the third and fourth stories are connected by making Sonne Siri's daughter; this is a mechanical external connection; compare below the connection between the fourth and fifth stories, which is narrative. In this story, the pair of women consists of two co-wives: Siri and Samu; with Siri the divine member of the pair.

The story has traits of a wisdom novella (sub-genre 9: contest): a contest of magic takes place between the two co-wives Samu and Siri (paras. 27 and 28). (For wisdom novella see Jason 1975, chpt. 4.3.1.1 and 1977, chpt. 3.1.).

Fourth story: Sonne's biography

(Honko 1998: 622-624; paragraphs 30, 32-43)

Like her mother Siri before her, Sonne is found in a flower and brought up by a lonely old man. The story of a foundling girl is repeated in an entirely human baby who is somehow taken from her parents; the same old man finds her and names her Gindye. Thus, the pair of women in the story is a pair of adoptive sisters, raised as twins. Envy develops and Sonne (the divine twin) sins three times: (1) Out of jealousy, Sonne curses Gindye to disappear into the *māya* world, which immediately happens (thus we do not have a complete curse-and-redemption legend); (2) She and her husband vow to bring a present to the Nandolige shrine, but the vow is not fulfilled. (3) The third sin is committed in the fifth story, in which the punishment will also come. The story of the unfulfilled vow and the punishment connect the fourth and fifth stories, and make them more of a unit. One does not make sense without the other.

Fifth story: Abbaya and Dārāya transform into divinities

(Honko 1998: 624-631; paragraphs 43-55)

After making a vow, Sonne bears twin girls, Abbaya and Dārāya. As the vow is not fulfilled, the divinity takes his revenge. Sonne sins a third time: she drives away a poor Brahmin (who is the divinity). On the eve of their wedding, the Brahmin incites a quarrel between Abbaya and Dārāya. Abbaya kills Dārāya and is instructed by the Brahmin to drown herself. On arrival in the divinity's abode, the twins are allowed three days on earth. They fulfil the vow, which their parents neglected, and thus the worlds are reconciled.

The relationship between the two girls is the closest in the series: they are real twins, children of one pair of parents. The fourth and fifth stories follow narrative patterns of the oral sacred legend: Sonne sins twice and both parents vow to give the divinity a gift and do not fulfil this vow. As punishment the divinity takes the children from the parents.

Macro-composition

As we saw, the paddana is composed of five stories. The ways in which they are connected range from loose to tight. The first story tells of the restoration of a neglected temple (sacred legend). As a reward for

restoring the temple, the restorer regains his health, and in addition is promised progeny (given a flower). This addition forms the link to the second story, which narrates the child's (Siri's) biography.

The result of the events in Siri's biography is her remaining completely alone, with no ties to society. There is no narrative link to the third story, but for the heroine in the third story bearing the same name. This link is the weakest one between two stories in the *pâddana*.

The link between the third and fourth stories is the fact that Sonne (protagonist of the fourth story) is the daughter of Siri (protagonist of the third story). This is a mechanical link but is somewhat stronger than the link between the second and third stories.

The fourth and fifth stories are intimately connected and interwoven. The heroines of the fifth story, the twin sisters Abbaya and Dâraya, have to die because of what their parents did in the fourth story: their mother (Sonne) sinned twice (killed her adoptive sister Gindy and insulted a Brahmin) and both their parents vowed to give the divinity a gift in return for Sonne's safe delivery and did not fulfil the vow.

The relationship between the heroines in the stories: Each story features two heroines. Stories 2 to 5 feature two heroines between whom a conflict exists:

First story: lady (Siri) and maidservant (Dâru);

Second story: legal wife (Siri) and concubine (Harlot Siddu);

Third story: co-wives (Siri and Samu);

Fourth story: two girls adopted by the same man and raised as twin sisters (Sonne and Gindy);

Fifth story: heroines are natural twin sisters (Abbaya and Dâraya).

Thus, a graduation of relationships between the heroines emerges, from more distant relationships to the closest possible social and biological relationships. There is no connection between the biography of Siri in the second and third stories.

The third story is an independent biography of Siri. In it, she acquires new social ties: two elder brothers and thus a parental home. Next, she enters a new marriage alliance and bears a new child (the heroine of the next story). At the end of the story Siri herself abandons the human world, without an obvious reason.

The fourth and fifth stories narrate the biography of Siri's daughter Sonne. Yet Sonne does not appear in the story as Siri's daughter, but appears in a flower to a lonely man, as a miraculous child. Thus, no connecting link between the third and fourth stories is obvious to the characters in the fourth story, while to the characters in the third it seems that both Siri and the newborn babe went to Māya. The third and fourth stories could have existed separately and could have been combined at some point in the development of the tradition.

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