**DANDIN**

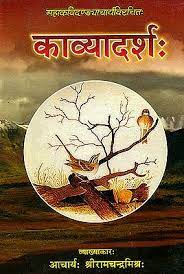
**Daṇḍin** is a 6th-7th century [Sanskrit](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Sanskrit" \o "Sanskrit) [author](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Author" \o "Author) of [prose](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Prose" \o "Prose) romances and expounder on [poetics](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Poetry" \o "Poetry). Although he produced literature on his own, most notably the [Daśakumāracarita](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Da%C5%9Bakum%C4%81racarita" \o "Daśakumāracarita), first translated in 1927 as *Hindoo Tales, or The Adventures of the Ten Princes*, he is best known for composing the *[Kāvyādarśa](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Kavyadarsha" \o "Kavyadarsha)* ('Mirror of Poetry'), the handbook of classical Sanskrit poetics, or [Kāvya](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/K%C4%81vya" \o "Kāvya). His writings were all in [Sanskrit](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Sanskrit_language" \o "Sanskrit language). He lived in Kanchipuram in modern-day Tamil Nadu.

**Early Life**

His writings were all in [Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit_language" \o "Sanskrit language). Daṇḍin's account of his life in *Avantisundarī* states that he was a great-grandson of Dāmodara, a court poet from [Vidarbha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vidarbha" \o "Vidarbha) who served, among others, the [Pallava](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pallava" \o "Pallava) king [Siṃhaviṩṇu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simhavishnu" \o "Simhavishnu) and King [Durvinīta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durvinita" \o "Durvinita) of the [Western Ganga dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ganga_dynasty" \o "Western Ganga dynasty):

< Yigal Bronner concludes that 'These details all suggest that Daṇḍin’s active career took place around 680–720 CE under the auspices of [Narasiṃhavarman II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narasimhavarman_II" \o ") R Daṇḍin was widely praised as a poet by Sanskrit commentators such as [Rajashekhara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajashekhara_(Sanskrit_poet)" \o "Rajashekhara (Sanskrit poet)) (fl. 920 CE), and his works are widely studied. One *shloka* (hymn) that explains the strengths of different poets says: (*daṇḍinaḥ padalālityaṃ:* "Daṇḍin is the master of playful words").

Daṇḍin's works are not well preserved. He composed the now incomplete *[Daśakumāracarita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da%C5%9Bakum%C4%81racarita" \o "Daśakumāracarita)*, and the even less complete *Avantisundarī* (The Story of the Beautiful Lady from Avanti), in prose. He is best known for composing the *[Kāvyādarśa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavyadarsha" \o "Kavyadarsha)* ('Mirror of Poetry'), the handbook of classical Sanskrit poetics, or *[Kāvya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C4%81vya" \o "Kāvya)*, which appears to be intact. Debate continues over whether these were composed by a single person, but 'there is now a wide consensus that a single Daṇḍin in authored all these works at the Pallava court in Kāñcī around the end of the seventh century'.



## **Kavyadarsa**

The *Kāvyādarśa* is the earliest surviving systematic treatment of poetics in Sanskrit. It has been shown that *Kāvyādarśa* was strongly influenced by the [Bhaṭṭikāvya](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Bha%E1%B9%AD%E1%B9%ADik%C4%81vya" \o "Bhaṭṭikāvya) of Bhaṭṭi. In *Kāvyādarśa*, Daṇḍin argued that a poem's beauty derived from its use of [rhetorical devices](http://www.gutenberg.cc/articles/Rhetorical_device" \o "Rhetorical device) – of which he distinguished thirty-six types.

He is also known for his complex sentences and creation of very long compound words (some of his sentences ran for half a page, and some of his words for half a line).

There have been several commentaries on the Kavyadarsah. The earliest appears to be Srutanupalini of Vadi Ghangala. Two other commentaries, one of Tarunavacaspati and another, (Hrdayangama) by an unknown author have been published in 1910 by Rao Bahadur Prof. M. Rangachariar, then Curator of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. A fourth commentary of Jibananda Vidyasagara has been adopted in this edition. Acarya Dandin belongs to the Daksinatya school of writers and was a lover of Vaidarbhi style; he brings out the distinction between the two extreme of the Vaidarbhi and the Gouda styles very clearly in this book.

Dandin belongs to the formative period of Sanskrit poetics when some of the doctrines were steadily advancing towards development; some of them were trying for winning recognition and style some others were making their first appearance in conscious or sub-conscious form. As one of the earliest exponents of the poetical doctrines, he richly deserves a prominent place in the history of Sanskrit Poetics. A study of his work on Poetics is imperative not only for having an enright into the beginning and early development of the poetical theories, but also for a correct appraised of the various doctrine which developed after him. Dandin has dealt with almost all the topics of the science of kavya, prevalent in his time and has given one of the most elaborate treatments to some of them.

The main contents or topics of the Kavyadarsa are as follows:

1. Benediction, and introductory remarks

2. Purposes and sources of poetry

3. Definition and classification of Kavya.

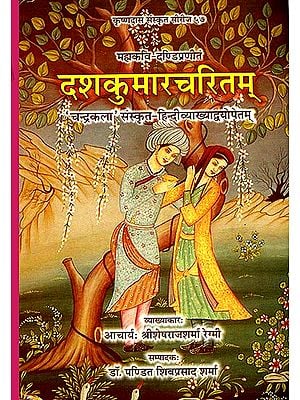
4. The Poetic dictions (margas) and their constituent excellences (guna)

5. Defects (dosa)

6. Poetic figures (i) Ideal figures (ii) Verbal figures and literary feats

7. Concluding remarks

Dandin makes a passing reference to the purpose of poetry. He casually mentions delight and fame as gains of poetry to the poet and describes mahakavya as a poetic composition which delights the world, implying thereby that the esthetic pleasure belongs to the reader also. Dandinalso refers to the attainment of the fruit of the four objects of life (caturvarga) when he describes a mahakavya as possessed of the goal of the four objects. Dandin also deals incidentally, with the sources of poetry or equipments of a poet, which, according to him, are (i) poetic imagination (pratibha), (ii) pure and vast learning (nirmala bahusruia) and (iii) assiduous application (ananda abhiyoga).



## **Dasakumaracarita**

The Daśakumāracarita relates the vicissitudes of ten princes in their pursuit of love and royal power. It contains stories of common life and reflects a faithful picture of Indian society during the period couched in the colourful style of Sanskrit prose. It consists of (1) Pūrvapīṭhikā, (2) Daśakumāracarita Proper, and (3) Uttarapīṭhikā.

A *shloka* (hymn) that explains the strengths of different poets says: "daṇḍinaḥ padalālityaṃ" ("Daṇḍin is the master of playful words").