

LITERARY MERITS OF JĀNAKĪHARAṆAM

V. SOWMYANARAYANAN

Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Sanskrit
Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College, Arumbakkam, Chennai (TN)

ABSTRACT

Jānakīharaṇam written by *Kumāradāsa* is one among the earlier *Mahā-kāvya*s in Sanskrit literature. It consists of 20 Cantos. It is to be noted that the Trivandrum transcript has at the end of the poem a small verse in the form of *phalaśruti* which runs thus, "जानकीहरणं श्लक्ष्णं लक्षणैरुपलक्षितम्। रामायणसुधासारमास्वाद्यं मुक्तिदायकम्॥" Many Sanskrit scholars accepted to assign Kumāradāsa here to the beginning of the 6th Century.

Kumāradāsa was a great poet with innate literary talents. He was quite at ease in handling chaste words of exquisite beauty. His utterances suit the occasion even by their mere sound effect. In the art of description he has shown his compo-sing proficiency with high order. His imaginations are so vivid and graphic. A few instances of his art of description are mainly dealt in this research paper.

Kumāradāsa uses only popular metres and he does not normally make mistakes. Following the poetic convention, he generally employs a single metre throughout a canto, with larger ones to mark the end of each canto and in the matter of choosing appropriate enough to the sentiment or theme depicted. Though he uses more than 20 metres, he seems to have a special liking for *Vamśastha* in which he has composed the maximum number of verses.

According to poetic convention, as defined by Daṇḍin, Kumāradāsa devotes almost the whole of canto 18 for exhibiting his skill in the difficult form of Śabdacitras.

The Nature-descriptions of Kumāradāsa not only delectable for the vista that they open up but also for the smooth flow of the verses. *Kumāradāsa* strictly followed the poetic rules set forth by Daṇḍin. One of the favourite methods of the poets in their descriptions of Nature is to invest it with life and deal with aspects of Nature in terms of human feelings giving rise to fine examples of *Samādhi* and *Samāsokti*. Kumāradāsa has some notable achievements.

This Mahākāvya Jānakīharaṇam is therefore of interest from many sides. It integrates not only India and Śrī Laṅkā but also South East Asia with creative work of Sanskrit.

THE WORK OF KUMĀRADĀSA

Jānakīharaṇam written by *Kumāradāsa* is one among the earlier *Mahā-kāvya*s in Sanskrit literature. It consists of 20 Cantos, of which first 10 Cantos were edited by Gopal Raghu-nath Nandargikar in 1907 and the Cantos 16 to 20 are critically edited with English translation by Dr. C.R. Swaminathan in the year 1977 and published through Motilal Banarasidass Indological publishers, Delhi. The colophons of the manuscripts to each canto mention the Sinhalese nativity of the poet¹. It is to be noted that the Trivandrum transcript has at the end of the poem a small verse in the form of *phalaśruti* which runs thus,

*जानकीहरणं श्लक्ष्णं लक्ष्णैरुपलक्षितम्। रामायणसुधासारमास्वाद्यं मुक्तिदायकम्”॥

The Date of Kumāradāsa

Alaṅkāra writers like Hemacandra (1089 to 1173 A.D.), and Bhoja (1010 TO 1055 A.D.) also quote from **Kumāradāsa's** work. Next comes the important author, Rājaśekhara of C. 900 A.D., who makes some references to **Kumāradāsa**. In his *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* he refers to the poet as born blind². He has also left a verse on **Kumāradāsa** and his poem³. Though there are different opinions on the date of **Kumāradāsa**, many Sanskrit scholars accepted to assign **Kumāradāsa** here to the beginning of the 6th Century.

Kumāradāsa was a great poet with innate literary talents. He was quite at ease in handling chaste words of exquisite beauty. His utterances suit the occasion even by their mere sound effect. In the art of description he has shown his compo-sing proficiency with high order. His imaginations are so vivid and graphic. A few instances of his art of description are:

1. The Descriptive Skill of Kumāradāsa

In the beginning of the first canto, **Kumāradāsa** devotes eleven verses to describe the city of **Ayodhyā**. In the very first verse⁴, he says that the city of **Ayodhyā** has all the splendour and wealth of the celestial city and that if it has come down to earth, it is only because of its weight due to excess of prosperity.

The poet also sets forth in detail the marriage rituals. First the **pāṇigraha** or holding of the bride's hand by the bridegroom, then offerings into the fire and going round the fire which is made a witness for the marriage are described⁵.

At the end of the eighth canto, the five verses dealing with drinking. Among those the 99th one is very beautifully narrated. While drinking wine, the lady is being profusely kissed by her beloved and due to repeated kissing the red colour on the lips gradually faded⁶.

2. Kumāradāsa's treatment of Sentiments

Kumāradāsa has revealed throughout his work, his power to depict and evoke the various sentiments. Of course Śṛṅgāra and Vīra from the major rasas depicted by him in the poem. In Śṛṅgāra, the Sambhoga phase is dealt more elaborately. Among other Rasas, Karuṇa and Bībhatsa figure with some prominence.

Śṛṅgāra occupies the major portions of cantos III, VIII and XVI. The psychological and physical reactions to the first expressions of love are well brought out in the following verse:

सप्रयत्नसुपवेशिताप्यसौ कामिना समुपगृह्य बालिका।
साध्वसेन चपला मुहुर्मुः वाञ्छति स्म समुदेत्तुमङ्गतः॥

Equally skilled is the poet in the depiction of the sentiment Karuṇa or pathos. Even in the first canto, while describing the tragic end of the sage-boy at the hands of Daśaratha, he devotes about ten verses to the depiction of pathos. When the king approached the target of his arrow, he found, contrary to his expectation, a young sage with his chest pierced by the arrow and the poet fancies that Daśaratha was hit at heart by a terrible shaft in the form of the boy's cry of agony rendered

more unbearable tears: “पुत्रो मुने:हृदि तं जघान⁷”॥

The sentiment of Vīra coupled with Raudra and bībhatsa is powerfully depicted in the 19th canto while describing the fight between Rāma and Rāvana. When the heads of Rāvana were fell down by the arrows of Rāma, new ones immediately substituted them. Thus Rāvana himself could see his own heads rolling on the earth with their crowns tossed away and with blood flowing from the lips that were crushed between the rows of teeth: “ददर्श भल्लाभि:..... निजानि राक्षस:॥⁸”

3. The treatment of Alaṅkāras

Alaṅkāras play a great role in this Mahākāvya (epic-poem). Daṇḍin says that a Mahākāvya should be Alaṅkṛtam. A considerable number of Arthālaṅkāras are also obtainable from the Jānakīharṇam. The poet has handled some of them with great proficiency. A few specimens of important Arthālaṅkāras will help one to realise his skill in composing figures of speech.

- 1) विभाति भृङ्गीसरणी सरन्ती गन्धाहृता चम्पककुङ्कुलाग्रे।
अन्तं प्रदीपस्य निषेवमाणा धूमावली कज्जलरेखिणीव⁹॥

Here the Alaṅkāra is Upamā. The line of black bees over the buds of Campaka flower, has been compared to the smoke produced by the flames of a lamp. The bees have the same colour with the smoke and the Campaka flower has the same colour and shape with the flame.

- 2) अभिहतो गिरिणा वडवानप्रबलरोषधरो जलधिद्विपः।
रचयति स्म सुवेलमहातरौ नियमितस्थित एव गतागतम्¹⁰॥

Here the sea is the elephant which hits regularly Suvela-tree. The figure of speech should be Rūpaka and Sāṅgarūpaka in as much as poetic imposition has been not only upon the Jaladhibut also upon the Vadavānala and Suvela Mountain.

- 3) इह हरिणकलङ्ककान्तिलेळैः सह पतिता मृगलक्षणस्य कान्तिः।
अलिभिरवततैर्न्यधत्त वापी-कुमुदवनैरिति शङ्कितं जनेषु¹¹॥

In a moon lit night, the lilies in the pond along with the bees over them gave rise to a doubt in the minds of the people who mistook them for the moon beam fallen upon water with its dark spot. So the figure of speech here is Bhrāntiman which has been defined as “Sāmyādatasmimstadbuddhir-bhrāntimān;

- 4) परेषु वात्यापरिवृंहितोऽस्य क्रोधाभिधानो युधि चित्रभानुः।
आताम्रनेत्रच्युतवारिवर्षैः आना. शान्तिं रिपुकामिनीनाम्¹²॥

In this verse, the Alaṅkāras is Paryāyokta in as much as Daśaratha's victory over his enemies has been suggested here through a particular mode of statement (Bhaṅgi). The suggested meaning is the only meaning.

4. Kumāradāsa's handling the metres

Kumāradāsa uses only popular metres and he does not normally make mistakes. Following

the poetic convention, he generally employs a single metre throughout a canto, with larger ones to mark the end of each canto and in the matter of choosing appropriate enough to the sentiment or theme depicted. For example, the use of the Viyoginī in canto IV (1 to 70), describing the scene of Viśvāmitra taking away the two sons from Daśaratha, suited very well with the meaning of the metre. While describing the Sambhoga Śṛṅgāra of Rāma and Sītā in the eighth canto, he has adopted the befitting metre Rathoddhatā.

The other rare metres like Toṭaka (2), Praharsinī (40) and Rucirā (2) are also found sparingly at the end of the cantos. Other longer metres that are used, containing seventeen syllables, are Śikharinī, Mandākrāntā, Pṛthvī, Nardāṭaka and Hariṇī. Though he uses more than 20 metres, he seems to have a special liking for Vamśastha in which he has composed the maximum number of verses. Thus, the even flow is generally maintained with care.

5. Efficiency in Śabdacitras

According to poetic convention, as defined by Daṇḍin, Kumāradāsadevotives almost the whole of canto 18 for exhibiting his skill in the difficult form of Śabdacitras. In the canto 18, the Śabdacitra called the Nirantarānuprāsa, which is a single letter forming the whole verse. Letter 'त' alone is used by Kumāradāsa in this following verse:

ततातीति ततोतीता तातातातात्तत्ततौ।
ततो तोतिततैतेतो ताते तुत्तितते ततिः¹³॥

In the ninth verse, of the same canto, there is a Śabdacitra which is named Pāda Yamaka. Here the second and the fourth pādas are similar.

दधानौ नृपती खिन्ने शतधा मनसी तया।
दृष्ट्यौ विवशयाऽनार्ति शतधाम न सीतया¹⁴॥

The following another variety of Yamaka used by Kumāradāsa is called Ādi-yamaka, in which the first halves of the first and second pādas are the same and the first halves of the third and fourth pādas are also similar:

विराजन्तमिदं दीप्त्या विराजं तं स्मृतिक्षणे।
सहस्रनासितो भ्रात्रा सहस्रनाख्यदागतम्¹⁵॥

6. Kumāradāsa's description of Nature

The Nature-descriptions of Kumāradāsa not only delectable for the vista that they open up but also for the smooth flow of the verses. Kumāradāsa strictly followed the poetic rules set forth by Daṇḍin. One of the favourite methods of the poets in their descriptions of Nature is to invest it with life and deal with aspects of Nature in terms of human feelings giving rise to fine examples of Samādhi and Samāsokti, Kumāradāsa has some notable achievements.

The ninth verse of the first canto proves the composing skill of Kumāradāsa that the white rumbling clouds of autumn resting on the mansions appear to the poet as depositing their rumbling sounds in the drums in those mansions and seeking in return a share in the white splendor of the clouds¹⁶.

This **Mahākāvyaṃ Jānakīharāṇam** is therefore of interest from many sides. It integrates not only India and Śrī Lāṅkā but also South East Asia with creative work of Sanskrit.

WORKS CITED

1. इति सिंहलकवेः कुमारदासस्य कृतौ जानकीहरणे महाकाव्ये सर्गः।
'जानकीहरणं श्लक्ष्णं लक्ष्णैरुपलक्षितम्। रामायणसुधासारमास्वाद्यं मुक्तिदायकम्॥
2. मेधावि-रुद्र-कुमारदासादयः जात्यन्धाः। Rajasekhara's Kavyamimamsa.
3. जानकीहरणं कर्तुं रघुवंशे स्थिते सति। कविः कुमारदासश्च रावणश्च यदि क्षमौ॥ Ibid Page 45.
4. आसीदवन्यामतिभोगभाराद्विवोऽवतीर्णा नगरीव दिव्या। क्षत्रानलस्थानशमी समृद्ध्या पुरामयोध्येति पुरी परार्ध्या ॥ (जा.ह-I-1)
5. शच्या विवाहस्य विधानमाद्यं नामान्तरेण प्रथितं विधिज्ञः। पर्यस्य चित्तानि तथा सुताया नृपस्य तत्रैव जनस्ततान॥ (जा.ह-VII-47)
6. नियतमिह पतन्ति दन्तधारा मदमदनोद्धतयोतिरितीव भीत्या। अधरकिसलयं विहाय यूनोर्मधु पिबतोर्नयनान्युपास्त रागः॥ (जा.ह-VI-99)
7. पुत्रो मुनेः पत्रिविभिन्नमर्मा शरानुसारेण नृपं प्रयातम्। नेत्राम्बुदिग्धेन विलापनाम्ना बाणेन भूयो हृदि तं जघान॥ (जा.ह-I-75)
8. ददर्श भल्लाभिनिपातपातितप्रकीर्णमौलीनि समुद्रताननः। मुखानि दन्तक्रकचक्षताधरप्रवर्तितासृञ्जि निजानि राक्षसः॥ (जा.ह-XIX-24)
9. जा.हIII-27
10. जा.ह XIV.27
11. जा.ह XVI-16
12. जा.हI-21
13. जा.ह 18-46
14. जा.ह 18-9
15. जा.ह 18-10
16. आलिङ्ग्य तुङ्गं वडभीविटङ्कं विश्राणितात्मध्वनि पुष्करेषु। यत्सौधकान्तेरिव संविभागं वत्रे सितं शारदमध्रवृन्दम्॥(जा.ह-I-9)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rajasekhara's Kavyamimamsa, G.O.S., Vol. I, p.12

The Janakiharānam of Kumaradasa, (I-X), Edited by Gopal Raghunath Nandargikar, Bombay, 1907.

Janakiharānam of Kumāradasa, Vraj Mohan Das, Published by Sri Krishna Das, Mitra Prakasan Pvt Ltd., Allahabad, 1967.

Janakiharānam of Kumāradasa, Cantos I-V; With a Sanskrit Commentary by Narayan Vasudeva Nigudkar and English Notes, and Translation by K.M. Joglekar, Bombay Oriental Publishing Company, 1908.

A Short History of Sanskrit Literature, T.K.RamachandraAiyar, R.S. Vadyar & Sons, Booksellers & Publishers, Kalpathi, Palkkad, Tamil Nadu. Revised Second Edition, 1989.

Jānakīharaṇam of Kumārādāsa, Dr. C. R. Swaminathan. Motilal Banarasiidass, Delhi -7, ISBN 0 8426 1028 6, First Edition, 1977.

PURVA MIMAANSA