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Jānakīrāmbhāṣya of Anundaram Barooah- An Analysis from the viewpoint of Sanskrit Textual Criticism.

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Abstract

Jānakīrāmbhāṣya, a Sanskrit Commentary on Mahāvīracaritam of Bhavabhūti, composed by Anundaram Barooah from Assam, occupies an important place in the field of Sanskrit textual criticism. Written in traditional style with new approach it exhibits certain uncommon features for which it stands out as an exceptional one from ancient commentaries written on Sanskrit works. The exposition of the text done in a method of text criticism applied in modern literature. Varied readings of the drama alongwith his views on them are also mentioned in the commentary. Barooah cites illustrations in the footnotes from other Sanskrit works having similarity in the use of words or expression with those of the Mahāvīracaritam. It is fortified by proper illustration and enriched with analytical exposition for which it may be called research work of high standard. It was the first of its kind till his time. The methodology of modern research was yet in its formative stage when Barooah wrote his commentary. The modern method of textual criticism applied by Barooah was still a new thing. He added a Sanskrit-English Glossary at the end of the commentary which is an innovation introduced in the traditional style of writing Sanskrit commentary. Thus, the uniqueness of the commentary offers a lot of scope for study.

Key words: Bhāṣya, ṭīkā, bhāṣyakāra, jānakīrāmbhāṣya, mahāvīracaritam, commentary

Introduction

Anundaram Barooah, one of the pioneer Indologists, was born at North Guwahati in Assam, in 1850. He passed away at an early age of 38 years in 1889 in Calcutta. Within short span of his life Barooah earned recognition as a brilliant student in India as well as in abroad. He was an erudite Sanskrit scholar and made his mark in the field of Sanskrit study with his valuable contributions. A man of exceptional personality Barooah imbibed best of modern civilisation from the West. He was a passionate lover of Sanskrit. To him, this language was 'dearer than any other language. Its music has charm which no words can express. Its capability of representing every form of human thought in most appropriate language is probably not rivalled, certainly not surpassed by any other language'^[1] Although Barooah does not have any original literary creative compositions like poem, drama or novel etc. to his credit yet we cannot say that he did not possess any original literary genius. He mainly concentrated in the study of the secondary type of literature based on ancient Sanskrit literature and deeply studied the dramas, Kāvya, lexicons, grammar, rhetorics and metrics of Sanskrit language and extracted the precious gems from them for the benefit of Sanskrit scholars and students. Jānakīrāmbhāṣya, the Critical Edition of *Mahāvīracaritam* of Bhavabhūti is one of his remarkable contributions in the field of Sanskrit textual criticism. This paper is an attempt to analyse the bhāṣya from the perspective of Sanskrit textual criticism.

Textual criticism in Sanskrit

This new methodology of textual criticism was introduced in India only towards the end of the 19th century mainly for restoration of the texts of rare books of Indian languages viz. Sanskrit,

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Prakrit and *Apabhramśas*. However, the scholars opine that it is not possible to arrive at a acceptable conclusion, providing solutions to all the problems which may arise in case of analysing Indian literature by exercising the methodology applied for textual criticism in European literature. Because there are many differences of the problems in the critical analysis of texts between European and Indian literature [2]. Dr. V.S. Sukhthankar was the first Indian who concentrated in the study in this field taking into consideration of the problems of Indian literature. Therefore, although scholars like R.G. Bhandarker [3], Anundaram Barooah, R. Pischel, Sten Konow, Todarmal etc. initiated the textual criticism in Sanskrit Literature, yet it is the critically edited edition of Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* which was the result of seventeen years of hard work of a group of scholars under the guidance of Dr Sukhthankar gives an idea about the study in this field. 'Prelogomana' the preface of *Ādīparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* edited by Sukhthankar is regarded as the authoritative book on Text Criticism in India. Although he follows basically European methodology in analysis of the text yet a particular method has been introduced for textual criticism of Indian particularly Sanskrit texts. Therefore the method introduced by Sukhthankar has been accepted as ideal for editing the other *parvans* of *Mahābhārata* and other texts in the later period. One of the pioneers after Sukhthamkar in this field was Edgerton. His edited version of *Pañcatantra* namely '*Pañcatantra Reconstructed*' published from Newhaven in America provided a clearer concept in text criticism of Sanskrit literature. After him the names of Ludwick, P.L.Vaidya, Johans Nowel Leijig, N.N.Upadhyay, Viswavandhu Shastri, Krisnakanta Hadiquii are mentionable. Ludwick edited '*Harivamśa*' (1936), Vaidya edited *Mahāpurāṇ* (1937), '*Suvarṇabhāṣottam sūtra*' of Leijig, '*Paramātmāprakāśa*' of Yogindra by Upadhyaya (1937), '*Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: Sundarakāṇḍa*' (1940) by Viśwavandhu Shastri, '*Naiṣadha Carit*' and '*Yaśastilaka*' of Krishnakanta Hadiquii, '*Karpūramañjarī*' (1939) by Manmohan Ghosh, '*Kṛṣṇakarṇāmṛt*' by Sushil Kumar Dey, '*Saptakāṇḍa vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*' published from Baroda, 'Different Recensions of *Mahānāṭak*' by Dr Estellar, 'Love of Krishna' by Francis Wilson and '*vilvamangalavācītam kṛṣṇastotram*' (1962) edited by Dr Maheswar Neog are examples of textual Criticism in India.

The tradition of writing commentary for explaining the inherent meaning of a text in Sanskrit which is known as *Ṭikā* or *Bhāṣya* has been in practice from ancient Vedic age. It is not possible to understand the purport of the treatises or poetic works of almost all branches of learning composed in Sanskrit. The great scholars such as Yāska, Sāyaṇa, Patañjali, Vāmana, Jayāditya, Sankarācārya, Vācaspatimīśra, Abhinavagupta, Mallinātha, Haridāśasiddhāntavāgīśa, Sridhāracārya, so on and so forth made their mark of erudition in the field of study of Sanskrit by their exposition on Vedas, Vyākaraṇa, treatises on Darśana, Alamkāra, Kāvya etc. contributing a lot in explaining inherent meaning of ambiguous texts. Thus Sāyaṇabhāṣya on the Vedas, Samkarabhāṣya on Vedānta, Vārtikas by Kātyāyana and *Mahābhāṣya* by Patañjali on the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini and *Sāmkhyatattvakaumudī*, Bhāmaṭī and *Tattvaśārādī* by Vācaspatimīśra, Abhinavbhārati and *Locanāṭikā* by Abhinavagupta on *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Dhvanyāloka*, Medhātithibhāṣya on *Manusamhitā*, Rāmānujabhāṣya on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Nīlakaṇṭhāṭikā on *Mahābhārata*, Śrīdhārīṭikā on the *Gītā* and the *Bhāṅgavatapurāṇam* are well-known commentaries which are held in high esteem by the scholars.

Time to time many scholars wrote numerous commentaries on poetics, prose and dramatic compositions.

Classification of Sanskrit commentaries

A commentary in Sanskrit is normally known as *Bhāṣya* and *Ṭikā*. Rājasekhara in his *Kāvyaṃmāmsā* defines *Bhāṣya* as '*ākṣipya bhāṣyam*' [2]. The Madhusūdanavivṛti of *Kāvyaṃmāmsā* illustrates this definition in this way- rejection of a conventional norm in *sūtra* and *vṛtti* is called *Ākṣepa* and explaining it by way of *Ākṣepa* is called *Bhāṣya*. V. S. Apte, in his Sanskrit English Dictionary defines *Bhāṣya* in a more elaborate way. Cf.

*Sūtrārtho varṇyate yatra padaiḥ sūtrānusāribhiḥ
Svapadāni ca varṇyante bhāṣyam bhāṣyavido viduḥ* [4].

A *bhāṣyakāra* explains sutras or aphorisms word by word with comments of his own. As for example, *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali in which the *bhāṣyakāra* explains the aphorisms of Panini and presents his own interpretation. Thus, it may be assumed that a *bhāṣya* was generally written on a treatise or grammar, poetics etc. On the other hand, a commentary written on a literary work is generally called *ṭikā*. It is defined by Rājasekhara as explaining the meaning in the most possible simple way [5].

Ṭikā has been classified by different scholars from different perspectives. According to some there are two types of it; one is *daṇḍānvayṭikā* and the other is *khaṇḍānvayṭikā*. Explaining the verses after arranging them in prose order is called *daṇḍānvaya* variety. This type of *ṭikā* also contains grammatical notes alongwith discussion on *Rasa* (sentiment), *Chanda* (metre) and poetic *Alamkāra* (embellishment). The other variety contains explanation of the verses on the basis of the meaning of them without arranging them in prose order.

Some classify *ṭikā* into eight types [6]. They are as follows-
Śṛṅkhalāṭikā- Sometimes a commentary composed on a *ṭikā* on the original work, is commented upon by another on which again another *ṭikā* is composed. This order of writing commentaries is known as *Śṛṅkhalāṭikā*. The *Bhāṣya* written by Vyāsa on the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, on which Śankaracharya composed *Tattvaviśāradīṭikā* can be cited for example.

Śāstrīyaṭikā- When there is analytical discussion followed by conclusion on the ambiguous and controversial topics on the basis of rules of treatises then it is called Śāstrīyaṭika which is also known as Prasthāpanāṭikā. The *Locanāṭikā* by Abhinavagupta on *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana is an example of this type.

Tulanātmikāṭikā- *Ṭikā* or *Bhāṣya* written on the basis of comparative and analytical study of different commentaries on the same book or treatise is called Tulanātmikā.

Vyavasthāpikā – When a commentator, having studied the views and difference of opinion of the seers on duties, rules and regulations, social customs etc. presents their views and the duties ordained by the treatises for their is known as Vyavasthāpikā *ṭikā*.

Anugāminī – An Anugāminī *Ṭikā* is that, which consists of enumeration, exposition explanation of the content of the original work without confronting the views of the author eventhough these may not be favourable to the commentator. For example, *Sāmkhyatattvakaumudī* by Vācaspatimīśra.

Svatantrā- Here the commentator gives his own views on the basis of the original work. As for example, the *bhāṣya*

written by Śamkarāchārya, Rāmānuja, Madhavāchārya etc on the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Vyāpakatīkā- Mixture of Anugāminī and Svatantrā commentaries is known by this name.

Rasagrahaṇātmikā- Where there is an effort by the commentator to give exposition of the original text in simple language, so that the reader can realise the feelings of the poet it is known as Rasagrahaṇātmikāṭīkā.

Type of the commentary jānakīrāmbhāṣya

Barooah's Jānakīrāmbhāṣya does not conform literally to the types of *bhāṣya* discussed above. On the other hand, it is also characterised with more elaborate explanation than commentaries written in traditional style. Barooah, besides giving word by word exposition of the text of *Mahāvīracaritam*, points out the flaws of the playwright. He also criticises the rhetoricians like Mammaṭa and Viśvanātha. He frequently refers to the aphorisms of grammar and poetics with his objections and conclusions regarding these and gives critical analysis of the text. For example, in many places he differs from the senior commentators and annotators such as Jagaddhara, Malanka, Wilson and others and suggested his own views. May be because of these factors Barooah likes to call his commentary a *bhāṣya* although he has not given any reason for it. It may be mentioned that Barooah was quite acquainted with the style of commentators of Indian classics like Mallinātha and others. While Mallinātha, who has written as many as commentaries on different texts is found to refer to the allusions as mere historical facts, Barooah quotes the original context as authority to justify his comments.

Barooah accepts better reading of the text pointing out the flaws of the readings adopted by Taranathatarkavācaspati and Trithen. For example, in the dialogue by Lakṣmaṇa in the 4th Act, Taranatha adopts the reading *daṇḍakam*, which the *bhāṣyakāra* considers erroneous because in the same dialogue by Lakṣmaṇa itself it is said that '*tasyām cīradharacaturdaśasamā*' where the word *tasyām* (which is the adjective of '*daṇḍaka*') is in feminine gender. Thus it is obviously a faulty reading in the opinion of Barooah.⁷

Thus, as per the two types of classification of *ṭīkā* discussed above, Jānakīrāmbhāṣya may be categorised under the *Daṇḍānvaya* and *Rasagrahaṇātmikā* variety of commentaries. However, this commentary written in traditional style with new approach. Barooah used both the printed editions of the *Mahāvīracaritam* in reconstructing the text as critical apparatus. Apart from that he also consulted a manuscript borrowed from Sanskrit College. He shows variant readings in Prakrit in the drama with justifications. He critically analyses Bhavabhūti's other two plays (viz. *Mālatīmādhavam* and *Uttarāmacaritam*) and give his opinion on the dramatist's style. Cf. "It is easy to form, from these plays some idea about the peculiarities of Bhavabhūti's style. They consist chiefly in the use of long compounds, high-sounding derivatives, and obscure terms. The first two were necessary to secure force, but the third is unquestionably a blemish. But this can be said in favour of Bhavabhūti that the use of obscure terms was occasionally forced on him for the sake of the big metres which he wrote."⁷ Such statements, as Professor Malinee Goswami observes, 'certainly prove Barooah's deep insight, clear observation and unequivocal decision expected from a very serious literary critic'^[8].

Title of the commentary

There is tradition of giving a title to the commentaries of the Sanskrit texts. As for example Sañjīvanī by Mallinātha,

Dīpikā by Annambhaṭṭa, Saralā by JīvānandaVidyāsāgara so on and so forth. Barooah has kept the title of his commentary on *Mahāvīracaritam* after his deceased elder brother Jānakīrām. Moreover, in the introductory verse of his commentary, Barooah gives the reason why he has named it as Jānakīrāmbhāṣya^[9]. He says, that he has composed the commentary on the *nāṭaka* entitled *Vīracaritra* Bhavabhūti, the story of which is connected with Jānakī (i.e. Sītā) and Rāma to explain the purport of the sentences difficult to comprehend. Thus assigning the title Jānakīrāmbhāṣya to the commentary on a play which is based on story of Rāma and Jānakī is quite befitting from this point also.

Salient features of the commentary

A manuscript gets corrupted in the process of transmission and to write a scholium on a work, the text first needs to be corrected. Therefore ancient commentators consulted various versions and recensions of the text as well as earlier commentaries and reconstructed the texts for themselves. Mallinātha and Rāghavabhaṭṭa also had maintained this tradition. Anundaram Barooah too, before writing his *bhāṣya*, at first concentrated in reconstructing the text of *Mahāvīracaritam* keeping conformity with the tradition.

Jānakīrāmbhāṣya is much closer to *Sañjīvanī Tīkā* by Mallinātha. On many occasions Barooah seeks support from Mallinātha to establish his own justification (cf. JB, Act II, 46). But he does not follow his predecessor blindly and points out the grammatical flaws in Bhavabhūti's composition citing from Pānini and Patañjali. For example, Mallinātha while pointing out the grammatical flaw in the word '*Kāmayamāna*' in the fifth verse of 19th Canto of *Raghuvamśam*, does not blame Kālidāsa on the plea that such unpaninian use is not unnatural in a writing composed three or four centuries after Pānini. But Barooah has not spared Bhavabhūti, although the latter was his most favourite poet for such unpaninian use and has criticised him with strong words. He says in the Preface of his *bhāṣya* '.....I have observed that the use of genitive for the dative as an indirect object is ungrammatical and faulty. What I mean is that it is against the rules of Panini and must be condemned as giving rise to great ambiguity'^[10].

The technical terms of dramaturgy like *Nāndī*, *Prastāvanā*, *Apavārita*, *Viṣkambhaka* etc. are usually explained by the commentators of Sanskrit play. Thus Jagaddhara in his commentary on *Mālatīmādhavam* has quoted Nāṭyaśāstra whenever an occasion arises. Rāghavabhaṭṭa's commentary on *Abhijñānaśakuntalam* and *Svapnavāsavadattā* and that of Vīrarāghava on *Uttarāmacaritam* also quote abundantly from *Daśarūpaka* and *Sāhityadarpaṇa*. This tradition is followed by later commentators of modern time such as Acharya Śeṣarāja Sarma Regmi (on *Prasannarāghavam*), Acharya Sri Ramcandra Misra (on *Mahāvīracaritam*). Unlike these, Barooah does not feel it necessary to quote the aphorisms of poetics. Instead he critically examined the rules of Dramaturgy. As for example, he points out flaws in the definition of *Nāndī* given by Viśvanātha^[11].

Barooah has made a comparative criticism of the *Mahāvīracaritam* and other Sanskrit works based on the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. In his Preface to the *bhāṣya*, Barooah expresses his indebtedness to the Epic, particularly the Italian edition of Gaspar Garrison which he considers much closer to the original text of Vālmīki. He draws parallels of ideas, allusions, themes and expressions from Vālmīki. He also quotes parallels from *Adhyātmarāmāyaṇam* and *Bālarāmāyaṇam* to examine the parallels. He also refers to the

similarity of expressions in the works such as *Raghuvamśam*, *Meghadūtam*, *Uttarāmacaritam*, *Prasannarāghavam*, *Anargharāghavam* etc. where the story of Rama is depicted., He has adopted the same attitude also in cases of other allied episodes,. For example, while dealing with the Rāma-Paraśurāma episode in the 2nd and 3rd Acts, Barooah has referred to the Rāma-Paraśurāma story from as many as seven sources like epics and Purāṇas. He summarises them serially and finally draws conclusion that ‘we do not know where Śrīkaṇṭha has taken the story from ^[12].’ This modern research technique of collection of datas, analysis and examination on the basis of the same and arriving at a conclusion thereafter adopted by Barooah in his *bhāṣya*, was not found in the ancient commentaries composed in traditional style.

One of important features of the commentary is the Sanskrit rendering of the Prakrit dialogues alongwith notes on them. This exhibits Barooah’s good command over the language. However, unlike some other commentator of drama like Jagaddhara and Prithvīrāja (who wrote commentary on *Mṛcchakaṭikam*), Barooah has not mentioned the type of Prakrit used in the *Mahāvīracaritam*.

Influence of Jagaddhara and Malanka and also of western scholars like Coolbrook and Wilson can be seen in regard to special importance given by Barooah in explaining the names and places mentioned in the *Mahāvīracaritam* alongwith their modern existence. He has collected observations of these scholars before giving his view. This is an innovation introduced by Barooah since such effort is not seen in the ancient commentaries. Of course Mallinātha also gives note on name of places in his commentaries on *Raghuvamśam* and *Meghadūtam*.

I was able to find only two other commentaries on the *Mahāvīracaritam*. One is by Vīrarāghava and the other is by Acarya Ramacandra Misra. Both the commentators quote abundantly from rhetorics. Vīrarāghava quotes Amarakoṣa while explaining meaning of words. He also quotes *Ratnamālā*, *Kāmandakī*, and *Gītā* on few occasions. He also gives grammatical derivations of words. Rules of Prakrit grammar is explained but there is no Sanskrit rendering of the Prakrit language in his commentary.

Acarya Ramacandra Misra also writes his commentary in traditional style. Like his predecessors he also quotes from books on Poetics in the context of dramatics techniques applied in the drama. He also mentions the name of the metre and *alamkāras* employed in the verses in the drama. Barooah has not mentioned any one of them.

Thus we observe that these commentaries have been composed purely in traditional style without the views of the commentators. On the contrary, Jānakīrāmbhāṣya is much simpler in comparison with the two other commentaries on the drama. Moreover, he has added a Sanskrit-English Glossary of the most difficult terms which, according to him, ‘is the chief difficulty in the way of understanding the play’. He has also made critical and comparative assessment of the Ramaic plays referring to the parallels. Thus he has introduced both traditional and modern method of text criticism in his commentary.

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