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## Unsung royal poets of Sanskrit from *Saduktikarṇāmrta*

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#### Abstract

Generally kings are known, who those rule. There were rigorous trainings of princes who would become king in future. These descriptions are found in *Manusmṛti* and *Arthaśāstra*. Generally a *kṣatriya* entitled to become a king who has received the knowledge and performed the all rituals of Vedas. It is said that a king will have many good qualities. Sometimes there are instances that some kings' name who ruled their kingdom and they are associated with several cultural works like singing, dancing, writing books etc. for example, Samudragupta was a musician, he can play musical instrument. There was famous Bhoja, who wrote *Śringārprakāśa* and *Sarsvatikanṭhābharaṇam*. This paper would focus on royal poets as mentioned in *Saduktikarṇāmrta* by Śridhara Dāsa in 1205 A.D.

**Key words:** Śridhara dāsa, saduktikarṇāmrta, *koṣakāvya*, vākpatirāja, dharmāśoka, lakṣaṇa sena, yaśovarma

#### Introduction

There are different categories of vast Sanskrit Literature. There are Vedic Literatures, classical literatures. Among classical literatures there are *mahākāvyas*, *khaṇḍakāvyas*, prose, dramas etc. Classical Sanskrit literature generally divided *drṣyakāvya* and *śravyakāvya* [1]. *Śravyakāvya* is divided into many classes and *koṣakāvya* is one of them. Viśnūtha says about *koṣakāvya*, as

कोषः श्लोकसमूहस्तु स्यादन्योन्यानपेक्षकः।  
ब्रज्याक्रमेण रचितः स एवातिमनोरमः॥<sup>2</sup>

It means that collection of detached verses under different sections called as *koṣakāvya*. Basically it is a collection of poems by different authors.

The *Saduktikarṇāmrta* is a *koṣakāvya* which is compiled by Śridhara Dāsa in 1205 A.D. It is divided into five chapters and around 2400 verses are available here. Each chapter is divided into sub-chapters and each sub-chapter consists of five verses. As it is known he was recruited as *māhāmāndalika* under King Lakṣaṇa Sena of Sena dynasty. Compiler collected 2400 verses from around 500 poets. There are famous poets like Jayadeva Umāpatidhara Rājaśekhara Kālidasa Baṇabhaṭṭa etc as well as unknown or minor poets. Among them there are poems of kings also. The following section of this paper would discuss on them.

**Vākpatirāja:** In the history there are two Vākpatirājas. The one is Vākpatirāja I who also known as Vāppāraja in 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. He was the son and successor of king Govindarāja II. Another one is Vākpatirāja II who belonged to Shakambhari chahamana dynasty. He ruled sapadalksaha country which included parts of present day Rajasthan [3]. He may flourish in 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. As per Prthvīraja Vijaya Kāvya he might defeated to the king Bhoja, the Paramāra king of Mālwa [3].

In *Saduktikarṇāmrta*, there are some verses which are attributed to Vākpatirāja and Vākpati. Now the question is whether they are same or not?

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<sup>1</sup> *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 6/1. “दृश्यश्रव्यत्वभेदेन पुनः काव्यं द्विविधम्”.

<sup>2</sup> *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 6/308.

<sup>3</sup> Early chauhan dynasty, by Dasharath Sharma, p-34.

Five verses attributed to as Vākpatirāja and another five verses attributed to as Vākpati. Vākpatirāja was the author of a Sanskrit work named ‘*Gaudavaho*’ and in this book found some information about king Yaśovarma. He was the court poet of king Yaśovarma <sup>[4]</sup>.

Vākpati is known as Muñja who was the king and ruled in Malwa reign. As it is known Dhanañjaya and Padmagupta flourished in his court <sup>[5]</sup>. He was the fond of Sanskrit poetry. It can be said that in *Saduktikarnāmrta*, the author of the five verses which are attributed to Vākpati, could be king Muñja. In one verse he praised to Viṣṇu’s vāmana incarnation and he may be a vaiṣṇava. This verse is following:

कुतस्त्वमणुकः खतः स्वमिति किं न यत्कस्यचि  
त्किमिच्छसि पदत्रयं ननु भवा किमित्यल्प्या।  
द्विजस्य शमिनो मम त्रिभुवनं तदित्याशयो  
हरर्जयति निरुतः प्रकटितश्च वक्रोक्तिभिः॥<sup>6</sup>

He may devotee of Viṣṇu, praised to Viṣṇu and his different incarnations over 5 verses. He highlighted the importance of trees in nature in a verse.

**Dharmāśoka:** Dharmāśoka was the third ascent from Janiṣka of first gunanda dynasty of Kaśmīra. Kalhaṇa said this king freed himself from sins by embracing Buddha’s religion and built the city of Śrīnagara with ninety six lakhs of houses.

स षण्णवत्या महाप्सा लक्षैलक्षीसमुज्जवलैः।  
गरीयसीं पुरीं श्रीमांश्क्रे श्रीनगरीं नृपैः॥<sup>7</sup>

Dharmaśoka appears to have been a poet and his verse is enchanting. For instance:

अनुद्धृष्टः शब्दैरथं च धर्टनात्प्रस्फुरसः।  
पदानामर्थात्मा रमयति नतूतानितरसः।  
यथा किञ्चिद्दृश्यः पवनचलचानांशुकतया  
स्तनाभोगः स्त्रीणां हरति न तथोन्मुद्रितवप्यः॥<sup>8</sup>

**Lakṣaṇasena:** Lakṣaṇasena was the last king of Sena dynasty. He came to the throne in 1179 century A.D.<sup>9</sup> He was the successor of king Bāllasena. He had great passion for Sanskrit poetry. In his court famous poets were flourished, such as Jayadeva Govardhana Umāpatidhara, Śarāṇa. He himself wrote Sanskrit poems. In *Saduktikarnāmrta* some verses are attributed to king Lakṣaṇasena. His description of Kriṣṇa is alluring.

कृष्णत्वद्वचनमाला सह कृतं केनापि कुञ्जान्तरे  
गोपीकुन्तलवर्हदाम तदिदं प्रासं मया गृह्णताम्।  
इत्थं दुग्धमुखेन गोपिशशुनारघ्याते त्रपानप्रयो  
राधामाधवयोर्जयन्ति वलितस्मेरालसा दृष्ट्यः॥<sup>10</sup>

Another one verse of king Lakṣaṇasena:

तर्यक्कन्धमंसदेशम्लितप्रोत्रावतंसं स्फुरद-  
वर्होत्सितकेशापाशमनृजुभुवल्लरीविभ्रमम्।

<sup>4</sup> Rajatarangini, 1/104.

<sup>5</sup> Encyclopaedia of Indian literature vol 2, ed. Amaresh data. P.995.

<sup>6</sup> *Saduktikarnāmrta*, 213.

<sup>7</sup> Rajatarangini, 1/104.

<sup>8</sup> *Saduktikarnamrtam*, 2160.

<sup>9</sup> Historians opined that king laksanasena became king around 1178 or 1179 A.D. chittaranjan sen and sailendra sena fully agreed with saduktikarnamrtam said time of laksanasena.

<sup>10</sup> *Saduktikarnamrtam*, 272.

गुञ्जोद्वेषुनिवेशिताघप्युटं साकुतराधानन-  
न्यस्तामीलितदृष्टिगोपवपुषो विष्णोर्मुखं पातु वः॥<sup>11</sup>

Above mentioned both verses are written by king Lakṣaṇasena based on Kriṣṇa. He may be a follower of vaiṣṇavism. As it seems he was interested in literature and he completed some due portion of the *Adbhūt-sāgara* which was not completed by his father, Vallālasena <sup>[12]</sup>.

**Yaśovarma:** Yaśovarma was indubitably a powerful ruler of Kannauj during 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D and was the patron of poet Vākpati and Bhavabhūti. Kalhana says:

कविर्वाकपतिराजश्रीभवभीत्यादिसेवितः।  
जितो ययौ यशवर्मा तद्वृणस्तुतिवदिताम्॥<sup>13</sup>

The well-known verse states explicitly that Yaśovarman was himself a poet. He wrote a play called Rāmābhuyada.<sup>14</sup> Few verses of this poet are available in *Subhāṣitaratnakosa* verse no. 242, 742 and 770. It as illustration in rhetorical works, which is an example of the author’s highly poetical talent and good power of description. Rhetorical works, such as (put the name) cited several excellent verses from the Rāmābhuyada. King Yaśovarma wrote a verse where he compared himself with aśoka.

रक्तस्त्वं नवपल्लवैरहमपि श्लाघ्यैः प्रियाया गुणै-  
स्त्वामायान्ति शिलीमुखास्स्मरधनुर्मुक्तास्सखे मामपि।  
कान्तापादतलाहतिस्तव मुदे तद्वृणम्भाप्यावयोः।  
सर्व तुल्यमशोक केवलमहं धात्रा सशोकः कृतः॥<sup>15</sup>

Compiler Śrīdhara Dāsa gave place those aforementioned royal poets in his anthology. Compiler thinks those royal poets have the alluring power of description and high poetical talent. Those aforementioned royal poets ruled their states as well as they engaged themselves in the world of poets.

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<sup>13</sup> Rajatarangini, IV, 144

<sup>14</sup> Bhavabhūti: his date, life and works. By V.V.Mirashi, p.366.

<sup>15</sup> *Subhāṣitaratnakosa*, 770.