Unsung royal poets of Sanskrit from *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*

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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 *Śṛṅgaraprakāśa* and *Sarsvatikanṭhābhavanam*. This paper would focus on royal poets as mentioned in *Saduktikarnāmṛta* by Śrīdhara Dāsa in 1205 A.D.

Key words: Śrīdhara dāsa, saduktikarnāmṛtam, 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*. *Śravyakāvya* is divided into many classes and *koṣakāvya* is one of them. Viśvānātha says about *koṣakāvya*, as

कोषः श्लोकसमूहस्तु स्यादन्योन्यानपेक्षकः।
व्रज्याक्रमेण रचितः स एवाचतमनोरमः।।

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

The *Saduktikarnāmṛta* is a *koṣakāvya* which is compiled by Śrīdhara 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 Vāppārāja in 10th century A.D. He was the son and successor of king Govindarāja II. Another one is Vākpatirāja II who belonged to Shakambhari chāhāmana dynasty. He ruled sapadalaksaha country which included parts of present day Rajasthan [3]. He may flourish in 11th century A.D. As per Pṛthvirāja Vijaya Kāvya he might defeated to the king Bhoja, the Paramāra king of Mālwa [3].

In *Saduktikarnāmṛta*, 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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1. Sāhityadarpaṇa, 6/1. “पुरुषालंकारकं पुरुषं कथां द्वितीयम्”
2. Sāhityadarpaṇa, 6/308.
3. 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 ‘Gaudavahō’ and in this book found some information about king Yasovarma. He was the court poet of king Yasovarma⁴. Vākpati is known as Muñja who was the king and ruled in Malwa reign. As it is known Dhananjaya and Padmagupta flourished in his court.⁵ He was the fond of Sanskrit poetry. It can be said that in Saduktikarnāṃṛta, 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:

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Another one verse of king Lakṣaṇasena:

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Kriṣṇa is alluring.
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Verses are attributed to king Lakṣaṇasena himself wrote Sanskrit poems. In his court famous poets were flourished, Dakśināmūrti, Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa, and Dharmāśoka.⑥

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

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स षणणवच महासा लखवलीसमपुन्तपति
गरीवशी पुरी समिमक्रे स्रीनगरिरूप:।। ॥
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Dharmāśoka appears to have been a poet and his verse is enchanting. For instance:

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अनुजु: शब्देऽच च दयानास्पु:स
पवनिलिानािंशुकतया
यथा किंविल्पुः पवनिलिानािंशुकतया
स्तामयोः।। स्वं हरेजजयचत्
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Lakṣaṇasena: Lakṣaṇasena was the last king of Sena dynasty. He came to the throne in 1179 century A.D.⁷ 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, Śrīnagara. He himself wrote Sanskrit poems. In Saduktikarnāṃṛta some verses are attributed to king Lakṣaṇasena. His description of Kriṣṇa is alluring.

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कुश्यानवकम्यानाला सह कुरु जनाधि कुञ्जानरो
गोपीकुक्तलवधवान सदैव नरः महामाया।। यहैशे नाखण गोविन्दालमालाम गभनप्रमम
साकुतराधाननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननननन
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Another one verse of king Lakṣaṇasena:

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पदानामथाज्मा अनुद्धुष्टः
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As it is known Dhananjaya and Padmagupta poets have the alluring power of description and high poetical talent. Those aforementioned royal poets ruled their states as poets. Compiler thinks those royal poets in his anthology. Compiler Śrīdhara Dāsa gave place those aforementioned royal poets not completed by his father, Vallālasena.⁸ 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 verse in the Adbhūt-sāgara which was not completed by his father, Vallālasena.¹¹

Yasovarma: Yasovarma was indubitably a powerful ruler of Kanna during 7th century A.D and was the patron of poet Vākpati and Bhavabhūti. Kalhana says:

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कविवर्णमयान्त्रास्त्राशभियमातिशित।
जितो वरी यस्ताम तुष्युदिविनितदाम्य।। ॥
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The well-known verse states explicitly that Yasovarman was himself a poet. He wrote a play called Rāmābhuyadya. Few verses of this poet are available in Subhāṣitaratnakosā 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 Rāmābhuyadya. King Yasovarma wrote a verse where he compared himself with asoka:

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सवं चकचचिद्दृश्यः
कृचववाजकपचतराजश्रीभवभी्याचदसेचवतः।
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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.

References

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⁴ Rajatarangini, 1/104.
⁵ Encyclopaedia of Indian literature vol 2, ed. Amaresh data. P.995.
⁶ Saduktikarnāṃṛtam, 213.
⁷ Rajatarangini, 1/104.
⁸ Saduktikarnāṃṛtam, 2160.
⁹ Historians operated that king laksanasena became king around 1178 or 1179 A.D. chittaranjana sen and sailendra sena fully agreed with saduktikarnāṃṛtam said time of laksanasena.
10 Saduktikarnāṃṛtam, 272.
11 Saduktikarnāṃṛtam, 282.
13 Rajatarangini, IV, 144
14 Bhavabhūti: his date, life and works. By V.V.Mirashi, p.366.
15 Subhāṣitaratnakosā, 770.