CONTRIBUTION OF KERALA TO SANSKRIT LITERATURE

B.A. SANSKRIT

SEMESTER II
COMPLEMENTARY COURSE

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SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
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UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
STUDY MATERIAL  
BA SANSKRIT  
II SEMESTER  
COMPLEMENTARY COURSE  
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Kulasekhara Alvar and the Mukundamāla

Kulasekhara Alvar is one of the greatest religious mystics of South India. According to tradition Kulasekhara was born as an incarnation of Kaustubha. Tiruvačikulam is the place of birth of Alvar. His father was Dridhavrata, the king of Kerala. He was an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. Tradition says that after the coronation of his son, Kulasekhara retired to Srirangam to lead a life of an ardent prayer. He passed away at Mannarcoil in Tinnevelly District. According to tradition, the date of birth of Kulasekhara Alvar is 3075 B.C. According to Swamikunnu Pillai, the date of birth of Alvar is 767 and K.G. Shesa Iyer calculated it as 527 A.D. Sir R.G. Bhandarkar assigned the Alvar to the 12th century A.D. Kulasekhara Alvar is the author of Perumal tirumozhi in Tamil and Mukundamāla in Sanskrit.

Mukundamāla

Mukundamāla is a short devotional lyric in Sanskrit of Kulasekhara. The commentator Rāghavānanda gives the additional information that Kulasekhara was a king of Kerala. The language of this poem is quite simple and natural. Owing to the great popularity of the poem there are various recensions of the text. The Kerala recension contains 31 verses. Two commentaries on the Mukundamāla are known as the Tātparyadeepikā by Rāghavānanda is a scholarly commentary giving Advaitic interpretation to the verses. He explains the text as an exposition of the two mystic mantras. Mukundaśṭākṣara-ṣaramantra and Aṣṭākṣara-ṣaramantra. He blends the Advaitic system of metaphysics with Bhakti cult. The other commentary of Mukundamāla by one Tiruvenkatatunui.

Rāghavānanda

Rāghavānanda is a versatile scholar. In Kṛṣṇapadi Rāghavānanda gives some details about his preceptor Krishnaṇanda. Krishnaṇanda was a sanyasin and was a native of Nāgapura on the banks of the Ganges. Rāghavānanda’s house was situated on the banks of Bhāratappuzha. He took asceticism and became a great yogin and an ardent devotee of Viṣṇu. This Rāghavānanda is usually identified with Kokkunathanthi Swamiyar and lived in 1310 A.D. He is the author of Tātparyadeepika commentary on Mukundamāla, Kṛṣṇapadi commentary on Bhāgavatapurana, a commentary on Viṣṇubhujangerayastotra, Śeṣāyadeepika on Paramārthaśāra of Śeṣa. Besides, two original works, Sarvasiddhāntasangraham and Vidyarcanāmaçari are also attributed to him.

The Royal dramatist Kulasekhara

The Royal dramatist Kulasekhara was the Emperor of Kerala, that he had his capital at Mohodayapuram, or the modern Tiruvačikulam. He has to his credit three Sanskrit dramas, viz. Tapatisamvarana, Subhadrādaṇanajaya and Vicchinnābhīṣeka. He has already composed a prose work viz. Āścaryamañjari, but this work is non extemt. T. Ganapati Sastri identifies Vicchinnābhīṣeka with the first Act of the Pratimāṇaṭaka and ascribes to Bhāsa. The author of Vyāgyavyākhya mentions only two dramas. Some scholars tried to identify the dramatist Kulasekhara with Kulasekhara Alvar.

Tapatisamvarana

The Tapatisamvarana is a good drama which deals with the love story of Tapati and Samvarana, the king of Hastinapura. It has six Acts. The plot is taken from the Ādiparvan of Mahābhārata. The first three Acts describes the development of the love of Tapati and Samvarana. In the last Act Mohanika tries to make the hero, the heroine and her two friends commit suicide, but she is overpowered by Kuru, the son of Tapati and Samvarana. In some contexts, the story closely resembles Abhijñānaśākuntala. The story happily ends with the reunion of Tapati, Samvarana and their son, Kuru. Śivarāma wrote a commentary on Tapatisamvarana. A Brahmin scholar wrote the commentaries on the basis of explanation given by the author himself. These commentaries are called Tapatisamvaranyagvyākhyā and Subhadrādaṇanajaya vyanagvyākhyā.

Subhadrādaṇanajaya

Subhadrādaṇanajaya is written by Kulasekhara. It describes the story of Arjuna’s abduction of Subhadra from Dvāraka. Kulasekhara’s dramas are very popular in Kerala. They are staged even to this day by traditional actors in Kerala stage, Kūṭiyāṭṭam. Śivarāma wrote a commentary on Subhadrādaṇanajaya also.
Vyaṇgyavyākhyas

The author of Tapatśisvamvaranavyaṇgyavyākhyā and Subhadrādhanaṇjaya-vyaṇgyavyākhyā was a Brahmin contemporary of Kulaśekhararavaman. He belonged to Paramesvaramaṇgalam on the banks of the Periyar. He was a great art critic that attracted the attention of the king. The king invited him to the palace for writing commentaries and for supervising the staging of the plays. It was he who popularised these two dramas in Kerala by introducing humorous verses in Malayalam Sanskrit mixture, in parody of the Sanskrit verses. We can identify this commentator with Tolan, the famous court jester of the king. Tolan is supposed to have written a Mahākāvyā called Mahodayapurāṇacaritam in a simple style, keeping the normal syntax of the language.

Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi of Śaktibhadra

Śaktibhadra, author of the Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi, was a South Indian dramatist. He had written other works like the Unmādavāsavadatta. There is a popular tradition which makes Śaktibhadra a contemporary of Śaṅkarācārya. It is said that Śaktibhadra was a native of Cennāṇur in Travancore. Since Kulaśekhara’s date is fixed about 900 A.D. Śaktibhadra must be assigned to about the ninth century A.D. In seven Acts the drama depicts the story of Rāmāyana. All the seven Acts are being staged by the traditional actors, Cakyars. Prof. Kuppusvami Sastrī refers to the Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi as the best of the Rama-plays perhaps barring Bhavabṛti’s Uttarāmāscarita in certain respects. There is a commentary on the play by a certain Brahmin of Bhāradvājagrāma, who is follower of the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsa. His date is not known.

The Yamaka poet Vāsudeva Bhaṭṭa

The Yamaka poet Vāsudeva Bhaṭṭa is the author of Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya, was a Bhaṭṭathiri of the paṭṭathru family of Namboodiri in the village of Peruvanam, very near to Trichur. His patron was Ravivarman Kulaśekhara who is the author of Pradyumnadabhyudaya. He lived in the first half of the 14th century A.D. Some scholars place him in the middle of 9th century A.D. There has been much confusion among scholars in identifying the author Vāsudeva correctly.

Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya

Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya is written by Vāsudevabhatta. It describes the story of Mahābhārata in eight cantos, containing about one thousand verses, mostly in the Arya metre. Even though it is a yamaka poem its literary merit is of very high order. The main sentiment of this kavya is vira and kindled by other emotions also. Yudhiṣṭhiravijaya has been very popular throughout India. It has several commentaries written by various scholars. Padārthacīḍanta by Rāgavara, Bālavyutpattikārinī by Cokkanāṭha, Śīsyaḥita by Rājānaka Ratnakānta of Kaṃśīr, Prakāśīka by Dharmarāja, Vijayadāśīka by Acyuta, Ratnapradeepika by Śīvadasa, Kaviśāṃbharaṇa by Śīkṣanātha, Padārthadeepika by a disciple of Śīkṣanātha are some of them. There are many Malayalam commentaries on the work are also known.

Tripuradahana

Tripuradahana is a yamaka poem written by Vāsudevabhāṭṭa. It describes the story of the destruction of tripura demons. It has three cantos containing about 200 verses in all. It has three well known commentaries in Sanskrit. They are Padārthapradīpīṇī by a son of Nityaprīya, Hṛdayagṛhini commentary by Paṅkajākṣa and Arthaprakāśīka by Nīlakantha.

Śaurikathodaya

Śaurikathodaya is a yamaka poem written by Vāsudevabhaṭṭa. It dipicts the story of Lord Kṛṣṇa as per Bhāgavata in six cantos. There are two commentaries on the poem. They are Tatvapradīpīka by Nīlakantha of Mukkola and Anvayabodhika of Nītyāṁrāyati.

Nalodaya

According to DR.K.K.Raja Nalodaya, a yamaka poem, may be authored by Vāsudevabhaṭṭa. Some scholars wrongly attribute its autorship on Kāidasā. It deals with the well-known episode of the Mahābhārata describing the story of Nala and Damayanti. There are several commentaries on Nalodaya.
MODULE II
ZAMORINS OF KOZHIKODE

The court of Zamorins was one of the most important centres of Sanskrit learning. The number of scholars patronized by Zamorins is also very great. Among these Zamorins of Kozhikode Mānāvikrama Šaktan Tamurān is the most outstanding. According to tradition, there were nineteen poets famous as patineṭṭarakkavikal in the court of Mānāvikrama. Of these, Punam is called the Half poet, because he was on the Malayalam poet, and not recognized as Sanskrit scholar. Among the others nine members were from Payyūr Bhaṭṭa family, five Nambootiris from Tiruvegappura, and the rest were Uddanāṭa Śāstri, Cennās Nārāyanan Nambūtiri, and Damodarabrhaṭṭa of Kākkaśśery family.

Uddanāṭa Śāstri and Kākkaśśery Damodarabrhaṭṭa

Uddanāṭa Śāstri was a native of Lōtapura in Tonaṃamaṅgalā, the present Chingleput District. He was the son of Raṅganātha and Raṅgādevi, the grandfather of Krishna and his great grandfather was Gokulanātha. Uddanāṭa was not real name; it was a title assumed by him later on; or perhaps it was a title conferred on him by some king. His real name was Irugappanātha. He came to Kozhikode seeking patronage took part in the annual Sastraic discussions in Tali temple. There are so many traditional stories in connection with Uddanāṭa and Kākkaśśery Damodarabrhaṭṭa. Uddanāṭa Śāstri, the author of Mallikamūrta and Kokilasandekya and and Kākkaśśery Damodarabrhaṭṭa, author of Vasumatīmānāvikrama have praised Mānāvikrama in their works. Both Uddanāṭa and Kākkaśśery refer to Payyūr Bhaṭṭas in their works with great respect.

Mallikamūrta is a drama in ten acts and belongs to the prakarana type. Keith calls it a slavish immitation of Bhavabhūti’s Malātimādhava. It describes the love story of Mallika, daughter of Viśvāvasu who is the minister of the Vidyādhara king, and Mādhava, the son of Brahmadatta who is the minister of the king of Kuntala. The books was published by Jivananda Vidyasagara from Calcutta in 1878 A.D. with a commentary by Ranganātha. Both the publisher and commentator wrongly attributed the work to Dandin. The text itself says that its author is Uddandya, the court poet of Mānāvikrama.

Kokilasandekya is an excellent lyrical poem written in a lucid style. It is one of the most popular sandeṣakāvyas in Kerala. In gracefulness of diction and the sweetness of melody it excels even the Sukasandeṣa of Lakshmīdāsa. K.Rāmapiṣṭāti says that the Kokilasandekya was written by Uddanāṭa after he had returned to his native place. The absence of any reference to the learned academy under Mānāvikrama suggests that this poem was written before he became acquainted with Zamorin. It is generally believed that Uddanāṭa married lady from Mārakkara house in Chennamangalam and the heroine of the Kokilasandekya was his own wife.

Another work, Svātīpṛasamsā is generally attributed to Uddanāṭa. These erotic verses, pretending to show the poet’s great intimacy with the heroine. Ullur S.Paramesvara Iyer attributes the Naṭṭakuṣṭa also to Uddanāṭa. Naṭṭakuṣṭ is a treatise criticizing the method of acting Sanskrit dramas adopted by the cākyars of Kerala. There is no evidence to show that it is by Uddanāṭa.

Damodarabrhaṭṭa of Kākkaśśery

Damodarabrhaṭṭa of Kākkaśśery fmaily is said to have been Uddanda’s chief rival at Revatipatattam. He has written a drama, viz.Vasumatīmānāvikrama, in seven Acts belonging to Nāṭaka type. This drama describes the story of Mānāvikrama’s marriage with Vasumati, daughter of his minister Maṅihat Accan. The influence of Kālidasa, Harṣa and Rājaekhara is found in Vasumatīmānāvikrama also. Though Kākkaśśery is popular through his stray verses and the traditional stories, he certainly deserves to be well known as a great dramatist and as a talented poet. M. Krishnamachariar attributes Indumatrīrghaṭa to Kākkaśśery. But it is the work of a Brahmin disciple of Ravivarman who had his house on the banks of the river Ṛcī in Kerala. Therefore, Kākkaśśery cannot be its author.
School of Distance Education

The Payyür Bhaṭṭas

The Payyür Bhaṭṭa family has played an important role in the history of Sanskrit literature in Kerala. There have been many scholars and poets in that family. Their contribution to the Mīmāṃsā literature and Sanskrit poetry is immense both in volume and depth. The family of Payyür Bhaṭṭas is at present situated near Porkkalam (raṇakahala in Sanskrit), very near to Kunnamkulam.

Parameśvara I

The earliest member of Payyür family is Rṣi I. We have only literary references about him. He has a brother named Bhavadāsa who was a great scholar in Vedanta. Rṣi I married Gouri and got a son named Parameśvara I. This Parameśvara has written several works. The following works of Parameśvara I are known.
1. Sumanoramoṇi commentary on Meghadūta
2. Jusadvamkarani
3. Svaditamkaraṇi commentaries on Nyāyakanika of Vacaspatimiśra.
4. Haricarita and
5. Nyayasamuccaya a work on Mīmamsa

Of these Sumanoramoṇi, Svaditamkaraṇi and Haricarita are available. Jusadvamkarani is mentioned in the Svaditamkarani and must be the earlier of the two. The reference to Śāṅkara as Pūjyapāda suggests that he was a samnyāsin. Dr. Kunhan Raja suggests that Saṅkara may be the author of the Niruktavārtika. His Nyāyasamuccaya is mentioned as an authority by his grandson Parameśvara II in Tattvāvibhāvana. Sumanoramoṇi is an elaborate and comprehensive commentary on Meghadūta. In Sumanoramoṇi, Parameśvara criticizes the views of Pūrṇasarasvati given in the Vidyullata commentary. A comprehensive study of these two commentaries shows that Parameśvara I must have been a younger contemporary of Pūrṇasarasvati.

Haricarita is a poem of 248 stanzas dealing with the story of Kṛṣṇa. In this poem each stanza beginning with one of the astronomical vakyas of Vararuci in the same order.

Parameśvara I had five sons. Rṣi II, Bhavadāsa II, Vāsudeva I, Subrahmaṇya, and Saṅkara. Of these Rṣi II married Gopālīka and had son Paramesvara II.

Paramesvara II.

Parameśvara II was a great scholar in Mīmamsa and has several important works to his credit. Parameśvara II has written commentaries on some of the standard works on Purvamīmamsa.
1. Gopālīka commentary on Sphotasiddhi
2. Tattvāvibhāvana commentary on the Tattvabindu of Vācaspati
3. a commentary on Cidānda’s Niśītavāvibhāva
4. a commentary on Maṇḍalanamiśra’s Vibhramaviveka

All these great works are referred to by his grand son Parameśvara III in the Jaminīyasūtrakarṇasamgraha.

Vāsudeva II

Parameśvara II had a brother named Vāsudeva II who was not only a good scholar, but also a wellknown poet. He is the son of Gopālīka and Rṣi II. Vāsudeva has many scholarly yamaka poems to his credit. They are Devicarita, Acyutalīla, Satyatapakhatha and Sivodaya. The Devicarita is a Yamaka poem in six āsvasas describing the story of Goddess Gopālīka. The Acyutalīla is also a yamaka poem dealing with the story of Kṛṣṇa in four āsvasas. The Satyatapakhatha is also a yamaka poem in three āsvasas dealing with the history
of Payyūr family. It is very difficult understand the meaning of the poem. Sivodaya is a short poem in two āśvasas dealing with God Siva and His consort installed in the temple at Vedaraneya. Besides these there are two other poems vākyāvali and Kaumārilayuktimāla or Kaumārilayuktīlakam where poetry is mixed with scientific subjects. The former narrates with the story of Kṛṣṇa in four cantos in which each verse begins with a vakya of Vararuci. In the Kaumārilayuktimāla substance of Kumārila’s Tantravārtika is summarized in metrical form. Cakorasandesā also is attributed to Vāsudeva.

Parameśvara III

Parameśvara II had a son called Rṣi III. He married Ārya and had a son named Parameśvara III. This Parameśvara is the author of Jaiminiyāsūrārthasaṃgraha. In this work he says that he is the grandson of Parameśvara author of Gopālika and Tattvavibhavana. He also says that his father Rṣi III was also known by another name Trāvītiyeśa. There is a commentary on the Kāśika of Sucaritamiśra by one Parameśvara. The date of Rṣi III and his son Parameśvara III as well as of Mānavikrama and others has to be at least the middle of the fifteenth century A.D.

Mānaveda

Some members of Zamorin’s royal family were themselves great scholars who made original contribution to Sanskrit literature. Mānaveda author of the Kṛṣṇagītī and the Pūrvabhāratacampū, is the most important among Zamorins. Mānaveda was the nephew of Mānavikrama who was the Zamorin from 1637 till Nov.28.1648. Mānaveda was not only a scholar and poet; he was also a patron of letters. Melputtur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa was quite probably a friend of Manaveda. It was at Manaveda’s instance that Nārāyaṇapāṇḍīta of Brahmakhalah completed the Mānameyodaya left unfinished by Melputṭūr NārāyaṇaBhaṭṭa.

Pūrvabhāratacampū

Pūrvabhāratacampū and Kṛṣṇagītī are the two known works of Mānaveda. The former describes the early history of the soma dynasty and is intended as a supplement to the Bhāratacampū of Anantabhaṭṭa. It has eight stabakas. It was composed in 1643 A.D. It is full of rare and difficult grammatical usages. There is a commentary of Pūrvabhāratacampū by one Kṛṣṇa who is generally identified with Mānaveda’s teacher. Kṛṣṇagītī

The Kṛṣṇagītī describes the story of Kṛṣṇa’s life in eight cantos composed on the model of Jayadeva’s Gītāgīvinda. It contains verses as well as musical portions and is intended to be enacted. The performance is called Kṛṣṇattam. It became very popular throughout Kerala. Even now it is staged in Guruvayoor temple. Mānaveda wrote Kṛṣṇagītī in 1652 A.D. On Kṛṣṇagītī there are two commentaries: the Hīḍini of Anatanārāyaṇa and the Vipaṇacika of Citrabhānu. Anantanārāyaṇa was patronized by Zamorin named Mānavikrama. The Vipaṇacika commentary was written under the patronage of a Zamorin who is referred to as Rājarāja. Mānaveda refers with respect to his preceptor Kṛṣṇa piṣāraṭi in both these works. He seems to be identical with Kṛṣṇa, who was the teacher of Nārāyaṇapāṇḍīta.

Nārāyaṇa Pāṇḍīta

Nārāyaṇa Pāṇḍīta is patronized by Mānaveda. He belonged to the Brahmin village Brahmakalaha very near to Guruvayoor. He was the son of Nilakantha and Kāli, and had brother named Srikumāra. The date of birth of Nārāyaṇa is 1586 A.D. His padarśhadīpika commentary on the Raghuvamśa and the vivaraṇa commentary on the Kumārasambhava are also well known. His other works are Gaurigunaughavarnana, Meyam partition of Manameyodaya, Srimatosavacampu, Aslesasatakā and other poems, Bhagavataprabandha, Nrsimacampu, Vaidehinavasangacampu, and Sarvanicaritasuti. Of these works only the commentaries on Raghuvamsa and Kumārasambhava, the Meyam portion of Mānameyodaya, and the Asleṣāsatakā are now available. In his commentaries Nārāyaṇa follows Arunagirinatha closely. Nārāyaṇa’s commentaries are of great help to students, since he explains elaborately all the suggested meanings and difficult problems in a lucid manner.

Meyam partition of Mānameyodaya

The Meyam portion of the Mānameyodaya deals with the prameyas or the objects of valid knowledge according to the Bhaṭṭa school of Mimāṃsakas. It is a complement to the whole work Mānameyodaya projected by Melputtur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, who, however, left the Meyam portion unwritten.
Aslešaśataka

The Aslešaśataka is a century of verses about Princess Ganga, called Asleša. It is possible that she was Nārāyaṇa’s wife. Ullur says that the poem was composed after the death of the heroine, and the main sentiment of the poem is Karuna.

Śrikantha

Śrikantha flourished under the patronage of a Zamorin of Calicut. He was a member of the Vāriyar community and he lived in a house adjoing to the palace of the Zamorin. His works are Raghūdaya and Soricarita. Raghūdaya is a yamaka poem describing the story of Rama in eight cantos. It has a commentary by Rudradasa. It is quite probable that Rudradasa is identical, with the commentator on the Soricarita. Soricarita is a yamaka poem in prakrit by Śrikantha generality identified with the author of the Raghūdaya. Four Śrikanthas are mentioned in Sanskrit literature. One of them is is the author of Raghūdaya and Soricarita.

Divākara

Divākara wrote the drama named Lakṣmimānavedā. He was the son of Udbahusundara and belonged to the Cola country. He was patronized by a Mānaveda of Calicut. In five acts the drama describes the story of the marriage of Rājalaṃkṣī with Mānaveda. While describing the greatness of his patron the poet does not mention the literary qualities of the King. This suggests that Divākara’s patron is different from the author of the Kṛṣṇagīti.

Śṛṅgaṛavilāsā of Sāmhasīva

Śṛṅgaṛavilāsā of Sāmhasīva is a one act play belonging to the Bhāṇa type. The author was a Tamil brahmin patronized by a Zamorin named Mānavigrama. He was the son of Kanakasaḥāṇi of Śṛṅgīvāsi gotra and belonged to the village of Gopalasamudra. Mānavigrama referred to in the work seems to be much later than the patron of Uddançā Sāstri. The exact date of this work is not known.

Anantanārāyaṇa

Anantanārāyaṇa of Bhāрадvaja gotra who belonged to a village called Caravana in the Pāṇḍya country. He enjoyed the patronage of Calicut named Manavigrama and a king of Cochin named Ramavarman. His Śṛṅgarasarvasva is a one act play belonging to the Bhāṇa type. It was composed to be enacted at Tirunāvaya on the occasion of the Mamamka festival. He wrote a commentary on Viṣṇusahasranāma named Haribhaktikāmadhenu at instance of the king Rāmavarma.

Manorama

Manorama Tampurāṭṭi was a member of the Kizakke Kovilakam of the Zamorin’s royal family and was born in 1760 A.D. She studied under Rudra Vāriyar of the Deśamaṅgalam family and became a great scholar in Sanskrit grammar. It is said that she got the name Manorama because of her mastery of the Prauṣṭhamanorama. It was she who taught Sanskrit grammar Ārūr Mādhavan Aṭṭirī, the author of Uttaramaiśadham. She passed away in 1828 A.D. Manorama is not known to have written any work; but the few verses that are attributed to by tradition shows that she was a good poet with a graceful style.

Mānaveda

Mānaveda wrote a commentary named viḷāsini on the Śukasandeśa of Lakṣmidasa. He lived in the beginning of the nineteenth century. He has also written a commentary on the Rāmāyaṇacampu of Bhoja. He says that he is the student of Raṅganātha. He also refers to two friends Rudra and Śekhara. It is known that this Mānaveda died in 1840 A.D.

Bhavādaśa

Bhavādaśa, a member of Cīrakkuzhi family and native of Sāgarapurakṣhetra wrote a commentary called Padayojana on the 11th skandha of the Bhāgavata. on the basis of Śrīharācārya’s Bhāvārdhadipa. He was the student of Puruṣottama and Aruṇagirī. This commentary is written at the instance of Uttratam Tirunal Lakṣmī Tampurāṭṭi of Kizakke Kovilakam in Calicut.

Bhāskara

Bhāskara of Mutukuriśī family near Shornore wrote the Śṛṅgāraṇetulīcārīta well known as Mutukuruśī Bhāṇa. He was patronized by a Zamorin of Calicut named Mānavigrama. Bhāskara flourished from 1805 to 1837. He wrote this Bhāṇa before he was sixteen years old. He was also patronized by the king of Cochin Vīrakeralavarman.
MODULE III

THE COCHIN ROYAL FAMILY

Introduction

The Cochin Royal family came into being followed by the Kulaśekharas of Mahodayapura, who were the emperors of Kerala in ancient times. The Cochin Royal family also known as Perumpadappu, had its capital at Mahodayapura till fourteenth century A.D., when it was shifted to Kochi. The shifting of the capital from Mahodayapura and the growth of powerful Zamorins of Calicut, the Cochin Royal family lost even the nominal overlordship of Kerala.

Literary contribution by the Cochin Royal Family

The Cochin Royal family has a great tradition of literary contribution from Kulaśekhara Varman. But it is not possible to trace it easily. In the Śivavilasa, a Mahākāvya written by Damodara Cākyār under the patronage of the king of Kāyamkulam, the hero is a prince of Perumpadappu royal family at Mahodayapura, who is designated as the king of Kerala in the Malayalam campū called Unniyāṭicarita, also attributed to this Dāmodara, it is said that there were five branches of this family and that there were eight other royal families who were feudatories of the Mahodaya kings.

The earliest work written under the patronage of Cochin Royal Family is the Bhāṣa called viṭanidrā which contains references to a prince Rāmavarman of Mahodayapura who was the son of Queen Laksmi. The work is of importance from the literary point of view.

Several poets and scholars were patronized by the king of Cochin; but it is very difficult to identify these kings. They are sometimes referred to as Rājarāja, a title which could be applied to any king. The names Rāmavarman Godavarman or Keralavarman which are given are also vague, as there have been many kings of Cochin having these names. Hence all that could be given are only tentative suggestions about their identity.

In the Malayalam Campū Thenkailanathodayam of Nīlakantha who was patronized by a Vārakeralavarman of Cochin, there is a list of seven kings of Cochin who preceded his patron. Vaṭṭaśēri Nīlānthan Nambūṭiri of Mūkkola who commented on the Tripuradahana and the Śaurikathodaya of Vāsudeva has referred to Rājarāja and Rāmavarman as the kings of Cochin and to Godavarman as helping the latter in the administration of the country. The patron of Balakavi who wrote the Rāmavarmavilāśa and the Rathaketādaya may be this Rāmavarman himself. The Nambūṭiris of Malamangalam family must have also been patronized by this Rāmavarman and his predecessor or Keralavarman referred to in the Bhāṣa as Rājarāja.

The Mahiṣamaṅgala compositions

Mahiṣamaṅgala is only the house name of the author. It is the Sanskritised form of Maḷamangalam by which term the family is known in Kerala. It is sometimes referred to as Maḷamangala, Maḷagala and Maḷaṅgala. At present the family is in extinct, it is believed that it got merged with the present Tarananallur family in Perumanam village. The reference found in some of work by members of this family shows that the house was situated somewhere near Nandiṭīra and the Vallī. More than one scholar is known as belonging to this family. The Mahiṣamaṅgala Bhāṣa is one of the most popular Sanskrit Bhāṇas of Kerala. The author was patronized by a king of Cochin who is referred to in the work as Rājarāja. In the prologue it is stated that the Bhāṣa was composed at the instance of the king of Cochin named Rājarāja.
Śankara, the great astrologer and his son Nārāyana author of the Prāyaścittavimarśini and Parameśvara author of the Āśaucadīpikā belong to this family. At the end of Āśaucadīpikā the author says that he is Parameśvara of Puruvanagrāma near Nandiṣṭhara student of Mādhava and others. There are two commentaries on the work, one by a member of the Mahiṣamaṅgalam family itself, and another by GōdavarmanYuvarāja of Kodungalloor.

Nārāyana says in his Prāyaścittavimarśini that he belongs to the Mahiṣamaṅgalam family in the Puruvanagrāma that he is the son of Śankara, and that he studied Mathematics. Śankara is the author of several works. The Malayalam commentaries called Bālaśankara of Kaladiṇipaka, the Muhūrtapadavi, and the Laghubhāskariya, Ganitasāra, Candragaṇitakrama, Prasnasara, Pancabodhā, Pancabodhārthadarpaṇa, Bhāṣākāladiṇipaka etc. In Sanskrit he has written a grammatical work called Rupalayanapaddhati. From the references to the dates given in his commentary on the kāladiṇipaka in 1540, and that on the Muhūrtapadavi in 1544 AD

There are some poetical works also by a member of the Mahiṣamaṅgalam family. Besides that well known Bhana, there is a Malayalam Campū called Bhāṣanaśadham Campū which is considered to be one of the best Campūs in Malayalam literature. There are also some Malayalam poems like the Darikavadhom Brahmanippāṭṭu which is generally attributed to Mahiṣamaṅgalam. There is also a Sanskrit poem called Rāsakrīḍa as well as a campū called Uttarārāmacarita by a member of the Mahiṣamaṅgalam family. From a comparison of the Bhāṇa with the Bhāṣanaśadhadacampū it is clear that the two are by the same hand.

Another excellent Malayalam Campū called the Kotiyaviraha is also attributed by some to the author of Bhāṣanaśadhadacampū. According to Ullur S. Parameśwara Iyer many other Malayalam works like Rājaratnāvalīyam, Bānayuddham, Rasakrīḍa, Thirunāṭṭam, Parvarīstuti and Viśnumāyācaritam are also the works of the author of Bhāṣanaśadhadacampū.

Another work from a member of Mahiṣamaṅgalam family is the poem Uttarārāghavīya which describes in a sweet and graceful style the story of Rāma and Sītā after the return of Lanka.

Bālakavi

Bālakavi, author of the two dramas Rāmavarmaṇvilāsa and Ratnaketūdaya, was a native of Mallandrum in North Arcot District, who came to Kerala in search of literary patronage. He was the son of Kālaḥasti and the grandson of Mallikārjuna. His teacher Kṛṣṇa was an erudite scholar from Kerala. Bālakavi’s patron is Rāmavarman, the king of Cochin, he is the hero of the play Rāmavarmaṇvilāsa. Even in the other work, King Rāmavarman is mentioned with great respect.

Regarding the date and identity of Bālakavi and his patron Rāmavarman there has been some controversy, Nīlakāṇṭha Dīkṣita states in the prologue to the Naḷacarita natakā that Appayya Dīkṣita was a younger contemporary of Bālakavi. According to this Bālakavi has to be assigned to the sixteenth century.

Rāmavarmaṇvilāsa is a drama in five acts describing the story of Rāmavarman, king of Cochin. Entrusting the entire Government of his state to his brother Gōdavarman, the king goes to Tūḷākkāveri, and there meets a girl named Mandārāmāla. He falls in love with her, marries her, and lives with her there for sometime. Then he hears from his brother that his country is being attacked by enemies. He comes back to Cochin, takes charge of the Government and defeats all the enemies.
The Ratnaketudadayā of Bōlakavi was also composed at the instance of the king of Cochin. The information that can be gathered from these two dramas are of some use in the reconstruction of the mediaeval history of Cochin.

Vedāntācarya

Vedāntācarya who wrote a commentary on the Kāvyaprakāśa called Uttejinī, Prakāsotejinī or Sarvatīkāvibhajini, was patronized by a king of Cochin named Ravivarman. He was a native of Kāncīpura, and had once been in the court of the king Tanjore. He was the son of ŚrīnivāsādharvarinVedāntācarya was a scholar well-versed in all the ṣastras. Once he came to the Iriṇjilakkuda temple in Cochin state, and met prince Keralavarman, nephew of the king. It was at the request of this Prince that he wrote the commentary of on the Kāvyaprakāśa. All the verses given in the commentary of the tenth ullasa of Kāvyaprakāśa are about king Ravivarman of Cochin, hence that section is also called Ravīrājyanasobhūṣaṇa.

Vedāntācarya says athat he is the chief of the scholars in the court of the king of Cochin, and that he has been praised by the great poet and Mantravādin Vāmana and by a samnyāsin who is like an incarnation of Sadānanda

Vṛṛa Karalavarman

Vṛṛa Karalavarman ruled Cochin from 1809 to 1828 A.D. He was an excellent scholar in Sanskrit and generous patron of literature. He was a follower of Mādhava school. He has written more than fifty Kathakaṇji works in Malayalam. In Sanskrit he wrote a few stotras like Pūrṇatrāyīśaśataka and Daśāvathāraślokamāla. Vṛṛa Karalavarman was also attracting many of scholars and poets of the time to his court. Ṛūr Āṭīṭirī, Cerānelli Kṛṣṇa Karṭā, Bhāskara of Matukkuri Īrī, Nārāyaṇ Nambūṭirī of Iḷḷayāṭam and Iḷḷaveṭṭikkat Nambūṭirī were all patronized by this king.

Ṛūr Mādhavan Āṭīṭirī

Mādhavan Āṭīṭirī belonged Ṛūr family in the village of Perumam near Thrissur. He calls himself Vandāruḍvijamādhava and Vandārubhaṭṭa the term vandāru in the Sanskritized form of Ṛūr. He was the son of Nīlakāṇṭha and Śrīdevi. He had his early education from his grandfather, later he studied under Rudra Vāriyar of Desamangalam family, and Pantalam Subrahmanyā Śaṭrī. He also studied under princess Manorama of Kīvīlakam in Calicut. Later, after his marriage he went to Kodungalloor Palace, and was a teacher to Gōdavarman, the third prince at that time. He wrote Utṭānannaisadāthiyacarita or Uttānanaśadadh was written by Ṛūr Mādhavan Āṭīṭirī which is a poem of sixteen cantos describing the life of Nāla and Damayanti after their marriage, written as a supplement to Śrīhaṭa Naśadāthiyacarita. He was patronized by the king Ramavarman who was his student and who had given hima a huge pension. Ṛūr Āṭīṭirī lived in the early half of the nineteenth century A.D. It is said that Mādhava was born in 1765 and died in 1836 A.D.

Kṛṣṇa Karṭā of Cerānelli

He was one of the court poets of Vṛṛa Karalavarman, King of Cochin, and flourished during 1765-1845 A.D. He married the daughter of Rāmavarman, Śaṭkot Tampurāṇ, of Cochin and Pārūkkūṭṭī Amma of Kuruppam house, Thrissur. He wrote the stotra work Citpureśastuti on the deity of the temple at Chittur near Ernakulam. It is written on the model of Nārāyaniya and contains 312 verses. The date of its composition in 1808, as is indicated by the Kōḷi chronogram tvatkrpalabdhisadhyam, given in the work itself.

Iḷḷayāṭam Nārāyana Nambūṭirī

Nārāyana Nambūṭirī of Iḷḷayāṭam in Amballur was also a protege of Karalavarman. He lived between 1770 and 1840 A.D. and wrote Uṣāpārīṇaya Campū in imitation of Rukmiṇīswayamvara of Iḷḷaveṭṭikkat Nārāyaṇ Nambūṭirī. It is said to have been composed in one day.
MODULE IV
CONTRIBUTION OF KERALA TO SANSKRIT LITERARY CRITICISM

Kerala’s contribution to literary criticism may be divided into three categories: works on poetics, 1. original works, 2. critical studies and 3. commentaries on Sanskrit poems and dramatical works.

1. Works on poetics -

Works on poetics may be divided into three groups. They are, a) original works, b) works modeled on Prataparudriya, c) commentaries on original works on poetics

a) Original works:

Sahityasara: Among the original works on poetics Sahityasara is well known. This was written by Sarveśvara in 13th century A.D. This is an authority on dramaturgy as is evident from quotations from it in the Abhijñānāśākuntalacaracarā. Sahityasara describes almost all topics pertaining to dramaturgy in six chapters named prakasas.

Balarāmabhara: Balarāmabhara is noteworthy treatise on dancing. It was written by Ramavarma Kartika Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore (1728-98). In this text the author has made some valuable observations on bhava. Dr. Esvaran Namboodiri has made an elaborate study of this book and edited critically.

Nāṭakādilakaṇa is a work which deals with the definition of nāṭaka and other rūpakas. The authorship of this work is unknown. Nāṭyaśastrasamśkṛta by T.K. Ramachandra Iyer giving a summary of the main topics dealt with in Nāṭyaśāstra in a simple style.

Canḍamārutasasti (19th century) of Kāṇchipuram, teacher of Ravivarman Tampurān and Udayavarman Tampurān of Kadathanādu, has written two works on poetics. They are Citramaṃsoddhāra and Laghurasakumārjali. In the first, the author clears the blemishes attributed by Jagannatha in Citramāṃssōkhaṇḍāṇa.

Nāṭāṅkuśa deals with the defects in certain practices in Kūṭīyaṭam by Chākyars. Some scholars ascribed this work to Uddānā Śāstri. Dr. K.G. Poulose had made an elaborate study on this text and published from Govt. Sanskrit College, Tripunithura.

Mukhābhūṣaṇa and Ārsaprayogasādhuṭvaniṛṇa (15th & 16th centuries) are two small works deal with the grammatical points and poetic usages. However, these texts may be included in the works on kaviśīkṣa, or instructions to the poet. In Ārsaprayogasādhuṭvaniṛṇa, the correctness of some irregular words in Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata and certain puranas is examined.

b) Works on the model of Pratāparudrayaśobhāṣaṇa

Bālarāmavarmanayaśobhāṣaṇa by Sadāśivadīkṣita (18th century) deals with almost all topics in Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy in eight chapters. Following the model a full drama named Vasulaksāmikālayaṇa is also inserted in this text. All the verses in this treatise are eulogizing the author’s patron, Kārtika Tirunāl.

Kulaśekharāya by Inçur Keśavan Namboodiri (1855-1932) containing 125 verses in four sections on Nāyaka, Kāvyā, Rasa and Guṇa. All the verses are in praise of Sri Mūlam Tirunal.

Kṛṣṇāṣudhi (19th century) has written a treatise on poetics by name Kāvyakalāṇidhi. It is divided into ten chapters. All the examples are eulogizing the author’s patron, Ravivarma of Kolathunādu.

Gōdavarmayayāśobhāṣaṇa by Arunagirikavi (1550-1650) is a notable treatise on poetics. This text deals with the arthālaṅkāras only. The author eulogizes his patron Vaṭṭakkumkūr Gōdavarman.

Alāṅkārakaustubha also called Alāṅkārabhūṣaṇa is a treatise on poetics written by Kālyānasaṃprabhāṇasūryā. Influence of Kuvalayāṇanda is obvious in this work. The illustrative verses are mostly in praise of Lord Padmanādhī. The author also praises Kārtika Tirunāl Rāmavarman in some verses.

Rāmodaya by Ilāthūr Rāma Śāstri deals with all the arthālaṅkāras in verses, in vasantarḁ̄la metre. The first half forming the definition and the last half illustration. The author praises his patron Ayilīyam Tirunāl as well as Lord Rāma.
Arthacitramaṃśāla is a work on poetics written by T.Ganapati Śāstri (1820-1926). The author praises his patron Viśākhambhairavam of Travancore through its illustrative verses.

In Ramavarmaśatāka K.Ramapisarotī (1860-1926) defines 100 alankāras from Kuvalayānanda with illustrations in praise of Ramavarma Maharaja of Cochin. In his commentary K.P.Kocchunţi Karta points out that the illustrative verses serve a double purpose eulogizing the king and Viṣṇu simultaneously.

c) Commentaries on original works on poetics

Commentaries on original works form a considerable portion of Kerala’s contribution to Sanskrit poetics. There are two commentaries written by Keralite authors on Kavyaprakāśa. They are Kavyaprakāśotttejini by Vedāntācārya (16th century) and Kāvyollasa by Tirumaṅgalatulū Nīlakanṭha (16th century). The Kavyaprakāśotttejini is remarkable for its profundity and comprehensiveness. The tenth chapter deals with the arthaalankāra portion and it is called Ravivarmayāsabhūṣana, since it praises King Ravivaraman of Cochin through illustrative verses. A noteworthy feature of Kāvyollasa is that it is composed in verses. This commentary elucidates in a fairly good manner the difficult of the original work.

Samudrabandha (14th century) has written a commentary on the Alankārasarvasva. This commentary deserves an equal position with those of Jayaratha and Vidyācakravartin. The illustrative verses in praise of the author’s patron, Ravivarma Kulaṅkēkhaṇa.

Prof. S.Neelakanṭha Śāstri has written a comprehensive gloss named Dhvnyālokottejini on Dhvnyāloka, sometimes even criticising the view of Abhinavagupta. A Commentary by Dāsarathi Namboodiri(17th century), Añjana commentary by an unknown author, Kaumudi commentary by Udaya(14th century), the author of Mayūrasandesha, are elaborate and useful commentaries on Dhvnyālokalocana. Both of them are available upto the end of the first udyota only.

The single complete commentary on Dhvnyālokalocana is Bālapriya by K.Rāmapiṣāroti. Written in simple and lucid style, this beautiful piece of work is extremely useful for students and scholars as well. The most important among the merits of Bālapriya is that the author has taken great pains to correct the corrupt text of Locana and Dhvnyāloka. Rāmapiṣāroti is credited with the merit of publishing Locana on the fourth uddyota of Dhvnyāloka for the first time. Pisaroti has written commentaries on the other prominent works on poetics and dramaturgy such as Kuvalayānanda and Citramāṃsa and Daśarūpaka.

The commentary on Bhāgavadbhaktirasāyana of Madhusūdanārasaswati by Polppākkara Damodaran Namboodiri(1882-1964) is also to be noted here.

Lilālītaka,(14th cent.) written in Sanskrit, of unknown authorship is an epoch making volume as far as Maniṇipravāla section of Malayalam literature. It contains eight chapters dealing with grammar and poetics in relation to Maniṇipravāla. Alaṅkārasamśepa(14th cent.) is a short treatise of figure of speech in which definitions and explanations are in Sanskrit, while the examples cited are from Maniṇipravāla.

Veda nāmottamam kāvyam by Dr.C.Kunhan Raja, Śakuntalapārmyam by Kerala Varma Vallyakoyittampran Amarukāṣatakamanḍānam and Viśākhavijayollāsa by Māṇavikrama Ettan Tampuran, Raghuvamśāsvada and Sṛṇgāramanjarīmāṇḍana by Punnaśeri Neelakanṭha Śarma are some critical and noteworthy Sanskrit essays which are to be mentioned here.