

Sri Raghavabhyudaya of Sri Bhagavantaraya Makhin an Analytical Study

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Sri Bhagavantaraya Makhin was an eminent Vedic scholar who lived in Tanjore in the 17th Century. Maratha kings ruled over Tanjore from AD 1676 to 1855 for a period of 179 years. Venkoji was the half brother of the great Maratha king Chatrapati Sivaji. Bhagavantaraya Makhin was the son of Gangadhara Makhin, who was a minister in Venkoji's court. Gangadhara Makhin retired from service after making his son Narasimharaya Makhin, the minister. After Venkoji, Shahaji II became the king AD (1684-1711). Anandaraya Makhin, son of Narasimharaya Makhin, became the minister of Shahaji II However, Bhagavantaraya Makhin kept himself aloof from ministerial work. He became a great poet and scholar, much honored by the king and his courtiers.

Bhagavantaraya Makhin was proficient in all branches of learning. His command in Sanskrit Literature was of a very high order. He, though an expert in the Vedic lore, had great liking for Sanskrit literature. He composed a drama by name Raghavabhyudaya. This drama is now taken up for an analytical study for the Doctorate Degree in Sanskrit. He also wrote two other works – Mukundavilasa a kavya in 10 Cantos and also the Uttara Campu. Campu is a mixture of prose and verse. The Raghavabhyudaya is a drama in 7 acts. The story is drawn from the Ramayana of sage Valmiki. According to the rules of dramaturgy, a Nataka should have a well-known theme. The Hero should be a noble one such as Dhiroddhata, Dhiralalita, Dhirasanta or Dhiroddhata. Dharma, Artha and Kama can be the Purusarthas. Keeping in mind all these requisites, Bhagavantaraya wrote this drama in a very simple and sweet style.

The details are about the life and works of the author and a brief account of the Bhosala dynasty of Maratha rulers who governed Tanjore. This Chapter also provides a brief account of the Mukundavilasa.

It goes into a detailed exposition of the present drama. The poet has introduced many deviations from the original story. The purpose served by such deviations is pointed out in this chapter bringing to light the expertise of the dramatist. A summary of each of the 7 acts is also given in this chapter. A note on the type of Prakrt used in the drama is also given. Any composition based upon the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata should not go against the main theme. But a great poet using his poetic genius can introduce new themes which add to the beauty and purpose of the original story. A blind imitation of the original cannot satisfy men of refined taste. For example, in the drama called Sakuntalam, Kalidasa introduced the curse of Durvasas. By this he exalted the character of Dusyanta. A faithful obedience to rules of dramaturgy should not be the criterion of a great writer. Following this practice of great dramatists, Bhagavantaraya has incorporated many useful changes in his drama. For example, as in the Tamil Kamba Ramayanam, Bhagavantaraya Makhin has created a situation where Rama and Sita see each other before Svayamvara. He has also introduced a drama within the drama to help Sita regain confidence in Rama's coming to Lanka to take her back. Gandharvas enacted a Drama in Lanka before Sita in which Rama steps into Lanka and defeats Ravana.

This article provides brief but graphic accounts of various characters that appear in this drama. Rama, Sita, Laksmana, Dasaratha, Hanuman, Visvamitra, Vasistha, Ravana and Vibhisana, as also sages Agastya and Satananda are covered for this characterization.

The article highlights the erudition of our dramatist. His mastery over Grammar, Logic, Mimamsa, Vedic and Puranic lore are all dealt with. It is recorded that an eminent dramatist Sri Ramabhadra Diksita who was a contemporary of our author, appreciated this drama.

It determines the place of our dramatist among great writers and the place "Sri Raghavabhyudaya" occupies in Sanskrit Literature. Though a composition of the later period, the Raghavabhyudaya of Bhagavantaraya exhibits, signs of an ancient work marked by simplicity and beauty. Both the prose and poetics pieces are remarkably easy following. One unusual feature introduced by the author is the

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employment of Prakrt. This is an important characteristic of old dramas. In dramas like the Sakuntalam Prakrts which were being spoken by people of those days, are employed. But now in 18th the century or so when our dramatist lived nobody used Prakrt. It is no longer a dialect used either in North India or in South India. But the fact that the dramatist has used prakrt shows that he is tradition-bound. This chapter also traces the influence of other poets and dramatists on our author, most important of whom is Kalidasa.

Reference Books -

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