



Somadeva's
YAŚASTILAKA

Aspects of
Jainism, Indian Thought and Culture

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FOREWORD

Sanskrit has been a perennial source of wisdom and intellectual discourse. The literature of this language has also served as a vibrant storehouse of knowledge-systems and information on cultural achievements. In fact, the study of this literature is an essential prerequisite for understanding the development of Indian society and culture.

In his *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Mahāmahopādhyāya Purushottam Vaman Kane presented a most monumental work on ancient texts of law as sourcebooks for Indian culture. Prof. V.S. Agrawal, in his *India as Known to Paṇini*, established the paradigms of the cultural study of a Śāstric work in Sanskrit — the Aṣṭādhyāyī — a text that is definitely one of the most miraculous intellectual accomplishments in the history of human race. Prof. B.S. Upadhyaya and some other scholars have attempted studies of the works of Kālidāsa and other poets as sourcebooks for Indian culture and civilisation, still others have taken up similar studies of the texts by Yāska and Patañjali. However, Sanskrit classics produced in first two millenniums of ACE have remained by and large unexplored from the point of view of cultural studies. Prof. K.K. Handiqui, one of the most distinguished Sanskrit scholars of modern times, not only made a fruitful attempt to bridge a gap in the cultural studies of Sanskrit texts in his *Yaśastilaka and Indian Culture*, he also joined the glorious line of stalwarts like Mahāmahopādhyāya Purushottam Vaman Kane and Prof. V.S. Agrawal by presenting another landmark of the study in Sanskrit literature as source for cultural history. In fact, *Yaśastilaka* of Somadeva, a *campū kāvya* composed in tenth century ACE, is really the *Yaśastilaka* — auspicious mark on the forehead — of India's culture. It establishes Indian culture as a vibrant continuum enriched by numerous tributaries. A cultural study of *Yaśastilaka* becomes especially significant considering the fact that this text by Somadeva belongs to the other traditions — the traditions of Jainism and the *śramaṇas*, that have made equally enormous contribution to the growth of Indian culture.

A scholar of extraordinary accomplishments from Assam, Prof. K.K. Handiqui here presents a remarkable study of work of Somadeva — an author — who flourished in the southern parts of our country nearly one thousand years back. The work not

An interesting example of Kāku-Vakrokti is found in Amṛtamati's fraudulent message to Yaśodhara, in which she begs to be allowed to accompany the king into wilderness after his proposed renunciation of the world. Yaśodhara, while listening to the message, interjects sarcastic remarks which appear to corroborate her statements, but really give them a different interpretation reflecting on her character. Portions of the message may be reproduced here, Yaśodhara's remarks being put within brackets. Amṛtamati says: 'I will accompany Your Majesty, just as the tide accompanies the ocean (That is why you are fickle); just as the image of the moon accompanies the sky (That is why you have a black spot¹); just as the shade accompanies a tree (That is why you are enjoyed by others); just as the track accompanies a chariot (That is why you are 'full of dust'²); just as the flame accompanies a lamp (That is why you emit 'smoke'³); just as sylvan beauty accompanies the spring (That is why you are full of Cupid's lore); just as the Ganges is the companion of the Himālayas (That is why you seek a lower⁴ level)'.⁵

Instances of Yamakas are occasionally found. A device used more than once is the Śṛṅkhalayamaka which consists in the continuous repetition of the last syllables of a series of compounds at the beginning of each succeeding compound. For example,

यः खल्वनेकविकिरकुलकामिनीनिशितशिखोल्लेखनखमुखविलिख्यमानशाखाभुजशिखरः, शिखरशिखाडम्बरित...
कुपलपर्यन्तः, कुपलपर्यन्त...पल्लवपुटपटलः, पल्लवपुटपटलान्तराल...पथिकसार्थः, पथिकसार्थ...
सहचरीनिचयः, सहचरीनिचय...छायाच्छन्नतलदेशः, छायाच्छन्नतलदेश...

As pointed out by Jacobi, the Śṛṅkhalayamaka is used by Siddharṣi in *Upamitibhavaprapaṅcā kathā*, p. 752. Haribhadra too has used this device in verses in his *Samarāiccakahā*.⁶

The mixture of prose and verse is a salient feature of *Yaśastilaka* which is one of the two earliest extant Campūs, the first being Trivikrama's *Nalacampū* written during the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Emperor Indra

1 i. e. a blot on her character.

2 'a lewd woman'.

3 i. e. disgrace.

4 i. e. a paramour of lower rank.

5 'देवस्याहं सहचरी...जलनिधेर्वैलेव अत एव चपलासि, नभसः शशिप्रतिमेव अत एव सकलङ्कासि, विटपिनश्छायेव अत एवान्योपभोग्यासि, ...रथस्य मार्गभूमिरिव अत एव पांशुलासि । प्रदीपस्य शिखेव अत एव मलिनोद्गारासि, वसन्तस्य वनलक्ष्मीरिव अत एव मन्मथकथासनाथासि ...हिमगिरेर्गङ्गेव अत एव नीचानुगतासि ...'

6 See B. I. ed., pp. 79, 423-4, 449, etc.

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