Rājaśekhara, the outstanding poet, dramatist and rhetorician of the royal court of Kanauj (9th-10th cent.) has attracted the attention of several eminent Orientalists of the 19th and 20th centuries, who have written much on his life and date and, also, on some of his works.

Four dramas of Rājaśekhara have come down to us. Of these two entitled Bālarāmāyana and Bālabharata are based, respectively on the two epics, Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata and the other two viz. Karpuramanjari and Viddhasālabhamānikā are court plays. Of the latter, Karpuramanjari has been edited critically, more than once, on the basis of original manuscripts, Viddhasālabhamānikā, which has unanimously been considered as a work of the poet’s mature years has, thus far, remained neglected. In spite of the fact that its text had already printed five times, Dr. S.K. De, had, in his History of Sanskrit Literature, that a critical edition of this play was, still, a desideratum:¹

My interest in bringing out a critical edition of this play was aroused by Prof. Jagannāth Agrawal, to whom, as an old respectful of his, goes the credit.

the credit for whatever, in my own humble way, I have been able to learn of and about Sanskrit and researches therein. It was he who guided me, at the preliminary stage, in preparing the plan of my work. At the outset, the descriptive catalogues of various Mss Libraries were thoroughly examined for manuscripts of Viddhasālabhaṇjika. Regular search was carried on towards the same purpose also by correspondence with and by personal visits to several manuscripts repositories in the country. The survey, thus conducted, enabled the location of as many as 23 manuscripts of Viddhasālabhaṇjika.

In addition to manuscripts of the text, the above survey enabled me to come upon the erudite Commentary on this play written by Vasudeva, a 15th century scholiast hailing from Kerala which had not been published so far. Subsequently, I was able to secure six manuscripts of this commentary, also. Thus, in all, 29 Mss were studied for the purpose of the critical edition presented in this Thesis.

For me, to decipher and transcribe manuscripts in the Malayalam script was a new experience and it would have remained only a wish but for the training that I could get thereafter from the Vishveshvarānand Institute at Hoshiarpur. There again, two of the best manuscripts of Viddhasālabhaṇjikā, available in Malayalam script, are preserved in the library of the said Institute.
But, book, by themselves, do not reveal much and the importance of the personal touch and grace of a Master alone can reveal the essence of what is contained therein. As the adage goes:

\[ \text{jiyotit sadabhyantram āptapādaśr} \]
\[ \text{adipitam nārthagatam vyanakti} \]

I consider myself singularly fortunate to have been under the care and guidance of the illustrious Acharya Dr. Vishva Bandhu, Director of the Vishveshvarānand Institute, as my Supervisor for my present research project.

I had to visit several Manuscripts Libraries in search of manuscripts and for their collation and study. Of these, the following deserve to be mentioned specially: The V.V.R. Institute, Hoshiarpur; Raghunath Temple Library, Jammu; Bhandarker Oriental Research Institute, Poona; Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras; Kerala University Oriental Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum; and Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tanjore. I am much indebted to the officers in charge of the above libraries for providing me with every possible facility towards the utilisation of the manuscript materials available in the respective libraries. My special thanks are due to Shri S. Prśthasarathi, Curator of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, who graciously spared the services of a Pandit for reading out to me a manuscript in the Telugu script and helped
me in various other ways. Moreover, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, the Oriental Institute, Baroda and the Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishva-vidyālaya have put me under obligation by supplying to me on loan their manuscripts of Viddhasālabhaṇḍikā. Shri O.P. Nāyānaswami, Secretary of the Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjore, arranged for the transcription of two Grantha manuscripts of the work in that library. The University Grants Commission, New Delhi, were very kind to grant me financial assistance for the purchase of some essential books. Naturally, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the abovementioned scholars, institutions as well as the U.G.C. for the help I have received from them.

I have also been benefitted by the work done by previous scholars on Rājaśekhara. These have duly included in the Bibliography appended to this work.

Last, but not least, I must express my sincere thanks to Shri K.V. Sarma of the Vishveshvarānand Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, Panjab University at Hoshiarpur, who, with his vast knowledge, remarkable accuracy and critical acumen, has been my friend, philosopher and guide at every step and helped me in every difficulty that I had to encounter and overcome in the proper execution of my research work.

Chandigarh.

S. D. JOSHI

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