CHAPTER 5

BUDDHACARITA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction:

It is helpful to think of analysis as decoding. Analysis of a poem means literally picking a poem apart poem’s meaning. By looking at a poem in terms of its elements, one decodes the poem. This guides to help the readers learn what to look for and what questions to ask in decoding a poem. To criticize means to judge the merits and faults of a poem. So in critical analysis one looks both analytically and critically at a poem and makes an argument about what the poet has done well and what he has done less well. Has he successfully expressed his theme? Has he written a ‘good’ poem or a ‘great’ poem? etc.

Asvaghosa, a pre-Kalidasic poet has successfully delineated in his masterpiece Buddhacarita, the life of Lord Buddha with its poetic beauty and literary merit. In this research work a sincere effort will be made to critically study the deferent aspects of the original work of Asvaghosa. The researcher will discuss carefully different sides of Buddhacarita dealing with general introduction, delineation of love and nature, meters and alamkaras, socio-political condition etc. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the aforesaid aspects of Buddhacarita, the magnum opus of the
great Buddhist writer and it is entitled with ‘Buddhacarita: A Critical Analysis’. It will constitute the 5th chapter of the proposed research work- ‘Buddhacarita of Asvaghosa: A Critical study’.

The Buddhacarita is the celebrated poetic work attributed to Asvaghosa. The work has made a great influence on literature, poetics, culture and history of Indian society, so it deserve to be critically studied in respect of literary, biographical and poetical excellence. Under this chapter a critical and thoughtful study has been presented as far as possible in respect of the following different topics.

5.2 Critical Analysis of Buddhacarita as a Mahakavya

5.2.1 Definition of Mahakavya

The definition of Mahakavya has been given by many well known rhetoricians like Bhamaha, Dandin, Rudrata, Hemachandra, Visvanatha and others. Most of them are of same opinion with slight differences. Visvanatha Kaviraja in his Sahityadarpama, chapter-VI has defined Mahakavya\(^1\). According to him a Mahakavya demands that it should be divided into chapters and which should bear the appellation ‘Sarga’ or canto and the hero should be either a divine personage or a Kshyatriya of noble descent and high lineage and should be of the type called Dhirdatta. The sentiment, Sringara (erotic), Veera (heroic) and Shanta (quietistic) of which one should be predominant sentiment and the others are subservient to
the principal one. The plot should be constructed on dramatic principle having five junctures viz, protasis (Mukha), epitasis (Pratimukha), catastasis (Garbha), peripetia (Vimarsa) and catastrophe (Nirvahana) placed properly. The plot may be taken from history or from old narratives or from traditions like Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. or it may be borrowed from the glorious deeds of the good and the virtuous one. The object of such compositions should be the attainment of the four ends of human pursuit (Purusartha) viz, Virtue (Dharma), Wealth (Artha), Pleasure (Kama) and Salvation (Moksa) though it is not necessary that all these ends should come out from a single poem but it will sufficient if any one or more is aimed at. It should open with a verse or verses expressive of a benediction to a deity or a blessing conferred on the readers or a hinting at the theme. An epic may be (not necessary) followed by the censure of deceitful persons and praise of the honest one. The stanzas should be composed in one and the same metre which should change only at the end. That the ‘Sargas’ or cantos of an epic should not be less than eight, which means, they should be neither too long nor too short. At the end of each canto there must be some indications of the contents of the succeeding one. The epic should contain the descriptions of the evening, sunrise and sunset, the night, the day, morning, noon, hunting, mountains, seasons, forests, oceans, cities, the union and separation of lovers, sacrifices, marriages etc. It should contain state-council, embassy, pools, gardens, love, sports in the garden or
water, the description of the birth and prosperity of the prince, campaigns and the like. The title of the epic should be in accordance with the subject matter or the name of the poet or hero while each canto should be named after the contents. According to Dandin, the characteristics of Mahakavya runs thus – ‘Mahakavya should begin with Asish (Benediction) or Namaskriya (Salutation) or Vastunirdesha (Representation of facts), it should be based on Itihasakatha (As in Ramayana, Mahabharata etc.) or on some true facts, harbour or incorporate ways of Caturbargaphalaprapti; it should have description of Nagara, Arnava, Saila, Ritu, Chandrodaya etc.; it should be Rasabhavasamanvita and Alamkarayukta; it should have cantos or chapters not very long or tedious and such kavya being Sadalamkriti lasts till the end of a Kalpa (As kavya of Kalidasa, Bhagavati etc). A Mahakavya should not less than eight cantos and longer than thirty.

5.2.2 Buddhacarita – a Mahakavya

Buddhacarita is an excellent Mahakavya containing all the essential qualities of an epic. Let us now verify as to how Buddhacarita satisfies the average standard of the epic as set forth by rhetoricians. In it the central figure is Buddha who was a descendant of Iksvaku dynasty and in the whole epic the hero is presented as a very noble, self controlled, clever by nature which technically called Dhirodatta. The each chapter of the book bears the title ‘Sarga’ (canto) and the predominant sentiment is Shanta
though in the 4th canto Srngararasa and in 6th and the 8th canto Karunarasa is introduced as an accessory. The different stages of the development of the plot are well arranged. The subject matter of the epic has been taken from the life of a historic and noble person as there is no confusion about that Gautama Buddha was a world adored personality. As Buddhacarita deals with the facts as to how the prince overcome the lures of worldly happiness and privileges and attained salvation so the goal or aim of the epic is one of the four, i.e, to attain salvation (Moksa). An epic opens with a benediction, salutation or naming of the principal theme but Buddhacarita is not in conformity with this rule though in the beginning we find some facts like eulogy of Iksvaku dynasty and also the father and the mother of Buddha. The metres used in this epic are very attractive and same throughout the whole canto but at the end of each canto the verses are composed in different metres. Original Buddhacarita (Tibetan translation) was written in 28 cantos but unluckily Sanskrit text comprises only 13 cantos plus some verses of the 14th and the number of the verses in each canto is within 30 to 200. Transition from one canto to another is very clear and natural. It contains representation of love scenes (canto iv), description of the birth of Buddha (i), descriptions of river, garden, town, pool, description of mountains, seasons, sunrise and set (II, III, IV, and so on), separation, messenger, council, embassy, sacrifices etc. (V, VI, VII) and later fight with Mara (XIII) and so forth are all described in a very vivid and picturesque manner. And lastly
the title of the epic ‘Buddhacarita’ is very appropriate in accordance with the subject matter as the very work deals with the ‘Carita’ or character or acts of Buddha and the title of the cantos (Sargas) also have the harmony with the described facts as canto ii ‘Antahpura Bihara’ deals with the royal life of Buddha in the palace, canto iv ‘Strivighata’ deals with the rejection of beautiful ladies by Buddha and the like.

It has already been mentioned above that the poet Asvaghosa was a successful poet. We find that Asvaghosa’s Buddhacarita satisfies almost all the norms of Mahakavya laid down by the rhetoricians like Dandin and Viswanatha Kaviraja.

It is said that the subject matter of a Mahakavya must be historical and the hero should be of some good or great personage. The subject matter of the Buddhacarita is considered as historical as we get in the work the description of the great King Suddhodana who was of Sakya dynasty. The hero of the Kavya is Gautama Buddha and he belongs to great personage. As required by the rules for a classical Mahakavya, the Buddhacarita has also been written in the cantos and there are altogether 28 cantos. At the end of each canto the poet has changed the meter and the hero of the kavya has been chosen from the famous Sakya dynasty. There is an indication of the subject matter of the next canto at the end of each canto. The name of the 1st canto is ‘Bhagavatprasutih’. Like other classical Mahakavyas, the work is also enriched with the description
of the cities, seasons, the rising and the setting of the sun, battle, counsel, birth of princes etc. in the Buddhacarita we come across the sentiment of Santarasa as the main sentiment. The prince Siddhartha left the palace and his dear ones including his wife and his son in order to get enlightenment. Here we get the elements of Santarasa. Besides in the descriptions of hermitage, penance grove etc shows depiction of Santarasa. In the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} cantos of Buddhacarita the sentiment of Sringara has been depicted as a subsidiary sentiment. In addition to these characteristics of Mahakavyas, we have got the description of the birth of princes in the Buddhacarita, Gautama Buddha and his son Rahula.

From the above discussion it is evident that though it is a work of poetical narrative of heroic character and deeds, yet it is not a composition of the type of the Great Epics, like The Ramayana and The Mahabharata which are classified as Itihasas. Because of certain defects such as an epic opens with a benediction or salutation of god but Buddhacarita is not in conformity with the rule of great epics. Though Buddhacarita is not included in the list of the Great Mahakavyas yet it can be acclaimed as a Mahakavya as it satisfies almost all the prescribed norms.

5.3 Critical Analysis of
Treatment of love and nature in Buddhacarita

Asvaghosa has depicted Santarasa as the main sentiment in the Buddhacarita. He wrote his Buddhacarita in order to establish
the superiority of Lord Buddha and preached the doctrines of Buddhism. But if we examine carefully then we will see that Asvaghosa has also depicted the sentiment Srngara as the subordinate sentiment. In the Buddhacarita we find the depiction of both the kinds of Srngara sentiments. As for instance of Vipralambha Srngara, we may cite the verse in canto VIII – 60 of the Buddhacarita ‘tato dharayamapatadya....viklava mu....gira etc’. Here Yasodhara was unable to bear the pangs of separation from the prince. Sambhoga Srngara may be illustrated in the 2nd, 4th and 5th cantos of the Buddhacarita. In the 4th canto the prince was carried off by force to the Padmasanda grove, like the grove of Nandana. The beautiful women tried to attract the mind of the prince Siddhartha by their playful intoxication as c.f.

Madenavarjita nama tam....stanaih etc (canto IV-29).

We also find some references made by the poet where his apathy regarding the worldly passion has revealed. As for instance in the cantos like IV ‘Stribighato’ and XI ‘kamavigarhno’. In the 4th canto Udayin, the Purohita’s son carried off Siddhartha by force to a grove to change the mind of the prince. The grove was full of young trees and beautiful damsels but the prince remains unmoved by all the sweet temptations. He only marvels at the gay doings of these women and exclaims

‘Yastu drsva paran...sah’ etc (canto IV – 60)
In the canto XI the price cited some examples of passions which are harmful to human beings, because of these passions no man can be happy in the world and even the sages had to do the undeserving works (verse 13-21). But Asvaghosa is always more of a poet than a monk at least in the Buddhacarita and so that he fulfils these requirements as presentation of love scenes is one of the indispensable elements of an ornate court poem.

Asvaghosa has given beautiful descriptions of flora and fauna in the Buddhacarita. He has mentioned forests and Vanas, Aranyakas and Kantaras, the hilly tracks and lofty mountains (Giri) which were largely covered with thick forests and cities were also green belts. The poet has mentioned numerous trees such as Pipal tree, Tala Brksa, Lodhra trees, Ashoka tree, Kurvaka tree and some forest trees such as mango (Cutusakham kusumitam- IV-35) banana (Kudaligarbhamiti), Jambu trees etc. In these descriptions we can make an idea of the poet’s knowledge for botany. We have got mention of the mountains like Himalaya, Kailasa (Kailsavat bhavanam raraja etc), Sumeru (canto XIII-41), Vindhya, Kanchana (canto XIII-38). We also find the description of some rivers such as Ganga, Niranjana, Yamuna etc., all these geographical descriptions are found in the Buddhacarita. Traditional seasons such as Vasanta, Varsha and Sarat has mentioned along with their characteristics in this epic. Here we get the defect of ‘Cyutasamskrti’ (lacking in correctness i.e, not in conformity to the rules of grammer). As for
instance we may cite the verses 45 & 72 of canto XIII where the word Varsa has been used on the neuter gender instead of feminine gender.

5.4 Critical Analysis of Poetic embellishment, Alamkaras and Meters:

Buddhacarita is full of figures of speech belonging to both the categories – Sabdalankara and Arthalankara. Anuprasa, Slesha, Yamaka, Kaku, Vakrokti etc are included in the category of Sabdalankara, again Upama, Rupaka, Atisayokti etc are called Arthalankara. Asvaghosa was very fond of Upama (simile). He used Upamas derived from the nature such as the Sun, the Moon, stars, night, mountain, creeper, trees etc. we may take the verse 79, canto V ‘Iti suhrdomivanusisyā kṛtye….maruraha etc’ here the prince has been compared to the Sun. the verse 29 of canto VII is also a beautiful example of Upama. But Asvaghosa’s use of figure Upama does not conform to the strictest classical standard as the gender fails to correspond in Buddhacarita (canto II-45, V-62 & VI-26 etc) and both gender and number at canto VIII-26. Not all of these cases would have been faulty by Dandin under the ruling of Kavyadarsa (ch-2, sl-51). We can cite the verse 70 of canto I as an example of Rupaka alamkara. Though the figure Rupaka sometimes used pedantically, they often show a real freshness of observation and recall the familiar sights of north-Gangatic India, as the Brahminy ducks rising and falling on a lake as the west wind of
March lashed its surface into waves (canto VIII-29). We find an illustration of Yamaka in canto I-86 of the Buddhacarita. His fondness for repetition of the same sound in a verse is of a different order unlike the later poets. The other figures whose descriptions fill the pages of the treaties on poetics hardly need notice, as their identification is of no aid in estimating the quality of his poetry. Beyond the remark that Arthantaranyasa, almost kalidasa’s favourite figure occurs rarely in Buddhacarita except a good example of it in canto X-26

‘evam hi nasyat....pranayam mayi tvam samriddhi etc’

Meters used by Asvaghosa in Buddhacarita are both the varieties of Samavrttas and Ardhasamavrttas. There are no references of Visamavrttas, considering that the continuity of narration in epics does not allow as many varieties of metres as in the plays or prose stories. The favourite meter of Asvaghosa as can be inferred from his uses in the Buddhacarita are Upajati, Anustup and Vamsasthavilam. He has rarely used the other meters like – Rucira, Praharsini, Malini, Puspitagra etc. for other meters the striking fact is the preponderance of the Upajati almost in every canto (I-XVIII). The monotonous effect of its trochaic cadence makes it difficult to handle for continuous narrative and that Asvaghosa was alive to this danger is shown by the way he rings the changes on the possible variations of the rhythm. Meter Vamsasta
is handled in the same manner and for the longer meters the classical rules of caesura are observed.

In respect of concord, a singular noun is employed several times instead of plural. For example we may cite verse no. 66 of the 1st canto of Buddhacarita as c.f.

kaccinna me játamaphullameva kulaprabālaṁ pariśoṣabhāgi |
kṣipram vibho brūhi na me 'sti śāṁtiḥ snehāṁ sute vetti hi bāṁdhavānāṁ ||(1.66)

We also get the instances of the defect Nihatartham (having its meaning suppressed). For example we may cite verse no. 34, canto VIII as c.f.

priyeṇa vaśyena hitena sādhunā tvayā sahāyena yathārthakāriṇā |
gato 'ryaputraḥ hyapunarnivṛttaye ramasva diṣṭyā saphalaḥ śramastava || 8.34

here we get the word ‘Aryaputra’ but it should be used as ‘Aaryaputra’ In this way in the several places of the work, we get the defect ‘Nirarthakam’ (Useless). The verse no. 68 of 1st canto is an example of this defect as c.f.

nāsyānyathātvam prati vikriyā me svāṁ vaṁcaṇāṁ tu prati viklavo 'smi |
kālo hi me yātumayaṁ ca jāto jātiṣayasyāsulabhasya boddhā ||(1.68)

Here ‘hi’ has no meaning, it is used only for the filling up of the metre. We get the other illustrations also in the verses like (V.30), (VII.18) etc.*

- The above few points are taken from Asvaghosa’s Buddhacarita : A Study by N.N.Sharma.
5.5 Critical Analysis of Socio-political Condition as mentioned in Buddhacarita:

The Buddhacarita provides us sufficient socio-political information in respect of the times of Asvaghosa. At that time the society was obviously traditional and consisted of four casts – Brahmanas, Ksatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. From Buddhacarita we learn about the different activities and the status of the Brahmanas and Ksatriyas but Vaisyas and Sudras has not come to our notice. The rules of polity for the Kings are repeatedly mentioned mostly in similes. At Buddhacarita canto I-41, the poet treats as the standard authorities the works of Usanas or Sukra and Brhaspati which though not extant are equally called the fundamental treatises in the Mahabharata. He uses the term Rajasastra for the science of politics, while Niti at Buddhacarita (canto IV-62) means the principles of worldly conduct. The political riddle at Buddhacarita (canto II-42) ‘Kritagasohopi pratipadya...anaya drsta etc’ , though soluble under the teaching of Mahabharata cannot be plausibly interpreted from Arthasastra and the use of the word ‘anaya’ in this verse is contrary to Kautilya’s vocabulary who pronounces for ‘apanaya’ in this sense (Arthasastra IV-2, 6ff). the king Suddhodana administered his kingdom according to the traditional law. Asvaghosa has not elaborated the services of the spies but their existence and help have been mentioned in this epic. Ministers play a very significant role in the administration of the kingdom and
Asvaghosa endows the ministers of the ideal as Suddhodana with necessary qualities (canto VIII-86). The law of inheritance is also mentioned in the epic where after the death of a property owner the wealth was inherited by his legal heirs (canto VI-20). The description of an ideal horse according to Indian views at Buddhacarita (canto V-73) is of great interest but unfortunately later writers show no advance on Asvaghosa’s day in the judgment of horses except in the irrelevant matter of lucky signs (Curtly referred in the canto II-4). Elephants were considered as royal wealth and the poet is well acquainted with the methods of catching, training and riding them but no technical terms has used to prove the existence of a formal ‘Hastividya’.

We get various information in the Buddhacarita in respect of the education system of the time of Asvaghosa. Prince Siddhartha gets educated in various branches of learning such as archery, military science etc (canto II-24). Asvaghosa shows special courtesy and honour towards Brahmanas, teachers, parents and guests. Sage Asita’s visit to Suddhodana may be cited as an example (cantol-52). The women at that time received high respect from all classes of people. They used various kinds of ornaments like necklace, Suvrnasutra, Kantasutra, Monikundala, Bhujapasha etc, the poem reflects several references of the of the existence of painters (canto VII-25), sculptures(canto III-19-22). Chinese tradition has also a legend suggesting that Asvaghosa was a great musician but this is
not borne out by the poem. Asvaghosa has not written in detail about the Upanayana in this epic but he has mentioned the custom of the initiation to the rite called Upanayana (canto II-24). Jatakarma or birth ceremony of a son, marriage, sacrifices etc were performed according to the traditional Sastras. Existence of Brahmanical asceticism (canto VII-16), Saiva ascetics (canto VII -51 &XIII-21), Vaishnavas (canto VII-3) has inferred from the verses. There are some references of the Indra-dvaja festival (canto I-58 & VIII-73). The poet does not mention different varieties of cereals but has mentioned as cereal food in general as Anna (canto XII-96). There are references of ‘Somarasa’ as intoxicating drink.

5.6 Philosophical Aspects in Buddhacarita:

We know Asvaghosa more as a poet than as a philosopher. From poetic point of view Buddhacarita is a brilliant composition. Still it has to be admitted that this unique work is a philosophical work of high merit. Through it, Asvaghosa has brought forth the principal doctrines of Buddhism in a sweet and sublime manner. The main aim of Asvaghosa was the propagation of 'Sad-Dharma' and 'Kalyana-Dharma' of Buddhism. The techniques of the Buddha may be said to be three-fold, the four noble truths, the noble eightfold path and the doctrine of dependent origination.
The four-noble truths are

1. There is suffering. Life is full of misery and pain. Even the pleasures are really full of pain.
2. Everything has a cause, there is cause of suffering. Everything in this world is conditional, relative and limited.
3. There is cessation of suffering, because, if is true that everything arises depending on some causes and conditions. If there causes are removed, then the effects cease to exist.
4. There are means to remove the sufferings. Following the noble eightfold path one may get rid of the sufferings.

The noble eightfold path consists of eight steps and these are

(1) Right faith (Smyag drsti)
(2) Right resolve (Samyag Samkalpa)
(3) Right speech (Samyag vak).
(4) Right action (Samyag Karmanta)
(5) Right living (Samyagagiva)
(6) Right effort (Samayagvyayama)
(7) Right thought (Samyag Smrti)
(8) Right concentration (Samyag samadhi)

Buddhism is divided into two sects – Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana denies existence of God, Karma takes place of God. The idea of liberation in Hinayana is said to be negative and egoistic. According to Mahayana, Nirvana is not a negative cessation of
misery, but a positive state of bliss. Our poet Asvaghosa was a follower of Mahayana sect of Buddhism and thus in Buddhacarita we find various doctrines of this sect.

Asvaghosa was so expert in expressing his thoughts that the reality and rationality of his philosophy never for a moment retard the freshness, liveliness and loveliness of his poetry. His significant work not only illuminate the mid but also enters deeply into our innermost soul in such a manner that we don’t feel that we are reading philosophy in poetry.

**First Philosophical Discourse**

In the third canto, the Prince inevitably faces the hard facts of life for the first time viz. old age, disease and death. At the first sight of these fundamental facts of life, we find in him the first dawning of a deep philosophical wisdom- a divine discontent – a special kind of most beneficial spiritual discontent.

**Second philosophical discourse**

In the fourth canto, the charioteer, under orders of the king, takes Siddhartha to a pleasure garden where beautiful women were waiting to seduce him. The Prince firmly rejects their amorous advances, for which he was given long lectures by Udayin. But the unperturbed Prince then gave a long philosophical discourse, which contains the first tenet of Buddhism i.e. non-permanence and sorrowfulness of the world. The three well known Buddhist making-
"All things are full of sorrow, only sorrow", "All things are momentary only momentary", "All things are void only" are referred here⁴.

**Third philosophical discourse**

In the fifth canto, on realizing the world is full of sorrows because it is non permanent due to Disease- oldage ,death, the prince was very sad. Everything appears to him gloomy and full of despair. He them sat under a Jambu tree and started to think deeply about the origin and destruction of the world. His mind became steady and he attained complete steadiness in his 'Dhyana or concentration. That concentration was based on 'Vitarka and Vicara' (Reasoning and investigation). After that he attained a feeling of supreme love (Priti) which developed his power of discrimination (Viveka). Thus he attained a state of pleasant one-pointedness (Ekagrata)⁵. Here Asvaghosa has mentioned several steps of 'Dhyana'

**Fourth philosophical discourse:**

In the fifth canto, the prince decided to accept 'Sannyasa' and asked permission from his father. The father told him to follow the steps of first worldly enjoyment and then service, sacrifice and meditation. But the prince was adamant on his desire and put forward fundamental philosophical question in front of his father. He told if the king could assure him that - death would never assail him, disease would never deprive him of his health, old age never
destroy his youth and if disaster would never steal off his properties, then he would give up his idea to became a recluse\textsuperscript{6}. The king could not give him any assurance and the prince goes out and meditates in peace.

**Fifth philosophical discourse**

In the fifth canto, the king arranges some prostitutes to entice the prince. But Prince was thoroughly disgusted seeing them sleeping in indecent postures and give his philosophical idea. He told, women of that kind were injure and ugly looking in the world, but they befool men by being decorated with beautiful clothes and ornaments. But if men know their real, impure and ugly nature, they would not make the same mistake again. In this way, the prince realises the utility and sinful nature of such women\textsuperscript{7}.

**Sixth philosophical discourse:**

In the sixth canto, when the prince bid farewell to Chandaka, he told that physical enjoyment and enjoyment of worldly objects were the causes of all grieves. Those who were attached to worldly objects are bound to be sad.

Thus the prince is already at the threshold of great realization that root of all worldly sorrows is Avidya leading to the inexorable series: Avidya-Bhoga-Karma-Janma-Janmantara-Duhkha. But chaudaka was inconsolable\textsuperscript{8}. The prince then gave him another
philosophical discourse as the absolute necessity of destruction of death.

**Seventh philosophical discourse:**

In the seventh canto, we find the philosophical concept of Tapasya and Svaga (Heaven). The end of Tapasya is Svarya and not Moksa. Because varga is something that is non-eternal, it is the result of 'Punya-Karmas or Virtuous deeds. 'Punya-Karmas' are Sakama-karma as they aim at some kind of results like earthly honour or heavenly happiness⁹. A Punya-Karma-Karin goes to Sarga and on the exhaustion of his Punya return to the earth again. So, he has to start a fresh the series of Birth- Growth-Decay-death. But in Salvation alone, there is no return as it is due to Niskama-Karmas and Sadhanas. It is very hard, very difficult involving asceticism of the most difficult type. Buddhism avoids the two ethical extremes of sensualism and asceticism and adopts a beautiful middle path. According to which- "Do not subject yourself to physical and mental tortures and do not give way to earthly Bhogas or enjoyments in an uncontrolled manner". But take the middle path of looking after your body and mind, proceed on the path of Salvation.

**Eighth philosophical discourse:**

In the ninth canto, when the minister and the priest went to the forest to bring the prince back, the prince refused and gives philosophical discourse to them. He told "Moksa-Dharma" is based
on "Sama" or self-control and peace\textsuperscript{10}, white "Raja-Dharma" is based on "Danda" or punishing others and ferocity. Peace and ferocity cannot go together like water and fire cannot\textsuperscript{11}.

**Nineth philosophical discourse**

In the ninth canto again when the ministers and priests continued their pledge to him, he told that he is searching whether there is life after death or not, he has to know about it by his own self control and meditation\textsuperscript{12}. So, whatever may happen, he cannot return home like a foolish man. He will rather enter into a burning fire then return home unsuccessful.

**Tenth philosophical discourse:**

In the eleventh canto when the king of Magadha, Bimbisara requested him to get engaged in the worldly enjoyments, he replied that he is very much afraid of disease- old age-death and has come to find a path to attain salvation. He is convinced that the root like a carrier carrying the load of all and he being pierced by the sharp poisonous arrow of worldly birth and death, come out of the world and cannot go back\textsuperscript{13}.

**Eleventh philosophical discourse:**

In the twelfth canto, after not being satisfied with the instructions of Arada, Siddhartha gave his philosophical discourse (XII.69-80) propounding the central Buddhist doctrine of "Anattavada" or "Anatmavada"- the Doctrine that soul is not ancient (Sasvata),
eternal (Nitya) and unchanging (Sthira)\textsuperscript{14}. On the contrary it is changing every time, like a flowing river or a burning lamp.

**Twelfth philosophical discourse:**

In the twelfth canto, Siddhartha propounds another well known Buddhist Doctorine- "Majjhima-Patipada". The Middle Path which is neither a path of uncontrolled sensualities nor a path of unreasonable asceticism, but a path of harmonization of the body and the soul. He says that a physically weak and mentally dissatisfied person can never attain Salvation. If the senses are satisfied, mind too is satisfied and only in satisfied mind "Dhyana" is possible\textsuperscript{15}.

**Thirteenth philosophical discourse:**

In the fourteenth canto, original Buddhacarita ends abruptly. Here also we get philosophical idea (XIV.10-31)-"Deluded into doing works which really can bring no good to them worldly beings try vainly for worldly pleasures\textsuperscript{16}, etc."

**5.6.1 Samkhya Elements in Buddhacarita:**

In canto XI, Saga Agada explained the Samkhya theory of Atma (Ksetranjna). The sage explained ignorance (Ajmana), action (Karma) and desire (Trsna) as the cause of rebirth (cycle of existence)\textsuperscript{17}. According to Buddha the very existence of Atma possesses the quality of giving birth and also of being a seed\textsuperscript{18}. So
long as the Atma (soul) persists, there is no abandonment of that principle. Because it would again become bound from the continued existence of the causation condition. He further thought that if there has soul, as the known of the field, when without body, must be either knowing or unknowing. If it is knowing, there is something for it to know and if there is something for it to know, it is not liberated. As long as the soul persists there is no complete separation and where there the soul still persists, the three remain in subtle form. When Siddhartha requested sage Arada to explain him whether a person may be released from old age, disease and death, then he explained that primary matter, secondary matter, birth, death and old age an called being. The primary matter consists of five elements, the ego principle, intellect and the unseen power. By secondary matter is meant the objects of the senses, the senses, the hands and fact, the voice, the organs, generation, excretion and the minds\textsuperscript{19}. 

Relevance of this study in modern period of Sanskrit literature:

The critical study of Asvaghosa gives us an idea how the Sanskrit poetry have evolved from the ancient to modern era. The changes that come to our focus is probably because the society has changed around us from the ancient to modern period, after all literature represents the condition of the society. But how far be the society changed the main theme of literature never change and Sanskrit is no exception. It is now almost universally recognised that Sanskrit is the eldest daughter of the old mother-tongue of the Aryan people. The oldest of the Indian speeches is to be found in the Rgveda. In the language of the Rgveda, one can trace a gradual and steady development of the language of the classical Sanskrit through the later Saipbitas, the Brahmans and the Upanisads. The development however, is not as spontaneous as the modifications that are effected by popular speech. It has been controlled by tradition and grammatical studies. The word samskrta means purified and well-ordered. Sanskrit was indeed the language not only of Mvya or literature but of all the Indian sciences, and excepting the Pali of the Hmayana Buddhists and the Prakrt of the Jains, it was the only language in which the whole of India expressed all her best thoughts for the last 2 or 3 thousand years, and it has united the culture of India and given it a synchronous
form in spite of general differences of popular speech, racial and geographical, economical and other differences.

As a matter of fact, we understand from the critical study that the Kavya literature appears to have been aristocratic from the beginning and its exuberant fancy is quite in keeping with the taste which prevailed in the atmosphere of court life. In order to appreciate the Kavya, therefore, it is necessary to realise the condition under which it was produced and the environment in which it flourished. The pessimism of the Buddhistic ideal gradually disappeared having been replaced by more accommodating views about the value of pleasure. From various references we find that from its very dawn love is established as one of the dominant themes of the Kavya poetry. The Kavya, therefore, appears almost from its very beginning as the careful work of a trained and experienced specialist.

The kavya remains influential in modern Indian languages and literatures. Sanskrit models were taken by Bengali for its Mangal poems. Adaptation into Bengali meant vulgarization and emasculation of the Sanskrit originals. The inferior aspects of Sanskrit poetry like the exaggerated tenderness and sentimentality, ideology and the trickeries of its cliché and conceits have appealed the Bengali poets. Therefore jaded imageries from Sanskrit are often used. However Bengali could not meet Sanskrit as it was more religious in character.
In the days of old Bangla, indulgence had been observed while poetic works in Sanskrit was taken into consideration. Even after the evolution of Bangla, many well-known Bengali poets, such as Jaydev, Umapatidhara and Govardhan acharya, continued to compose their literary works in Sanskrit. The result was that many pure Sanskrit words entered Bangla from the very early stages.

However the present Bengali Literature no longer plays a submissive role to Sanskrit. Ramprasad Sen and Rabindranath Tagore illustrate the eclipse and the re-emergence of the Sanskrit classics. Kavya had influenced Rabindranath`s lyric poetry. Bengali literature in the past has derived many false standards and values from Sanskrit.

The critical analysis of a kavya of the class of Buddhacarita requires a good knowledge of Sanskrit grammar. This study has dealt seriously different aspects of the use of Alamkaras and Meters in Buddhacarita. While going through this study, the conception of alamkaras and meters have been explained in details which will enable the reader and also the researcher to analyze the quality of a classical poetry and thus to differentiate between various types of poetry on their literary merits.

The concepts of environment differ from age to age, since it depends upon the condition, prevalent at that particular time. In this paper, an effort is made to find out the awareness of ancient
Indian people about the environment. In modern Sanskrit, the word *Paryavarana* is used for environment, meaning which encircles us, which is all around in our surroundings. It is clear that the people of Asvaghosa’s time vision to live in harmony with environment was not merely physical but was far wider and much comprehensive. The Vedic people desired to live a life of hundred years and this wish can be fulfilled only when environment will be unpolluted, clean and peaceful.

Apart for knowing the various minutes about poetry, this study allows us to know the Buddhist philosophy. This very epic Buddhacarita has revealed the internal theme of Buddhism which is to abstain from unnecessary worldly entertainments. It shows us a path by which we can stay away from the excessive sensualism at the same time staying in the midst of all worldly pleasures. This concept is very important in today’s life. Buddhism appeals very much to the modern world because it is reasonable and scientifically based. Buddha said, "Do not believe in anything that I say just out of respect for me, but test it for yourself, analyze it, as if you were buying gold." Modern-day people like such a nondogmatic approach. This critical study which covers philosophical aspects in Buddhacarita, has described briefly various doctrines of Buddhism through various examples, which enables the reader to understand the complicated concept of Buddhism in a straightforward manner.
Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is evident that though it is a work of poetical narrative of heroic character and deeds, yet it is not a composition of the type of the Great Epics, The Ramayana and The Mahabharata which are classified as Itihasas. Though Buddhacarita is not included in the list of Great Epics yet it can be acclaimed as a Mahakavya as it satisfies almost all the prescribed norms.
References:

1. sargavanadha mahakavyam tatriekanayakah surah
   sadvamshah kshatriya vapi dhirudattaganameetah
   eka vamshbhava bhupah kunaya bahavaopi va
   srimgara virasantanam ekaongee rasa isyate
   onganir sarvepi rosah sarvainatakasandhayah
   itihasudbhavam vrttam ouyandvasajjanasrayam
   chhattarash tasya varghah syeutewekam ch phalahu bhavet
   adau namaskriya sahirvavastunirdhesa eva va
   kachit ninda khaladinam satam ch gunakirtanam
   ekavrttamayaiah paddairovasane anyevrattaokaih

.................................................(Sahityadarpan VI.315-325)

2. sargabandho mahakavyam ucyate tasya lakshanam
   aśīrnamaskriyā vastunirdeśo vāpi tanmukham /
     Dandin Kavyadarsa(DKd) _1.14
   itihāsākathodbhūtam itarad vā sadāśrayam
   caturvargaphalāyattaṃ caturudāttanāyakam // DKd_1.15
   Nagarārṇavāsailārtucandrārkodyavarṇanāaiḥ
   udvānasalilakṛṣṭāmadhupānaratotsavaiḥ // DKd_1.16
   vipralambhair vivāhāiś ca kumārodhayavarṇanāaiḥ
   mantradūtaprāyāṇājīnāyahābhvyudayair api // DKd_1.17
   alamkṛtam asaṃśiptaṃ rasabhāvanirantaram
   sargair anātivistīrṇāiḥ śravyavrtañca susamdhībhīḥ // DKd_1.18
   sarvatva bhinnavrtañca upetaṃ lokaraṇjanam
   kāvyāṃ kalpāntarasthāyī jyātate sad alamkṛti // DKd_1.19

3. tataḥ sa pūrvāsayaśuddhabuddhivistīrṇakalpācitaṃpunyakarmā |
   śrutvā jāraṁ sarīvivijā mahātma mahāśānerghośarnivāntike gauḥ || 3.34

4. kiṁ vinā nāvagaccharmi capalaṁ yauvanaṁ strīyāḥ |
   yato rūpeṇa sampannam jareyaṁ nāśayiṣyati || 4.56

5. adhigamyā tato vivekajāṁ tu paramaprītisukham [manah] samādhiṁ |
   idameva tataḥ param pradadhyau manasā lokagatiṁ niśamya samyak || 5.11

6. na bhavenmaranāyā jīvitarāv me viharatesvāṣthymidam ca me na rogaḥ |
   na ca yauvanamāksīpejjarā me na ca sampattimāpahedvīpattih || 5.35

7. vīmṛṣedādhiyoṣṭāṁ manusyaḥ prakṛtiṁ svapnavikāramidrśāṁ ca |
   dhruvamatra na vardhayetpramādaṁ guṇasamkalpahastastu rāgameti || 5.65
8. śokatyāgāya niṣkrāṁtaṁ na māṁ śocitumahasi || śokahetuṣu kāmesu saktāḥ śocyāstu rāgīnaḥ || 6.18
9. śarīrapidda tu yādiha dharmah sukham śarīrasya bhavatyadharmah || dharmena caṇṇoṣu sukham paratra tasmādadharman phalatiha dharmah || 7.26
10. na caīṣa dharmo vana eva siddhaḥ pure pī siddhārṇiyatā yatāṁ || buddhīśca yatnaśca nimittamatra vanam ca liṅgāṁ ca hi bhirucihnām || 9.18
11. yā ca śrutirmokṣamāptavanto nṛpa gṛhaṭhā iti naitadasti || śamapradhānaḥ kva ca mokṣadharmo daṁdapradhānaḥ kva ca rājadharmah || 9.48
12. iḥāsti nāsti ta ya eṣa saṃśayaḥ parasya vākyairna mamātra niścayāḥ || avetya tattvam tapaṅa śaḥmena vā svayam grahaśyāmi yadatra niścitam || (9.73)
13. jāraṁdho vyādhiṁkīraṇasyaṅkya yadāṁtako vyādha ivāṣritaḥ sthitāḥ || praṛāmrāṅgaḥ bhāgyavānaśrīrāṁstudan vayaḥprakarṣaṁ prati ko manorathaḥ || 11.62
14. prāgdehaṁna bhaveddehi prāgguṇeḥbhastathā guṇiḥ || kasmādaṁda vimaṅktaḥ saṅśarīriḥ badhyate punah || (12.79)
15. kṣuptipaśaśramakāṁtaḥ śramādaṁvasthamānasah || prāṅnuṇāmanasāvāpyāṁ phalam kathamanirvṛtaḥ || (12.103)
16. hasadbhiryaktṛtaṁ karma kaluṣaṁ kaluṣātmabhīḥ || etapāṇaṁ kāle kroṣadbhiranubhyāte || 14.19
17. ajñānaṁ karma trṣṇā ca jñeyāḥ saṁsāraḥetavah || sthitāḥ smriṁstrītye yastu tatsaṁtaṁ nābhivartate || 12.23
18. vikāraprikṛtiḥyō hi kṣetrayāṁ muktamapyaḥ || manye prasavadharmāṅgam vijayadharmāṁnameva ca || 12.70
19. vikāraḥ iti buddhiṁ tu viṣayāṁ nirādvīdaṁ ca || pāṇipādaṁ ca vāḍaṁ ca pāyūpasthaṁ tathā manah || 12.19

***Note: In these references, the verses from Buddhacarita are mentioned only as the canto no & verse no., book name i.e. Buddhacarita by Asvaghosa is not mentioned. So, all references without book name readily suggest that the are from Buddhacarita by Asvaghosa. References from the sources other than thses are mentioned along with their bookname.***