INTRODUCTION
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Vyākaraṇa, the most prominent of the six vedangas has been studied with great zeal in ancient India. Among the different systems of Sanskrit grammar that arose in India, the school of Pāṇini is the most outstanding and the most popular. Pāṇini (c.600 B.C.) the author of Astādhyāyī. Kātyāyana (c.500 to 350 B.C.) the author of the vartikas and Patañjali (c.150 B.C.) the author of Mahābhāṣya are traditionally known as 'manitraya' who gave the law to the science of grammar.

The Kāśika of Jayāditya and Vāmana of the 7th century A.D. is the fullest commentary on Astādhyāyī. The rules of Astādhyāyī are arranged in such a manner that only after a careful study of Astādhyāyī, one acquires knowledge of the various topics of grammar and hence the students of Pāṇini were not satisfied with the exhaustive commentaries like Kāśika which explained the rules in the order of Astādhyāyī itself. An attempt was therefore made to recast the sutras of Pāṇini according to the subjects treated therein. The works, which are the outcome of this subject-wise treatment of Astādhyāyī, are better known as Prakriyā works and proved most suitable to the changing needs of the hour because
Sanskrit was no longer a spoken language. *Rūpavatāra* is the earliest work of this type. It is followed by later works like *Prakriyāratna* of unknown authorship (c. 13th century A.D.), *Rūpamālā* of Vimalasarasvatī (c. 13th century A.D.), *Prakriyākaumudi* of Rāmacandra (15th century A.D.), *Prakriyāsarvasva* of Narāyana Bhatta (16th - 17th century A.D.) and *Siddhāntakaumudi* of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita (16th - 17th century A.D.).

The present study is divided into three parts. Part I 'GENERAL', consisting of three chapters, aims at introducing the author and his work. Chapter I is concerned with Dharmakīrtī with particular reference to his authorship, identity and date. Chapter II gives a description of the work with main reference to its origin, title, contents, sources and commentaries. The characteristic features of the work as well as its defects and drawbacks are elaborated in chapter III. Part - II is termed 'ANALYTICAL STUDY' and contains chapters IV to VII. The text is analysed in all its details in this part. Chapters IV and V are meant for examining the treatment of the science of grammar by Dharmakīrtī with particular regard to the interpretation, illustration of sutras and the like. Chapter VI examines the readings of the sutras
and discusses the vartikas while Chapter VII is concerned with the verses of Rūpavatāra, a meritorious feature of the work. Part III 'OBSERVATIONS' comprehends Chapters VIII and IX. A comparative study of Rūpavatāra with Kasikā and later recasts like Siddhāntakumārī is attempted in Chapter VIII and Chapter IX sums up the results of this critical study and concludes with an attempt to evaluate the work. The appendix, comprehending 1. List of rules of Astādhyāyī interpreted in Rūpavatāra, and 2. List of rules of Astādhyāyī referred to in Rūpavatāra, has got great bearing on this thesis since it gives an analytical outline of this recast of Astādhyāyī.

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to bring out all the meritorious as well as defective aspects of the work which is the first outcome of prakriyā style of treatment of the rules of Astādhyāyī and consequently it has been established that Dharmakirti deserves high esteem for the creation of this recast and that, to a beginner of Sanskrit grammar expounded by Pāṇini, this work is a better asset than any other one in the field.