INTRODUCTION

Indian languages have a long and glorious tradition of lexicographic works. We have enough proofs of this in ancient Sanskrit and Greek literature. Ours being an oral learning tradition, the education is transmitted through a never ending teacher-pupil relationship. In the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali we come across a story that Brhaspati, the preceptor of Gods, started teaching Devendra, the *Śabdānuśāsana* i.e. the recitation of vocabulary in Sanskrit. The study lasted for 1000 divine years, even then Indra could not come to the end of his aim. There is a lot to discuss about this story. First of all, the study of individual words of a language needs a careful analysis of the form found in it. When a speaker receives a literature, oral or written, which exhibited forms and expressions which were obviously new to him, he was forced to investigate the problem relating to the origin of such forms and expressions. This results in the development of a new branch of technical literature called *Vyākaraṇa* or grammar.

The lexicographic tradition in India closely follows that of vedic and classical Sanskrit tradition. Thus in India, in so far as vedic literature is concerned, the *Nighanṭu*-s were compiled as an ancillary branch of vedic tradition. These texts were orally transmitted in regular vedic schools and became the basis of Yāska’s *Nirukta*. The nature of glossing may be seen in the development of the *Brāhmaṇa* literature. Pāṇini’s analysis of Sanskrit not only indicates that it is the result of a continuous process of analytical study but also attests a collection of analysed material into systematic groups such as *ganaṃpatha* and *dhātupātha*. 
The later lexicons in India are all set in verse form. In no language, but for Sanskrit the versified vocabulary has been successfully accomplished. The importance of lexicographical study can be understood from the educational system of olden days. They initiated the study with Pāṇini's grammar and Amarasimha's Nāmalīṅgānuśāsana, one of the most celebrated Sanskrit lexicon. Kālidāsa poetically corroborates the above said view of inseparable nature of grammar and lexicography in his Raghuvamśa - 'vāgarthāviva sampṛkṣtau.....' etc. The same idea is further stressed by the popular saying - Aṣṭādhyāyī jaganmātā Amarakośo jagatpitā. Though Amarakośa had eclipsed all the lexicons written before and after it, Abhidhānaratnamālā of Halāyudha is an equally popular and widely quoted lexicon by commentators like Ujjvaladatta, Mallinātha, Medinikāra, Kāṭayavema (on Śākuntala), Jayamaṅgala (on Bhaṭṭī kāvyā) Narahari (in his Cūḍāmanī), Nārāyaṇa (on the Uttararāmacarita), Padmanābhadatta (on the Bhuvanēśvarī stotra) Bhāratīśena (on the Bhaṭṭī kāvyā), Bhānuji Dīkṣita (on Amarkośa), Raṅganātha (on Vikramorvaśīya), Rāyamukta (on Amarakośa), Śivadatta (in his Śivakośa) and a number of other scholars.

I. Subject and Nature of the work:

The Abhidhānaratnamālā is a vocabulary of small extent containing about 900 stanzas and it is divided into five kāṇḍa-s as follows: (1) Svargakāṇḍa (2) Bhūmikāṇḍa, (3) Pāṭālakāṇḍa, (4) Sāmānyakāṇḍa and (5) Anekārthakāṇḍa. The first four of these deal with synonyms while the last one is devoted for homonyms and the indeclinables. In the very second verse of Abhidhānaratnamālā, Halāyudha describes the nature and purpose of his work. After having compiled the previous works of Amaradatta,
Vararuci, Bhāguri and Vopālita, he compiles his work namely Abhidhānaratnamālā, in order to help the poets. It is a basic necessity of a poet to be very rich in vocabulary. So, keeping this point in his mind Halāyudha has attempted in compiling only essential words that required more importance and terms of technical value. Hence his dictionary is concise and less copious.

Halāyudha’s style is very simple and straight. He will give one example and on that basis the reader should guess other words which are needless to include as it will make his work voluminous. For example, while mentioning the synonyms of Brahmā, the four faced God, he has just mentioned the word padmabhūḥ, the rest of the words like kamalabhūḥ or abjanmā etc., should be coined on our own. In this aspect Halāyudha’s Kośa is handy and gives room for the creativity of the reader. It does not mean that Halāyudha has carelessly omitted these words but he considered them pointless of mentioning. He did not, obviously, wanted to increase the number of entries in his work, which may cause the reader a sort of boredom and who will gradually give up studying his work. If a work is short and sweet it will be easily followed by every one. Therefore, Halāyudha has adopted this technique and he had the faith in his readers that they will be able to coin other like words on their own.

In the same way, the work of Halāyudha does not stress too much the gender and number as Amarakośa, however, in other respects it generally follows the latter, as the gender can be easily inferred by the way the author has arranged. For example, in the following sloka:

svaḥ svargah surasadma tridaśāvāsas triviṣṭapam tridivam/
dyauḥ gauḥ amartyabhuvanam nākah syād ūrdhvalokāśca//
we can easily infer that svah, svargah, tridaśāvāsah, dyauḥ, gauḥ, nākah and ūrdhvalokaḥ should be used in masculine gender, and the words triviṣṭapam, tridivam and amartyabhuvanam in neuter gender. Thus making simple the task of building up one’s word power.

II. Plea for Cultural Study and Scope of the work:

It is the well known truth that India is the birth place for many civilizations, religions and philosophical systems. She is not only rich by means of natural resources but also with cultural heritage. Though she has mothered different types of customs and habits, arts and architecture, language and literature, she still remains as a whole, the reason for which is the natural unity underlying the diversified culture which has nourished her in turn. So this factor is always compelling to study her culture which is of interest taking from the researchers to the laymen.

It is proper to undertake a cultural study on a lexicon because, language is the main phenomenon which reflects the culture of a particular people by means of literature and the language is well preserved in unbiased manner in the lexicons, for there is no scope for exaggeration or hyperbole in a scientific or technical treatise. So a study of a particular culture can be more thoroughly executed from the lexicon than the literature where the author is tend to fancy and exaggerate.

As it is established doubtlessly that lexicons, which preserve the culture of the period to which they belong, are best suited for a cultural study, again it is proper to resort to a lexicon penned by a Hindu author. Because the chief religion of India is Hinduism and to study the Hindu culture through the
eyes of a Hindu author will be more relevant. So, on this basis Abhidhānaratnamālā (here after ARM) has been selected as a treatise (from the Hinduism point of view).

In Sanskrit the Kośa literature is dominated by a group of Jaina authors like renowned Amarasimha, Hemacandra etc. It is Halāyudha, who bravely sets his feet in the zone much alien to Hindu authors, and finds a way to establish his own place for himself and his work.

III. Author and Date:

Halāyudha the author of the present lexicon is said to have flourished by the middle of 1000 AD. R.G.Bhandarkar,¹ identifies him with the author of Kavirahasya, a grammatical work written in honour of the King Kṛṣṇa III (AD 940-56) of the Rastrakūta family.² Halāyudha is also said to be the author of three works viz., (i) Abhidhānaratnamālā (ii) Kavirahasya and (iii) Mṛtasāñjīvini, a commentary on the Chandaḥ-sūtra of Piṅgala. The last is said to have been written in the reign of King Muṇja Vākpati of Dhārā.³

Th. Aufrecht has expressed his view that the Halāyudha who shares with our author the epithet of ‘Bhattach’ composed a commentary on the Piṅgalachandhas. He may, perhaps, be identified with the writer of Kośa; chiefly on account of the many artificial meters which he uses, and which no lexicographer has taken the liberty of employing for such a dry subject as a string of synonyms. But Dr. C.P. Bhattachṭa⁴ comes forward with an irrefutable argument to prove that both these Halāyudha-s are different. In the Mṛtasāñjīvini, Halāyudha refers to ‘caturāṅga’ and a game-board with sixty
four squares. This was considered to be a reference to chess. But there is no reference in the ARM either to caturāṅga or to aṣṭāpada (a board with sixty-four squares) in the sense of a game board. The word aṣṭāpada, has, however, occurred in the sense of gold. Further there is no allusion to the lexicon in the work Mṛtasaṁjīvini. So, on the basis of these two instances, C.P. Bhaṭṭa rejects the identity of the authors of these two works. This argument also receives support from the ‘India Office Catalogue’ where the authors of the ARM and Kavirahasya are regarded as identical and the author of Mṛtasaṁjīvini as a different person.

M.Krishnamachary says that Dhanāpala the author of Tilakamaṇjarī was a contemporary of Halāyudha, the author of Kavirahasya; and the date of Dhanapāla, he determines as 1000 AD, for one of the work of Dhanapāla, named Paiyālacchī Nāmamāḷā was composed by him in the sāṃvat. 1029 (c.972-73 AD). If this Halāyudha is identified with the author of ARM, then his date can be assigned to the 10th Century AD. The fact that Kavirahasya was composed as a metrical guide to poets in the employment of verbal forms, as well as an eulogy of Kṛṣṇa III of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa family who lived in 940-56 AD, gives strength to the above said view.

There are few more evidences to prove that Halāyudha, the author of ARM must have lived before 11th century AD. The ARM was commented upon in Kannāḍa most probably by Nāgavarman - II long ago. He flourished in 1145 AD. Secondly a work namely Abhinavābhidhānam was composed by Maṅgaraja on the model of Halāyudha’s ARM, in 1398 AD. M. Mariappa Bhat says that there are evidences in the work to show that
Nāgavarmā’s commentary of *Abhidhānaratnamālā* have been bodily incorporated in many places.

Unfortunately there is no direct reference to the date and other works of Halāyudha in ARM. Among his authorities Halāyudha mentions Amaradatta, Vararuci, Bhāguri, and Vopālīta. In the absence of direct evidences, we are, therefore, compelled to be contented with the available information recorded above. After considering all the above said arguments we can arrive at a conclusion that the author of *Kavirahasya* can be identified with the author of ARM where as the Halāyudha of *Mṛtaśaṅjīvinī* is distinct. Regarding the date of the author, we have enough proof to believe that Halāyudha has lived in the late 10th century AD, and we shall hardly go too far back if we place him in between the 10th to 11th century.

In the following pages an attempt is carried out to make a cultural study of *Abhidhānaratnamālā* under various topics.

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NOTES


2. Keith, History of Sanskrit literature, p.188.


5. ARM, 2. 18.


12. ARM, I.2