CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The Author - Identity, Life
Birthplace Date and Works - Scholarship of Vidyāmīdhava
The presence of aesthetically and intellectually erudite innumerable commentaries of various kinds of Sanskrit texts has elevated the status of the former into yet another genre of Sanskrit literature. Further, since its presence is conspicuous, recently there has been a number of works emerging either critically evaluating such commentaries or analysing comparatively various editions of the same text or comparative critical reading of different commentaries of the same text or other kinds of textual readings of the commentaries making use of theories and concepts of literary theories. All these attempts, in a sense, constituted these critical literary pursuits into yet another genre of discourse in literature, namely critical reading of the commentaries of the original Sanskrit texts. The present work can also be considered in these directions of critical reading of commentaries, where focus will be on introducing a hitherto unknown version of a commentary on *Kumārasambhava* composed by Vidyāmādhava.

*Kumārasambhava* is one of the greatest poem ever written in Sanskrit literature. The reputation of *Kumārasambhava* is very high
and it is appreciated and exalted as one of the five Mahākāvyas in Sanskrit literature. Since the work got much popularity due to its poetic merit, a number of commentaries were written on the work throughout India in Sanskrit as well as vernaculars.

There are about forty-four commentaries on Kumārasambhava available now. Among these, the commentary written by Vidyāmādhava is very famous among the scholars of Sanskrit.

1. The Author

Identity

In Keralasāhityacaritra, there are references of more than one Vidyāmādhava. Among them the first one is the author of Vidyāmādhavīya commentary on Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa and Kirātārjunīya of Bhāravi. Another Vidyāmādhava is the author of the poem Pārvatīrakmiṇīya. There is one more Vidyāmādhava who is an astrologer. He wrote a work called Muhūrtamādhavīya, a horay astrologic work. According to C. Panduranga Bhatta¹, all these are one and the same Vidyāmādhava.

¹ Contribution of Karnataka to Sanskrit (CKS), p. 418.
seems to have been the name of several individuals. One was the author of a commentary on *Kumārasambhava* and on the *Kirātārjunīya*. He seems to be identical with the astronomer Vidyāmādhavasūrin, the author of *Muhūrtadarśana* or *Vidyāmādhavīya*. The original name of Vidyāmādhava was Mādhavapaṇḍita. He was a learned scholar and a versatile poet. Hence appropriate to his knowledge, he acquired the name Vidyāmādhava. A village by name Guṇavanta (now Gunavanthe) of Honnavar taluk in Karwar district in Karnataka was the birthplace of Mādhavapaṇḍita. The concluding portions of *Muhūrtadīpikā* furnish all the details about the personal history of Vidyāmādhava. Mallinātha (also called Mallappa) the last son of Bukkarāyar of Vijayanagara was the patron of Vidyāmādhava. Mallinātha was the ruler of western coast of Mysore in AD 1363.²

So rest of the discussion in this thesis is based on the assumption that all these are the same individual.

Vidyāmādhava's father was a Nārāyaṇapaṇḍita and he was the grandson of Ratnagiri's brother. Ratnagiri is said to be a famous

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². Forward by H. P. Devaki to Vidyāmādhava's *Vidyāmādhavīya*. 
saint. His son was Viṣṇusūrin, who wrote a commentary called Muhūrtadīpikā or Muhūrtamādhavīya. But according to Ullur³, Viṣṇu was his disciple.

**Life**

Vidyāmādhava as a commentator of supreme poetic sensibility and critical acumen is a distinguished personality. He has a well deserved high position in the galaxy of scholars of India, who made their mark in the arena of Sanskrit literature. Vidyāmādhava is mainly remembered for his famous commentaries named Vidyāmādhavīya by which he made Mallinātha, next to him.

**Birth Place**

Scholars in general are of the opinion that Vidyāmādhava belongs to Karnataka. Some information about his birth place can be gathered from his own works. In the beginning of the commentary on Kirātārjunīya, Vidyāmādhava gives his own details as follows

From this it is clear that Vidyāmādhava got birth in Nīlamana in Guṇavantagrāma. According to Vatakumkur⁵ Guṇavantagrāma is the place situated four miles south to Gokarṇa temple. Guṇavantagrāma (now Gunavanthe) as mentioned above, as mentioned above is situated in Honnavar taluk in Karwar district of Karnataka.

Date

As regards the date of Vidyāmādhava scholars are of different opinion. According to Panduranga Bhatta⁶, Vidyāmādhava belonged to the early 14th century AD. He further says that Vidyāmādhava was a contemporary of Mallappa Odeya, son of Bukka. Again another reference⁷ says that Vidyāmādhava

flourished under the king Someśvara I, one of the later Cālukyas. H. P. Devaki also supports this idea.

Similar references can be seen in *Kerala Sāhitya Caritraṇḍ* of Ullur, and *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* of Krishnamachariar and *Samskṛtavijñānakōśam* of Poovattur Ramakrishna Pillai which too agree with this opinion. One more point to be noted at this context which is most important is that, while going through the commentary, references on Dakṣiṇāvartanātha can be noticed in it. The date of Dakṣiṇāvartanātha is fixed to 13th century AD. This means Vidyāmādhava is posterior to Dakṣiṇāvartanātha. Thus, on the basis of above data it can safely be concluded that the date of Vidyāmādhava is after 13th century AD. Fixing a reasonable later limit in his case could not be done for want of enough evidence.

**Works**

In the literary history of India no ancient author normally gives

8. Forward by H. P. Devaki to Vidyāmādhava's *Vidyāmādhaviyam*,


a list of his own works. This is one of the most difficult problems faced by the students of the history of Sanskrit literature. So it is very difficult to form a clear data about the works of an author. Vidyāmādhava also is not an exception in this regard. Notwithstanding, from the scattered and vague references of his own, it may not be wide of the mark to ascertain that the author of the commentary on Kumārasambhava and Kirātārjunīya is Vidyāmādhava. At the beginning of the commentary on Kirātārjunīya,\textsuperscript{12} and in the colophon of the commentary on Kumārasambhava\textsuperscript{13}, he clearly mentions his name as its author.

His another work is Pārvatīrukminiīya. This is a Dvisandhānakāvya written in 'Sabhaṅgaśleṣa' that simultaneously depicts the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī and Kṛṣṇa and Rukminiī in the same words. This has been composed in nine cantos. Besides these, he wrote an astrological kāvya named Muhūrtadarśana, otherwise known as Muhūrtamādhavīya or Vidyāmādhaviya.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} श्रीमत्रीलगुहालये गुणवत्तियामेप्रभृतः पदे।
ख्यातो रतनगीरिसिंहघुनिरस्सूलुः तत्तावृत्तात्मकः।।
यो नारायणसूरिस्स्य तन्यो व्याख्यातुमधारमः।
विद्यामाधवसंज्ञितः कविर्हें काव्यं महद्भारेः।।
\item \textsuperscript{13} इति विद्यामाधवप्रमितविशिष्टिकायां कुमारसम्भवाप्रकाशिकायां प्रमस्तरः।।
\end{itemize}
2. Scholarship of Vidyāmādhava

Profound scholarship in different fields of learning is one of the indispensable qualification of commentator of an ancient work. A scholar, although he being a sahṛdaya, if not well-versed in almost all the Śāstras in Sanskrit would not be capable to elucidate all the hidden beauties of a literary work, especially of a classical work like Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa. In other words in addition to being a sahṛdaya, a commentator is supposed to be 'samānadharma' (equal in mentality) of the poet. Only such person can feel and respond exactly as the poet does.

One of the factors that could come before the eyes of even a lay reader of the commentary of Vidyāmādhava while going through it is the intensive as well as extensive knowledge that he had over different genres of Sanskrit literature. Still what is more striking is, inspite of his deep scholarship and the intensity of references appear in the commentary it never poses a hurdle before a reader to pursue through. Moreover the authorial intervention open up a new and simple way for a proper and deeper understanding and appreciation of the original work.
As said earlier, Vidyāmādhava, like other traditional commentators, had deep erudition in various branches of knowledge such as Dharmaśāstra, Veda, Purāṇa, Kośa, Kāvya, Kāvyashastra, Nāṭya, Saṅgīta, Jyotiṣa etc.

Citations from Śruti, Smṛti and Dharmaśāstra are ample proof to the author's knowledge in Dharmaśāstra. Vidyāmādhava was deeply conversant with Pāṇiniyan grammar. He profusely quotes from Aṣṭādhyāyī. He also quotes Vararuci, the great scholar of Sanskrit grammar. Other notable quotations are from the Gārgyaśaṣṭhitā and Parāśarasamhitā. He goes to Purāṇas also whenever necessary. He was a man of wide reading. At several places Vidyāmādhava quotes legendary accounts or explains the stories from Purāṇas. Reference from Śaivāgama indicates Vidyāmādhava's knowledge in this area also. Vidyāmādhava had vast knowledge of lexical literature. Apart from citations from famous works like Amarakośa, Bhoja's Nāmamālikā, Sarasvatīkaṃṭhābharaṇa and Vaijayantīkośa of Yādavaprabhāśa are also can be found in it. Vidyāmādhava is familiar with other lexicons like that of Keśavasvāmin, Halāyudha and Śaśvata.
There are quotations from technical works like Viśvaprakāśikā, Yogaratnakośa, Yogaśāstra, Nighaṇṭu and Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. Besides, there are rare citations from Māgha, Kālidāsa and Murāri.\textsuperscript{14}

The fact that Vidyāmādhava was an erudite scholar, proficient in almost all the branches of Sanskrit literature is clear from the above description and that would invariably have helped him in commenting on the work Kumārasambhava that in turn made the commentary an easily comprehensive one.

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\textsuperscript{14} All the quotations are given in the appendix.