KĀMAKUMĀRAHARAṆA :
A CRITICAL STUDY
(A) Kāmakumāraharaṇa - A General Introduction:

The Kāmakumāraharaṇa, literally ‘the kidnapping of the son of Kāmadeva,’ is a Sanskrit dramatical work. It is one of the few Sanskrit plays composed in Assam during 17th-18th century A.D. The author of the drama, Kavicandra Dvija, who is said to be one of the court poets of the Ahom king, Svargadew Siva-Simha (1714-1744), a great patron of art and literature. The present work is found in both (i) printed and (ii) manuscript forms. The printed edition is available to the readers in the Rūpakatrayam, edited by Dr. Satyendranath Sharma, formerly Tagore Professor of Modern Indian Language, Gauhati University, and published by Asom Sahitya Sabha in 1962. This edition is based on a manuscript written in old Assamese script on sānci bark (aquilaria agallocha) containing 78 folios. The manuscript is preserved in the Kāmarūp Sanskrit Sañjīvani Sabhā at Nalbari, the headquarters of the district of the same name.

The Theme

The popular puranic legend of Īśā and Aniruddha finds its impetus in this work of Kavicandra Dvija. This legend is largely available in the Śrīmadbhāgavata-purāṇa and the Harivarṇaśa (a khila of the Mahābhārata). The

1. A photostat copy of this manuscript is obtained from the same source for the purpose of the present study
Uttara-Khaṇḍa of the Padma-purāṇa and the fifth section of the Viṣṇu-purāṇa also contain the story of Ḫūśā and Aniruddha. However, the story of Ḫūśā and Aniruddha, delineated in the Kāmakumāraharaṇa is an amalgamation of the stories from the Śrīmad-bhāgavata-purāṇa and the Harivaṁśa. Based on this puranic story several works were composed by different authors from Assam prior to Kavicandra Dvija. The Ḫūśaparīṇayā-kāvyā of Pīṭhāmbara Dvija, a contemporary of Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, the Kumaraḥaraṇa-kāvyā of Ananta Kandali, etc., are few such works which might have been the source of inspiration for our author, Kavicandra. Our playwright, however, seems to have followed more keenly the Kumaraḥaraṇa-kāvyā of Ananta Kandali.

Regarding the source of his play, the author expresses his indebtedness to the 'Śrī-Bhāgavata-Harivaṁśa' which, however, appears to be misleading to the readers. 'Śrī-Bhāgavata' generally implies the Śrīmad-bhāgavata-purāṇa, whereas the Harivaṁśa, a khila of the Mahābhārata was never been referred to as Śrī-Bhāgavata. Hence, it appears to be more convenient for us to interprete the term Śrī-Bhāgavata-Harivaṁśa as both the Śrīmadbhāgavata and the Harivaṁśa. The story of Ḫūśā and Aniruddha as available in the Harivaṁśa is happily blended with the story presented in the Śrīmadbhāgavatapurāṇa in the hands of Ananta Kandali, and our author seems to follow the line of Ananta Kandali.

2. It is evident from the concluding remarks of the poet at the close of each Act of the play which runs as follows:

"ītī...śrībhāgavata-harivaṁśa-samuddḥṛta-kāmakumāraharaṇa-nāṭakaḥ prathamoṅikaḥ."
Characteristics

Inspite of its being composed in the pattern of a classical Sanskrit drama, the *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* bears certain peculiarities which are not found among the common features in the dramatic works of the classical masters like Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, and so on and so forth. The author has adopted the new dramatic code as established in the 16th century Assamese Brajāvalī dramas of Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva. That is how our drama happens to have the following distinctive features:

1) The Sūtradhāra conducts the entire performance of the drama from beginning to the end.

2) Preponderence of music, songs and dances set to the classical tālas and rāgas and descriptive payāra songs expressing beauties of heroes and heroines or pathetic and emotional situations are present.

3) Each act ends with benedictory stanzas.

4) Along with the Sanskrit verses in classical metres, viz. Śārdūlavikriḍita, Sragdharā, Vasantatilakā, etc., Assamese songs and metres, such as Lechārī, Dulaḍī, Payār, Muktāvalī etc., are also introduced:

5) Many local expressions in Sanskritised form are found in the drama. However, the most interesting feature is the employment of Assamese

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3. Local expressions in Sanskritised form in various places are:

(a) *Bṛhadṛṣṭa-pada-prakhyāta*...........etc.

the word *Bṛhadṛṣṭa* is a Sanskritised form of Assamese *Bar-raja*, meaning 'Chief Ruler'.

(b) ‘dānte trāṇāḥ vidhāya tvayi śraṇān gataśmi’ which seems to be parallel to ‘dānte trāṇa tuli lañño / yimate sevāta raño / diyā moka schi upadeśā /’ Ghoṣā No. 130 in the *Nama-ghoṣā* of Mahāpuṣṭa Madhavadeva
nuptial songs. The *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* occupies a very significant place in the history of the Sanskrit dramatic literature in respect of the following features:

1) It is a contribution to the field of Sanskrit drama by an Assamese poet.

2) The drama, though composed in Sanskrit language, the general rules of Sanskrit dramas are not entirely followed here. It contains certain elements which are the distinctive features of Vaiṣṇava Aṅkīyā-nāṭa-s of Assam which are not seen anywhere in the Sanskrit dramas composed according to the traditional rules of dramaturgy.

3) This drama attempts a very bold experiment in respect of composing Sanskrit verses in typically Assamese metres.

4) Last but not least, this drama deserves to be reckoned with as a very important datum in respect of the cultural history of Assam pertaining to the first part of the eighteenth century of our era.

It may be mentioned, in this connection, that a Sanskrit drama like the *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* could not have been composed in this corner of the country unless Assam had a rich tradition of Sanskrit learning and classical literary activities prior to the time of our author.

(B) Tradition of Sanskrit Learning in Assam - The Background:

The hoary land of Prāgjyotisha-Kāmarūpa, as Assam was anciently

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4. Please refer to Part B, Chap. III, Section B
5. 'The kingdom came to be known as Kāmarūpa during the Purānic times based on the legend that Kāmadeva, the god of love, —the Indian Cupid, who was destroyed by the fiery glance of Śiva, returned to life in this country.' K. L. Barua Bahadur, *Early History of Kamrūpa*, p. 10
known, is a great centre of Sanskrit learning since very early times. The fact that Sanskrit Brāhmanical culture in its varied aspects entered this ancient land very early, and there is hardly any need to reemphasise that aspect. Both archaeological and literary evidences show that Assam from the time of the epics, if not earlier, was a centre of Sanskrit learning, and both vidyā and kālā, including the Vedic studies were being cultured here. The existence of a large number of Sanskrit inscriptions and handwritten manuscripts scattered throughout the various corners of the state bear evidence to the flourishing Sanskrit Brahmanical learning in Assam since very early times.

The available archaeological and literary evidences show that it was mainly under the patronage of the rulers of this land that Brahmanical culture and Sanskrit learning expanded and reached even the far corners of the country. The rulers took personal interest in the matter of diffusion of Sanskrit learning in the land. They not only encouraged the immigration of men of learning to Assam but also settled them in agrahāra-s which were created for the purpose in different localities of the country, spreading as far as the remote areas and hilly terrains. It is also very important to note that the rulers themselves took interest in learning and composing verses in Sanskrit. This gave an impetus to the movement of the spread of Sanskrit learning in the early period of Assam history.

Epigraphical Evidence

We have a good number of epigraphical records from early Assam ranging from the 4th to 12th century A.D. These records, composed in classical
literary style, were incised on copper-plates, or engraved on solid rock boulders, stone-slabs or on stone or metallic images and also on bronze seals. These records from early period of Assam history are found edited/re-edited and compiled on three collections, viz, (i) the Kāmarūpa-Śāsanāvali, edited with annotated Bengali translation along with an elaborate introduction by MM Padmanath Bhattacharya Vidyāvinod.  

(ii) the Kāmarūpa-Śāsanāvali, re-edited with both Assamese and English rendering along with a long introduction in English by Dr. Dimbeswar Sarma, (iii) the Inscriptions of Ancient Assam, edited with parallel English translation along with a rich introduction and elaborate notes by Professor Mukunda Madhava Sarma. Besides the above, a few newly found records discovered subsequently to the publication of the above mentioned anthologies are still available in the pages of different research journals. Of the period between the 13th to 19th century A.D., we have about two hundred or more records of different hues almost all of which are found to be edited or re-edited with elaborate notes and long introduction both in English and Assamese by Professor M. Neog and compiled in one collection, (iv) the Prācyā-Śāsanāvali. Here again quite a few newly obtained inscriptions are still found scattered in the pages of journals.

The language of the early epigraphs is invariably Sanskrit. About the

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6. Published by Rangpur Sahitya Parisad, 1338 Sal
7. Published by Publication Board, Assam, 1981
8. Published by Gauhati University, 1978
9. Gauhati, 1974
standard of Sanskrit language used in the inscriptions, Professor M. M. Sharma and Professor H. K. Barpujari hold a very high opinion. Professor M. M. Sharma remarks that “the literary portions of the copper-plate grants also possess a high degree of literary beauty and conform to the classical kāvyastyle. These were evidently the compositions of certain learned Sanskrit scholars endowed with poetic talent.” Professor H. K. Barpujari also passes a similar remark: ‘The Doobi and the Nidhanpur grants of Bhāskaravarman exhibit a superb standard of literary craftsmanship comparing favourably with literary inscription of any part of India or of greater India.’

The fact that the rulers of Kāmarūpa encouraged immigration of learned scholars and settled them in agrahāra-s, created for the purpose of spreading Sanskrit learning, is evidenced from the copper-plate grants of Bhāskaravarman of 7th century A.D. The Nidhanpur copper plate grant informs us that king Bhūtivarman (6th century A.D.) of the Bhauma-Nāraka dynasty donated land to a large number of Brahman families in the Mayūra-Śāmala-agrāhāra in the district of Candrapuri (candrapuri-viṣaye) by issuing a copper plate charter. It also adds that due to the loss of the earlier copper plates, Bhāskaravarman issued a fresh copper-plate charters (i.e., the Doobi and the Nidhanpur copper-plates) for that purpose. In these grant the gotras of the brāhmaṇas and the Veda-śākhās followed by them are very clearly indicated.

10. *IAA*, p. 0.24
12. *NCP*, line 51-54, *PCP*, v. 76
The copper-plate grants of Vanamāla-varmadeva (middle of the 9th century A.D.) describes the city of Hadappēsvara as the place of inhabitation of innumerable honest scholars.13 This epigraphic record show that the donee of both the Tezpur copper-plate grant and the Parbaṭiyā copper-plate grant is one Jejjāta Bhaṭṭa, who is said to be the sole repository of the three Vedas in the Kali age. (verse 26)14

A similar statement is made in the copper-plate grants of Ratnapāla (c. 1035 A.D.) alluding to the capital city, Śrīdurjayā as a city of poetical figures created by the learned men and preceptors15 (lines 32-33). The Khanāmukhi copper-plate grant of Dharmapāla (1st half of the 12th century A.D.) mentions that the king had made a gift of land to a brahman, named Ummoka from Madhyadeśa. Jayapāla of 12th century A.D. made a tulāpurusa grant to Prahāsa, a brahman from Puṇḍra (North-Bengal) which the brahman ascetic said to have refused. Several other kings like Harijara, Dharmapāla, Balavarman, Indrapāla from early Assam seemed to have settled learned brahmans even in the hilly regions.

Thus, owing to the patronage extended by the rulers of Kāmarūpa, Brahmanical scholars belonging to varied Veda – śākhās and different brahmanical schools from different parts of India felt encouraged to flock to Assam and made it a famous centre of Sanskrit learning. Yuwan-Chwang, the

13. TCP, line 1-4; PCP, line 33
14. PCP, v. 26
15. BCP, line 32-33
Chinese pilgrim who visited Kāmarūpa, as Assam was known in the 7th century A.D., during the reign of Bhāskaravarman, (c. 594-650 A.D.), found the kingdom studed with large number of scholars inhabiting the land, so as to make it a great centre of high Sanskrit learning. He observed that Kāmarūpa was a famous centre of learning and scholars of high talents visited this land.

Scholars from Kāmarūpa were equally honoured by the contemporary rulers of India for their scholastic attainments. According to one authority, a learned Pundita from Kāmarūpa came to the famous University of Nālandā to take part in a debate relating to a religious controversy with the Buddhist scholars there.¹⁶

A brahman, named Viṣṇusomācāryya from Kāmarūpa, is said to have been honoured with a gift of land by the Gāṅga king Anantavarman of Kāliṅga kingdom of the 10th century A.D.¹⁷

One Pāramāra grant of the same period states that the brother of the king Vākpatirāja granted land to Vāmanasvāmī who was also from Kāmarūpa.¹⁸

The rulers of Ancient Kāmarūpa were scholars themselves besides being promoters of Sanskrit learning. The Gauhati Copper-plate grant of Indrapāla (c. 1058 A.D.) describes Purandarapāla, father of the donor king, as sukavi (v. 11) and said to have composed a famed work Nitikusuma, a work on state-craft

¹⁷. "vedavedāngaparājegerhyāḥ kāmarūpaviśaya-sīringātiṣkāgraḥāra-vāstavycēhyāḥ parāśarā- sagotrebyō viṣṇusomācāryapādebyo vivāhasamaye kanyā-dānam udakapurvvam kṛtvā” as quoted in A Cultural History of Assam, p. 121
¹⁸. E. L., XXVI, pp. 62-68; XXIII, p. 100
based on Sukraniti, while Indrapāla himself as having indepth knowledge of various lores such as Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsā and Tantra. (verse 16)

Harṣapāla, a king of Pāla dynasty, is credited with the composition of Sanskrit verses and the Kavīndra-vacana-samuccaya, an anthology, edited by F. W. Thomas, quoted one Sanskrit verse being composed by one Harṣapāla in the passage 47-48. This Harṣapāla may probably be identified with the father of Dharmapāla; and in the Khanāmukhi grant of the later, Harṣapāla has been described as being favoured by the goddess of learning also. (verse no 9)

The Saduktikarṇāmṛta, an anthology by Śridharadāsa preserved ten verses composed by one Dharmapāla. N. N. Dasgupta has confirmed these verses as being composed by king Dharmapāla-deva of Kāmarupa. King Dharmapāla, who is described as a consumate poet (kavi-cakravāla-cūḍāmaṇi), again, is said to have composed the first eight verses of his Puṣpabhadrā copper-plate grant. (v. 8)

A corpus of inscriptions on copper-plates, rock or stone slabs, body of canons and so on obtained from eastern India of a period roughly covering the reign of the Ahoms (c. 1228-1826 A.D.), was edited and compiled by Professor M. Neog in his Prācyā-Śasanāvali, also show that the tradition of Sanskrit learning persisted throughout the medieval period in the History of Assam.

Literary Evidence

Besides the epigraphic records, literary products on various branches of

19. JARS, IV, pp. 56-57
learning prove the rich heritage of Sanskrit learning in ancient Assam (sic Kāmarūpa). It is a known fact that the Kālikā purāṇa, a typical sthalapurāṇa, was composed in Assam probably in the 9th-10th century A.D. The Yoginī Tantra, a widely known tantra work, was also composed in Kāmarūpa around the 15th-16th century A.D. The second part of this work centers round Kāmākhya and her domain, Kāmarūpa. The Hastyāyurveda, a treatise on elephantology is said to have been written by sage Pālakāpya whose birth place seems to be Kāmarūpa. It is stated in the body of the treatise that the sage Pālakāpya has his birth in the āśrama of sage Sāmagāyaṇa, his mythical father, situated at the hilly slopes of the Himālayas at the proximity of the Lauhitya Sāgara. cf ‘śailarājaśritam puṇyam lauhityam sāgaram prati’20 K. K. Handiqui remarks appropriately- ‘the home of the sage was on the side of the Himālayas at the bank of the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra, which points to North Eastern Assam where the river is still called Luit’21

Other Sanskrit works on Tāntricism were the Kāmākhya Tantra, the Śakti Saṅgama-tantra etc. Siddha Nāgārjuna (c. 10th-11th century A.D.) who was a disciple of Saraha or Rāhula, composed two works, viz, Yogaśataka, a medical treatise and the other is the Boddhi-cītta-vivaraṇa, a Vajrayāna text. He compiled these works evidently under the patronage of some Pāla ruler of Assam.22 The Kaulajñānanirṇaya, Akulavīratantra and Kāmākhya-guhyā-siddhi

22. S. K. Bhuyan Commemoration Volume p. 171
are attributed to Siddha Minanātha who was also from Kāmarūpa. The treatises like the Gorakṣasamhitā and the Kāmaratna Tantra are attributed to Gorakṣanātha, a disciple of Minanātha, and his activities are closely associated with this land. A female disciple, Sahajayoginīcintā by name, who was also from Kāmarūpa wrote another treatise, Vyaktabhāvānuñatattva-siddhi.

The scholars from ancient Assam (sic Pragjyotisa-Kāmarūpa) were not only fond of the Sanskrit language but also were very much conscious about its chastity and beauty. This is warranted by the availability of a large number of manuscripts on various technical subjects such as grammar, rhetoric, prosody and so on and so forth. The Prayogaratnamālā-vyākaraṇa of MM Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa Bhaṭṭacāryya, the Vṛttamāla, a treatise on chanda by Kavi Karṇapura are the best examples of such works. Both the scholars were patronised by the Koch king Naranārāyaṇa of the 16th century A.D. Laukikapadamanjari, Uśmabheda, Dhāturūpaprakaraṇa etc. are other works on grammar by Puroṣottama.

Many scholars hold the view that king Harsadeva, the writer of the Ratnāvalī and the Nāgānanda was a ruler of Assam. It was believed that Viśākhādatta, the writer of the drama Mūdrārakṣasa was also from Assam. The Kīcakavadha-kāvya of Nītivarman was composed in Assam during the 12th century A.D., and, interestingly, copies of this book in manuscript form are

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23. vide, CHA, Vol. I. p. 275
24. Ibid, 274
found in many places of Assam. The *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva is commented upon by the Koch prince Šukladhvaja and his commentary is known as *Sāravatī*. The *Sāradīpīka* is another commentary on *Gitagovinda* by Jagaddhara, which is also copied by Ratnākara Kandalī adding a gloss on it at the behest of Šukladhvaja. Šukladhvaja, however, acknowledges with due respect the influence of the *Sāradīpīka* in writing his commentary on the *Gitagovinda*.

Sanskrit-Puranic literature has been assiduously studied in this land, and this is warranted by the prestigious learned volumes composed by scholars from Kāmarūpa in the early medieval period of our history. Among the notable purāṇic works, mention may be made of the *Svaipamatsya-purāṇa*, *Viṣṇudharma-purāṇa*, and the *Dharmapurāṇa*. Manuscripts of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-purāṇa* are also found in good number. The royal court of the Koch king Naranārāyaṇa was graced by jewels like Śaṅkaradeva, the great


27. The following lines quoted from Ratnākar Kandalī’s work will prove the fact. The opening lines of his gloss are:

śrīśukladeva bhūpālavacāśā likhatisphuṭam /
saṭīkagītagovindam śrīratnākarakandalī //

and the concluding lines are:

itiṣāradīpīkāṭīkāsameta śrīgītagovinde /
suprīta pitāmbara nāma dvādaśasargah //

The authorship of *Sāradīpīka* is clearly ascribed to Jagaddhara with the following words:

nānā ṭīkāśamālokya vicārya saciram hṛdā /
gītakondimātikeyaṁ kriyate śrījagaddharah //

Quoted from the Introduction to *Gīta Govinda* by S. N. Sharma, pp. 16-17

Vaiṣṇava reformer whose neo-Vaiṣṇava cult is based on the Bhagavata-purāṇa. Bhakti-Ratnākara of Śaṅkaradeva, a technical work on Vaiṣṇava bhakti cult, is a remarkable contribution to the corpus of Sanskrit literature produced in Assam. Bhaktiviveka of Bhāṭṭadeva is another work of similar nature which is also a great contribution of Assam to Sanskrit learning.

Jyotiṣa and Śrīṃti are the other areas where the Kāmarūpa scholars excelled. It may be remembered that the very name Prāgjyotiṣa or Prāgjyotiṣapura seems to be associated with Jyotiṣa (astronomy/astrology). There was a distinct school of astronomy for calculating the almanac in Kāmarūpa, called Kāmarūpiyaśandhaḥkhaṇḍa-sādhyā. Some of the notable works on the subject are Dāmodara Miśra’s (14th century) Jyotiṣa-sāra-sārangraha, Pitāmbara Siddhānta-Vāgīśa’s (16th century A.D.) Grahaṇakaumudī and Sarṅkrānti Kaumudī.29

However, Assam’s most spectacular contribution to Sanskrit literature is in the area of Nīti and Dharmaśāstra. Pandit Manoranjan Śāstri has identified as many as 54 authors under this category. The most notable among them are (i) Nilāṃbarāchāryya (13th century), author of the Kālakaumudī, the Chandraprabhā, the Arisāprakāśikā (being a commentary on the Viṣṇupurāṇa) (ii) Vedāchāryya (14th-15th century), the author of the Smṛti-Ratnākara and (iii) Kavi Bhāratī (14th-15th century A.D.), the author of the Makhapradāpa.30

29. vide, CHA, p. 273
30. See also Birinchi Kumar Barua Commemoration Volume, p. 119
The rulers as well as the common people of Assam were very much fond of the themes of Sanskrit literature, comprising Kāvyā, Nāṭaka, Itiḥāsa, etc. So a good number of Sanskrit works were rendered into Assamese at the instance of those rulers. The Koch kings as well as the Ahom kings took much interest in this respect. For example, the two epics— the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, and a good number of Purāṇas were translated into Assamese during this period. Valuable treatises bearing on Assam Vaiṣṇavism and Bhakti-mārga were composed by Śaṅkaradeva and his talented followers like Mādhava Kandelī, Ananta Kandelī, Mahendra Kandelī, Hema Sarasvatī, Harivara Vipra, Kaviratna Sarasvatī, Rudra Kandelī etc. who are to be mentioned as celebrated authors of the medieval period. Mādhava Kandelī, who rendered the Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa into Assamese in the early 14th century without any deviation from the original, and whom Śaṅkaradeva praised as the poet unerring (pūrva-kavi-apramādi) was the most celebrated author among the pre-Śaṅkara age.

Showing deep respect to the rich heritage of Sanskrit culture, Śaṅkaradeva introduced the Aṭṭikīyā-nāṭa-s in Assamese Brajāvalī incorporating elements of Sanskrit dramas and Sanskrit verses. Sanskrit verses were inserted in the dramas composed in Assamese language also.

Among the Ahom kings, Sargadew Rudra Simha and his eldest son Siva Simha were the great patrons of art and literature. Kavirāja Chakravartī has

31. S. K. Bhuyan Commemoration Volume, p. 175
32. vide, Assamese Literature, p. 45
composed the Śakuntalā-kāvyā, the Gitagovinda, the Sañkhacūḍavadha-kāvyā etc. Siva Simha and his consorts requisitioned even the services of the painters to illustrate the Hastividyārṇava, Gitagovinda, the Dharmapurāṇa, the Sañkhacūḍavadha-kāvyā. Other illustrated works are the Citra-Bhāgavata and the Ānandalahari. The style belongs to the Assam School of painting.

Sanskrit dramas like the present one, viz. Kāmakumāraharaṇa, had been composed by the court poets of the Ahom kings. Besides the Kāmakumāraharaṇa, four more dramas belonging to the medieval Assam are discovered so far: they are the Vighnesajanmodaya by 'kavi-sūrya’ Gaurikānta Dvija, the Sañkhacūḍa-vadha by Dīna Dvija, the Śrīkṛṣṇa-prayāṇa by Vidyāpañcānana and the Dharmodaya by Dharmadeva Goswāmin.

(C) Life and date of the author:

The life and time of an author can be determined on the basis of both internal and external evidences. Internal evidences include the biographical data provided by the author himself in his own writings. References to his predecessors or contemporaries are also dependable evidence in respect of determining the probable date of the author. Besides, the artistic-literary products, the language and style throw welcome light on the date and the works of the concerned author. In short, as far as the internal evidences are concerned,

33. vide, Introduction to RT, p. 0.4
34. Ibid
the author is his own historian. External evidences include reference to the
author and his work in the contemporary literary or other works.

As regards our author, Kavicandra Dvija and his work, viz. Kāmakumāraharaṇa, no reference is traceable in any contemporary literary or
other works. In view of this, we have to depend entirely on the internal
evidences provided by the author himself. In this respect our author is his own
historian.

In the colophon of each act and in the closing verse of each song of
the drama, our author calls himself Kavicandra Dvija. However, our author kept
himself silent about any other information about his personal life, whereas he
heaps prolific eulogies on his patrons, namely king Siva-Simha and
Pramathesvari.35

Another work ascribed to Kavicandra Dvija is the Assamese verse
rendering of the Dharmapurāṇa wherein he lavishly eulogises his patrons, king
Siva Simha and queen Ambikā. This version of the Dharmapurāṇa is profusely
illustrated without leaving a single folio. The style belongs to the Assam School
of painting. Both these works, viz. the Kāmakumāraharaṇa and the
Dharmapūraṇa were composed during the period when he was a court poet of
Siva Simha. (A.D. 1714-44)

Kavicandra Dvija has gratefully acknowledged the patronage extended

35. It appears that Kavicandra Dvija spends so much space and energy in eulogising his
patrons that he hardly could make room for his own. He seems to follow the trend of
the inscription writers of his age during which donors were highly eulogised
to him by the Ahom king Siva-Simha and Bar-Raja Pramathesvari in respect of the Kāmakumāraharaṇa, on the one hand, and Siva-Simha and Ambika in respect of the Dharmapurāṇa, on the other.

Identity of the Author

Since our author has not given any account of his personal life in both of his works, he is sometimes came to be identified, albeit confusingly with Kavirāja Chakravarti, another famed court-poet of the king Siva Simha, and the author of the Śakuntalā, the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa, the Gītagovinda and the Bhāsvatī, all being Assamese rendering from Sanskrit original. However, the identification of Kavicandra with Kavirāja Chakravarti cannot be established for want of adequate evidence.36

The name of one Kavicandra is referred to in the History of Sanskrit Poetics by S. K. Dey.37 This Kavicandra is the author of an alaṅkāra work, called Kavya-Candrikā containing 15 prakāsas. This Kavicandra describes himself as the son of Kavikarṇapūra and Kauśalyā, grandson of Vidyāviśārada, and father of Kavibhūṣana and Kaviballava belonging to the Datta family of Dīrghāṅka-grāma. He flourished in between 1652-70 A.D. In this circumstances our author cannot be identified with this Kavicandra, too.

Date of the Author

Kavicandra Dvija does not mention the date of the completion of his

36. 'It is therefore, better to consider them as two distinct persons who enjoyed the favour of the same monarch.' S. N. Sarma, RT, p. 0.5
37. HSP, p. 255
Kāmakumāraharaṇa. But he has mentioned the date of the completion of the Dharmapurāṇa as 1735 A.D. In both the works he has gratefully acknowledged the patronage extended to him by Siva Simha and his consorts. In the Kāmakumāraharaṇa, Kavicandra eulogises Siva-Simha and Pramathesvari every now and then, that is in almost all the songs of the play. He has referred to the king in the 'Prologue' as bhadrājapadaprakhyāta-prathitaguṇa-grāmarāmābhirāma-śrīpramathesvari-mahā-devidayita. The expression bhadrāja of the text is a Sanskritised form of Assamese Bar-Raja, meaning 'the chief ruler.' It may be noted that under the misguided spell of astrological prediction, engineered by the brahman priests of his court, king Siva-Simha made his queen Pramathesvari (originally called Phuleswari) Bar-Raja, ‘Chief Ruler or Executive Head of the kingdom’, and made over to her the Royal umbrella. What is more, coins were struck in her name along with that of Siva-Simha. In this connection Sir Edward Gait writes: “Sib Singh was completely under the influence of Brahman priests and astrologers, and in 1722 he was so alarmed by their prediction that his rule would shortly come to an end, that he not only made many lavish presents for the support of temples and of Brahmans, in the hope of conciliating the gods and averting the threatened calamity, but also endeavoured to satisfy the alleged decree of fate by a subterfuge which greatly diminished his prestige in the eyes of the people. He declared his chief queen, Phulesvari, who assumed the name Pramathesvari (one of the names of Durga), to be the Bar-Raja or ‘Chief King’ made over to her the royal umbrella, the Ahom emblem of sovereignty and caused coins to be
struck jointly in her name and his in 1724.\textsuperscript{38}

In the \textit{Dharmapurāṇa} also Kavicandra expresses his gratitude to the king and his consort, Ambika, who was married after the death of Pramatheswari, in the following way: “Siva-Simha, the eldest son of king Rudra Simha is a learned and intelligent monarch. Nobody is equal to him in virtue and he is as beautiful as the husband of Rati. The dusts raised by his marching army envelop the sun and make it invisible. As a result, the day appears dark as the night. Born of the Chetia family, devoted to her husband, loved by the husband and resembling Rati in physical charm, is Ambikā, the chief queen of the king. The royal couple have a son, whom the scholars after having consulted the scriptures named Ugrasimha. Though he has been placed in charge of governing the Tipam region in his boyhood, he has nevertheless been able to endear himself to all by his winning manners and dignified mien. Badha, an officer of unblemished character, respectfully carried out the joint orders of the king Siva Simha, Queen Ambika and Prince Ugrasimha by having caused this \textit{Dharmapurāṇa} to be translated and illustrated in the Śaka year 1657.”\textsuperscript{39}

Sir Edward Gait further writes: “When Rudra Singh died, his eldest son Sib Singh, who was with him at Gauhati, at once proceeded to Rangpur where he ascended the throne. He assumed the Ahom name Sutampha.”\textsuperscript{40}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{38} E. Gait, \textit{A History of Assam}, p. 183\hfill \\
\textsuperscript{39} RT, pp. 0.4-0.5\hfill \\
\textsuperscript{40} E. Gait, \textit{A History of Assam}, p. 183
\end{flushright}
became the disciple of Krishnaram Bhattacharya who was given the charge of the management of the Kāmākhyā temple, whence Krishnaram and his successors came to be generally known as Parbatiyā Gosāin and assigned to him large areas of land in various parts of the country (Kamarūpa) for maintaining the temple.

As already quoted from the Gait, that Siva Simha was completely under the influence of the Brahman priests and astrologers, so much so that he declared his queen Phuleswari to be the Bar-Rajā or “Chief King” in 1724. After being installed as Bar-Rajā, Phuleswari assumed the name of Pramathesvari, a name of Durgā. This Siva-Durga concept of the king and his consort, was the result of the growing Śākta predominance under the influence of the Parbatiyā Gosāin of whom both the king and the queen were the devoted disciples. Bar-Rajā Phuleswari died after prolonged suffering from illness in 1731 A.D. She excavated a rectangular tank, called Gaurisagar on the bank of the Namdang river near modern Sivasagar town along with three temples (do‘l or deul) built on its bank, and dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Devī of which Śiva temple was the biggest in size. Its excavation commenced on 5th phalguna, (1723 A.D.) and was completed after nearly five months. Phuleswari’s younger sister Draupadi was married by Siva Simha after Phuleswari’s death and rechristened her as Ambika. This, again, is another epithet of Durgā. In place of her deceased sister, Ambika was made Bar-Rajā, the Chief Ruler. She died in about 1738 A.D. and was succeeded as Bar-Rajā by another wife, named Anadari, who was renamed Sarvesvari. Siva Simha died in 1744 A.D. in the
month of November.

Siva Simha and his consort Pramathesvari were great patrons of art and learning. They encouraged poets and artists. They also requisitioned the services of the well-known painters to illustrate the manuscripts written by his court-poets. Śāṅkhacūḍavadha, Gitagovinda, Dharmapurāṇa and Ānandalahari were profusely illustrated at the behest of the royal couple. Another notable profusely illustrated treatise is the Hastividyaṇava.

From the foregoing accounts this may be assumed that Kavicandra Dvija, the author of Kāmakumāraharaṇa flourished during the reign of Siva Simha and his date may be taken as the same as that of Siva Simha himself. Since Bar-Rajā Pramathesvari died in the year 1731, the date of our work Kāmakumāraharaṇa must have been completed before that year, though our author is silent about it.

(D) The Patron of the poet:

Kavicandra Dvija has gratefully acknowledged in his Kāmakumāraharaṇa the patronage extended to him by Sargadew Siva Simha and Bar-Rajā Pramatheswari. These two names are often mentioned with due respect. At the colophon of the 1st Act, the poet furnishes a detailed description of his patrons and, also, the lineage of Siva Simha. He informs us that Siva

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41. Ananta Ācārya Dvija wrote the book Ānanda Lahari during the reign of Siva Simha and his queen Pramathesvari. He mentions in his book that Siva Simha’s court was full of many learned pundits and that he was one of them.

—Descriptive Catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts, p. 5
Simha is the son of Sargadew Rudra Simha who was born in the Indra-variśa (śakrakula). Rudra Simha was the thirtieth Ahom king and was the son of Gadapani and Jaymati.

The Ahoms ruled Assam for almost six hundred years roughly from 1228 to 1826. In 1826, Assam came under the British as per the provisions of the treaty of Yandaboo. During these six hundred years, a good number of kings ruled Assam. From the thirteenth century to sixteenth century, the Ahoms were busy in establishing their kingdom. But since the seventeenth century, the situation changed. It so happened that a series of war between the Ahoms and the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal and Delhi took place during this period. In this century a number of powerful Ahom kings e.g. (1) Pratap Simha (1603-1641) (2) Cakradhvaj Simha (1663-1670), (3) Gadadhar Simha, (1681-96) (4) Rudra Simha (1696-1714) were in the helm of affairs.

During the reign of Cakradhvaj Simha, the Ahoms fought the famous Saraighat battle under the leadership of Lachit Borphukan.

The Ahom rulers in Assam for the last 145 years (1681-1826) were from Tungkhungiya clan. Suteng was the first prince from the lineage of Sargadew Suhungmung who was given the dominance over Tingkhong region. Saranga Gohain was his son. Saranga Gohain’s son was Gobar Gohain of the

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42. jātaḥ śakrakule narendratilakaḥ śrī-rudrasiṁho nṛpo / vikhyāto’ti vitanayamānavilasat kārttanya-kārttir-mahān // tatputro yamarindamaḥ prthuyaśā viprapiyodhārmikāḥ / devo yamśivasirinhu bhūpativaro nityotsavaivnimodatān // —KH, l. 53
Tungkhungiya clan. Gobar Gohain was installed as king in 1675 A.D. in the initiative of one officer, named Debera Borbaruah, but was removed from the throne after twenty days.

From 1670 to 1681, Assam saw a state of unrest. During this period kings were easily handled by the greedy and ambitious ministers and officials. This state of unrestness came to an end when Gadapani, son of Gobar Gohain, was installed on the Ahom throne. Thus Gadapani started the rule of the Tungkhungiya clan of the Ahoms in Assam. He ascended the throne in 1681, assuming the Hindu name Gadadhar Simha and Ahom name Cupatpha. Under his kingship the Ahoms were able to fight against external foes. Gait writes: "With his death, and the accession of Gadapani, the era of weak and incompetent princes, and of unscrupulous and ambitious ministers came to an end; internal corruption and dissensions ceased; and the Ahoms were once more able to present a united front against their external foes. He fought the last war with Mohammedans and ousted them from Gauhati."\(^{43}\)

One of the three cannons (among the booties that was acquired from the Mughals) bears the following inscription:

'The Gadadhar Simha, having vanquished the Musalmans at Guwahati, obtained this weapon in 1604 Šaka' (1682 A.D.)\(^{44}\)

Gadapani and Jaymati had two sons: Lai Gohain and Lechai Gohain.

\(^{43}\) HA, p. 166
\(^{44}\) Ibid, p. 167
Lai Gohain ascended the throne after his father’s death assuming the Hindu name Rudra Simha and the Ahom name Sukrampha. He ruled Assam for eighteen years (1696 to 1714 A.D.). The Ahom power reached its zenith during his rule; art and literature, foreign policy, expansion of kingdom and internal discipline—everything reached a high mark. Hence his reign may be regarded as the golden period of Ahom rule in Assam.

The Rangpur city, which was the seat of administration, was built with spacious brick buildings during the reign of Rudra Simha. The king requisitioned the services of an artisan, named Ghanasyam from Koch Behar for this purpose. In the city of Rangpur as well as in Charaidew brick buildings were erected under his supervision. The king also caused the excavation of the largest existing tank in Assam, namely Joysagar-*pukhuri* and made a temple on its bank, called *Joy-do'l*, both being named in the memory of his mother, Jaymati.

The king did not show any affinity towards any religious sect. Although he invited one Krishnaram Bhattacharyya, a Śākta Brahmin from Navadvip and installed him in Kāmākhyā, he refused to accept him as Rājguru. However, at the time of his death, the king gave his permission for initiating the princes to that cult. Rudra Simha died in 1714 A.D.

Siva Simha, the eldest son of Rudra Simha, ascended the throne in 1714 A.D. Now he became the monarch of a peaceful and well organised large kingdom. There was no external invasions, and hence he could enjoy the monachy with peace.
Siva Simha became the disciple of Krishnaram Bhattacharyya and gave him the management of the Kamakhya temple. For the maintenance of the temple large areas of land in various parts of the country were also assigned to him. This Krishnaram Bhattacharyya was also known as the ‘Parbatiyā Gosāin.’

Under the influence of the Parbatiyā Gosain, the royal couple Siva Simha and Phuleswari gave impetus to the growth of Śaktism in Assam. The king, as cited above was completely under the influence of the Brahmin priests and astrologers and the action he had taken in their misguided advice to hand over the royal umbrella successively to his three chief queens when he married one after another that at the death of the earlier one, had greatly diminished his prestige in the estimation of his people. It may be recalled that, his first ‘Chief Queen’ Phuleswari, also called Pramatheswari was even more under the influence of the Brahman priests than her husband, and she caused the Vaiṣṇava mahantas to be offended in her consuming zeal for Śākta Hinduism. Siva Simha died in 1744. He enjoyed the throne for thirty years three months and eleven days.45

The king who ascended the throne after Siva Simha was his younger brother Pramatta Simha. Next to Pramatta Simha, Rajeswar Simha, the fourth son of Rudra Simha, ascended the throne. Lakshmi Simha, the fifth son ascended the throne after him. In 1780 Gaurinath Simha, son of Lakshmi

45. Ibid, p. 196
Simha, was placed on the vacant throne by the nobles. His successors ruled Assam till 1826.

Thus from 1681 the kings of Tungkhungiya clan ruled Assam. The successors of Gadadhar Simha and Rudra Simha are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of succession</th>
<th>Name of king</th>
<th>Year of accession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td>Rudra Simha</td>
<td>1696 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st</td>
<td>Siva Simha</td>
<td>1714 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32nd</td>
<td>Pramatta Simha</td>
<td>1744 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33rd</td>
<td>Rajeswara Simha</td>
<td>1751 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34th</td>
<td>Lakhmi Simha</td>
<td>1769 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35th</td>
<td>Gaurinath Simha</td>
<td>1780 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36th</td>
<td>Kamaleswar Simha</td>
<td>1795 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37th</td>
<td>Chandrakanta Simha</td>
<td>1810 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38th</td>
<td>Purandar Simha</td>
<td>1818 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39th</td>
<td>Chandrakanta Simha</td>
<td>1819 A.D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(for the second time)

Siva Simha and his consorts were great patrons of art and learning. Great poets like Kavirāja Chakravartī, Ananta Ācārya etc. besides our poet were the court poets of Siva Simha. Almost all the poets and scholars who enjoyed their favour have spoken in eulogistic terms of many qualities of their head and heart.

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46. Gunabhiram Baruah, Assam Burañji, p. 99
(E) Title of the play:

Kavicandra Dvija selected the name *Kāmakumāraḥarana*, i.e., the abduction of the son of Kāmadeva, the Love-god, for his dramatic composition. In the prologue itself the author explains the title as *Kumāraḥaranaḥ makaradhvajasya* which indicates the ‘abduction of the son of Cupid’. As tradition goes, the title of a drama or a poem should be coined after the name of the hero or heroine or the subject matter.⁴⁷ Viśvanātha Kavirāja opines that the title of a *nātaka* should indicate the very nucleus of the dramatic action.⁴⁸ Sāgaranandin is also of the opinion that the title may refer to the names of the principal characters or to some important pivot in the dramatic action.⁴⁹

Since the main theme centred round the marriage of Ļūṣā and Aniruddha, the name of the work could have been *Aniruddhaharanaḥ* or otherwise. But Kavicandra liked the name *Kāmakumāraḥarana*. Aniruddha, the hero of the play was the grandson of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī, and son of Pradyumna and Māyāvatī. Pradyumna was also known as Kāmadeva or the ‘Lord of Love’ himself as he was said to have been the rebirth of cupid.

In the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, it is stated that as to Kāma, the God of love who was a portion (*aṁśa*) of (the future) Lord Vāsudeva, was formerly burnt into ashes through the wrath of Śiva. Hence he, Kāma, resorted to Him again.

⁴⁷. *DR*, I. 68
⁴⁸. cf. *nāma kāryam nātakasya garbhitaṁrtha-prakāśaka.*
  —*SD*, VI. K. 142
⁴⁹. *NLK*, p. 268
for the restoration of his corporeal form. That very god of Love was born of Rukmiṇī and Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. He is known as Pradyumna and was in no way inferior to his father in any respect.50

The birth story of Kāmadeva as Pradyumna runs as follows: once gods were oppressed by Tārakāsura, the Lord of the Asuras, and in distress they were seeking some means for destroying Tārakāsura. In return, they were suggested that a son born of Śiva and Pārvatī would kill the Asura. At that time, Pārvatī was worshipping Śiva to win Him as her bridegroom; but Śiva was in a deep meditation without a sign of breaking it. Kāmadeva and Rati were asked by Indra to break Śiva’s meditation. Accordingly, Kāmadeva tried his flowerly arrows on Śiva. Śiva was so much annoyed that out of wrath he burnt Kāma into ashes through His third eye. Seeing Kāmadeva’s condition, Rati-devi wailed and tried to propitiate Śiva. Being pleased at last Śiva granted a boon to her, that Kāma would be born on earth as an enemy of Sambarāsura, and she would also reborn in an Asura family and there they would be united again.

Kāma was born to Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī, and he was named Pradyumna. Sambarāsura stole away the new born baby from the sutikagrha itself and threw him away into the sea, because of the prediction that Pradyumna was born as his enemy. The baby was swallowed up by a sea-fish.

50. cf. kāmastu vasudevāṁśo dagdhaḥ prāgrudramanyunā / dehopapattaye bhūyastameva pratyapadyata // sa eva jāto vaidarbhyaṁ kṛṣṇabirjasamudhavaḥ / pradyumna iti vikhyātaḥ sarvato navamaḥ pītaḥ // —BP, X. 55. 1
It so happened that, that particular fish was caught up by a fisherman of Sambarāsura’s land and was presented it to his king. When the fish was cut opened, a baby was found alive and given to Māyāvatī, who was in charge of the kitchen. She brought up the child with great care. In his youth, the child bore all the traits of Kāmadeva.

One day Nārada came to Māyāvatī and told her about her and Cupid’s previous birth, and also reminded her about her present birth’s purpose. He also told her about the boy she brought up, who was none but her Kāmadeva. Then Māyāvatī told the boy everything that Nārada told her and instigated Pradyumna to kill Sambarāsura. Pradyumna killed Sambarāsura and left for Dvārakā with Māyāvatī. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and Rukmīṇī rejoiced seeing their lost child along with Māyāvatī and accepted them. From Māyāvatī and Pradyumna, Aniruddha was born, and thus he was called Kāmakumāra.

Kavicandra has followed the style of his predecessor, Ananta Kandali who has coined his Assamese Kāvyā as Kumaraharāṇa, the topic of which is the same as that of Kavicandra’s. Kavicandra is under the influence of Ananta Kandali’s Kumaraharāṇa, and thus named his play as Kāmakumāraharaṇa, which is, however, more distinctly applicable to the story of the play.

As the incident of the play goes, Citralekhā was under obligations to entice away Aniruddha from Dvārakā to Śoṇitapura for Ěśā. For that purpose she left for Dvārakā. She met Nārada-muni on the bank of the Narmada. Nārada informed her that Aniruddha was kept so well protected at Dvārakā that no one could enter his room without prior permission. However, Nārada helped her by
imparting *tāmasi-vidyā* whereby she would be able to abduct Aniruddha unnoticed.\(^5\)

With the help of *tāmasi-vidyā*, Citralekhā transformed herself into a bee and entered Aniruddha’s room through the holes of *kundrākṣa*. After narrating everything about Īṣā, she transformed Aniruddha also into a bee and then brought him out through the same hole that she entered the room. This is how Citralekhā was able to abduct Kāmakumāra and the *gandharva*-marriage became possible.

(F) Story of the play in brief - An Analysis:

**Act I**

The play begins with the benedictory stanzas: an eulogy to the Supreme Being (*paramānandāya*) and then to Śiva and Pārvatī. The Śūtradhāra, then, in a panegyrical vein, glorifies king Siva Simha and his consort, Pramathesvari, who encouraged and rendered all possible help to the poet to compose the play. It is further revealed from the utterance of the Śūtradhāra that the play was enacted in the presence of the royal patrons.

51. *ata idānīṁ nigūḍhavidyāṁ kathayāṁ .... ityuktā citralekhāṁ samipamāhūya karne tāmasividyāṁ kathayāmāsa/

---Act III. p. 18

52. *evaṁ.........nāradakathitasya ausadhasya vaṭikāṁ vidhāya lalāte tasyāḥ tilakaṁ datvā bhrāmarūpamāsthiyā dvārakāntahpūre gavā gavāksārandhreṇa aniruddha-sivirāntah praviṣṭā tilakaṁ vimucya nijarūpeṇa aniruddhakumārasamīpe śhiṭvā tena saha aloṣya ubhayōḥ lalāte tilakaṁ datvā svayaṁ bhrāmaṁ bhūtvā tāṅca bhrāmarāṁ kṛtvā prīṣhe nīdhāya tena pathārathāntikrama āniṇāya/

---Act III. p. 19
The actual play begins with the entry of Banasura into the pleasure garden (rañgaśāla) along with his wife, children, friends, ministers and other attendants with all auspicious (mārgala) items. His daughter Úṣā is ahead of the troupe. The pleasure garden, which is situated on the bank of a river, is decorated specially to celebrate the occasion of the visit of his tutelary deity Mahādeva. King Bāṇa is sitting silently there. Presently, Śiva, accompanied by Pārvatī and other attendants, arrives at the garden, where they are duly received by Bāṇāsura. Śiva's mission in coming to the pleasure garden is to fulfill the urge of Úṣā. Śiva is joined here by the heavenly nymphs and gandharvas. They try to please Śiva with dance and music. Seeing the beauty of the heavenly nymphs and being intoxicated with their music, Mahādeva feels the urge of Cupid. He assumes the form of a beautiful young man.

One of the chief nymphs, Citralekha assumes the form of Pārvatī. She approaches Lord Śiva and asks for His favour. Mahādeva is very much delighted to hear her words and seeing her beauty, he requests her to stay with him for sometime so that he may have the enjoyment of looking at her beautiful form. Citralekha moves away smilingly.

Pārvatī is witnessing the amusing behaviour of her husband. She decides to enjoy more. She hits upon a plan to make a fun of the situation. She commands her male attendants of hideous appearance to sport with the nymphs and request them to extinguish the fire of love by casting favourable glances at them. Seeing their hideous forms, the damsels began to laugh and refuse their offer of love. Thereupon, they cast off their garlands of skulls and bones and
assume attractive forms. At this all the nymphs smilingly go away and report everything to Pārvatī.

Ūṣā is witnessing the sports of the heavenly nymphs (apsarā) with pleasure and astonishment. She is also stung by the arrows of Cupid. Approaching the goddess Pārvatī bashfully, she laments over the unmarried state of her life and expresses a longing for the happiness of married life. Seeing her condition the goddess takes pity on her and proclaims a boon, and assures that whoever would enjoy her in a dream in the twelfth night of the bright fortnight in the month of Vaiśākha next shall be her husband.53 Úṣā comes back satisfied to the palace and Śāṅkara returns back to Kailāsa with his host of attendants.

Act II

After getting the boon from Pārvatī, Úṣā's state of mind is totally changed. She is brooding over the matter day and night. At last the prediction of the goddess comes true. Úṣā has a dream on the twelfth night of the bright fortnight in the month of Vaiśākha. She finds her being embraced by a young man in her dream. But very soon her happiness is over, as she regains her consciousness. She is lamenting for losing her chastity in the dream. She becomes almost mad after the young man of her dream. Her friends try to

53. cf. vaiśākhe māsi śuklāyāṁ dvādaśāyāṁ tu dinakṣaye / ramiṣyati ca yastvāṁ vai sa te bhartā bhavisyati // — v. 55
console her citing valuable sayings from the śāstras. Finding no other means to console her, they summon Citralekha. She is expert in the art of painting portraits of all creatures of the three worlds. Citralekha reminds the princess that the boon granted by the goddess Pārvatī is bearing fruit. So she need not lament over the loss of her chastity in a dream.

The princess Úṣā now falls on Citralekha’s feet and requests her to bring the young man of her dream by any means. But it is not possible for Citralekha to bring a person who is not seen by her. By the grace of Lord Rudra, however, there is nothing unknown to her. So she assures Úṣā that if she could find out her lover from the portraits to be presently drawn by herself, Citralekha would certainly try to unite her with her lover.

Úṣā, somehow, calm down by the words of her friend. Citralekha enters a portrait house and depicts on her canvass all the young man of the three worlds. She shows them one by one to Úṣā. Finally, Úṣā succeeds in finding out her lover in the portraits drawn by Citralekha. The young man is none other than Aniruddha, the grandson of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa of the Yādava clan.

Úṣā is so anxious to meet her lover that she repeatedly requests Citralekha to make arrangements for bringing Aniruddha the next day itself, or otherwise she would commit suicide, she said. However, Citralekha manages to make Úṣā understand that the city of Dvārakā is far away from Šoṇitapura, and

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54. svapnācarita doṣo hi martyrāloke na vidyate /
evam mahārṣayaḥ sarve pravadanti barānase //
—Act II. 3
hence the process needs few days from then onwards. Citralekhā assures her that she will bring her lover on the eighth day. Citralekhā, therefore, prepares to leave for Dvārakā, creating a chariot with horses by applying her magical powers, to bring Aniruddha from the city of Dvārakā for her friend. She dresses herself with beautiful costumes and finally waits for auspicious moments to leave.

Act III

Citralekha is ready to leave for Dvārakā to accomplish her mission and, therefore, she searches for an astrologer to find out the auspicious moment to start with. She asks Tribhāṅgī, an old lady servant, to bring Jagadbhandāka, the royal astrologer secretly for that purpose. After proper calculation, Jagadbhandāka founds an auspicious moment for Citralekhā. After paying the astrologer his fees, Usā warns him not to disclose the secret, otherwise, he will be punished heavily. Usā cuts jokes seeing the well dressed beautiful form of Citralekhā that she might charm her Aniruddha, and hence she may not get him virgin. Citralekhā then assures Usā that Aniruddha is as good as her father Kumbhāṇḍa to her. Usā is satisfied at her words and bid her farewell.

Riding on a speedy chariot, Citralekhā reaches the bank of the river Narmadā. There she refreshes herself with bath and food. She then meets the heavenly sage Nārada on the bank of the river Narmadā itself. She falls at his

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55.  

\[ \text{adityādi grahāh sarvve nakṣatrāpi ca vāsaraḥ} / \]

\[ \text{tīthiyo rāṣayoyogāḥ kurvvantu kuśalantava} // \]

—III. 2
feet with a prayer. Seeing her alone, Nārada enquired of her about the reason of her journey and her destination. Then she tells him of her errand. Nārada points out the difficulties involved in her task. He tries to dissuade her from that impossible task. He narrates how the city of Dvāraṅga was surrounded by large and deep ocean, and Aniruddha is well-protected in an apartment. The city is well fortified by steel ramparts and protected by warriors like Balarāma, Hanumat and Garuḍa. Moreover, Śrī-Kṛṣṇa Himself, holding weapons in hand, guards the city. So it is not an easy task to abduct Aniruddha from that place.

But Citralekhā is firm in her decision. Noticing her firm determination, Nārada wants to help her. He teaches her the tāmasi-vidyā, whereby she would be able to abduct Aniruddha unnoticed by anybody. Citralekhā is thankful to Nārada.

Nārada having done this favour to Citralekhā, goes to Dvāraṅga ahead of her to warn Śrī-Kṛṣṇa about the safety of Aniruddha. At the moment Śrī-Kṛṣṇa is engaged in gossip in an outer chamber with his family members, Nārada informs him of the impending danger to Aniruddha's safety. Then, by the order of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, protective measures are tightened in the city of Dvāraṅga and all the gates are closed to foreigners. Aniruddha is shifted to a safer place which is made of iron grills. The place is well-protected by the guards like Balabhadra, Garuḍa, Kāmadeva and Hanumat. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa Himself riding on the

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56. This tāmasi-vidyā is referred to as haranluki-māyā in the kumaraharaṇa-kāvyā of Ananta Kandalī, Vaiṣṇavite poet, which is followed keenly by Kavicandra
chariot and holding the *cakra* in His hands guards the place day and night.

But all these efforts go in vain. (Citralekha manages to abduct Aniruddha by transforming him into a bee with the help of the *tāmasi-vidyā* imparted by Nārada.) Arriving at the outskirts of Dvārakā, Citralekha leaves off her chariot and reduces herself to a bee (*bhramari*) with the help of the *tāmasi-vidyā* taught by Nārada and enters the harem. Then through the holes of *gavākṣa* she enters the chamber of Aniruddha and changes herself to her real form. She tells him everything about her mission and changes him also to a bee. She then takes the form of a bee again and comes out of the chamber holding Aniruddha on her back. When they are out of the city and arrive at a safer distance Citralekha restores Aniruddha to his real self and herself, too. On coming to his real self, Aniruddha is not only surprised but highly pleased to see a beautiful maiden sitting by his side. He requests Citralekha to favour him with an embrace. But Citralekha is too clever. She manages to enrapture his mind by melodious songs narrating the wonderful beauty of Aniruddha. Finally, they arrive at Śoṇitapura and straightway she leads the Yādava prince to the private chamber of Üśā crossing the walls of the fort enraged with fire (*agnimaya-prākāram*).

**Act IV**

At last Üśā’s dream about Aniruddha is materialised. Seeing Aniruddha with her friend, Üśā’s happiness knows no bounds. Citralekha, with the help of her friends, makes all arrangement for the marriage ceremony secretly. The
marriage is duly solemnised according to the gāndharva-rites. After the marriage is over, the lovers repair to the bed chamber. They enjoy their love according to their wish for eight days. But the span of their happiness was too short.

A haunch-back woman, engaged by the king to look after the princess, suddenly appears in the bridal chamber. Seeing the lovers sitting together, she abuses Aniruddha. In turn Uṣā warns Kubjā lest her nose be chopped off. Kubjā then enraged, rushes to the palace and reports the matter to the queen Madhumati. She also adds that she will report the matter to the king, too. The queen tries to hush up the matter by bribing her with innumerable costly ornaments and dresses etc. The queen hopes that something could be done, in the meantime, to send away the young man with the help of the old hag.

But the old hag foolishly thinks that when the queen has rewarded her with pearl necklace, the king would certainly present her a more valuable thing for giving the information. So, she starts for the king's court to inform the king about the new-comer to Uṣā's residence. On her way, she meets an astrologer. Being requested by the old hag he foretells jestingly that she would be the Chief Queen very soon. She also meets a barbar and took his mirror. Seeing her ugly look on the mirror she throws the mirror to a distance and says that she will teach him a lesson.

Emboldened by the false hope of being the Chief Queen, she enters to the audience hall. Without considering the propriety of reporting the matter there, she bluntly discloses the secret love affairs of Uṣā and Aniruddha in the presence of the ministers and courtiers. The king is very much annoyed. Highly
enraged, he orders that the nose and ears of the old hag be chopped off at once for her audacity. At the same time he despatches ten of his hundred sons to ascertain the report and, if found true, to do the needful. The princes, therefore, rushed to the palace of Üṣā. Entering the palace they find an unidentified person sitting by the side of Üṣā. Then Aniruddha introduces himself as the grandson of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and also reports that he is brought to Śoṇitapura by their sister’s order. But they have no mercy on him. They challenge Aniruddha. In the fight the princes are defeated and killed.

Act V

Hearing the news of death of his ten sons, the king Bāṇa sends another company of troops consisting of his ninety sons so that Aniruddha cannot escape from Śoṇitapura. Meanwhile, Nārada comes to Śoṇitapura to give assurance to Aniruddha.

Bāṇa, well-equipped with weapons, proceeds to Üṣā’s palace (where Aniruddha resides.) Seeing the father-in-law in front of him, Aniruddha politely introduces himself and clarifies his position. He also asks forgiveness for killing his ten sons.

But Bāṇa is in no mood to appreciate all these pleadings. He could not forgive Aniruddha and hence he challenges Aniruddha for a fight. The elder son of Bāṇa, Kumbhavīra, disarms Aniruddha. Then Aniruddha offers prayers to the Sun-god who helps Aniruddha with a bow and arrows. Seeing the heavenly arms only Bāṇa considers Aniruddha not as an ordinary person. Seeing no way
out, Bāṇa utilises his wonderful weapon nāgapāśa, and finally captures Aniruddha with it.\(^{57}\)

Kumbhāṇḍa, the Chief Minister, advises him not to kill him, since he has married Üṣā though secretly. He is, then, put to the prison, unreleased from the bondage of nāgapāśa. Then the king retires to his palace. In the prison, however, Aniruddha offers prayer to the goddess Durgā, and by the grace of the goddess his nāgapāśa is loosen.

Seeing Aniruddha captured by Bāṇa with his nāgapāśa weapon, Üṣā is lamenting, describing her husband's qualities. Nārada reports the defeat and captivity of Aniruddha to Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā who, thereupon, marches against Bāṇāsura with a host of Yādava heroes.

After three days, they reach Šoṇitapura. But the city is protected by the fire-gods defending the ramparts with burning fire. With the glowing colour of the fire the colour of the bodies of the Yādavas become golden. Balabhadra requests Śrī-Kṛṣṇa to find out some means to extinguish the fire. Śrī-Kṛṣṇa then requests Garuḍa to do the needful.

Garuḍa then extinguishes the fires by showering water which is brought from the Ākāśīgaṅgā.\(^{58}\) A fierce battle is fought between Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and the sage

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57. cf. athāniruddhasya baleḥ sutena tathāniruddhasya balena baddhvā / itistutipṛītiyāntarātramā durgāvirāsīdgajavairvāhā / —v. 6

58. evamuktvā vihangarājaścaṅcussahasramā kṛtvā ūrdhamuḍḍiya ākāśīgaṅgājalaṁ caṅcubhirāṇiya vahniprākāropari muhūrtadvayair vavarṣa / taiḥ prākārabhaṅgar iḍrvā....

—KH, p. 37
Aṅgirā who comes to help the fire gods. But in the battle Aṅgirā is defeated. Thus Kṛṣṇa overcomes the initial opposition offered by the fire god in charge of defending the ramparts of the city, and finally assaults the city. Bāṇāsura now comes to the battle-field followed by an army of Asuras.

Act VI

The sixth Act begins with the description of a war situation in the battle-field as Bāṇā meets Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. Even the gods are terrified with the sounds of war-music and come down to witness the events. Śaṅkara, the tutelary of Bāṇāsura, comes there to help His devotee accompanied by His two sons, Kārtikeya and Ganeśa and four army generals, viz, Mahākāla, Bhairava, Nandi and Bhringī. He is immediately confronted by Kṛṣṇa and his followers.

Indra, Brhaspati etc. come from heaven to witness the fierce war. The sound of their weapons at the time of war shakes even the earth. When Śaṅkara notices the issue of the fight turning favourable to the Yādava army, he sends Mahākāla, Bhairava, Nandiśwara and Bhringī, the four army generals to help Bāṇa and comes himself to fight for Bāṇāsura.

Śaṅkara is immediately confronted by Kṛṣṇa, and His followers including His two sons, Ganeśa and Kārtikeya, are similarly opposed by the Yādava heroes. But in the war Śaṅkara is defeated by Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. So, He retires from the battle-field.

After Śaṅkara’s retirement from the battle-field Śrī-Kṛṣṇa attacks Bāṇa. He challenges him to show the power of his thousand arms.
Śrī-Kṛṣṇa holds His Sudarśana-cakra to punish Bāṇāsura. Seeing Kṛṣṇa in that mood Śaṅkara goes to Gaurī. He requests her to save the life of His devotee. Koṭavī, the eighth part of Gaurī appears in the battle-field in a state of nakedness. She appears before Kṛṣṇa to save Bāṇa from the fatal weapon of Kṛṣṇa. At her request, barring two of his thousand arms, all are chopped off by Kṛṣṇa by hurling his Sudarśana-cakra.

Śaṅkara becomes furious to see the pitiable condition of His devotee and He reappears in the battle-field with his destructive trident. The fight between Śrī-Kṛṣṇa and Śaṅkara is known as Hari-Hara-yuddha, and our author describes it vividly in the following way: when they are almost ready to hurl their most powerful weapons, Brahmā, the creator, intervenes and persuades them to give up the fight. A truce is arranged between the opposite parties. According to its terms Bāṇāsura not only sets Aniruddha free, but also agrees to offer him his daughter. The play finally ends in a happy note of marriage songs sung by the ladies. Ūṣā and Citralekha are happily married to Aniruddha and Gada, respectively.

[^59]: hariharayuddhamavarttata ghoram / sakalasurāsuradhairyavirāgavām / kampita bhuvanatrayamaticitrām / abhimukhamubhayordastalavitām / taraliṇātiśūriśūlacakram / bhīṣitavahinvārvanāyamaśākram / maraṇaviśāṅkāvīpūlitaśākram / rahitīyudhabhaṭavāhītavālokam // —VI. 12-15
(G) The Sources and Deviations:

Kavicandra acknowledges his indebtedness to the Śrīmad-bhāgavata purāṇa as well as to the Harivaṁśa so far as the kernel of the story of his KH is concerned. At the end of each Act of the play the poet invariably states: "śrī-bhāgavata-harivaṁśa-samuddhṛta-kāmakumāraharaṇa-nāṭake" etc. which implies that the theme of the play is taken from the above two sources. The story in the Bhāgavata purāṇa covers chapters 62-63 of the tenth skandha, while in the Harivaṁśa it covers chap. 116-128 of Bk II.

The story of Īṣā and Aniruddha is found, briefly though, in the Padma-purāṇa and the Viṣṇupurāṇa (Bk V) also. However, our author depends mainly on the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and the Harivaṁśa.

The elements of the story culled from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa are as follows:

(a) Citralekha is the daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa, the minister of Bāṇa;
(b) Citralekha is an expert in drawing and painting;
(c) Bāṇa imprisoned Aniruddha with the help of Nāgapaśa;
(d) Śivajvara was defeated by Viṣṇujvara;
(e) Cutting off the thousand arms (sahasrabāhu) but two of Bāṇa by the Sudarśana-cakra;

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60. V. 32: 7-8
61. X. 62. 12
62. X. 62. 17
63. X. 62. 28-32
64. X. 62. 23-24
65. X. 62. 32-49
(f) The presence of naked Kuṭavī, i.e. the divine mother of Bāna in the battle-field to protect the life of Bāna;

The elements of story drawn from the Harivarṇa

The following materials are taken from the Harivarṇa

(a) Grant of a boon to �潍 by Pārvatī,

(b) Dream of Ģ潍 on her union with Aniruddha,

(c) Restless state of Ģ潍 after the dream,

(d) The learning of tāmasī-vidyā by Citralekhā from Nārada,

(e) Description of Agnigaḍa and the extinction of its fire by Garuḍa,

(f) Description of the battle scene,

Deviations from the original sources

Thus, drawing materials from both the Bhāgavata purāṇa and the Harivarṇa, Kavicandra appears to have cooked up the story of the drama with the amalgamated materials, and composed his play. However, while making up his story he deviated from both the original sources. He has created incidents and new characters to suit the situations. The deviations are noticed in the following aspects:

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66. X. 63. 20
67. II. 117. 1-19
68. II. 118. 1-2
69. II. 118. 3-20
70. II. 119. 1-19
71. II. 122. 13-19
72. II. 125. 1-24
(a) In the *Harivamśa*, Bāṇāsura is the central figure in the story whereas in the *KH* it is Īśā who occupies the central position.

(b) According to the *Harivamśa* once Īśā happened to witness Hara and Pārvaṭī engaged in romantic sport on the bank of a river, and this sight aroused a desire in the mind of Īśā to have similar sport with her husband. She started thinking that a girl who used to sport with her husband in that way is a fortunate one.

\[ dhanyāhi bhartṛsaḥitā ramayantyevaṁ samāgataḥ / \\
maṇasa tvathā samkalpācyayā bhāṣitaṁ tathā //\]

(a) The goddess Pārvaṭī, knowing about the growing desire in the heart of Īśā, graced her with a boon, that in the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha she might be united with her husband in her dream.

In *KH* also a situation is created by Kavicandra for getting such a boon from Pārvaṭī by Īśā, but he depicts the scene in his own way. On getting the message that Śrī-Rudradeva would come along with goddess Pārvaṭī and his attendants with a desire to sport on the bank of a river, Bāṇa decorated the bank of the river beautifully in a manner suitable for romantic sports (*vicitra raṅgasthāli*). Bāṇa with his family

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73. Compare in *KH*

\[ dhanyāḥ sabhartṛkāṇāryo ramante svecchayā mudā / \\
alabdhabhartṛkāḥ pāpā vṛthā jivantimadvidhāḥ // \\
—I. 53

74. cf. vaiśākhameśi harmyaṁsthaṁ dvādaśyāṁ-tvāṁ dinakṣaye / \\
ramiśyati yaḥ svapne sa te bhartā bhaviśyati // \\
—HV. II. 117. 19
and ministers followed by his attendants, came and waited there to worship the divine pair. As soon as the awaited divine guests came there, the king and others worshipped them accordingly. The prayer (stava) recited by Bāna and his entourage is styled Bhaṭimā (a typical prayer of Aṅkīyā-nāṭa of Śaṅkaradeva). After the prayer the king took his seat by the side of Lord Śiva, when Uṣā got the boon from Pārvatī.75

(b) The grant of the boon to Uṣā by Pārvatī, the dream of Uṣā, description of the dream to Citralekhā, Citralekhā’s assurance to draw the picture and to bring Aniruddha to Šoṇitapura—are hinted in the Harivamśa. But Kavicandra describes these events adding new features so as to give it local colour and expressions.

(c) Citralekhā’s promise to bring Aniruddha from Dvārakā to Šoṇitapura within eight days, suspicion in the mind of Uṣā about Citralekhā seeing her beautifully dressed at the time of her leaving for Dvārakā, assurance of Citralekhā that Aniruddha was as good as her father, Kumbhāṇḍa—all these are not found either in the Harivamśa or the Bhāgavata.

(d) According to the Purāṇa, Citralekhā knew yoga practices and with that yogic power she created chariot and horses, and entered the city of

75. 

ūṣe śnusva madvākyair mugdhe kanakasuprabhe /
rūpayauvanasampannair yadāvindasi satpatim //
vaśākhemāśi śuklāyāṁ dvādaśyāṁ tu dinakṣaye /
rāmisyati ca yastvāṁ vai sa te bhartā bhavisyati //

—Act I. verses 54-55
Dvārakā and abducted Aniruddha while asleep.⁷⁶ According to the Harivamśa, Citralekhā reached Dvārakā with the intention of abducting Aniruddha. But after reaching Dvārakā she became puzzled. At that moment she met Nārada which gladdened her. When Citralekhā conveyed to Nārada the purpose of her mission, Nārada agreed to teach her tāmasī-vidyā⁷⁷ with the help of which she could bring Aniruddha to Śoṇitapura.

But in the KH, Citralekhā herself created horses and chariot; she dressed up beautifully and asked Tribhaṅgī to bring Jagadbhanḍaka, the royal astrologer to find out the auspicious moment to start in her journey to Dvārakā. While on her way to Dvārakā, Citralekhā stopped the chariot on the bank of the river Narmadā and took her bath. When she was ready to continue her journey, Nārada appeared before her. After proper queries, Nārada came to know about the purpose of her mission. He taught her tāmasī-vidyā. The means of application are also described. She then practised it and left for Dvārakā. Wearing a magic tilaka on her forehead, she became a bee, entered Aniruddha's chamber, reduced Aniruddha also into a bee with the help of the same magic tilaka and came out with him through the same hole that she entered into the room.

⁷⁶. BP, X, 62, 22-23
⁷⁷. grhyatāṃ tāmasīvidyā sarvalokapramohini
   —HV, II. 119. 19
(e) On her journey back to Śoñitapura, when they resumed their own forms, Aniruddha tried to seduce Citralekhā; but clever Citralekhā diverted his mind by describing his beauty. She sung songs in different classical rāgas and tālas to divert his attention.

In addition to the above mentioned two principal sources, with all variations, alternations and deviations, our author is indebted to the Kumaraḥaṁga, a 16th century Assamese kāvya, composed by Ananta Kandalī. The plot of the Assamese kāvya is a happy blending of the elements drawn from the Bhāgavata purāṇa and the Harivarṇaṁśa. Although Kavicandra has not mentioned and acknowledged his indebtedness to Ananta Kandalī, the influence of the Kumaraḥaraṇa is quite evident as may be shown below.

(i) Following the Kumaraḥaraṇa, Kavicandra introduced comic scenes created by the hunch-back woman in charge of keeping strict vigilance on Úşā. The characters like astrologer and the barber, who add colour to the scene are not the creation of Kavicandra. They are borrowed from Ananta Kandalī. The services of an astrologer is utilised in the KH to find out the auspicious moment for Citralekha's departure for Dvāракā as well as for predicting the fortune of the hunch-back woman, though ironically.

(ii) The sun-god helping Aniruddha with a bow and arrows in his fight against Bāṇa is not to be found in the Purāṇa; it is also borrowed from the Assamese kāvya.78

78. Kumara, verse -334
(iii) In the *Kumaraharana*, Ananta Kandali follows the *Bhagavata* in respect of chopping Bāṇa’s *sahasrabāhu* except four. But Kavicandra follows the *Harīvarṇāśa* in stating the chopping off of *saharabāhu* of Bāṇa excepting two.

(iv) Besides borrowing materials from these three sources, our author has introduced local elements wherever possible. The introduction of comic scenes, though crude and vulgar, and the depiction of marriage ceremony with nuptial songs and teasing moments add extra colour to the play. It is a bold step on the part of an Assamese poet to introduce folk themes to a classical-based Sanskrit drama, the *Kāmakumāraharaṇa*.

(H) Technical Remarks:

The *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* is a dramatic composition written in Sanskrit language on the famous episode of Üṣā and Aniruddha. The play is divided into six acts and it contains usual Nāndī-*śloka* and the Bharatavākyya. So it may be classed as a *nāṭaka*, a variety of Sanskrit Rūpaka. The author of the drama

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79. *khodi ēse dekhi kṛṣṇe hāte cakra dhari ।
cakraka sambodhi bulilanta deva hari ॥ ।
Bāṇa nṛpatira dekhā hājāreka kara ।
cārī khāni rākhī tāra kāṭyō sattvara ॥
—Kumara, 472.

80. *dvibhūnā ca bāpena jīvaputri bhāviṣyati* ।
—*HV*, II. 126. 120
himself calls it a *nāṭaka* in many places. In the prologue of the drama, it is said in clear terms that he has composed this *nāṭaka* at the instance of the royal couple, Svargadew Siva Simha and Pramathesvari. Again, in the closing line of each act, the term *nāṭaka* is mentioned. But, so far as the technicality of the drama is concerned, it is revealed that the *Kāmakumāraharaṇa* is an amalgamation of Sanskrit dramaturgic rules and the technique of the *Ankīyā-nāṭaka*, i.e. the Brajāvalī dramas originated by Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, the saint poet of Assam.

The whole gamut of Sanskrit literature is divided into *drṣya* and *śravya*, according to the literary critics. *Drṣya* is further divided into Rūpaka and Uparūpaka, and *nāṭaka* belongs to the former group. The special features of a *nāṭaka*, as pointed out by Viśvanātha Kavirāja in his *Sāhityadarpana*, chap. VI. are as follows:

(i) the subject matter of a *nāṭaka* should be an established one, borrowed either from history or ancient lore;

(ii) the plot should have five successive stages, each of which may be called *sandhi*;

(iii) it should contain five to ten Acts;

(iv) the hero should very often be of a high birth, mighty, sagelike and *dhīra* and *udātta* type;

(v) he may either be a divine figure or a semi-divine figure or a human figure with the quality of righteousness;

(vi) *śṛṅgāra* or *vīra* should be the principal sentiment, while other sentiments
should be delineated as subordinate to the two principal sentiments.\textsuperscript{81}

If we examine the \textit{Kāmakumāraharaṇa} in the light of the above mentioned special features we may trace the following characteristics:

(a) The story of the drama is an established one as it is drawn from the \textit{Śrīmadbhāgāvatapurāṇa} and the \textit{Harivamśa} (a \textit{khila} of the \textit{Mahābhārata}). In fact, the author mentions the source of the story at the end of each Act, e.g. \textit{sūbhāgavata-harivamśa-samuddhṛta-kāmakumāraharaṇa-nāṭake}.

(b) It contains six Acts.

(c) All the five junctures are properly maintained.

(d) Erotic is the principal sentiment, and \textit{vīra}, \textit{hāsyā} etc. are delineated as subordinate ones.

(e) Aniruddha, the hero is regarded as a semi-divine one as he possesses most of the supernatural powers of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, his grandfather. When all these features together are taken into consideration, the \textit{Kāmakumāraharaṇa} may definitely be regarded as a classical Sanskrit \textit{nāṭaka}.

But in spite of possessing almost all the required characteristics of a Sanskrit \textit{nāṭaka}, the \textit{KH} lacks certain special features, such as the clear cut distinction of \textit{prastāvanā} from that of the actual play. Unlike a Sanskrit \textit{nāṭaka}, the Sūtradhāra, i.e. the director of the play, in the \textit{KH} remains on the stage

\textsuperscript{81} cf. \textit{SD}, VI. 6
throughout the drama, i.e. from the prologue to epilogue. So, from this point of view the KH has some similarity with the Brajāvalī dramas as introduced in 15th-16th century A.D. by Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva and later on adopted by his followers.

The points of similarity between Ankiya-nāṭa and the KH are as follows:

1. The constituent elements of Ankiya-nāṭa, e.g. the Nandi-ślokas, the Bhaṭimā, the Sanskrit ślokas, the songs, the speeches of Sūtradhāra as well as dramatic characters in prose passages are all present in the KH.

2. The Sūtradhāra occupies a predominant position and remains on the stage from the prologue to the end of the play.

3. In both the places preponderance of the lyrical elements consisting of prayers and songs are quite evident.

4. Songs are plenty in number in both the places and they are set into classical rāgas and tālas.

5. Both Sanskrit and Assamese metres are used in the KH and the Ankiya-nāṭakas. But while in the KH Assamese metres are used in Sanskrit verses also, in the Ankiya-nāṭakas Assamese metres are confined to verses in Brajāvalī or Assamese language only.

6. Absence of Vidūṣaka is a noteworthy similarity.

7. As in the Ankiya-nāṭaka, dialogue is meagre in the KH compared to the volume of the Sūtradhāra’s narratives and explanatory notes.

8. In the Ankiya-nāṭakas, very often appeal is made by the Sūtradhāra to pay attention to the dramatic performance, and then to proclaim the
glory of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. In the prose passages, for example, an appeal is made in this way. “āhe loka, tāhe dekhaha sūnaha, nirantare haribola haribola.” In verses the appeal is made in a different way:

\[ \text{kṛṣṇara kiṅkara bola bāṇi} \]
\[ \text{teja sāmājika kāma} \]
\[ \text{dāki bolahū rāma rāma}.^{82} \]

Kavicandra Dvija has imitated this style in his play. To draw the attention of the audience he frequently quotes—‘\text{tad drṣyatāṁ śrūyatāṁ bhāṅyatāṁ jaya hara gaurī}.’ He repeats the name of Hara and Gaurī perhaps because his patrons were devotees of Hara and Gaurī, and to please them he mentions these auspicious names. It may also be possible that he himself is a worshipper of Hara and Gaurī.

(a) Another similarity is the violation of dramaturgic rules that prohibit the introduction of certain topics as harmful to sentiment or spirit of the hero or as offensive to the feelings of the audience.\(^{83}\)

However, the \(KH\) differs from the \(Aṇkiyā-nāṭaka\) in many respects. The dissimilarity between the \(KH\) and the \(Aṇkiyā-nāṭaka\) may be drawn as follows:

(1) The \(Aṇkiyā-nāṭaka\) is a one Act play, whereas, the \(KH\) consists of six Acts.

(2) The role of female characters is very negligible in the \(Aṇkiyā-nāṭaka\)

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82. \(RHN\),
83. \(NS\), xviii. 16ff.; \(DR\), 1.51; 31f; \(SD\). VI. 32
except in Śaṅkaradeva's Pārijātāharana and the Rukminīharana. But in the first part of the KH the female characters particularly Ûśā and Citralekhā play a major role. Besides Ûśā and Citralekhā, divine lady Pārvatī and her attendants created a good impression on the minds of the audience. Thus the female characters are very prominent in the KH.

(3) So far as the rasas of the Anikīyā-nāṭakas are concerned, Bhakti is the dominating sentiment. Even where the union of Rāma and Sītā is described in sensuous language, we are reminded that it is Sītā's intense religious devotion to the Supreme Being. In fact, the word rasa seems to point rather to the joy of devotion than to sentiments in poetics. So the presence of erotic sentiment, particularly the sambhoga śrīgāra is of very little conspicuity. But in the KH, śrīgāra is the dominating sentiment although vīra and śānta are also delineated with equal strain. Sambhoga-śrīgāra prevails in the Fourth Act of the drama.

From the foregoing discussion it appears that the KH is neither fully faithful to the model of the Anikīyā-nāṭa, nor to the tradition of Sanskrit dramas so far as the technical aspect of the (present) drama is concerned.

However, in the KH there are some elements which are borrowed neither from the Sanskrit nāṭaka nor from the Anikīyā-nāṭaka. These are completely our poet's own innovations. These are:

(1) At the end of each Act the source of the drama is mentioned.

(2) Eulogy of the patrons is made at the end of each Act.
(3) Name of the author is referred to at the end of each Act.\textsuperscript{84}

Interestingly enough, these technical peculiarities are also noticed in other Sanskrit plays composed in post-Śaṅkaradeva period. Five dramas composed in this period are discovered so far. These are:

1. the \textit{Kāmakumāraḥaraṇa} of Kavicandra Dvija
2. the \textit{Vighneśajanmodaya} of ‘kavi-sūrya’ Gaurikānta Dvija
3. the \textit{Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha} of Dīna Dvija
4. the \textit{Śrīkṛṣṇa-prayāṇa} of Vidyāpaścāana, and
5. the \textit{Dharmodaya} of Dharmadeva Goswamin.

Out of them the first three dramas are compiled in the \textit{Rūpakatrayam}, edited by Dr. Satyendranath Sarma. All these three dramas are composed within a span of eighty years and all of them follow an independent style of their own.

The \textit{VG} is composed by \textit{kavi-sūrya} Gaurikānta Dvija taking the story from the \textit{Brahmavaivartapurāṇa} at the behest of Kamalesvara Simha (1795-1811) and the \textit{SV} is composed by Dīna Dvija in 1802 A.D. taking the story from the \textit{Prakṛti-khaṇḍa} of the \textit{Brahmavaivartapurāṇa} at the behest of Gendhela Borphukan alias Kaliabhomora Barphukan during the reign of Kamaleswar Simha. Both the dramas contain three Acts each and they share common characteristics with the \textit{KH}.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{itiśri-pramatheśvaripriyatama-śrī-śrī-śivasimha-mahīmahendraśāsita-dvijakavicandra-kṛtau śribhāgavata-harivaniḥsamuddhṛta-kāmakumāraḥaraṇanājake prathamō’nikāḥ / etc.}

—Act I. p. 9
(1) All these three plays begin with one or two Nāndī verses and then a prastāvana introduced by the Sūtradhāra.

(2) There are Bhaṭīmās, the typical prayer of Arikīyā-nāṭaka, in all the three dramas. These Bhaṭīmās are Deva-bhaṭīmās and composed in Assamese meters. The Bhaṭīmās of the VG and the ŠV are sung in the name of Viṣṇu, whereas Bhaṭīmā in the KH is addressed to Śiva. However, the Bhaṭīmā in the VG is written in Sanskrit language.

(3) In all the three plays the name of the drama and the dramatists are announced after the Nāndī verses or the Nāndī and Bhaṭīmās are over.

(4) The name of the patrons and their orders concerning the dramas are stated in ornamental prose passages, written in a typical style which is common to the inscriptions of the kings or officials, and are described in the same way.

(5) Every Act begins with a verse indicating the forthcoming incidents of the Act in all the three dramas. The VG and the ŠV, however, give a benedictory stanza at the beginning of each Act.

85.

(a) śṛṇutāho śāmājikajanāḥ / aviratāsura-vṛṇḍavandita-haragauricaranāravinda makarandapānōntattamaṅadhukareṇa, 
...... śṛ-śrmatasāvār̥-mahādevi dayitena śṛ-svargadeva-sivasimha-
mahimahendreṇa kāmakumāraraharaṇa-nāma-nāṭakaṁ nāṭayitum ədīṣṭo'smi /
—KH, Act I

(b) anena mandamandarāndolitamūdgha dugdhapārāvāra.....śṛimatamānan-
andadevena vighneśajanmodaya nāma-nāṭakaṁ kartumādiṣṭo'smi'
—VG, Act I

(c) śṛmadamaranikaravarakirṣṭakotikūṭamanīvi......narāyaṇena śālikhacūḍavadhākhya nāṭakamabhinetumādiṣṭo'smi.'
—SV, Act I