CHAPTER V

COMMENTARIES ON MALATIMADHAVA

Rasamanjari
Bhavapradipika
Vibhudharatnavali
Tikās by Jagaddhara
Śeśarāja Sarma
Jibānanda Vidyāsāgara
CHAPTER V
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It is possible that a poetic work may have different interpretations. These interpretations should be in the purview of the expectations and possibilities it arouses. It is not easy to find out the intentions of the writer who is away from us by time and space. But the commentators provide us with a missing link between the sense intended by the poet and the poem.

Mālatīmādhava has been commented upon by about fifteen scholars. Some of them are tīkās known only through references. The most important commentaries now available are the Rasamañjari of Pūrṇasarasvatī, Bhāvapradīpaka of Tripurāri, Vibhūtaratnāvalī of Nāycdēvā, Mālatīmādhavaṭīkā of Jagaddara. These commentaries have many things in common, but differ
widely in details. They have shown considerable skill in interpreting
the deep sense contained in the drama. Some of the interpretations
are of a scholastic nature.

The best criterion to evaluate a literary work is to study the
delineation of rasa and dhvani. Dhvani is the reverberation a work
of art produces in the mind of the connoisseur. In other words it is
very important to see much more than that the poet conveys through
the words. The essence of art lies in suggesting much by a very
small expression. All the above commentators have succeeded in
grasping the intention of the dramatist and presenting it to the readers.
An analysis of the approach of different commentators in interpreting
similar situations will throw light on their wonderful power of
imagination, erudition, insight and knowledge of various sastras.

Rasamañjarī of Pūrṇasarasvatī

A cursory glance on this commentary emanated from the
pen of a great poet-commentator will reveal that it is closer to the
intentions of the dramatist. Most of the commentators go into the
details of styles employed, metres used, grammatical peculiarities
and the structure of the sentence. Pūrṇasarasvatī gives stress on the
literary aim of the work.
Rasamañjarī awakens the intellect of the reader and this indeed is the criterion to decide the greatness of a literary work. To see the beauty of a forest one should go into the interior of it, to understand the works of great writers a closer approach is essential. Rasamañjarī helps its readers to achieve this goal. The Commentary is studied in detail in the VIIth chapter.

**Bhāvapradīpikā of Tripurārī**

Tripurārī furnishes a good deal of information about himself in the introductory verse of the commentary.

पद्यावयप्रमाणान्ते भवभूतिमहाकवि:
मातृतीमाधवः नाम यदूपकमरीरचतः।
क्रियते विवृतिसत्य भारद्वाजेन धीमता
वनरे पर्वलेखस्य सुनुना त्रिपुरारिणा।

His father’s name was Parvatesayajvan and he belonged to the Bharadvāja clan. The word Rasikapriyā given in another verse seems to be an adjective to the word Bhāvapradīpikā. Sometimes it may be another name of the commentary. He has given his own reason for writing a new commentary. He has said that though there are many commentaries on the work, they go on narrating
irrelevant things or evading relevant ones and so are not accepted by the learned class. He adds that he has deliberately made his commentary short: अतो मिलेन चचस्य लघौ भावावधीपिका. This may be a criticism against Rasamañjarī which is a voluminous one.

Bhāvapradīpikā has been composed keeping in mind the requirements of ordinary readers who are unable to grasp the ideas contained in the earlier commentaries. He points out that a commentary should be free from two faults, viz. avaktavyokti and vaktavyatyaṅga.

Tripurārī evaluates the work as a whole and provides a total view. The analysis of sandhīs and sandhyaṅgas proves this. He distinguishes between merits and defects of a passage in question and offers an impartial judgement which is the principal duty of a critic. He brings out whatever Bhavabhūti wanted to convey both by expression and by suggestion. The interpretation of the following verse shows his expertise in pointing out the samādhi.

यात्रा मुहूर्तकक्षरमानं ततः

दाशृवत्वस्तत्पत्र्यनिं वहन्तः।
And then, while going, by her having eyes with graceful eye-lashes, whose face with the neck repeatedly turned backwards resembled a lotus with its stem twisted, a side glance steeped in nectar and venom was planted deep in my heart.

While commenting on this verse, Tripurâri states:

Cupid has darted his arrows in the form of Mâlâri’s glance and the same has struck deep into Mâdhava’s heart.

The introductory verses at the beginning of his commentary shows that he was also a poet of supreme order. His remarkable power of imagination and poesy is evident in the following verse.

To those lovers who had never seen the celestial damsels, beautiful ladies of the earth might be charming. Likewise those who have
never gone through the earlier but beautiful commentaries, the one by myself seem to be much attractive and even when there were the olden commentaries, this might be useful. A small torch in the hand might be acceptable in the absence of the sun which throws light on the whole universe.

He adds that when the love is humble, who might not behold her with love? Likewise scholars who have no competitive mind might accept his commentary whole heartedly.

Bhavabhūti was proud of his own poetic powers and it is expressed in the verse ये नाम केवलिः. The verse at the end of the commentary of the III act shows that Tripurāri also unreservedly accepts this estimate of the dramatist.

Bhavabhūti in the prologue of his play Uttarāmacarita introduces himself as padavākyaprāmāṇajñāḥ. Tripurari also does so and says that he is sāhityādhvaparikṣuṣṇadhir. Tripurāri expresses his high regard for Bhavabhūti and his works at the end of the commentary of seventh act.

Scholars are of opinion that Jagaddhara who wrote a tīkā on Mālatīmadava belonged to the former part of the 14th Century.
A.D. Tripurārī criticises some of the views of Jagaddhara. So Tripurārī can be assigned to the middle or latter part of the 14th century A.D.

Bhāvārthadīpikā is an incomplete work which extends only up to the end of the seventh act. It has been successful in enabling the readers to enjoy the nectar churned from the ocean of Bhavabhūti’s words. It is the creativity that makes works stand beyond the barriers of time and space and the commentator possessed this quality to a greater extent.

Vibudharatnāvalī

Vibudharatnāvalī of Nānyadeva is one of the celebrated commentaries on Mālatīmādhava. Nānyadeva has commended only on three acts (from VIII to X) left unfinished by Tripurārī. Nānyadeva was probably a disciple of Tripurārī. From the colophon of the commentary, it is learnt that his family name was Śilābhaṭṭiya and his father was Haricandana. From many references we come to know that he had high regard for Bhavabhūti and his works. He states that Mālatīmādhava is the best of Prakaraṇas. The play is qualified as prakaraṇaratnakārāḥ. Nānyadeva adds
that he has taken much pain to extract the essence of Bhavabhūti’s work.

Actually he was completing the commentary out of respect for Tripūrāri. The expression Tripūrāripadāmbhōjabhṛṅgāyamānaḥ may also refer to one who has read the works of Tripūrāri. In description, interpretation and criticism he closely follows Tripūrāri. Both refers to the work of Bhavabhūti as the ocean of words7. The name of the commentator, Nānyadeva itself is dubious. He might have accepted the name out of respect for his guru i.e गुरु के न अन्यो रेखा

The verse beginning with Śabaravāmiprītyā at the end of the commentary of each act also suggests that he might have been a disciple of Śabaravāmi. He rarely shows a tendency to project himself as a writer of repute. At the end of the commentary he admits that he has taken much pain to complete the work and had to depend on the earlier commentaries. This statement shows his simplicity and modesty.

Like Tripūrāri, Nānyadeva also presents things briefly. At the same time he is careful to give literary beauty to his explanations.
The explanation of the following verse shows how skillfully he brings out the suggested sense.

दलनि ददयं गाठोत्रेण हिथा नु न भिषकते
बहति विकलतः कायो मोहे न मुल्लवति चेतनाम।
ज्वलनः तस्युपन्तवाहः करोऽति न भर्ससा।
लाहरति विशिष्यमर्मेश्वरे न कृत्तिति जीवितम्॥ ॥ 9-12

My heart, whose anguish is intense, bursts but is not split in twain; my languid frame suffers stupefaction but parts not with consciousness; the fire within inflames the body but does not reduce it to ashes entirely; fate strikes cutting at the vital parts but cuts not off life.

He comments that fate wishes that Mādhava might suffer for a long time. Though fate is unfavourable to him, it does not put an end to his life. He comments that fate wishes that Mādhava might suffer for a long time.

His explanations are crisp and clear. He also has a wholesome view of the text and points out sandhīs and sandhyāṅgas. Vibudharatnāvalī stands ahead by the radical expressions and variety. Lucid language satisfies the readers and gives them a new experience.
Malatimadhatikā

Jagaddhara also furnishes details about himself in the verses at the beginning and also at the end of his tīkā. He mentions the name of his parents at the end of the commentary of each act. His father’s name was Ratnadhara and mother’s name Damayantikā. He qualifies his work as rasarājarājī which may mean that the work is intended to depict śrīgāra, the rasarāja. He was a great scholar who was well-versed in Kōsās, Vyākaraṇa, Nāṭya, Alāṅkāraśāstra, Nyāyaiśeṣika and Vēdās. He has also commented on Meghasandesa of Kālidāsa known as Rasadīpikā. The commentary was intended to please its readers and so he calls his tika kavitustikā.

He expresses his humility in the introduction:

श्रीकण्ठकण्ठबिरुद्धपुत्रकां केसिनर्

ढीका मयाल्पमतिनां पितन्यते यत्।

हासाय दुर्गन्नतियत्व भवेत्रै चैत-

दुच्चे पदेः यद्विमकाह्सति सर्व एव।।

Prof. Gode assigns him to the 14th century AD. This seems to be correct. Pūrṇasarvasvātī who belonged to the middle of the 14th
century AD criticises some of the views of Jagaddhara and so he is earlier than Pūrṇasarasvatī.

Jagaddhara shows a critical approach. He exhibits a flair for bringing out the suggested import of the text. Nothing misses his critical eyes. His expertise in bringing out the intention of the dramatist in using particular words is evident in the explanation of the following verse.

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एकोकृतत्स्वती निषिद्धम द्वायपीडङ्ग
निन्दुनयतंकृचकुमलयानया मे
कर्पूरहरिजन्दनथकान्तात
निष्णन्देशवल्मुकाहिमदिवर्गं।। 6 - 12
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By her with bud-like breasts, stout and compactly grown, is sprinkled upon my skin, as it were, after being got together and squeezed the class of such things as camphor, pearl necklaces, yellow sandal oozings of the moon-stones, saivala, lotus fibers, snow and the like. Jagaddhara notes that these all indicate the complete relief from sexual desire. It may be noted that mention of so many soothing substances hint to the zenith of sexual emotion of the hero and at
the same time point to the fact that it is all removed by one or the other soothing substance. The word ‘tvacī’ is used to remind us of the experience of touch.

स्पष्टीकरण तत्विनिर्दिष्टवाचात्मक त्वचीत्वुत्कर्म

Such features make his commentary an original treatise aimed at appreciating the poetic genius of Bhavabhūti.

Mālatīmādhavatīkā

Śeṣarājaśarma, the author of the ṭīkā, follows the usual pattern of commentaries of explaining the text and difficult words in it. He offers anvaya, artha vigrahavākya and grammatical peculiarities. Alaṅkāras and metres are also pointed out. He does not spare much time to analyse the plot and the rasa scheme. He interprets the words of the passages and at times tries to link this sense to events passed or yet to come. Yet the work reveals his deep knowledge in dramaturgy and grammar. His method of interpretation is rather mechanical. He analyses the rasa in the verse उत्कृष्टोक्त्वत् कृति as

अन्त्र ज्ञुपसाया परिपोषत् बोधतो रसः। तथा हि - शरमांसपालमबन
तत्कर्त्तानि मांसादमन चोहीपनं इश्वुरिनिहि बनादयोइनभावः। मोहदयो व्यभिचारिणो ज्ञुपसा
च स्थ्यातीभावः।

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Śeṣarājaśarma was a native of Durgaghat, Varanasi. He was a professor in Paśupataksetram, Nepal. He is the author of Candrakalā, a commentary on the Uttararāmacarita of Bhavabhūti.

Mālatīmādhavatīkā

Pandit Jibānanda Vidyāsāgara, the commentator, was the superintendent of Free Sanskrit College, Calcutta. Nothing is known about the personal details of the author from the commentary. The tīkā confines itself to merely giving the word meaning. At times he points out the relevance of certain words used.

While commenting upon the verse sānandaṁ he points out a reason for the pleasure experienced by the serpent king. He has entered into the nāsārandraḥ in order to protect his life. Otherwise he would be eaten by the peacock. The propriety of the word sānandaṁ is beautifully pointed out by this explanation.
REFERENCE

1. Malatīmādhava with the commentary of Tripurāri and Nānyadeva ed. by Mangesh Ramakrishna Telang, Panduranj Jawali, Nrnayasagar Press, Bombay 1918 Intro. P. 1

The name of the commentary is Bhāvapradīpikā and Rasikapriyā is an adjective qualifying it. It can be the other way also. Rasikapriyā can be the commentary.

2. Ibid

3. Ibid p. 25

4. Ibid P. 2

5. Ibid P. 94
6 Ibid Act. 10 P. 245
7 Ibid P. 184

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Mahadevasastri, Tr.vandrum, 1953, T.S.S. No. 170,
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10 Mālātīmādhava ed. by M.R. Kale. P. 133

11 Mālātīmādhava with the Candrakalā commentary of Śeṣarāja
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12 Mālātīmādhava ed. with a commentary by Jibānanda
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