CHAPTER VII

AN APPRAISAL OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

In all the preceding chapters, we have made an attempt to study of the various aspects of Varadāmbikāparināya campū, along with that of the life and date of the authoress, which is shrouded in controversy. Relevant historical and other sources have been referred to in the discussion of the life and date of the poetess. The different aspects of the campū such as the theme, its development, the Rasā delineation, the characterisation with special reference to major characters, the description in all their details, variety, poetic conventions and alāṅkāras and language and style are studied with appropriate illustrations and excerpts from the text. The threads of the various aspects developed in the preceding chapters may now be gathered together as a single synthetic whole. We have adopted for this study, the method of highlighting the literary merits of the campū and due care has also been taken to elucidate its historical merits at the appropriate juncture. Keeping in mind the over-all picture that emerges out of the present critical study, one hardly contest the opinion held by Prof. Sūryakāntha which he emphatically puts forth that the prime object of Tirumalāmbā in writing this campū was to
exhibit the beauty of Sanksrit prose and variety of imagery, as was doubtless the case with Subandhū, Daṇḍin and Baṇa. "They have all written not so much for the display of the moods of the "breathing clay" as for the display and worship of the Saraswati, the eternal sarasa or flow of life, the vocal essence of matter and makes it throb. It was not a mania, not a perversion, not an obsession with these devotees of learning; it was their its worship they died." 

It is proposed here to test the claim of the poetess herself given in the epilogue to the Varadāmbikāparīṇaya campū, that "The glory of Tirumalāmbā's natural genius has been augmented by her continuous appreciation of the ins and outs of the wonderful kāvyas, drāmas, the purāṇas and the Vedās, fully retained in memory after hearing them read but once. Her beautiful literary compositions, characterised by striking flashes of genius in regard to all subjects and all languages, are a feast for the ears of all poets and all eminent scholars, proficient in the highest sciences, and are veritable cows of plenty for bestowing imaginable, innumerable and desirable fruits on those who need them," by a review of the study in the different chapters, making a critical appraisal of the merits
of the Campūkāvya in all its aspects and drawing relevant conclusions.

Life, Date, and Works:

In the course of the discussion the above chapter, we have observed that when one proposes to say something on the life, date and works of any Sanskrit writer, an almost insurmountable problem that one is impelled to encounter is the scarcity of sufficient and authentic biographical material. W.D. Whitney, a renowned western scholar, has aptly observed: "All dates given in Indian literary history are pins set up to be bowled down again". A similar opinion is put forth by Winternitz in these words: "We can often say this or that book, this or that class of literature is older than a certain other. However, with regard to its real age it is only possible to offer hypotheses. The surest mark of differentiation for this relative chronology still lies in the language".

That the Hindus did not pay much attention to the historical order of things and that they were careless in relating the chronological succession of their Kings was pointed out by the Arabian traveller Alberuni in his travelogue as long
back as 1030 A.D. If this were to be the status of history of the ruling dynasties, one can well imagine what it must be in the case of poets, dramatists, philosophers, and artists etc. patronised by them. We have to cull out information about their date, life and social conditions bit by bit from all possible sources—literary, epigraphic, archeological etc., and scrutinise it in the light of available evidences. An attempt to do the same has been made in this chapter.

After discussing the foibles and fortes of various sources, we have referred to the inscription of Acyutarāya in Śrīraṅganāṭha Temple at Śrīraṅgam which clears much of the doubts about the identity of Tirumalāṁbā. Read with her epilogue to Varadāṁbikāparināṇaya campū, we safely conclude that she was the queen of Vijayanagara King Acyutarāya who ruled between 1529 and 1542. Another problem that we have to encounter is that the date of Acyutarāya itself is debatable. There is hardly any unanimity regarding the exact period during which Acyutarāya was at the helm of affairs in Vijayanagara.
Unfortunately, very little or almost nothing is known about Tirmalāmbā's antecedents, her ascendency to the position of the queen, her education etc. These questions will for ever remain unanswered, or at least until some new discoveries of authentic evidences, if ever, are made. At present, we have to be content with whatever little information that we are able to unearth from various sources.

It seems Varadāmbikāparināya campū, was her only work, for no other work is credited to her name. Fixing the date of the composition of this work is also beset with difficulties, some of which have been discussed in the first chapter. Taking into account the historical facts mentioned in the work itself such as that of the coronation Acyutarāya, anointment as heir-apparent of Cina Veṅkaṭādri, it can be concluded that she must have composed it between 1532-34.

Dr. Filliozat has suggested another possibility taking into account her (the poetess's) glorification beyond what was historically warranted, of her husband, who died a premature death in 1532, that this work must have been written after 1542 A.D. This also cannot be ignored. All in all, we will be on the safer side
if we conclude that Tirumalāmbā lived and wrote her work Varadāṃbikāparināya campū, during the first half of the sixteenth century.

The purpose of the poetess in choosing the theme of the marriage of the Acyutrayawith Varadāmbikā is evidently the glorification of the king Acyutarāya, who was also a beloved husband of the poetess. It is a historical kāvya, with abundant unhistorical elements included in it. In fact, much of what she says about Narasimha, the father of Achyuta and his conquests, about Achyuta's immediate succession to the throne after Narasimha's death, about Acyuta's growing a thin line of beard etc., are unhistorical. Therefore as a historical source, it should be taken with a pinch of salt. However, as a piece of literary work, it should be read and appreciated. We, for the purpose of the present study, are not concerned with the unhistorical statements related in it, but only with the literary merits that it has in plenty.

As a corollary of the simplicity of the theme of this campū, its plot is considerably short. Though it has a single story to relate and all its events unite so as to lead one to
the final catastrophe, the marriage of Acyutarāya with Varadāmbikā and the birth and installation as the heir-apparent of their son Cina Veṅkaṭadri, the reader feels that it is insipid, not lively and not well-knit. There are very few twists and turns in the plot. Although Acyutarāya is the hero of this campū, the poetess depicts Acyutarāya's family and his father Narasiṃha and his heroic adventures, wars and victories, marriage etc, in undue details. It is a very grave flaw of the campū since it consumes nearly half of this romance. What is even worse is that such heroic feats are not performed by the hero himself. Does Acyutarāya's greatness lie only in being born as a son of Narasiṃha? Even if the poetess did not intend to say so, she gives the same impression. It is only the description of the feats of horsemanship of Acyutarāya that the poetess has tried to bring out his heroism.

Narration:

In the second chapter of this thesis, we have observed that those portions of this campū which narrate the various incidents of the story and also those which tend to carry the Kathavastu of the campū further and serve as a connecting link between what precedes it and what follows it, can be taken to be narations.
Narration, along with descriptions, forms the fundamental constituents of a Kāvyā. Although in the present campū, narration and descriptions are so neatly interwoven that it is often very difficult to distinguish between the two, large portions have been devoted to descriptions alone. The poetess has an abiding interest in introducing descriptions of various kinds even at the cost of the significance of the major story elements. As a result, the slender thread of narrative is, more often than not, lost in the elaborate descriptions. Moreover, the poetess is carried away by her desire for the display of her profound erudition, mastery of Sanskrit language and rich power of description and introduces descriptions where they are unnecessary; where they are actually necessary, she denies them their place. The descriptions of Narasiṁha's heroic conquests are unnecessary and the marriage of Acyuta with Varadāmbika, the climax of this campū, has been described in such brief and concise manner that the reader may think it to be only a minor incident.

However, it should be said to the credit of the poetess that she has achieved finesse in the art of narration. Some incidents
like the marriage of Narasimha with Ombamamba, birth and education of Cina Venkaṭadrī etc, narrated by the poetess bring out her ability to carry forward the story by pithy sentences and beautiful narrations. These narrations stand out for their beauty as well as brevity. The dramatic elements in the conversations are attractive and help the development of the theme. The Kathavastu itself being short, descriptions no wonder overshadow the narrations.

**Descriptions:**

Description is a fundamental constituent of the Mahākavyā. The poetess seems to have accepted this whole-heartedly since has demonstrated her descriptive power in giving lively and vivid pictures of the countries of Tuḍirā and Cola, the river Kāverī, armies and the fierce battle, the sea and the Ramesvara bridge, the garden, the spring season with all its persuasiveness of love, the noon and the evening, and aquatic sports in addition to the depiction of chief personages. That like other Sanskrit poets of note, Tirumalamba is blessed with rich descriptive power can hardly be denied. The above enumerated descriptions which are numerous, minute, lengthy and charming, are adorned with original images of beauty in nature and in human-life.
processed though the poetess' extraordinary imaginative ability and poetic skill. The depiction of the physical handsomeness of a man by a woman which is amazingly rare in Sanskrit works, is also to be found in the present Campü. This portrayal of a man from top to toe, characterized by minute and faithful presentation of the nature of things, is what distinguishes this work from others, as far as descriptions are concerned.

However, it is rather difficult to answer the question whether all these descriptions are necessary in the context of the development of the theme. As we have observed in the third chapter, some of the descriptions seem to have been forced into the texture of the Campü, for their own sake, even though they are not very essential for the development of the plot. Further, some descriptions essential to the development of the theme only to some extent, have been described at great lengths. The long descriptions for instance of the lineology of Acyuta, the conquests of Narasimha, the countries of Tundīra and Cola, the river Kāverī, though not essential, have gone out of proportions to the disadvantage of the unfolding of the story. To make the matters worse, the poetess fails to introduce proper descriptions at places where they are necessary. A glaring
instance of this loophole occurs when the final catastrophe of this Campū, namely the marriage of the hero and the heroine, is reached. This incident, devoid of descriptions and elaboration, reads like any ordinary incident. This indeed is a blemish in Campū. In defence of the poetess, however, it must be stated that the poetess was merely following the trend that had come into vogue after Kalidasa. Bharavi, in particular, has been guilty of adding to the length of his Mahākavya with a meagre plot only through the series of descriptions. In order to win the encomium of her time, the poetess has followed this trend.

Characterisation:

In the fourth chapter dealing with characterisation in the present Campū, we have noted that the range of characters depicted in it is narrow, as the poetess has chosen them only from royal families. Those poets, who have drawn their theme from the epics or puranas are mostly indebted to their sources in portraying their characters through the depiction of the different incidents. However, Tirumalāmbā is indebted to none in the depiction of the characters of Varadāmbikāparināya, since it is, in a wider sense of the term, a historical kāvya. It is true that the theme being chosen from the real (contemporary) life, she has to be faithful
to reality. But this is not a big restraint considering the difficulty of re-characterizing the characters of the popular epics and purāṇas, which are already well-grounded in the minds of the people. Being true to reality is also not mandatory for the poets of historical literary works in India. That irrepressible flight of imagination, the inborn quality of the poets, remains unimpeded in all kinds of kāvyas including the historical ones. We have, in the first chapter itself, noted how unhistorical, imaginative elements are infused and interwoven by the poetess in this work, at her discretion.

Acyutarāyā, the hero of this campū, has been portrayed as a person not wanting in modesty, political sagacity, discrimination, valour and all other virtues. His learning ability, horsemanship, personal beauty have all been described by the poetess exhaustively. He is depicted as a devoted lover, a faithful spouse, and an affectionate parent. The heroine Varadāṁbikā, the daughter of a noble family, has been depicted as an exceedingly beautiful woman, a devoted beloved, humble, lover of nature and an embodiment of kindness and love towards animals. She is accomplished in playing lute, is god-fearing, believer in vows and a loving parent.
Narasiṁha, the father of Acyutarāya, is an able king and administrator, a mighty conquerer, an embodiment of compassion, and a devotee of God. His wife Ombamāmbā, belonging to a noble family, is beautiful and virtuous. The character of Jester is important from the point of view of the development of the theme. Cina Venkaṭādrī, the son of Acyuta and Varadaṁbīkā, displays a unique dignity right from his childhood. He is, considering his virtues, appointed the heir-apparent. Apart from these characters there are others too of minor importance.

The portrayal of female characters vis-a-vis male characters is pale and unconvincing. They are depicted as merely the associates in sex-life, as only instruments of procreation. They do not have any scope to display their talent, intelligence and mental resources etc. It is all the more surprising since the poetess herself was a woman. Even in the description of the physical beauty, she has been partial to male personality. Even the mother-hood has not been depicted properly as can be seen from the focus on men as proud and joyous parents in this Compu.

The character of Narasiṁha over-shadows even that of the hero. It is not only because more space has been devoted by the poetess for depiction Narasiṁha's character, but also because his
character, unlike that of Acyuta, evolves out of various events and incidents. Moreover, Acyuta shows himself in bad light because he is pleased by the praise of the bards and sycophants, and for personal enjoyment, entrusts the affairs of the state to his ministers. His life is uneventful.

All the important characters in this Campū, are presented as the embodiment of noble and ideal qualities which sounds unrealistic. They do not appear like real men of flesh and blood. Considering the fact that this is a historical kāvya or at least the poetess purported it to be one, it is even more incongruous. However, in defence of the poetess, it can be said that the very briefness of the plot has been a constraint on her.

Alaṅkāras:

The importance of Alaṅkāras in a literary work can hardly be overemphasized. The excellence of literary work, in the main lies not only in its richness of sentiment, but also in the employment of figurative language. We have observed in chapter V that a remarkable feature of the present Campū is the profusive employment of rhetorical embellishments. It is true, as rightly observed by Ānandavardhana, that the excessive use of the figures
of speech with special efforts would amount to artificiality, and that they should be employed with great discretion in such a way as to subserve the delineation of Rasa. The poetess Tirumalāmbā, we have observed, may be said to be very well-versed in the science of Rhetorics, as can be seen from copious examples of various rhetorical embellishments. It becomes evident from a thorough perusal of the Varadāmbīkāparīṇaya Campū that she has employed the figures of speech in appropriate contexts to adorn the narrative as well as descriptive parts of the text and to win the hearts of the readers. She compares well with Kālidāsa inasmuch as the alāṅkāras evolve without any special efforts on her part and they, apart from being spontaneous in evolution, ably subserve the delineation of the principal and subsidiary sentiments.

Further, both the Śabdālaṅkāras and Arthālaṅkāras consist in a big group of figures of speech that have been used by Tirumalāmbā. We have also noted that her use of Śabdālaṅkāras is considerably scanty as compared to that of the Arthālaṅkāras. Yet, all the three important varieties of Śabdālankāras, viz., Anuprāśa, Yamaka and Śleṣa, have been brought in beautifully. The poetic skill of Tirumalāmbā, however, becomes more glaring as can be seen from her apt method of employing a number of Arthālaṅkāras
throughout the Varadāmbikāpariṇāya Campū. Of the figures of speech she has brought in, it is evident that she has given special preference to Upama, Utpreksā, Rūpaka etc.

Thus, by way of conclusion, we can say that a profuse but apt use of figures of speech has been made by the poetess, using great discretion, in order to embellish her writings and thereby to gain the hearts of Saḥrdayas.

Rasa-Delineation:

Rhetoricians and literary critics, throughout the annals of the history of Sanskrit literature, have come to a consensus view that a Mahākāvyā should have Śṛṅgāra, Vīra or Karuna as the principal sentiment and other Rasās as subsidiary sentiments in the limited portions of the poem. From the analysis made in the sixth chapter of the thesis, we have come to learn that Tirumalāṁba has followed this view in practice in Varadāmbikāpariṇāya Campū. As discussed in detail in the relevant chapter, the predominant Rasa of the Campū is Śṛṅgāra. The sentiment is delineated by her with remarkable insight and vividness. The two kinds of Śṛṅgāra viz., Samghoga and Vipralāmbha Śṛṅgāra have found place in Varadāmbikāpariṇāya Campū. Sambhoga
Srṅgāra is developed in the descriptions of the first sight of each other of Acyuta and Varadāmbika, advent of spring, stroll in the garden, flower plucking, the moon, the evening, the aquatic sports and of the amorous sports of the royal couple. On the other hand, the Vipralāmbha Srṅgāra has been delineated mainly in the description of the pangs of separation felt by both Acyuta and Varadāmbika.

The poetess has delineated in fascinating manner, the subsidiary sentiments viz., Vīra, Raudra, Bhayanaka and Bibhatsa in certain portions of her Campū whenever the occasions for them present themselves during the development of her theme. All these four Rasas occur in the first part of the Campū which deals with Narasīmha and his heroic exploits. Narasīmha combines in himself all the four types of Vīra, viz., Danavīra, Dharamavīra, Yuddhavīra and Dayāvīra. The ability of the poetess in delineating all the above-said Rasas is wholesome. Except in the case of Srṅgāra Rasa, the principle sentiment and Vīra Rasa, one of the subsidiary sentiments, she has been very brief. In the delineation of Srṅgāra Rasā, her depiction of the scenes is in keeping with decorum and propriety. Although the situations of rasās other than Srṅgāra and Vīra are brief, they are very effective.
A few words about the scholarship of Tirumalāṁba here, may not be altogether out of place. That she has rich vocabulary and full command over language is established in Varadāṁbikāpariṇāya Campū. Due to her equipment in synonyms and homonyms, she is quite efficient in the use of the appropriate synonyms in different occasions without resorting to the repetitions of the same words. We have already pointed out that the compounds of this romance are generally longer even than those found in Bāna’s Kadambaṁtari and Harṣacarita and that this Campū contains the longest compound which is to found in Śanskrit literature. Undoubtedly, she has modelled her style on the works of Subandhu and Bāna. However, the poetess has wisely avoided the monotony of prose-sentences full of a series of sonorous compounds, many times of awe-inspiring majesty, by intermingling verses.

The Gaudī style in which she has composed the Varadāṁbikāpariṇāya Campū, contains the literary excellence (Guṇa) of vigour (ojas) which consists in the letters expressive of vigour, the abundance of long compounds and high sounding expressions.

Varadāṁbikāpariṇāya campū is enriched with wise-sayings and idiomatic expressions, some of which have the shade of Kalidāsa’s
statements. All the same, the poetess has shown her ability to change them into the ideas of her own.

Though, Tirumalāmbā may not rank high on par with Kālidāsa, it must be said to her credit that she has a rank amongst the scholarly poets of the Sanskrit literary tradition. Even more importance should be accorded to her because she was one of a few women who in the male-dominated world of literature, have enriched the Sanskrit literature. As a historical Kāvya, Varadāmbikāparṇāya campū is very useful in the reconstruction of the history of Vijayanagara empire especially of the first half of the sixteenth century. Due to this fact it has increased significance. The poetess must be given due credit for her descriptive power charged with the imaginative faculty and intellectual faculty happily combined together. Her narrative ability too is exquisite. It is evident from the way the theme evolves in Varadāmbikāparṇāya Campū.

In short, the Varadāmbikāparṇāya Campū, is laden with innumerable literary merits manifest in her descriptions, evolution of the theme, alaṅkāras and delineation of Rasas and so on. Her flow of thought is with case and simplicity. Her words and ideas are apt, gorgeous and happy. The soft and melodious
syllables find place in her style to keep step with richness of sense. These literary merits apart, it throws adequate light on the history of the times. Therefore it has acquired much popularity these days. A poetess of note, a lover of nature, undoubtedly she is. No wonder she has won the admiration and encomium of all the Sahradayyas.
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