PART-I

INTRODUCTION:

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE ŚAṆKHACŪḌAVADHA.
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A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE ŚAŃKHACŪḌAVADHA.

The Śaṅkhacūḍavadha is a Sanskrit drama composed in the Medieval Assam by Dīna Dvija under the patronship of Kaliyābhomorā Barphukan, the Ahom viceroy in western Assam during the reign of the Ahom King, Sargadew Kamaleśvara Simha, who ruled from 1795-1810 AD. The drama contains three Acts. The principal theme of the play is the killing of the demon king Śaṅkhacūḍa. There are other relevant episodes also with the main theme. In the history of Sanskrit dramatic literature, particularly in the history of Assam, this drama occupies a very significant position.

The kernel of the play, Śaṅkhacūḍavadha of Dīna Dvija, is narrated in chapters vi, vii, and also in chapters from xiv to xxi of the Prakṛti-Khaṇḍa of the Brahmaṇaivarta-purāṇa.

The text of the Nāṭaka is available so far in two forms, viz, a lone sāñci-leaf manuscript and a printed edition. The sāñci-leaf manuscript, preserved in the library of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam,
Guwahati. This manuscript, No. 62 in the catalogue, contains thirty six folios of sānci-bark (Acquilaria Agallochā). It is written in old Assamese script and at places have become wornout.

The printed edition is based on this lone manuscript and is included in the Rūpaka-trayam, edited by Professor Dr. Satyendranath Sarma, formerly Tagore Professor of Modern Indian Languages, Gauhati University, and published by the Asom Sāhitya Sabhā in 1962. The other two plays of the Rūpaka-trayam are Kāmakumāraharaṇa by Kavicandra Dvija and Vighncśajanmodaya by Gaurīkānta Dvija. The Principal features of the Śaṅkhacūḍavadha are common to the other two dramas included in the Rūpaka-trayam.

The special features of the Śaṅkhacūḍavadha, briefly, are as follows :

(i) Our drama is more narrative than the dramatic works in general.

(ii) It appears that the play-wright has hardly made any change in the story narrated in the Brahma vaivarta-purāṇa and has not made any improvement on the original for the dramatic purpose.
(iii) It represents a tendency towards the change in the established general norms of Sanskrit dramas.

(iv) The influence of the *Aṅkīyā-nāṭakas* composed by Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, the propounder of the Neo-Vaisnavism in medieval Assam, is fully noticed.

(v) The drama embodies a very bold experiment in respect of composing Assamese verses in Assamese metres.

(vi) This drama also deserves to be reckoned as a very important datum in respect of the cultural history of Assam pertaining to the late medieval period (i.e., later part of the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth century A.D.

(vii) The songs of this play are set to classical rāga and tāla.

(viii) Some elements of Brajāvalī dramas or the *Aṅkīyā-nāṭakas* of medieval Assamese literature are incorporated here which are not found in other Sanskrit dramas composed according to the traditional norms of dramaturgy.

(ix) Assamese is the sole medium of expression so far
as the songs are concerned.

(x) If the lyrics of this drama are composed in typical Assamese metres, the Sanskrit verses are in classical Sanskrit metres.

Sanskrit dramas are categorized into ten main forms, i.e., Rūpakas. The ten varieties of Rūpakas are, viz., Nāṭaka, Prakaraṇa, Bhāṇa, Vyāyoga, Samavakāra, Dima, Ihamrīga, Aṅka, Vithi and Prahasana. Out of the ten Rūpakas, Nāṭaka is considered to be of the highest form. Śaṅkhacūḍavadha is called a Nāṭaka by the author, Dīna Dvija himself. According to Bharatamuni’s Nāṭyasāstra, Dhanañjaya’s Daśarūpaka and Viśvanātha Kavirāja’s Sāhityadarpana, the story of a Nāṭaka should be drawn from traditions, and not to be an invented one. Again, it is also said that the hero of a drama should be a king, a royal sage or a god. This type of heroes may appear in human form.

As recommended by the authors on dramaturgy, the

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1. In the prologue and at the end of each Act., of the play it is termed as nāṭaka. cf.
   (i) śrimatāḥdjayasarasiruhaśāyinā nārāyapena śaṅkhacūḍavadhākhya-
       nāṭakamabhine tumādīsto’śmi.
   (ii) iti......śaṅkhacūḍavadhanāṭake ganīgalakṣmī......nāma
       prathamo’vikah.
2. NS. XVIII, 10ff; DR. III. 1-34; SD. VI, 7-9.
story of the Śaṅkhacūḍavadha is culled from a traditional source, viz., the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa of the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa. Śaṅkhacūḍa, the hero of the drama is a demon king who appeared in human form.

From the point of sentiment (rasa), the dominant sentiment of a Sanskrit Nāṭaka must be the heroic or the erotic. The playwright of the present drama, Śaṅkhacūḍavadha, has delineated heroic sentiment as the dominant sentiment, while keeping other sentiments as auxiliaries.

To exhibit the qualities of the ŚV as a Sanskrit drama, it is necessary to show the general structure and arrangement of the Sanskrit dramas. Sanskrit poetry, from its inherent nature as apart from its intrinsic merit, is divided into two varieties — 'drśya', i.e., what is capable of being seen or exhibited, and śravya', i.e., what can only be heard chanted. The ŚV falls under the category of 'drśya'. 'Rūpaka' is the general term in Sanskrit for all dramatic compositions; it also comprises a subordinate class, called 'uparūpaka'. A 'Rūpaka', which has rasa or sentiment for its substratum, is

3. cf. 'nāṭakamathā prakaraṇān bhāṇavyāyoga samavakāradimāḥ / ihāṃṛgāṅkavīthyaḥ praḥasanamiti rūpakāṇi daśāḥ // — SD, VI. 3
divided into ten classes. The plot (vastu), the hero (netā) and the sentiment (rasa) are the three essential constituents of every dramatic piece. Each dramatic piece opens with a prelude or prologue (prastāvanā), which itself is introduced by what is called Nāndī. This Nāndī, according to some, must suggest the gist of the whole plot. The Sūtradhāra may sometimes retire after the recital of the Nāndī, in which case another actor, called Sthāpaka (for he establishes, as it were, the topic of the play) takes his place. In the prelude, which may begin with a brief allusion to the poet's literary attainments, his genealogy, etc.

The Sūtradhāra or the Sthāpaka suggests the subject in the form of the Vīja, or by a simple beginning, or by naming the character(s) about to enter. He must please the audience with sweet songs descriptive of some seasons and couch in the Bharatī vṛtti.

The prastāvanā is of two kinds,—prarocanā and āmukha in which the Sūtradhāra holds conversation with the actress or his assistants, bearing on the subject to be introduced. The whole subject matter should be well determined and divided into acts and scenes. A Nāṭaka may consists of from five to ten acts. The hero should be Dhirodatta. The prevailing sentiment should be Śṛṅgāra or Vīra (or
sometimes Karuṇa), others being introduced as conductive to its development. An act must not be tiresomely long. It should be full of Rasa and introduced through Viṣkambhaka, according to necessity. The close of the Nāṭaka is marked by the exit of all characters. Such incidents as journeys, massacres, wars etc. should not be represented in a play. They may only be indicated. The death of the hero must never be exhibited. The play should end, as it begins, with a benediction or prayer, called the Bharatavākyā, as it is repeated by the principal personage of his character of an actor and contains an expression of wishes for general prosperity and happiness. The unity of interest or action must be maintained throughout. As regards the language to be used in a piece, the hero and the higher characters speak in classical Sanskrit, while females and other minor characters speak in different prākrit dialects.

II. DATE OF COMPOSITION OF THE PLAY

The date of a work can be determined on the basis of two factors, viz, internal and external evidences. The date of the present work under study can be determined from the

4. cf. "durāhvānam vadho yudhvām rāyadeśādīviplabahaḥ/ vivāho bhūjanām śāpotsargau mṛttyūratām tathā/"

—SD., VI. 16.
internal evidences. The poet himself declares the date of the completion of his work in the colophone of the third Act. He mentioned the title of his patron also. He indicates the date (the Śaka year) in a chronogrammatic form: śāke tattva-munīndubhir-vigaṇite bhāṣāvimiśraimarudā. In this expression, the word 'śāke' stands for the Śaka-year, the word 'tattva' stands for the twenty four (twenty four tattvas of Sāṅkhya-darśana), the word 'muni' stands for seven (saptarṣi or seven sages) and 'indu' (moon) stands for number one (because there is only one moon). According to the formula (nyāya) 'aṅkānāṁ vāmato gatiḥ', we may read the numbers reversely, and thus we may get the Śaka year, viz. 1724 or A.D. 1802. This reading tally with the period of Borphukanship of Kaliyābhomorā who was rewarded with the title Pratāpavallabha for his heroic deeds. He was appointed Borphukan during the reign of Kamalesvara Simha, i.e., A.D. 1795-1810.

A confusion may arise about the reading of the Śaka year as stated in the chronogram just quoted. If we follow the formula aṅkānāṁ vāmato gatiḥ, we may come to a conclusion like, that the work was completed in 1742 Śaka

year (by reversely reading the figure 24 standing for \textit{tattva}). But it would not tally with the period of Borphukanship of Kaliyābhomorā. Because, Kamalesvara Simha died in the Śaka year 1732 or A.D. 1810, and his younger brother Candrakanta Simha ascended the Ahom throne. During the tenure of Chandrakanta Simha, Kaliabhomora died when Badancandra became Borphukan. So the reading of the Śaka year 1724 unambiguously correct.

III. LIFE AND DATE OF DīNA DVIJA.

The life and date of a particular author may be determined on the basis of both (i) internal and (ii) external evidences. (i) External evidences include reference to the author and his work in the contemporary literary or other works, while the (ii) internal evidences include biographical data supplied by the author himself in his writings. Besides, references made in the work of a particular author to his contemporaries or predecessors, are also dependable evidences for determining the probable date of that particular author. Moreover, mention of one's patron's name is also a great help in this respect. The language and the style of literary work of a particular author throw much light on the date of the concerned author. In short, as far as the internal
evidences are concerned, an author is his own historian. On the basis of this, we may examine the date and life of our author, Dīna Dvija.

(i) External Evidences:

So far as the external evidences are concerned, the name of Dīna Dvija, or the reference to the play Śaṅkha-cūḍāvadha is not traceable in any contemporary literary or other works. Hence, we have to depend entirely on the internal evidences supplied by the author himself.

(ii) Internal evidences:

Our author, Dīna Dvija furnished very little information so far as his personal history is concerned. In the closing verse of most of the songs of the play, the author calls himself Dīna Dvija.⁶ Professor S. N. Sarma, the compiler and editor of the play, observes that, “it is not possible to ascertain whether Dīna (poor) was his real name or simply an epithet signifying his humility.” Prof. Sarma's assumption may, perhaps, be supported by the verse incorporated in the colophon, which runs as follows:

⁶ cf. bole dvija dīna hiṃa śunā save budhayana bhakti hetu emana milaya // —Śv., Act III. 12
In another place, also, the poet states:

‘bole dīna dvīja hīna śuna save budhajana’ etc.

In the last line of the last verse, i.e., ‘vākyaiḥ sanskritakairimāṁ racitavān bhūdevavaryāgrāṇiḥ’, there may be some indication to his family relations. Herein the expression, bhūdevavaryāgrāṇiḥ, probably means ‘the elder brother of Bhūdeva,’ may be a younger brother of his. We find reference to one Bhavakānta Vipra Mahanta, who composed one Assamese drama, called Sambarāsuravadha, under the patronage of the Ahom king Kamalesvar Simha (1795 to 1810 A.D.), who happened to be the patron of our author’s (Dīna Dvija’s) patron, Kaliyabhomora. This Bhavakānta might have been referred to as the ‘Bhūdevavarya’.

Dīna Dvija has gratefully acknowledged the patronage extended to him by Kaliyābhomorā Barphukan, who was a viceroy in the Western divison of the Ahom kingdom during the reign of Kamalesvar Simha.
In the history of Assamese literature, also, we meet with one Dīna Dvija, who translated into Assamese the romantic episode of Mādhava-Sulocanā of the Uttarakhāṇḍa of the Padmapurāṇa. The language of the Mādhava-Sulocanā bears the stamp of eighteenth century Assamese language. So, it may be assumed that the author of the Mādhava-Sulocanā and our playwright, Dīna Dvija is one and the same person.  

IV. THE PATRON OF THE POET

In the prologue as well as in the epilogue of Śaṅkhacūḍavadha, Dīna Dvija has gratefully acknowledges one Barphukan (which is sanskritised as brhatphukkana) for his patronship. Dīna Dvija has incorporated two Nāndī verses in the Prastāvanā and immediately after the Nāndī verses the poet offers blessings to the minister in whose instance he has composed this play.

cf.

kaviḥ mantriṇāṁ pratyaśirvādamāha /
śrīmānśriśakravamśodhavanpatiratikānta saṁkrāntamūrtiḥ,
nānābhūpālaśiśaprapatapadayugo’mitrapākṣeśkṛtāntaḥ/
 tatslabhyo’mātyamukhyahsaṅkalabudhajana prītidaḥ śubhra kūrtiḥ,
sandikaivāṃśajanmā jayati vimaladhiḥ brāṭphukkano’sau/  


7. Introduction to RT, p. 011.
In this verse the poet has referred to his patron as 'the worthy minister of the King who is a descendent of the family whose ancestors are said to have derived their origin from Śakra, the lord of the gods,—śrī śakramaṃśodbhava-nṛpati—......tatsāghyo'mātyamukhyah.

The Ahoms ruled Assam for almost six hundred years from 1228 to 1826 A.D. In 1826, Assam came under British rule as per the provisions of the treaty of Yandaboo, between the invading Burma king and the British. A good number of kings ruled Assam during aforesaid six hundred years. The Ahoms were busy in establishing their kingdom uptill sixteenth century A.D. In the process a series of war took place between the Ahoms and the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal and Delhi in the seventeenth century A.D. In this century a number of powerful Ahom kings, e.g., (1) Pratap Simha (1603-1641),, (2) Chakradhvaj Simha (1663-1619 A.D.), (3) Gadadhar Simha (1681-96 A.D.), (4) Rudra Simha (1696-1714A.D.), (5) Siva Simha (1714-1744 A.D.), (6) Pramatta Simha (1744-1751 A.D.), (7) Rajesvara Simha (1751-1769 A.D.), (8) Lakṣhmi Simha (1769-80 A.D.), (9) Gaurinath Simha (1780-1795 A.D.), and (10) Kamalesvar Simha (1795-1810 A.D.) were in the helm of
affairs. During the reign of Chakradhvaj Simha, the Ahoms fought the famous Saraighat battle under the leadership of Lachit Barphukan.

Our poet, Dīna Dvija, mentions the name of his patron as one Barphukan in the Prastāvanā. His patron was the worthy minister of Ahom king Kamalesvar Simha (1795-1810) Dīna Dvija composed the play Śāmkhacūḍavadha in the Śaka year 1724, i.e., 1802 A.D. So, we may say that Dīna Dvija was contemporary to the Ahom King Kamalesvar Simha. Kamalesvar Simha was the successor of Gaurinath Simha. Gaurinath Simha died in the year 1795 A.D., and just after his death, Kamalesvar Simha, alias Kinaram Gohain was crowned as thirtysixth Ahom king. When Kamalesvar Simha was crowned king, two youths, named Haradatta and Vīradatta of Kāmarūpa revolted against the Ahom king. They marched with their military force from the local kāchārī (civil station). The name of this revolution was known as Danduādroha, because of the name of the place, Danduā, where the revolution took place. At that time, Gendhela Rajkhowa alias Kaliyabhomoa was the general in charge of western Assam. He defeated the rebellion against the Ahom

9. S. K. Bhuyan, Sātsorī Asam Buranjī, p. 171
king and established peace there.\(^9\) Because of the successful operation against the rebellious army of Haradatta and Vīradatta, Kaliyabhomora was awarded with the title of ‘Pratāpavallabha’ and was made Viceroy (Barphukan) at Guwahati. One Pṛthuram Dvija, who rendered into Assamese verses the ‘Muṣalaparvan’ of the Mahābhārata, gratefully acknowledges the patronage of the Minister Pratapavallabha, the worthy scion of the Sandikai family. He says: “Victory Pratapavallabha, the foremost of the Ministers, comes of the Sandikai family and is repository of all virtues. He is of dark complexion, and a great charmer of ladies.”\(^{10}\)

The King, as referred to by the poet Dīna Dvija in the prologue, is no other than Kamalesvar Simha of Indra dynasty.

In the prologue, just after the benedictory verses, the poet has referred to a king who is to be belonged to the dynasty of Indra (Śakra), i.e., the founder of the Ahom dynasty. (śrīmān-śrī-śakra-varṇaśodhavānpatiratikāntasamkrānta mūrtih/) The king was a patron of learning and a man of culture. He was fond of enjoying dramatic performances and also maintained a band

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10. *RT*, Introduction, p. 0.11
11. *Tungkhunjī Burañjī*, p. 168
12. M. Neog, *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times*, p. 37
13. *RT*, Introduction, P.O-1
of court artists. Under his inspiration, many books, both in Sanskrit and Assamese were written. The *Hara-Gaurī-Saṅvāda* in Sanskrit and the *Sambarāsuravadha*, a drama in Assamese were written by Bhavakānta Vipra Mahanta under the inspiration of Svargadew Kamalesvar Simha. Svargadew Kamalesvar Simha enjoyed the throne for fifteen years five months and thirteen days. Kamalesvar Simha died in 1810 A.D. becoming a victim of an epidemic. After him another three Ahom monarchs sat on the throne. They are accordingly Chandrakanta Simha (1810 A.D.-1811A.D.), Purandara Simha (1818A.D.-1819 A.D.), and the lastly king Chandrakanta Simha (for the second time) occupied the Ahom throne.

V. THE TITLE OF THE DRAMA

In choosing the title of the play Dīna Dvija follows the tradition of Indian dramaturgy. He selected the name *Śaṅkhacūḍāvadha*, i.e., the killing of Śaṅkhacūḍa, the hero of the play. The theme of the play is taken from the Prakṛtikhaṇḍa of the *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa* wherein the demolition of Śaṅkhacūḍa by Lord Śiva is depicted. From

15. *ityādyāśeṣamiha vastuvibhedajātam rāmāyaṇādīsahā vṛhatkathāṁ ca / āsūtryettadānu netrasāṅgumyāccitrāṁ kathānucita cāruvacāḥ prapañcāiḥ/*

16. *cf. nāma-kāryaṁ nāṭakasya garbhitārtha-prakāśakam /*

—DR., I. 68

—SD., VI. 142
this standpoint our poet does not deviate from the dramaturgic rules. According to tradition, the title of a drama or a poem should be coined after the name of the hero or the heroine concerned.\textsuperscript{15}

(i) Viśvanātha Kavirāja holds the view that the title of a Nāṭaka should indicate the very nucleus of the dramatic action.\textsuperscript{16}

(ii) Sāgaranandin also is of the opinion that the title may refer to the names of the principal characters or to some important pivot in the dramatic action.

In the prologue of our play, the author explains the title as—`devānām-ari-sāṅkhačūḍa-vadhā-nāṭam-tulasyudvāha-yutam` etc. The expression means `the annihilation of the demon king Śaṅkhačūḍa who is the enemy of the gods.’ The \textit{vadhakāvyas} generally deal with the slaughter of demons and monsters. Our present play is no different from this convention.

The conception of the good and the evil being eternally at war is the core of all literature. Satan, in Christian literature, at war with benign forces of heaven is the product of such an idea. The \textit{daityas} and \textit{dānavas} are no different. The \textit{vadhakāvyas} are mostly symbolical. As for example,
Baghāsura symbolises the vice of warice and its annihilator Bhīma is the saviour of all people, an unsurpassed might.

In the classical Sanskrit literature, there are few (i.e, a good number of) vadhakāvyas, viz., the Śiśupālavadha of Māgha, Rāvana-vadha of Bhartṛhari and so on. There is a good number of vadhakāvyas in Medieval Assamese literature also. In the pre-Vaiṣṇava period, Kaviratna Sarasvatī composed the Jayadratha-vadha-kāvyā. The Vaiṣṇava poets also composed several vadhakāvyas which are about the daityas and dānavas of antiquity.

Rāmasarasvatī has composed several vadhakāvyas, like the Mahiṣa-dānavavadha, the Khatāsuravadha, the Aśvakarṇavadha, the Kulācalavadha, the Baghāsuravadha, the Jāṅghāsuravadha, the Hemasundarī etc. These kāvyas generally serve as appropriate source of recreation and pleasure to the common people. These also feed moral attitudes through lessons aimed at demonstrating the justice of God. The Vadha-kāvyas deal with super normal themes of exploits and enterprises, and imbued with a religious merit. And it is bhakti through which comes the emancipation from mortal miseries and sufferings.
In the *Kulācalavadha* of Rāmasarasvatī, it is said thus: as a mother does not take note of 'the child in the womb striking her with his feet; So God does not take note of man’s occassional transgression provided that he remembers him at the ultimate moment.'

Kavirāja Cakravartī composed the *Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha-kāvya* which is again illustrated profusely by other court artists at the behest of Svargadew Sivasimha and his consort *Bor-rājā* Phuleswari Konwari.

The popularity of the *vadha-kāvyas* among the masses inspired Dīna Dvija, a poet belonging to late seventeenth-eighteenth century A.D. to compose his Sanskrit play, *Śaṅkhacūḍavadha*. His immediate model seems to be the *Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha-kāvya* of Kavirāja Cakravartī. Taking the same theme, Dīna Dvija composed the play with the amalgamation of the rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy and those of the *Āṅkīyā-nāṭas* of Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva.

The title of the play, *Śaṅkhacūḍavadha*, justifies the events of the play. Here also, like other *vadha-kāyas*, it is shown that a Bhakta like Śaṅkhacūḍa, who was born as *dānava* and was inclined towards the *dānavite* feat, got released from worldly bondage and attained *Vaikūṇṭha*. 
VI. THE STORY OF THE PLAY IN BRIEF :

The Śāṅkhacūḍāvadha is a Sanskrit play consisting of three Acts. The kernal of the theme is taken from the Brahmanda-varta-purāṇa (Prakṛti-Khaṇḍa). The story runs as follows:

Act-I :

The first Act begins with the usual benedictory verses as well as the prarocanāp. The play opens with a quarrel among the three consorts of Viṣṇu, viz., Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā. One day Viṣṇu was sitting in his royal court among his courtiers along with his three consorts. The three goddesses were sitting comfortably. In one moment it so happened that Gaṅgā had cast glances at Hari longingly and Hari, too, responded to Gaṅgā’s glances smilingly. But Sarasvatī, by the nature of womanly jealousy, felt insulted and became furious. Lakṣmī tried to appease her. But instead of being appeased, Sarasvatī started abusing Hari. Hari came out of the court. Sarasvatī then showered curses upon Lakṣmī to become a plant and a river on earth (sarit-vṛksarūpā). Gaṅgā reacts violently to the unjustified anger and jealousy of Sarasvatī, and pronounces a similar curse upon her. Sarasvatī then curses Gaṅgā that she would
loose her heavenly status and become a river on earth. Consequently she would be accumulated with the sins of those sinful men who would take bath in her waters.

At this stage, Viṣṇu appears in the scene and intervened. He pacified them with sweet reasonable words and then interpretes the quarrel of the three deities as a boon for the mortals. Hari expresses his inability to undo the evil effects of their mutual curses. However, He specifies the course of their stay on earth. He tells Lakṣmī that she would be born as a daughter of Dharmadhvaja and be called Tulasi. She then would have to do severe penance meditating upon Brahmā. With Brahmā’s boon she would be married to Śaṅkhacūḍa, a demon king, but a devotee of Viṣṇu, and when Śaṅkhacūḍa would be killed by Hara, she would be freed from worldly bondage. Hari also specified the courses of Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī.

Accordingly, the three deities had to come down to the mortal world in the forms specified in their curses. Lakṣmī is born as the daughter of king Kuśadhvaja and Malāvatī. The girl was named Vedavatī. When she has grown up she leaves the palace in order to practice penance in the forest. While practicing penance, Rāvana, the king of Laṅkā,
outraged her modesty. She cursed him in turn, saying that she would be the cause of his death in her next birth. She then immolates herself through yoga.

Besides the description of the quarrel among the three consorts of Viṣṇu, the poet depicts a quarrel between Sūrya and Śaṅkara. Vṛṣadhvaja was a devotee of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara was so pleased with Vṛṣadhvaja that He remained in the latter's residence for three yugas. One day Sūrya came to Vṛṣadhvaja's place to meet Śaṅkara; but the king does not pay any attention to the deity. Being thus neglected by the king, he became very irritated. Therefore, Sūrya curses the king, and a quarrel takes place between Sūrya and Śaṅkara. Out of anger, Śaṅkara runs towards Sūrya and Sūrya also with his father Kaśyapa goes to meet Brahmā, because he is threatened by the trident of Śaṅkara. Hearing this incident from Sūrya and Kaśyapa, Brahmā comes to Vaikuṇṭha to meet Nārāyaṇa. Finally, Nārāyaṇa controls the situation.

Act II:

The second Act of the play begins with the birth story of Tulasī. Lakṣmī is born as the daughter of Dharmadhvaja and Mādhavī. They belong to the heritage of Dakṣasāvarṇi. On coming of age, she goes to Badarikāśrama where she
worships Brahmā for a long period. Tulasī’s penance comes to an end when Brahmā, the creator, appears before her and offers her the desired boon. Here, in this Act, a description of the curses upon Tulasī and Śaṅkhacūḍa by Rādhikā in their former existence is given by the dramatist. After receiving the boon, Tulasī narrates that, while in her former existence she engaged in a love dalliance with Kṛṣṇa at Goloka, Rādhikā cursed her to be separated from Kṛṣṇa, and she will go to lead the life of a mortal woman in the world. But Kṛṣṇa gives her assurance that she would regain her celestial form by worshipping Brahmā. Brahmā gives her the desired boon and advises her to marry the demon-king Śaṅkhacūḍa. Śaṅkhacūḍa, in his previous life was also an attendant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. By the curse of Rādhikā, he is also born as an asura. Brahmā also says that they would regain their celestial status after their death. The remainings of Tulasī’s body would remain in the mortal world in the form of the sacred plant Tulasī and thus the curse of Sarasvatī would materialise.

After granting the desired boon to Tulasī, Brahmā disappears from Badarikāśrama. After the departure of Brahmā, the demon king Śaṅkhacūḍa arrives near Tulasī.
At the first sight, they are attracted towards each other and very soon they are married according to the process of Gandharva rites. The wedded couple return to the capital. Śaṅkhacūḍa gradually becomes very tyrant and begins to oppress the gods and the mortals alike. The creator Brahmā and the gods approach Śaṅkara for finding a means to overcome Śaṅkhacūḍa. Śaṅkara advises them to approach Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa then tells them that only Śaṅkara would be able to kill the demon-king Śaṅkhacūḍa if he could be divested of the Nārāyaṇa-kavaca, and his wife Tulasī's chastity could be reviled.

The gods, thus assured, make preparation for the fight. Headed by Śaṅkara, they move towards the capital of the demon king with full military preparation. A message either surrender or fight, is sent to the demon king. Śaṅkhacūḍa prefers to fight and goes to meet Śaṅkara in the battle-field leaving his capital in charge of his wife and son, Sucandra. The Act ends here with the description of Śaṅkhacūḍa's march to the battle-field.

Act III :

The third act begins with the discussion of pre-war conditions and negotiations between Śaṅkara and
Śaṅkhacūḍa. A vivid description of the war between the gods and the demons is given by the poet. The war starts between the armies of the gods and demons. The gods fight on the side of Śaṅkara. Even Pārvatī fights with the demon-king assuming the furious form of Mahākālī. But she fails to kill him because of the fact that Śaṅkhacūḍa is wearing the Nārāyaṇa-kavaca. Pārvatī comes to Śaṅkara to inform her failure in killing Śaṅkhacūḍa. At this Śaṅkara comes to meet Śaṅkhacūḍa. A good fight is fought with Śaṅkhacūḍa, but Śaṅkara, too, fails to kill him. Then Nārāyaṇa, in the guise of an old needy brāhmaṇa, appears before the demon-king and asks for his Nārāyaṇa-kavaca. The king realises that his death is certain, if he gives away his kavaca. Yet, the devotee of Viṣṇu gives away his kavaca. After receiving the kavaca, Nārāyaṇa comes to meet Tulasī assuming the form of Śaṅkhacūḍa. Nārāyaṇa seduces her and violates her chastity. Śaṅkhacūḍa fights with Śaṅkara without the armour. Now, it becomes easy for Śiva to kill Śaṅkhacūḍa. At last the king is defeated by Śaṅkara. When Tulasī finally realises the cheat, that the seducer is actually Nārāyaṇa, Tulasī curses him to turn into a stone. Nārāyaṇa reminds her of the curse of Sarasvatī and her previous
celestial existence.

Nārāyaṇa tells that Tulasī will turn into a river to be named Gandakī, and on the bed of that river Nārāyaṇa would be lying as a stone and her hair will turn into a sacred plant to be universally known as Tulasī. Whoever worships Nārāyaṇa with the leaves of Tulasī plant, he or she will earn the merit of performing one hundred horse sacrifices. Instantly Tulasī turns into a river and the bones of Śaṅkhacūḍa, which were thrown into the sea, conch-shells of varied sizes sprung up. The conch-shell now becomes a very important requisite in the worship of Nārāyaṇa. The play ends with the invocation of blessings from God.

VII. SOURCES AND DEVIATIONS

(a) Sanskrit Sources:

At the close of each Act of the ŚV, Dīna Dwija clearly mentions the Brahmavaivartapurāṇa as the source for theme of his play. The Brahmavaivartapurāṇa (abbr. Bvp), is reckoned as one of the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas. It possesses

17 sargaśca pratisargaśca vaṁśamanvantarāṇi ca / vaṁśānuvaritam cāpi purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇam //
18. āstādaśa purṇāni kṛtvā satyavatī sutaḥ / bhārata-khyānam cakre tadupābhrīnaṇam //
—Matsyapurāṇa, 555. 70
all the characteristic features of a Mahāpurāṇa as listed in *Amarakosa*. Vedavyāsa is believed to be the author of all the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas.

The glory of the *Bvp* is depicted in other Mahāpurāṇas also. The *Matsyapurāṇa* glorifies the *Bvp* as follows: It is the Brahmavaivarta, which includes those eighteen thousand ślokas where Sāvarṇi relates to Nārada, the story of Brahmavarāha as well as the glory of Kṛṣṇa on the basis of the incidents of the *rathantakalpa*, and also the divine power of Kṛṣṇa. The Uttarakhanda of the *Vāyupurāṇa* also states: "*vivartanād brahmanastu brahma-vaivartamucyate.*" The transformation of the Brahman is presented in the *Bvp*. The *Nārādiyapurāṇa* reckons the *Bvp* as the tenth in the list of eighteen Mahāpurāṇas and states that this *purāṇa* deals with virtue, wealth, pleasure and salvation. Vettam Mani, in his *Puranic Encyclopaedia*, speaks about the *Brahmavaivartapurāṇa*, as follows: "It deals with *prapañcasṛṭi* (creation of the universe). It says that *prapañca* is nothing but the *vaivarta* (transformation) of Brahman."

The *Bvp* is solely a sectarian work which sings the glories of Lord Viṣṇu. It is a popular work among the

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19. *rathāntarasya kalpasya vṛttāntamadhikṛtya yat sāvarṁinā nārādiya kṛṣpamāḥātmya samyutam.........brahmavaivartamucyate / —ibid
20. Vettam, Mani, *PE*, p. 112
21. This point is discussed at the relevant place of the present study.
scholars in the North-Eastern India particularly Bengal and Assam. This *purāṇa* has an erotic flavour. It contains four *khaṇḍas*, viz, Brahma-khaṇḍa, Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, Gaṇapati-khaṇḍa and Kṛṣṇajanma-khaṇḍa. During the reign of the Ahom kings like Rudrasimha and his son Sivasimha, this *purāṇa* was rendered into Assamese with religious eroticism part by part under the royal patronage.\(^2\) There are also Bengali translations of this *purāṇa*.

The first book, i.e., the Brahma-khaṇḍa deals with the creation of Brahman. Stories relating to the origin of gods and demons, men and animals, the three worlds, seven oceans etc., are narrated in this book. The second book, i.e., Prakṛti-khaṇḍa deals with Prakṛti, i.e., the original matter which manifests in the form of five goddesses, viz., Durgā, Lakṣmī, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī and Rādhā. The stories of Vedavatī, Sitādevi, Tulasī, Sāvitrī etc. are depicted. The third book is Gaṇapati-khaṇḍa. Three major stories constitute this book. The first part of this book deals with the birth of Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa. The second part deals with the battle between Kārtavīryājñana and the sage Jāmadagni, the annihilation of the *kṣatriyas* by Paraśurāma; the fight between Gaṇeśa and Paraśurāma in which the former lost one of his teeth, is
also depicted. The fourth book is Kṛṣṇajanma-khaṇḍa in which the life of Śrīkṛṣṇa from birth to youth is depicted. It glorifies Lord Kṛṣṇa and his favourite consort Rādhā. This fourth book may be called the principal part of the Bvp. The supremacy of Kṛṣṇa is established here.

Dīna Dvija culled the story from the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa for his play, Śaṅkhacūḍavadha. The outline of the story as depicted in the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, more particularly in chapters 6, 13-21, is kept intact by our playwright. [The story of Bvp is in dialogue form, where Nārāyaṇa narrates the story to Nārada]. In the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa Nārāyaṇa is telling Nārada about the power and nature of the female deities.

Dīna Dvija summarises the story of Ganga, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, their quarrel and mutual curses, and also the effects of the curses, their transformation into rivers on earth as depicted in the 6th chapter of the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa. The dramatist introduces this story through the speeches of the Śūtradhāra to the audience to which is added the story of Tulasī and Śaṅkhacūḍa.

The story of the quarrel among the three consorts of Viṣṇu, viz, Ganga, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī, is depicted in detail through the lengthy speeches of the Śūtradhāra.
Sarasvatī, in womanly jealousy, cursed Gaṅgā and Lakṣmī to come down to the mortal world in the form of sacred rivers. Gaṅgā, too, cursed Sarasvatī to assume the form of a river. Later on, Hari rectifies their mutual curses by allowing the three deities to remain with Him, but come down to the mortal world partially for materialising their curses.

Hari advised Lakṣmī to be born in the family of Dakṣasāvarṇī assuming the name, Tulasī. After having severe penance she would marry Saṅkhacūḍa at the advice of Brahmā.

Eventually, Sūrya happened to curse Vṛṣadhvaja of the Dakṣasāvarṇī clan to be bereft of Lakṣmī. Vṛṣadhvaja's two sons, Dharmadhvaja and Kuśadhvaja offered prayers to Lakṣmī for her favour. A part of Lakṣmī was born to Kuśadhvaja, assuming the name Vedavatī. She engaged herself in a severe penance in the forest, and gradually she moved to a cave of Gandhamādana mountain. In that cave she met Rāvana of Laṅkā, and due to his ill behaviour, Vedavatī pronounced a curse predicting that Vedavatī would be the cause of destruction of Rāvana's family. Vedavatī immolated herself in Rāvana's presence, and later on was
born as Sītā in Janaka’s house. This story is depicted briefly in chapter fourteen.

To Dharmadhvaja’s wife, Mādhavi, Tulasī was born, and she is said to be a part of Lakṣmī. Tulasī was practising severe penance in the Badari forest to get a boon from Brahmā. Brahmā appeared before her and offered a boon. Then Tulasī stated that she was a *gopikā* in Gokula and had to come to this mortal world due to the curse of Rādhā. She desired to get Kṛṣṇa as her husband. Brahmā granted her desires with a boon saying that she would have to marry Śaṅkhacūḍa, born in Danu’s family, who was also a friend of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula in his previous birth. The remaining story in the *Bvp* is like the story of the drama. The poet summarises the events and narrates through the lengthy speeches of the Sūtradhāra.

(b) Sources: MIL.

Apart from Sanskrit sources, works written in Modern Indian languages might have inspired our poet to compose this Sanskrit Nāṭaka. Sanskrit-purānic literature has been assiduously studied in this land. This is warranted by the prestigious learned volumes composed by scholars from
Kāmarūpa in the early medieval period of our history. The Royal court of the Koch king Naranārāyaṇa was graced by jewels like Śaṅkaradeva, the great Vaiṣṇava reformer, and his followers like Ananta Kandali, Mādhavadeva etc. 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. Thus, a good number of Sanskrit works were rendered into Assamese at the instance of those rulers.

Among the Ahom kings Sargadew Rudra Simha and his eldest son Siva Simha were great patrons of art and literature. Kaviraṭa Chakravarttī has composed the Śakuntalā-kāvyā, the Gītagovinda, the Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha-kāvyā etc. Siva Simha and his consorts requisitioned even the services of the painters to illustrate the Hastivīḍyārṇava of Pālakāpya, the Gītagovinda and the Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha-kāvyā of Kaviraṭa Cakravarttī, and the Dharma purāṇa of Kavicandra Dvija. A manuscript of Śaṅkhacūḍa-vadha-kāvyā, which is profusely illustrated in the style of Assam School of painting, is presently preserved in the library of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam,

22. RT., Introduction, p. 0.16
This manuscript is said to have been acquired from the British Museum, London. However, as we have our misfortune, this valuable work has not seen yet the days of light. It is still lying in the manuscript form.

Showing deep respect to the rich heritage of Sanskrit culture, Śaṅkaradeva introduced the Aṅkīyā-nāṭas in Assamese Brajavali incorporating elements of Sanskrit dramas as well as Sanskrit verses. The people of Assam, in general, were so much influenced by these Brajavali dramas that even Sanskrit dramas were composed following the dramatic codes of the Aṅkīyā-nāṭas. The Sanskrit Śaṅkhacūḍavadha of Dīna Dvija bears all the characteristics of the Brajāvali dramas. The immediate source for the theme of the play seems to be the Assamese kāvyā on the same theme composed by Kavirāja Chakravartī.

Apart from Assamese translations, the Bvp in Bengali version are also available. One Bengali version of the Bvp is composed by Dvija Kāli. It contains all the four khaṇḍas of the original Bvp.

(c) D E V I A T I O N S :

The story of the Śv of Dīna Dvija does not show much deviations from the original story depicted in the Bvp. The poet has selected all the events depicted in the sixth chapter
of the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa wherein Nārāyaṇa relates to Nārada about the quarrel and the curses among the three wives of Viṣṇu, viz., Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā. It is also related to Nārada how Viṣṇu tried to appease the deities and give solution to their mutual curses. A part of Sarasvatī would be a river on earth and remove all the sins of persons whoever takes bath in its waters. Finally, Lakṣmī is destined to be a river as well as a plant on earth. The initial stage of Lakṣmī would be a human form, named as Tulasī. She would have to be married to Śaṅkhacūḍa, a devotee of Viṣṇu and finally, both of them would return to Goloka. The remains of the body of Tulasī would be a river, called Gaṅḍakī and her hairs would turn to be the sacred plant, called Tulasī. All these are faithfully depicted in the first Act with local colour. The story-teller in the drama is the Sūtradhāra.

The story of the quarrel between Sūrya and Śiva as depicted in the thirteenth chapter of the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa, is added by our poet in the first Act. But the story of Vedavatī incorporated in this Act does not seem to be relevant to the main theme of the drama. However, the last part of the fourteenth chapter where the story of the birth and marriage of Sītā with Rāma and their exile as depicted therein is not
even cursorily referred to. The result of the curse of Vedavatī on Rāvaṇa is shown in this part of the *purāṇa*. Our poet has avoided this portion. He could have avoided also the episodes of Sūrya and Vedavatī from the structure of the plot.

The events delineated in the second and the third Acts are similar to the events depicted in chapters from fifteen to twentyone of the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa of the *Bvp*. As a matter of fact, the poet does not pay any heed to the structure of the theme from the dramatic point of view. Professor S. N. Sarma, observes: "The first Act dealing with the quarrel among Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā and the episode of Vedavatī appear to be irrelevant when we examine them strictly from the dramatic point of view. The relation between Vedavatī and Tulasī has not been clearly shown, nor has he shown clearly how Sarasvatī's curse upon Lakṣmī got fulfilled through Tulasī. It is to be inferred from one or two casual references only. Although the episode of Vedavatī occurs in the *purāṇa*, the dramatist could have easily dropped the episode from the structure of the play. By following the puranic narratives too faithfully, the writer has destroyed the unity of the story."²³

²³. *RT.*, p. 13
The puranic events are mainly stated through the narrative speeches of the Sūtradhāra. The emotions of the dramatic personalities are depicted through the songs and payārs. Here lies the success of the poet. He has inserted into the play songs composed in Assamese language. Rāgas of these songs are Assamese.

VII. Technical remarks

Dīna Dvija's Saṅkhacūḍavadha is a mythological drama written with the admixture of Sanskrit and Assamese language. The dramatist himself calls his play ‘nāṭaka’ in the prologue, and also at the end of the first and the third Acts. He also applies the term ‘nāṭa’ more than once.

In the prologue of the play it is said that the nāṭaka, entitled Saṅkhacūḍa-vadha is to be staged at the request of Nārāyaṇa. “śrīmatā-hṛdayasarasīruḥaśāyinā nārāyaṇeṇa saṅkhacūḍa-vadhākhyyam nāṭakam-abhinetum-ādiṣṭosmi.” But, so far as the technicality of the drama is concerned, the Saṅkhacūḍavadha bears the elements of Sanskrit dramaturgic rules as well as the several techniques and rules of Brajāvali dramas originated by Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, the saint poet of Assam in the fifteenth century.
The whole gamut of Sanskrit literature is divided into śṛṣṭya- and śravya- kavya. Drṣṭya-kavya is again divided into Rūpaka and Upa-Rūpaka. Nāṭaka is a subvariety of Rūpaka. The special features of a Nāṭaka are given by Viśvanātha Kavirāja in the sixth chapter of his Sāhityadarpana as in the following order:

(i) the subject-matter of a Nāṭaka should be an established one, borrowed either from history or from ancient lore;
(ii) the plot should have five successive stages, each of which being named as sandhi;
(iii) the Nāṭaka should contain five to ten Acts;
(iv) the hero should be from a high birth, mighty, sage-like and one of dhirodatta type;
(v) the hero may either be a divine or a semi-divine figure or a human figure with the quality of righteousness;24
(vi) śṛṅgāra or viṇa should be the principal sentiment

24. cf. nāṭkaṁ khyātaṁ tattvaṁ syāt pañcasandhisamanvatām / vilasaddhairyādīgupavadyuktāṁ nānāvibhūtibhūtāṁ // sukhadulṣkhasamudbhūtāṁ nānārasanirantarām / pañcadhikādaśaparastatrāṅkāṁ parikirtitāṁ // prakhyātatavaniśo rājarsidhirodāttāṁ pratāpavān / divyo'tha divyādivyo vā guṇavānṇāyaako mataḥ // —SD., VI. 7, 8 & 9

25. cf. eka eva bhavedaṁ gī śṛṅgāro viṇa eva vā / aṅgamanye rasāṁ arve kāryo nirvahane dbhutaḥ // —SD., VI. 10
while other sentiments should be delineated as subordinate to the two principal sentiments; 25

And, when the Śv. is analysed in the light of the above mentioned special features of a Sanskrit Nāṭaka, it becomes clear that our drama, Śv., does not bear all the special features of a Sanskrit Nāṭaka. However, following characteristics may be traced in our drama:

(i) The subject-matter of the Śv. is a famous one (prakhyāta) taken from the Prakṛti-khaṇḍa of the Brahmaṇavaivartapurāṇa. In fact, the playwright mentions the source of the story at the end of each Act:
cf, ʿiti brahmaṇavaivartapurāṇa-prakṛti-khaṇḍa-samud-
dhṛte śaṅkhacūḍa-vadhanāma-nāṭake-tritiyoṅkhaḥ //”

(ii) The plot of the present play properly maintains all the five junctures, each of which being named, sandhi.

(iii) Though the propagation of devotion to God (bhakti) is the ultimate aim, yet the erotic (śṛṅgāra) occupies a prominent position in the drama.

(iv) Śaṅkhacūḍa can be considered as a hero of Dhirodāṭta type.

The dissimilarities of the Śv. with the Sanskrit Nāṭaka are seen in the following respects:

(i) The plot of the Śv. is divided into three Acts, whereas
the plot of the Sanskrit Nāṭaka is divided into five to ten Acts.

(ii) Though the plot is divided into three Acts, it does not bear any of the qualities of a Samavakāra (a kind of Rūpaka), or Saṁtāpaka (a kind of upa-Rūpaka) which also contains three Acts., as prescribed by the dramaturgic rules.

Though the drama, Śv., possesses some of the requisite characteristics of the Sanskrit Nāṭaka, yet it lacks the important features of the same. There is no clear-cut distinction of prastāvanā from that of the actual play. Unlike a Sanskrit Nāṭaka, the Sūtradhāra in the play remains on the stage throughout the dramatic performance, i.e., from the prologue to the epilogue. In this respect, the Śaṅkhacūḍāvadha has certain similarities with the Brajāvalī dramas as introduced in the 15th-16th century A.D. by Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva, and later on adopted by his followers. Śaṅkaradeva and his most prominent disciple, Mādhavadeva following his Guru, composed six one-act plays each in Brajāvalī language. The main constituent elements of the Aṅkīyā-nāṭa are broadly stated as follows:

1. The Nāndi-śloka(s)

2. The Bhaṭimā
3. The songs set into classical Rāga and Tāla
4. The speeches of Sūtradhāra and dramatic characters in prose passages
5. Sanskrit ślokas

The similarities between the Ankīyā-nāṭa and the Śv. are as follows:

(i) The constituent elements of the Ankīyā-nāṭa, viz, the Nāndī-śloka, the Bhaṭimā, the Sanskrit ślokas in the body, songs, speeches of the Sūtradhāra and the dramatic persons are present in the Saṅkhacūḍāvadha also.

(ii) In both the places, the Nāndī-śloka is recited by the Sūtradhāra.

(iii) In both the places, the Sūtradhāra occupies a prominent position. As in the Ankīyā-nāṭa, in the Saṅkhacūḍāvadha-nāṭa also, the Sūtradhāra remains present in the stage from the beginning to the end, and performs everything as expected from a Director in the modern stage.

(iv) In both the places, preponderance of the lyrical elements consisting of prayers and songs are plenty in number. The songs in both places are set into classical rāgas and tālas.

(v) Absence of Vidūṣaka is a noteworthy feature in both the Ankīya-nāṭas and the Śv.
(vi) As in the Aṅkīya-nāṭa, the metres, both Sanskrit and Assamese, are employed in the Śv. also.

(vii) Another important similarity between them is noticed in respect of violating certain dramatic rules that prohibit the introduction of certain topics as harmful to the sentiment or spirit of the hero, or as offensive to the feelings of the audience.

(viii) Comparing to the narratives of the Sūtradhāra, the dialogue of characters is meagre in the Śv and also in the Aṅkīya-nāṭa.

(ix) In the Aṅkīya-nāṭa, an appeal to the audience is made by the Sūtradhāra, to pay attention to the dramatic performance, and then proclaiming the glory of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, in the following way:

Sūtradhāra :

"...... āhe loka, tāhe dekhaha śunaha,
nirantare hari bola hari bola."

This type of appeal is made by the Sūtradhāra of the Śv. also, as he says at the end of the explanatory notes:

Sūtradhāra :

"......tat paśyata, śṛṇuta nirantarāṁ jaya jaya

kṛṣṇetī vadata.”

26. cf. RHN, PHN, PPN, vide Aṅkāvalī
27. Śv., Prologue, in RT, p. 96
Inspite of all the similarities and dissimilarities with the Sanskrit Nāṭaka and the Aṅkīya-nāṭas, the Saṅkhacūḍavadha has its own characteristics.

Here are some of the dissimilarities between the Saṅkhacūḍavadha and the Aṅkīya-nāṭas.

(i) The Aṅkīya-nāṭas are one Act plays, while, on the other hand, the Śv. consists of three Acts.

(ii) The presence of erotic sentiment, particularly the sambhoga-śṛṅgāra is rarely used in the Aṅkīya-nāṭas. But in the Śv. the sambhoga-śṛṅgāra is also present. This sentiment is delineated in the second and third Acts, respectively, between Saṅkhacūḍa and Tulasī, and also between Tulasī and Nārāyaṇa.

(iii) The role of female characters is very negligible in the Aṅkīya-nāṭas except, however, in Śaṅkara-devā’s Pārijāta-haraṇa and the Rukmīṇī-haraṇa. But in the Śv. female characters play a major role from the first Act to the last, more particularly in the first Act, e.g., the role of the three consorts of Hari is remarkable.

There are some elements in the Śv., which are neither taken from the Aṅkīya-nāṭas, nor from the Sanskrit-nāṭaka. These elements are Dīna Dvija's own creations. However, some Sanskrit dramas of Assam composed after the period of
Śaṅkaradeva, created some new dicta of their own. And thus, these dramas follow a style of their own. The present play, the Śv., shows the changes of style, as shown below:

(i) At the end of each Act, the source of the play is announced. For example:

"iti brahmavaivartapurāṇa-prakṛtikhaṇḍa-samudhrte tulasī-
janmakathamānī nāma ditīyōṅkāh."

(ii) Eulogy of the patrons is given at the end of the second and the third Acts, and also at the beginning of the first Act, e.g., "sandikai-vānśajanma jayati
vimāladhiḥ-śrī-brhat-phukkano 'asau." —Act I. v. 3

(iii) Each Act begins and ends with benedictory stanzas.

(iv) The name of the author is mentioned at the end of some songs following the style of the Assamese poets of Medieval period, e.g.,

"dīṇa dvīja vākyamadhu guṇa gāve gopa-
vadhū jñānīsave abadhāna kara." —Act II song No. 4

Again, in the song No.1 of the first Act, our poet mentions his name. Assamese poets of medieval period used to mention their names at the end of their poetic compositions by way of drawing attention of the readers and listeners to the subject described, and, thereby, to arouse the sense of devotion to the Lord in their minds.