Life and Works of Sahṛdayatilakan K. Rāmapiṣārōṭi

Dr. Rajeev P.P.
Asso. Professor, Govt. Sanskrit College, Thripunithura

Introduction.

Sahṛdayatilakan K. Rāmapiṣārōṭi was a great scholar in Nyaya, Vyakarana and Sahitya. He was born in the year 1867 in Kalleṅgara Piṣāraṃ, his mother's ancestral house, which was situated at Irinjalakkuda in Thrissur district, Kerala. His father was a Nambūthiri Brāhmin of Vazhappilly family of Vellangallur, Thrissur and his mother was Kuñji Piṣārasyār. Rāmapiṣārōṭi, who was the elder son to his parents, had two brothers namely Karuṇākara Piṣārōṭi and Bharata Piṣārōṭi. Ramapiṣārōṭi lost his parents in his childhood after which he moved to his uncle Acyutapiṣārōṭi's, a great traditional scholar in Sanskrit and started his education. He learned Kāvyās and grammar especially Siddhāntakaumudī of Bhaṭṭōjidīkṣita from Acyutapiṣārōṭi. Acyutapiṣārōṭi was closely associated with Rajarṣi Rāma Varma, the Maharaja of Kochi and he directed his nephew Rāmapiṣārōṭi to the discipleship of the king. Rāmapiṣārōṭi studied Muktāvali and Dinakari under Rājarṣi Rāma Varma. He learned Nyaya Sastra from Raṅgappācārya. During that time, a renowned scholar Saṭhakōpācārya from Kumbhakonam was invited to Kochi and was appointed by the king at Seṣācārya Saṃskṛta Pāṭhaśāla for teaching the princes. Rāmapiṣārōṭi had learned the higher texts in Nyāya śāstra under Saṭhakōpācārya. He studied the higher texts in Vyākaraṇa under Muriṅṅōṭṭ Koccukuññan Nambiar, a great scholar in Vyākaraṇa Sāstra. Irinjalakkuda Saṅkuṇṇi Variyar and his nephew Kuttan Variar were his teachers in Jyotiṣa.

After his studies, Rāmapiṣārōṭi was engaged in teaching the princes of the Cochin royal family. At the age of twenty three, he was appointed as teacher in the Seṣācārya Saṃskṛta Pāṭhaśālā, run especially for the members of the Cochin royal family. Subsequently he joined the Maharajas College, Ernakulam and he spent nearly two decades there till his retirement. He married Iccukkuṭṭi (Lakṣmī) Piṣārasyār and had a son and a daughter. His son Kuṭṭamaśśēri Nārāyaṇa Piṣārōṭi later became the principal of Sanskrit College, Tripunithura. His daughter Ammukkuṭṭi Piṣārasyār was married to a person having his own name, i.e. Rāmapiṣārōṭi who was a professor of Annamalai University. Since the name of his son-in-law was the same as his own, he was mostly addressed as "Valiya Rāmapiṣārōṭi" among his circle.[1]

As a teacher, he was an unquestionable authority in all sastras. A large number of disciples were trained by Rāmapiṣārōṭi all along his career of more than three decades of teaching. After his retirement, he lived at his residence near the Kaṇṇankulaṅgara temple in Tripunithura along with his family members. During that time, he was also engaged in learning, writing and imparting knowledge of sāstrās to the younger generation. He passed away in 1947 at the age of eighty.

Works of Sahṛdayatilakan K. Rāmapiṣārōṭi

Sahṛdayatilakan K. Rāmapiṣārōṭi was a versatile scholar having deep knowledge in almost all branches of Sanskrit. He possessed great mastery especially in Sahitya, Vyākaraṇa and Nyāya. He wrote different types of Sanskrit works. His works can be classified under two heads: **Original Works and Commentaries.**

Original Works

1. Rāmavarma śataka: Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote this work on the occasion of the 60th birthday of the king Rāma Varma in 1913. Rāmavarmaśataka comes under the category of śāstrakāvya in Sanskrit. This Kāvya depicts the glory of king Rāma Varma of Kochi and also illustrates hundred

Alaṅkāras that are discussed in the poetic work Candrālōka. There are a hundred verses in this kāvya and the author himself provides Tippaṇi (short notes) on verses wherever necessary. K.P. Kochuṇṇi Karthavu, a scholar in Sanskrit wrote a commentary on this work.

2. Saṅgamēśastuti: This is a stotra work written by Rāmapiṣārōṭi. This work eulogizes the lord Saṅgamēśa, the presiding diety of Kūṭalmāṇikkaṃ Temple at Irinjalakkuda. The ten incarnations of Viṣṇu are illustrated in this stotra and each stanza concludes with the prayer- "śrī Saṅgamēśassa tanōtu mē śaṃ." Two lines from the the work are quoted below:

Hiraṇyapūrvaṃ kaśipuṃ nakhāgraiḥ paśōssamaṃ yō nṛharirnihatya.
Prahlādapūrvaiḥ praṇutaḥ prasannaḥ śrīsaṅgamēśassa tanōtu mē śam.[2]

3. Gaṅgāstuti: In this stotra, Rāmapiṣārōṭi depicts the sanctity and glory of Gaṅgā in an exquisite manner. There are only eight verses included in the stotra. A stanza serving as a specimen of its style is cited below:

śrīviṣṇupādābjamṛṇālavallī mālēśamaulēstanujā ca jahnōḥ.
Yā hārapaṅktiḥ sphurati kṣitēssā śrīmatyaghaughaṃ
mama hantu Ggaṅgā.[3]

4. śivastuti: This is a minor stotra work which contains only twenty verses. In this work, Rāmapiṣārōṭi praises lord śiva.

5. Pūrṇatrayīśastōtra: In this stotra, Rāmapiṣārōṭi praises lord Pūrṇatrayīsa situated at the Tripunithura temple. There are twenty verses in this stotra and the charm and glory of the deity is brought out elegantly. The following verse is an example of the style of composition of Pūrṇatrayīśastōtra-

Pūrṇēndurabjaśca na yatsamē tadguṇōttaraṃ sundarahāsamāsyam.
Kaṇṭhaśca kambupratimaṃ sphurantaṃ śrīkaustubhēna praṇamāmi
viṣṇōḥ.[4]

6. Slōkaviṃśatimālikā: In this stotra, Rāmapiṣārōṭi praises lord Viṣṇu in twenty verses. Each verse of this stotra ends with a request - "Sa pāyāt." An example of this stotra is given below:

Lakṣmīpatiśśaurisutāvatīrṇō śrīgōpabālō vrajavāsyahō yaḥ.
Hantuṃ svadattastanapūtanāyā hatvā dadau tāmamṛtaṃ sa pāyāt.[5]

7. Rāmāyaṇa: A minor poem written by Rāmapiṣārōṭi containing ten verses. In this poem, he summarises the main incidents in the story of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa.

Commentaries

1. Sārārthadīpikā on Abhijñānaśākuntala: This is a commentary on Kalidasa's Abhijñānaśākuntala. The commentary gives a new meaning and dimension to Sākuntala Studies. This is a combined work of Rāmapiṣārōṭi and his patron-friend Rāma Varma Parīkṣit Thampurān. Thampurān and Rāmapiṣārōṭi prepared this commentary carefully after thoroughly examining all the previous writings of Kālidāsa.

This commentary is different from other commentaries on Sākuntala in three aspects which are:

(a) It gives a philosophical interpretation to the whole theme.

(b) It employs the method of unveiling the inner meaning - Samādhi.

(c) It gives the Kerala reading of Sākuntala as popular here for several centuries.

2. Sārārthadīpikā on Mālavikāgnimitra: Rāmapiṣārōṭi adopts a simple style for interpreting Mālavikāgnimitra in this commentary. This commentary is neither too short nor so elaborate and hence could be very useful to readers. Rāmapiṣārōṭi starts this commentary with the following verses:

Nāṭakaṃ kālidāsīyaṃ yatpūrvaṃ ca rasōttaraṃ.
Sārārthadīpikāṃ vyākhyāṃ tasya kurmō yathāmati.[6]

3. Sārārthadīpikā on Vikramōrvaśīya: Rāmapiṣārōṭi also wrote a commentary on Kālidāsa's Vikramōrvaśīya. Vaṭakkuṃkūr Rājarāja Varma,

the author of Keralīyasaṃskṛtasāhityacaritaṃ said that Rāmapiṣārōṭīi's Sārārthadīpikā commentary is a meritorious one. This commentary is very useful to readers and researchers in Sanskrit.

4. Bālapriyā on Dhvanyālōkalōcanā: Anandavardhanā's Dhvanyālōka and Abhinavaguptā's Locana commentary on it, play a very important role in Indian Literary Theory. Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary on Abhinavaguptās Locana namely, Bālapriyā. The understanding of Locana would not be understood as complete without the Bālapriyā commentary of Rāmapiṣārōṭi. This commentary helps the readers to get into a serious discussion of Abhinavaguptā's Locana commentary.

In the beginning of this commentary Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote -

Kāvyālōkō lōcanaśca dvē grāhyagrāhakē satāṃ.
tadgranthakārāvācāryau rasikāgrēsarau stumaḥ.
Lōcanasyādimōdyōtamātrasyātra purākṛtā.
vivṛtirlabhyatē tattāṃ dṛṣvā granthāntarāṇi ca.
Pāṭhān kēralavikhyātānālambya ca yathāmati.
kurmō bālapriyāṃ prāyaḥ prauḍhalōcanaṭippaṇīṃ.[7]

Rāmapiṣārōṭīi's Bālapriyā is the only complete commentary available on Abhinavaguptā's Locana.

5. Bālapriyā on Citramīmāṃsā- Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary on Appayyadīkṣitā's Citramīmāṃsā. This commentary is named Bālapriyā and it is treated as a poetic composition of high standard. In the beginning of this commentary, Rāmapiṣārōṭi says:

Vikhyātā citramīmāṃsā yā kṛtāppayyadīkṣitaiḥ.
Taṭṭippaṇīṃ yathābuddhi kurmō bālapriyāmimāṃ.[8]

According to Rāmapiṣārōṭi, one must be well versed in other branches of learning in Sanskrit in order to undertake a detailed study of Alaṅkāraśāstra.

6. Bālapriyā on Kuvalayānanda: Kuvalayānanda of Appayyadīkṣita is the most popular treatise on the Alaṅkārās in Sanskrit. The author him-

self wrote a commentary on Kuvalayānanda named Candrikā. But this commentary is insufficient for a vivid comprehension of the text. So Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary named Bālapriyā. This is a comprehensive commentary on Kuvalayānanda. Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote this commentary in a lucid style for use by students.

7. Bālahṛdya on Daśarūpakāvalōka Daśarūpaka of Dhanañjaya is a major text in Sāhitya śāstra. Dhanika wrote a commentary on Daśarūpaka named Daśarūpakāvalōka. Bālahṛdya is the commentary of Dhanika's Daśarūpakāvalōka written by Rāmapiṣārōṭi. Unfortunately the Bālahṛdya commentary is not available at present.

8. Rasikapriya commentary of Nārāyaṇīya: Melpputtūr Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭā's Nārāyaṇīya has a prominent place in the stotra texts in Kerala. Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary on Nārāyaṇīya named Rasikapriya. This commentary was not based on the whole of Nārāyaṇīya. It starts from 37th Daśaka of Nārāyaṇīya. At the end of this commentary Rāmapiṣārōṭi gives the following verse:

Vyākhyāṃ śākuntalādīnāṃ lōcanasyāpi cākarōt-
Rāmaḥ paṇḍitarājō yaḥ ṣārakastēna khalviyaṃ.
Vyākhyā sāhayyatō vidvatparīkṣinnṛpatērmudē.
Sāhityaikavidāṃ yattatkalitāṃ tāṃ karōtviyaṃ.
Yathā nārāyaṇīyaṃ mē tadvyākhyānamidaṃ thatā
śrīmannārāyaṇasyāstu prasādāya tadarpitaṃ.[9]

Ramapiṣārōṭī's devotion towards lord Kṛṣṇa is revealed through this commentary.

9. Sārārthadīpikā on Sivānandalaharī: Sivanandalahari is one of the famous stotra work written by Sri Sankarāchārya. Rāmapiṣārōṭi composed a commentary on Sivanandalahari called Sārārthadīpikā. This commentary starts with the following verse:

śivapūrṇatrayīśādīn natvā kurmō yathāmati.
śivānandalaharyāstu vyākhyāṃ sārārthadīpikāṃ.[10]

In this work, Rāmapiṣārōṭi clearly traces the 'Anubandhacatuṣṭaya' of the work, which is an inherent part of the śāstric tradition. At the end of the commentary, Rāmapiṣārōṭi clearly states that he composed this work during the last phase of his life.

10. Sārārthadīpikā of Devīmāhātmya: Devīmāhātmya is one of the most famous works in religious literature. Devīmāhātmya was commented on by Rāmapiṣārōṭi which was known as Sārārthadīpikā. For writing the commentary, Rāmapiṣārōṭi made use of all the earlier commentaries on Devīmāhātmya. Sārārthadīpikā commentary on Devīmāhātmya starts with the following verse:

Kvacitkvacicca tatpāṭhā bhinnāssantyapi viśrutān.
dēśētratyaṭīkākṛtāṃścālambya tāṃstathā.
vyākhyāśśantanunāgēśabhaṭṭādyaistasya yā kṛtāḥ
Dīpikākhyādikā yāstu kēralīyakṛtāśca tān.
dṛṣṭvā viracyatē vyākhyā tasya sārārthadīpikā
śrīdurgāyāssatāṃ tasya bhaktānāṃ ca mudēstviyaṃ.[11]

Rāmapiṣārōṭi composed this work at a time when he was badly affected by asthma.

11. Commentary on śukasandēśa: Lakhmīdāsā's śukasandēśa is one of the important texts among Sandēśa texts in Sanskrit. There are seven commentaries available on this work. Of these commentaries, Rāmapiṣārōṭī's commentary on śukasandēśa is a very popular one. The commentary on śukasandēśa is a supreme example of his expertise and scholarship in the field.

12. Commentary on Vyutpattivāda: Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary on Gadādhabhaṭṭācāryā's Vyutpattivāda. Further details about this unpublished commentary are presently not available.

13. Commentary on Dinakari: Rāmapiṣārōṭi produced a commentary on Viśvanāthapañcānanā's Dinakari. But unfortunately more details are not currently available about this commentary and it is not yet published.

14. Commentary on Ratnāvalī: Srīharṣā's Ratnāvali is an important work in Sanskrit. Rāmapiṣārōṭi wrote a commentary on it but more details are not available on it.
15. Vyañjanāvṛtti: This is an independent work by Rāmapiṣārōṭi. In this work, he describes the Vyañjanāvṛtti in detail. Unfortunately more details about this work are not available.

Conclusion.

In 1915, Rāmapiṣārōṭi was honoured with the title "Sahṛdayatilakan," conferred on him by Rājarṣi Rāma Varma, the Maharaja of Kochi. The śāstra Sadas of Tripunithura also honoured Rāmapiṣārōṭi by conferring the title "Paṇḍitarājan". Sri. Mānavikraman Eṭṭan Thampurān of Kozhikode and Sri. Cittiratirunāḷ Mahārāja of Travancore had also honoured Rāmapiṣārōṭi by rewarding his undisputed scholarship. The Prince of Wales, Edward VIII, during his visit to Madras in 1922, honoured Rāmapiṣārōṭi with a golden bangle. He was also honoured with a cash award from the Mahārāja of Gwāliyor.

Foot Notes.

1. Ulloor.S. Parameswara Iyer, Keralasāhityacaritraṃ, Vol. V, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1955, P.227.
2.. Kurup. K.K.N (Dr), (General editor) , The royal family of Cochi and Sanskrit studies, Hill Palace, Tripunithura, 2011, P-79.
3. Ibid. P- 79.
4. Ibid. P-78.
5. Vaṭakkahaṅkūr Rājarājavarmā-Kēralīyasaṃskṛtasāhityacaritraṃ- Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 1997,Vol-VI, p-156.
6. Ibid.Vol-VI, P-144.
7. Ibid.Vol-VI, P-136.
8. Ibid.Vol-VI, P-154.
9 Ibid. Vol. VI, P-148.
10. Ibid.Vol-VI, P-149.
11. Ibid.Vol-VI, P-151.

Selected Bibliography.

1. Kerala Caritam- Sreedhara Menon, A, Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-Operative Society, Kottayam, 1978.
2. Kerala Sahitya Caritam- Parameswara Iyer, Ullur, S, Department of Publication, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.
3. Keralīya saṃskṛtasāhityacaritram- Raja Raja Varma Raja, Vadakkumkur, Sree Sanskaracharya University of Sanskrit, kalady, 1997.
4. koccīrājyacaritram-Padmanabha Menon, K.P, Mathrubhumi Printing and publishing Company LTD, Kozhikode, 1998.
5. Varaprasadam- Poulose Dr. KG, Vallathole Vidyapeetham, Edappal, 2013.