

MĀLATĪMĀDHAVA OF BHAVABHŪTI – A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The present Paper entitled "Mālatīmādhava of Bhavabhūti – A Critical Study" deals exclusively with a critical analysis of the Prakaraṇa Mālatīmādhava. Hence, an intensive study has been carried on with a view to establishing the fact that Mālatīmādhava is an elegant work of Bhavabhūti which has encompassed all the literary elements as also the various socio-cultural aspects of Indian society during early 8th century A.D. The present work is divided into five chapters. After fastidious observation which has been discussed in a greater detail in the preceding four chapters, a persuasive conclusion has been drawn here.

Introduction

The present Paper entitled "Mālatīmādhava of Bhavabhūti – A Critical Study" deals exclusively with a critical analysis of the Prakaraṇa Mālatīmādhava. Hence, an intensive study has been carried on with a view to establishing the fact that Mālatīmādhava is an elegant work of Bhavabhūti which has encompassed all the literary elements as also the various socio-cultural aspects of Indian society during early 8th century A.D. The present work is divided into five chapters. After fastidious observation which has been discussed in a greater detail in the preceding four chapters, a persuasive conclusion has been drawn here. The summaries of these chapters are given at first.

Chapter-I

The 1st chapter of this thesis deals with the short-sketch of Bhavabhūti's ancestors, his life, date and works. Accordingly, his ancestors were Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya branch of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and they were very pious. They performed Vedic sacrifices. Bhavabhūti was a fifth descent from his ancestors. He was known by the name Śrīkaṇṭha - Pada – Lāñcana. He had acquainted with various branches of knowledge viz., Veda, Upaniṣad, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and so on. He lived in the 1st quarter of the 8th century A.D. Three compositions were ascribed to Bhavabhūti. Among these Mahāvīracarita and Uttararāmacarita are nāṭakas while Mālatīmādhava is a Prakaraṇa. This chapter includes a general introduction on the Mālatīmādhava and special features of a Prakaraṇa. This chapter also includes the source of Mālatīmādhava. Bhavabhūti had taken the theme of the Mālatīmādhava from the Bṛhatkathā of Guṇāḍhya. Although Bhavabhūti had extracted the theme of Mālatīmādhava from Bṛhatkathā, yet there were found some deviations from the original source. Moreover, Bhavabhūti had made some innovations to suit the theme of the Mālatīmādhava. Those innovations appeared attractive when considered from dramatic perspectives. In the end of this chapter the summary of every act of the Mālatīmādhava has been given in brief to give a nimble idea about the story.

Chapter-II

The 2nd chapter is entitled „The Literary study of the Mālatīmādhava“. At the very outset, this chapter deals with the delineation of various sentiments in the Mālatīmādhava. It has been found that Bhavabhūti articulately delineated various sentiments with proper feelings and Bhavabhūti also stupendously created the events suitable to those particular sentiments. The three main factors which facilitate in relishing sentiments viz., vibhāva, anubhāva and vyabhi-cāribhāva are found in an appropriate form. Here, Bhavabhūti has delineated Śṛṅgāra as the predominant sentiment and other sentiments as subordinate ones. The two main types of Śṛṅgāra sentiment viz., Sambhoga and Vipralambha are delineated most appealingly. In the 6th act the delineation of Sambhoga śṛṅgāra

is found in love pleading of Mālatī and Mādhava whereas in the 5th act the delineation of Vipralambha śṛṅgāra with its different stages is found at the separation of Mālatī from Mādhava. The striking picture of pathetic sentiment is found in the 10th act when everybody has determined to put an end to their lives at the loss of Mālatī. Bhavabhūti suggests Vīra rasa in the deeds of Mādhava and Makaranda.

In the 5th act Mādhava had displayed his valour in saving Mālatī from the hands of Aghoraghaṇṭa. Makaranda had shown his valour in the 3rd act when he saved Madayantikā from the clutches of the tiger. Bhavabhūti effectively delineates Raudra rasa when he depicts the extreme anger of Mādhava to Aghoraghaṇṭa. Similarly, Bhavabhūti puts some marvelous events to delineate Adbhuta rasa. He has also given abhorrent picture of goblins residing in the cremation ground to delineate Bībhatsa rasa. He puts properly the frightful aspects at proper place to suggest Bhayānaka rasa. Here Bhavabhūti has not delineated Śānta and Hāsyā rasa. Particularly he has omitted the character of the Vidūṣaka for evoking the Hāsyā rasa (comic sentiment). In the Mālatīmādhava, Bhavabhūti has employed a large number of alamkāras also. He has used figures of speech of both the types viz., word and sense. He stupendously has employed śabdālamkāras and arthālamkāras in the verses. The figures of word like Anuprāsa, Yamaka and Śleṣa have been effectively employed. He has used figures of sense like Upamā, Utpreṣā, Nidarśanā, Rūpaka etc. profusely. Simultaneously, he has shown great fondness for alamkāras like Samuccaya, Kāvyaṅga, Virodha and Anumāna as well. He has used Śleṣā, Yamaka, Apahnuti, Aprastutaprasaṁśā, Viśeṣa, Yathāśaṁkhyā etc. in only a few places. Bhavabhūti had displayed his great mastery in using rīti also. He had opted the Vaidarbhī rīti while he had to compose sweet sounding and compound less words in the verses. As for instance in the verse cf. *ujjvalālokayā snigdha tvayā tyaktā na rājate /malīmasamukhī vartih pradīpaśikhayā yathā // Mālatīmādhava., X .4*

This verse contains beautiful arrangement of the minimum possible sweet sounding syllables such as la , ka , ya in the word *ujjvalālokayā* ; ra, ja , ta, etc in the word *rājate* ; ma, sa, la in the word *malīmasamukhī* , and harsh syllables like ṭa, ṭha , ḍa , ḍha etc were mostly avoided. This verse was also free from long and complicated compounds. Again he had opted Gauḍī rīti where he had used bombastic language with complicated and lengthy compounds consisting of harsh syllables. In the 5th act Bhavabhūti had given the description of Aghoraghaṇṭa in a bombastic language with complicated and lengthy compounds consisting of harsh syllables. Moreover, Bhavabhūti had put a few numbers of verses which contain both hard and soft consonants.

In the Mālatīmādhava, Bhavabhūti has appropriately made the use of Mādhurya guṇa (sweetness) in Sambhoga śṛṅgāra rasa while describing the longing of Mādhava for Mālatī . He has used this guṇa in Vipralambha Śṛṅgāra rasa as well as in Karuṇa rasa also. He has deliberately used ojaḥ guṇa in Vīra, Bībhatsa and Raudra rasas. He has equally used Prasāda guṇa also. In this Prakaraṇa five defects occurring in words come to view . They are ----(1) śrutikaṭutva (2) nirarthakatva (3) cyutasamskṛti (4) grāmyatva (5) aślila. However, only one defect of sense namely vyāhatārthatva is found.

Bhavabhūti is skilled in handling different metres. He has composed many verses in the Vasantatilaka metre. He has used the lengthy metres viz., Daṇḍaka and Śārdūlavikrīḍita. Here the metre Śārdūlavikrīḍita is used in

describing the ghosts that was residing in the cremation ground. Again he has used Hariṇī metre in describing the pathetic condition of Mādhava due to the separation from Mālatī. He has deliberately used the metres Mandākrāntā and Mālinī to depict the love scenes of Mālatī and Mādhava. He had profusely used metres like Aryā, Upendravajrā whereas he had used rarely the metres like Pṛthvi, Aupachandasika, Upajāti and Śālinī etc. Moreover, here the metre Bhūjaṅgaprayāta is also not employed by him. The 3rd chapter is entitled “The social aspects of the Mālatīmādhava” and it deals with the various aspects of society such as caste, marriage, education, position of women, political and economic system prevalent during 8th century A.D. After a thorough analysis of the Mālatīmādhava, it has been found that the caste system was very much prevalent in the then society. The Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra were main four castes. Bhavabhūti was a Brāhmaṇa by caste and his ancestors were eminent Brāhmaṇas. In the 6th act it is found that Brāhmaṇas had performed auspicious rites for auspicious purpose during the marriage ceremony of Mālatī. He has represented Mādhava and Makaranda as Kṣatriyas who were engaged with various heroic deeds. But no reference of studying the Vedas and Vedāṅgas by the Kṣatriyas found. In the 5th act Mādhava is represented as a seller of human flesh. In case of Vaiśya, he does not portray traders and their trade with other countries. He has also represented the characters like Kalahāṁsaka, Lavaṅgikā and Mandārikā as slaves in people’s home. Thus it is found that four castes were prevalent during 8th century A.D. Apart from these four castes another sub caste namely Caṇḍāla is found. In the Mālatīmādhava, Kapālakuṇḍalā and Aghoraghaṇṭa are represented as Caṇḍālas who were coped with hideous activities.

Regarding the marriage it has been noticed that the practice of matrimonial alliance between members of two higher castes were in vogue during Bhavabhūti’s time. A matrimonial alliance had been arranged between Bhūrivasu, the minister of Padmāvatī and Nandana, the pleasure minister of the king. The king of Padmāvatī solicited Mālatī’s hand, the daughter of Bhūrivasu, for the sake of Nandana. In the meantime, Bhūrivasu agreed to give his daughter to Nandana. But Mālatī detested Nandana. She loved Mādhava and they got married by Gāndharva form of marriage. Eventually, they had got approval from the king. Allusion of some rituals are found which are followed by the people of 8th century A.D. In the 6th act it is found that on the day of Mālatī’s marriage ceremony, everyone made haste for the welcome of bridegroom’s party. Mālatī was ordered by her mother to go to the temple of town deity in order to ward off the obstacles from auspicious marriage ceremony and to attain good fortune. On the way of Mālatī’s going to the temple, her attendants had sung loudly sweet auspicious songs. Also there was deep sound of auspicious drums. Again Mālatī was adorned with her bridal dress and ornaments in the presence of the deity. After the completion of marriage ceremony the untimely Kaumudī festival was staged for the entrance of Mālatī at the mansion of Nandana. It appears that people enjoyed a lot during marriage. No particular age restriction is mentioned by Bhavabhūti regarding the marriage of a girl. No mention is found regarding the treatment received by the bride in her new home after marriage. Again, Bhavabhūti does not provide any information about the conjugal love and the relationship between husband and wife.

Chapter-III

Women play a pivotal role in a society and the position of women in the society served as one of the determinant factor for the overall development of that society. Therefore, a trial had been made in the 3rd chapter of this Paper to assess the position of women in the society depicted in the Mālatīmādhava. In course of critical analysis, it is revealed that women generally enjoyed a respectable position in the society. It has also been found that Kāmandakī had studied along with Bhūrivasu and Devarāt in the city of Padmāvatī. Mālatī is found skilled in painting, dancing, music, garland making etc. and she had a theoretical and practical knowledge of these subjects. Again women did not suffer religious inequality during Bhavabhūti’s time. It is seen that Kāmandakī embraced Buddhism and she was a female Buddhist nun in the monastery. Moreover, considerable information has been found regarding the practice of yoga. In the 5th act Kapālakuṇḍalā made a

journey through the air by the power of yoga. Again Saudāminī is found to have practiced yoga for attaining miraculous power. In the 10th act Saudāminī had flown up from the divine Śrīparvata to Padmāvatī with the help of miraculous power. With the help of this power, she could make herself invisible from the view of all. However, Bhavabhūti does not provide clear reference about whether women could chant the Vedic mantras or not during his time. Also he has not referred a social norm which restricted the husband not to participate in any kind of religious activity without his wife.

The study also reveals the co-education system during 8th century A.D. It has been found that Kāmandakī was educated along with Bhūrivasu and Devarāta at a famous centre of education. It has also been found that Mādhava was sent by his father Devarāta from Kuṇḍinapura to the city of Padmāvatī in order to study Ānvikṣikī. The curriculum included a study of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Sāṃkhya, Yoga and logical philosophy. In this Prakaraṇa it is found that Mālātī who is the daughter of the Brāhmaṇa minister Bhūrivasu knew only painting and a few other arts and sports but there is no reference to any arrangement made for her proper education. Buddhism had developed to a position where women received advantages of education. Moreover, Kāmandakī was a female Buddhist mendicant in the monastery. Avalokitā; Buddharakṣitā and Saudāminī were disciples of Kāmandakī. The permission given to women to enter the order gave a fairly good impetus to the cause of female education. Subsequently, this chapter includes a discussion on some of the conspicuous features of political system that was evolved in the period of 8th century A.D. It has been known from the speech of Kāmandakī that politicians greatly practised the policy of Cāṇakya. The king was a real factor in the kingdom and he guarded his subjects abiding by law. The king had efficient ministers and above all the political situation of 8th century A.D. was considerably peaceful.

Chapter-IV

The 4th chapter of this Paper is entitled as “the cultural aspects of the Mālātīmādhava” where at first the religious aspect has been discussed which was in vogue during the period of 8th century A.D. Religion greatly influences the cultural life of the society. At that time, the people were religious minded. They performed various religious rites and they were found associated with the worship of different gods and goddesses. Moreover, there was also the belief on Buddhist doctrine. In the 6th act Mālātī had gone to the temple of city deity to ward off the obstacles from auspicious marriage ceremony. In the 5th act there was a suitable description of cremation ground which indicates the custom of cremation during 8th century A.D. Many temples were erected during that period. At the very beginning, Bhavabhūti had offered his prayer to the Śiva, Gaṇeśa as well as the Sun. Moreover Kapālakuṇḍalā worshipped goddess Śakti. She offered Mālātī to the goddess Śakti as a victim. This chapter also deals with various religious festivals viz., Madanamahotsava which were celebrated during Bhavabhūti’s time in the honour of different gods. Although Bhavabhūti has given the reference of worshipping of gods and goddesses he offers very little information about the religious beliefs of the people during 8th century A.D.

In every society there remain certain popular beliefs which were followed more or less by the people of that society. Similarly, during the time of Bhavabhūti also people had a lot of influence of such beliefs. Mālātīmādhava was replete with numerous references of such beliefs. Here belief of worship of deity for the sake of good fortune during marriage ceremony, belief of rebirth, belief of blessings and belief of signs are well noticed.

This chapter also contains much information about art and architecture of Bhavabhūti’s time. At the very beginning, mention is made regarding 64 arts found in the Kāmasūtra of Vātsāyana. In the Mālātīmādhava, among these 64 arts the art of painting, music, dancing and garland making are found. Subsequently, this chapter had furnished remarkable sort of architecture of 8th century A.D. The 9th act of the Mālātīmādhava revealed that the city Padmāvatī was extremely rich in

architecture. The city Padmāvati owed a large numbers of buildings and the city –gate having a rampart on it. The city also had lofty mansions, temples etc. These lofty mansions, temples etc. marked the highest specimen of architecture during 8th century A.D.

Fruits like mango, pomegranate were common and people were accustomed to chew betel leaves. Among the drinks mention may be made of soma juice, wine etc. People of Bhavabhūti's time took different fruits and they also took betelnut. Moreover, drinking of wine was also in vogue during the period of 8th century A.D. However in this Prakaraṇa, Bhavabhūti has not mentioned about the principal food of common people during his time.

During Bhavabhūti's time people were highly concerned regarding their dress. Generally dress consisted of two garments viz., upper garment and lower garment. In the 1st act it was known from the speech of Mādhava that Mālātī's noble maidenhood was disclosed by the arrangement of her dress. In the 6th act Mālātī's attendants are found with coverings of china silk. Moreover Mālātī's bridal dress included a bodice of white silk and red silk garments to serve the purpose of the mantle. In the very beginning of this Prakaraṇa, the female Buddhist nun Kāmandakī was found to have worn red robes. Thus, Bhavabhūti gives different sorts of garments used by the women during 8th century A.D. Subsequently, this chapter includes discussion on the various sorts of ornaments used by the people during Bhavabhūti's time. In this chapter it has been found that Mālātī's attendants had worn ornaments like bracelets, anklets etc. Mālātī was presented the necklace of pearls by the king during her marriage ceremony. It has also been seen that Mālātī and Mādhava had worn garlands of flowers. From the above discussion following findings can be drawn out-----

The Mālātīmādhava is a Prakaraṇa, the plot of which is mainly the imagination of the poet. Here, there is a main story of Mālātī and Mādhava and also a sub-story of Madayantikā and Makaranda are found. Certain events of this Prakaraṇa are found to be fascinating and horror generating. This makes the play a very unique one. Moreover, the description of mountains, rivers and other natural objects found in this Prakaraṇa especially in the 9th act is very appealing. The scenes of horror hold the spectators spellbound. Its uniqueness is also found in the introduction of a Buddhist nun Kāmandakī, the character who helped to unite the hero and heroine. However, certain weaknesses in regard to the plot have also been noticed. The characters in this Prakaraṇa including the hero faint so often that they lose the sympathy of the spectators. The hero is made to faint away at a time when his friend's life is in danger when he should have run for his help. The supernatural disappearance of Mālātī and her equally supernatural rescue and reappearance stands as defects of construction in the Mālātīmādhava. Bhavabhūti's egotism is well reflected in this work as he indulges in self admiration. He admires his plot construction and boasts that a bright and marvellous composition like his play could hardly be found elsewhere. He is not tired of describing his command of expression.

The lack of sense of proportion on the part of Bhavabhūti is well noticed in handling of the plot of the Mālātīmādhava where too many important events happen by accident. As for instance, the tiger episode in the third act which makes it possible for Kāmandakī to achieve her second purpose viz., the union of Makaranda and Madayantikā. Again, Mādhava's arrival in the nick of time to save Mālātī from being killed by Aghoraghaṇṭa is another incident of that type. Both Mādhava and Makaranda save their beloveds through sheer luck. Similarly in the 10th act Saudāminī's invaluable help is also secured through mere accident. It is true that, accidents do happen in real life, but they certainly do not occur with such frequency and consistency. Another serious drawback about Bhavabhūti is that some verses are common in all the three dramas. Another shortcoming for which Bhavabhūti himself is to be blamed is that he goes out of the way to invite comparison with Kālidāsa. As for instance, in the 9th act, he sets himself to compete with Kālidāsa in the description of Mādhava's lament. In the Vikramovarśīyam of Kālidāsa, Purūravā addresses a number of birds and beasts, and

in the *Mālatīmādhava* also, *Mādhava* addresses the monkeys along with others. But *Bhavabhūti*'s deliberate efforts fail to achieve their end in this regard.

As a poet his emotionalism was so great that it often swept him off his feet. He concentrated on the portrayal of emotion and the characters become only a medium of emotional expression rather than living, human and individual personalities. This lack of real characterisation is a major defect of *Bhavabhūti*. Moreover, the plot of this *Prakaraṇa* is too long and too complex. In this regard one scholar writes, "the incidents subsequent to the scene in the cemetery (V Act) look like clumsy appendages and not like parts of a whole". (*Mālatīmādhava* of *Bhavabhūti* ed. by R.G. Bhandarkar (quoted by C.K. Venkataramaiah). In the opinion of A.B. Keith "*Bhavabhūti* was not content with simplicity but is often too fond of elaborate and overloaded descriptions which are fatally taking in simplicity and intelligibility and can be fully comprehended only after careful study and examination. The latest of his dramas, the *Uttararāmacarita* is far less obnoxious to criticism for defects of judgement than the *Mālatīmādhava*, which may be set down as an adventure in a genre unsuited to the poet's talent." (The Sanskrit Drama by A.B. Keith)

Mālatīmādhava is replete with all the literary elements which reveal *Bhavabhūti*'s sublime literary excellence. Here *Bhavabhūti* has shown to be an expert in the combination of allied and contrary rasas. The principal sentiment of this *Prakaraṇa* is *Śṛṅgāra*. Along with the principal one here he has delineated seven rasas except *Hāsyā* and *Śānta*. Like other plays of *Bhavabhūti* in the *Mālatīmādhava* also the character of *Viduṣaka* is not found who plays an important role in Sanskrit dramas. *Bhavabhūti* has not enabled to delineate *Karuṇa* rasa so successfully as in the *Uttararāmacarita*. However he splendidly delineated the principal sentiment *Śṛṅgāra* along with other contradictory rasas. In this *Prakaraṇa*, *Bhavabhūti* has used three *śabdālaṃkāras* viz., *Anuprāsa*, *Yamaka* and *Śleṣa* whereas he is inclined to the *arthālaṃkāras* also. *Bhavabhūti* has suitably employed both the *alaṃkāras* and shown his excellence in the employment of *alaṃkāras*. Five defects in words and only one defect of sense is found in the *Mālatīmādhava*. He has abundantly used the metres viz., *Vasantatilaka*, *Śikhariṇī*, *Mālinī* and *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*, *Aryā*, *Upendravajrā* whereas he had used rarely the metres like *Prthvi*, *Aupachandasika*, *Upajāti* and *Śālīnī* etc. Again he has used the lengthy metres viz., *Daṇḍaka* and *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* also. Here the metre *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* is used in describing the ghosts that was residing in the cremation ground. He uses the *Hariṇī* metre in the address of hero *Mādhava* to the heroine *Mālatī*. Thus he has employed the metres properly.

Considerable information about the caste system of 8th century A.D. can be well obtained in this study. During this period, all the four castes duly performed their respective duties. Apart from the four main castes there appeared another sub caste namely *Caṇḍāla*. Moreover, two forms of marriage viz. *Prājāpatya* and *Gāndharva* marriage are shown to be prevalent during 8th century A.D. Apart from common forms of ritual associated with marriage, there had been introduced some other rituals in which marriages were settled. One of such rituals was bride being carried in procession assisted by her attendants on the eve of marriage to the temple which formed a standard marriage ritual during *Bhavabhūti*'s time. However *Bhavabhūti* does not mention about the treatment received by the bride in her new home after marriage. Again, he also does not provide any information about the conjugal love and the relationship between husband and wife. During 8th century A.D. the position of women was not so much lower. Women had got the opportunity to have education. They did not confine themselves only to normal course of subjects but also had the opportunity to learn painting, dancing, music etc. Apart from these some women were expert in the practice of yoga. Some women also possessed adventurous spirits. They acquired some superhuman power such as flying through the air, becoming invisible and producing anything at will etc. Here *Bhavabhūti* has not referred whether women could chant the Vedic mantras or not during his time. During the period of 8th century A.D there was the prevalence of co-education. Royal families had sent their sons to distant centre of education. In this way considerable information can be well obtained from the *Mālatīmādhava* regarding the social aspects of 8th century.

During Bhavabhūti's time people were religious minded and they were found associated with the worship of many gods and goddesses. Many temples were erected during that period. The worship of goddess Śakti was accompanied with sacrifices of animals and also human beings. The reference of worshipping of gods and goddesses are found but very little information is found about the religious beliefs of the people during 8th century A.D. Buddhism became a popular religion during Bhavabhūti's time. People of 8th century A.D. used to believe on blessings, signs as well as on rebirth. The art and architecture attained a high level of excellence during the period of 8th century A.D. People of Bhavabhūti's time took different fruits and they also took betel nut. Moreover, drinking of wine was also in vogue during the period of 8th century A.D. However, in this Prakaraṇa, Bhavabhūti has not mentioned about the principal food of common people during his time. People used abundantly various sorts of silk clothes during Bhavabhūti's time. Maidens appeared to be well dressed in those days. Generally Buddhist nuns appeared with red robe during this period. However, Bhavabhūti does not make any reference regarding the dress of man. During Bhavabhūti's time women used to wear various sorts of gold ornaments viz., bracelets, anklets, necklace etc. Garland of flower was common to both for man and woman.

Conclusion

By summing up the present analysis it can be derived that although the Mālatīmādhava has a few defects yet it is a fertile work of Bhavabhūti where he has crafted clever arrangement of the events leading to the union of Mālatī and Mādhava. From the literary point of view Mālatīmādhava is a unique composition of Bhavabhūti. Moreover, this work of Bhavabhūti has become a good record of the systems of society and culture during the 8th century A.D. in India.

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