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NAIṢADHĀNANDA OF KṢEMISVARA

BY

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That Kṣemisvara, author of the well-known play *Caṇḍakausika*, has to his credit another work of the same class named *Naiṣadhānanda* is not widely known. Whereas the *Caṇḍakausika* has been edited, and translated into various languages,¹ the *Naiṣadhānanda* is rarely known even as manuscript. The only knowledge that we had about this play till now was confined to what Peterson had written in his *Report III*² giving the description of a manuscript of the play. Recently another manuscript of the work has been known to exist in the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner, a copy of which was given to me by Prof. C. Kunhan Raja. The present study of this play is based on this manuscript.

AUTHORSHIP

There is no doubt as to the authorship of the *Naiṣadhānanda*. The prologue itself refers to the play as the work of Kṣemisvara : "

आदिष्टोऽस्मि परिषदा यथा किल विजयकोष्ठप्रणप्तुः कवेरार्यक्षेमीश्वरस्य
कृतिरभिनवं नैषधानन्दं नाम नाटकं नाटयितव्यमिति ।

The colophon also gives the same information :—

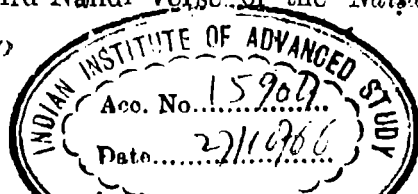
इति महाकविक्षेमीश्वरविरचितं नैषधानन्दं नाम नाटकं समाप्तम् ।

The similarity of the third Nāndī verse of the *Naiṣa-*

dhānanda

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देव्यां संभ्रमकातराः सकरुणा दीनेऽमराणां गणे

स्मेरा विद्रवविह्वले सुरपतावम्भोनिधौ साद्भुताः ।

सानन्दाः शशिकन्दले कञ्चलनकूराश्च हालहले

शम्भोः सम्प्रति पान्तु^६ ताण्डवमिव व्यातन्वतो दृष्टयः ॥

to the third Nāndī verse of the *Caṇḍakausika*

आनन्दश्लथिताः समाधिषु मुखे गौर्या विलासोल्लासाः

संभ्रान्ताः क्षणमुद्रताः क्षणमथ स्मेरा निजे वैकृते ।

कूराः कृष्टशरासने मनसिजे दग्धे वृणाकूणिताः

तत्कान्तारुदितेऽश्रुपूरतरलाः शम्भोर्दृशः पान्तु वः ॥

also indicates the common authorship of the two plays. Moreover the concluding *Bharatavākya* verses are found to be the same in both the dramas.

प्रमुदितसुजना समृद्धसस्या भवतु मही विजयी च भूमिपालः ।

कविभिरुपहिता निजप्रबन्धे गुणकणिका हनुगृह्यतां गुणज्ञैः ॥

अपि च,

येनादिश्य प्रयोगं धनपुलकभृता नाटकस्यास्य हर्षात्

वस्त्रालङ्कारहेम्नां प्रतिदिनमकृशा राशयः संप्रदत्ताः ।

तस्य क्षत्रप्रसूतेर्भ्रमतु जगदिदं कार्तिकेयस्य कीर्तिः

पारे क्षीराख्यसिन्धोरपि कनियशसा सार्धमग्रेसरेण ॥

Thus it is quite clear that *Naiṣadhānanda* is the work of Kṣemīvara, author of the *Caṇḍakausika*.

KṢEMĪVARA

In the prologue to the *Caṇḍakausika* we are told that the play was written for King Mahipāla.⁶ This king is described as having marched towards the south to defeat the Kārṇāṭas; Kṣemīvara compares his patron Mahipāla with the famous Candragupta of Pāṭalīpura, and the Kārṇāṭas are compared to the Nandas.⁷ This king is

referred to as Kārtikēya in the concluding verse of the plays.⁹ Pischel¹⁰ has identified this King Mahīpāla with the Pratihara king of that name who had his capital at Mahodaya or Kanyākubja, and about whom we have inscriptions dating between 914 and 917 A. D. He is also to be identified with King Mahīpāla mentioned by Rājasekhara in his *Bālabhārata*¹¹ as his patron; Rājasekhara also speaks of his patron King Mahīpāla as having marched to the south. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Indra III about whom we have inscriptions dated 914 A. D. and about whose contemporaneity with Mahīpāla there cannot, therefore, be any doubt, asserts on the other hand that he invaded Mahodaya.¹¹ Mahīpāla's fight against the Karnāṭas and Indra's march against Mahodaya are, probably, the same fight as seen from opposite points of view.

Kṣemīvara was a younger contemporary of Rājasekhara¹² and flourished in the beginning of the tenth century A. D. as the court poet of King Mahīpāla of Kanyākubja. He tells us that his great grandfather was Vijayakoṭṭha (or Vijayaprakoṭṭha). Nothing more is known definitely about his life. Krishnamachariar says¹³ that Kṣemīvara was a Śaivite, since all the three benedictory verses of the *Caṇḍakausika* are in praise of Śiva; but in the *Naiṣadhānanda* the beginning verse¹⁴ is in honour of Viṣṇu and Śrī, showing thereby that he has no special leanings towards either Śiva or Viṣṇu¹⁵

ARGUMENT OF THE PLAY

The *Naiṣadhānanda* is a Nāṭaka in seven Acts dealing with the famous story of Nala. The dramatist has not made any major deviation in the story taken from the epic, but the plot has been knit together in an admirable manner. The seven Acts are called respectively *Mahendrasandēsa*, *Dautyadamayanti-darśana*, *Damayantīpurīṇaya*, *Dyūtāpahṛtasarvasva*, *Analagarbha*, *Damayantīparidevana* and *(Upasam)hāru*. The scenes are quite dramatic and there is plenty of scope for action.

Act I shows us king Nala and Vidūṣaka in a chariot driven at great speed by Vārsṇeya. The king is going to take part in the great *svayamvara* of Princess Damayantī of Vidarbha. In a few masterful hints in the course of the conversation the preceding circumstances are indicated—how Nala has already fallen in love with Damayantī on hearing about her bewitching beauty from a golden swan he happened to meet in his garden, and how he is now going to the *svayamvara* in a happy and optimistic mood. The Vidūṣaka, who is frightened by the rushing wind coming against him on account of the great speed, is asked to close his eyes and stand still, holding the flag-staff. The king enjoys the beauty of the natural scenery on the way. Soon they reach Kuṇḍina, the Capital of Vidarbha. Vidūṣaka who opens his eyes is struck with wonder at the opulence of the city. Suddenly they hear a command to stop the chariot, for the dust produced by the running chariot has gone up making the thousand-eyed Indra, who is coming in a plane, to shed incessant tears. The chariot is stopped accordingly; the king and Vidūṣaka get down and move to the garden to take shelter under some shade, after sending the charioteer to look after the horses. Nala now hears the words of the golden swan assuring him that it has instilled love for Nala in the mind of Damayantī. It is at this happy moment that Indra's messenger Mātali enters. The king promises to do anything that Indra wants. Then he is told that he should go to Damayanti as Indra's messenger to persuade her to accept Indra himself in the *svayamvara*. It is a great shock to the king, but he has to keep his promise. The scene ends with Nala's lamentations about his misfortune.

In the *second Act* we find Nala, in the same mood, going to meet Damayanti to convey to her Indra's message. She is in the garden with her friend Vidrumamālā, preparing a wreath of flowers. Hiding behind creepers the king is able to feast his eyes on Damayanti's unsurpassed beauty; from their conversation he knows that she loves him. He

approaches them and is cordially received. He gives her Indra's message with great difficulty; but she says that she will accept Nala himself in the Svayamvara, and that Indra cannot get angry towards him for that.

The *third Act* deals with the Svayamvara. The lords of the quarters have come disguised as Nala. Damayanti selects Nala; the other kings get angry and there ensues a battle in which the king is victorious. None of these incidents takes place on the stage. We are informed about these through long reports from Vidūṣaka and others. Towards the end of the scene the king appears on the stage along with the rescued Damayanti.

In *Act IV* is described the condition of Nala possessed by Kali who has Moha and Māyā as his helpmates. Damayanti is extremely worried over this change in her lord. Though he is being defeated in the play of dice by Puṣkara, he refuses to give up the gambling. Damayanti tries her best to dissuade him from gambling again. He is losing his wealth and his country. Knowing that some misfortune might happen to them, Damayanti sends her two children to her father's palace. The victorious Puṣkara who is sorry that Nala did not allow Damayanti to be put as the stake, approaches her and behaves rudely towards her; but goes away to meet Nala who is coming to fight with him. Nala who has defeated Puṣkara in battle now comes to Damayanti; but he does not want to take the country by force. Leaving all ornaments to Puṣkara, they leave for the forest.

In *Act V* we find Nala and Damayanti moving in the forest; in spite of the lack of comforts they are happy. Kali who is worried over this makes the 'Dice' take the form of birds and fly away with Nala's garments—(the only object left with them which they were using as their bedding, fan, seat and umbrella). Because of the fatigue Damayanti lies down, and falls asleep. Nala who is now fully possessed by Kali leaves her and goes away. Soon

there is a wild conflagration, and he falls in a swoon. Meanwhile Damayantī wakes up and wails on noting that Nala is gone. She is caught in the smoke and runs away searching for her lord. When Nala recovers from his swoon he hears a cry of help. Kārkoṭaka who is caught in the fire is calling for help. Nala helps him out of the fire; Kārkoṭaka bites him in return, as a result of which Nala becomes old and wrinkled in form. Kārkoṭaka tells him that this form will help him in his life incognito. Nala is given a cloth by wearing which he can regain his original form. At the advice of Kārkoṭaka Nala now goes to serve King R̥tuparna of Ayodhya as a charioteer.

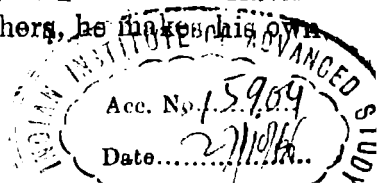
Act VI takes us to the court of King R̥tuparna in Ayodhya. King Nala under the new name of Bāhuka is quite comfortable there; but he is deeply worried about his misfortune—his country taken by the enemies, his wife abandoned in the lonely forest and he himself disfigured and living in servitude. The thought about the possible calamities to which she might have fallen a prey is making him moody and dejected. The adventures of Damayantī in the forest are made known to the audience with the help of a play within the scene. Having escaped from the forest and reached her mother's house at Cedi, she sent messengers secretly to see whether Nala could be found. Bāhuka had given a vague reply to her general message. Damayantī has now sent an actress to test Bāhuka with the help of a play depicting her own adventures in the forest. King R̥tuparna, his queen and Bāhuka are witnessing the play, little knowing that the actress is keen on testing psychologically about the identity of Bāhuka. The entire story—how Damayantī on waking up alone in the forest lamented bitterly, being anxious about the safety of her lord, how, in the course of her wanderings there, she was bitten by a snake and consequently saved by a hunter who then became enamoured of her beauty, made advances towards her and was killed in the fire of her anger, how being dejected with life she was about to commit suicide when she

heard about the arrival of a caravan under whose protection she later reached Cedi, and how she was comfortably received there—is presented through this interlude. Every now and then Bāhuka almost reveals his identity by his passionate remarks, and it is with great difficulty that he controls himself. Though Rtuparna does not suspect anything, the actress is convinced that Bāhuka is Nala himself. She tells the king that Damayanti has decided on re-marriage, since she does not know anything about her heartless husband, and that Puṣkara has also been invited for the *svayamvara*. Bāhuka is angry at this news, and the king is also eager to participate in the *svayamvara*. It is almost late, still with the expert knowledge of Bāhuka at driving they expect to reach there in time.

The *last Act* takes us to Damayanti at Cedi. The actress who has come with Rtuparna and Bāhuka tells her that Bāhuka is Nala himself. Bāhuka has learned the 'secret of the dice' from Rtuparna on their way from Ayodhya, and has now gone to challenge Puṣkara. Nala's son Indrasena who has grown up into a valorous young man hears about Bāhuka's challenge to Puṣkara, and is not in a mood to yield his country to a stranger. The victorious Bāhuka enters with King Rtuparna in the chariot. He looks at the boy with affection. Indrasena's anger also melts in his presence. Nala understands that it is his own son. With the help of the cloth given by Kārkoṭaka he resumes his real form. He pretends anger towards Damayanti for her attempt at re-marriage. She vindicates her position by jumping in the fire from which she is brought back unscathed by the fire god himself. Damayanti's parents also come. Kali suffering because of Damayanti's curse is set free, and the story ends happily.

ECHOES FROM CLASSICAL WRITERS

Influences of earlier classical dramatists can be seen throughout the play. But Kṣemishvara is not a slavish imitator; whatever he takes from others, he makes his own.



by giving a stamp of his own dramatic genius. Now and then we are reminded of some classical passages, but we never feel that he has borrowed them. He is mostly indebted to Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti. The opening of the first Act is quite similar to that of the *S'ākuntala*; and the following verse describing the speed of the chariot :

दृष्टं दृष्टिपथादुपैति न पुनर्दृष्टं पुरो वर्तते
 पश्चाद्भूतमभूतवन्नयनयोर्मार्गो न संतिष्ठते ।
 वेगात्स्यन्दनमारुतैरिव परिक्षिप्तं द्वयोः पार्श्वयो-
 रेतस्पश्य सकाननाद्रिनगरग्रामं जगद्भावति ॥

reminds one of the well-known verse 'यदालोके सूक्ष्मं etc., there. Similarly Nala's statement in Act. II

'नद्याप्यनावृतानि मन्दधियां अनर्थद्वाराणि भवन्ति ।'
 'अथवा भवितव्यानां द्वाराणि भवन्ति सर्वत्र ।'

—*S'ākuntala* I

Towards the close of the third Act Damayanti is about to leave Nala. She goes and comes back to take the flower wreath that she has purposely forgotten. Then again on her way she stops under the pretext that the flower dust has fallen into her eyes, and she looks at him longingly with tears in her eyes. This scene is quite similar to the departure of *S'ākuntalā* after her first meeting with *Duṣyanta* (दर्भाङ्कुरेण चरणः क्षत इत्यकाण्डे etc.)

The idea of a play within the play that is used in the sixth Act of *Naiṣadhaṅgamula* must have been borrowed from Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāmacarita*; but Kṣemisvara has used it, like Shakespeare in *Hamlet*, to test psychologically the reactions of the hero who is witnessing it. Indrasena's valorous challenge in the last act of the play is reminiscent of Bhavabhūti's treatment of Lava and Kuṣa.

चिन्ता न मेऽस्ति निजदुर्नयहारितेऽपि

राज्ये यतः श्रिय इमा भृशमप्रतिष्ठाः ।

एतच्च मां दहति धर्मकष्टोरतार्क—

तापार्तिशुष्यदधरं वदनं प्रियायाः ॥ Act II verse 10 of the *Naiṣadhānanda* contains an echo of the well-known verse in *Mṛcchakatika* :—

सत्यं न मे विभवनाशकृतास्ति चिन्ता

भाग्यक्रमेण हि धनानि भवन्ति यान्ति ।

एतच्च मां दहति नष्टधनाश्रयस्य

यत्सौहृदादपि जनाः विमुखीभवन्ति ॥

Nala's words to Kārkoṭaka who has bitten him—
स्त्वे यथेष्टमुपभुज्यतां मे शरीरम् । सुहृत्प्राणयात्रासम्पादनमात्रकेणापि तावदनेन
साफल्यमनुभूयताम् । make one think of Jimūtavāhana's words
to Garuḍa in *Nāgānanda*. Perhaps an influence of the
Nāgānanda is found in this play even in the selection of
the title.

Kṣemivarā's indebtedness to the *Mudrārākṣasa* is
suggested in the following verse (VI-7)

यान्तश्चेदनुयामि सत्यवचसा नैतन्मतं स्वामिनः

स्वाम्ये पुष्करसन्नियौ ननु रिपौ दुर्मर्षणाः संपदः ।

क्लषायं परिगृह्णातापि तपसे भर्तुर्मया किं कृतं

तद्वैवं प्रतिपालयामि विपदोऽनित्या तथा संपदः ॥

which reminds one of Rākṣasa's words :—

किं गच्छामि तपोवनं न तपसा शाम्येत् सवैरं मनः

किं भर्तृननुयामि जीवति रिपौ स्त्रीणामिवं चेष्टितम् ।

किं वा खड्गसखः पताम्यरिबले नैतच्च युक्तं भवेत्

चेत्तश्चन्दनदासमोक्षरभसं रुज्यात्कृत्वा न चेत् ॥

The following verse where Nala laments about the difficulties that Damayanti would have had to suffer in the forest :

किं वक्ष्यतीन्दुवदना परिहाय निद्रां
नेत्रोत्पले प्रतिदिशं तरले क्षिपन्ती ।
आम्यन्त्यदेशकुशला विपिनान्तराणि
किं वा करिष्यति मया रहिताद्य भीरुः ॥

reminds us of

‘ ते लोचने प्रतिदिशं विधुरे क्षिपन्ती । ’

in Anāṅgaharṣa's *Tāpasavatsurāja*.¹⁶

Kṣemisvara has perfect command of pithy and forcible expression. The pitiable condition of the parents of a girl in India is well put in the mouth of the Sūtradhāra.

बाष्पाभसां निदानं चिन्तायाः कारणं रुजा मनसः ।
कन्येति नाम पित्रोर्दुःखतरोरग्रिमा वल्ली ॥
कस्मै प्रदातुमुचितेति करोति मोहं दत्तापि भर्तृभवनात् गतेति दुःखम् ।
भर्तुर्भवेदभिमतार्थ न वेति चिन्तां पित्रोः क्रदापि खलु नैव सुखाय कन्या ॥

The first verse is repeated in the last Act also.

King Nala advises Vidūṣaka to get used to the wind in the moving chariot, because one must endure where there is no cure :

असाध्यो भिषजां व्याधिरभ्यासेन तु जीयते ।

The king's decision never to swerve from the path of truth is put in a telling manner :

त्यजामि तृणवत्पाणान् लोष्टेषुच महीमिमाम् ।
मूलं तु धर्मयशसोः न सत्यं त्यक्तुमुत्सहे ॥

Moha, in the fourth Act, boasts about his greatness thus :

जगदिदमभिभावितप्रतिष्ठं करतल्लाडितकन्दुकोपमं मे ।

Effective, indeed, are the words of Nala to Damayanti on the eve of their departure to the forest :

त्वया सह न मे देवि भविष्यति वनं वनम् ।

राज्यं तु जातदैन्यस्य न सुखाय न कीर्तये ॥

How fickle prosperity is can be seen in the verse :

भुजङ्गरसनालोलः कमठाननचञ्चलः ।

नागेन्द्रकर्णतरलः श्रियः विमनुशौचसि ॥

The condition of the king about to leave his wife in the forest is well portrayed in the following verse :

स्नेहेन नीयतेऽन्यत्र मोहेनान्यत्र नीयते ।

मन्दस्य मम दोलेव मतिरायाति याति च ॥

Here and there in the play we find general maxims put in an effective manner :

‘ न ज्ञायते परिणमन्ति कथं विधात्रा जन्तोर्ललाटलिखितानि दुरक्षराणि । ’

‘ दुर्वृत्रो वा सुवृत्तो वा पतिः स्त्रीणां हि दैवतम् । ’

‘ कल्यत्यात्मसमं परं हि लोकः । ’

‘ अहो सुकुमारता कुलाङ्गनाहृदयानाम् । ’

‘ दुष्प्रत्ययानि चविवेकिनां मनांसि । ’

‘ अदिसाहसिभागं को अवराहो । ’

Kṣemishvara has complete command over the language, and knows how to adapt the style to the nature of the

theme described. There is vigour in the description of the wild fire stopping suddenly as by magic :

येन ज्वालावलीढाचल्लतरणिशिखाश्रेणिदीप्ताम्बरेण

क्रान्ताः पर्यन्तधूमैः पवनविलुलितैः सागरान्ता वनान्ताः !

ग्रासीकुर्वन्निवोर्वावल्यमनलस्रैर्दीप्यमानो मरुद्भिः

सोऽयं मायेन्द्रजालप्रतिमरुचिरहो द्राक् प्रशान्तो दवाग्निः ॥

Simple and effective is the description of Bhīma's condition, happy to receive Nala back, but anxious about the fate of Damayanti :

जामातरं वीक्ष्य चिरप्रनष्टं चिताधिरूढां तनयां च दृष्ट्वा ।

हर्षश्च शोकश्च समं दधानमिदं मनो मे प्रतिपत्तिमूढम् ॥

The dramatist has shown restraint and good taste in the use of figures of speech and in descriptions.

From the above analysis of the play it would be seen that the *Naiṣadhātmananda* is an important play which deserves to be included among the classics in Sanskrit literature.

NOTES

(1) *Caṇḍakausika*, a drama in five Acts, Bombay 1860; *Caṇḍakausikam*, Calcutta. 1867; *Caṇḍakausika*, edited with a commentary by Jivānanda Vidyā Sāgara, Calcutta 1884; Translated into German by Ludwig Fritze, Leipzig, 1883. Translations into some of the Indian languages are also known.

(2) Report on the search for Sanskrit manuscripts in the Bombay circle, part III (1884-86) pp. 21, 340f. The Ms. is dated 1611 A. D.

(3) The title of the play is *Naiṣadhānanda*, and not *Abhinavanaiṣadhānanda* as is given in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (p.227b). '—कृतिरभिनवनैषधानन्दं नाम' etc. in the prologue (found in both the manuscripts) may seem to suggest that *Abhinavanaiṣadhānanda* is the title. But the correct reading must be 'कृतिरभिनवं नैषधानन्दं नाम' । Compare with the passage in the prologue of the *Caṇḍakausika* 'कवेरार्थक्षेमीश्वरस्य कृतिरभिनवं चण्डकौशिकं नाम नाटकं' etc., In the prologue of our drama itself the title is mentioned as *Naiṣadhānanda*. 'सूत्रधारः—(सानन्दं) आर्ये नैषधानन्दे नाटयितव्ये क्रियतां सङ्गीतकम् ।' The colophon also calls it *Naiṣadhānanda*.

(4) अभिनवनैषधानन्द in the Ms.

(5) The Ms. reads शब्दस्य प्रतिपाब्दु । The Ms. is very corrupt. I have made my own corrections while quoting passages from it.

(6) आदिष्टोऽस्मि....श्रीमहीपालदेवेन ।

(7) 1 — 4

(8) See the *Bharatavākya* verse quoted above.

(9) See S. Konow, *Das indische Drama*, p. 87. There is no reason to doubt (as Dr. S. K. Aiyangar has done in Sir Asutosh Silver Jubilee Volume, *Orientalia* 2, pp. 559 ff.) the correctness of the view expressed by Pischel and generally accepted by scholars that Kṣemisvara flourished in early tenth century in the court of the Gurjara Pratihāra ruler Mahipāla I; see 'Mahipāla of the Caṇḍakausika, by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, J. O. R. M. Vol. 6. 1932. pp. 191 ff.

(10) 1 — 7

(11) *Ep. Ind.* 7, p. 30

(12) Rājasekhara wrote his *Bālarāmāyaṇa* for his patron Nirbhaya or Mahendrapāla of Kanyākubja, who was Mahipāla's predecessor.

(13) History of Classical Sanskrit Literature, p. 642

(14) आख्याते हसितं पितामह इति तस्तं कयालीति च

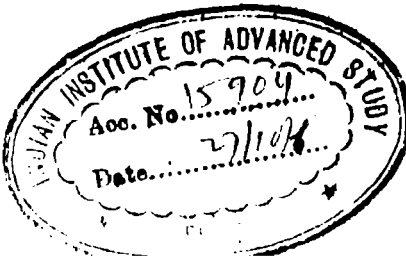
व्यावृत्तं गुरुरित्ययं दहन इत्याविष्कृता भीस्ता ।

पौलोमीपतिरित्यसूयितमथ व्रीडाविनम्रं श्रिया

पायाद्दः पुरुषोत्तमोऽयमिति यो न्यस्तः स पुष्पाञ्जलिः ॥

(15) There has been some confusion between 'Kṣemisvara' and 'Kṣemendra', owing, no doubt, to the similarity of their names. One Tanjore Ms. of the *Caṇḍa Kausika* has ascribed it to Kṣemendra. Obviously it is a scribal error. Peterson says (Report III p. 21) that the verse, आख्याते हरित.....of the *Naiṣadhānanda* is ascribed to Kṣemendra in *Padyāmṛtataraṅgiṇī*; but in Dr. J. B. Chaudhuri's edition of the work the verse is not found.

(16) This similarity was pointed out to me by Dr. V. Raghavan.



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