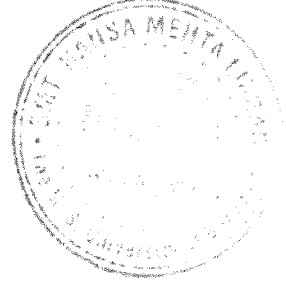




INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

The tradition of good and sublime poetry begins from Vālmīki, the first poet, Ādikavi. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are the two popular epics representing the ethos and epoch of ancient India. M. Williams in his book *Indian Wisdom* observes: “ In India literature like the whole face of nature is on a gigantic scale. Poetry, born amid the majestic scenery of the Himalayas, and fostered in a climate which inflamed the imaginative powers, developed itself with oriental luxuriance, if not always with true sublimity. Although the Hindus like the Greeks, have only two great epic poems (the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*) yet to compare these vast compositions with the Iliad and the Ganges, rising in the snows of the world’s most colossal ranges, swollen by numerous tributaries, spreading into vast shallows of branching into deep divergent channels, with the steams of Attica or the mountain torrents of Thessaly. It is, of course, a principal characteristic of epic poetry, as distinguished from lyrical, that it should concern itself more with external action than internal feelings. It is this which makes Epoch the natural expression of trial has turned the mind of national life. When centuries of trial have turned the mind of early national inwards, and men begin to speculate, to reason, to elaborate language and cultivate science, there may be no lack of refined poetry, but the spontaneous production of epic song is, at that stage of national existence, as impossible as for the octogenarian to delight in the giants and giant-killers of his childhood. The *Rāmāyaṇa*

and *Mahābhārata* then, as reflecting the Hindu character in ancient times, may be expected to abound in stirring incidents of exaggerated heroic action.”¹

From the classical age formalization in Sanskrit began. The science of poetry called *Kāvyaśāstra* or *Alaṅkāraśāstra* developed and the rhetoricians enumerated the principles and definition of poetry. Classical Sanskrit literature can be broadly divided into three types Viz. *Mahākāvya* (great poem, court-epic), *Khaṇḍakāvya* (shorter-poem), *Laghukāvya* or *muktaka-kāvyas*.

Carita-kāvyas play an important role in the field of Sanskrit language. They mainly form a part of biographical literature. Biography is a significant sector of the literature. It is a narrative, which records consciously and artistically the important events happened in the life of a great person whom the author describes. The biographical works are the combination of history and literary art. So the biographer shares with the historian a concern for truth and simultaneously with the novelties for the ambition to create a work of art.

Biographical works are the significant treasure of Sanskrit literature. The life-sketches or the biographies of important persons attracted many poets to write upon them. Therefore a huge number of *carita-kāvyas* have been composed. We have to accord due consideration to them as they possess high merit of literature.

The word *carita* has the following meanings: performed, practiced, attained, known, offered, going, moving-course, acting, doing, practice, behavior, acts, deeds, e.g. *Udāra-caritānām tat pranitam prayujyate*. *Caritram* means behavior, habit, conduct, practice, acts, deeds, performances, observance, history, life, biography, account, adventure, nature, disposition and duty, established or instituted observance.²

Some of the *carita-kāvyas* are historical, some are biographical, some are centering on the life of persons, some are on their deeds and some are on their characters. It is interesting to note that there are *carita-kāvyas* of many types and many forms. The objectives behind the compositions are also different.

The *carita-kāvya* literature focused on the remarkable personalities of society. It can be divided in different groups according to the phrase of significant personalities introduced therein. As a result internationally important religious or spiritual figures like Sankaracarya, Vivekananda, the historical and political persons like Shivaji, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, the most popular saints like Jnaneshvar, Tukaram, Ramadasa, and the well known social workers become the subject of these *carita-kāvyas*. The other significant feature of these *carita-kāvyas* is that the authors of poems have their own choice in presenting the biography in their choice literary form. So some biographical works are composed in *mahākāvya*-form, some in drama form. On other hand some biographies are composed in an abridged form and simple style to

attract the common people or children. Some books contain the collections of biographies of the persons who have participated in the war of independence.

Present thesis is also based upon a biographical epic poem entitled Sri Swami Vivekananda caritam written by Dr. Tryambaka Sharman Atmarama Bhandarakar. Thesis is divided into eight chapters which is based on the original text.

First chapter contains an outline of the tradition of Sanskrit *mahākāvyas* from the classical period up to the modern period. The important points like origin of *mahākāvyas*, definitions of the *Mahākāvyas*, special features of the *Mahākāvyas*, types of *mahākāvyas* have been given also in this chapter.

The second chapter is “Literary works on Swami Vivekananda” in this chapter different types of works are discussed, like *Viśwabhānu* an epic poem which is written by Dr. P. K. Narayan Pillai, *Vivekānanda Vijayam* this is one of the plays written by Shridhar Bhaskar Varnekar. Another work is *Swāmi Vivekānanda caritam*. This is a prose work written by Gajanan Balakrishna Palasule. And last work is *Shrimad Vivekānandapañchakam*, collection of five *Ślokas* dedicated to Swami Vivekananda written by Swami Shrimad Ramakrishnanda.

The Third chapter is about the life, date and works of the poet Dr. Tryambaka A. Bhandarkar, the author of the epic poem, *Sri Swami Vivekānanda caritam*.

The Fourth chapter contains the summary of the eighteen cantos of the *Mahākāvya*.

The Fifth chapter embodies the life history of Swamiji as it is presented in the *mahākāvya*.

The Sixth Chapter contains the literary evaluation of the poem like sentiments, styles, suggestions, the figures of speech, *Guṇas* and *Doṣas*, metres, *Alaṅkāras*, and characters of the poem.

In the Seventh chapter is about the descriptions and narrations in the *mahākāvya*. This chapter describes the social conditions of India, the culture of Indians, Swamiji's patriotism, his love for Indians etc. This chapter embodies sublime ideas of Swamiji.

The Eighth chapter is about the religious and philosophical ideas depicted in the *Mahākāvya* which describes the religious and philosophical thoughts of Swamiji.

The Ninth chapter of the thesis concludes the discussions and highlights the significant contribution of the poet to Modern Sanskrit literature.

REFERENCES

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