

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF MAGHA.

The classical Sk.literature is enriched with six poems which may be called gems. Three of them -Raghu, Kumāra and Megha from the pen of Kālidāsa, the national poet of India, are called 'Laghu-trayī' while the remaining three- Kirāta of Bhāravi, Naisā-dha of Sriharsa and Śīśu of Māgha- are called 'Brihat-trayī'. The 'Śīśu', or as it is better known, the Māghakāvya, after the name of its author, is one of the master-pieces of Sanskrit literature. It has enjoyed a very high reputation as work of art for over eleven centuries and has been so popular with the scholars as to be ranked by them as the best Kāvya.¹ There may be some exaggeration in this estimate but it is certain that Śīśu has a position of honour in the circle of the learned.

It is evident from the Prabandhās, tradition and the colophon at the end of a manuscript² of the poem that he belonged to Bhinnamāla in Gujarat. It may be noted in this connection that the country 'Gujarat' in the days of Māgha (6 A.D. to 7 A.D.) was not co-extensive with modern Gujarat." What we know as Gujarat today is the country extending roughly from Mt.Abu in the north to Daman in the south, from Dwarka on the Arabian sea in the west to Godhra or Dohad in the east, that is, the country bounded on the north by

1. 'काव्येषु माघः।'

2. 'इति श्रीभिनमालावकास्तव्यदत्तकस्तुनोर्महावैयाकरणस्य माघस्य कृते
शिशुपादवधे-।'

Int. to Śīśu, p.3. Pt.Durgaprasad, NSP.

the desert of Marwar, on the north-west by the Great Runn of Cutch, on the West (if Kathiawar is included) by the Arabian sea, on the south by the Deccan plateau which almost abuts on the coastal plain between Daman and Dahanu, on the east by the gorges of the Narbada and the Tapi, with Satpura in between, on the north-east^{1 2} by Mewar and Malwa plateaux. Moreover, it was never ruled by one king as it was ruled after the 11th century or in modern times. Nor was the whole land or country described above was called Gujarat. Lāṭa was the name given to the region south of the Mahī or at times south of the Narmadā upto the Purnā. It appears that Ānarta was the name of the country extending from Kaira to Palanpur or Vadnagar in the north and including Dwarka in the west. The rest of the country, viz., the southern portion of the present Kathiawar peninsula was called Surastra.

Thus Lāṭa corresponded roughly with the Southern Gujarat, Ānarta with the North Gujarat but included most probably parts of Northern Kathiawar, while Surastra corresponded with Southern Kathiawar.

Politically the whole of modern Gujarat formed part of the Mauryan Empire (300 B.C.), then the Indo-Greeks (180 B.C. to 100 B.C.) ruled on some of its parts and were followed by the Kshtrapas (125 A.D. to 390 A.D.). Then those parts were conquered by Candragupta II and the Guptas ruled over them till 467 A.D. After the fall of the Gupta Empire towards the close of

1. Dr.H.D.Sankalia: Studies in Historical and Cultural Geography and Ethnology of Gujarat. p.9.

the 5th century A.D., several petty kings and generals (probably former vassals of the Guptas) made attempts to assert their independence and to carve out a kingdom for themselves from the tottering empire.

From its ruin arose the principality of the Gurjaras around Broach, with Nandipuri as their capital; of the Maitrakas at Valabhī; of the Garulakas around Dwarka and perhaps of the Saindhavas at Ghumali; of the Kataccuras north and south of the Tāptī who were soon replaced by the Cālukyās of Badami.¹ Thus five or six small powers shared between them parts of Gujarat and Kathiawar.

North Gujarat, the portion extending from Kaira to Palanpur in the north was probably under the Gurjara-Pratiharas of Rajputana. This dynasty sprang up in Rajputana in about the 7th century A.D. Within a few decades, it spread its sway over Malwa, N.Guj., Kathiawar and the whole of North India and parts of Bengal and Bihar. It is this power, the Gurjaras, which prevented the Arabs from penetrating east-ward after they had raided and destroyed Valabhi and conquered Sind in the eighth century A.D.

No records of these kings by themselves are found from Gujarat but from their other records, we know that N.Guj. and Kathiawar formed a part of their vast empire. This fact is proved by the existence of the copper-plates of their feudatories in Kathiawar. These are of the year 900 A.D.²

1. Ibid. pp.10-11.

Gujarat again is not the same thing as Gurjardesa or Gurjara.¹ The word 'Gurjara' appears in history as applicable to a region in the middle of the sixth century A.D. Its capital was Bhillamāla. Its southern boundary was somewhere about the river Sarasvatī on which the town of Pātana came to be situated. Its northern boundary was beyond modern Jodhpur. The land was styled 'Gurjara' pure and simple. The southern part of the old Gurjara is now included in modern Gujarat as its northernmost part and lies between Sirohi and the Sarasvatī.

The first king of this country emerges out between 500 A.D. and 550 A.D. He was Haricandra² by name, otherwise called Rohilladhi, a Brahman by birth. He had two queens- one a Brahmin lady and the other Kṣatriyā. He had four sons- Bhogabhatta, Kakka, Rajjila and Dadda who strengthened the position of the empire.

The Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II (625 A.D.) records the defeat of Lāta, Mālava and Gurjara. This is a clear reference to the kings of Gurjara, Lāta and Mālava whose territories were contiguous. The Gurjara king can be no other than Haricandra's³ descendant of the Pratihara dynasty who reigned at Bhillamāla, the capital of 'Gurjara'.

1. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 'The Glory that was Gurjardesa'
Vol.III.

The king of Gurjar was defeated by Prabhākaravardhana, the father of Harṣavardhana as stated by Bāna in his Harṣacarita.¹ Though its conquest by Harṣa is not mentioned in his world-conquest, it can be presumed. Hiuen Tsang's description of the king suggests that like Sind and Kashmir, Gurjar was nominally subject to overlordship of Harṣa.

Hiuen Tsang who visited the country in about 641 A.D. remarks, " The king was a Kṣatriya by caste, a young man celebrated for his wisdom and courage and a firm believer in Buddhism."²

³
According to Shri C.V.Vaidya, the king referred by Hiuen Tsang may be the Gurjara king who was contemporary of Harṣa. He probably was the son of one Vyāghramukha mentioned by Brahmagupta, the famous astrologer who composed the well-known Siddhānta at Bhinmal in 628 A.D. Now this Brahmagupta states that the king⁴ belonged to Chapa dynasty.

Māgha's grandfather Suprabhadra was the minister of the king Varmalata who flourished in about 625 A.D. This king Varmalata was the father of king Vyāghramukha referred by Brahmagupta. Hence the king described by Hiuen Tsang is evidently the immediate

1. गुर्जरप्रजागरः प्रतापशील इति प्रथितापरनामा प्रशोकरवर्धनो नाम राजाधिराजः p.174

2. Watters OYC. Vol. p. 249.

3. History of Mediaeval India, Vol.I.p.357.

4. श्रीचापवंशतिलके श्रीव्याघ्रमुखे नृपे शकनृपाणाम् ।
पञ्चाशत्संयुक्ते हि शतैः पञ्चभिरतीतैः ॥

(This verse is quoted by Dixit in his Marathi history of Indian Astronomy. p.217. It is from Brahmasiddhanta of Brahmagupta).

therefore
successor of Vyāghramukha and may be looked upon as the contemporary and patron of our poet Māgha as shown below:-

Varmalāta	Minister Suprabhadeva
(600 - 625 A.D.)	:
	:
	:
Vyāghramukha	Dathaka
(625 - 640 A.D.)	:
	:
The king described by	Māgha
Hiuen Tsang but whose	
name is not known.	
(640 A.D. onward)	

Hence it was in the capital Bhinmal¹ of this country and under this king that Māgha lived and wrote.

I. Authorship.

No one has ever doubted or challenged the authorship of our poem Śīśu. except Bhīmasena², a commentator on Kāvyaṣaṣa. He, in his commentary 'Sudhāśekhara' on Kāvyaṣaṣa contends that Māgha purchased the authorship of the poem from some other learned Brahmin-poet whose name has been suppressed for a fabulous amount of wealth and brought it to light after his own name. He cites this work as an illustration of a poem composed for money (Arthakṛte). But this is Bhīmasena's mere conjecture for which he does not produce any evidence. Tradition, legends

1. Vide Chap.VII 'Home of Magha'.

2. HSL, p.156. f.n.

and history confirm Māgha's authorship of the poem. It is difficult to reject such a weighty evidence of history in favour of what Bhīmasena's view. We, therefore, hold that Magha is the author of the poem.

II. A life-sketch of Magha.

(a) Parentage:

It is a matter of satisfaction that Māgha, unlike most other Sanskrit poets, affords us a glimpse of his personal history in the five stanzas with which our poem closes. Mallinātha's commentary on them is not available, but Vallabhadeva comments on them. In absence of any evidence to prove their spurious nature, we may accept them as genuine. They are autobiographical in character and furnish us with the names of the poet's grandfather and father.

The first stanza informs us that the King Varmalāta had Suprabhadeva as his minister whose son was Dattaka (v.3) or Dathaka Sarvāśraya (v.4) whose son was the poet Magha (v.5).

They further inform us that both Suprabhadeva and Dattaka were obliging, generous and pure-hearted. Datha

to be known as 'Sarvāśraya Dathaka' on account of his generous nature. We also get some interesting particulars regarding

Suprabhadeva. He held the office of the prime minister to a king who listened to his advice with as much respect as the enlightened public received the words of the revered Buddha. This comparison may show that in the days of Māgha Buddhism counted among its followers, cultured people and that the king also to whom the poet's family owed so much sympathy with that faith. It is, therefore,

natural that the poet desired to immortalize the king's name but this royal patron of letters has been unfortunately deprived of that high honour intended by the poet. He has suffered so much from the successive generations of scribes, through whom the text has passed, that it is difficult to determine his correct name since the Mss. show variations such as Dharmalābha, Dharmadeva, Dharmanātha, Gharmalāta, Nirmalānath, Varmalākhyā, Varma¹lāta, Varmanātha. Thus we find that Māgha's grandfather was the famous minister Suprabhadēva and his father was the magnanimous Dattaka. Māgha's observation of the sea (III) near the city of Dwārkā and that of Mt. Gīrnāra (IV) indicate that he had personal knowledge of the sea and the mountain. From this, it appears that Māgha was a 'Gurjara Paṇḍita'. Bhojaprabandha also remarks to the same effect. Both the Bhojaprabandha and the Prabandha-Cintāmaṇi state that Māgha was a native of the town called Bhinmal in Gujarat. There seems to be no reason why this statement should be disbelieved as regards the poet's birth-place. It is confirmed by tradition and by a Ms. of Śīśu (Sam. 1827).²

(b) Legends:

There are certain legends current about Māgha, which are recorded in (1) Ballal's Bhojaprabandha, (2) Merutunga's Prabandha-Cintāmaṇi and (3) Prabhācandra's Prabhāvaka Carita. They are in brief as follows.

1. Int. to Śīśu. (NSP. ed.) Māgha.

2. Ref. Chap.V, p.102 f.n.2.

¹
(1) Bhojaprabandha.

The meīaeval tradition records that he was patronised by King Bhoja of Dhārā. As the poet Māgha was pressed by poverty, he sent his wife to that King's court with a verse ² describing the rising sun but indirectly deploring the sports of chance. The king was pleased with its poetic merit and gave her abundant wealth by way of reward. But returning home, the generous lady distributed it among the beggars whom needs she thought were greater than her own. She returned home empty handed and followed by beggars. On seeing this the poet became desparate, cursed poverty in few verses and dropped down dead on the spot. On hearing this news, the king arrived at the spot and with much grief performed the poet's funeral ceremony. The wife of the poet entered fire along with her husband.

³
(2) Prabandha-Cintāmani.

The Prabandha-Cintāmani makes Māgha and Bhoja ⁴ contemporaries.

Bhoja, hearing about poet Māgha's learning and generosity invited him from Śrīmāla to his own capital with due respect. The king offered him royal hospitality on his arrival there. Then Māgha returned home with some dissatisfaction with the royal treatment. The king paid a return visit to Māgha's place where he was treated right royally and provided with all comforts. The king, satisfied at the treatment, left for his capital.

1. Br.Pr. pp. 63-4 NSP.10th ed. 1932.

2. Śisū.XI.64

3. Pra.Cin.,pp.52-55 Farbus Guj.Sabha 1932.

4. Merutunga in Sam. 1361 (given by the author himself.).

A certain astrologer made a prophecy regarding Māgha's future before the poet's father to the effect that the poet would prosper very much in the beginning but later on will be deprived off his wealth and die of sore foot. The father therefore made ample provision to meet this eventuality. The poet started spending his wealth in the right direction and surprised the learned by composing Śísupālavadhā. But his extravagance rendered him poor.

This account agrees with that given by Bhojaprabandha, except the end of the story which is different.

The conclusion is as follows:-

The king, on hearing the death of the poet in that manner, came to the spot and called that place Billamāla as the best of men (the poet Māgha) died there in that condition inspite of there being a number of wealthy persons of his community.

(3) Prabhāvaka-carita:-

The following is the account given in the XIV Śrīnga¹ of Prabhāvaka-carita composed by Prabhācandra in Sam. 1334.

The author Prabhācandra speaks of Gurjardeśa, the city of Srimāla, king Varmalāta, his minister Suprabhadēva, his two sons Datta and Subhāmkara and Datta's son, Māgha who was the friend of king Bhoja from his childhood. The author of Prabhāvaka-carita then pays a glowing tribute to Śísu, the composition of Māgha.

1. Siddharsicarita.

Thus all these three accounts show that Māgha was a contemporary of the king Bhoja. Again, it appears from these three Prabandhas that Māgha flourished in the second half of the eleventh century when the king Bhoja ruled over Mālavadeśa.

But these legends are not reliable as they are based on the supposition that Māgha was a contemporary of the king Bhoja of Dhārā. This supposition is wrong.¹ These legends, though unreliable from the point of view of history, however serve one useful purpose. They reveal the character of the man. They give us insight into Māgha's character, dignity and traditional magnanimity of heart.

²
Prabhāvaka-carita gives us the following additional information about Māgha.

Suprabhadeva had two sons - Dattaka and Subhāmkara. Both of them were very generous. Māgha, the son of Dattaka, was the friend of the king Bhoja from his childhood. Māgha was the most refined gentleman and possessed a very strong character. He was the chariot of the goddess Sarasvatī and was the essence of his Age. He was respected by all the citizens of the wealthy city of Śrīmāla. There were certain Jain temples in the city. Subhāmkara was a Śreṣṭhi.

This legend serves the purpose of a testimonial to the character and scholarship of the great poet.

1. For reasons, vide Chap.VI.Date of Māgha.

2. XIV Śrngā.

(c) His scholarship:-

It is no exaggeration to say that few Sanskrit poets were as learned as Māgha. He was not only a great poet but also a great prodigy of learning. Prabhācandra very rightly introduces Māgha as the chariot of the goddess Sarasvatī. That he had complete mastery over various scriptures appears from his clever and beautiful handling of the minute details of these various scriptures. Possibly Māgha alone was the successful Sanskrit poet to deal in this way the varied technical and secular matters in his poem. He was quite at home in the different schools of philosophy, politics, religion, ayurveda, astrology, army, science of elephants and horses, psychology, mantra, Purāṇa, Gāthā, Smṛtis, sciences of figures and metres. Although he was a devout Brahman, he possessed minute knowledge of heterodox systems also and had full sympathy for them. He was proficient in Vedas and Mīmāṃsā. Grammar was his strong point. His knowledge of Grammar is displayed almost in each canto. The variety of grammatical forms and constructions reveals his proficiency in Grammar. The dry technicalities of grammar are rendered charming with the help of beautiful similes. The minute rules of grammar are respectfully observed barring few exceptions. There is hardly a verse in the poem where some fine and new word is not employed. As regards his scholarship in this particular branch, verses Nos. 47 and 112 of canto II and No. 75 of the XIXth canto of the poem deserve special mention.¹

1. The question of his erudition with special reference to Philosophical Doctrines, Pauranic stories, geography, history, politics, religion and in general is treated separately in independent chapters Nos. 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 12).

Rājasekhara rightly maintains in his 'Kāvyamīmāṃsā'¹ that that though genius (Pratibhā) is of supreme importance, yet learning is also essential. He distinguished two types of poets - the Śāstra Kavi who depicts sentiments and the Kāvya Kavi who by his mode of delivery, softens difficult ideas and thoughts. Both have their place in literature. Thus the grammatical and lexicographical sciences as well as the philosophical discipline were the favourites of the learned people in the days of Māgha; and hence the attainment of such scholarship was necessary for our poet. He is not like Bhaṭṭi who takes pride in thinking that his poem would not be intelligible to people who are not learned². Māgha was really³ equipped with learning and language described by Dr.A.B.Keith with reference to classical poets in general in the following words: "The great poets of India wrote for audiences of experts; they were masters of the learning of the day, long trained in the use of language and they aimed to please by subtlety, not simplicity of effect. They had at their disposal a singularly beautiful speech and they commended most elaborate and effective metres."

Thus in Māgha, a great poetic genius was combined with deep learning and supreme literary achievements.

(d) His works:

The fame of Māgha, like that of Bhāravi, rests only on his Śisupālavadha. No other work of his has come down to us. But

1. Kāvyamīmāṃsā p.17,Ch.5.

2. Bhaṭṭi Kāvya p. XXII.34 ed.

3. Keith Hist.

p.128

there are few stray verses quoted as his in anthologies and not found in the extant Śiśupālavadha. This makes ^{us} believe ^{that} these verses must have been taken from some other works of Māgha which are not now available to us.¹

(e) His Patrons:

We have already discussed above that the king described by Hiuen Tsang when he visited Bhinmal and the son of the Śrīcāpa king Vyāghramukha of Bhinmal was the patron of our poet.

(2) The three Prabandhas viz. Bhojaprabandha, Prabandha-cintāmaṇi and Prabhāvaka-carita associate, as we have seen, our poet Māgha with the king Bhoja of Mālavadeśa and make him a protégé of that king who flourished in the eleventh century A.D. Of these three, Bhojaprabandha may be dismissed, rightly argues Sri D.C.Bhattacharya,² as an unreliable work. But the other two are not so fanciful. Both of them agree in making Māgha a native of Śrīmāla and the Prabhāvaka-carita which gives perhaps the correct name of the king (Varmalāta) and gives us the genuine history in Suprabhadeva having been a minister of Varmalāta of Bhinmal, almost in the same breath associates Māgha (the grandson of Suprabhadeva) with Bhoja.³

1. Vide Chap. VIII 'Works of Māgha'.

2. 'Māgha and his Patrons' by D.C.Bhattacharya I.A. August, 1917.

3. तस्य श्रीभोजभूपालबालमित्रं कवीश्वरः । (V.L. कृतीश्वरः)
श्रीमाघो नन्दनो प्राप्सीत्यन्दनः शीलचन्दनः ॥ v.12, XIV.

Moreover the following verse is quoted in the Sadukti-karnāmrita under the joint authorship of Bhojadeva and Māgha:

रेवतीवदनोच्छिष्टपरिपुनपुटे दृशौ ।
वरु हलमैदशी चः पानगोष्ठ्यः पुनानु वः ॥
- भोजदेवमाद्ययोः

भरुकीवः/

(I.48.4, p.62, Bibl. Indica Ed.)

It is therefore, not likely that there is some truth behind the association of Māgha with Bhojadeva. There is a possibility of the existence of more than one Bhojadeva in the history of Western India. Col. Tod in his 'Rajasthan', states on the strength of a 'Jaina Chronogrammatic Catalogue' (obtained from the temple of Nadole) that there were three Bhojas, all belonging to the Paramara race of Malava, reigning respectively in A.D. 575, 665 and 1042. The last Bhojadeva is very well-known. The existence of the second Bhojadeva of 665 A.D. is corroborated by Col. Tod by the Mansarower inscription (found near Chitor) of the Paramar King Mana, son of Bhoja of Malava dated 770 V.S. (A.D. 714).¹

Relying on Col. Tod's account of the inscription, we may accept the existence of Bhojadeva, Parmar of Malava, reigning round about Chitor in 665 A.D. It is quite possible that Māgha might have been ~~in~~ his protege as there is no inconsistency from the point of chronology.

There is another important consideration in connection with Bhojadeva Second and Māgha's association. Hiuen Tsang visited

1. Vide 'Rajasthan', Vol. I, p. 92, note ¶ and pp. 799-801.

Chitore (Chi-chi-to) and in his time the reigning king of Chitore "encouraged men of merit and learned scholars of other lands collected here in numbers".¹ It is possible that the king whom Hiuen Tsang saw was either Bhojadeva or his father. The above reference to his encouraging attitude towards scholars shows that Bhojadeva the elder was also as great a patron of learning as his well-known descendant Bhojadeva of the eleventh century A.D. Thus concludes Sri D.C. Bhattacharya in his learned article mentioned above.

It may be observed that the opinion of the learned scholar is correct, as the existence of the earlier Bhojadeva clears the chronological absurdity in associating Magha with Bhojadeva (second) and can explain the association between the two mentioned by Prabhāvaka-carita.

(f) His relatives:

Over and above his grandfather Suprabhadeva and his father Dattaka mentioned by himself in the stanzas at the close of our poem, we are in a position to know the name of his mother and a few other relatives from other sources.

Prabhāvaka-carita possibly mentions the name of the poet's mother in a verse which tells us that her name was Brāhmī.² The same source³ informs us that Subhankara was his uncle and

1. Watter's Yuan Chwang, Vol.II, p.251.

2. " *श्रीमद्भक्तिकथा* " P.C.XIV.12.

3. Ibid, XIV.15.

¹
Siddharsi¹, was his first paternal cousin. This Siddharsi was the author of Upamitibhavaprapaneakathā composed in Sam.962.

Thus it is a matter of satisfaction that we are in a position to know a few particulars about his grandfather and the father and at least the names of his mother and a few near relatives.

(g) Composition of the poem Śisupālavadha:

There seems to be no special circumstances under which our poem was composed. Magha himself informs us with due modesty in the concluding verse at the close of the poem that he does not aspire to achieve great fame by composing the present poem but his only object is to sing the glory and greatness of Lord Viṣṇu.²

³
A story, current in literary circles, may be mentioned in this connection. Though unreliable, it serves the purpose of revealing the difficult nature of the poem. Māgha composed the poem and consulted his friends regarding its merits. They found that it was too difficult to be understood and therefore advised him to go and stay for about a year in a village situated on the banks of the river Mahī (in Gujarat) and to recompose the poem after the passage of the stipulated period. Māgha followed their advice and the result is the poem in the present form. The story

1. Ibid, XIV. 10-16

2. लक्ष्मीपतेभ्यश्चितकीर्तनमात्रमाह - कविर्विशवर्षिणः (Śisū).

3. For this information I am thankful to Sri Jethalal Joshi, the well-known Hindi scholar of Gujarat.

apart from suggesting the deadening influence of the climate of the region round about the Mahi on the intellect of ~~the~~ an individual, shows that the present form of the poem which is the result of the revision is less difficult than the original attempt.

(h) Character and personality of the poet:

It appears from the study of the poem that Magha was gifted with beautiful physical appearance. He must have been healthy and handsome with a long pig-tail on his head and fond of putting on costly dress and ornaments.

It can also be inferred from the poem that his speech must have been polished, dignified, soft and suggestive.

The description of Yudhishthira's hall (XIII. 51-60) suggests the residence of our poet. It might have been very well equipped like a palace. There ^{been} might have/a garden with flowers of all seasons, trees and creepers. The poet seems to have been fond of a number of beautiful pet-birds for his recreation in the pleasure-house of the garden. He might have possessed a conveyance of his own.

The poem further shows that it is the reflection of the personality and character of the poet and represents as well the age in which it was composed. It is evident from XI.6 that the poet followed a fixed daily time-table. It shows that his life was well-disciplined and regular. He may be composing poems in the auspicious hours of the early morning, taking his bath at sun-rise and then

offering his morning prayers and worship. He may be again busy with his study. In the mid-day he may be taking his meals and little rest. The third period of the day might have been occupied with discussions on poetry and the fourth with evening bath, worship, meals, company of his wife, recreation and retirement to bed. Such an adherence to the daily time-table can certainly make one learned and famous.

we learn about his luxurious life, his gay, amorous and light-hearted nature from the description he has given of the luxurious life, water-sports, drinking-bouts, love sports etc. of Kṛṣṇa and Yādavas from Canto III to Canto XIII of the poem. The poet is so much absorbed in these descriptions that he almost forgets the theme of his poem and becomes conscious of it only when he comes to Canto XIV of the poem when Kṛṣṇa reaches Hastināpura to participate in the Rājāsūya sacrifice.

We also come across occasional glimpses of his personality. According to XI.47, the poet was fortunate to enjoy the mother's affection in a very large measure. From IV.43, it appears that his marriage took place somewhere in the region round about the mountain Rāivataka. This is evident from the way in which he describes the mountain. At the same time he makes the mountain receive the guest Kṛṣṇa in a fine hospitable manner which reminds one of the reception given by a father-in-law to his son-in-law.

The poet's character was a wonderful combination of three diverse qualities - pride, straightforwardness and generosity. It appears that the unavoidable pride compelled him to parade vast learning and great poetic ability. It is possible that it was this tendency which made him imitate Kirāta in his Śīsu. It is beyond doubt that the poet wanted his poem Śīsu. to surpass the fame and popularity of Kirāta. It is needless to add that this skilful architect imitated the technique of the poem Kirāta in his poem Śīsu. but gave it the stamp of his originality and scholarship.

The various legends mentioned above bring out the dignified and magnanimous character of our poet. The same useful purpose is served by the verses, quoted under his name in anthologies. Thus, for example, the verse ¹ quoted by Ksemendra in his Aucitya-vicāra-carcā helps us to get some idea about the principles followed by him.

The verse tells us that he was a grammarian, a poet, nobly-born and wealthy and the same time it suggests that possibly ² he fell on evil days in the evening of his life. Again, the verse quoted as Māgha's by Vallabhadeva in his Subhāśitāvalī informs us that the poet came to believe in the latter part of his life that wealth and not the merits possessed by an individual was in the eyes of the world the only criterion for judging his worth.

1. ब्रुहस्पतिः कलः ॥

2. शीलं अमी ॥

(Both these stanzas are given fully in Chap.VIII of the present thesis).

It appears from the poem that Māgha possessed healthy outlook towards life. He appears to have seen more of the brighter side of life as is apparent from the various descriptions of water-sports, love-sports etc given in the poem though there are occasional allusions to the sufferings he had to undergo with a tinge of fatalism e.g. XI.64; XVI.64. He compares world to a stage (XIV. 163). Hās is a practical approach to the problems of life as is seen from the wise observations he makes at number of places.¹ The poem again shows that he had no shocking experience of life when he wrote the poem. There are three verses which appear autobiographical. In VIII. 120 and IX. 16, the poet informs us that transgression of conduct in difficulties is not blamable. Māgha had to give up his dignity and had to approach king Bhoja. In VII. 158, he tells us that external attainments are perishable but the internal ones remain. This may be autobiographical. He lost wealth but not learning etc.

It is certain that he was born in the traditions of pure Vedic religion and remained its follower. In spite of this, he had full sympathy for the heterodox systems of Buddhism and Jainism. He refers to Buddhism at several places and to Jainism at one place in the poem with due respect.² This is^a significant fact. It helps us to understand the largeness of the poet's heart. Our appreciation of the poet's spirit of tolerance

1. Appendix- X.

2. Buddhism: II.28; XV.58; 2 epilogue std. & XIX. 112 (Jainism).

becomes greater when we remember the fact that such a spirit was conspicuous by its absence in the society of those days. This shows that Māgha believed in harmony and not discord.

Finally, Māgha appears at his best as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu in the poem. He is a God-intoxicated soul who sings the glory and greatness of his favourite deity Lord Viṣṇu. This is the aim of his poem, as is admitted by him in the concluding stanza of the poem.¹ Canto XIV is no doubt the best illustration of his devotion to God Viṣṇu. Similarly the sage Nārada in canto I, the ladies of Dvārakā in canto III, Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira in canto XIV, all speak with force and sincerity of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Again the envoy of Śiśupāla vilifies Kṛṣṇa in verses with double entente^{dr}, so that in one case he eulogies Him. Here in the beginning are expressed Kṛṣṇa's modesty, ability and affection in the reply given by Kṛṣṇa to Yudhiṣṭhira. This short reply of Kṛṣṇa to Yudhiṣṭhira is heart-touching (XIV. 12-16). Equally sanctifying is the prayer offered by Bhīṣma to Kṛṣṇa. Māgha is seen at his best here as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu.

1. लक्ष्मीपतेश्चरित कीर्तने मात्र चारु । - कुविवंशवर्णेन