

C H A P T E R XX.

Conclusion.

The foregoing pages show that Māgha is one of the most versatile poets in the History of Sanskrit Literature. He is a master of grammar and lexicography, a profound scholar of philosophy and religion, adept in statecraft and mythological stories, a keen observer of men and matters as well as a consummate literary artist and a representative of the age of learning.

The immense popularity that his poem has enjoyed can be judged from the large number of commentaries that came to be written in the succeeding centuries (Vide Ch. IV.). Although it is difficult to say when the popularity of the poem reached its zenith as the dates of some of the commentators are not available while those of some others are uncertain yet it can be asserted on the strength of the continuous flow of commentaries on the poem from the time of its composition that Śiśupālavadha has enjoyed unbroken popularity till the present day.

Moreover, the popularity of the poem is never confined to one particular province only but it spread all over the vast country as the commentators of the poem hail from the different parts of India.

The extent of its influence on the succeeding generations of the poets, the quotations of its verses in the standard works of rhetorics and its place in the Sanskrit anthologies point to

its intrinsic merits. It has been translated into some of the languages of India and Europe, viz., Gujarati, Hindi, English, German and French. The great Marathi poet Bhāskarbhaṭṭa Borikar has based his poem Śīsupālavadha (1273 A.D.) in Marathi on Māgha's work to a considerable extent.

Śīsupālavadha has been highly appreciated by scholars and has been ranked with the immortal poems of Kālidāsa, Bhāravi and Śrīharsa. Thus it occupies a place of pride and distinction as a Mahākāvya along with the other four (Raghu., Kumāra., Kirāta and NC.). There are three to four hundred poems in Sanskrit Literature and to enjoy one of the first five places among them is no small achievement.

The chief interest of the poem lies in another direction also. It is in several ways the repository of the traditional classical learning (Vide Chaps. IX, X, XI.). Such a poem is bound to be the touch-stone of Sanskrit scholarship and the highly coveted title of Mahāmahopādhyāya was conferred on one who wrote a commentary on Śīsupālavadha or any other equally great work. This clearly indicates that Māgha's work is one of those few poems which command respect at the hands of scholars.

The poem has ~~gain~~ its own contribution to make the History of Sanskrit Literature, and as such deserves attention. It is a store-house of historical, geographical, religious, political and social data (Vide Chaps. XII, XIII, XIV, XV), which has its own

value for the study of the cultural history of India.

We have tried to show that there are merits in Śisupālavadha which certainly deserve appreciation. Just as it was once overvalued in the same way there is a distinct modern trend to undervalue it. The best way is to follow the golden mean.

Māgha's Śisupālavadha has undoubtedly secured for all time a prominent place in the Sanskrit Literature.