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### The Linguist Anundoram Borooh : An Estimation

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Anundoram Borooh the great Sanskrit scholar of Assam, has made his countrymen proud and privileged, all the time, through his extensive literary work which always stands as the proof of his observational intellect and intensive analytical perception. This erudite scholar of the Sanskrit language has shown his interest as well as expertise in every branch of knowledge which he took as his field of research. His works reflect his extensive study and an impartial dynamism which in many places, did not resist him to put a rein on even the flow of his criticism towards his predecessors. Almost all of his works, may it be of pure literature, grammar, language, or of prosody, those academic ventures project his concern and interest towards the study of language as well. This lover as well as the worshipper of the Sanskrit language always tries through his work to establish the linguistic mechanism of Sanskrit. The aim of this paper is to estimate this scholar as a linguist in the backdrop of his works reached to us. It is really an impossible task to estimate the scholarship of such a towering personality, nevertheless, here, it is purely an humble endeavor in this regard. Another point of declaration is that, the observations and analysis of the proposed paper are based on the works of Anundoram Borooh which are found in the compilation published by the Publication Board, Assam<sup>1</sup>.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language and as a separate branch of knowledge it differs from grammar and philology in many respect. A linguist always tries to analyze the speech in an sequential way to establish various features of the language in hand. A grammarian, on the other hand, tries to fix the norms and dictums which the ingredients of a particular language follow in its used form. A philologist again is specifically concerned with the historical background of a language. Among these three branches of knowledge grammar and linguistics seem to be closer. There is no harm in saying that the relation between grammar and linguistics is that stays between the part and the whole. It is very much important to notify here that grammatical study of a language covers a large portion of the linguistic study of the said language and Indian tradition, before taking resort to the ways and means of formal linguistic study of Sanskrit, various Indian scholars have been

offering tremendous contribution to this field through the garb of works which remain primarily enriched and informative with various grammatical rules and speculations. So, much before the renowned and established linguists like Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, our India gave birth to scholars with indomitable linguistic perception and unparalleled insight of research like Panini, Patanjali, Kaiyaṭa, Jinendrabuddhi, Sarvavarman, Vopadeva and so on, who in their respective works could establish numerous postulations about the Sanskrit language which was once elevated to be the spoken language of India and its surroundings. With the passage of time India produced many scholars who devoted their life in studying the Sanskrit language and establishing various linguistic observations with the help of their genius and analysis. The name of Anundoram Borooah can be included in forefront of this series of scholars without an iota of doubt and hesitation. His works include (i) A Practical English Sanskrit Dictionary, Vol. I,(1877), Vol. II (1878) and Vol.III(1880), (ii) Higher Sanskrit Grammar: Gender and Syntax (1879) (iii) A Companion to the Sanskrit Reading Undergraduate of the Calcutta University (1878), (iv) Mahaviracarita of Bhavabhuti along with Janakiramabhasya (1877) (v) Bhavabhuti and His place in Sanskrit Literature ( 1878), (vi) Prosody (1882), (vii) Vamana Kavyalamkarasutravrtti, Vagbhata Alamkara and Saraswatikanthabharana ( 1883), (viii) Nanarthasamgraha (1883), (x) Dhatuvrttisara ( 1886, and it is a part of his Dhatukosa),( xi) critically edited text of Amarasimha's Namalinganusasana with the commentaries of Xiraswami and Raya Mukuta Vrhaspati and extracts from several other Commentaries (1887-88) and (xii) Ancient Geography of India. An interesting point to be noted here is that each part of the works of Anundoram Borooah is capable, by dint of their independent perspective, of demanding separate identity and each writing of this scholar is nurtured by his inherent observation and critical evaluation.

The first point which we must remember here is that in almost all of his discourses, Anundoram Borooah, throws light on Sanskrit language and he asserts his linguistic opinion and observation wherever he feels it necessary. So to estimate this scholar's linguistic view, one must take all of his works as the data for study in this field. Otherwise there will remain grave lacuna in

the process of such an estimation and many important observations and opinions of the scholar may be overlooked . This is very much pertinent with the case of his book the Ancient Geography of India , which though not is connected primarily with the Sanskrit language, here Anundoram Borooah takes words as the data of his research and study. In doing this, the scholar while offering a detailed discussion on the ancient Geography of India, takes the purport not only of the abhidha or the primary meaning but his observations are established in many cases, are made on the basis of laksana or secondary meaning and also of vyanjana or the suggestive meaning of the term in hand. Such a mechanism, however, cannot be employed without the knowledge and study of the linguistic part of a language. Thus Anundoram Borooah's treatment of the secondary and the suggestive meaning of the Sanskrit words exhibits his in depth linguistic study on Sanskrit language as a whole. The study on the works of Anundoram Borooah displays that this scholar has done this purposefully to cover the jurisdiction of each and every meaning that the concerned term produces in different directions. Such affinity towards the language has helped the scholar in searching out the roots of various words used in modern days. As for example, in connection with the exposition on the term India, Anundoram Borooah furnishes his opinion on the basis of the Vedic reference showing the change of meaning of the term<sup>2</sup> through the passage of time. This scholar is always seen to be mesmerized by the import of Sanskrit words and he in many a place, establishes this opinion with clear denotation. Thus in the very beginning of his writing on the Ancient Geography of India, Anundoram Borooah says, “ a whole life may be spent, nay several lives may be spent and yet the history, use, and force of words may not be thoroughly known”. The muse of the Sanskrit language attracted the heart of this scholar so much that he spent his whole life in working with this language in various dimensions. This scholar conspicuously declares his inclination towards Sanskrit in almost every step of his work<sup>3</sup> . While coming to the topic of Prosody where Anundoram Borooah incorporates his discourse on the exhaustive preface on Pingala's Chandasutra etc., he says that a thorough knowledge of Prosody appears to be essential for all linguistic and historical examination of Sanskrit.<sup>4</sup> This statement obviously reminds us of the words of Louis H. Gray , who says that language is much more than

merely physical, physiological, mental, and psychological. It is, for example, a vehicle of literature; and in this aspect of it, it would appear that one can neither have a truly profound appreciation of literature without deep knowledge of the possibilities, niceties, and inherent qualities of the language in which the literature in question may be written, nor can one create literature of the highest type without such knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

The linguist Anundaram Borooh is notably focused through his works of lexicons. It is a well known fact that the lexicons are basically used for knowing the meaning of the words used in a particular language and at the same time the study on lexicons enhances the power of understanding the meaning of various words used in different context with various intention of the speaker in a particular language. Such knowledge enables the reader or the listener there by to grasp the meaning of a sentence in a much easier way. So it is clear that the semantic part of any language has a degree of dependence on the knowledge of words along with its meaning that is offered in the lexicons of various types. Lexicons which in Sanskrit is commonly termed as Kosa may be of different varieties but the common attribute of all types of works on lexicons is to furnish the intention of the word used in a language. Anundaram Borooh's book on the Namalinganusasanam and his Nanarthasamgraha and Dhatuvrttisara are purely lexicographical works where our scholar has put stress to amalgamate various meaning of words which were referred and enlisted earlier by his predecessors in the context of the term concerned. All the above mentioned works of Anundoram Borooh here are based on the systematic arrangement of words and their concerned meaning and above all being a compilation, these works presuppose the morphological and semantic study of the Sanskrit language which Anondoram Barooah had undergone through the study of Sanskrit lexicons and dictionaries offered by different scholars at different point of time. In the first work Anondoram Barooah has gone through Amarasimha's work between the lines and has presented it before us with valuable explanation or commentary offered mainly by Ksiravami and Raya Mukuta Vrhaspati along with quotations from several other commentaries available at that time. The scholarly preface which our scholar has appended here furnishes many facts about

lexicography and specially about the work of Amarasimha. It also points out the charismatic effect of the morphological dimension of the Sanskrit language. To make it clear that what a tedious yet great job has been done by our scholar we can just go for an example. Let us take the meaning of the term Indra<sup>6</sup>. Here after furnishing Amara's line like indro marutvanmaghava vidaujaha pakasana... etc. Anondoram Borooh offers his explanation and in doing so he has purposefully amalgamated the opinions given in this regard by scholars other than the commentators. Thus in the case of narrating the meaning of the names of Indra Anondoram Borooh has quoted the observations of the earlier scholar Ramanatha where the assertion of the scholar Vidyasagara was also present<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, his clarifications which are reflected through the supportive statements of his predecessors also stand as the stamp of his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar. He himself has declared in the beginning of the preface of this work that his observation does not remain without consulting Panini, Katyayana etc. who are regarded as the stalwarts of Sanskrit grammar.<sup>8</sup> The Nanarthasamgraha is a typical type of lexicon and here our scholar has enlisted the words with the same sound or form bearing the same meaning. So this is called a dictionary of homonyms and Sanskrit being an inflectional language, has a magical wand to create homonyms in connection with the variety of context as well as the ingredients. Now these homonyms are very strong elements of linguistic information. Besides, the meaning with variation also enables the speaker or the reader as well as the listener to attend to the underlying meanings of a term which is used in a sentence and this will help to construct what Noam Chomsky calls deep structure of a language in an easier way. In the preface of this work Anundoram Borooh clearly asserts the necessity of such a work as he says "we see lag of Sanskrit is the same as lagna of Hindustani- lego of Latin and so on. But what is this lag, through what stages (if any) it has passed and how has it come to possess the senses assigned to it – questions like these are utterly unsolved and we are completely shut out from truths directly and indirectly underlying their solution".<sup>9</sup> The purpose of forming this work was historical as our scholar wants here to show how in every grammatical word, every sense is clearly traceable to the original idea or ideas conveyed by the root or the component parts of the word.<sup>10</sup>

This process is also helpful for production of semantic observations. The Dhatuvrttisara of Anundoram Borooh is a lexicographical work where the roots used in the Sanskrit language are enlisted with the meaning and this is mainly a work on the Katantraganavrtti of Durgasimha, the famous commentator of Kalapavyakarana and Manorama of Ramanatha. Dhatu or the root particle of a word bears the main source of meaning of a particular term. Though it can be changed with the use of different linguistic particle, the application or the denotation of it, if known, can take the reader or the listener one step forward in understanding the real essence of the term. Word being the possessor of meaning and as the syntactical coherence of a sentence depends much upon this unit of a language and as numerous words have been originated from the root of different nature in Sanskrit, the study on roots and their meaning is very much compatible to the process of understanding the structural grammar of Sanskrit.

So by editing these lexicographical works of the predecessors, along with notes and exhaustive preface, Anundoram Borooh has offered significant contribution to the field of Sanskrit as a whole and linguistics in particular. His clear perception towards the Sanskrit language has made him think, in many places, even in a negative way on the works of some scholars who have created the process of extracting the real meaning of a term very difficult and also sometimes impossible due to wrong and misleading etymologies<sup>11</sup>. Thus the linguistic temperament that Anundoram Borooh possessed was his greatest possession and it led him to continue his research in this field throughout his life.

Anundoram Borooh was also a text critic in the true sense of the term. In the portions of his writings where this scholar offers his exposition on different words and expression on the verses and passages from the Sanskrit classics like the Meghaduta, the Raghuvamsa, the Kumarasambhava, Sarasvatikanthabharana, the Bhattikavya (canto I to V), the Janakiramabhasya, a unique commentary based on the Mahaviracarita establish Anundoram Borooh's critical observation and perception on various terms and statements found in the text. His observation also could establish that even Mallinatha - the great Sanskrit commentator had done many things haphazardly. A man without the linguistic knowledge of Sanskrit can never get the courage to refute even the opinions of renowned scholar whose explanation has been running through the ages without any such controversy. Thus it is true that though Anundoram Borooh has not in his credit any work on pure linguistics, yet the grammarian, the lexicographer, the textual critic, the poet in him can establish him as a linguist par excellence. Though phonetics or phonology of the Sanskrit language is not discussed separately by the scholar, his analysis, perception, criticism and exposition can bring huge information regarding morphology, syntax and semantic issues of the Sanskrit language in a very clear way. All these are sufficient to declare our scholar a linguist par excellence.

## References –

1. Works on Anundoram Borooh, Publication Board, Assam, December, 2007
2. The word India derives its name from Sindhu corrupted into Sindh or Hind, which is said to have originally meant "flowing", then a river.....
3. To me, Sanskrit is dearer than any other language. Its music has charms which no words can express. Its capacity of representing every form of human thought in more appropriate language is probably not rivaled, certainly not surpassed by any other language. Conclusion of Bhavabhuti and his Place in Sanskrit Literature.
4. Concluding portion. Works on Anundoram Borooh, Publication Board, Assam, December, 2007, pg. 247
5. Foundations of Language, pub. by Macmillan Company, New York, 1939, pg 9
6. Works of Anundoram Borooh. Publication Board, Assam, December 2007, pg. 574
7. sau maghava maghavan maghavan rupatrayam iti rayah. Vidyasagaropyevam. Ibid. pg 575
8. two numbers refer to unadi sutras; three to Panini; four to varttikas to Panini
9. Works of Anundoram Borooh. Publication Board, Assam, December 2007, pg. 1377
10. Ibid., pg.1381
11. Ibid.,pg.1392