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BOOK REVIEW : INDIA IN THE AGE OF KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI

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By APURBA CHANDRA BHARTHKURIA,
published by PUNTHI PUSTAK,CULCUTTA,700 004(India)2000 pp.
VIL+IX=331

'INDIA IN THE AGE OF KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI' is a book written by Apurba Chandra Bharthkura who is a specialist of Grammar as well as Sanskrit and History.

In the beginning, author has undertaken the work of primary sources. KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI or KĀŚIKĀ are written by Jayaditya and Vaman. The under review presents KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI -a commentary on Āstadyayi of Panini-who is the great grammarian of ancient India. In the contents, eleven chapters are given on INDIA IN THE AGE OF KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI.

The Geographical account of India is given in the KĀŚIKĀVṚTTI. In this chapter, author shows some 'sutras' which had been present in the Geographical account. The word 'Janpad' defined as 'gramasamuddya Janapadam' (Janapad lup'd, kasika 4.281). This commentary shows a group of villages like Anga, Varag, Myadha, Subma and Pundra. Author regarded the general note on the few Geographical terms in the Kāśikāvṛtti. From these sutras of Kāśikāvṛtti, it is clear to know the various names of Janpadas' in that age. Names of twenty two rivers and seven mountains are also found in this chapter. Twenty-four cities and seventeen villages are also shown in that age. In the age of Panini, many people used to dwell in the forest or Deserts. The Kāśikāvṛtti describes ancient tribes which were living in different parts of Indian and the adjacent countries. Author also wrote other Sanskrit words which are included in Epics of Rajśekhara's i.e.the Panchatantra and the Kavyamimansa. As a reference of these various tribes, author referred the view of V.S.Agraval. Agraval identified the tribes which are dwellers of the upper Indus and a part of present Pakistan.

The 'Economic Life' is the second part of this book. He gathered adequate knowledge of the economy of the country of India from Kāśikāvṛtti. As per the author, rural economy is based on agriculture and other sources of earning are mineral forest, cattle and wooden and cotton products. Sugarcane, vegetables, fruit cultivation, cotton, forest wealth is the agriculture economy and in cotton products, silk garments, woollen goods are also included in the economy. The wool industry flourished in the age of Kāśikā. Kāśikā's description of industries of Gold, Iron, Tan, Bell-metal Conch-shell naturally earned a reasonable profit for the people in the same part. Apart from this, he shows the economy in that age in which he wrote about the servicers like

barber, washmen, cobbler, the words related to Rajak, Vastro rathob, Kambalo rathah. In the age of Kāśikā economy of urban society shows their riches in which Raya(t) officers like Mahamatra, Senapati, Saulka-rfor the earning. People were happy with their jobs.

Author very heartily studied to know about available jobs in Panini's age. In that time Karmkar i.e. labours services were utilized by rich men. These labourers were from different categories. They were working under the land owned on regular contract. Teaching job was also available in that time. Author really studies about the jobs and remuneration(means earning of money). Apart from this, author also shows the currency of that age. He knows Suvarna, Mas, Pana, Sona, Ardha or rupyakarsapana, Pada. In this way, Kāśikā -which is related to Grammar- author gratefully showed and expressed his views about economy and social relations.

In the third chapter, author wrote about the political system. Kāśikā referred the civil and village administration. Soldiers protected the villages and cities too. The Kāśikā describes the king as Parisadvalo royal which means that the king remained associated with the parisad or the cabinet of ministers. Author quoted the Defence, Army, Weapons, Military officers. In the age of Kāśikā ,the author described about food and drinks, dresses, ornaments, hair dressing, cosmetics, painting of teeth and nails, Art, Architecture and transport- games and hobby.

The author has allotted separate chapters on 'religious life' and 'Women'. The Kāśikāvṛtti gives an account of the matters related to the life of women. Author described the Patanjali's views about women. As per Patanjali ,Women were not allowed to enter into the Sabha or the assembly in his time. On this issue author said that Kāśikāvṛtti is silent regarding the entry of women in sabha. Women's beauty, their ornaments, dresses, cosmetics shows in Kāśikā.

Kāśikā refereed the human character in chapter ten-'Virtues and Vices'. In Kāśikā age Indian society was not bad. People lived as usual, pious people were also present in society. Author wrote , 'The social and religious order were good inspite of the presence of some anti religious and mischievous and antisocial elements.

Author ends the book with In the last chapter author discrimination the animals life, wild animals, domestic animal. Not only about animals, but author also referred the trees and plants.

Kāśikā is a clear picture of life, thoughts and action of the Indian people. Author said' We gather from this grammarian work a vast idea of the mode of living of the people , their economy ,political life ,foods, drinks, arts and architecture, academic life and the religious beliefs and practices. As per author , it is a very important source book for the study of the multi -coloured socio- cultural life of the people of India. Reader agree with his impressive evaluation of the age of India

The method of the research is Comparative and analysed. Thus,I hope Sanskrit people and researchers will be read this edition for their research. Apart from this, reader finds the author's goodness and cleanliness of writing and generously too.

In all, he referred many words in Kāśikāvṛtti from which he described the whole India. Perhaps grammarian words are too rich for showing the whole society and author has successfully done his work by his heart.