



# Meghapratisandesha Kavyam of Sri Korada Ramachandra Sastri: An Introduction

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**Abstract :** The Meghasandesha of Kalidasa is considered as one of the master pieces of world literature. It is a tale of separation and longing that is enriched by glowing description of nature. Meghasandesha stops with Yaksha's message to the cloud, leaving a curiosity in reader's mind as to what happened later. This has inspired some poets to compose sequels to Meghasandesha. Ghanavrttam is one such work that completes the story - the cloud messenger goes to Alaka where he delivers the message and returns back to Yaksha with the beloved's message, and the reunion of the couple after the completion of one year. This paper introduces the work, the author and its poetic excellence.

**Keywords :** Meghasandesham, Pratisandeshakavyam, Ghanavrttam, Korada Ramachandra Kavi.

**Introduction :** This paper deals with the kavya —घनवृत्तम् Ghanavrttam, a Meghapratisandesha kavyam by Korada Ramachandra Kavi (1816-1900). He is a well known poet of Telugu and Sanskrit languages, belonging to Andhra Pradesh.

Ramachandra Sastri had authored numerous works in Sanskrit and was the pioneer of Telugu prose. His famous works are मञ्जरीमधुकरीयम् 'Manjarimadhukariyam,' written in 1860, the first original drama in Telugu, and ' घनवृत्तम्,' a sequel to Kalidasa's Meghadutam in Sanskrit. He had authored more than 20 original works in Sanskrit and in Telugu.

**Ghanavrttam:** This Kavyam is composed as a sequel to Kalidasa's famous work Meghadutam (Meghasandesam). It has two sargas, and an introductory part called प्रबन्धादिप्रक्रिया. The work opens with an invocation to Goddess Saraswati -

श्रीर्दद्यादनवद्यगद्यविलसत्पद्यावलीगुम्फन-  
प्रागल्भ्यं सरसीजगर्भवनिता सर्वाभिरैः पूजिता।  
मातुर्गर्भविनिर्गताभर्कगणस्याकृष्टभेदात्परं  
नानावाक्यविशारदत्वमचिराद्या यच्छतीतादरा ॥

Translation: The ability to compose beautiful poetry is acquired by people due to the grace of Goddess Saraswati, who bestows such ability quickly on them depending on their merit (i.e. based on the samskara of their previous births). May the consort of Brahma, the one worshipped by gods, Saraswati, bestow on me the ability to compose charming poetry, consisting of flawless prose and a profusion of flowery verses.

The poet mentions the motivation for composing the work –

श्रीकालिदासकविराजविक्रान्तमेघसन्देशकाव्यपरिपूर्णलालसा मे ।  
सर्वेप्सितप्रणयनक्षमकल्पवल्यास्सूतैस्स्वयत्नरचितैरुपशोभनं नो ॥

The Meghasandesa was composed by the highly renowned poet Kalidasa, that is not complete and I have a great desire to complete this work.

जानन्नपीदमनिशं मनसोऽवशत्वात्तत्पूणे परिनिवर्तयितुं न दक्षः ।  
काव्यं करोमि घनवृत्तपदं महान्तो मृष्यन्तु सादरधिया दयया विलोक्य ॥

Even though aware all the while of the smallness of my own work, and divert it from completing (the half-told story of Meghasandesa), I have undertaken to compose the work "Ghanavrttam".

The above three verses constitute the प्रबन्धादिप्रक्रिया. The work has 178 verses, the first sarga having 92 shlokas, the second sarga 83 shlokas. An account of the contents of the work is given below.

### Contents of First Sarga

The first Sarga opens with the verse -

इत्युक्तोऽसौ सपदि जलदस्तेन दीनात्मनालं  
श्रुत्वा कामं सरसहृदयप्राग्रणीत्वात्प्रहृष्टः।  
लोके दीनावनमनुपमं पुण्यमादत्त एवं  
सन्तः प्रोचुस्तदिह हि मया तोषणीयस्सखा मे ॥ 1.1 ॥

Translation: Hearing what was said by the Yaksha (as described in Meghasandesa) in his lowly state of mind, the cloud, foremost among the compassionate thought - "it is a saying of noble people that in this world protection offered to sufferers is extremely meritorious. Therefore, my friend Yaksha should be pleased by me". Thinking so, the cloud decided to fulfill the Yaksha's mission.

Indeed, when it is within one's capacity to help, who would deny the heartfelt request of a dear friend?

को वा न स्यात् प्रणयवशतो याचमाने वयस्ये  
शक्यं कार्यं स्वगतिवशतस्साधितुं सप्रयत्नः॥ 1.5 ॥

The cloud rushed to Alaka that competed with Indra's capital in splendor. He identified Yaksha's house from the description given by him. There he saw Yaksha's wife. She asked the cloud -

नेतुर्मे ते प्रियसचिवता प्राक्कथङ्कारमासी-  
त्तच्चेत्तस्याऽविदितमपि ते वृत्तमित्येव मन्ये।  
तस्माच्चन्द्रस्वकरसुधया वासरार्ता चकोरीं  
प्रेम्णेवेमां रमणकथया नेतुमर्हस्यतापम्॥ 1.17 ॥

"tell me without any hesitation, the story of my husband, even if he is in the company of another woman. Though our bodies are different, our minds are one in all respects. Whatever be his desire, it is acceptable (to me) like nectar".

The cloud answered - "Your husband is living on the Citrakuta Mountain, being present there only physically, but his heart always filled with overflowing love for you. Therefore, you are fit to somehow bear this pain (of separation), until the time the curse comes to an end, just as a water-lily awaits the end of the day". Says he –

तिष्ठत्येवं प्रियसुहृदयं कायमात्रेण तत्र  
त्वय्यायत्तप्रणयगुरुणा चान्तरङ्गेण नित्यम्।  
तस्माच्छापावधिमथ कथंकारमप्यत्र सोढुं  
घसान्तं वा खलु कुमुदिनी प्रार्हसि त्वं मुदैवा॥ 1.45 ॥

The cloud then narrates an episode that has taken place earlier, to dispel her doubts regarding her husband's honesty – “mother! I understand your husband to be brave, valiant and kind-hearted, and an abode of beauty from the unmistakable marks that characterize him. Believe me, o wise lady! you may hear an episode that has taken place earlier, hearing which all your apprehensions (regarding your husband) vanish, just as darkness on the arrival of Sun” – saying so the cloud narrated the event.

Lord Indra, on a visit to the Citrakuta mountain noticed the Yaksha doing severe penance and in order to create obstacles in his penance, called Surupa, an *apsarasa* who was exquisitely beautiful to disturb Yaksha's tapas. Surupa, seeing the Yaksha under a shade-less tree in the forest, asked him-"O noble man! Looking at you, by your appearance I wonder as to whether you are Jayanta, or Nalakubara, the son of king of kings (Kubera) or the spotless Candra or embodied Manmatha? You seem very much scorched by Sun, why are you sitting here?" I will make you relaxed and filled with love". The Yaksha understood her intentions but didn't showed any love for her and asked her to go away.

**Contents of Second Sarga :** Hearing about her husband from the cloud, the wife of Yaksha became very happy.

Later, the wife of Kubera, possessed of spiritual power acquired due to her worship of Goddess Ambika, decided to remove the misery of her friend *Yakshi*, out of compassion for her. She refers to instances wherein even gods and goddesses had to undergo the consequences their previous deeds

के वा न स्युः परिभवपदं कर्मणा स्वार्जितेन – “Who, in this world, is spared from the consequences of one's own deeds?”. Then Kubera, the lord under whom Yaksha served, also consoled the *Yakshi* -

सैवाशेषान्हरिहरमुखान् मोदखेदौ नयन्ती  
तत्तत्काले स्वपदनलिनासक्तचित्तप्रभूणाम्।  
इष्टान्भोगानिहपरसुखप्रापकं ज्ञानमीड्यं  
यच्छन्ती हे सखि! विजयते श्रीपराशक्तिराद्या॥ 2.9 ॥

“Therefore you too take refuge in Goddess Bhagavati. Worship Her being restrained in food and action, with blemish less conduct, following the righteous path”.

Following the advice of Kubera, she continued her penance continued for some time, the Goddess making her presence in a dream said “O noble woman , I am pleased with your penance. Now stop this severe vow of yours. You will enjoy all comfort and riches due to my grace”.

The *Yakshi* followed the advice and felt comfortable. She sends her message through the cloud and says- ‘If one is alive, then one can enjoy the pleasures of the world’ and says to the cloud “son! go quickly and convey these words to my beloved”.

The cloud returned to the Yaksha with the message of his beloved and spoke in a deep voice, in the form of thunder, saying “your wife is safe” in clear terms, just as Hanuman told Lord Srirama (the well-being of Sita).

गम्भीरेण स्तनितवचसा भव्यपात्रं वधूटी ।

The Yaksha, hearing the nectar like words of his dear friend, the cloud, the life-giver (the giver of waters that make people live), shone like a lotus that has become lustrous being in bloom; like moon in the spring season; like ocean on a full-moon day.

As the Lord Vishnu left the bed in the form of Adishesha, the Yaksha too, being free from the curse of Kubera, glowing like the full-moon, started from the Citrakuta mountain, eager to meet his wife, his heart filled with great love for her. He met her and became very happy. Then he went to Kubera, his master. Kubera, on seeing the Yaksha, now free from curse, embraced him with great affection. Having seated him in a jeweled seat, he uttered these words holding a friendly disposition -

“Be happy, continuing a friendly relation with me. Take from my treasury as much money required, and in the company of your wife follow the trivargas (highest ends of life)”.

Hearing the words of his master Kubera, and keeping his command in mind, his heart filled with joy, the Yaksha went to his home and described in detail all that has happened to his wife. Then the Yaksha, along with his wife, taking the morning bath, and praying Goddess Saraswati as prescribed in the ritual texts, with great faith in the trivargas (i.e. Dharma, Artha and Kama, started following them in equal measure. He, shining forth with the goodness acquired due to his virtuous acts, led his life in an impeccable manner.

## References

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