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WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS
FROM THE PUBLISHER AND
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Ratnaśrījñāna

Sheldon Pollock

Measured by the crudest quantitative standards—miles travelled, size of readership, kinds of language-traditions influenced, numbers of translations and adaptations and borrowings—Daṇḍin's seventh-century *Kāvyaḍarsā* can safely be adjudged the most important work on literary theory and practice in Asian history, and, in world history, a close second to Aristotle's *Poetics*. Its impact on the literary histories of southern India, in particular Kannada, Sinhala, and Tamil in the period 800-1200, is common knowledge among scholars, so too its appropriation into Pali (in the *Subodhālaṅkāra*) during the later centuries of this same epoch, when Theravādin literati undertook a dramatic reordering of their aesthetic objectives according to Sanskrit principles. Less well-known is the influence the *Kāvyaḍarsā* exercised on Chinese in the formation of Recent Style Poetry in the high T'ang, and on Tibetan after the remarkable educational reforms initiated by Śākya Paṇḍita (1182-1251).¹ In view of these facts, any text pertaining to the history and interpretation of Daṇḍin's work will hold considerable scholarly interest. Foremost among such texts, of course, are commentaries on the *Kāvyaḍarsā* itself.

It is sobering to realize, however, that the number of published commentaries on the *Kāvyaḍarsā* stands in almost directly inverse proportion to the text's importance. Only four had found their way into print up to 1957 (of the two dozen or more pre-colonial commentaries that we know of). Three of these in fact were published together, in a now rare edition, by D.T. Tatacharya in 1936, and largely ignored since.² The editor believed that nothing was known about the authors of these commentaries except their names (and for the third, not even that). This may not in fact be the case.

The first of the commentaries is printed in Tatacharya's edition in the *Śrutānupālinī* composed by one Vādiṅghāla (or Vādighaṅkāla, or Vādighaṅghala).³ Neither the printed version of this commentary nor any of its additional manuscripts tell us anything about the identity of the author. In 1921, however, a tenth-century Gaṅga grant was published that may have bearing on this question. The record, which is dated Śaka 884 (A.D. 963), describes the gift of an *agrahāra*, as *śrutagurudakṣiṇā* or teacher's fee, to one Vādighaṅghala [sic] Bhaṭṭa, and contains a long *praśasti* describing the scholar. Included in the encomium is the following list of accomplishments:

niravadyasāhityavidyāvyaḅhyānanipuṅa -.....
sakalarājavidyāpratipādanapratibuddhabodhaprabodhitavallabharāja.....
tadātvāyatisughaṭamantrakramopadesānuṣṭhānavaśīkṛtākṅhiladigaṅgāna...
kṛṣṅarājadeva-