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Hemacandra's Contribution to Sanskrit Grammatical Systems

Puran Mal Verma[1]
[1]Associate Professor, Hindu College, University of Delhi, Delhi

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Abstract

This paper tries to enquire the grammatical tradition of Hemacandra, which was born in 12th century. He was known as '*Kalikālasarvajña*' (the omniscient of Kali era). Focusing on his famous grammatical treatise *Siddha-Hema-Śabdānuśāsana,* this paper examines how Hemacandra's was innovative and logical in synthesizing, simplifing, and expanding the indigenous Indian grammatical tradition. *Siddha-Hema-Śabdānuśāsana* of Hemacandra is divided into eight chapters, out of which seven chapters are on Classical Sanskrit and an eight chapter is dedicated to *Prakrit I and* Apabhraṁśa dialects. Hemacandra managed to balance the Paninian pedagogy with changing linguistic conditions and New Indo-Aryan vernaculars. The paper analyzes his practical pedagogical restructuring, his elimination of intricate Vedic rules and cumbersome algebraic *pratyāhāras* in favor of *anvartha* (transparent) terminology, his complete *pañcāṅga* grammatical apparatus, and his illustrative historical epics (*Dvyāśraya-kāvya*).

Keywords: Hemacandra, *Siddhahemaśabdānuśasana, Dvyāśrayamahākāvya, Prakrit,* Chalukya dynasty, Jayasimha.

Introduction

The twelfth century CE represents an intellectual renaissance in Western India, centered in the Caulukya (Solanki) capital of Anahillapāṭaka (modern Patan, Gujarat).

Hemacandra (1088–1172 CE) was born in Dhandhukā village to Cāciga (father) and Pāhiṇī(mother) of the Moḍha merchant family, Hemacandra's childhood name was Cāṅgadeva and later he became Somacandra upon initiation and later on he achieved the status of *Sūri* in 1109 CE (Vikrama Saṁvat 1166).[1]

Hemacandra's the contemporary of Jayasiṁha Siddharāja (1094–1143 CE)of Chalukya dynasty. Around 1135-36 CE Siddhraj defeated the king of Malwa and brought the royal library to his kingdom Patan. There was the Sanskrit grammar text '*Saraswatikaṇṭhābharaṇa*' of Bhoja. This text was very celebrated grammatical treatise in eleventh-century. Siddharaja requested Hemacandra to write such a grammar for the Gujarat, motivated by regional pride and a desire to eclipse Bhoja's intellectual glory.[2] Hemacandra agreed for this commission and requested to procure copies of the eight foundational grammatical systems preserved in the Sarasvatī-bhaṇḍāra of Pravarapura in Kaśmīra.[3] Then he wrote the great grammar '*Siddhahemaśabānuśāsana*' linking the name of the sovereign with that of the scholar-monk.

Structure of the *Siddha-Hema-Śabdānuśāsana*

The *Siddha-Hema-Śabdānuśāsana* is organized into eight chapters (*adhyāyas*). Each chapter contains four quarters (*pādas*). There are approximately 4685 sūtras. The architectural mastery of the work lies in its

[1] Buhler, Georg. *The Life of Hemacandrācārya*, translated by Manilal Patel, Singhi Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1936, pp. 6–11.
[2] Belvalkar, Shripad Krishna. *An Account of the Different Existing Systems of Sanskrit Grammar*, Aryabhushan Press, 1915, pp. 73–75.
[3] Musalgaonkar, V. B. *Ācārya Hemacandra*, Madhya Pradesh Hindi Granth Academy, 1971, pp. 20–24.

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bifurcated scope: the first seven chapters (comprising 3,569 sūtras) are related to the Classical Sanskrit language, while the eighth chapter (comprising 1,116 sūtras) is dedicated to Prakrits as well as Apabhraṁśa.[4]

Framework of Chapters I–VII

Hemacandra's Sanskrit grammar represents a rigorous reorganization of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini and the southern *Śākaṭāyana-Śabdānuśāsana* of the ninth-century Jaina monk Pālyakīrti. The contents proceed logically along functional morpho-syntactic categories:

- **Chapter I:** This chapter deals with the general metalinguistic definitions (*saṁjñā*), euphonic rules of vowel sandhi, consonant sandhi, and nominal declension (*nāma-prakaraṇa*).
- **Chapter II:** This chapter deals with Irregular nominal declension, syntax of cases (*kāraka-prakaraṇa*), euphonic consonant substitutions (such as *ṣatva* and *ṇatva*), and feminine suffixes (*strī-pratyaya*).
- **Chapter III:** In this chapter, prefixes (*upasarga*), indeclinable particles (*gati*), compound formation (*samāsa-prakaraṇa*), and verbal classification into *parasmaipada* and *ātmanepada* are dealt.
- **Chapter IV:** Conjugational mechanics, secondary verbal roots, tense-mood markers, root-reduplication, augment additions, and vocalic strengthening (*guṇa* and *vṛddhi*).
- **Chapter V:** This chapter deals with the primary verbal affixes (*kṛdanta*), gerunds, infinitives, and participles.
- **Chapters VI–VII:** Here, secondary nominal derivation (*taddhita-pratyaya*), compound suffixes (*samāsānta*), reduplicated stems, prolated vowels (*pluti*), and metarules of interpretation (*paribhāṣā*) are described.[5]

Methodology and Pedagogy of *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*

Whereas, the Panini's included the Vedas in his scope, Hemachandra knowingly avoided the archaic Vedic meters and pitch accents from his grammar book. By the 12th century, Sanskrit had largely become an elite classical medium for court literature, governance, and sectarian debates. Hemachandra understood that keeping the old Vedic accents only added needless complexity for the ordinary learner.

Simplification of Metalanguage

Unlike Panini, Hemacandra tried to make his grammatical treatise simple. For example- he hadn't used *māheśwara sutras* and *pratyahāras* in his grammar. Hemachandra did away with these enigmatic phonetic series. Instead, inspired by Sharvavarman's famous Katantra grammar, he opted for natural and explicit terminology (anvartha-sanjya):

- For vowels, he employed *svara* (subdivided into *samāna*, *nāmin*, and *sandhyakṣara*).
- For consonants, he used *vyañjana*, *ghuṭ* (non-nasal stops), *ghoṣavat* (voiced), and *aghoṣa* (unvoiced).
- Grammatical tenses and moods were divested of arbitrary vowel tags (Pāṇini's *laṭ*, *liṭ*, *luṭ*, *loṭ*, etc.) and replaced with descriptive chronological terms: *vartamānā* (present), *parokṣā* (perfect), *śvastanī* (periphrastic

[4] Shastri, Nemi Chandra. *Ācārya Hemacandra aur Unkā Śabdānuśāsana: Ek Adhyayana*, Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan, 1963, pp. 26–30.
[5] Kielhorn, Franz. "A Brief Account of Hemachandra's Sanskrit Grammar." *Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 2, 1888, pp. 19–21.

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future), *bhaviṣyantī* (simple future), *pañcamī* (imperative), *hyastanī* (imperfect), and *kriyātipatti* (conditional).[6]

Structural Reorganization and *Lāghava* (Economy)

Hemacandra resolved the structural dislocation that plagued earlier commentators. While Pāṇini's rules for a single nominal paradigm or compound often lay scattered across disparate chapters, Hemacandra grouped morphologically allied transformations within continuous thematic sections (*prakaraṇas*). His sūtras absorbed the corrections of centuries: the *Vārtikas* of Kātyāyana, the observations of Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, and the structural revisions of Chandragomin and the *Kāśikāvṛtti* were directly integrated into the body of the *sūtras*, obviating the need for auxiliary corrective texts.[7]

The *Pañcāṅga* Apparatus and Scholastic Sub-commentaries

To constitute an independent, authoritative school of grammar (*saṁpradāya*), a classical Indian system required a complete five-limbed apparatus (*pañcāṅga vyākaraṇa*). Hemacandra authored all five components himself, an achievement unmatched since Patañjali:

1. **Sūtra-pāṭha:** The foundational aphorisms (*Siddha-Hema-Śabdānuśāsana*).

2. **Dhātu-pāṭha:** The verbal catalog, entitled the *Dhātupārāyaṇa*, cataloging 1,980 verbal roots distributed across nine classes (*gaṇas*). Hemacandra streamlined Pāṇini's ten classes by absorbing the reduplicating class (*juhotyādi-gaṇa*) directly into the root class (*adādi-gaṇa*).

3. **Gaṇa-pāṭha:** The classified nominal groupings subject to shared morphological processes.

4. **Uṇādi-pāṭha:** Over 1,000 aphorisms explaining idiosyncratic words whose derivations from verbal roots involve irregular primary affixes.

5. **Liṅgānuśāsana:** A comprehensive metrical manual on gender designation in 138 stanzas, accompanied by an extensive prose autocommentary (*svopajña-vivṛti*).[8]

Hemacandra reinforced this linguistic edifice by providing two autocommentaries of differing depth: the *Bṛhadvṛtti* (Great Commentary, extending to 18,000 verses) for advanced scholars, and the *Laghuvṛtti* (Short Commentary, comprising 6,000 verses) for intermediate students. Furthermore, he composed the *Bṛhannyāsa*, an encyclopedic analytical gloss running to roughly 84,000 verses, designed to rival the *Mahābhāṣya* in breadth, though largely preserved today only in fragmentary manuscripts.[9]

The Prakrit Grammatical Paradigm: Chapter VIII

Chapter seventh of his grammar is of very importance. It is the celebrated contribution of Hemacandra to Indian historical linguistics. While earlier Prakrit grammarians—such as Vararuci (*Prākṛta-Prakāśa*) and Caṇḍa (*Prākṛta-Lakṣaṇa*) have written in brief about varying dialects, Hemacandra produced an exhaustive, rigorously systematized compendium of the entire Middle Indo-Aryan dialectal continuum.[10]

Corelation of Grammar and Poetics: The *Dvyāśraya-kāvyas*

[6] Belvalkar, *Systems of Sanskrit Grammar*, pp. 75–76.
[7] Shastri, *Ācārya Hemacandra*, pp. 84–90.
[8] Bali, Suryakant. "Saṁskṛta Vyākaraṇa ko Jaina Ācāryoṁ kā Yogadāna." *Jaina Prācya Vidyāeṁ*, 1986, pp. 125–127.
[9] Musalgaonkar, *Ācārya Hemacandra*, pp. 86–88.
[10] Upadhyay, Shaligram. *Ācārya Hemacandra kā Apabhraṁśa Vyākaraṇa*, Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1965, pp. 1–5.

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In the classical tradition of Bhaṭṭi's *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, Hemacandra sought to substantiate his grammar through artistic literature (*śāstra-kāvya*). He composed two monumental historical poems known as the *Dvyāśraya-kāvya* (Literally, "Poem with a Dual Refuge"), so named because each verse simultaneously narrates the political history of the Caulukya dynasty and illustrates, in strict serial progression, the aphorisms of his grammar:

1. **The Sanskrit *Dvyāśraya-kāvya* (*Kumārapālacarita*):** Composed in twenty cantos, this work uses the first fourteen cantos to trace the Caulukya dynasty from Mūlarāja I through Siddharāja Jayasiṁha, while cantos sixteen through twenty celebrate King Kumārapāla. The verses systematically exemplify the rules of Chapters I–VII of the Sanskrit grammar.[11]

2. **The Prakrit *Dvyāśraya-kāvya*:** Composed in eight cantos, this epic focuses exclusively on Kumārapāla's daily royal life, spiritual discipline, and religious endowments, with each verse illustrating the sequential aphorisms of Chapter VIII (Prakrit and Apabhraṁśa).[12]

Thus, Hemachandra created a self-sustaining pedagogical system: created the grammatical rules, Explained them by commentaries and provided living and context-rich evidence of their application by creating epics.

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[11] Musalgaonkar, *Ācārya Hemacandra*, pp. 47–50.
[12] Buhler, *Life of Hemacandrācārya*, pp. 48–50.