Dhruvatārā in Kālidāsa's Literature

Hideo Kimura

Dhruvatārā or *Dhruva* is the Polar star. On the *Amarakoṣa* of Amarasimha (circa 300 A. D.), I, 2, 21a, '*dhruva āuttānapādiḥ syāt*,' Kṣīrasvāmin (circa 1050 A. D.) comments as follows: *dhruvati dhruvaḥ kaḥ| uttānapādasyā-patyam, ṛṣitvād ṛṣyandhaketi aṇi prāpte, bāhvāditvād iṇ|* According to this commentary, the etymology of *dhruva* is that the root '*dhru* (6 Parasmāipada, to be firm, fixed)' takes '*ka*' *pratyaya* and becomes *dhruva*: *dhru* + *ka* → *dhruva*. *Dhruva* is a masculine noun which means 'one who is fixed' and so means the star which is fixed at the north pole; namely, the Polar star. According to Indian mythology, King Dhruva ascended to a place in heaven and became the Polar star. Thus, the Polar star is called *Dhruva*.

Dhruva was a son of King Uttānapāda. Therefore, according to the *Pāṇiniya* (circa 4th cen. B. C.), I, 4, 114 (*ṛṣyandhakavṛṣṇikurubhyaḥ ca.*), '*aṇ*' *pratyaya* is suffixed to *uttānapāda* and āuttānapāda is constituted: *uttānapāda* + *aṇ* → āuttānapāda. '*Aṇ*' *pratyaya* indicates 'descendent or offspring.' Thus, āuttānapāda, which is a masculine noun, means 'the son of Uttānapāda' and is used as a secondary name of the Polar star Dhruva. In the same way, according to the *Pāṇiniya*, I, 4, 96 (*bāhvādibhyaḥ ca.*), *uttānapāda* is suffixed with '*iṇ*' *pratyaya* and becomes āuttānapādi: *uttānapāda* + *iṇ* → āuttānapādi. Since '*iṇ*' *pratyaya* means 'descendant,' āuttānapādi, which is a masculine noun, also means 'the son of Uttānapāda' and is applied to Dhruva. Therefore, āuttānapādi also is used as another name

(1) The story of Dhruva is described in the *Harivaṃṣa*, 1, 2; the *Bhāgavata*, 4, 8, 13; the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, 1, 12; the *Matsyapurāṇa*, 4; the *Līṅgapurāṇa*, 1, 62; the *Skandapurāṇa*, 4, 1, 19-21. Kālidāsa depicts that King Dhruvasaṃdhi, son of Puṣya was superior and kept firmly peace policy even towards enemies and kept truth in his words, and compares him with King Dhruva in the *Raghuvamṣa*, XIII, 34: *tataḥ paraṃ tatprabhavaḥ prapade dhruvopameyo dhruvasaṃdhir urvīm| yasminn abhūj jyāyasi satyasam̐dhe saṃdhir dhruvaḥ saṃna-matām arinām||*

for the Polar star Dhruva. According to Kṣīrasvāmin's commentary mentioned above, there are three Sanskrit words which mean the Polar star: *Dhruva* (-tārā), *Āuttānapāda* and *Āuttānapādi*, although in the *Amarakoṣa* there are only two: *Dhruva* and *Āuttānapādi*.

A very interesting description of the Polar star Dhruva is found in Kālidāsa's writings. In his Mahākāvya epic, the *Raghuvamśa* or 'the Dynasty of Raghu,' XVII, 35, Kālidāsa (circa 400 A. D.) depicts the Polar star Dhruva in autumn in the following simile:

*taṁ prītiṣṭhāḍāir netrāir anvayuh pārayoṣitah/
 caratprasannāir jyotirbhir vibhāvarya iva dhruvam||*

'With eyes beaming with love, damsels of the city followed him, as with stars clearly twinkling in the autumn (sky), nights follow the Dhruva star.'

Young women who lived in the city were so charmed by the brilliant and brave figure of Atithi, son of Kākutstha and Kumudvatī, that those whose eyes beamed with love for Atithi were caused to stare at him, as autumn nights with stars shining clearly follow the Polar star Dhruva.

The Polar star appears at a high or low position from the horizon in the northern sky, depending on whether one is at a high or low latitude. Therefore, from a southern country like India, the Polar star appeared near to the northern horizon. Although the Polar star actually revolves round the north pole, its moving is hardly noticeable with the naked eye. Therefore, the people of ancient India, thinking that the Polar star did not move, used the word Dhruva with the meaning 'one who is fixed' as a noun which points the Polar star.

In his commentary on this verse, Mallinātha (circa 1000 A. D.) who is very famous as a commentator on Kālidāsa's works, mentions the reason for which the stars and the Polar star Dhruva are described in the simile thus: '*dhruvapāṣabaddhatvāt tārācakrasya*' or 'from the cause why the circle of stars is bound to the Polar star Dhruva.' The idea of his comment came from the fact that in India the stars appear to move round the Polar star which is fixed at a low position near the horizon.

It is very interesting that in this verse Atithi, having the brilliance of youth and being brave, is compared to the Polar star Dhruva shining brightly in the autumn sky, which is free from dust and purified with rains during the rainy season before autumn; and that the eyes of young women, whose hearts swell with pleasure, beaming with love for Atithi, are compared to the other stars surrounding the Polar star.

In the *Kumārasambhava* or 'the Birth of Kumāra,' VII, 85, Kālidāsa depicts the Polar star Dhruva in other way:

dhruveṇa bhartrā dhruvadarṣanāya prayujyamānā priyadarṣanena|
sā dṛiṣṭa ity ānanam unnamayya hrīṣannakaṇṭhī katham apy uvāca||

'As having been pointed to Dhruva star by her handsome permanent husband, she, turning up her face, barely answered with voice low because of shyness, 'I have seen it.'

At the time when the religious and solemn marriage-rites were near their end, her husband, the God Çiva, pointing to the Polar star Dhruva suddenly, said to the bride Umā, 'Behold !' Having looked at the star with her uplifted eyes, she was so shy that she barely answered her husband in a very low voice, 'I have seen it.'

In this verse the Polar star Dhruva is described as the symbol of permanent relationship and love between husband and wife. It is the reason why the relationship and love between husband and wife must be permanent like the Dhruva star which is fixed at the same place, does not move and does not change permanently. Bride Umā and bridegroom Çiva are looking at the star, the symbol of permanent relationship and love between husband and wife, with the pleasure of deep emotion due to marriage.

In this verse the word 'dhruva' is used twice; one is used as a noun to indicate 'the Polar star' as mentioned above, while the other, as an adjective to indicate 'unchanging, permanent' modifying the noun 'bhartri' or 'husband.' The description of 'dhruveṇa bhartrā' or 'by her permanent husband' is excellent and admirable in relation with the usage

(2) Cf. B. S. Upadhyaya: *India in Kalidasa*, Allahabad, 1947, p. 288-9.

of the word 'dhruva,' meaning the polar star, as the symbol of permanent relationship and love between husband and wife.

Considering the constitution of this verse from the point of view of the natural features and customs and life of India, the idea which constitutes this verse can be said to come from the following matters. After the rainy season ends, the sky over India is cloudless every night and all the stars twinkle with clear brightness. Such a season is called autumn, and in the sky the Polar star Dhruva nightly appears at the same position, which is near the northern horizon, and is so bright that it attracts people's attention. According to the traditions of Indian life, marriage is prohibited during the rainy season. After it is over, however, the season for celebrating marriages begins. Then, the description of this verse is proper for that of autumn. According to the *Manusmṛiti* (200 B.C.—200 A. D.), IX, 101, 102, a husband and wife must maintain mutual fidelity until death, and their relationship must be unchangable and permanent. This is the summary of the highest law for husband and wife. These matters regarding Indian life and natural features were so skilfully arranged through the poetic thought of the great poet, Kālidāsa, that these make this verse admirable.

—A part of the studies of Kālidāsa done at Poona in India due to Indian Government's scholarship for foreign students which was given me (Nov. 1, 1952—Oct. 31, 1955)—

(3) In his commentary on this verse, Mallinātha notes the two ways of usage of the word 'dhruva' with the quotation, 'dhruvo bhabhede klībe tu niçcīte çāçvate triṣu.' which is the *Amarakoṣa*, III, 3, 211. One of them is the usage of its meaning 'a kind of star, namely, the Polar star Dhruva' (*bhabhede*) and the other the usage of its meaning 'perpetual or permanent' (*çāçvate*).

(4) The *Manusmṛiti*, IX, 101, *anyonyasyāvvyabhicāro bhaved āmaraṇāntikaḥ/ eṣa dharmah samāsenā jñeyah stripūmsayoḥ paraḥ/*; 102, *tathā nityam yateyātām stripūmsāu tu kṛitakriyāu/ yathā nābhicaretaṁ tāu viyuktāv itaretaram/* (Cāu-khambā Sanskrit Series No. 226, Banaras, 1953, p.503)