

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem with an Account of the Value of the Rāmāyana

As I have proposed earlier, my basic contention is to compare the Aesthetic Structure of the two versions of the Rāmāyana, the great epic. It is a well-known fact that Valmiki's Rāmāyana, is an original one written in Sanskrit language because, at that time Sanskrit was the bearer of the sophisticated thought either in the form of kāvya or mahākāvya or in the form of philosophical literature. Moreover, it is evidenced from the Rāmāyana that persons belonging to a sophisticated class i.e. Brahmins, kings etc. always used Sanskrit language as a medium of communication. Rāvana, the King of Lankā, though described as a King of the Rākshasas, is found to speak Sanskrit like other kings and Brahmins. It is said in the Rāmāyana that an individual who belongs to Rama's group thinks while approaching towards Sita in Ashoka forest that if he speaks Sanskrit like other Kings and Brahmins, Sita might be afraid of him mistaking him for Rāvana which he is actually not. The sloka of Valmiki's Rāmāyana runs as follows:

**"Yadi vācam pravakṣyāmi dvijātīriva Samskr̥tam
Rāvanam manyamāna Sītā bhīte bhaviṣyati."**

From this sloka it appears that Rāvana used to speak Sanskrit by virtue of being a King. Moreover, other kāvyas like Rāmāyana etc. were written in Sanskrit so that learned and sophisticated people can follow the theme clearly. Afterwards, the Valmiki Rāmāyana and Adhyātma Rāmāyana were translated into various dialects like Bengali, Hindi, Nepali etc.

Various learned scholars have done much thematic works in the past. The moral problems of the Rāmāyana, the political and social aspects,

anthropological aspect etc. have been discussed in India and abroad. But, so far as I know, the aesthetic part of it is not given priority or preference. The Rāmāyana is an excellent piece of literary art that is not much highlighted. When a work reaches to the level of literary form of art, it needs many infrastructural facilities, without which a work cannot be described as a piece of art par-excellence. If there were any piece of story without the artistic foundations like rhetoric (alamkāra), metre (chhanda), suggestive meaning (vyāñjana), etc., it would be regarded as a third-rate poetry that is technically called chitrakāvya. Hence, whether a work really has reached the level of art or not depends on those aesthetic structures. These structural elements in a body make a work kāvya par-excellence after delineating aesthetic pleasure (rasa) in it.

The Rāmāyana, being a mahākāvya, should be adjudicated from different standpoints like various social, moral, anthropological themes as well as its grammatical and aesthetic aspect that is generally called literary criticism. So far as the aesthetic structure of this epic is concerned, there is the usage of various metres, alamkāras, words or sentences expressing suggestive and implicative meaning which are technically called lakshana, vyāñjana or dhvani. I find some interesting points in the usage or application of some metres (chhandas) in the Nepali version of the Rāmāyana, which are considered to be taken from Sanskrit chhandas. To consider the Rāmāyana written by Bhanubhakta in the light of Sanskrit metres as used in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana is, I believe, a novel and unique type of work, the scope of which remains unexplored so far.

One could raise a question why chhandas, one of the foundations of aesthetic structure, is taken so seriously. In reply, it could be answered that chhanda is more basic than others are. In the broader sense chhanda is also

an ornament (alamkāra) of a kāvya, according to its broader derivative meaning – ‘alam̄ (bhūṣaṇam̄) karoti yaḥ saḥ’ i.e. that which makes a work ornament is called alamkāra. In this broader sense chhanda is also a kind of alamkāra by virtue of being ornament to language. Secondly, chhanda has got a prominent role in literature, as it is included in one of the Vedāṅgas. The derivative meaning ‘Chhandayati ahladayati iti chhandah’ (i.e. metre is that which makes the literature charming) also suggests that it is an inevitable measure for writing a kāvya, particularly in poetry.

The comparison between the metres used in Bhanubhakta’s Rāmāyana and those in Adhyātma Rāmāyana can be done properly by a scholar who is equally conversant with Sanskrit and Nepali languages. Though my basic discipline is Sanskrit, I had enough scope to learn Nepali language due to geographical location where I have spent almost the main period of my service life. Fortunately, I have made an effort to utilize this scope.

Teachers and students who deal with Bhanubhakta literature know very well that Sri Motirām Bhatta, Sri Brahma Śamsēr, Sri Bāburām Āchārya, Sri Sūryavikram Jñavālī, Dr. Pārasmani Pradhan, Dr. Tulsī Bahādur Chhetri, Dr. Jagat Chhetri, Sri Indra Bahadur Rai, Dr. Kumar Pradhan and many other scholars have contributed to the literary criticism of the works of Bhānubhakta.

I have read their works and have appreciated their ability of assimilation and the profundity of knowledge. I have been inspired by their writings to such an extent that I felt an inner urge to write something on the subject though I know that it is a humble attempt only.

Nepal is a land with a glorious past. It is a land of religion and a land of culture also. We know very well that Nepal has witnessed many mighty

warriors who did not hesitate even to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their motherland which is superior to heaven (svargādapi gariyasi). Similarly, Nepal has been blessed with many qualified poets and writers who, renouncing worldly happiness, worshipped the Goddess Saraswati and made valuable contributions to literature and thus became immortal in the history of Nepali literature. Bhānubhakta is the brightest star among such poets.

Bhānubhakta is indisputably the greatest mastermind in Nepali poetry and occupies a unique place in the poetical world of Nepali literature. He is the emperor among Nepali poets. He holds indisputably a very high position in the galaxy of world's poets and is no way inferior to Homer and others. He is regarded as the father of Nepali language and maker of religious community: "Bhānubhakta Nepali bhāsāko janak hun."

Bhānubhakta's works have been the delight of not only the educated Nepalese but also of the non-Nepali people. His Rāmāyana, a unique specimen of Nepali poetry occupies a significant place in the entire development of Nepali literature. Of all the literary works of the poet Bhānubhakta, the Rāmāyana occupies a place of exceptional importance. That is why all the critics agree that the Rāmāyana is the best amongst the works of the poet Bhanubhakta wherein is displayed his poetic genius and art in all its glory. He has been and will ever be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen as the Ādikavi of Nepali literature.

The richness and fertility of his poetic genius, the exuberance of his imagination, his profound knowledge of human heart as well as his profound knowledge of deep Vedantic philosophy of Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana, his simple and lucid language, his addition to local colour and application of typical Nepali idioms (tukkās), which pervades his compositions and, above all, his

familiarity with classical Sanskrit metres entitled him to the rank of Tulsidasa of Nepali. That is why he has been regarded not only as the national poet of Nepal but also has been given a place of honour along with the national poets of India.

Dr. Kumar Pradhan has rightly mentioned that "The Sanskrit literature was the chief source of inspiration for many poets as in the past."² The poet Bhanubhakta was neither an English-knowing person nor an ascetic like Tulsidasa, but, on the other hand, he was a scholar well versed in Sanskrit language and literature. Not only the poet Bhanubhakta, but also many other poets and writers were well-acquainted with Sanskrit language and literature, especially with Sanskrit metres. Among such poets and writers we can mention the names of Indiras, Vidyāran̄yakesarī, Patāñjali, Basanta Sharma and Paṇḍit Raghunāth Bhatta. All these poets preceded Bhanubhakta. In this connection mention may be made of the poets and writers who followed Bhanubhakta. Sri Motirām Bhatta, Lekhnāth Poudyāi, Dharanīdhar Sharma, Sri Lakshmiprasād Deokota, Dr. Parasmani Pradhan, Dr. Tulsi Bahadur Chhetri (Tulsi Apatan) and Sri Dillirām Timsinā are very famous for their love for Sanskrit language and literature, and as such they earned deep knowledge in Sanskrit.

There are many reasons behind the purpose of adopting Sanskrit as the main vehicle of their writings by the above mentioned poets. The main reason is that due to the vitality and copious nature of Sanskrit language, it had attracted many poets and writers. The subject-matter, the rich language, the unique metres of Sanskrit literature had so much influenced the Nepali writers that they made an honest attempt to introduce them in Nepali literature.

Moreover, in the language of Dr. Kumar Pradhan, *"The Nepali-speaking people have a long literary tradition but Sanskrit and not the vernaculars of different tribes and communities remained the language of learning and*

poetry for centuries. Works and epigraphs written in ancient and later kingdom of Nepal valley, the Khasa empire and Sena principalities are in the language of gods. Innumerable manuscripts of Sanskrit prose and poetry have been collected from different parts which were later united to form Nepal.¹³

The principal source of inspiration of the poet Bhanubhakta was Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit had powerfully influenced the poet Bhanubhakta. He was a lover of Sanskrit metres and followed the norms laid down in Sanskrit prosody. Sri Mrigendra Samsar, ex-Director General of Public Instruction, Nepal has rightly spoken that the greatest service of Bhanubhakta for the language is the mingling of Sanskrit metres with Nepali literature. To quote him, "Nepali sahitayama Sanskrita chhandalai lyai gabhidinu nai sayad Bhanubhaktako bhasapraty sabbhanda badhta seva ho."¹⁴

The well-known writer and the winner of Sahitya Academy Award (New Delhi), Sri Dilliram Timsina, in his article, "Bhanubhakta Chhandako Prabhab", published in Bhanubhakta Smarak Grantha, is of the opinion that the well-known poet, Acharya Bhanubhakta, is the person who easily influenced to a great extent the heart of the common people by composing poems using classical Sanskrit metres in Nepali language. "Nepalima Sanskrita chhandama kavita lekhera janajivanka hrdayama vyapak ruple sahajai prabhavparne vyakti hun svanamdhanya Acharya Bhanubhakta."¹⁵

While discussing the vitality and copiousness of Sanskrit, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru opines, "Sanskrit is a language amazingly rich, efflorescent, full of luxuriant growth of all kinds, and yet precise and strictly keeping within the framework of grammar which Panini laid down two thousand six hundred years

ago. It spread out, added to its richness, became fuller and more ornate, but always it struck to its original roots.⁶

Sir William Jones, the great scholar as well as the founder of Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta, in the year 1784, praised Sanskrit in glowing terms: "The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either: yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident, so strong indeed, that no philosopher could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from some common source which perhaps no longer exists."⁷

If we go through the history of Nepali literature, we can find that many poets and writers who preceded Bhanubhakta were in favour of Sanskrit language. Some of the Pāṇḍits used to ask why they should write in Nepali? (Nepalimā ke lekhnū?), "It is better to write in Sanskrit, which is the language of Gods." (Devabhāṣa Sanskritamā po lekhnū). As a result we find many Sanskritized words in the poetic compositions of some of the Nepali poets. As for example, we find plenty of Sanskritized words in Raghunāth Bhatta's Rāmāyana of which only Sundarkanda i.e. the 5th book, is available.

Here we may quote Sri Mrigendra Sāmsēr, who wrote in his article "Kavi Bhānubhaktāchārya" (published in Bhānubhakta Smārak Grantha), "Hundred years ago, from today, what was there? Whatever was there for education was the reading of Sanskrit only." (Ahile bhanda jhandai saya varsa agadi ke thiyo? Siksa bhaneke jo kuchh thiyo Sanskrita padhnu nai).⁸

The poet Bhanubhakta was also well-versed in Sanskrit language. In the words of Sri Samsér, "Sanskrita bhāṣamā kausaḥ kam thienā." That is why he read the works of Sri Saṅkarāchārya that is written in Sanskrit. He read Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana. It is a well-known fact that Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is based on Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana. His Rāmāyana is the manifestation of his earnest love for Sanskrit language and literature. His deep love for Sanskrit language and literature prompted him to select classical Sanskrit metres in his Rāmāyana and other works.

It is well-known to all that the poet Bhanubhakta is one of the brightest luminaries in the metrical sky who came to the arena of Nepali literature at a time when Nepali language had not developed fully but Sanskrit flourished in Nepal with its full splendour and popularity, as a fully developed language.

It should be kept in mind that a thorough study of the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana produced a powerful effect on the mind of Bhanubhakta and, accordingly, he composed a Rāmāyana of his own. Moreover, the noble zeal for obtaining eternal fame inspired him to create something which could establish him beyond the limits of time and that is why the Nepali Rāmāyana has been developed in such popular form.

The poet Bhanubhakta is unrivalled in the use of classical Sanskrit metres such as Śārdūlavikr̥ḍitam, Vasantatilakam, Sragdharā, Mālīnī, Shikharīnī, Indravajrā, Upendravajrā, Upajāti, Svāgatā, Drutavilambitam and Tōṭaka.

The introduction of classical Sanskrit metres in his writings is one of the greatest innovations of Bhanubhakta's master-hand equally gifted with literary talents and poetic arts. He is the only Nepali poet who did not use any existing

Nepali metre and with utmost sincerity utilised classical Sanskrit metres. The application of classical Sanskrit metres is the life-blood of Bhanubhakta's writings. And as such he has enriched the Nepali literature much more intelligently than any other poet with the skilful use of these metres because in his application of classical Sanskrit metres, we find intellectual power, scientific method, logical precision and musical profundity.

Sanskrit scholarship must have been fairly widespread in Nepal. As Sri M. M. Gurung (of Kalimpong), a recipient of Sahitya Academy Award, and an executive member of Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, opines, *"It is also interesting to note that during the middle ages when the Nepali language had not developed, some Nepali writers have written Rāmāyana in Sanskrit. The tradition of writing the Rāmāyana in Nepali in prose and verse came into being after the rise of Prithvinārāyan Shāh who made Nepali the official language of his kingdom."*⁹

The poet Bhanubhakta, though well-versed in Sanskrit language and literature, being inspired by the special attraction and deep love for his mother language, started writing his own Rāmāyana in Nepali language (which is easy to pronounce), taking the theme from Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana, so that it will be easier to understand the underlying Vedantic philosophy for those who are ignorant about Sanskrit language.

Bhanubhakta's magnum opus, the Rāmāyana, is the free and condensed rendering of the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana containing one thousand three hundred and nineteen verses of four lines. In a word, his Rāmāyana is the first classic of the Nepali language. On account of the simplicity, lucidity and elegance, his Rāmāyana enjoyed great popularity not only in Nepal but also in India. It is a well-known fact that his Rāmāyana is the masterpiece of

Nepal's greatest poet. Though translated from Adhyātma Rāmāyana, Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana may be considered as an original composition. It will be very clear to all if we go through the stanzas of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana as well as those of Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana. While the main theme remained the same, long stutis are generally omitted and incidents are condensed in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana. At places, the poet has given a local touch or added something of his own to suit the environment of his time and enhance its local attraction. Thus the innovations of Bhanubhakta are admitted. And, as a result, within a very short time, his Rāmāyana influenced the heart of the common people greatly.

There is neither Māngalācharaṇa nor Upavibhājana in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana as he has not followed the traditional practice of composing a mahākāvya as laid down by the rhetoricians like Viśwanātha, Dandin, Bhāmaha and Vāmana.

The Rāmāyana is an epic in which the story of Sri Rāmachandra is depicted. The Rāmāyana, along with the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas has played a significant role in the evolution of Indian languages and culture. We regard the Rāmāyana as the earliest specimen of great works written in kāvya style. Even in an age of science and technology, the story of Sri Rāmachandra still stirs the depth of human soul. It has influenced many great writers of India as well as several writers of the world. It has not only influenced literature but other art forms like dance, drama, song, painting and sculpture also have been influenced greatly by this national epic, the holy scripture of the Hindus. Thus this epic has become a part of our cultural heritage. Moreover, it is said that,

"As long as in this firm set land

The streams shall flow, the mountains stand

So long throughout the world, be sure

The great Rāmāyana shall endure.”

Sanskrit version:

“Yāvat sthāsyanti girayah saritascha mahitale

Tāvadrāmāyanakathā lokesu prachariṣyati.”

The Rāmāyana was written in many languages. The original Rāmāyana is not destroyed ignoring the changes made to suit the different cultural traditions.

Late Sri Harendra Kumar Mukhopadhyaya, Ex-Governor of West Bengal, who, while writing the preface to the “Bhānubhaktaka Rāmāyana” published by Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, Darjeeling, and edited by Sri Sūryavikram Jñavāli (Alt. Gewali) in the year 1954 very aptly observed that “Kavi Bhanubhakta Āchārya’s Rāmāyana in Nepali verses written round about 1840 is regarded not only as the earliest but according to many, up to the present, the only high class specimen of Nepali poetry. In addition, it is also valued as a scripture.”¹⁰ This is the reason why the verses of Bhānubhakta’s Rāmāyana are chanted in those houses where somebody has died.

Sri Motirām Bhatta, his first biographer, praises his language highly. According to him, excellency of meaning and figure of speech of the words used by the poet Bhanubhakta are unique. “Arthoko chamatkār ra sabdako alamkāra kavi Bhānubhaktako apār chha.”¹¹

Regarding Bhanubhakta’s contribution to the Nepali literature Mr. R.H.Tahiliani, Ex-Governor of Sikkim, remarks that “The contribution of this great poet in the enrichment of Nepali literature is unique in the annals of the Nepali

speaking people. His works have always been a source of great inspiration for all."¹²

The Deputy Chief Minister of Sikkim, Mr. P. T. Lucksom, who has been elected chairman of 182 Bhanu Jayanti Celebration Samity, is of the opinion that "*Bhānubhakta's greatest contribution to the Nepali world is the translation of the Rāmāyana in simple folk language which at once became popular among the Nepali masses. Today, Nepali language has attained the place of pride with its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.*"¹³

In the words of Sri M. M. Gurung, "After the freedom movement of India and political awakening in Nepal against the tyrannical regime of the Rānās, Bhanubhakta and Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana became more and more popular with the masses as well as with the poets and writers of both Nepal and India."¹⁴

Smt. Kriṣṇā Dikṣit of Siddhe Busty, praises Bhanubhakta through versification which is given as follows:

Adikal - Bhāsa avirbhāvak
Bhānu udayko - Nepali sahityakasmā
Bhānu timi Adikavi - Nepalika lokapriya kavi
Kavyatmak visesata thiyō - niraksaratako daman
Sakaratako protik timi, sahabhāvanako proneta.
Sampurnatama timi saralatako pujari.
Rāmāyan timro yash praptiko mui bidha."¹⁵

English translation:

Ancient times, innovator of language,

Bhānu for rising up – in the firmament of Nepali literature.

Bhānu, you are Ādikavi, favourite to the Nepalese people,
You had speciality in kāvya, destruction of illiteracy,
You are symbol of literacy, creator of simple imagination.
You are complete in yourself, worshipper of simplicity.
The Rāmāyana is the main vehicle of attaining your fame.

Now, an important question arises why Bhanubhakta derived the theme of his Rāmāyana from Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana without taking it from Vālmiki's Rāmāyana, which is very famous throughout the world. The answer is obvious.

It is known to everybody that the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana is a discourse of Bhaktivāda and Ātmavāda and the poet Bhanubhakta, being a man of religion, was in favour of the cult of Bhakti. He was also a devotee of Ātmavāda. Through different verses of his great works, the Rāmāyana, the poet Bhanubhakta wanted to propagate his philosophy on Bhaktivāda and Ātmavāda among the common illiterate masses in a simple and lucid language, which attracted the heart of the common people within a very short time. Thus the poet was a great success in this respect.

On a study, it is seen that not only the poet Bhanubhakta, but many other poets and writers who composed the Rāmāyana in Nepali language, also based their works on the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana. But Bhanubhakta's rendering of the Rāmāyana differed from those who wrote before him. It is to be noted that the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana has been translated in Malayalam language also. The translator is Ezhuthachan who gives pride of place to the exposition of didactic and spiritual principles in his Rāmāyana.

It is also a well-known fact that the Rāmāyana of the great poet

narration (of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana) is simple and speaks of a later date of composition.

The principal metre used in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana is Anuṣṭup. The author has composed this epic mainly in Anuṣṭup metre. The greatness of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana has been expressed through the employment of this metre. The Bālakāṇḍa (2nd book) begins with Śārdūla metre but the metre Anuṣṭup has been also used widely in this book. After a thorough scan of all verses, I have found that seven metres viz.

1. Anuṣṭup;
2. Śārdūla;
3. Vasantatilakam, Vamsāsthavailam;
4. Upendravajrā;
5. Indravajrā;
6. Rathoddhata; and
7. Sragdhara

have been used in the Bālakāṇḍa.

In the fifth Canto of the first book (i.e. Bālakāṇḍa) speech of Ahalyā to Sri Rāmachandra has been described in ślokas 43-51, through the employment of Vasantatilakam metre.

In Ayodhyakāṇḍa (2nd book) of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, seven metres viz.

1. Anuṣṭup;
2. Indravajrā;
3. Praharṣiniyam;
4. Śārdūla;
5. Upendravajrā;

6. Sragdharā; and

7. Vasantatilakam

have been used.

In slokas 31 and 32 in the 2nd Canto in Ayodhyākāṇḍa, where Kaikeyī, mother of Bharata, threatened the King Dasaratha saying that she will commit suicide either by hanging or by taking poison if the King fails to keep his promise, the metre Upendravajrā has been used. This metre has been employed in sloka no. 6 in the 6th canto in Ayodhyākāṇḍa where the poet has expressed the view that in this world of ours, nobody is responsible for affording either happiness or misery to anybody, because the people are tied with the string of their own action of Karma (cf. Svakarmasūtragrathito hi lokah. Adhyatma Rāmāyana, Canto- 6, Sl.6).

The metre Praharsiniyam has been used in the concluding sloka of the 1st canto in Ayodhyākāṇḍa.

Apart from the metre Anuṣṭup, the following metres such as Indravajrā, Upendravajrā, Vamsāsthavilam, Rathoddhata, Vasantatilakam, Sārdūla, Puspitāgrā and the metre Sundari have been used in Aranyakāṇḍa (3rd Book of the Rāmāyana).

Speech of Marīcha to the demon-King Rāvaṇa from slokas 19-27 in the 7th Canto in this Aranyakāṇḍa has been described through the employment of Rathoddhata metre.

Speech of Jatayū has been nicely described through the employment of Puspitāgrā metre in the slokas 44 –53 in the 8th canto of Aranyakāṇḍa. It is to be

noted that this metre belongs to the Ardhasamavṛtta type of Sanskrit prosody.

In the Puspitāgrā metre, the uneven feet i.e. the 3rd and the 1st contain the triads na, na na and ya respectively while the even i.e. the 2nd and 4th feet contain the triads na, ja, ja, ra and ga.

In the concluding stanza of the 8th Canto in Aranyakānda, the metre Sundarī (of Ardhasamavṛtta type) has been used. This metre Sundarī contains in the even part the triads sa, sa, ja, and ga respectively and in the uneven feet the triads sa, bha, ra, la and ga.

In Sundarkānda (5th Book), five metres viz. Anuṣṭup, Indravajrā, Rathoddhata, Vamsāsthavilam, and Vasantatilakam have been used.

In Yuddhakānda (6th Book), we find the application of twelve metres viz. (1)Anuṣṭup; (2)Indravajrā; (3)Upendravajrā; (4)Upajāti; (5)Vamsāsthavilam, (6)Vasantatilakam; (7)Sragdharā; (8)Sārdūla; (9)Mattamayūram; (10)Bhūjaṅgaprayātam; (11)Vidhvāṅkamālā and (12)Indravamsā. In this 6th book, in the 11th Canto, the poet has glorified the name of Sri Rāmachandra through the employment of Sragdharā metre. In the 13th Canto of this book the metre Mattamayūram has been used from slokas 10-23. The metre Bhūjaṅgaprayātam has been used from slokas 24-32 in the same Canto.

In the concluding stanza of the 14th Canto of this 6th book, the metre Indravamsā has been used. The metre Vidhvāṅkamālā has been used in the slokas from 24-30 in the 15th Canto of this 6th book.

In the Uttarkānda (7th book) we find the application of eight metres viz.

Anustup; Sārdūla; Vasantatilaka; Indravajrā; Upendravajrā; Puspitāgrā; Rathoddhata and Sragdharā.

In the 5th Canto of this 7th book (Uttarkanda) of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana, the Rāmageeta has been described through the employment of Vamsasthivilam metre. According to Rāmageeta, the principal cause of this world is ignorance (Ajñanamevāsya hi mulakāraṇam) Uttarkanda, 5th Canto, Sloka 9). This ignorance can be destroyed only by knowledge (Vidyāivatannāsavidhouptiyasī, especially knowledge on Ātmavāda).

It is to be noted that the general rule, especially in the case of the Rāmāyana, of changing the metre at the end of a Canto is observed faithfully in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana and, as such, we find the metre Vasantatilaka used in the concluding stanza of this 5th Canto in the 7th Book. In the 6th Canto of this book the metre Puspitāgrā has been used. In the 7th and 8th Cantos, the metres Sragdharā and Rathoddhata have been used respectively.

The concluding stanza of the 9th Canto in this 7th Book (i.e. Uttarkanda) of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana has been composed with the application of the metre Vasantatilaka which is one of the most widely used and widely recognized metres of Sanskrit Prosody.

Thus we find that the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana ends with the employment of the metre Vasantatilakam, which is very favourite to the Nepali poets as well.

One of the reasons for being attracted to Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is that the names of nine classical Sanskrit metres used by Bhanubhakta have been referred to in the Bhāṣāprabesh Nepali Vyākaraṇa, composed by Dr.

Parasmani Pradhan. To quote him, "Nepāli jātiya kavi svargvasi Bhanubhakta Achāryale āfnā racanamā nimnalikhita nou prakarkā Sanskrita chanda prayogarekā chhan: (1)Sārdūlavikrīditam, (2)Shikharinī, (3)Mālinī, (4)Svāgatā, (5)Drutavilambita, (6)Indravajrā, (7)Upendravajrā, (8)Vasantatilakā ra (9)Sragdharā."¹⁶

This is merely a reference and the topic has not been elucidated anywhere. In order that the Metrics which in Sanskrit is one of the Vedangas can develop in the proper form through the Nepali language, I have laid special emphasis on Bhanubhakta's Metrics for popularising it through the Nepali language as a Vedāṅga.

Due to my keen interest in Nepali language and literature I have become so much impressed with this epic, especially with the metres used by the poet, that I wished to write something on the topic. Thus, gradually, the idea of finding out classical Sanskrit metres used by the poet Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana developed in my mind. This is the genesis of my attempt.

My professional career necessitated frequent acquaintances with the Nepali people of Kalimpong. I started picking up threads from here and there to weave them into a texture of my project embedded with the events of life history of the poet, detailed discussion of different kāvyas and other writings of Bhanubhakta. Generally, Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana has faithfully observed the rules of classical prosody. The metrical treatment in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is noteworthy. Sārdūlavikrīditam widely used while Vasantatilakam, Mālinī, Sragdharā, Indravajrā, Shikharinī made a distinct advance in importance.

After a through scan of the slokas of Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana, I have found that Bhanubhakta used nine classical Sanskrit metres of SAMAVRṬTA type in this epic. The metres are as follows:

- (1) Śārdulavikrīḍitam;
- (2) Vasantatilakam;
- (3) Mālīnī;
- (4) Sragdhara;
- (5) Indravajrā;
- (6) Shikharīnī;
- (7) Upajāti;
- (8) Svāgata; and
- (9) Drutavilamḍitam.

Bhanubhakta showed considerable skill in metrical handling. Of the nine classical Sanskrit metres in which each syllable has a fixed length, the favourite being the Śārdulavikrīḍitam, and Bhanubhakta excels in the use of these metres.

My topic included in the study of metres exhaustively covers the nine classical Sanskrit metres used by Bhanubhakta and they have been discussed adequately with the help of as far as possible figurative and tabular illustrations.

It is hoped that this humble attempt will meet the long felt requirement of an useful research work on metres used by Bhanubhakta and, in order to prosecute my work, I have tried my utmost to collect materials from various sources.

In preparing my papers I have consulted mainly – (1) A HISTORY OF NEPALI LITERATURE by Dr. Kumar Pradhan and published by Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, (2) CHHANDAMAÑJARĪ of Gaṅgādāsa

edited by Dr. Dilip Kumar Kanjilal, (3) RAMAYANA of Bhanubhakta, published by Sanjha Prakasan, Kathmandu, Nepal, (4) ADHYATMA RAMAYANA with the translation in Hindi by Munilal and published by Gobinda Bhavan Karyalaya, Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, (5) KAVI BHANUBHAKTAKO JIVANCHARITRA by Sri Motiram Bhatta, (6) CHHANDA RA ALAMKAR by Dilliram Timsina, (7) Adikavi Bhanubhakta Acharya by Sri Bhaichand Pradhan of Kalimpong, (8) THE RAMAYANA OF BHANUBHAKTA, edited by Sri Surya Vikram Jnavali, (9) BHANUBHAKTA RAMAYANA by Dr. Bhajan Gopal Sanyal, (10) BHANUBHAKTA SMARAK GRANTHA, edited by Sri Surya Vikram Jnavali, Dr. Tulsi Bahadur Chhetri, and Jagat Chhetri and published by Nepali Sahitya Sammelan, Darjeeling on 29th Asada Samvat 2026(1969 A.D.), (11) BHANUBHAKTAKA KRITI ADHYANHARU by Bhanubhakta Satavarsik Prakasan, Nepali Sahitya Prakasan, Darjeeling, (12) BHANUBHAKTA VISHESANKA, chief editor Bhabaniprasad Ghimire, (13) ADIKAVI BHANUBHAKTA ACHARYAKO SACHCHA JIVANCHARITRA by Pandit Kaviraj Naranath Acharya 2036 (1979 A.D.), (14) BHANUBHAKTA GRANTHAVALI edited by Dr. Parasmani Pradhan and published by his son Sri Nagendramani Pradhan from Mani Printing Press, Darjeeling, 1st edition, in Samvat 2009 (1952 A.D.) and (15) PURANA KAVI KA KAVITA by Baburam Acharya.

The present thesis has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter is sub-divided into 8(eight) sections, and the 2nd chapter which consists of the analysis of the previous research and writings has been divided into four sections. In the 3rd chapter I have discussed the Methodology followed by me in my thesis.

Chapter four deals with the presentation and analysis of data with the help of (a) Text, (b) Tables and (c) Figures. This chapter is sub-divided into three sections.

The principal findings and conclusions have been presented in the fifth chapter. Recommendations for further research have also been suggested in this chapter. After this chapter, Endnotes have been presented.

After Endnotes, there is another section: Reference Section. In this section, a selective BIBLIOGRAPHY is given in a sheet containing the word BIBLIOGRAPHY, capitalized and centered on the page. In the same section, after BIBLIOGRAPHY, there is a sub-section entitled APPENDICES – this has been inserted in a sheet containing the word APPENDICES, capitalized and centered on the page.

In the preliminary section of my project, a table of contents in details has been given. A preface along with a page for acknowledgement has been included in this portion. A list of Abbreviations also has been inserted.

My project entitled "*A philosophical study of the aesthetic structure of the Rāmāyana: with special reference to the Adhyātma Rāmāyana and the Rāmāyana by Bhānubhakta*" has long been a desideratum. It is hard to say at what point I began writing this thesis but mimeographed parts of it have been developed into a full-fledged form.

I express my profound thankfulness and also acknowledge my deep gratitude to my honourable teacher Dr. Dilip Kumar Kanjilal, M.A., D.Phil (Cal), B.Litt. (Oxford), ex-principal, Govt. Sanskrit College, Calcutta who helped me sincerely in writing my thesis.

I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to my respectable Teacher, Dr.S.R.Banerjee, M.A.(Double), Ph.D.(Cal), Ph.D.(Edinburgh), Professor of Comparative Philosophy, University of Calcutta for his indefatigable interest in this thesis on the Sanskrit metres used by Bhanubhakta in his Ramāyana.

I would like to express my indebtedness to my dear friend Mrs. Geeta Bandopadhyaya, M.A., M.Phil, B.Ed., retired Asstt. Professor in Sanskrit, Institute of Women's Education, Hastings House, Calcutta, who helped me in various ways. I am extremely thankful to Sri Motilal Sharma (M.A., B.Ed.), present Teacher-in-charge, Govt. High School, Kalimpong , for his whole-hearted co-operation in providing me with some books. Dr. Jivan Pradhan, M.Sc., Ph.D. (NBU), Head of the Department of Botany, Kalimpong College, gave me a wealth of information and, for this, I am grateful to him. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my gratitude to my colleague Sri Kumar Chhetri, M.A.(Double), Head of the department of Nepali, who provided me with some rare books on Bhanubhakta literature which helped me greatly for pursuing my research-work.

Thus we find that the study of Bhanubhakta literature is both fruitful and meaningful because his writings are of immense religious importance. His Ramāyana was not the exact transliteration of the Sanskrit counterpart but a larger modulation to the extent of original frame in Nepali structure.

The aim of Bhanubhakta was probably to inculcate the teaching of the Ramāyana among the Nepalese people through local heritage and tradition. His Ramāyana influenced the heart of the common people greatly and with it culture (Indian), knowledge (Vedantic), power of writing, and devotion(for Sri Nārāyaṇa) awakened in the land.

The poet Bhanubhakta was fully aware of the philosophical doctrine of Ātmavāda. The poet says, "Let them hear of the Ātman – that even the lowest of the low have the Ātman within, which never dies and never is born."

What do we find in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana? Two conceptions coupled with Vedantic Bhakti or devotion as the guiding motto, and also Sraddhā and faith in one's own self, hundreds of large-hearted men and women giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost, for the well-being of the Nepali people had been shaken up. The poet Bhanubhakta with his unique vision realized that Sri Rāmachandra, the destroyer of all evils only can save the Nepali people who were demoralized from the after effects of political upheavals. Thus Bhanubhakta's writings "gave birth to the Nepali political consciousness and national solidarity".¹⁷

The poet Bhanubhakta used different metres to express different moods. He used the metres Śārdūla and Sragdharā for narrative passages Shikharinī for grief and sorrow. Mālinī for depicting scenic beauty, the metre Vasantatilakam is used for the purpose of vigorous statement.

The number of verses in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is 1319. Śārdūla occurs 1039 times because this metres is thought to be highly convenient for giving expression to deeds of chivalry and is also employed in the eulogies of kings. All the metricians from Bharata to Kedāra unanimously recognized this metre. Ksemendra remarked that Rājasekhara earned celebrity from the use of this metre "Śārdūlavikrīḍitarāiva prakhyāta Rājasekharah." The next favourite of Bhanubhakta is the pretty Vasantatilakam, which is one of the most widely used recognized metres of some Sanskrit prosody. Ksemendra has opined in the Suvrttilaka that among all the Sanskrit poets the poet Bhārabi excels in the

use of this metre and that is best applicable to the case of the mingling of the sentiments of the heroic and the fierce "Viraroudrasaṅkaraḥ".

Vasantatilakā:

Bhanubhakta concludes his Ayodhyākānda with the verse written in Vasantatilakā metre that runs thus:

"Sītā ra Lakṣmaṇ sahit garī Rāmalaī
Bhojan ma dinchhu bhani khup sīta chij banai,
Bhojan garāi Raghunāthki jāna māyā,
Tahā sapatni bhai Rām ki kīrti gāyā."

Ayodhyākānda – Sl-123.

The scene of setting fire to the tail of Hanumān under order from King Rāvana has been graphically described through the employment of the metre Vasantatilakam. The description goes as follows:

"Sācho bhanyo bhani bujhī kapḍā magāyo
Tel ghiule muchhi puchhar bhari berna lāyo,
Hukum diyo aba jalāyā bādhi leū
Serā sahar pani ghumāyera chhāri deū."

Sundarkānda – Sl-122.

Mālinī:

This metre has been explained in the Nāṭya Śāstra by the name Nāṇḍimukhī. Bhanubhakta used this metre 37 times in his Rāmāyana. He described the beauty of Laṅkā in this metre. To wit:

"Najara variparīko jo chha shovā najara bho,
Trikut giri uparkā purimā phernajar go,

Varipari parkhāi chhan bichhichmā chha khāyā
Sahaj tā arule tā garna ko sakchha dāvā.”

Sundarkānda – Sl-17.

Sragdharā:

The naming of this metre has been done with a view to convey the idea of its wide appreciation and circulation (Srak mālym dharatīti Sragdharā). It occurs 41 times in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana. To suit the holy environment of the hermitage of the sage Atri who worshipped Sri Rāmachandra gladly and whose wife Anasūyā blessed and welcomed Sitādevī with earring, sārī and shāwl, the poet has used Sragdharā metre. To wit:

“Sitāle pāumā sir dhari kana bahutai prem buḍimābadhin,
Jor jor kuṇḍal ra sārī dīl kana buḍhile amgarāga pher chadhāin,
Yasle sōvā nirantar didhapani rahulā yo pani binti lāin
Sitājilāi āsīdīi ti Anasūāle bahut harsa pāin.”

Ayodhyākānda – Sl-122.

Indravajrā:

The Indravajrā is one of the widely known metres of Sanskrit prosody. It falls under the class of Vedic Tristup. The poet Bhanubhakta used this metre 32 times in his Rāmāyana. To wit:

“Khup satyavādī ta pitāji thiya,
Sachai hunāle vardān diyā
So pūrṇa garnā kana jānchhu banmā,
Sāncho kurā ho bujhi leu manmā.”

Sundarkānda – Sl-17.

Shikharinī:

To describe the scenes of wailing and lamentation and to describe uncertainty in life, the poet has employed the Shikharinī metre. This can be illustrated with the help of the following verse:

"Sunyau bhāi samsārmā sharir ati kachchā chha janko,
Śarir kachcha jāni na gara timi ris katti manko,
Sabai bhog chāñchal chhan bhjulsari ekchhin na rahanyā,
Vichār yasto rākhi sahu timi vado hunchha sahanā."

Ayodhyākānda – Sl-30.

In a significant departure from the principle followed in employing the metres like Śārdūla, Vasantatilakam, Mālinī, Sragdharā, Indravajrā and Shikharinī, he has used three other metres Upajāti, Svāgatā and Drutavilamvitam in only three specific circumstances.

Upajāti:

The metre Upajāti has been used in sloka no. 102 in Ayodhyākānda. To wit:

"Pharkanna bhaiyyā! timi pharki jāu,
Pitājilāi pani doṣ na lāu."

After searching for Sita, Hanumān returned from Lañka. Sri Rāmchandra welcomed him in Svāgatā metre in verse 153 in Sundarkānda. The derivative meaning of Svāgatā is one whose advent is welcome. And, Hanumān brought the welcome news of Sita's recovery. So the metre Svāgatā has been used here

aptly. To wit:

"Dhanya hun yi Hanumān yi sarīko,
Kohi chhaina aru bhakta Harīko
Bhakti khup gari ta kākh pani pāyā,
Loknā adhik dhanya kahāyā"

Drutavilamvitam:

Similarly, verse no. 376 of Yuddhakanda conveys intermixture of different pleasant ideas and as such the metre Drutavilamvitam has been used. In the above mentioned verse, while mentioning Sri Rāmachandra's "Ayutavarsa Rāj" that means a reign of ten thousand years, and describing the removal of sin after listening to Rāmakathā, the story of Rama, the poet Bhanubhakta has employed the metre Drutavilamvitam. The verse runs as follows:

"Ayutavarsa ta rāj prabhuko bhayo,
Sakal tāp duniyāharūko gayo,
Shibjile yati Pārvati thyai kahyā,
Sakal pāp chhuti jānchha sunirahyā."

Thus we find that the poet Bhanubhakta has based his contribution on the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana which notices significant departure from the basic story of the Rāmāyana. Moreover, it is evident that Nepal is fortunate enough in having such a manifested and inspiring personality in the nineteenth century who was famous not because of the profundity of his Vedantic knowledge, but because of his awareness of the endeavour to use the classical Sanskrit metres through the application of Bhaktivāda and Ātmavāda.

It is known to all that the Aryans gave to India the Sanskrit language which remained a unifying force in the sub-continent for many centuries. It also served as the mother language for the development of many vernaculars and

regional languages of India. By and by Sanskrit became the *lingua franca* of India. Sanskrit, the sacred language of the Hindus, once again received encouragement and patronage at the hands of the hill-people also. As a result, the Nepali writers and poets well versed in their vernacular, changed over to Sanskrit in response to the new trend. The knowledge of Sanskrit became a symbol of culture too. That is why the Nepali prosody was based on the concept of Sanskrit metres. And, being of Aryan race, Bhanubhakta, too, brought about a revolution in the concept of metres. Hence, it is clear to all that the Ramāyana of Bhanubhakta is the modified version in Nepali language from Sanskrit source, ornamented and beautified by classical Sanskrit metres.

In conclusion, we may declare that, with extra-ordinary skill and subtlety, he mingled classical Sanskrit metres with Nepali literature. The seriousness and relevance of Bhanubhakta's message to humanity should not be overlooked.

The poet Bhanubhakta died in 1868, but it seems that he is still with us. Because, his kāvyas have, as all great literature have, transcendental qualities; after reading his kāvyas we find ourselves transported to an extraordinary world. His unique teachings can only save us from the grossness of the modern society and infuse a spirit of enlightenment.

If we can enrich our knowledge of Vedantic philosophy through the verses of Bhanubhakta, we will be able to ignore the transitory mundane pleasure and seek shelter in Sri Nārāyaṇa, the Saviour of all humanity.

Bhanubhakta was the symbol of courage, self-sacrifice and ideals. We will have to achieve our goals and fulfil our dreams after going through the works of Bhanubhakta. The greatness of his talent as well as his honest attempt to be great in this world as he himself confessed again and again through his

writings, will be remembered and followed by all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The poet Bhanubhakta who according to Dr. Parasmani Pradhan is "The greatest figure in Nepali literature"¹⁸ is the national poet of Nepal. But he has not dissociated himself from the tradition and culture of Indian heritage. Indian culture has an all-encompassing and comprehensive outlook and Bhanubhakta has taken up that spirit in accepting the Rāmāyana, which is one of the two national epics of India. And, therefore, the study of Bhanubhakta's handling of the Rāmāyana assumes great importance in the assessment of his literary activities. The poet Lekhnāth Poudyāl eulogizes him in the following verse in Sanskrit Shikharinī metre.

"Fijāri bistārai tarunātama shovā sunhari
Hari sarā kalo tama bhavanko maṅgal gari,
Udaeko Bhānu pratham Kavi Sāhitya nobhamā,
Sovai Nepāli niratishay chhan mānya bhavamā."

Bhānu (Bhānubhakta), after spreading gradually the golden and fresh beauty and dispelling the whole darkness by doing good to the building, appeared in the firmament of (Nepali) literature. And as such all the Nepalese people in this world are very grateful to him.

Bhanubhakta was fond of writing in verse. And as such he has not written in prose. He was a lover of Sanskrit metres. He used classical Sanskrit (cl. skt.) metres throughout his writings and he followed the norms laid down in Sanskrit Prosody. Any language can be enriched with the help of rhetoric and prosody. So application of the metres plays a very important part in any kāvya.

It may be safely said that I have written my project for those readers who want to widen their knowledge of the subject or who feel an urge to have a thorough idea of the cl.Skt. metres used by Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana. Moreover, as far as the growth and development of the subject is concerned, my project will be very much helpful to the readers of Bhanubhakta literature because, in the 2nd chapter, I have mentioned the names of some eminent scholars in the field along with their contributions.

Though some of the learned people who are well versed in Nepali literature know that Bhanubhakta has used some of the cl. Skt. metres in his kāvyas but this fact is not well known to those Sanskrit scholars who are not fully conversant with Nepali literature. Therefore, the main purpose of my study is to make them understand that cl. Skt. metres can also be used in Nepali literature. With the help of presentation and analysis of the data (a) Text, (b) Tables and (c) Figures, I have tried my best to clarify my project. We have always held the view that the study of Bhanubhakta literature is very essential for a comparative study in Nepali Sanskrit literature. We have also felt that the understanding of the modern Nepali language will be much more clear if a student has some background of the works of Bhanubhakta. Moreover, it is hoped that my approach will help further national integration because literature is the main vehicle for carrying the message of national integration. The students, teachers and researchers who are curious to read works of Bhanubhakta will also be well acquainted with his kāvyas along with various kinds of classical Sanskrit metres used by him.

The following objectives are the corner-stones of my project. Firstly, the central objective of my writing is to provide a clear understanding and appreciation of the various metres used by Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana.

canto by canto. The other purpose of my project is to awaken in the researchers a deep interest in the definitions, characteristics and formations with examples of the nine cl. Skt. metres used by Bhanubhakta.

Lastly, Bhanubhakta, despite his contributions in Nepali literature is not yet well known to the people outside Nepal. So this approach is expected to popularize him beyond the confines of his own country, including other Sub-Himalayan areas. To sum up, it may be emphasized that my research will enable the readers (1)to enumerate the various cl. Skt. metres used by Bhanubhakta in the Rāmāyana, (2) to describe the basic aspects of the cl. Skt. metres especially of the nine metres used by Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana, (3)to define the term "Metres" as employed in the Nepalese literature and to have a full knowledge about the necessity of metres, (4)to have an idea of all the determining factors of metres such as Vṛtta, Jāti, Mātrā, classification of vowels, definition of the Gaṇas, and definition and placing of Yati, (5)to get an idea of the formation of metres in Nepali Literature along with its antiquity and present position, (6)to have an idea of cantowise distribution of metres with special reference to the metres used in particular places, as well as in each and every sloka, (7)to highlight Sanskrit language which for many centuries became the source of inspiration for many Nepali poets and dramatists. It is intended further to provide the reader with an idea of the important literature related to this study (8)to enable them to gather more knowledge about the works of Bhanubhakta and about his life history in brief, and (9)to provide an idea of the difference between the Skt. Adhyātma Rāmāyana and Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana.

We may conclude this section with the following words. There are two more driving forces behind the study of Bhanubhakta literature. The first is concerned with the need to do something about the Cl. Skt. metres used by Bhanubhakta in his kāvyas. The second which has a longer academic

tradition is concerned with trying to understand the essentials of Vedantic Philosophy (including Ātmavāda and Bhaktivāda) propagated by the poet through his Rāmāyana and other writings.

1.3 A brief life history of the poet Bhanubhakta

The poet Bhanubhakta was born on 29th Āsāḍha, Vikramīya Samvat 1871, i.e. on the 13th July, 1814 A. D. He came from a well to do and respectable family of a Brāhmin, Śrī Krishna Āchārya, who lived in western Nepal, in the village of Ramghā in Tanhūn. According to Motirām Bhatta, his first biographer, Śrī Krishna Āchārya was a highly learned man who devoted himself to Brahmakārya. His profound knowledge and innate virtuous nature earned him fame all over Tanhūn. Once Bhanubhakta was questioned 'who are you'? He composed a verse (in Śārdulavikrīditam metre) in reply wherein he summarized his identity as "there lived in the hills of Tanhun a Brahmin named Sri Krishna Āchārya. Being of a high and respectable Aryan background, he devoted himself to the well being of the society. A highly learned man, he imparted his knowledge to me. It is he whose grandson I am. The verse runs thus:

"Pahārko atibes des tanahūmā Śrī Krishna brāhmanthiyā,
Khup uccākul Aryavamsī hunagai satkarmamā man-diya
Vidhyāmāpani jo dhurandhar bhai sikṣā malāi diyā,
Inko nāti ma Bhānubhakta bhani hūn yo jāni chihni liya"¹⁹

(written in Śārdula metre)

Śrī Krishna Āchārya had six sons. The eldest was Dhanañjaya and the others were Kasinātha, Padmanābha, Tulsī, Gaṅgādutta and Indravilāsa, who was the youngest one. Bhanubhakta was the eldest son of Dhanañjaya. Being the eldest grandson, Bhanubhakta was very favourite of Śrī Krishna Āchārya. Dhanañjaya was very busy with his Govt. Service. So Bhānubhakta's grandfather undertook the responsibility of rearing him up. We got this information from Sri Motirām Bhatta's book, "Kavi Bhānubhaktako

When Bhanubhakta was about twenty-two years' old, he made up his mind to serve the people by composing poems. This decision was the outcome of a chance encounter with a grass cutter who, although poor, intended to serve the society by digging a well so that he would leave a mark behind him after his death. Bhanubhakta thought to himself, "Fie on me! to live without earning fame." This feeling has been expressed through one of his couplets written in Sanskrit Vasantatilakam metre. "Dhikkār hol Ma kana basnu na rākhi kīrti."²⁰ Thus we learn that the wisdom of a grass-cutter inspired in him a desire to make himself immortal in this world and this he sought to do through poetry. He thought of translating the Rāmāyana (from Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana) in Nepali language.

He learnt Sanskrit literature and Grammar along with Astrology. The principal source of his inspiration was Sanskrit literature. He became proficient in Sanskrit metres also. He composed Bālakānda in 1841 A. D. (Sam 1898). After composing Bālakānda, Bhanubhakta composed some stanzas, couplets and lyrics for eight years. In the words of Sri Motirām Bhatta, "Rāmāyana Bālakānda benaye pachi at varsa samma Kavi Bhanubhakta jile phatphut kavita matra gare."²¹

The poet was in prison for five months as victim of circumstances beyond his control. During his days in prison he composed the Ayodhyakānda, the Aranyakānda, the Kishkindhyakānda and the Sundarkānda. Next year he composed the Yuddhakanda and the Uttarkānda. Bhanubhakta was a man of

this world having a wife and sons. He was not an ascetic and his Ramāyana was meant for people like him. The actual date of his death is not definitely known. But according to Sri Motīrām Bhatta, he died in Sāmvat 1925 i.e. in 1868 A.D. while, according to Dr. Kumar Pradhan, he died in 1869. He is further of the opinion that "Nepali literature is often described as beginning with Bhanubhakta Āchārya (1814-1869 A. D.)."²²

1.4 Works of Bhanubhakta

Bhānubhakta's major works are the Rāmāyana, Badhūshikshā (Advice to the daughter-in-law), Pras'nottarī (Catechism), and Bhaktamālā (Garland of Devotion). Besides these works, he also composed many lyrics, couplets and stanzas. Among such poems two were written in praise of the beauty of Kāthmāndu and of Bālājū. Bhānubhakta's literary works may be classified into two groups: (1) Translated and (2) Original. His Rāmāyana, Pras'nottarī and Rāmageetā belong to the first group. His Badhūshikshā, Bhaktamālā, lyrics, couplets and other stanzas belong to the original group.

The Rāmāyana:

His Magnum opus, the Rāmāyana, is the free and condensed rendering of the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana containing one thousand three hundred and nineteen verses of four lines. Though translated, Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyana may be considered as a original composition. While the main theme remains the same, long stutis are generally omitted and the incidents are condensed. At places, the poet has given a local touch or added something of his own to suit the environment of his time and to rivet the local attraction. Thus the poet becomes innovative. In a word his Rāmāyana is the first classic of the Nepali language. It has been the most popular work on classical Sanskrit metres. On account of simplicity, lucidity and elegance, Bhānubhakta's Rāmāyana is popular not only amongst the Nepalese but also in the non-Nepali speaking world. Hence, Dr. Kumar Pradhan opines that "*this work occupies the venerated status of an epic in the Nepali-speaking world.*"²³

Prasñottari:

It is a translation of Sañkarāchārya's Maniratnamālā written in Sam 1910 (A.D.1853). It is composed in forty-eight stanzas with the application of three classical Sanskrit metres viz. Indravajrā, Upendravajrā and Vasantatilakam. It is a glorious testimony to his poetic genius that, in Prasñottari, he made questions and furnished the answers in the same stanza. As for example, the poet says:

"Kun jñān chha thūlo bhani līnu parnyā?

Vedāntako Jñān chha dukkha harnyā."

Which knowledge should be taken as vast? It is the knowledge of the Vedānta that removes misery. Another example may be cited here:

"Kun ho jagatko gahanā banyāko?

Vidyai chha sabko gahanā banyāko."

What is the ornament of the world? The answer is: Knowledge is the ornament for all. "Kun dhanya ho? Jun chha paropakari." Who is fortunate? One who does good to others.

"Kun Pujya ho? Tattvalinya bichari."

Who is honourable? One who takes up philosophy i.e. Vedantic philosophy. Many such questions and answers may also be cited from the poet's famous devotional poem "Prasñottari". Regarding the speciality of this poem, Sri Bhaichand Pradhan of Kalimpong, opines that "Yo granthama euta visesata yo pani chha ki ekai slokma prasna pani garieta chha, tyasko uttarpani dieko chha."²⁴ In this book, the poet put the question and supplied the answer in the same sloka.

The Rāmageeta:

The Rāmageeta forms the fifth section of the last canto of Uttarkānda, in the Adhyatma Rāmāyana. It is the last work of the poet Bhanubhakta. The Rāmageeta contains the gist of Vedantic philosophy. The poet Bhanubhakta sums up the contents of 62 verses from Sanskrit source in 29 or 30 stanzas. According to Sri Motirām Bhatta, in the Vikramiya Sam 1925 (A.D. 1868), Bhanubhakta was suffering from fever. As a result he lost his appetite as well as energy and strength. In this year, his friend, Dharmadutta Subbā, who was one of his neighbours in Nepal, requested (or suggested to) the poet to translate the Rāmageeta. Accordingly, the poet made the translation of the Rāmageeta though he was bed-ridden due to Kālā-azar. The poet solicited the services of his son Ramanāth as his writer.

Badhūshikshā:

Badhūshikshā, composed in Sam 1919 (AD 1862) which consists of thirty-three verses (according to Dr.Kumar Pradhan thirty-two) was considered as an original work of Bhanubhakta. The Sanskrit metres used in this work are Sārdūlavikrīditam, Mālīnī and Vasantatilakam.

Some scholars are of the opinion that Badhūshikshā may not be considered as the original works of the poet Bhanubhakta. But, diction, style and classical Sanskrit metres employed in this poem undoubtedly prove that it is definitely one of the original works of the poet Bhanubhakta who had good command over Nepali language as well as deep knowledge in rhetoric and prosody. According to Sri Motirām Bhatta, in Sam 1919, one day Bhanubhakta met his friend Tārāpati Upādhyāya Brāhmin on his way home from Nepal. On Tārāpati's earnest request, he agreed to spend a night at his residence. But he

had to spend a sleepless night there following a continuous quarrel between his friend's wife and her daughter-in-law. During his wakeful hours at night he composed some useful instructions for a better and careful running of household. In his opinion, devotion to husband is the greatest quality of a woman. "Striko dharma patibratā ati thūlo."²⁵ According to Sri Bhaichand Pradhan of Kalimpong "Yo granthako racanā bisēṣata badhuharūka nimti garekā-hunatā pani nāri-jati mātrakā nimiti atyanta upayogi chho."²⁶ Though this book has been written especially for badhūs, or wives, yet it is very necessary for womenfolk in general.

Bhaktamālā:

Another original work of Bhanubhakta is **Bhaktamālā**. It is full of quietistic or renunciation. It is essentially a devotional poem and is written in Sam 1910 (AD 1863). It is composed in Sanskrit Shikharinī metre and it consists of twenty-two verses. The Sanskrit rendering of only the first fifteen verses of the poem has been found in Palpā, a city in West Nepal. According to Sri Bāburām Āchārya, Bhanubhakta at first composed the poem with fifteen slokas but, later on, he added to it seven more slokas cf. "Purānā Kavi Ra Kavita" by Bāburām Āchārya, p-165.

The poet Bhanubhakta was fully aware of the uncertainty of life. So he was against the accumulation of wealth. One of his verses in **Bhaktamālā** proves this statement. The poet says:

**"Jagatmā Prithvikā adhipati baḍā daulathi thiya,
Marankā velāmā bujhilinu ti kya likana gagā?"**

Nirantaryai samjhi Hari bhaji rahos shuddha manie,

Parantu hak marnyai chha ta batuli kyā garnu dhanie?"

Loosely translated, this means the following: 'The Lord of the Earth in this world was very wealthy, but did he take anything at the time of his death? Considering this you should always worship Sri Nārāyaṇa with pure mind. If you are destined to die, what is the use of accumulating wealth?'

Bhanubhakta composed two lyrics. One of them praising the beauty of Kāthmāṇḍu written in Sanskrit Totak Metre is very famous. Sometimes we can hear through TV or Radio, the singing of the verses of this lyric by some good singers. The first verse runs thus:

"Chapalā abalāharu ek suramā

Guna Kesariko phula lee Shiramā

Hidanyā sakhi likana oripari

Amarāvati Kāntipuri nagari."

Verse No. 1

The poet Bhanubhakta has composed many stanzas. His skill lies in adopting a particular metre to a particular stanza. His different stanzas written in Sans. Sārdūla, Vasantatilakam, Indravajrā and Totaka metres exhibit many facets of his personality.

While writing on Bhanubhakta as a poet, Sri Sūrya Vikram Jñavāli writes:

"The years of the composition of the various works of Bhanubhakta according to Motiram Bhaṭṭa are noted below:

1836	--	<i>First two poems</i>
1841	--	<i>Bālakānda</i>
1849	--	<i>Poems relating to Bārajū and Kathmāṇḍu</i>
1852	--	<i>Ayodhya, Aranya, Kiskindhya and Sundarkānda</i>
1853	--	<i>Yuddha and Uttarkānda, Prasṅnottari and Bhaktamāla</i>
1862	--	<i>Badhūshikshā and</i>
1868	--	<i>Rāmageeta²⁷</i>

1.5 Differences between the Adhyātma Rāmāyana

and

Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana

In this topic, I shall confine myself to the following important points: Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is the master piece of Nepal's greatest poet. It is a well-known fact that Bhanubhakta's Nepali Rāmāyana is based on The Adhyātma Rāmāyana which is written in Sanskrit language. According to Dr. Kumar Pradhan, "the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana is an anonymous work of a sectarian nature, probably belonging to a sect propounded by Rāmānūja."²⁸

A thorough study of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana produced a powerful impact on the mind of Bhanubhakta and accordingly he felt an inner urge to write a Rāmāyana of his own, taking the main theme from the Sanskrit source.

Analysis of all the verses of The Adhyātma Rāmāyana and those of Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana reveal significant differences between the two epics. After a close study of all the stanzas of Adhyātma Rāmāyana and those of Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana, it is evident that Bhanubhakta wrote his Rāmāyana in a concise form that made it easy for understanding. He omitted long stutis with which the Adhyātma Rāmāyana is galore. There is no sub-division or upa-bibhājana in his Rāmāyana whereas there is upa-bibhājana in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana.

Total number of stanzas of Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana is 1319 whereas that of the Adhyātma Rāmāyana is 4247 with sixty-five Sargas. A comparative

chart showing total number of slokas of Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana and those of the Adhyātma Ramāyana has been affixed to the project. Bhanubhakta influences the heart of the common people by adding something of his own to suit the environment of his time. He uses simple language that is easy for memorising. His language is simple and lucid. In some places he has given such a local touch in his composition that influences the heart of the common illiterate mass. His writings are short but significant and the language is sweet.

The general rule (especially in the case of the Ramāyana) of changing the metre at the end of a canto is observed in the Adhyātma Ramāyana whereas Bhanubhakta deviates from this practice with the exception of Ayodhyākānda and Sundarkānda where he has changed metres at the end.

Sanskrit Adhyātma Ramāyana has been composed mainly in Anuṣṭup metre. Only at the concluding stanzas of each Sarga, different metres have been used. After a thorough scanning of all the concluding stanzas of The Adhyātma Ramāyana, I have found that the metres Vasantatilakā, Indravajrā and Upendravajrā have been used widely. In some places the metres Sragdharā, Vamsasthvilam and Sārdulā also have been used. Concluding sloka of Uttarkānda in the Adhyātma Ramāyana has been composed in Vasantatilakā metre whereas Bhanubhakta concludes his Uttarkānda with Sragdharā metre.

After a thorough scanning of all the slokas of Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana, it is clear to us that without using only one metre in the main body of his Ramāyana, Bhanubhakta used nine classical Sanskrit metres, all of which belong to Samavṛtta type.

Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana acquired a special prominence because of his introduction of Nepali colloquial language in many places. The

popular idioms are attractive to the people. The language gains a special urgency because of the fact that Bhanubhakta tried to make the language idiomatic and poetic.

So far as the main theme is concerned, it may be said that Bhanubhakta followed the Adhyātma Rāmāyana fully with the exception of a single instance where he has changed a little.

This may be outlined as follows:

In the Adhyātma Rāmāyana it has been stated that Hanumān being thirsty sought for water from the sage who was the Rākṣasa Kālnemi in disguise. As the sage requested Hanumān to take water from the pitcher (cf. the Adhyātma Rāmāyana: Komāṇḍalum gataṁ toyam tvam pātumisyasi), Hanumān said that it would not quench his thirst fully. But Kālnemi disguised as a sage advised him to go to the nearby lake where the demoness was lying in wait in the form of a crocodile. But in Bhanubhakta's writing we find that the sage offered water, cf-

"Khojyā jal Hanumānle ra khusi bhai tesle tahāā jal diyo."

Bhānu's Rāmāyana, Yuddhakāṇḍa, Sl. 139

This has been slightly modified.

The poet Bhanubhakta introduced certain changes in characterisation. His Rama has a distinctive character of his own. He is more human than an avatāra. His Sita is courageous. She is not frightened when threatened by the maids of Rāvana whereas in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana she is frightened and bewildered, cf. A. Rāmāyana Sundarkāṇḍa canto two, sloka 21:

"Sītā bhītā liyamānā svātmanyeva sumadhya gā,

Adhomukhyāsrūṇayānā sthītā Rāmārpitāntarā"

Rāvāna advised Sita with the following words: "Forsake Rama. Don't keep any hope in him because he is uneducated (mūrkhā), ungrateful (kritaghna) and worthless (adhama). Don't spoil your youth. Recognise me as your husband (malāi patimāna). I will keep you with deep love (Sāhrai prem garī rākhulā). Moreover, Rama has no quality at all (baigunī chhan Rōma tā)."

Having heard this, Sita became mad with anger. Her eyes became red. Her reply to Rāvāna is also noteworthy. It is a burning example of the everlasting courage of a lady. It also conveys great lesson to every woman who is deeply devoted to her husband. Sita told him --

**"Pāji Rāvāna! boldachhas kati bahut durvāchya bakbak garī
Rāghav dekhl darāi chhalna bhani ek sanniyāsiko rup dhari
Jasle yajna vise havi kukurle harchhan usai challe
Rām Lakshman na huda haris ta bujhile maris yasai kalle."**

Sundarkanda, Sl.40

"Oh the wicked Rāvāna! Why are you uttering so many unpleasant words constantly? Being afraid of Rāghava, assuming the garb of a mendicant only to cheat him, you came during the absence of Rama and Lakshmana to abduct me in the same manner as the dog takes away the offering of the sacrifice. You will surely be rewarded with death." Bhanubhakta's Bharata is not rude, but he has been depicted in Sanskrit Adhyatma Ramayana as an angry prince who has addressed his mother Kaikeyi as demoness (Rākshasi), wicked (duṣṭā) and killer of husband (bhartrghātini).

We know very well that both in the Rāmāyana and in Bhāsa's work, Bharata has been found to be a rather unsympathetic to his mother Kaikeyi whose main object was to install her son to the throne. And the age-old estimate in India has been against Kaikeyi for this selfish approach. But Bhanubhakta

has tried to redeem her character through Bharata who has paid the highest tribute to her mother by speaking in a tone full of pathos rather than anger. To wit:

"Gayā jahā̄ Sītāpati ma pani jānchhu aba tahā̄
Phagat ek Kaikeyī yahibasirahun chhoddachhu yahā̄
Phalāhārī hunchhū sirabhari jatadhārī banamā
Ma bhōlī janyāchhū hidikana vichār yai chha manamā"

Loosely translated in English, this means:

"There I will go where the Lord of Sita has gone,
Let Kaikeyī live, I'll leave her here alone,
Rather on fruits and with matted locks in forest I'll live
Tomorrow this place, I will leave."

It will not be irrelevant to remember in this connection some lines from Dr. Kumar Pradhan – *"The original Sanskrit work is not considered to be a valued literary piece. It differs from Vālmiki's epic in many respects and its main purpose was to preach the cult of Bhakti or Devotion on the basis of Śaṅkarāchārya's Vadānta. But the preaching of Vedānta does not seem to be the direct concern of Bhanubhakta's work."*²⁹

Bhanubhakta's Rāvāna is nobler. It may be noted that in depicting the sublime aspect of Rāvāna's dealings with Sita, Bhanubhakta has referred to Rāvāna's taking of the earth without touching the feet of Sita and it is reasonable to comment that Bhanubhakta was probably influenced by the Bala Rāmāyana of Rājasekhara in presenting the role of Rāvāna. Bhanubhakta's Rāvāna is nobler because he does not touch Sita for another reason. The poet says –

Sītājīlai manle chihni kana manamā matr̥vat buddhi gardo

Hātīe maile chhudamā anuchit chha bhani sparsā hātīe no
gardo

Aranyakāṇḍa, Sl. 83

"Knowing Sita inwardly and thinking her to be mother-like;

Aware that it would be improper to touch her, he did not touch."

A table showing the total no. of slokas in Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana:

Bāla	Ayo	Ar.	Kis	Sun	Yu	Uttar	Total
139	123	122	143	154	381	257	1319

A table showing the total number of slokas with Sargas (cantos) in the Adhyātma
Rāmāyana (according to the Adhyātma Rāmāyana which I have consulted):

<u>Kāṇḍa</u>	<u>Slokas</u>	<u>Sargas</u>
Bāla	390	7
Ayo	728	9
Aranya	516	10
Kiskindhya	560	9
Sundarkāṇḍa	327	5
Yuddhakāṇḍa	1115	16
Uttarkāṇḍa	611	9
TOTAL	4247	65

A thorough study of all the verses of The Adhyātma Rāmāyana and those of Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana disclosed the following deviation. To highlight the contrast, a comparative chart is given below showing the differences between the two Rāmāyanas:

Sl.	<u>The Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u>	<u>Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana</u>
1.	Total No. of slokas: 4247	Total No. of slokas: 1319
2.	There is Upa-vibhājana with 65 cantons(Sargas)	There is no Upa-vibhājana
3.	There are long stutis	Long stutis have been omitted
4.	Greatness of The <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u> has been described elaborately	A short description of the greatness of the <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u> is given
5.	Elaborate incidents are found	Incidents are condensed
6.	The <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u> is famous for wide narration	Bhanubhakta's <u>Rāmāyana</u> is marked for lucid narration
7.	The <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u> is monotonous	Bhanubhakta's <u>Rāmāyana</u> is attractive
8.	The <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u> is descriptive	Bhanubhakta becomes innovative
9.	No sudden change of metres	Change of metres suddenly
10.	No change of spelling	Change of spelling sometimes for the sake of metres
11.	There is mangalācharana in the <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u>.	No mangalācharana in Bhanubhakta's <u>Rāmāyana</u>
12.	The metre Anustup has been used widely in the <u>Adhyātma Rāmāyana</u>	Bhanubhakta did not use the metre Anustup at all in his <u>Rāmāyana</u>.

13. *The metre Śārdūla has been used sometimes only in the concluding stanzas of some sargas.* *Too much use of Śārdūla metre in main body.*
14. *Change of metres always at the concluding stanza.* *There are changes in metres only at the concluding stanzas of Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Sundarkāṇḍa and Uttarkāṇḍa.*

1.6 Why did Bhānubhakta select classical Sanskrit

metres in his Rāmāyana?

The poet Bhānubhakta occupies a unique place in Nepali literature. His Rāmāyana is the manifestation of his earnest love for Sanskrit language and literature. It has been sometimes said that the poet Bhanubhakta is great not because he composed the Rāmāyana in Nepali language but because he used nine classical Sanskrit metres in his epic.

Though Jhyāure compositions are universally popular amongst the Nepalese, Bhānubhakta did not use the metre in his writings. It is to be noted that the metrical rhythm of Nepali poetry for long depended almost exclusively on Cl. Skt. metres of Samavṛtta type. And, as such, the writers on metres in Nepali literature had formulated the definitions of some of the classical Sanskrit metres (those which have been frequently used by many poets) after translating them from the great work Chhandomañjari of Gaṅgādāsa.

The poet Bhanubhakta was trained and instructed by his grandfather Sri Krishna Āchārya, who himself was well versed in Sanskrit language and literature. It is known to us that Pandit Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa, who was a contemporary of Bhānubhakta also translated the Rāmāyana in Nepali language which is also based on Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana. But unfortunately only his Sundarkānda survives. The poet Raghunāth was also a follower of Sanskrit metres. He discarded the established Jātiya Chhandas and used different classical Sanskrit metres in his epic.

Now the question arises – why did the poet Bhanubhakta select classical Sanskrit metres in his Ramayana and other writings instead of selecting other Nepali Jāṭiya Chhandas such as Jhyāure, Bāḷun, Muktak, Savāi etc.? The reason is obvious. His deep love and great interest and aptitude for Sanskrit language and literature prompted him to choose classical Sanskrit metres in his Ramayana and other writings. He has used different classical Sanskrit metres in his works including his two lyrics, couplets and other stanzas. Different metres have been used to express emotions of Bhakti, Karuṇā and Vīrarasa.

Sri Bhaichand Pradhan of Kalimpong, a well-known writer and commentator, in the chapter “Chhanda-Chundi” of his famous book ‘Adikavi Bhanubhakta Acharya’, clearly and vividly explains the reasons of selecting Sanskrit metres by Bhanubhakta in his Ramayana and other writings.

If we go through the history of Nepali literature, we find that the poet Lakshmiprasād Deokotā wrote his famous book Munāmadan with the application of Jāṭiya Chhanda Jhyāure. The poet Dharanīdhar Sharma also used the metre Jhyāure in many of his poems. According to Sri Pradhan though there were plenty of uses of the Jāṭiya chhandas, during the time of the poet Bhanubhakta, yet gradually the use of Jāṭiya chhandas had been discarded not only by Bhanubhakta, but also by many other poets. And, fortunately, these Jāṭiya chhandas had been replaced by Sanskrit chhandas. Accordingly, many poets such as Indiras, Patañjali, Basanta Sarmā, Vidyāranayakesari and many others have used Sanskrit metres in their writings.

The poet Patañjali composed his poem Matsyendranathko Katha with the application of seven Sanskrit metres, viz. Sragdharā Vasantatilakam, Sārdula, Mālinī, Upajāti, Bhūjaṅgaprayātam and Indravajrā. He composed his

Haribhaktamālā mainly in Vasantatilakam metre. Only at the concluding stanza, he has employed the metre Mālīnī. His Balogopālavāni has been composed in Sanskrit, Svagatā and Shikharinī metres.

Basanta Sarma, who had studied astrology also, was a follower of Sanskrit metres. His Krishnacharita (Life of Sri Krishna, a part of the Mahābhārata) which can be considered as the longest poetical work in Nepali, has been composed exclusively in Śārdūlavikrīditam metre.

So we can declare that Sanskrit metres in great numbers were applied in Nepali literature even before the poet Bhanubhakta.

Vidyāranjakesari's Gopikāstuti (taken from Śrīmadbhāgatam) has been composed with the application of Sanskrit Indirā metre.

In the language of Sri Bhaichand Pradhan, "Atah yo drdhtāpūrbak bhannu sakincha ki Nepālī sahityamā Sanskrita chhandako prochar yathestha bhaisakeko thiya."³⁰

Due to the popularity of Sanskrit metres during Bhanubhakta's time, the poet also used Sanskrit metres throughout his writings.

Now another question arises: why there was much popularity of Sanskrit Chhandas during Bhanubhakta's time? Sri Pradhan clarifies it in details. According to him, knowledge of Sanskrit and the reading of books written in Sanskrit language were the means of acquiring knowledge during Bhanubhakta's time. The poet Bhanubhakta also read many books in Sanskrit language and being influenced in Sanskrit language felt the necessity of

translating Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana in Nepali language.

Another reason for selecting Sanskrit metres by Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana and other writings has been given by Sri Bhaichand Pradhan. According to him, during Bhanubhakta's time, the people were deprived of a simple, lucid and beautiful language. So, there was an immediate necessity of a high class language like Sanskrit and Bhanubhakta felt an urgent necessity of Sanskrit metres also along with the language. In his language, "Yaska nim̐ti jahā saral saundaryapūr̐na, lalit̐tyapūr̐na, sādhar̐an boddhagomya au kim̐chit uchchakotikā bhāśako avasyakata̐ thiyo, tyahā tyasko sāthsāthi Bhanubhaktale Sanskrita chhandako pani avasyakata̐ aubhav gare."³¹

There was another reason behind the purpose of selecting Sanskrit Chhandas by Bhanubhakta in his Rāmāyana. The poet used to hear with great attention the slokas used during the occasion of marriage and worship. Special attention was given not only to the subject matter but also to the metres used in those compositions. It should be kept in mind that all those slokas were written mainly in Sanskrit language with Sanskrit metres.

Hence in conclusion, like Sri Bhaichand Pradhan, we also may hold the view that while composing his own Rāmāyana, Bhanubhakta used classical Sanskrit metres according to his own choice.

And it may be safely said that the poet Bhanubhakta selected classical Sanskrit metres out of spontaneous urge. To quote Sri Pradhan, "Svayam̐nā kavitva-pratibhā nihita bhāeko hunāle yasto rachanāharūnā mātra hoina ki rachanagata chhandaprati pani tinko dhyān ākarsita hunthyo, kāran, yasta

avasarkā pāthan au gayanka rachanaharū adhikatarā Sanskrit bhāṣā tathā
Sanskrita chhandamā hunchhan. Atah, pachhi svamle rachanā garda āphulāi
man parekā chhandalāi tinle prayog gare, yo spasta chha. Yasari
Bhanubhaktakā chhanda-chunaimā tinkā afnnā mastiskako samyogko prabhāb
pani dherai nai pareko chha bhane atyukti hūdaina".³²

1.7 Significance of the Problem

During the course of my professional career I learnt Nepali language and became interested in Bhanubhakta literature. Hence I want to keep standing contributions to the growth and development of Bhanubhakta's works. It is perfectly correct to say that many of his writings enjoyed great popularity by maintaining a standard of style in language and a proper application of various types of classical Sanskrit metres used in his writings. But it may be safely said that in writing my thesis paper I have faced many grave problems that I want to highlight. I requested many persons for supplying me books, magazines and other kinds of data on Bhanubhakta's literature. But to my great misfortune, I found that only a few made response to my appeal. Again due to the non-availability of books of English language regarding Bhanubhakta's work, I had to depend on the only authentic book in English language viz. "A History of Nepali Literature", written by Dr.Kumar Pradhan and published by Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, in the year 1984. But some other books written in Nepali language on Bhanubhakta literature are also available in the market. So I had to depend on those books mainly.

It is known to all that recently there has been a pronounced re-awakening of scholarly interest in the study of Bhanubhakta literature. It is obvious that the application of classical Sanskrit metres is of crucial importance in the literature of Bhanubhakta. My great and growing interest in the study of this literature developed by attending Bhānu-Jayanti ceremony organised by Nepali Adhyayan Samity, Kalimpong. Myself being a Bengalee woman, as well as a Selection-Grade Lecturer in Sanskrit, the writing of this thesis has been a challenging as well as enjoyable task for me. According to some hill people my work is

interesting and rewarding also. Therefore, all the problems which I have faced are pleasing and absorbing for me.

There is no harm in confessing that as a non-Nepali female scholar, I had to face many difficulties in reading the original text of Bhanubhakta. But that difficulty I have overcome. Sometimes I took guidance from Nepali scholars, sometimes I personally went to meet some of the teachers learned in that area. I must admit the co-operation and assistance of some notable persons. I have tried to discover the skill with which Bhanubhakta used the classical Sanskrit metres in his text.

Needless to say, one has to confront many difficulties working on a topic like this. But thank God, I have been able to complete my project after removing all the obstacles by my determination, dedication and application.

1.8 Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions:

In this world, literary language have been found to be divided into two groups –viz. prose and verse. Verse becomes charming and graceful with the application of metres. Bhanubhakta was well-versed in verification. He learnt Sanskrit and became proficient in Sanskrit metres. It is to be noted that Sanskrit was a fully developed language during his time and became the source of inspiration for many poets and writers in Nepali literature. And as such like his predecessor poets he also used many classical Sanskrit metres in his Rāmāyana and other writings. We know very well that he was a poet of unique vision. He learnt Sanskrit and accepted the Sanskrit Adhyātma Rāmāyana as the source of his Nepali Rāmāyana. The Adhyātma Rāmāyana is written mainly in Anuṣṭup metre. But in order to relieve the monotonous tone of description, the poet Bhanubhakta used different Sanskrit metres in his Rāmāyana.

Bhanubhakta's language is Nepali but mixed with Prakrit. And, Prakrit is the oldest form of Sanskrit. Hence we find great affinity of Sanskrit with Nepali. In support of my statement I am quoting some lines from the Introduction to the book 'A History of Nepali Literature' written by Dr. Kumar Pradhan: "Nepali belongs to the Indo-Aryan family, that is, like most of the other languages of North India, it is derived from a speech, the earliest form of which is to be found in the Rigveda." As professor R.L.Turner writes in the introductory part of his *A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language* (London 1931), "The proof that Nepali has descended from Sanskrit rests upon the fact

that many details of its grammatical structure find their explanation only in the corresponding forms of the earlier language, and that much of its vocabulary, allowing for a regular correspondence of sounds between the two languages, is identical with that of Sanskrit."³³

That the Nepali scholars used Sanskrit metres in their writings is not surprising. But what is remarkable is that the language Nepali has descended from Sanskrit which has been proved by many writings of different scholars. Bhanubhakta's *Rāmāyaṇ* is great in every aspect, great in intellectual thirst and in the beauty of its expression, lucidity of language, originality of using Nepali idioms in proper in proper places, application of Alliteration and excellence in Rhetoric and Prosody. The prominent speciality of his writing is that all of his stanzas are composed with metres and the metres used by him belong to classical Sanskrit of Samavṛtta type. We know that Bhanubhakta brought about a revolution in the concept of metres in Nepali literature. He discarded the established Nepali chhandas such as Jhyāure, Bālun etc. But, on the other hand, he employed different classical Sanskrit metres in his writings.

To conclude, it may be assumed that Bhanubhakta had probably a natural inclination for music and for this reason he was charmed with the musical effect of Sanskrit metres. This may explain the reason for adopting so many Sanskrit metres belonging to the Samavṛtta type which produce beautiful sonorous effect.

Limitations:

We know very well that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is regarded as one of the two national epics in India. And as such many leading intellectuals of the hill areas

have been influenced greatly by the Rāmāyana of the celebrated poet Bhanubhakta. His life and works have been had a profound influence on our mental make up, social structure and intellectual development. Bhanubhakta's writings inspired me to such an extent that I have whole heartedly devoted myself to the research work on Bhanubhakta's Rāmāyana with special reference to the different Sanskrit metres used by him along with the discussion of different metres used in the Adhyātma Rāmāyana through the different verses of the epic.

Whether Bhanubhakta has followed the traditional practice of composing a mahākāvya with benediction, distribution of cantos, deriving the theme from old narratives, and making one of the nine basic sentiments, i.e. Śṛṅgāra or Vira as the prevailing one; and other marks as laid down by the rhetoricians like Dandin, Bhāmaha, Vāmana and Viswanātha – this is an important question to be answered.

The answer is obvious. The poet Bhanubhakta did not follow all the rules laid down by the above mentioned rhetoricians. The renowned rhetorician Viswanātha, in his famous book “Sāhitya Darpana” describes the different rules (characteristics) for composing a Mahakāya (epic) which runs as follows:

*“Sargabandho mahākāvyaṃ tatraiko nāyakah surah
 Sadvaṃśah Kshatriyo vāpi dhirodattagunānvitah
 Ekavaṃśabhavā bhūpāḥ kulajā behavoapi vā,
 Śṛṅgāravirasāntāmekoṅgi rasa ishyate.
 Aṅgānisarveṣu rasah sarve natakasandayah
 Itihāsotbhavam Vrittamanyadvā sajjanāśrayam*

Chattārestsya vargāḥ systeshvekr̥m̄cha phalāmbhabet

Ādau namaskriyāsirvā vastunirdeśāeva vā,

Kachinnindā khalādinām̄ satāñcha gunakirttanam

Eka-vrittamayaiḥ padyairvasāneanyavrittakai.

Nātisvalpā nātidirghāḥ sargāḥ astadhikā iha

Sargānte bhāvisargasya kathāyāḥ sūchanam bhavet.¹³⁴

That means a kāvya (versified poems) will be considered as a mahākāvya, if it is divided by chapters termed as sargas or cantos. In the mahākāvya, the hero will be of Dhīrodatta type as the hero Kārtikeya in Kumāra Sambhavam of Kalidāsa. Or the hero should be any ksatriya of Dhīradatta nature, who comes of a very good family, as we find the hero Nala in Naiṣadhacharitm of Sri Harṣa and Arjuna in Bhāravi's Kirātārjunīyam.

The word "api" includes the highly qualified persons (coming from another family) to the category of hero in the epic. Again, many kings of high family (kulin) with the qualification of Dhīrodatta type and descending from the same family may be described as the hero of the epic, as Dilīpa in Kalidāsa's Raghuvamsam.

Among the sentiments viz. Smṅāra, Vira, Sāntā and others, one should be used as the principal sentiment in the epic. As for example, we find the sentiment Smṅāra in Naiṣadacharitam, Vira in Śisupalavadham (of Māgha), or in Kirātārjunīyam, Sāntā in the Mahābhārta and Karuṇa in the Ramayana. There should be a Maṅgalācharana at the beginning according to the rules as laid down by the rhetorians. As for example, we find Namaskāra in Raghuvamsam,

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Āsirvāda in Rukminīharanam. The main body of the cantos will be composed with the application of the same metre but only in the concluding sloka of the canto, different metres will be used. And at the end of the canto, the incident of the following canto should be predicted or indicated.

Now, let us see how far the poet Bhanubhakta was successful in following all the above mentioned rules for composing a mahākāvya. A thorough and attentive study of the whole contents of Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana reveals that Bhanubhakta composed his Ramāyana without showing any Maṅgalācharaṇa though the author of a mahākāvya should begin with a proper salutation to the deities for ensuring smooth completion of the work. Vīrarasa pervades in Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana.

There is no distribution of cantos, there are only seven books (Kāṇḍas) in Bhanubhakta's Ramāyana. The poet derived the theme from Sanskrit Adhyāta Ramāyana, which is said to have been written by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa so far as other marks are concerned the poet Bhanubhakta did not follow them.

The general practice (especially in the case of composing Ramāyana) of changing metre at the end of each canto is not observed by Bhanubhakta. Only at the end of Ayodhyā (2nd book), Sundarkāṇḍa (5th book) and Uttarkāṇḍa, he has changed the metres at the concluding stanzas.

According to the rhetoricians only one metre should be used in the main body of the epic. But Bhanubhakta ignoring this practice used different classical Sanskrit metres in his Ramāyana. Another limitation of the writing of the poet

Bhanubhakta is that he was confined to verses only. No literary work in prose, ascribed to his name is available till today.