

Abstract (Section - 6)
SANSKRIT RIDDLES USING BENGALI PRONUNCIATION

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A living language is not uniformly pronounced by all persons using that language. There are rapid changes in terms of time and place. In a vast country like India it is never expected that Sanskrit had and has one single variety of pronunciation in spite of the fact that there was a standard pronunciation as mentioned in the works of Sanskrit grammar and also of phonetics. In this respect the state of West Bengal in India has a very ill repute and actually very often laughed at by Sanskrit knowing people of other parts of India. In Bengali language no distinction is maintained as regards the pronunciation of three 'sa' sounds, we mean 'śa', 'ṣa' and 'sa', and two 'na' sounds (i.e., 'ṇa' and 'na'). Difference between 'ba' and 'va' is non-existent. Hardly any difference is maintained in the pronunciation of short and long vowels (fortunately leaving 'a' and 'ā') as well. These features of Bengali pronunciation have been transmitted to the pronunciation of Sanskrit as well. This problem has been further aggravated by the fact that a large number of people migrated from the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, along with their more peculiar pronunciation, to West Bengal.

The 'so-called' *Vidagdha-mukha-maṇḍana* by Śrī-dharmadāsa-kavi, published from Calcutta with Bengali translations are quite different, both in number of riddles and contents from the Nirnay-Sagar Press edition. It appears that the nomenclature '*Vidagdha-mukha-maṇḍana*' was no ore used as a proper name but to indicate any work containing riddles, regarded as the 'ornaments for the scholars' (or, 'decoration for the speech of scholars'). These may be called 'local Sanskrit riddles'. Otherwise the greater amount of charm, may be the whole, that is nothing but to confuse or bamboozle the person supposed to find solution to that riddle, will be lost. It may not appear as a riddle at all as well. The first blow of these types of riddles is given by mixing some words of the local language with the Sanskrit. Now it appears to us that every provincial language must possess such riddles to test intellect of the persons of that area and that amount is no less than riddles for all. It needs more proficiency to compose such riddles which are open to almost all persons and thus they attain the perfect status of folk literature. We would explain this fact with a few such riddles.