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Kamalākara

Narahari Achar

Born Vārāṇasī, (Uttar Pradesh, India), circa 1608

Kamalākara was born into a learned family of scholars from Golagrāma, a village on the northern bank of the river Godāvārī. Kamalākara was the second son of Nṛsimha, himself a scholar. His family later moved to Vārāṇasī. Many members of Kamalākara's family were illustrious astronomers, many of whom were also original discoverers. All of them have contributed to the literature on astronomy. Kamalākara learnt astronomy from his elder brother Divākara, who compiled five works on astronomy. Kamalākara cites from Divākara's works.

Kamalākara's major work, *Siddhāntatattvaviveka*, was compiled in Vārāṇasī at about 1658 and has been published by Sudhākara Dvivedi in the Vārāṇasī series. This work consists of 13 chapters in 3,024 verses in different meters and treats such topics as mean positions and true positions of planets, shadows, elevation of the Moon's cusps, rising and settings, eclipses, etc. Although this text borrows heavily from *Sūryasiddhānta*, it contains some things not found in other texts. For example, Kamalākara states that the pole star we see at present is not exactly at the pole. He has assumed a value of 60 units for the radius of the Earth and gives values for sines at 1° intervals. Kamalākara also gives a table for finding the right ascension of a planet from its longitude. According to D. Pingree, he presents the only Sanskrit treatise on geometrical optics. His other works include *Śeṣavāsanā* and *Sauravāsanā*.

Kamalākara was bitterly opposed to Munīśvara, the author of *Siddhāntasārvabhauma*.

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