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## **KALIDASA'S *SHAKUNTALA* AND THE DOCTRINE OF RASA**

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Tripti Mund, M.A., M.Phil.

*Kalidasa's Shakuntala and the Doctrine of Rasa*

**KALIDASA'S *SHAKUNTALA*  
AND  
THE DOCTRINE OF RASA**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE RECRUIREMENT  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN ENGLISH**

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Tripti Mund

Roll No. 7202

Registration No. 10314/01

Date: 12 -09-2003

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala* and the Doctrine of Rasa” submitted by me to the University for the award of degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY embodies my own evaluation of Kalidasa’s play *Shakuntala*. I further declare that this work has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma of any institution nor is it being submitted concurrently to any University for any other award.

(Tripti Mund)

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that Mrs. Tripti Mund, bearing Roll No. 7202 and Registration No. 10314/01 has worked for her M.Phil. dissertation entitled "Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and the Doctrine of *Rasa*" under my guidance. It is also certified that the dissertation is original and is a product of her study and interpretation of Kalidasa's play *Shakuntala*. To the best of my knowledge the dissertation has not been submitted to any other University anywhere else for award of any degree of diploma.

(N.S.R. Ayengar)

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*I owe my gratitude to my dear parents and my beloved husband, for their constant inspiration and ungrudging support, which helped me complete the work,*

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## PREFACE

Kalidasa was the greatest poet and dramatist of Indian classical literature. Although the date of his birth has no definite proof, he is assumed to have lived in 400 A.D. Sanskrit literature owes to him for giving classics like *Abhijnanasakuntalam*, *Meghadutam*, *Kumara-Sambhavam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, etc. His works have attracted readers of all languages. However, when I was at school I had seen a movie named *Shakuntala*. Also the television serial *Viswamitra* had a few episodes on the story of Shakuntala, had left an inerasable impression on my mind. But I read the drama for the first time when I joined Berhampur University as an M.Phil. scholar. We have it as a course curriculum in the paper “Theory of Drama”. I decided to work on the drama *Shakuntala*.

Opportunely I met Dr. N.S.R. Ayengar, Department of English, Berhampur University, who happened to teach us Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala*. I requested him to act as my supervisor. It is because of his careful guidance I could complete the dissertation.

The dissertation attempts to establish the theory of ‘*Rasa*’ in Kalidasa’s major play *Shakuntala*.

Chapter one gives a brief sketch of Kalidasa’s life and the place of his origin and his works. It also deals with the predecessors who influenced Kalidasa and his successors and his influence on them.

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The second chapter discusses the act-wise the summary of the story of the lost ring “*Shakuntala*”. Its sources, theme and technique are also dealt with.

“The Doctrine of *Rasa*”, which is the title of the third chapter is a study on the evolution of *rasa* in dramatic performance and the application of *rasa* theory to *Shakuntala*.

The concluding chapter (Chapter IV) shows Kalidasa’s place in Indian classical literature and Kalidasa as a poet and dramatist. Finally, it shows how far he was successful in applying the doctrine of *rasa* in his play *Shakuntala*.

**- Tripti Mund**

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**CHAPTER – I**

**INTRODUCTION –**

**KALIDASA AND HIS WORKS**

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Kalidasa is the most eminent figure in Sanskrit Literature. His poetic genius has gifted the literary world with unsurpassed dramas and lyrics like *Abhijnanasakuntalam* and *Meghadutam*. These works are a storehouse of ‘*alankara*’, ‘*rasa*’, ‘*bhava*’ and ‘*dhwani*’. He described ‘nature’, ‘beauty’ and ‘love’ with exceptional minuteness. His works clearly reflect the ancient Indian culture and civilisation. For his perfection in poetry he has been called as *Mahakavi*, *Kavi-Siromani*, *Kavikulaguru*. The key to his perfect art is his graceful presentation of aesthetic beauty. Where human emotion is the soul of his artistry, nature’s beauty is the charm. His mastery over sound and language and brevity in style has showered utmost satisfaction on his readers. Bana Bhatta in his *Harsha Charita* says that Kalidasa’s verse is fresh blossoms dripping honey:

*nirgatasu na va kasya  
kalidasasya suktisu,  
priti madhur asardrasu  
manjarisviva jayate*

(Nagaiyah 1).

The majestic combination of words make his work rich with colour and sweetness. The detail description of each aspect in his work left no room for his admirers to get confused or think it as

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incomplete. The only thing his works lack is the details of the time he lived in.

The quest for the exact date and period of his life has posed several problems for scholars. The facts available are too scanty to arrive at a definite date. It is heart breaking that neither the poet nor the Indian tradition could preserve any authentic information about a poet, who has been an inspiration for all ages. With reference to his works critics have assumed a few dates but could come to no conclusive proofs. “The Mandasor inscription by one Vatsabhatti reveals some indebtedness to Kalidasa’s poem *Ritusamharam*” (Rajan 307). Thus critics accept 437 A.D. as the upper limit of Kalidasa’s date. The Aihole inscriptions of *Saka* era i.e., 633 A.D. suggest the lower limit of the great poet’s time.

Traditionally Kalidasa is believed to have been the court poet, one of the nine jewels of Vikramaditya (the ruler of Ujjain). It is believed that Vikramaditya was the founder of the Vikrama or the *Samvat* era. But as critics like Chandra Rajan have doubts on the very identity of Vikramaditya:

The name, Vikramaditya which appears to have been the personal name of an ancient king, legendary or historic, occurs frequently in history. Three kings of that name ruled at Ujjayini at various times; one of the most famous was Yasodharman [...] the most celebrated of these in history being Chandra Gupta II [...]. Other great rulers have been identified with the Vikramaditya

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of tradition, such as Gautami-Putra Satakarn [...]. The question is to determine which of the many Vikramaditya's that history parades was the patron of Kalidasa. Who is the real Vikramaditya?

(Rajan 308).

Such questions jumble the unsolved mystery of Kalidasa's dates. Scholars have even identified king Vikramaditya as the son of Mahandraditya of Pramara dynasty or Malwa dynasty. Vikramaditya is believed to have ruled Ujjain in the first millennium B.C. It is during his reign that the Sakas were pushing into Malwa. The producers of this hypothesis argue that the description of the Asura Taraka and his evil forces in *Kumarasambhavam* as the veiled description of this invasion of the Sakas. Thus the connection of Kalidasa to 57 B.C., the period of Vikramaditya's victory over the Sakas. Sir William Jones, A.B. Keith and several other western critics and the Encyclopaedia of Britannica accept Chandra Gupta II as Vikramaditya, the patron of Kalidasa.

*Raghuvamsam* too has references that the 'master poet' was of the first century B.C. In the play Devabhuti who is the last of the Sunga emperors is the supposed model of Agnivarana. Agnivarana is the last ruler of Raghu's dynasty, a weak and desolate ruler who died a suspicious death. He was assassinated by a slave girl dressed as the king. The king ascended the throne in 82 B.C. and was assassinated in 73 B.C.

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Yet another evidence places the poet in the second century B.C. This hypothesis finds him as the court poet of Agnimitra Sunga. *Malavikagnimitra*, the first play of Kalidasa is woven around the love story of Agnivarana and Malavika. In the last act of the play the emperor writes a letter to his son. The letter shows a striking resemblance between the life and death of Agnivarana of the poem and the last Sunga emperor, Agnimitra. This according to some scholars is a powerful evidence for Kalidasa having lived and wrote in the second century B.C.

Scholars have found evidences of Kalidasa's time in monuments and sculptures too. The Gupta art of the fourth-fifth century A.D. exhibits a fervour of the poet and dramatist's art. The sculptural beauty of Bharhut, Sanci and Sanghol are quite similar to the word pictures in Kalidasa's *Meghadutam*. Like the word '*pramada*' which is very often used by Kalidasa, conveys the self-conscious feeling of young women blooming with beauty. The '*yaksis*' and '*devatas*' of Bharhut and the figures of Sanghol are all '*pramades*'.

The titles of his *kavyas* also give suggestions of the dates of Kalidasa. *Vikramorvasiya* and *Kumarasambhavam* refer to Vikramaditya and Kumar Gupta. Eulogies of various poets show Mentha as the immediate predecessor of Kalidasa and Bharavi (sixth century A.D.) as his immediate successor.

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Like Kalidasa's nativity (date of birth) his name is also a mind-boggling riddle. It is believed that there were more than one men living by the name of Kalidasa. H.L. Shukla has noted down the varied opinions of Rajashekara and Aurfrecht:

... there lived not only one author by name of Kalidasa, but at least three known to Rajashekara [...]. Aurfrecht (Oxford Cat. Kalidasa) enumerated fourteen authors whose lives and works came to be confounded and ascribed to the name of the greatest poet of India.

(Shukla 1).

Who then is the Kalidasa we are concerned with? This pushes us back to his parentage. Legends have it that he was an orphan Brahmin boy brought up by a cowherd. He was married to Vasanti, princess of Varanasi. Vasanti considered herself to be too learned to marry the great grammarian Vararuchi. He avenged his insult very cleverly by posing the cowherd boy as a master of all arts and lores. Vasanti married the boy, but on discovering the fact that she was deceived, she insulted the stupid boy. The insulted boy paid tribute to Goddess Kali and was blessed with the knowledge of grammar, logic and poetics. Thus the myth accounts for his name being 'Kalidasa', 'slave of Kali'.

The date of the great poet's life and parentage is puzzling but this rarely affects the beauty of his works. His poetic excellence has created twenty-seven works of diverse kinds.

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Seven of these works are unanimously accepted as authentic works of Kalidasa. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has divided them into three groups. These are the plays, the epics and the poems. *Shakuntala* or *Abhijnanasakuntalam*, *Vikramorvasiya* and *Malavikagnimitra* are the plays. The epics include *Raghuvamsam* and *Kumarasambhavam*. *Meghadutam* and *Ritusamharam* are his poems. Each piece of art has its own loveliness and grandeur.

*Abhijnanasakuntalam* is the crown of Kalidasa's poetic excellence. He tells the story of King Dushyanta's love for the hermit girl Shakuntala. The story moves from love at first sight to secret marriage. Later *rishi* Durvasa's curse falls upon her. She is forgotten by the king. Finally there is reunion in Kasyapa's hermitage. The dramatic skills and poetic diction heighten the pathos and tender emotions of the heroine.

*Vikramorvasiya* is composed in five acts. Kalidasa has borrowed the theme from the *Rigveda*. He blends it with events both terrestrial and celestial. "Dr. Wilson has rightly pointed out," says Bhagawat Saran Upadhyaya that, "Fate is the ruling principle of the narrative and the monarch, the nymph and the sovereign of the gods himself are portrayed as subject to the inscrutable and inevitable decrees of destiny" (Upadhyaya 284). Here too the heroine, Urvashi incurs a curse upon her. Thus separating her from her lover Pururuvas. Urvashi, an *apsara* (a celestial nymph) is kidnapped by the demons. King Pururuvas

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hears this and goes to rescue her. During this he falls in love with Urvashi. But after some time Urvashi is transformed into a tree as she enters the forbidden grove of Kumara. Thus the separation begins. As directed by a voice from the heaven the grief stricken Pururuvas embraces the vine. The tree is transformed back to Urvashi, thus the reunion takes place.

Unlike the other plays *Malavikagnimitra* depicts the court life of the Sunga emperor Agnimitra. This play is also written in five acts. The hero, Agnimitra is a real historical figure. He falls in love with one of his queen's attendants, who is finally revealed as Malavika, the princess of Vidarbha. Two of his queens oppose his love with the attendant. The eldest queen, Dharini reacts to the king's relationship with an attendant, as it is not the dignity of the king to marry an attendant. On the contrary Iravati, the youngest is jealous. Kalidasa does not show the heroic details in the play. The intrigue is restricted to the court. It is an intrigue at court, very different from other Sanskrit dramas. Kalidasa's works are remarkable for their poetic excellence. But *Malavikagnimitra* is more prosaic.

*Raghuvamsham* is composed of nineteen cantos. The epic begins with an invocation of Lord Siva and Parvati. Then the "Line of Raghu" begins with Dilipa, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and the birth of Rama. His youthful exploits are seen in Canto XI, the poetic description of his victory over Ravana and his return to Ayodhya in Canto XIII. The following cantos are centred upon

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Lord Rama's sons, Luv and Kush. The two concluding cantos are a shadowy treatment of the last twenty-four Raghuvanshis.

*Raghuvamsham* dealt more with Lord Rama, the avatar of Vishnu. *Kumarasambhavam* is the legend of Shiva. Unfortunately only seventeen cantos, i.e., only the first part of the poem is available to us. It is not clear if Kalidasa left it unfinished or the second part was lost. The poem is more a dramatic poem than an epic. It is the lyrical description of the love between Shiva and Uma, i.e., Parvati, the birth of Kartikeya i.e., Kumara and Shiva's victory over the demon, Taraka.

*Meghadutam* is a "poem of longing and separation". The "megha" i.e., cloud is the messenger of the lover. A certain *yaksha*, because of his negligence of duty was cursed by his Lord, Kubera. He was exiled for one year. He had to leave his newly wedded wife and live in Ramgiri *ashrama*. It was in the month of *asadha* i.e., June-July he saw the new rain bearing clouds that is propelled by south-east monsoon. The cloud was on its usual route towards the north. In the north was Alakapuri in the Himalayas, where his newly wedded wife lived. On seeing the clouds moving towards Alakapuri he was filled with pangs of separation and thus addresses to the cloud and entreats it to carry his message. His entreating the cloud to take a northerly route and go to Alkapuri and pass the message to his beloved wife is what testifies to the great imaginative ability of Kalidasa. The curse motif is prevailing in this poem too. *Meghadutam* also

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reverberates with Siva's presence. It is a harmonious blending of music, imagination and feeling in hundred and twelve strophes. It is composed in 'Mandakranta' metre to suit the speed of the clouds.

*Ritusamharam* is the description of the six seasons of the Hindu tradition. It is an assembly of hundred and forty-three stanzas. These stanzas are a description of the natural beauty of each season. The seasonal beauty is attached to human sentiments. There is a very minute description of the geography of the western Malwa. The poem is probably the first of Kalidasa's works, for it lacks the artistic unity one finds in the other mature works of Kalidasa.

Kalidasa's works stand distinctly in the annals of Sanskrit drama. The flourishing plastic art has contributed significantly to the popularity of his works. Above all his brilliantly polished style makes him superior over other poets. He uses *Vaidharbha* style in all his works. The simple, graceful and natural style has kept the flavour of his works ever fresh. As he owes to his predecessors for his poetic and dramatic skills his successors too are inspired by him. The uncertainty of the exact dates of Kalidasa makes it difficult to give the exact chronological order to his position in the 'Vamsa of Kavis' i.e., the succession of poets. A brief study of the origin and growth of Sanskrit drama would be helpful to know who influenced him and those influenced by him.

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In any study of Indian classical literature it is important to know the origin and characteristics of Sanskrit drama. Scholars have divergent views but generally, the origins of drama in India are shrouded in antiquity. The three major sources of its origin is believed to be the Vedas, the epics and the dance. Bharata's *Natyasastra* is probably the first book that contains the theory of Sanskrit drama. Traditionally it is believed that Brahma took "passages" for recitation from the *Rigveda*, songs from the *Samaveda*, gestures from the *Yajurveda* and emotions from the *Atharvaveda* to create the fifth *Veda*, *Natyaveda*. The Hindu Gods too contributed to the formation of drama. Siva contributed the *Tandava* and Parvati *Lasya* dance, Vishnu gave the *Riti*, i.e., the four dramatic styles and Visvakarma made the stage. The plays like *Tripuradaha* and *Samudramanthana* were staged during the Indradhvaja festival. The play is mentioned by Kalidasa in his *Meghadutam*. This shows that drama has originated from festivals.

Another theory proposes that drama arose and spread with the Krishna-cult. The processions, songs, music, dance and *lila* are believed to be the source for the growth and development of drama. The kingdom of Surasena is known to be the land of Krishna worship. Sauraseni Prakrit in a Sanskrit drama proves it. But it is yet to be proved that *Krishnalilas* were the earliest ones. *The Binding of Bali* and *Kama's Slaying* are the plays supposed to having been staged during the second century B.C.

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Western critics have also brought forth several theories about the origin of Sanskrit drama. Hillebrandt and Sten Konow gave their opinion that the recitation on stage of the epics and legends gave rise to the drama. But Keith challenged the popular mine theory of the origin of drama. Pischel links the genesis of drama in the puppet-plays. There are references to the puppet plays in the *Mahabhrata*, *Kathasaritsagara* and *Balaramayana* as 'puttalika', 'putrika', 'darumayi' etc. Luder sees the shadow play as the essential source for the growth of Sanskrit drama. The *Rigveda* has more than fifteen dialogue hymns, which represent dramatic spectacles of religious character. Max Muller, Levi and Schroeder were the major exponents of the dialogue-hymn theory. All these theories have their own limitations.

Sanskrit drama is also believed to have originated from Greek drama. The scholars of this theory presume that the Greek drama flourished much before the Indian drama came into existence. According to them as Alexander's invasion to India influenced Indian astronomy, astrology and mathematics, it may have influenced Indian drama as well. Prof. Windisch and Weber found similarities between the Greek and Sanskrit plays like, the classification of drama into acts, the prologues and the epilogues, the way in which the actors make their entrance and exist, the terms *yavanika* and *yavani*, the theme, characters like Vidusaka, Pratinayak all smell Greek. But there are also points that show the Greek drama and the Sanskrit drama are

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diametrical opposites. Sanskrit drama like in *Abhijnanasakuntalam* ignores the unities of place and time. As against the Athenian stage, in Sanskrit drama, it is seen as the blending of tragic and comic. As opposed to Classical, the Sanskrit drama is essentially romantic in nature. The exact point of the origin of Sanskrit drama is not known. But it is also true that all these sources must have made important contributions to its growth and development. Sanskrit drama is a product of Indian mind that has a kaleidoscopic view of life. It has expanded itself under the influence of various factors – religious and secular, foreign and national, yet maintaining its own essence. It has travelled a long way from the royal court to the theatres for the public. Thus making it highly complex Visvanatha Kaviraj in his *Sahityadarpana* has classified the Sanskrit drama into two types *rupaka* and *uparupaka*. The *rupaka* is divided into ten types of which *nataka* (*Abhijnanasakuntalam* by Kalidasa), *prakarana* (*Malatimadhava* by Bhavabhuti), *bhana* (*Karpura Carita* of Vatsaraja) are a few. The *rupaka* as Lele says has *rasa* or sentiment for its substratum. *Uparupaka* has eighteen types *natikas* like *Ratnavali*, *Viddhasalabhanjika*; *trotakas* like *Vikramorvasiya* and *Sattakas* like *Kapuramanjari* are its examples. Each *rupaka* is further divided into threefold – (i) *Vastu* or the plot (ii) *Neta* or the hero (iii) *Rasa* or the sentiment. Without these elements no dramatic piece can be presented.

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Similar to the English drama, Sanskrit drama also has a main plot and a subplot, *aadhikarika* and *prasangika*. The *aadhikarika* is concerned with the main characters i.e., the hero and the heroine. The *prasangika* is the action of the characters other than the hero and the heroine. There are three elements requisite for the development of the plot. These are *beeja* or the seed, *bindu* or the drop and *karya* or the final issue. The *beeja* is that circumstance which leads to the ultimate end. *Bindu* is that incident which helps the play to continue. *Karya* is the final action of the play. Besides these there are *pataka* and *prakari*. *Pataka* is an episode of considerable length by which the progress of the plot is illustrated. *Prakari* is an episode of little importance where the principal characters do not take part. These five are called *arthaprakritis*.

A dramatic plot develops under five stages or *Arasthas*. They are: (i) ‘*Arambh*’ or the beginning (ii) ‘*Yatna*’ or the effort (iii) *Praptyasha* or prospect of success (iv) ‘*Niyatapti*’ or certain attainment through the removal of obstacles (v) ‘*Nirvahana*’ or attainment of the desired goal. When these stages are in progress the *samdhis* act as the connecting link between the *adhikarika* and *prsangika*. These are also of five types viz. *mukha*, *pratimukha*, *garbha*, *avamarsa*, *nirvahana*. *Bija* and *arambha* combine to give *bukha samdhi*. It is here the seed is sown with all its *rasas*. In *pratimukha* there is the means, *yatna*. The *bija* starts to grow here. In *garbha* there is a *praptyasha* calling for

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the further sprouting of the original *bija*. *Avamarsa samdhi* is accompanied by *niyatapti*. Here the *bija* has grown more luxuriantly than the *garbha*. But the end is postponed by the intervention of a new problem. Like in *Shakuntala* Shakuntala's meeting with Dushyanta is postponed with the curse of Durvasa, *nirvahana* is the end of the play.

Every play has a hero in its plot. In a Sanskrit drama there are four kinds of heroes – *dhirodatta*, *dhiralalita*, *dhirashanta* and *dhirodwat*. But the *dhirodatta* is the best with eight manly qualities viz., *sobha*, *vilas*, *madhurya*, *gambhiry*, *dhairya*, *tejas*, *lalitya* and *aaudraya* i.e., modest, decorous, comely, munificent, civil, of sweet address, eloquent, noble ancestry, etc. The hero is assisted by (i) *peethamard*, who is clever and devoted to his master, (ii) *vidushaka* a witty person. He is always with the king helping him in his love-intrigues, (iii) *vita* is skilled in one art only. And of course the ministers, ascetics and allies also accompany the hero. Sometimes the hero has to face a rival who is known as *pratinayak*.

The heroines (*nayika*) are principally of three kinds – wife of the hero (*swiya*), another's wife or maiden (*anya parakiya*), common woman (*samanya* or *sadharana stri*). Sanskrit poets have mainly been inclined towards themes that involved a maiden as she better helps in the creation of *rasa*. A heroine possesses qualities such as the hero and has assistants too like the *sakhi*, *dasi*, *dhatrayi*, *Ppatibeshika*.

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*Rasa* is the feeling produced in a man of poetic sensibility by the proper action of the *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhichari-bhavas*. The feeling or *bhava* is the emotion either of pleasure or pain arisen from the sight of an object. Critics have divided sentiments broadly into eight types: *rati*, *hasa*, *shoka*, *krodha*, *utsaha*, *bhaya*, *jugupsa* and *vismaya*. Corresponding to these sentiments are the eight types of *rasa*, viz., *sringara*, *hasya*, *karuna*, *veera*, *bhayanaka*, *vibhatsa*, *adbhuta*. There is also a ninth *rasa* known as *santa rasa* corresponding to the *sthayibhava sama*.

A Sanskrit drama is characterised mainly by its absence of tragedy, time and place crosses human boundaries and the happy blending of tragic and comic incidents. Apart from these characteristic features there are several other characteristics that are adhered to by a dramatist of Sanskrit.

It cannot be denied that Sanskrit drama had its origin in an Indian atmosphere. The Sanskrit dramatists gave more importance to the portrayal of sentiments than to plot or character. The emotions could be heightened only through poetry. These dramas are highly idealistic and romantic. The lyrical verses do not leave the dramas just as dry pieces of conversations. The *Abhijnana- sakuntalam* contains over two hundred verses. These verses are mostly uttered by the major characters. The language spoken by them is Sanskrit. The division of language spoken by the character is according to the

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social status. *Vidusaka* speaks Prakrit, Sauraseni; Maharashtra is spoken by high-class women, children and royal servants. The other attendants of the royal palace speak Magadhi. The low class people like cowherds, robbers, gamblers speak varieties of Prakrit like Abhiri, Paisaci and Avanti.

The themes chosen for any Sanskrit drama are usually from history or epic legend. But the dramatist mixes it up with his own fictitious inventions like Kalidasa has done it at many places in his *Abhijnanasakuntalam*. The dramatists took great care on the stage setting too. The dramas commenced with *nandi* (benedictory stanza) and followed by the prologue wherein the stage manager (*sutradhara*) with his wife or assistant introduces the actors and also informs the audience of the play. Behind the stage actions are informed by the *pravesaka* or *viskambhaka*. This information is given in-between the acts. The play concludes with *bharatavakya* (a national prayer). The plays were staged on several occasions like, royal coronation, public fairs, religious festivals, marriage, birth, etc. Apart from all these the Sanskrit stage strictly adhered to the high ideals of Indian culture. No play had a calamitous end. Nor were the dramatists given any scope to represent indecorous conduct on stage like kissing, biting, national disaster, etc.

The second chapter of the *Natyasastra* mentions the details of a stage in a Sanskrit drama. “The text mentions three shapes of playhouse: oblong, square, triangular” (Rajan 34). The

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corresponding size is also mentioned where the most suitable size being ninety-six feet by forty-eight feet. Bharata has also given the reasons for this:

... ‘in a larger playhouse, the voice will not carry far; it will lose its quality of tone and become weak and indistinct’, and due to its large size the subtle play of expressions on the face that are the means to convey the emotions and produce the *rasas* will not be seen clearly by the spectators sitting towards the back.

(Rajan 34)

Thus the full enjoyment of the sentiments expressed by the actors could be possible only with a small stage. A small stage could enable all to see and hear even the slightest of expression and utterance. Each auditorium had a greenroom *nepathya* of forty-eight feet by forty-eight feet. The stage was raised by twenty-seven inches above the ground. “A wall with two doors, one for entry and the other for the exit of actors, separated the stage from the greenroom” (Rajan 34). Curtains of high quality were also used which was called as *yavanika*. As little or no scenery was used. Language became very important for most of the descriptions. Like in Act I of the play *Shakuntala*, the king Dushanta describes the serenity of the hermitage of Kanava. The stage always faced east. The walls of the stage were carved with beautiful paintings and colourful figures. Equal importance was

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given to costume, jewellery and hairstyle. The line from *Sakuntala* “Enter the king costumed as suffering from remorse” (Rajan 250) from the Act VI of *Shakuntala* shows the importance of costume to express emotions. Colour too “was used symbolically, both in the costumes and the make up” (Rajan 36).

Kautilya’s *Arthasastra* too contains some dramatic theories. But these are not pure dramas. According to western scholars Asvaghosa’s *Sariputrprakarana* is the earliest extant Sanskrit drama. Bhasa who probably lived in the third century B.C. is mentioned by Kalidasa, Bana and Rajasekhara. *Pratima Abhisekha*, *Madhyama-vyayoga*, *Karnabhara* are a few of his plays. Like Kalidasa’s style he too used *vaidharbhi* style. Saumilla and Kaviputra are few more playwrights whom Kalidasa mentions. But king Sudraka’s name is not mentioned by him. Kalidasa’s works are characterised by realistic depiction.

The next major dramatist is Kalidasa. His works are the pride of Sanskrit literature. Sanskrit poetry reached its highest level of elegance and refinement in his hands. It is during his time that classical Indian literature saw its Augustan age.

Harsha, king of Kanyakubja is the major immediate successor of Kalidasa. He reigned from six hundred six A.D. to six hundred forty seven A.D. He improved upon his predecessor by establishing the comedy of courtly – intrigue as a distinct type of Sanskrit drama. He has three dramas to his credit: *Ratnavali*,

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*Priyadarsika* (a reminiscence of Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra*) and *Nagananda*.

Bhavabhuti is followed by Mahendra Vikrama of the first quarter of eleventh century A.D. His is the greatest name after Kalidasa. He has excelled his great predecessor in the delineation of the heroic and the wonderful writes an anonymous critic. Kalidasa followed *vaidarbha* style. Bhavabhuti (736 A.D.) is a follower of the *gauda* style. *Mahaviracarita*, *Malatimadhava* and *Uttararamacarita* are the three plays written by him.

Visakhadatta lived in eight hundred sixty A.D. *Mudraraksasa* is his famous play. His play marks a distinct diversion from Kalidasa's and Bhavabhuti's style. Bhattanarayana probably flourished in the eighth century A.D. In his only drama *Venisamhara* he has illustrated varied techniques of Sanskrit drama. The next dramatist is Murari with his *Anagharaghava*. Then came Rajasekhara in the last decade of ninth century A.D. with four plays – *Balabharata*, *Kapuramanjari*, *Balaramayana* and *Viddhasalabhanjika*. Ksemisvara (*Handakausika*) of tenth century, Damodaramishra (*Mahanataka*) of eleventh century are the dramatists who followed Kalidasa were highly appreciated and followed by writers of all ages. But as time passed the impact of his influence has obviously been diluted.

Krsnamisra of the latter half of the eleventh century A.D. is known to have revived the old tradition. His *Prabodhacandaudaya* is the first Sanskrit allegorical drama. *Moharajaya* of Yashapala

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(thirteenth century), *Caitanyacandrodaya* of Paramandalasasena, Kavikarnapura (sixteenth century), *Dharmavijaya* of Bhudeva Sukla (sixteenth century), *Amrutodaya* of Gokulanatha (seventeenth century) are some of the allegorical dramas. Thus Kalidasa is placed after Bhasa and before Harsa.

According to the *Natyaveda*, a ‘*nataka*’ should be a representation of both virtue and vice. Its aim is to bring to the audience a sense of tranquillity almost of the level of a mystique’s meditation. A drama should not leave the audience unduly disturbed and agitated. Production of ‘*rasa*’ is one of the main functions of drama. Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala* is a repository of various ‘*rasas*’.

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# CHAPTER – II

## SHAKUNTALA (PLAY)

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*Shakuntala* or *Abhijnanasakuntalam* the play is regarded as the masterpiece of Kalidasa. The story is about the love of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. The plot moves from Dushyanta and Shakuntala falling in love to their secret marriage, then their separation and finally reunion of the lovers. The theme of the drama is based on the Indian philosophy that true love is immortal. Rabindranath Tagore has explained this theme of love in Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*:

Kalidasa has shown that while infatuation leads to failure beneficence achieves complete fruition, that beauty is constant only when upheld by virtue, that the highest form of love is the tranquil, controlled and beneficent form, that in regulation lies the true charm and lawless excess, the speedy corruption of beauty. He refuses to acknowledge passion as the supreme glory of love; he proclaims goodness as the final goal of love.

(Krishnamachariar 590)

The dramatized legend opens in the hermitage of Kanva where Dushyanta falls in love at first sight with Shakuntala. Unfortunately the curse of Durvasa falls upon their tender love. The lovers separate as Dushyanta's memory fails to recognize

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Shakuntala. Ironically when he recollects his beloved she is not near him. Finally the lovers meet in Kasyapa's hermitage. The "complete fruition" of their love is their son Sarvadamana who in history was known as Bharata.

The dramatists of Indian classical literature took themes from epic history. These stories were always the *vikhyata* (famous) ones. The purpose to do this was that the audience enjoyed fully. The story of Shakuntala is believed to have been taken from the great epic *The Mahabharata*. In the *Rigveda* there is only the mention of "the Bharatas as a warlike tribe" (Sing 53). Here there is no reference to the love of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. In the thirteenth book of *Satapatha Brahmana* the name 'Shakuntala' is repeated several times. But the repetition is not to describe the love story of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Her name is used in the context of her sacrifice. Rajan says that in *Satapatha Brahmana* we get the earliest reference to Shakuntala:

In the last sections of the *Satapatha Brahmana* that are devoted wholly to a description of the rituals of the Horse-sacrifice (Asva Medha Yajna), where the names of some of the Kings who performed them are mentioned, we come across to this line: 'In Nadapit, the Apsara Sakuntala conceived (bore) Bharata'. This is the earliest literary reference to Sakuntala and her son (the little boy Sarvadamana in the play) who performed many horse-sacrifices [...]. The original story of Sakuntala referred to in the SB (Satapatha

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Brahmana) is lost to us; we have only a very long and earthy version of it is the epic (Mbh. : 1: chs. 62-69).

(Rajan 80)

The *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Padmapurana* are believed to be the three major sources of the great Indian play *Shakuntala*. But it is more widely accepted that Kalidasa is more indebted to the ‘Mahabharata’ for the making of *Abhijnana-sakuntalam*. As inscribed in the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, Dushyanta was a ‘Chandravanshi Maharaja’, belonging to the lunar dynasty, the descendant of Puru. Shakuntala was born from the union of the celestial nymph Menaka and Maharshi Viswamitra. She grew up in sage Kanva’s hermitage as his daughter. It is in Kanva’s hermitage that Dushyanta saw Shakuntala for the first time and fell in love with her. They married secretly, the *gandharva* way. Dushyanta left Shakuntala in the hermitage and went back to Hastinapur. Later Shakuntala too was sent near him. But Dushyanta failed to recognize her.

The theme of *Shakuntala* has been drawn from the *Mahabharata* but it “deviates at several places from the narrative of its source” (Upadhyaya 282). In the play by Kalidasa sage Kanva is away from the hermitage. He is on his pilgrimage to propitiate Gods to ward off the impending misfortune of his foster daughter. This is known to the audience in the first act when the hermits tell it to Dushyanta:

Dushm. Is the master of your family at home?

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Herm. Our preceptor is gone to Somatirtha, in hopes of depreciating some calamity, with which destiny threatens the irreproachable Sakuntala.

(I, Jones 4).

But the legend in *Mahabharata* shows sage Kanva to be absent from the hermitage only for the very moment. Amal Dhari Singh in his *Kalidasa: A Critical Study* has compared and contrasted Kalidasa's creation and the *Mahabharata* story of Shakuntala:

Kalidasa introduces Dushyanta as a childless king. So marriage becomes a necessity. In the *Mahabharata* the king marries for pleasure. At first glance, the proposal for the marriage seems quite abrupt. In the *Abhijnanasakuntala* the lover and the beloved get sufficient time to know each other and their love-affair is known to Sakuntala's friends.

(Singh 54)

In *Shakuntala*, the play new characters were introduced to satisfy the needs of drama. Kalidasa created, Priyamvada and Anasuya, as the companions of Shakuntala. These characters were introduced not just to tease and play with Shakuntala. It is they who saw and understood the growing love of Shakuntala for Dushyanta. Their teasing and flattering provoked innocent Shakuntala to express her love in words. Each incident in Shakuntala's life was known to them – her love, marriage and even the curse that fell upon her. It is important to note that

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Shakuntala did not know about the curse up to the last act, her friends kept it as secret. In fact only Priyamvada and Anasuya knew that Shakuntala was cursed. It is due to Priyamvada's request that Durvasa said the method of nullifying the effect of the curse. A. K. Warder has stated that the story mainly differs due to the introduction of the curse:

Kalidasa in his play, a *nataka* in seven acts, has varied this story chiefly by introducing the curse of a sage angered by the negligence of Sakuntala in love, which causes Dusyanta genuinely to forget Sakuntala and not to recognize her when she comes to his palace.

(Warder 149)

The curse of Durvasa is a genuine reason for Shakuntala being forgotten by Dushyanta. In the *Mahabharata* it is Shakuntala who tells the story of her birth. She agrees to marry Dushayanta on the condition that her son would be Dushyanta's successor. The love affair is not a complete secret in the play. It is known to Priyamvada and Anasuya. Kanva when he returns from the pilgrimage approves the marriage and sends pregnant Shakuntala immediately to Hastinapur. But in the *Mahabharata* the story differs:

...they marry by the aristocratic rite of simple mutual consent. But Dusyanta returns to his palace and Sakuntala remains at the hermitage, where a son is born to her. When he is six years old she takes him to

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the emperor, but he disowns them. Finally a voice in the air confirms that the boy is Dusyanta's son.

(Warder 148)

Some scholars have interpreted that in the *Mahabharata* version, Shakuntala was sent to Dushyanta when her son was nine years old. Scholars may vary in their interpretations, but the fact is that in the *Mahabharata* Bharata was born in Kanva's *ashrama*. Kalidasa gives a dramatic twist with the introduction of Durvasa's curse. There is no abrupt ending. The climax is reached in the fifth act when Dushyanta fails to recognize Shakuntala. The veil is removed out of Dushyanta's memory in the sixth act only after the fisherman appears with the signet ring. Now it is his turn to suffer and pine. Indra's invitation to Dushyanta to fight against the demons, the couple meeting in Kasyapa's *ashrama* are all created by Kalidasa.

The variations in the first to fifth acts can more truly be said as the reshuffling of the episodes of Shakuntala in the *Mahabharata*. But the sixth and seventh acts are creations of Kalidasa's genius. These acts show clearly the strong support of Kalidasa for the ideals of Hindu religion. Birth of Bharata and the reunion of the separated hearts shows that "beneficence achieves complete fruition" (Krishnamachariar 590). The two meeting places of the lovers – Kanva's *ashrama* and Kasyapa's *ashrama* symbolise love as a holy deed. In the course of the play Kalidasa has uplifted the passionate love to the spiritual level.

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Each scene has its own significance. Shakuntala's name is erased from the memory of the king. In act five he denies the hermits from Kanva's *ashrama* to have known Shakuntala:

Dushm. Holy man, I have been meditating again and again, but have no recollection of my marriage with this lady. How then can I lay aside all consideration of my military tribe, and admit into my palace a young woman who is pregnant by another husband?

(Jones 84)

His memory of Shakuntala has been stone walled by Durvasa's curse. To nullify the curse the signet ring is essential. But it fell into the Ganga. Hence the separation. It is in this separation that matured the lovers and spiritualised their love. But the signet ring is the only means that could remind Dushyanta of his forgotten love. Hence the fisherman episode is incorporated for the restoration of the signet ring. The recovery of the ring intensifies the agony of separation. Dushyanta now mourns for Shakuntala. The lovers should reunite. But where? The place chosen by Kalidasa is where the heaven and the earth have met. It is in Kasyapa's hermitage where he meets his wife Shakuntala. This time Shakuntala is not with Priyamvada and Anasuya but with their son Sarvadamana. On seeing the child his heart is filled with the affection of a father. He was returning from Indra's kingdom that he saw the beautiful hermitage. It is his son Sarvadamana who finally becomes the medium to reunite

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Dushyanta with Shakuntala. Amal Dhari Singh gives his views on the theme of *Abhijnanasakuntalam* as:

Thus, Kalidasa has represented the old theme according to the high ideals of Hindu Religion. He has modified the story with his poetic imagination. His *Abhijnanasakuntala* occupies the supreme rank in the presentation of ideal love in the whole range of Sanskrit Dramatic literature.

(Singh 56)

Both the hermitages are places of union and are holy places. Kanva's hermitage is the place of physical union and Kasyapa's hermitage is the place of spiritual union. Mutual suffering of the lovers elevates their love from physical charm to moral beauty.

The synthesis of spiritual love is through separation. Shakuntala is partly responsible for her fate, 'the curse' she brings on her love is due to her own negligence. But Dushyanta is in no way responsible for his suffering. Moral maturity in the lovers is mainly due to the divine intervention. Fate plays a crucial role through the unexpected curse of Durvasa, then the signet ring falls in the river Ganga, the recovery of the ring by the fisherman, Indra's invitation.

In the play Kalidasa has laid out several worlds. First the world of Shakuntala, it is the green world of nature. Shakuntala is portrayed as the "lady of Nature". She is the child of nature. Right from her birth she was abandoned by Menaka. She was

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growing in the care of the birds. There is also a bird called 'Sakunta'. So the girl in the lap of the birds was named "Shakuntala". Kanva who named her so found her abandoned and adopted her as his daughter. She grew up to a young girl in his hermitage, in a surrounding where nature stood undisturbed. The whole action of the play centres round this Lady of Nature. It is Dushayanta's world that distracts the attention from the hermitage of Kanva to the palace and pleasure gardens of Hastinapur. All greenery vanishes with Shakuntala. Even the painting in the sixth act could not restore the happening of her magical world. The green world stood only as a mirage. Shakuntala's world is the world of love, of external beauty. Here there is the physical union of the lovers. Dushyanta's world i.e., the urban world separates the lovers. The resolution is not to take place in any of these worlds. Kalidasa "finds its resolution in yet another world – a higher world that is inaccessible to ordinary mortals and which partakes of the quality of timelessness" (Rajan 45). The reunion is not like that of the first act, bodily union. It is the union of the inner souls. So they unite in the place of highest penance, i.e., in the world of Kasyapa and Aditi. It is a world where heaven and earth meet. Mortals could reach there only after proving themselves. Dushyanta had to defeat the demons before he could enter this world. Chandra Rajan has commented on Kalidasa's fine demarcation between these worlds:

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No overt comment is made about the relative merits of these several worlds, nor is a stark contrast drawn between one and the other, for it is not characteristic of Kalidasa's poetic vision to see experience in simple black and white terms.

(Rajan 46)

Kalidasa instead of commenting and contrasting gives his readers a wonderful opportunity to experience and enjoy the beauty of each world.

The play is a wonderful combination of romance and fairytale elements. The play is located in the mythic past, it was the time when men could move with Gods. A time when beings from both the worlds came together to maintain order in the universe. They helped each other in the time of need like Dushyanta protects Indra by driving away the Titans. It was also the time when heavenly beings made love with mortals. Shakuntala is the daughter of Menaka and Viswamitra. Menaka was an *apsara* from Indra's court and Viswamitra was a sage. Shakuntala was born from the womb of a fairy and therefore is herself a fairy. Apsaras are believed to be airy beings. Thus the very origin of Shakuntala is from nature. No wonder that she had an inclination towards nature. Each part of her body has a reflection of nature's beauty:

Her lower lip has the rich sheen of young shoots,  
her arms the very grace of tender twining stems;

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her limbs enchanting as a lovely flower glow with the radiance of magical youth.

(I, Rajan 177)

*Shakuntala* the play presents a heroine very different from other heroines. In the play Kalidasa has never brought his heroine out of the world of nature. He has characterized her as very sensitive. She could not adjust in the glittering gilded world of the Puruvas. So in the play Shakuntala is never seen interacting with the world of Dushyanta. The only instance when she came to the palace is in act five. This entry into the glittering world gave her no happiness but only betrayal. She was repudiated by her husband. This is the only play where the heroine, the king's wife, the lady who gave birth to the king's heir did not come in contact with the other queens and ladies of the palace. She is the heroine who in her infancy was abandoned by her parents. Her husband too fails to recognize her. Finally the ascetics also abandon her and return back to the hermitage. Thus she stands alone, abandoned by all. The tragedy she faces is unique. Her trial is also a special one. It is not in the royal court that her issue is raised. She stands for justice near the "raised enclosure of the Mystic Fire" in the king's palace. Ironically Agni, the fire God, was the witness at the time of their marriage and now he sees her repudiation. The only similarity between Shakuntala and the other heroines in the Sanskrit dramas is that she is finally reunited with her husband.

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Another significant thing to be noted in the play is that it is not only Shakuntala but the whole play has little to do with the affairs of the court. Except for the scene of Shakuntala's repudiation the main action of drama takes place in the hermitage of Kanva, the garden of Dushyanta's palace and finally the penance groves of Kasyapa. Yes Dushyanta's recollection of Shakuntala in the fisherman episode takes place in the palace. The time period of Shakuntala's absence from Dushyanta's memory is the span when Shakuntala is totally absent from the play. Thus, the glittering world of Dushyanta has no room for the lady of nature, Shakuntala. When Shakuntala becomes a memory for Dushyanta, Shakuntala's world is seen again. It is not experienced directly but is expressed in the painting of Shakuntala. Dushyanta only recollects the beautiful surroundings of Kanva's ashrama where Shakuntala lived. In the final act Shakuntala's world is back, but now it is highly sanctified. Then in the last scene of the very same act there is a reference to the returning of Dushyanta with his wife Shakuntala and son Sarvadamana to the palace i.e., to the world of the king. But this returning to the palace is only referred to in the drama. In the action of drama this does not really happen.

The title of the play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* has the theme hidden in it. Etymologically *Abhijnana* means "Recognition". Thus translated to English the title means "Recognition Shakuntala". Recognition by whom? It is the king Dushyanta

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who recognizes his wife Shakuntala. He had forgotten her as a result of the curse of Durvasa. But this recognition is not only of the physical being Shakuntala, but of the inner beauty of the 'Lady of Nature'. Rajan has explained what the meaning of recognition stands for in the context of the play:

What is knowing? The king at first knew Sakuntala carnally, as an object; and frankly as an object of pleasure. She is a flower to smell, a gem to hold and an ornament to wear. She is hardly a person to him. It is only at the close of the play that he sees her as a person and knows her truly. Something has to be added to his view of her to make him see her as a 'person' of intrinsic beauty and not merely a beautiful object.

(Rajan 86)

When Dushyanta saw Shakuntala for the first time, he was attracted by the physical charm of her body. But he has to know her soul. This could be possible only through a long separation and grief. Shakuntala was cursed by Durvasa and as a result of the curse Dushyanta refused to accept her. Hence the separation between the lovers. But in the fisherman scene Dushyanta realises his mistake. The guilt of repudiating Shakuntala opened the eyes of Dushyanta. He could now see the beauty of her soul. In the seventh act he sees Shakuntala not as beautiful as she was when he first saw her. She is no more in the prime of her youth. Here she stands "Dressed in dusky garments/her face fined thin

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from observing strictest vows” (VII, Rajan 275). He sees that the glow of Shakuntala’s skin has reduced with time. But he could see the soul of Shakuntala is set aglow. In their course of separation Dushyanta thought is perfected. He is now matured. He could now see the true self of Shakuntala, i.e., the beauty of her soul.

Dushyanta is not an ideal hero. He deviates from those trends of a Sanskrit drama that defines its true hero. From the drama it is clear that Dushyanta was a great warrior and a good ruler. Indra invites him to fight against the demons. But there is no war scene in the play. It is so because the drama is not about the brave king but about his and Shakuntala’s spiritual growth. His personality as a successful ruler is apparent not through his brave actions but from the images. His energy is compared to the magnificent tusker of the mountains. His facial beauty is no less than a precious gem. Dushyanta’s character as a hero is complex. In the play Kalidasa does not bound the hero and the heroine to fit to the strict rules of Sanskrit dramatury. This forms a major source of interest in the drama.

The royal signet ring too plays a very significant role in the drama. It is on this ring that the whole theme of recognition depends. The signet ring is the only proof of Shakuntala’s marriage with Dushyanta. Unfortunately, the ring slips out of Shakuntala’s finger in Suci’s pool. In the meantime as an effect of the curse of Durvasa she has been forgotten by the king. As

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the question of Shakuntala's recognition arises the ring, used as the royal stamp gains a new status. "As the play progresses, this ring, an inanimate thing-"a mindless thing" as the king describes it, becomes a character in the drama and plays a role" (Rajan 96) with its slipping slips Shakuntala's fortune away from her. As the ring looses, the king too looses his memory. With its recovery is recovered the lost memory of Dushyanta for Shakuntala. The recovery is also the beginning of the king's grief. Now he is guilty for repudiating Shakuntala.

In a Sanskrit drama the typical characteristic of the *vidusaka* is that he is a companion to the hero who exhibits his sharp wit and is a constant source of fun. *Shakuntala's vidusaka*, Madhavaya is a hunchback who can laugh at his disability. He is also a close friend to the king. The king finds himself relaxed in his companion. He is the only character who in the guise of his 'affectionate banter' comments the king and the queens too. He is a man of the court. Shakuntala's world would suffocate him. So he disappears from the play in act two and reappears only in act six i.e. only when the king needed someone to divert his mind, to share his grief. This is probably the only play of Kalidasa where the *vidusaka* and the *nayika* do not meet. Madhavaya does not get any opportunity to see Shakuntala. He hears about her from Dushyanta. Again, he is probably the only jester who is boared to hear about the heroine. In *Abhijnana-*

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*sakuntalam* neither the hero, the heroine nor the jester fit the norms of a typical Indian classical hero, heroine or jester.

Kalidasa compiled his play *Shakuntala* in seven acts. It opens with the benedictory stanza called *nandi*, followed by the prologue. In the prologue the manager and an actress prepare the audience for the course of action that is to be staged. The scene opens showing a young and handsome king, dressed in his hunting suit. He is armed on a chariot and is chasing a deer. This game of hunting is in the forest in the foothills of the Himalayas. Dushyanta moves, “Recklessly charging towards Kanva’s Hermitage chasing a blackbuck, he stops short of killing the sacred animal only when an anchorite stands barring his way” (Rajan 87). But this is a world of enchantment where only holy things can happen. Before he could kill the deer, ascetics from Kanva’s *ashrama* stop him from doing so. Dushyanta could realise that he is about to do a great mistake. So he puts down his bow and arrow. The ascetics invite him to the penance groves of Kanva’s hermitage. But sage Kanva is not there. He has gone to Somatirtha to propitiate Gods to ward off the impending misfortune of his foster daughter, Shakuntala. Shakuntala is first seen on the bank the river Malini. Here she is watering the plants with two of her companions Priyamvada and Anusuya who are more involved in flattering Shakuntala’s blooming youth:

SAKUNTALA: Sweet Anasuya, Priyamvada has tied  
my bark-garment so tight that I feel quite

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uncomfortable; could you loosen it a little?  
*(Anasuya loosens it)*

PRIYAMVADA (*laughing merrily*): Blame your own  
 budding youth that's making your bosom swell.

(I, Rajan 176)

Dushyanta, while he was roaming in the hermitage, he sees Shakuntala from behind the bushes. He stands there praising the beauty in bark garments. He is already attracted by her beauty but gets the opportunity to come near her only when a bee troubles her. He helps her to get away from the bee. On the very first sight of Dushyanta, Shakuntala too experiences disturbed psychological feelings that love creates in adolescent hearts. To come closer to Shakuntala the king conceals his real identity. He introduces himself as a royal attendant. Act I also reveals the true parentage of Shakuntala. Anasuya and Priyamvada say the king that she is the daughter of the *apsara* Menaka and the sage Viswamitra. Before the ignited love could be expressed the three girls had to leave with the fear of being attacked by an elephant that was terrified and confused by the sight of the king's chariot. It had become wild. Act I portrays the physical charm of the hero and the heroine. It also shows Dushyanta's fascinating towards the feminine beauty of Shakuntala. The gestures of Shakuntala reveals a similar feeling of love creeping in her heart for Dushyanta.

Act II is mainly a dialogue between the king and his companion Madhavaya. The inner desire of Dushyanta to meet

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Shakuntala is slowly getting intensified. In a hope to see her again he orders to encamp near the hermitage. His desire to meet Shakuntala again seems to materialise when two hermits from Kanva's *ashrama* come requesting him to guard the hermitage from the demons. The demons have been disturbing them while performing the sacred rites. Dushyanta readily accepts to stay back and guard them. The king expresses to Madhavaya all his love filled feelings for Shakuntala. Madhavaya is his close companion so close that he sends Madhavaya to break the royal mother's fast. He is unable to go as he is tied with his duty to guard the hermitage. Before Madhavaya leaves for the palace Dushyanta says that his love for Shakuntala is just a tale that he invented for the little diversion from routine duties. He does so to conceal the love affair from the ladies of the Royal palace. Shakuntala's companions are introduced in the first Act, but Dushyanta's friend comes into the stage in the second Act. In the act Dushyanta gives a complete picture of Shakuntala's beauty to his friend Madhavaya. He also expresses his growing love for Shakuntala.

Act III takes us back to the hermitage where Shakuntala is suffering from sunstroke. Priyamvada tries to cool the raising temperature of her body with lotus leaves and ushira root. The fever is actually due to her longing for Dushyanta. The other side of the play shows Dushyanta in deep love for Shakuntala. In the soliloquy he says:

...False is the statement to lovers like me

that flowers are your arrows; that moonbeams are cool;

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the moon's rays pregnant with ice shoot darts of fire,  
and your arrows are tipped with hardest adamant.

(III, Rajan 200)

Dushyanta is wounded by the arrow of Shakuntala's beauty. In a hope to meet Shakuntala again, he moves restlessly in the forest. Suddenly he sees the "milky sap" of the plucked flowers, "a line of foot prints" on the "pale river sand" and the "twining stems". His heart fills with joy as these signs indicate that Shakuntala is somewhere nearby. He finds her on the bank of Malini but prefers to adore her beauty from behind the bushes. He stands there to find if the fire of love is equally radiant in her heart. There Shakuntala shyly admits to her friend that she is in love with Dushyanta. M. Krishnamachariar writes:

King Dushyanta of the Lunar race pursues a gazette in the vicinity of Kanva's hermitage. Here he espies Sakuntala watering her tender nursery with her favourite friends. Struck by her beauty he begs for an interview. He overhears the reciprocation by love of Sakuntala, meets and marries her. He gives her his ring and with a promise to fetch her soon he returns to his palace.

(Krishnamachariar 192)

Dushyanta comes out of the bushes only when he is confirmed that Shakuntala too loves him. Shakuntala has already lost her soul to Dushyanta. Her father is away but the innocent hermit

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girl had already lost her control over her emotions. She becomes powerless to put up any resistance to the advancement of the young and handsome royal lover. They get married by *Gandharva* tradition. In the blooming of their love Priyamvada and Anasuya play an important role. They initiate Shakuntala to express her love for Dushyanta. Hence bringing the lovers together. The lovers are left alone by Priyamvada and Anasuya. But the couple had to separate very soon as Lady Gautami comes in to enquire about Shakuntala's health. She takes her back to the cottage. Dushyanta again hides behind the bushes to conceal his presence from Lady Gautami. After everyone has left Dushyanta comes out from behind the bushes trying to feel Shakuntala's presence in the "bowers of creepers" where she rested, "on the stone slab", on "the bed of flowers crushed by her body". Shakuntala surrenders herself with immense faith on Dushyanta. He too is true to his love. The signet ring that he has already gifted to Shakuntala in Act II is now a token of love for her. He leaves Shakuntala with a promise to come back soon to take her.

In Act IV Shakuntala bestows upon her the curse of Durvasa. She sits near a cottage door, completely lost in the thoughts of her lover, Dushyanta. She is unaware of the happenings of the world around her. In such a time, in comes the angry sage, Durvasa and enquires about the possible hospitality in the hermitage. But poor Shakuntala whose entire mental and

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spiritual being is with Dushyanta could not see or hear Durvasa. The irate sage cannot control his temper as he is disregarded, and pronounces a terrible curse on her. He cursed that the person whom she was thinking of would no more recognise her. It is Priyamvada and Anasuya who heard the holy man's curse. It was Priyamvada's pleading near the angry sage that he said the way to nullify the power of his curse. The power of his curse would "cease the moment she presents some ornament as a token of recognition" (IV, Rajan 216). The two companions of Shakuntala are consoled as Shakuntala has the signet ring of the king. They prefer to keep the matter of curse a secret. A curse has befallen upon Shakuntala due to which the innocent girl has to face a life filled with sorrow. But she is unaware of the entire episode of the curse. Act IV is about the curse of Durvasa, revelation that Shakuntala is bearing Dushyanta's child and the ceremony of her departure. It is in this act that sage Kanva first appears on the stage. As he steps in to the hermitage a holy voice informs him that in Shakuntala's womb grows the "glowing energy" of Dushyanta. He arranges for the immediate departure of Shakuntala to Hastinapur. In their farewell to Shakuntala trees give rare ornaments and the elderly women of the hermitage give her valuable pieces of advice. She leaves the hermitage with blessings and good wishes from her lovely friends, the inanimate plant, the inarticulate deer and all other indwelling divinities.

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Shakuntala left the sylvan surrounding with tears rolling down her cheek. But an inner joy to meet her husband was also there. Dushyanta experienced signs of something good to happen as he entered the hermitage. But Shakuntala experiences signs of some ill omen as she first steps into the palace. The curse of Durvasa has worked; she is not recognized by her husband. He does not accept her as his wife. To her misfortune her signet ring is lost. It has slipped off her finger in Sachi's pool while she was taking her bath. Any extent of pleading would not work to neutralise the powerful curse. Shakuntala first tries her best to remind the king of their intimate episodes in the hermitage, which are known only to her and the king. Later when everything fails she rebukes him for his blatant faithlessness and for disregarding a pregnant woman. She is left alone bewailing her wretched fate and her disgrace before the whole court. Even her own men Sarangarava, Saradavata and Gautami leave her helpless and return to their *ashrama*. Before anything could be decided about the poor lady she vanishes with "a flash of light in a woman's shape" (V, Rajan 242).

Act VI takes the hero to the world of sorrow and regret. It is in this act that Dushyanta realizes the great injustice he has done to Shakuntala. Two policemen enter with a fisherman who claims to have found the royal signet ring in the belly of the fish. As he sees the ring his eclipsed memory gets cleared. He recollects all the promises he had made to Shakuntala. The very

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sight of the ring drives the king almost mad. He is unable to reconcile to what he has done to his dear Shakuntala. He is guilty of insulting her. Now it is his turn to bewail his fate. He forgets all the joys of life. Even the spring festival is not being celebrated. Life becomes colourless for him. He curses himself for his rudeness towards Shakuntala:

Rudely awakened by penitent grief  
 this cursed heart, then insensible  
 when my doe-eyed beloved tried hard  
 to rouse it from sleep, is now painfully awake.

(VI, Rajan 250)

The handsome king now looks charmless and weak. In remorse he passes sleepless nights. He is so grief-stricken that the Royal duties are also neglected by him. Madhavaya reappears in this act. It is to him that the king discloses the promises he had made to Shakuntala. He realizes how the ring must have fallen in to Saci's pool. Rajan comments on the role of Madhavaya as:

Madhavaya is not the typical *visdusaka*, he is hardly involved in intrigue. As Sakuntala is a different kind of heroine, Madhavaya is a different kind of jester and king's companion. The heroine and the jester never meet in this play. With exquisite poetic tact, Kalidasa keeps them and their worlds apart. Madhavaya, as we noted earlier never enters the 'green world'; he stands on its fringes complaining about his aching joints.

(Rajan 101)

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Madhavaya's first appearance is in Act II and he reappears in Act VI. In Act II the king discloses to Madhavaya his love for Shakuntala. But he is sent to the palace as the surrogate son to break the fast of the Royal Mother. To keep his love for Shakuntala away from the ears of the royal ladies, Dushyanta said him that her story was invented for the sake of entertainment. In Act VI too the king chooses him as his companion to whom he could express his guilt and grief. The king curses the ring for slipping off the delicate finger of Shakuntala. His grief is so intense that he even loses his consciousness. Meanwhile Matali comes as Indra's messenger. He comes on behalf of Indra to request Dushyanta to help Indra fight against the Titans. Mirakesi making herself invisible hears to all the conversations of the grief stricken king. She goes happily to Shakuntala's mother, Menaka to inform about the grief-stricken state of the king. This indicates that something good was about to happen in the lives of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. As a rescue from the intense mental agony Dushyanta accepts the invitation of Indra.

With Act VII we enter into a world of spiritual beauty. There is a contrast in the world of Act I and Act VII. "The difference in tone and character of the two worlds – the initial green world and this golden world which is the *artifice* of eternity" (Rajan 85). The happenings of Act I takes place in the beautiful surrounding of the penance groves of Kanva. Here we

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see the fresh green colours of the trees, colourful flowers, hovering honey bees, clear cool water of the Malini, the fragrance of blooming flowers, tender shoots. It represents “fresh colours of the wood-lands and of budding youth” (Rajan 85). Act VII takes place in Kasyapa’s *ashrama*, the place of highest penances. Here every thing is golden and looks ornamented with precious gems and jewels. The lotuses are golden, water glitters like gold, the rays of the sunset is red and gold. The hermits meditate not under green and shady trees but in the “jeweled caves with celestial nymphs” (Rajan 85). This is “a world of austere beauty, luminous with the light of the siprit; it is not a world of nature, spontaneous, informed by instinct, but of Nature perfected by restraint and discipline” (Rajan 85). It is a world much above the normal man’s vision, the place is “Hema-kuta, the home of kimpurusas” (VII, Rajan 268). Hence the king is desirous of being blessed by them. Here Dushyanta is attracted by a little boy. He is unlike other children. The hermit ladies call him Sarva-Damana. The boy is playing with the lion cubs. On seeing the boy Dushyanta’s heart suddenly cries out for being a father. He develops a fatherly affection for the boy. He learns from a hermit lady that the child is the son of an *apsara*. This raises some curiosity to know about the boy’s parents. The child calls “Mamma Mamma” on hearing the bird’s name “Shakunta”. This further raises Dushyanta’s curiosity to know if the child’s mother is his wife Shakuntala. Is the child his own son? This question raises when Dushyanta learns that the child is a

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descendant of the Puru dynasty. Meanwhile the child's amulet with divine power falls off his hand. If any one other than the parents picked it, it would turn to a serpent and bite the person. But nothing happens to Dushyanta as he touches the amulet. He is overwhelmed as he realises that Sarvadamana was his own son. Shakuntala comes running as she hears that the amulet did not turn to a serpent. Good fortune again returns to the lives of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. Both the lovers have lost their physical charm. But the suffering has enlightened their souls. The first and the third acts show the union of the physical bodies. Here it is the union of the souls, i.e., the recognition of the true self. Dushyanta along with his wife Shakuntla and Sarvadamana take leave from Marica and the other hermits and they return to Hastinapur. Then Shakuntala and Dushyanta are united.

This is the final stage of the drama. The play ends but life continues. Bharata is to inherit the kingdom of Dushyanta. The long spell of penitential grief perfected the king. He recognized the true value of love. His pleasure on meeting Shakuntala is from the core of his heart. His suffering made him to realize her true worth. Thus the title of the play *Abhijnanasakuntalam*.

May the self - Existent Lord who unites in Himself  
the Dark and the Light,  
Whose Infinite Power pervades this Universe,  
annihilate forever the round of my births.

(VII, Rajan 281)

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These are the last lines of the play. These lines are an invocation to Lord Siva. “The dark and Light” in the original Sanskrit text is “Nila-Lohita” where *nila*(dark) suggests the dark blue colour developed in Lord Siva’s throat due to his swallowing of poison. To save the world he had drunk poison at the time of *Amritmanthana*, i.e., the beginning of the world. *lohita* is ‘the brightness of Gauri or Shakti’. This combination of dark and light is symbolic of human mind that has to see several polarities in life. Dushyanta prays Siva to balance all the polarities and maintain equilibrium in the world as he had done at the beginning. The play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is the last work of Kalidasa. These “words spoken last are therefore eminently fitting as the final utterance of the great poet and dramatist; it is his farewell to his work, and to the world in an ultimate sense” (Rajan 84).

The union of lovers bring complete *lokranjan*. The element of grief is prevalent all through, but the lovers are not separated permanently. Kalidasa’s play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is a success not simply for its story or the perfect unity of the play with the stage techniques. But Kalidasa blends with all these the aesthetic beauty of human sentiments. He uses *rasa* to ornament his play. Hence the freshness of the play prevails till today.

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# CHAPTER – III

## THE DOCTRINE OF RASA

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*Vibhavanubhava vyabhichariya sanyogat rasa nishpattih.*  
This is the famous *sloka* by Bharata in his *Natyasastra*. It explains how *rasa* is relished. The term *rasa* is related to the sentiments, that is, aroused in the minds. The sentiments may be *sringara* (erotic), *veera* (heroic), *karuna* (pathos) and likewise. The meaning of the term is easily conceivable. But it is very difficult to express the notion properly in western critical terminology. In western concept it is something close to aesthetic pleasure.

The first seed of the theory of *rasa* sprung with “*Ma nidad pratisthang twam agamah swaswatih samah yat krauncha mithunath ek awadhih kama mohitam*”. This melodious *sloka* by Valmiki was an “involuntary emanation of measured poetry” (Sankaran 6). Once when Valmiki was going to take bath in the river Sarayu he saw a happy pair of Kraunches. But one of the birds was suddenly shot to death by an arrow. On seeing the living bird’s helplessness and the dying bird weltering on the ground, out of pity and agony the sage uttered *Ma nidad pratisthang twam agamah swaswatih samah yat krauncha mithunath ek awadhih kama mohitam*, meaning: O *nidad* (hunter) you shall not come to any good in your life for you killed one of the pair of loving Kraunches. This *sloka* occurs in the *Balakanda* of the *Ramayana* when Maharshi Valmiki utters these words (*sloka*) extempore. *Rasa* has its existence in the

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*Vedas* and *Upanishad* but with a different meaning. In the *Rigveda*, ‘*Rasa*’ means *somarasa* or the juice of some plant. It also denotes water, milk and flavour in the earlier Mandalas. In *Atharvaveda* it is the sap of grain. During the *Upanisadic* period *rasa* meant ‘essence’, meaning par excellence. Some critics combine both the senses of *rasa* – ‘essence’ and highest ‘taste’ or ‘experience’ accompanied with joy to explain the meaning of *rasa*. That means *rasa* is synonymous to that ‘perennial bliss’ which a sage enjoys when he attains ‘self-luminous consciousness’. In more simpler words *rasa* is the similar feeling of joy that is aroused in the meditating sage. A. Sankaran explains how these two feelings are similar:

....‘*Rasa*’ to mean the perfect joy that the sage experiences when he perceives intuitively the Highest Truth in his meditation, and applied it to that ‘aesthetic pleasure’ which the cultured spectator with a responsive heart enjoys, when he loses himself completely in the characters, situations and incidents of a play represented by highly talented actors.

(Sankaran 3)

*Rasa* is the total transference of the personal emotions of the spectator to the emotions created by art. Thus the earliest traces of *rasa* shifts from *soma rasa*, the Aryan’s drink to the Brahman, the yogi’s communion with the metaphysical absolute. Kosala, Sandilya, Vatsya and many other scholars gave their own meaning of *rasa*. But Bharata is the earliest

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propounder of the *Rasa* school. For Bharata the aesthetic principle of a work of art was nothing beyond *Rasa*- “*na hi rasadrte kascidarthah pravartte* (No meaning proceeds from speech with out any kind of sentiment)” (Sharma 6). When asked for the meaning of *rasa* he described *rasa* as, “that which is relished is *rasa*”. *Rasa* maintains a perfect harmony between the performers and the spectators. It is not simply the physical or metaphysical sense of the term that matter. *Rasa* is the depth of delightful experience springing out of a work of art. The followers of the *rasa*-school call *rasa* as the *atma* (soul) of poetry.

Valmiki saw the dying bird and the wailing surviving male bird and reached to that state of intense feeling of pathos where he lost his personality. This extreme experience of pathos, “that overpowered him translated itself spontaneously into the form of the *Sloka* ‘*Ma nishad...*’” (Sankaran 7). The pathos he experienced was the resultant of two elements – *vibabha* (the cause) and *anubhava* (ensuant). Valmiki’s *sloka* is regarded as the first step towards the absolute development of *rasa*. Critics have always regarded it as one of the best examples of *karuna rasa*. Undoubtedly the *sloka* resulted to *rasa*, but it was also the first poetic lines. It is poetry that actually developed. For the emergence of *rasa* the gap was great. It is only with Bharat’s *Natyasastra* that the doctrine of *rasa* first emerged in its systematic shape.

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The aphorism by Bharata, “*Vibhavanubhava Vyabhichariyan Samyogat Rasanishpattih*” conveys that *Rasa* is relished when a permanent mood or *sthayibhava* is brought to a relishable condition through the three elements viz. the *vibhava*, the *anubhava* and the *vyabhicharibhava*. According to him “no meaning can proceed (from speech) without (any kind of) *rasa* (i.e., sentiment)” (Sharma 155).

*Sthayibhava* is the permanent mood or the durable psychological state. In Bharata’s definition of *rasa* the word ‘*sthayi*’ does not occur. But the doctrine of *rasa* demands its explanation. In the opinion of Bharata the *sthayibhava* is like the king and the other *bhavas* are like its subjects. The *sthayibhava* is “the permanent or dominant mood, which are made manifest with in the heart of the men of taste by the reading of *kavya* or the witnessing of a dramatic performance” (Sharma, 155). *sthyayibhava* always retains a dominant position when compared with other *bhavas*. It exists permanently in our mind in the form of latent impressions and are derived from actual experiences that are stored in our consciousness. Bharata has identified eight *sthayibhavas*. They are: (i) Love (*rati*), (ii) gaiety (*hasya*), (iii) sorrow (*soka*), (iv) anger (*krodha*), (v) energy (*utsaha*), (vii) fear (*bhaya*), (vii) disgust (*jugupsa*) and (viii) astonishment (*vismaya*). There is a ninth *sthayibhava* recognized by Anandavardhana and Avinavagupta as passiveness (*nirveda*). The nine *sthayibhavas* are connected respectively with the nine

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sentiments (*rasas*), viz., *sringara*, *hasya*, *karuna*, *raudra*, *veera*, *bhayanaka*, *bibhatsa*, *adbhuta* and *santa*. *Samyoga* means connection with the *sthayibhava*.

“Vibhavas are certain causes or main spring of emotions like love, pathos etc. They are heroes and the excitants of love etc, like the spring season, pleasure garden, fragrance, moonlight etc” (Sankaran 15). It is the determinant that determines which sentiment is to be aroused in the spectator. The synonyms of ‘*vibhava*’ can be *karana*, *nimitta* and *hetu*. It is called *vibhava* (determinant) because words, gestures and representation of the *sattva* are *vibhavyte* (determined) by it. *Vibhavas* are recognised as having two aspects – (i) *Alambana* (dependent) *Vibhava*, (ii) *Uddipana* (excitant) *vibhava*. *Alambana vibhava* is the person or the object responsible for the arousal of emotion. They are the supporting objects that ignite the *sthayibhava*. Without the presence of *alambana vibhava* the *sthayibhava*, though present in latent form, cannot confine itself on a particular object. The *uddipana vibhava* is the environment that stimulates the emotions. When Dushyanta falls in love with Shakuntala at first sight in the hermitage of Kanva, the pleasant and beautiful groves of the hermitage of Kanva is the *uddipana vibhava*. The *alambana vibhava* here is none other than Shakuntala.

*Anubhava* is the external manifestation of the provocation of the *sthayibhava*. It is an indicator of the *bhava* and

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communicates the emotion felt by the characters. What is experienced by the characters of the play are made to felt and experienced (*anubhavayati*) by the spectator. The actors use various physical gesticulations to do so. A. Sankaran defines it as “the visible effects or the consequents of the searchings of the heart of the heroes”. *Anubhavas* too are of two types- (i) voluntary, (ii) involuntary. The moments like that of the eyes and the eyebrows are produced by effort. Hence they are the voluntary expressions of the permanent emotions. The voluntary changes, otherwise known as *anubhavas*, are done for proper communication with others. Involuntary changes are considered to be *sattvikabhavas*. These are the permanent moods that are excited automatically. These are again of two types – internal and external. Bharata has identified eight *sattvikabhavas*. They are – paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, change of voice, trembling, change of colour, weeping and fainting.

“*Vyabhicharibhavas* are transitory or evanescent emotions that tend only to develop the main sentiment, such as anxiety, anger etc.” (Sankaran 15). In the word *vyabhichariah*, ‘*vi*’ and ‘*abhi*’ are prefixes of the root ‘*chara*’ that means ‘to go’, ‘to move’. Thus *vyabhichariah* means those that move in relation to sentiments towards different kinds of objects. The *vyabhicharibhava* does not have an independent status. It is the strengthening aspect of *sthayibhava*.

The *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharibhava* blend harmoniously to arouse in the audience the thrilling climax of emotion which is called *rasa*. Sadhu Ram rightly says that “the Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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object of all kinds of *Kavyas* is to give aesthetic pleasure, technically called *Rasa*, which is brought about by *Vibhavas* or the causes of emotions, and *Anubhavas* or the external signs or effects of emotions” (Ram 167). We thus see that Bharata has referred to three kinds of psychological states – durable psychological state, complementary psychological state and sattvika state. In total these psychological states are of forty nine types – eight durable psychological state, thirty three complementary psychological state and eight sattvika states. The example from Kalidasa’s play *Shakuntala* explains how *rasa* is relished:

Skilled actors represent Dusyanta and Sakuntala. These first meet in the pleasant, beautiful groves of the hermitage (Vibhava). Each, struck with the rapturous beauty of the other, casts eager, longing looks. At forced parting Sakuntala finds an excuse to steal a glance at her lover (Anubhava). In their extreme diffidence and anxiety they pine away one for the other (Vyabharibhava). Happily Sakuntala’s mate helps her in declaring her love through a letter. Dusyanta hastens to present himself and there is union of the lovers. When all these are represented aided by poetry, music and other histrionic devices, – which Bharata calls *Natyadharmi* – the deep-seated instinctive impression of love (Sthayibhava) is kindled in the mind of the audience and developed to

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that climax, when through complete imaginative sympathy with the situation, the audience forgets all differences of person, time and place, and this climax of emotion reveals itself in a sort of blissful consciousness. This bliss is *Rasa*.

(Sankaran 15)

The scene of Shakuntala and Dushyanta falling in love shows how the *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicharibhava* combine to arouse the *sthayibhava* in the audience and finally producing *rasa*.

Although Bharata has explained his *rasasutra* clearly, the central terms *samyoga* and *nispatti* have proved to be ambiguous for the commentators. Every commentator has his own way of interpretation. Hence the varied theories on *rasa*. Bhatta Lollata suggested the theory of *utpatti-vada*, Sankuka came with *anumiti-vada*, Bhatta Nayaka with *bhaktivada* and Abhinavagupta with *abhivyakti-vada*. After experiencing various stages of development *rasa* in the work of Visvanatha was finally established as the 'soul' of poetry. At first the doctrine of *rasa* was restricted to the various aspects of drama. It was only accepted into the realm of Sanskrit poetics only after the elaboration of the theory of *rasa* by Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. A brief study of the major exponents of the *rasa* school would enable a better understanding of the doctrine of *rasa*.

Bhatta Lollata, a commentator of the eighth and ninth centuries is among the earliest of Bharatas commentators. He concluded that *sthayibhava* which is first generated by the *vibhavas*, manifested by the *anubhavas* and intensified by *vyabhicharibhavas* finally becomes *rasa*. *Rasa* according to him is ingrained in the actor, i.e. in his form, dress and action, thereby delighting the spectator. By actor he specifically meant the hero. To explain Lollata's interpretation of *rasa-sutra* M.M.Sharma gives the example of the love between Rama and Sita:

...it was Rama who had love (*rati*) for Sita and as such the *rasa* (*srngara*) belonged to Rama. The spectator ascribes this *rasa* to the actor on account of the actor's clever acting. Thus the spectator's knowledge about Rama's love for Sita gives him pleasure. The love is *sthayibhava*; and the very *sthayi* being brought to its full form (*upacita*) by *vibhava*, etc., becomes *rasa*.

(Sharama 157)

*Rasa* creeps in the same way in Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*: The hero Dushyanta falls in love with Shakuntala. The Dramatist describes this using appropriate words. The spectator ascribes to the actor. On account of the actor's clever acting, the spectator develops the same mental attitude that belonged to Dushyanta and the spectators' apprehension of imputed love in the actor brings to him delight. Thus *rasa* is relished. The actor imitates the original

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character through *anusamdhi* or *anusamdhana*, which is the process of awareness, recollection and reflection. Thus the *sthayibhava* of the original character is superimposed on the other actor and this superimposition gives pleasure to the spectator. The pleasure is because he is made to believe that the actor is no one but the original character itself.

Sri Sankuka the next commentator of Bharata's *rasasutra*, probably belongs to the ninth century. He saw *rasa* as a process of logical inference. His theory of *rasa* is known as the theory of inference or *anumana*. It is the theory of *anumitivadha*. The spectator enjoys *rasa* when he infers the mood of the original character in the actor. It is like the picture of a horse. This is not a real one but it cannot be said that it is not a horse. The actor through his skilful representation appears as the original character. Like the picture of the horse, when an actor is performing on the stage it is known that the actor is not the original character, but the fact cannot be denied that the actor is not altogether different from the original character. With the union of the real (original character) and the unreal (actor) the spectator cannot recognize their distinction. *Rasa* here is undoubtedly spoken in relation to the sentiments aroused in the spectators. But this arousal of *rasa* is due to clever imitation. This inferred mood is certainly different from the ordinary perceptions, as it has its own distinct charm and beauty. In spite of its limitations Sankaran's theory contributed positively to the

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theory of *rasa*. When compared with Bhatta Lollata, Sankaran recognized the more active participation of the spectator in the process of *rasa* realization. He for the first time gave a philosophical interpretation to the theory of *Rasa*.

Anandavardhana suggested the “theory of suggestion”. According to him *rasa* cannot be stated directly in poetry (*kavya*). It is suggested by the *vibhavas* etc. So *rasa* is conveyed through suggestion, i.e. *rasa abhivyajyate*.

Bhattanayaka of the ninth century A.D. refused all the theories of *rasa*. He explained his theory by pointing out that a work of art has three functions, namely *abhidha*, *bhavakatva* and *bhojakatva*. *Abhidha* as M.M. Sharma says “presents the meaning of the poetry in the form of a description of the *vibhava* etc.” (160). *Bhavakatva* is supposed to have derived from Bharata’s definition of *bhava*. It is the power that generalizes *vibhavas*, *sthayibhavas* etc. Here the specific properties of the *vibhavas* etc. are not sensed. It is their general character that is experienced. It is through this process of generalization (*sadharanikarana*) that Rama in a drama does not appear as a lover of Sita and Sita as the beloved of Rama but they appear as common lovers with their common pursuit of love. This takes the spectators away from his thought of mundane preoccupations. *Bhojakatva* brings the elements of *sattva* into predominance by throwing the *rajas* and *tamas* in to the background. The preponderance of the *sattva* elements produces illumination and a

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state of perfect rest of the self within itself. That state is characterized by the absence of all conscious physical, psychological and volitional activities and so by freedom from all attachment to and aversion from all that can enter into consciousness. The state of aesthetic experience is known as the state of perfect bliss and it is a kin to the mystic realization of *Brahman*.

*Rasa* thus resides in the *sthayibhava* or the permanent mood which is experienced in a generalized form in poetry and drama. It is enjoyed by one's own blissful consciousness which is very close to the philosophic meditation of *Brahman*. Bhattanayaka interprets the term *samyoga* as the cognition of things in a generalized form and *nispatti* as the enjoyment (*bhukti*) of the *sthayibhava* as *rasa*. Hence his theory is known as *bhuktivada*. It means a significant contribution to the theory of aesthetic realization. It is Bhattanayaka who was the first to consider aesthetic realization as a mental process, a subjective experience of a refined reader or spectator. In his theory we see a transition from objective to subjective view of aesthetic experience and the *rasa* realization has been explained in terms of an inward experience.

Abhinavagupta, a major critic of the tenth century A.D. revised the meaning of *rasa* as the meaning (*artha*) of *kavya*. This meaning is strength by Bharata's explanation of the term *bhava* as "*kavya rhan bhavayanti bhavah*". According to Bharata

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these *bhavas*, *sthayibhava*, *anubhava* etc. combine to form *rasa*. So one of the meanings of *kavya* is *rasa*. His two important works *Abhinavabharati* and *Dhvanyaloka Locana* challenges the views of Bhattanayaka in two different stages and offers a new solution to the problem of aesthetic experience. This great exponent of Kashmirian Saivism propounded the theories of *rasa* and *dhwani* so convincingly that he is considered to be one of the greatest authorities in poetics and dramaturgy.

Explaining Bharata's theory of *rasa* Abhinavagupta has pointed out that *rasa* is suggested by the union of the *sthayibhava* with the *vibhavas* etc. through the relation of the suggested (*vyanjya*) and the suggestor (*vyanjaka*). *Sthayibhava* he says is lying deep in the hearts of the spectators as latent impressions. When a piece of art is experienced this *sthayibhava* is suggested by the depicted *vibhavas* etc. which are generalized in their mind and soon stripped of their peculiar conditions of time and space with the help of the suggestive power of word and sense and their skilful representations in drama. Similarly *sthayibhava* is universalized and generalized giving rise to an uninterrupted, ceaseless enjoyment, bereft of all feeling of insatiety, which is *rasa*. Like a beverage containing black pepper, candy-sugar, camphor and ingredients entirely different, *rasa* too gives an unique taste that is altogether different from its ingredients. According to him there is no other sensation that

could stop this aesthetic experience. This *rasa*-realisation is called *vitavighna pratiti*.

Since Abhinavagupta explains the word *nispatti* used by Bharata in his *rasa-sutra*, as *abhivyakti*, his theory of *rasa* is known as *abhivyaktivada*. *Abhivyakti* means *pratiti* or perception of *rasa* through the power of suggestion whose ultimate result is an extraordinary state of relish. This state of relish is a divine bliss that is nowhere near the general experiences of pleasure or pain. At this moment we are so completely lost in it. All pain is forgotten. If there is any pain, it is a pleasurable pain. Abhinavagupta has pointed out seven obstacles (*vighnas*) during *rasa* realization. They are:

- (1) The spectators incapacity for *rasa* realization
- (2) The lack of the proper aesthetic or psychic distance between the dramatic situation and the spectator.
- (3) The spectator's over-absorption in his own personal likes and dislikes.
- (4) The lack of the proper means of apprehension.
- (5) The absence of clarity.
- (6) The *sthayibhava* being given secondary importance in a play.
- (7) The creation of doubt or uncertainty as to the exact nature of the *sthayibhava*.

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This shows Abhinavagupta's deep insight into those dramatic aspects which lead to the ultimate realization of *rasa*.

The concept of *rasa* has been refined by these critics. But the doctrine of *rasa* as already stated was first given by Bharata. After defining the theory of *rasa-sutra* he classifies *rasa* into eight types “ in accordance with the eight dominant emotional moods, which, when develop transform themselves into the *rasa*” (Sankaran 15). These sentiments are (1) *Sringara* (love) (2) *Hasya* (humour) (3) *Karuna* (pathos) (4) *Raudra* (wrath) (5) *Veera* (heroism) (6) *Bhyanaka* (terror) (7) *Bibhatsa* (disgust) (8) *Adbhuta* (wonder).

These eight sentiments are the subdivisions of four major sentiments. The comic sentiment arises from the erotic, the pathetic from the furious, the marvellous from the heroic and the terrible from the odious. These four major *rasas* seem to have been arising in the mind under the impact of external objects. These four types of feelings are:

- (1) *Vikasa* (Ardent desire) leading to the arousal of *sringara rasa*.
- (2) *Vistara* (Amplitude) leading to the arousal of *veera rasa*.
- (3) *Ksobha* (Agitation) leading to the arousal of *raudra rasa*.
- (4) *Viksapha* (Distraction) leading to the arousal of *vibhatsa rasa*.

Bharata has also pointed out eight colours symbolizing these eight sentiments. The erotic sentiment is green (*syama*); the comic sentiment white (*sweta*); the pathetic sentiment grey (*kapota*), the furious sentiment red; the heroic sentiment yellowish (*gaura*), the terrible sentiment black; the odious sentiments blue and the marvellous sentiment yellow. Bharata has attributed the eight *rasas* to eight deities: Vishnu is the god of the erotic; Pramathas of the comic; Rudra of the furious; Yama of the pathetic; Mahakala (Siva) of the odious; Kala of the terrible; Indra of the heroic and Brahma of the marvellous sentiments.

Bharata has also discussed various factors that enunciate *rasa* realisation. These he says are expressed through the four varieties of *abhinaya* (action). They are *angika* (action through limbs); *valika* (through speech); *acharya* (through dress); *sattvika* (certain outward expressions of emotion). These *abhinayas* are again subdivided into several types that promote the different *rasas*.

Bharata in his *Natyasastra* has given an elaborate theory of *rasa*. The doctrine of *Rasa* is well utilized by Kalidasa in his works and where *Shakuntala* is the best example. But before discussing *rasa* in Kalidasa's *Abhijnanasakuntalam*, it is important to know the *sthayibhavas* of the eight sentiments, their determinants, consequents, complementary psychological states

and their nature of combination leading to the realization of *rasa*.

### 1. *Sringara Rasa*:

As explained by Bharata, the *sthayibhava* of the erotic sentiment is love (*rati*) is associated with the fullness of youth and originates when a relationship is tied up between a man and woman. The erotic sentiment is usually associated with bright, pure, beautiful and elegant attire. Bharata has divided this sentiment into two type, *samyoga* and *vipralamba*. *Samyoga* is the *rasa* of union and *vipralamba* is that of separation. The determinants of *samyoga sringara rasa* are the blooming seasons like spring, rich ornaments, full bloom flowers, company of intimate fellows etc. Consequents in the erotic sentiment which is to be represented on the stage are the clever moment of the eyes, eyebrows, soft and delicate moment of the limbs, sweet and pleasant words etc. The consequents *vipralampa sringara rasa* are indifference, languor, fear, jealousy, fatigue, anxiety, yearning, drowsiness, dreaming, awakening, illness, insanity, epilepsy, inactivity, fainting, death and other such conditions.

In addition to Bharata's *rasas* of union and separation Dhanamjaya has mentioned another *rasa* of privation. He has named them as *sambhoga* (union), *viprayoga* (separation) and *ayoga* (privation). The *viprayoga* and *ayoga* of Dhanamjaya together correspond to the *vipralamba* of Bharata.

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## 2. *Hasya Rasa*:

The *sthayibhava* of the comic sentiment is laughter. It is aroused by the determinants such as an unusual dressing, impedance, greediness, quarrel, strange moment of limbs, use of irrelevant words, uncouth behaviour and the like. The sentiment is represented by the consequents such as the throbbing of lips, the nose, and the cheek, opening the eyes wide or contracting them, perspiration, colour of the face and taking hold of the sides. Complementary psychological states in it are indolence, dissimulation, drowsiness, sleep, dreaming, insomnia, envy and the like.

There are six types of *hasya rasas*:

- (1) *Smita*- It is the gentle smile which refers to the wide opening of the eyes.
- (2) *Hasita*- Smile is revealed by the slight showing of the teeth.
- (3) *Vihasita*- Gentle laughter is heard by a soft sound.
- (4) *Upahasita*- It is the ridiculous laughter identified by the shaking of the head.
- (5) *Apahasita*- An uproarious laughter accompanied by tears.
- (6) *Atihasita*- Convulsive laughter amounts to the shaking of whole body.

The varieties of laughter also categorized for various class of persons. The first two identify the superior persons, next two to the middling and the last two to the inferior type of persons.

### **3. *Karuna Rasa*:**

The *sthayibhava* of the pathetic sentiment is sorrow. It is aroused by the determinants such as suffering under curse, separation from or loss of dear ones, commotion caused by reversal of situation, death, captivity, fatal injury and other misfortunes. This is shown on the stage by the consequents such as heaving of sighs, shedding tears, paralysis, lamentation, dryness of mouth, change of colour and loss of memory etc.. The complementary psychological states are epilepsy, depression, languor, indifference anxiety, yearning, excitement, delusion, fainting etc.

### **4. *Raudra Rasa*:**

The *sthayibhava* of the furious sentiment is anger (*krodha*). It identifies *raksasas*, *danavas*, haughty men and is caused by striking, cutting, mutilation and the fight in the battle field. It is aroused by the determinants such as indignation, rape, insult, false allegation, exercising, jealousy, threatening, revengefulness and the like passions. It is represented on the stage by the consequents such as biting one's lip, knitting of eyebrows, red eyes, moment of cheeks, trembling, frowning, swelling, drawing of weapons etc.. It is soon followed by the

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complementary psychological states like indignation, excitement, intoxication, inconstancy, agitation restlessness, fury etc.. It is more truly a sentiment full of conflict.

### **5. Veera Rasa:**

The *sthayibhava* of the heroic sentiment is energy (*utsaha*). It is aroused by the determinants such as good conduct, determination, perseverance, courage, infatuation, diplomacy, discipline and aggressiveness etc. It is to be shown on the stage by the consequents such as heroism, firmness, patience, pride, energy, diplomacy etc. Its complementary psychological states include pride, contentment, firmness of purpose, judgment, agitation, indignation, etc.

### **6. Bhayanaka Rasa:**

The *sthayibhava* of the terrible sentiment is fear (*bhaya*). This is aroused by the determinants such as loss of courage, sight of ghost, death, hideous noise, terrible cry of jackals and owls, staying in a lonely area or house etc. It is represented on the stage by consequents like trembling of all the limbs, sweating, vomiting, spitting, fainting and the like. The complementary psychological states are depression, distraction, agitation, paralysis, perspiration, fear, stupefaction, dejection, restlessness, palpitation of the heart etc.



### **7. *Bibhatsa Rasa*:**

The *sthayibhava* of the odious sentiment is disgust (*jugupsa*). It is aroused by the determinants such as disgusting sight, taste, smell and sound, which create uneasiness and suffocation to the spectators. It is staged in the form of the consequents like contraction of the mouth and eyes, covering of the nose, spitting, vomiting etc. Its complementary psychological states are agitation, delusion, apprehension, sickness, death epilepsy etc.

### **8. *Advuta Rasa*:**

Its *sthayibhava* is astonishment (*vismaya*). It is caused by the determinants like the supernatural elements, illusory and magical acts. It is shown on stage by the consequents like exclamation due to surprise, weeping, trembling, stammering, sweating etc. Its complementary psychological states are joy, agitation, perspiration, hurry, choking voice, etc.

Abhinavagupta added a new *rasa*, i.e., *santa rasa* as the ninth *rasa*. This addition was a good cause for the critics to argue on. Many critics accept only the eight *rasas* elaborated in chapter six of Bharata's *Natyasastra*. Those who do not recognize *santa* as a *rasa* have their own arguments. Sama is accepted as the *sthayibhava* of *santa rasa*. The *santa rasa* is rejected by many critics on the ground that:

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...it is contrary to the teachings of Bharata. Bharata has enumerated the Bhavas to be forty-nine and Sama is not one of them. If this should be accepted to be a Bhava the number would exceed the limit fixed by him. Further, in the same way as the spring season, flowers, etc., excite love, austerities and study do not bring about Santarasa but only Tattovajñana or the knowledge of eternal truths, and so austerities, etc., also cannot be the Vibhavas of Santa. Absence of Kama, etc., also cannot be Anubhavas, for how could the absence of Kama or Krodha, in other words, the negation of an action be represented on the stage? Dhṛti (fortitude), etc., which are related to sensual enjoyment cannot be the Vyabhicāribhavas of Santa. So there does not exist a Rasa, called Santa,

(Sankaran 112)

Hence to accept *santa* as a *rasa* would be to go against Bharata's *rasasutra*. Since the real nature of *sama* refers to the state of complete inaction and lack of conflict and tension. Representing it on the stage would be impossible.

Abhinavagupta has tried to prove his point as against such arguments that do not accept *santa* as a *rasa*. He argues that drama or poetry is not confined to the *trivaraga*, *purusarthas*,

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*dharma* etc. only. It also takes into account the highest *purusartha* or *moksha*. This emotional mood is *sama*, which is the *sthayibhava* of *santa rasa*. Critics like Visvaratha accept *santa* as a *rasa* as according to them *santa* is not solely the cessation of all activity. This too is being represented and appreciated on stage. “The Alankarasastra (too) recognises nine rasas, *srngara vira karunadbhuta hasya bhayanaka bibhatsa raudra santah*”(Nagaiah 6).

When *santa* is accept as the ninth *rasa* what then are its *sthayibhavas*, *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicharibhavas*. The *sthayibhava* of *santi rasa* is *sama*. If *vibhavas* (determinants) are the pursuit for spiritual knowledge and freedom from worldly desires. It is to be represented on the stage by *anubhavas* (consequents) such as meditation, devotion, perception, recognition of truth, control and sympathy for all creatures. Its *vyabhicharibhavas* (complementary psychological states) are courage, indifference, recollection and fixity etc.

Referring to the old manuscripts of the *Natyasastra* Abhinavagupta has said that Bharata has dealt with *santa* and its *sthayibhava*. Bharata’s treatment of *santa rasa* in *Natyasastra* is before the sixth chapter. Here *santa* is considered as the source of the other *rasas*. Hence it is the fundamental *rasa* which Abhinavagupta called *Maharasa*. It is the basic mental state in which all emotions in aesthetic experience emerge out of *santa* and are in the end submerged in it. *Santa* is a state of

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consciousness which is free from all tensions and turmoil. Abhinavagupta after analyzing the nature of the nine *sthayibhavas* has concluded that the first eight are either pleasant or painful but the *sama* is only delightful.

The question arises, where lies the *rasa*, whether in the original character or actor or poet or spectator or the work itself? Bharata's *rasasutra* explains that *rasa* is produced when there is the union of *sthayibhava* with *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharbhava*. Hence *rasa* lies in the work of art and the spectator just enjoys it. Bharata explains *rasa* as *asvadya* (objects of relish). It can be made clear by an analogy of the flower. Just as the smell lies in the flower itself and not in the nostril of the person who enjoys its smell. *Rasa* lies in the work of art and not in the spectator who just enjoys it.

Kalidas's works show his belief in the doctrine of Bharata's *rasasutra*. The *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicharibhavas* are dealt with so minutely in his works that its union with *sthayibhavas* produces *rasa*, which is relished till today. *Shakuntala* is his most cherished play. It is the story of Shakuntala's love with Dushyanta – they fall in love, separate and at the end reunite. The separation is the phase of transformation of the lovers. Here the physical earning transcends into a more matured and spiritual love when they finally meet. On this maturation of love Chandra Rajan says:

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Sakuntala, having delineated love's ecstasy and fulfilment as well as its anguish in the separation that follows the anger and bitterness of its cruel betrayal, finally gathers it all in the closing scene in an epiphanic moment of recognition, restoration and reunion.

(Rajan 41)

Kalidasa has treated these three phases of the lovers lives in seven acts, and these seven acts are an amalgamation of Kalidasa's indepth knowledge of human sentiments which is named as *rasa*.

*Sringara*, love in its many aspects is a perennial theme of lyrical poetry. The *nataka Shakuntala*, is about love of Dushyanta and Shakuntala hence *sringara* is the *rasa* that ornaments the play. Kalidasa explores the twin aspects of *sringara rasa* – *sambhoga sringara* and *viralamba sringara*. The *sambhoga sringara* has been shown as erotic and the *vipralamba sringara* as sublime. The first instance of *sambhoga sringara rasa* is when the king experiences that indicates a good omen is a fine example of *vyabicharibhava*:

Dushm. [*walking round and looking*] Now then I enter  
the sanctuary.– [*He enters the grove*]- Oh! this  
place must be holy. My right arm throbs.  
[*Pausing and considering*]- What new

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acquisition does this omen promise in a sequestered grove? But the gates of predestined events are in all places open.

(I, Jones 6)

In the tranquil environment of Kanva's ashrama Dushyanta sees Shakuntala in her full blooming youth and falls in love with her. The undisturbed surrounding is the *vibhava*:

...Rippling beneath a passing breeze, waters flow  
in deep channels to lave the roots of trees;  
smoke drifts up from oblations to the Sacred Fire  
to dim the soft sheen of tender leaf buds;  
free from fear, fawns browse lazily in meadows  
beyond, where darbha-shoots are closely cropped.

(I, Rajan 175)

The beautiful surrounding, the inner joy of Dushyanta and of course the beauty of Shakuntala triggers the feeling of love in him. The flattery of Priyamvada and Anasuya are the major forces who initiate Shakuntala to express her love through a letter. Their words excite Dushyanta too. Though standing behind the bushes he too is unable to control himself from adoring and appreciating Shakuntala's magical youth, "Her lower lip has the rich sheen of young shoots,/her arms the very grace of

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tender twining stems;/ her limbs enchanting as a lovely flower/ glow with the radiance of magical youth” (I, Rajan 177). Before the lovers could express their love for each other Kalidasa separates the lovers. But this *vipralamba* is not the resultant of any hatred. It brings out the ingrained feelings of love. They long to meet each other. Dushyanta impatiently reveals to Madhavaya about his growing love for Shakuntala. On the other side Shakuntala suffers from fever. *Virahotkanthita* Shakuntala begs, “My friends, if you approve, counsel me as to how I can find favour in the eyes of the Royal Sage; otherwise I shall be just a memory” (III, Rajan 203). Act three of the play is full of the erotic elements of *sambhoga sringara*. For Shakuntala, *vipralamba* starts from the time Dushyanta left for Hastinapur. With the curse of Durvasa in the fourth act begins the separation as Dushyanta forgets Shakuntala as a result of the curse. But it is in Act V when Dushyanta does not recognize her and refuses to accept her the separation becomes a brief for her. Shakuntala’s sorrow begins. Dushyanta realizes his mistakes as he sees the lost ring found by the fisherman. Now begins Dushyanta’s *vipralamba*. In Act VI he withdraws all his interest from worldly pursuits and repents on his cruel behaviour towards his beloved. In distress he speaks to Madhavaya:

Ah! My friend,  
Was it a dream? A magical vision  
Of loveliness ? A hallucination?  
Or, the fruit of my good deeds past,

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reward in strict measure, and no more?  
 It is gone, I am quite certain,  
 never to return: Wishes? – they have fallen,  
 all, off the edge of a precipice.

(VI, Rajan 253)

In grief, the king bans the celebration of the spring festival. His costumes too symbolise his grief. These are the *vibhavas* of *vipralamba sringara*. The king's disgust and guilt towards himself are the *anubhavas*. His fainting is the *vyabhicharibhava*. All this combine to produce love-separated i.e., *vipralamba sringara*. In Act VII Kalidasa returns to *sambhoga sringara rasa*. But the reunion in the seventh act does not show sensuous love like it was in the first act. Rather the meaning of love has been raised from the physical to the spiritual ideal. *Sringara rasa* is no more in its erotic aspect, it has transcended to a more meditative behaviour of the matured lovers. The lovers unite in the serene surrounding of Kasyapa's hermitage. Sarvadamana becomes the medium to reunite his parents, Dushyanta and Shakuntala. On seeing the child the king's heart is filled with *vatsalya* (affection) for the child, "O how my heart goes out to this wayward little fellow" (VII, Rajan 272). Hence the complete cycle of *sringara rasa*.

The repudiation of Shakuntala is no doubt *vipralamba sringara*. But it also arouses the pathetic sentiment i.e., *karuna*

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*rasa*. The curse of Durvasa, loss of Dushyanta's memory are the cause of the lovers' suffering. These determinants have led to the shedding of tears, sorrow and grief for both Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Such consequents combine with the *vyavicharibhavas* like the king's fainting to produce *karuna rasa*. Another example of sorrow in the drama is Shakuntala's departure from Kanva's ashrama, the scene is full of sorrow. There is tear in every one's eyes. Even the dear (*sarangarava*), the trees shed tears while she is leaving for her husband's house. Though Kanva and the other hermits were happy that Shakuntala was going to her husband's house but the very realisation that their separation was permanent one could not stop sage Kanva also from sighing in grief:

How can my grief ever leave me,  
O my beloved child, when I see  
grains of wild rice already scattered by you  
sprouting green shoots at the cottage door.

(III, Rajan 228)

The scene of Shakuntala's departure and the lover's suffering in separation evokes *karuna rasa* in the spectators too.

The curse of rishi Durvasa was a result of his anger. Shakuntala sat in the thoughts of Dushyanta, unmindful to the happenings around her. She could not listen to Durvasa's words,

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which insulted him. This raised the *krodha* of the irate stage and he cursed Shakuntala to be forgotten by the person in whose thoughts she was lost. Thus the curse upon Shakuntala which is an example of *raudra rasa*. We see *raudra* in Shakuntala too:

SAKUNTALA (*in anger*): Ignoble man! You who are like a well covered with grass...you judge every one by the measure of your own heart... who would stoop to imitate your conduct ... practicing falseness putting on the mantle of virtue?

(V, Rajan 239)

In Act V when Dushyanta failed to recognise Shakuntala despite all her trials to remind him of their intimacy, the calm and innocent girl lost her temper. Such a reaction by Shakuntala was the result of Dushyanta's refusal to recognize her and accept her. These are certain examples of Kalidasa's treatment of *raudra rasa*.

*Veera rasa* is the heroic sentiment that is characterized by expression of energy. The energy identifies a king. There are only a few instances of *veera rasa* in the play. In the first example *utsaha* is the *sthayibhava*. In act one when Shakuntala is troubled by a bee the king steps out from behind the bushes and drags the bee away:

KING (*hastily steps forward*): Ha!

While the chastiser of the wicked,

great Puru's scion rulers over this rich earth,

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who dares behave in the churlish manner  
to guideless, young girls of the hermitage.

(I, Rajan 179)

This king's heroic energy is exposed again at the end of act six when Dushyanta accepts the proposal of Indra to help him fight against the Titans. The example of *adbhuta rasa* in *Shakuntala* is when Dushyanta and Matali pass over Hemakuta, the king is astonished:

KING (*in a tone of almost wonder*): How's this Matali!

The wheels glide noiseless; no jolting is felt;  
no dust is seen whirling around;  
they do not touch the surface of the Earth;  
nothing marks the chariot's descent.

(VII, Rajan 268)

He wonders on seeing the chariot glide dustlessly and noiselessly. Such a glide is not normal to the chariots on the earth. Thus an example of *adbhuta rasa* in Kashyapa's *ashrama* Dushyanta is again astonished to see the little child Sarvadamana playing with the lion cubs. This is not common to all children. Hence it is *adbhuta* for Dushyanta. But in Sarvadamana it is the *veera rasa* that is relished.

The first act of *Shakuntala* shows *Santa Rasa*. On the hermits' request the king withdraws his arrow. The furious mood that ventured to kill the deer now cools down with a desire to get

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purified with the sight of the holy hermitage. The tranquillity of both the hermitages, Kanva's and Kasyapa's are examples of *santa rasa*. Enjoying the serenity of Kanva's ashrama Dushyanta describes:

... Rippling beneath a passing breeze, waters flow  
in deep channels to lave the roots of trees;  
smoke drifts up from oblations to the Sacred Fire  
to dim the soft sheen of tender leafbuds;  
free from fear, fawns browse lazily in meadows  
beyond, where darbha-shoots are closely cropped.

(I, Rajan 175)

Such an example proves Kalidasa's acceptance for the ninth *rasa* i.e., the *santa rasa*.

The examples of the various *rasas* in *Shakuntala* show Kalidasa's deep insight into the Bharata's *rasasutra*. *Rasa* as we know is the *sthayibhava* produced by the union of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharibhava*. It is not just the mixture of these *bhavas* that is the cause of *Rasa*. It is their harmonious blending that produces *rasa*. A poetic genius alone can conceive such a configuration. It is Kalidasa's genius, who could write such a wonderful play *Shakuntala*, where its aesthetic configuration is so perfect that it out shined all other plays for centuries.

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## CHAPTER – IV

## CONCLUSION

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*Pura kavinang gragna-prasange kanisthika adhisthith kalidasa.*

*Adhapi tat-talya kaver abhavad anamika sa arthavati vabhub.*

An anonymous critic has described Kalidasa as peerless. It is during Kalidasa's time that Indian classical literature reached its utmost popularity. Kalidasa's works are a major contribution to take Sanskrit literature to the forefront of all other literatures. The perfection in his art has always attracted the appreciation of critics.

Two major poets of the seventh century, Dandin and Bana, have praised Kalidasa's works. Dandin (600) has appreciated Kalidasa for refining the Vaidharbha style. Bana (608-648) writes, "*nirgatasu na va kasya/ kalidasasya suktisu/ pritir madhur sardrasu manjarisviva jayate*". H. L. Shukla has given the meaning of these words as "who will not delight at the sight of Kalidasa's fine sayings like honey-laden shoots, so fresh and sweet" (Suhkla 116). Such appreciation for Kalidasa's work came not from one or two poets, but his works are admired and followed even today. Ravikirti (604 A.D) imitated Kalidasa's style of depiction. Jayadeva also made an in-depth study of the great poet's works. But Vallabhadeva was the first to discover the aesthetic beauty hidden in his poems. Apart from him Sthiradeva (11<sup>th</sup> cent.), Dakshinamurti (13<sup>th</sup> cent.), Purnasaraswati (15<sup>th</sup> cent.), Lakshmi Niwas (16<sup>th</sup> cent.), Mahima Simha Gani (17<sup>th</sup> cent.), Kalyanamall (18<sup>th</sup> cent.) are a few names who

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merited Kalidasa's works. These critics have adopted the style and technique of the great poet of Sanskrit literature.

Kalidasa's works were not restricted to the Indian soil. In the year seventeen eighty-nine Sir William Jones translated Kalidasa's *Abhijnanasakuntalam* to English and called his translation, *Sakuntala: The Story of Lost Ring*. It is this translation by Sir William Jones that made the western world aware of the great Sanskrit literature. Among all the Sanskrit laureates it was Kalidasa who was most appreciated. George Forster introduced Kalidasa to German intellectual's by translating William Jone's *Sakuntala* into German. Goethe composed a poem in German in praise of Kalidasa's great work *Shakuntala*. A few lines of his epigram translated are:

If in one word of blooms of early and fruits of riper  
years, of excitement and enchantment should tell, of  
fulfilment content, of Heaven and Earth; then will but  
say Shakuntala and have said all.

(Shukla 119)

Kalidasa in his *Shakuntala* satisfies all the expectations of the spectators. The earthly excitement is fulfilled through the love of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Their places of union gives the feeling of heavenly presence. Herder of Germany, Nicolai Karamazina of Russia and Friedrich Schegel are few more scholars who attracted the western world towards Kalidasa's

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works. The western critics did not restrict their study to Shakuntala. Other works of Kalidasa were also equally appreciated. *Vikromarvasiya* was translated into Russian by Lenza in 1842. It was retranslated by Friedrich Bollenzena in 1846. Goethe translated *Meghadutam* from H. H. Wilson's English translation of the same work. Wilson translated *Vikramorvasiya* and *Malavikagnimitra* was made known to the Europeans by Wilson's translation into English. He named his translations as *Urvashi* won by Valour and *Malavika and Agnimitra* respectively. Ruekert translated a few verses from *Raghuvamsham*. Griffith translated *Kumarsambhavam* into English. The great Indian men like Rabindranath Tagore and Shri Aurobinda were the men who actually helped the western critics to understand Kalidasa and take him to their countries. According to Tagore Kalidasa was "the beginning of all beginnings".

The western critics made in-depth study of the style of Kalidasa's works. They also compared and contrasted his artistic skills to their literary geniuses like Virgil, Homer, Shakespeare, etc. Monier Williams has compared the various aspects of the Sanskrit dramatist's work *Shakuntala*:

Shakuntala combines the majesty of Homer with the tenderness of virgin, the luxuriance of Ovid and the depth of Shakespeare. And yet it is simple and contains enough to

suggest the old Athenian boast of beauty without extravagance.

(Suhkla 124)

Williams has paralleled *Shakuntala* with the best works of Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare and has found incomparable beauty independent of any criticism. William Jones has seen Kalidasa as the Shakespeare of India. But the tender feeling and rich imagination of Kalidasa's multifarious creations are beyond all comparison. In spite of his great works Kalidasa had to face the criticism of Anandavardana, Viswanatha, Amritananda, Panditaraja Jagannath and many more. But their criticism was not so strong to fossilize his great creations. His works are still alive as masterpieces of Indian classical literature.

Kalidasa has written three dramas – *Malavikagnimitram*, *Abhijnanasakuntalam* and *Vikramorvasiya*, all of them exhibiting his strict adherence to the rules of Indian dramaturgy. But their beauty lies in his power to delineate human emotions in their manifold expressions. His wonderful development of wisdom and thought enabled him to express these emotions with all its exactness. One enjoys his plays for his skill of narration which is marked in his plots. It is the characteristic of any Sanskrit drama to take the plot either from the history or epic legend. *Shakuntala* and *Vikramorvasiya* are inspirations from epic legends. But the plot of *Malavikagnimitra* is the depiction

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of the story of actual historical figures Malavika and Agnimitra. Sadhu Ram has commented on the originality of Kalidasa's plots.

They are taken from old sources, except that of Malavikagnimitra, and are so enriched and transformed by his genius and creative imagination that they seem almost original. By his subtle and natural devices, and by the introduction of minor characters and incidents, he almost gives us a new creation.

(Ram 165)

His plays are not a reproduction of the epic. They have only inspired Kalidasa. He has manipulated these stories so beautifully that they seem original. The last two acts of *Shakuntala* are Kalidasa's own creation. The simple, direct and brief dialogues make his language easy and effective. His power of characterization reveals his clear understanding of the tender emotions of human heart. Kalidasa knew well that no heart accepts a tragic end to life. Hindu philosophy too believes that there is light after every darkness. Hence no story of Kalidasa ends in permanent separation of the lovers. He was concentrated equally on theme, plot, dialogue, characterization and poetry.

All the plays of Kalidasa are based on the theme of love. He does not simply present a love story in the format of a drama. He rather depicts the emotion 'love'. He understands clearly all the aspects of human life and passion. He has given importance

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to the moral and ethical values of the society. Shakuntala and Dushyanta unite only after Gandharva marriage. His love theme is mainly based upon the emotions of women. H. L. Shukla has given an excellent description on the women in his plays:

Kalidasa's plays show the diversity of the mind of a 4<sup>th</sup> century man whose understanding of the human condition is extended beyond his own sex and beyond his own time. Because he is genius, because he could hear the words of women and transform them into language on the stage, because he did not filter these words through the screen of contemporary male prejudices, he was able to present vibrant, alive women. Shakuntala's uniqueness lies in its portrait of a young girl who remains strong during her swift growth to womanhood. It is not proper to regard women in Kalidasa's plays as less than characters whose dramatic stature must be examined from their own vantage point and in their own right.

(Shukla 135)

His description of women is not as a subordinate of man. Rather he gives her an individual identity. She is beyond a mere character. Her feelings and emotions are expressed like his own.

Every drama is incomplete without its natural surrounding. Kalidasa has dealt in detail each aspect of India. The

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geographical features include the beauty of Indian mountains, clouds and lakes too. The flora and fauna are given equal importance. Sometimes they are personified. In the scene of Shakuntala's departure the deer holds the hem of her garment. The *koel* sings trees give silk garments and ornaments to wear. The traditional Hindu society is respected by him. As Bhagwat Saran Upadhyaya in his *India in Kalidasa* says, "the picture of society as disclosed in the works of Kalidasa is both graphic and varied" (171). The structure of society, the stages of Hindu life, Ashrams, types of marriage, birth, marital and death rites are all included in his plays.

His architectonic skill is par excellence. The stage technique is mastered by him. Each scene gives a hint to the proceeding scene. Like in *Shakuntala* the first act reveals that sage Kanva has gone to Somatirtha to pacify Shakuntala's adverse fate. The beauty of his plays is multiplied by its excellent verses. "Kavya" or poetry are of two types – *sravya* and *drisya*. *Sravya-kavyas* include poetry, stories, romances etc. These are either read or listened to when recited by others. *Drisya-kavyas* are dramas that are enjoyed through performances on stage. *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is an example of this type. The play consists of about two hundred verses. Lyrical verses heighten the effect of emotions. Due to the affect of lyrical verses the emotions no more sound as dry pieces of conversation.

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Kalidasa represents the Augustan age of Sanskrit poetry. His is a versatile and exceptional talent. The lyrical grace of his poetry is exhibited through his simple and lucid style. There are three major styles of poetry viz. the *vaidharbhi*, the *panchali* and the *gaudi*. Among these *vaidharbhi* is the best. And Kalidasa's creations are the best examples of *vaidharbhi* style. The similes he has used are incomparable for its naturality and spontaneity.

The sources of these similes range from mythology, nature, *sruti*, *smriti* to *vyakaranas* and *sastras*. Prof. S. Nagaiah has observed the introduction of "Vedic concepts in his similes" (10). He also gives an example to prove his point, "that the sun at the end of the day transfers his lustre to Agni is a Vedic concept" (Nagaiah 10). The simile is from the fourth act of *Raghuvamsam*. Raghu was crowned as the king of Ayodhya. His fame was "like *Agni* having received the lustre laid down by the sun at the end of the day" (Nagaiah 10). Appreciating the quality of his similies an anonymous critic writes, *Upma kalidasasyu bharver arthagauravam/ dandinah pada-lalityang maghe santi tryogurgah*.

Here are a few examples of his brilliant similes. The lamp-flame (*Dipa-Sikha*) in the sixth act of *Raghuvamsam*. In act one of the same play Sudaksina and Dilipa, when they are driving towards Vasistha's hermitage is described as *chitra*. *Chitra* the constellation moving with the moon in a clear sky. In act one of

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*Kumarasambhavam* the maiden is compared to a white flower placed on a tender sprout or as pearls on a platter of a coral. It is Kalidasa's unique style to employ a series of similes instead of a single simile. For example the description of the Himalaya in the *Kumarsambhavam*. How the Himalaya was blessed with a daughter, Parvati. Here the Himalaya is described as synonymous with, "a lamp with a bright flame", "the holy milky way", "a wise man with refined speech". Sadhu Ram gives a wonderful meaning of simile from his study of Kalidasa's similes. He says:

The essence of a simile is not merely resemblance or community of qualities. It is the exquisite touch the poet gives to it by his intuition, his subtle sense. By his penetrating insight he presents the glimpse of an invisible charm that lies hidden behind the outward show, just a suggestion, something ineffable and ethereal.

(Ram 174)

Kalidasa through his "penetrating insight" opened up the hidden meaning of the objects.

Kalidasa has not only employed similes in his poetry. He has also included a variety of metres. *Upajati*, *mandakrantha*, and *anushtupa* are the metres he has often used. *Indravajra* and *upendravajra* are two more metres that the poet has used to combine variety and melody in his verse. *Meghadutam* is an example of *mandakranta* metre.

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These similes and metres ornament Kalidasa's description of nature and love. His similes show the reflection of nature in man:

His young maidens have moon-like faces, creeper-like arms, lily-like hands and feet, and flower-like exuberance and charm of youth pervading through every limb of their bodies.

(Ram 176)

For him man is very close to nature. His similes show that human beauty is inseparable from nature's beauty. Shakuntala is a fine example as she is the 'Lady of Nature'. Nature is also personified in Kalidasa's works. A few examples of nature personified by Kalidasa are - the Madhavi creeper that twines itself with the mango tree in *Shakuntala*. *Ritusamharam* is a poetic description of the effects of seasons on human emotions. The rains come with an illusion in the distracted mind of the king in *Vikramorvasiya*. In *Raghuvamsam* and *Kumarasambhavam* we get the graphic description of spring. In *Shakuntala* the mango buds do not bloom as the king is sad. Kalidasa is a lover of nature, but never separates it from human sentiments. His description of nature is not limited to Earth. It extends to several worlds, like in *Meghadutam* and *Shakuntala*.

*Kavya* aims at aesthetic pleasure, i.e. *rasa*. *Rasa* is created by the causes of emotions, *vibhavas* and the effects of emotions, Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)  
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*anubhavas*. In the true sense of the term, there is no *vibhava* in poetry or fiction. The poet writes and the reader creates them through their imagination. But in drama the spectator need not have to trouble their imagination. They see everything enacted on the stage. The art of gesticulation (*abhinaya*) includes all forms of fine arts – poetry, music, dance, painting etc. In drama we get music from songs, speech from dialogues and the art of painting from scenic arrangements. All these help to bring out the sentiments of the spectator.

Every dramatist aims at the production of total aesthetic pleasure in his spectators. Kalidasa has concentrated mainly on the hero and the heroine. Their characters are defined by the type of sentiments they arouse. A dramatist works hard to arouse the similar sentiment of the hero and the heroine in the spectators. On the part of the spectators they too struggle to grab the emotions. But for Kalidasa's plays the spectators enjoy the sentiments without any effort. Kalidasa also takes full care not to make his acts lengthy and tiresome. He fills it with *rasa*. In any Sanskrit drama the prevailing sentiment of the hero should be *shringara* or *veera* or at times *karuna*. For the heroine the most familiar sentiment chosen is the erotic sentiment. *Abhignana-sakuntalam* is an example where the hero and the heroine are both portrayed to relish *sringara rasa*. *Sringara rasa* is the prevailing sentiment in Kalidasa's plays. Shakuntala and

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Dushyanta enjoy both the aspects of the erotic sentiment. They meet in the hermitage of Kanva and love each other. In the first three acts of the drama Kalidasa applies *sambhoga sringara rasa*. From the time Dushyanta leaves Shakuntala waiting for him Kalidasa introduces *vipralamba sringara rasa*. These two aspects of *sringara rasa* one after the other dominates the drama.

Shakuntala is not just a love story where lovers unite, separate and reunite. It is a drama where Kalidasa has given the true meaning of love. Here love gets matured through separation. The basic *vibhva* of *sringara rasa* is beauty. Sadhu Ram has rightly pointed out that desire for beauty is the basic instinct of man:

The yearning of the human soul for beauty is an eternal instinct deeply embedded in human nature. With a poet, this search for beauty becomes a burning passion. The poet is ever anxious to catch the flitting form of beauty and to give expression to its elusive charms.

(Ram 177)

An artist never loses any opportunity in representing this beauty in art. Through this representation *rasa* is created. Through his treatment of *rasa* Kalidasa in his *Shakuntala* has dealt with both levels of beauty, physical and spiritual. The lines:

She's right in what she says,  
With rounded breasts concealed by cloth of bark  
fastened at the shoulder in a fine knot

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her youthful form enfolded like a flower

In its place leafy sheath unfolds not its glory

(I, Rajan 177)

These erotic lines from the drama is a description of the physical beauty of Shakuntala. But Kalidasa is not concerned only with the *sambhoga sringara*. Where there is only physical union. He concentrates on the spiritualization of love. This is made possible only through separation. Thus the *vipralamba sringara* resulted to the exposure of the inner spiritual beauty of the lovers. Love cannot end; true love has to continue. Shakuntala's and Dushyanta's love continued to flourish through their offspring Sarvadamana. Thus Kalidasa applies the doctrine of *rasa* to elevate love from mere physical pleasure to an experience that is highly spiritual.

As discussed in the chapter "The Doctrine of Rasa" critics like Bhatta Lollata, Sri Sankuka, Bhattanayaka, Abhinavagupta came up with their own theories of *rasa*. They were not insensible to the sweetness of *rasa* but worked largely to prove and establish their theories to be relevant. In contrast to these critics there were poet critics like Pravarasena, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Murari who aimed at enjoying the beauty of *rasa*. They "distinctly favoured this school and were even enthusiasts of it" (Sankaran 40). Sankaran has further given a

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note of Kalidasa's application of the doctrine of *rasa* in his works:

He extols the historic art (M. Act 1.4) through which the eight Rasas have to be developed (V. Act II.18). When attending a dramatic performance the audience, through its imaginative sympathy, loses itself in the situations and characters, and enjoys... Among the Rasas *Srngara* is his favourite, and even here *Vipralambha* or the union of lovers after long separation is the most delectable (V. Act 3.21, *Megha*.2. 45). Kalidasa a direct disciple of Valmiki, who probably values *Karuna* (R.XIV.42). He at his best in the delineation of *Srngara*, but equally at home in *Karuna* and *Vira*. To him as to Valmiki, Poetry is the spontaneous rhythmic expression of a climax of emotion (R. XIV.70). In judging the value of anything he would follow the dictates of his own conscience (S. Act1.19). Above all in developing the Rasas he would insist on that quality essential for every art, viz., restraint.

(Sankaran 41)

*Meghadutam* is the perfect example of his use of *vipralamba srngara*. *Karuna* and *veera rasas* dominate *Raghuvamsam*. Like

Valmiki spontaneously uttered “*Ma nishad ...*”, as he saw the Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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bird dying in pain. Kalidasa too agrees that true poetry comes out as a sudden reaction to any scene in the climax of its emotion. Here the poet too experiences a similar level of emotion. Every artist portray the same emotions. But they give different levels of enjoyment. As the method of interpretation differs from artist to artist. Each artist gives his individual touch. Kalidasa too has taken a love story as his plot in *Abhijnanasakuntalam*. As stated earlier it s a story taken from the Mahabharata. In the epic the story has no major significance. If the episode of Shakuntala is removed from the epic it would in no way hinder the epic's grandeur. Also her story may have been written by poets before Kalidasa. But she gained worldwide fame in the hands of Kalidasa. Why? Of course Kalidasa's style, characterization, technique contributes to her fame. But the most important factor is Kalidasa's application of his in-depth knowledge of human sentiments, which has given rise to an unexcelled aesthetic pleasure i.e. *rasa*. The spectators too get involved in these sentiments without any effort. The dominating *rasa* in *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is no doubt *sringara*, but Kalidasa knows that man has several other sentiments ingrained in him. So he deals with *karuna*, *raudra*, *veera* and *santa rasas* too.

In the drama Kalidasa has deviated at various places from the original story depicted in the epic Mahabharata. Kuntaka a contemporary of Abhinavagupta, names such a change as

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*prakaranavkrate*. According to him “change introduced by the poet in the incidents of the traditional plot is justified only as contributing to the easy and natural development of Rasa” (Sankaran 127). Sankaran has explain this view of Kuntaka by taking an example from *Shakuntala*:

Kalidasa’s introduction of the curse of Durvasas in the fourth act of the Sakuntala exonerates Dusyanta from his otherwise, wilful, cowardish, criminal and monsterlike repudiation of his lawfully wedded spouse. Quite unlike the Amazon, with her child, arguing out her case like an able lawyer before the King’s Court as represented in the Mahabharata story, Sakuntala’s appearance and later repudiation in her full pregnancy heightens the pathos of the situation.

(Sankaran 128)

Durvasa’s curse erases the memories of Shakuntala from Dushyanta’s mind. This is the seed of *karuna rasa*. Had no change been made in the story, had Shakuntala not been repudiated, the pathos could not have been felt to its fullest extent. The dramatist gives every detail of the human sentiments. Dushyanta’s feelings towards Shakuntala when he sees her for the first time can be realized by everybody. But the jealousy of Dushyanta towards the lucky bee for hovering around Shakuntala’s beautiful face is a sentiment that only Kalidasa could highlight.

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There are also instances in the play where the spectator can relish two *rasas* at one time. Like in the first act of *Shakuntala* Dushyanta is seen on a chariot in his hunting suit chasing a deer. This gives the impression of the *veera rasa*. At the same time the deer runs swiftly for its life. A *bhaya* is developed on the part of the spectators who sympathise the deer. Thus the *bhayanaka rasa*.

The *sthayibhavas* are the instincts that are already deeply implanted in a person. The artist only represents the *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaribhavas* as a result of which the *sthayibhava* is called forth and developed to that climax when it is realized by us, invariably accompanied by a thrill or joy. Kalidasa has himself said in a *sloka*, which means:

... when a person, though happy, becomes uneasy of mind on seeing beautiful objects and hearing sweet music, then indeed he intuitively realises *smarti* though vaguely, associations of former births deeply implanted in him.

(Sakaran 105)

The reflection of former association can be seen in *Abhijnanasakuntalam* Dushyanta has completely forgotten his love for Shakuntala as he is under the spell of Durvasa's curse. But as sweet music enters into his ears he experiences



some sort of uneasiness as if some moment of love is troubling him. But these are all submerged in his unconscious. His conscious mind is unaware of the happenings of the past. The sweet music thus brings forth the submerged *sthayibhava* in Dushyanta and he intuitively realizes the feeling of love. This is true on the part of the spectators too. Abhinavagupta too takes support of this view of Kalidasa to prove his theory of *rasa*.

The treatment of *rasa* by Kalidasa in his works has been highly appreciated by all his readers. Also it cannot be denied that his works are of high quality. But there are instances in his works that raise certain questions, like what kind of *rasa* is this? The play *Shakuntala* “might be made effective in producing aesthetic experience, if presented from the point of view of the suffering heroine” (Warder 149). Warder has also raised the question on the kind of *rasa* produced as the king forgets Shakuntala:

Unfortunately Kalidasa has not done this but has the king dominate the stage throughout. What is his emotion when, due to the curse, he has completely forgotten his love? How can we imagine such a thing, which is completely outside our experience? What *rasa* can we have from it? In short the play does not deal with human experience. It is a fairy story, which perhaps has religious or philosophical significance.

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(Warder 149)

Warder has himself answered it as an emotion not understood by human brains, because the play contains an excess of fairy tale elements. Similar questions on the type of *rasa* has been posed by other critics too. But such remarks are very few and quite insignificant to disgrace Kalidasa's application of *rasa* in his works. It is due to this perfect utilization of *rasa* in *Abhijnanasakuntalam* that it has been awarded as the crown of Kalidasa's plays.

India is a land of rich cultural heritage. For this it owes to its ancestors. The *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* are the perfect proofs that show the development of the Indians included science, religion, philosophy, law and medicine. Literature too was not a field that could be neglected. The Indian scholars knew very well that human mind for its all-round development needs some sort of entertainment, a source where he could revitalize his emotions. The source to enrich his sentiments was literature. The foundation of Indian classical literature may have been laid by some unknown writer, but the task of building up Sanskrit literature was taken up by Kalidasa. H. L. Shukla has rightly called him as the prophet:

On the literary side, it was left to the genius of  
Kalidasa to become a prophet of the new synthesis in  
the stammering ideas of his age and to give a new

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status to Sanskrit language. If Sanskrit came to be recognised as a national language all over the country, it was in no small measure due to the grace and finish that Kalidasa contributed to it. In his period Indian art and especially literature were in the very forefront of world culture.

(Shukla 7)

It is Kalidasa's knowledge of Indian culture, society, its philosophy that helped him to develop wonderful plot, heroes and heroines. He was an artist who truly believed on the continuity of tradition. Thus in his works it is clearly seen that he has adhered to the rules and techniques proposed by his ancestors. But these rules could never restrict him from creating something new. He has left his successors with new ideas, styles and techniques. Shri Aurobindo has given a wonderful summary of the greatness of this great artist:

He seems to have been a man gifted with all the learning of his age, rich, aristocratic, moving wholly in high society, familiar with and fond of life in the most luxurious metropolis of his time, passionately attached to the arts, acquainted with the sciences... In creed, he was a Vedantin and in ceremony, a Saivite, but he seems to have accepted these as the orthodox forms of his time and country, recommended to him by his intellectual preference and aesthetic affinities

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rather than to have been satisfied with their profound religious want. His writings show indeed keen appreciation of the high and lofty thought. He is, besides, a consummate artist profound in conception and suave in execution, a master of sound and language, who has moulded for himself out of the infinite possibilities of the Sanskrit language, a verse and a diction which are absolutely the grandest, most puissant and most full-voiced of any human speech, a language of the Gods.

(Nagaiah 21)

These lines by Aurobindo sums up all the qualities of Kalidasa and those represented in his works. The fire sentiments of human emotions are so well portrayed that Kalidasa's works have never appeared as a piece of work from remote antiquity. They have always given a feeling of being written in our times and for us.

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