

## IV Semester B.Sc Sanskrit Notes on Kalidasa and Sriharsha

कालिदासः - KALIDAASA (around 400 A.D.)

वरकविः, कविकुलगुरुः are two of the titles bestowed on Kalidasa. He is one among the poets who composed the best works in Samskrta literature and brought everlasting fame. Even to this day, his time, place and personal life details are unsure. His poems are universally well-known. His work, 'अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलम्' - has been translated into several languages in the world.

At times, folklore surrounds famous personalities. Similarly, several stories are in vogue in the case of Kalidasa too. But these do not throw any light on the poet's life. Kalidasa is said to have been in the court of King Vikramaditya. Historical records show several kings by the name Vikramaditya. But scholars opine Kalidasa may have been in the court of Chandragupta II. The Aihole rock inscription ( 634 A.D. ) of Ravikeerthi commends Kalidasa. In the 7<sup>th</sup> c. A.D., Bana in his work, the 'हर्षचरितम्' praises Kalidasa. On the basis of a few other sources, scholars contend Kalidasa to have preceeded Bana and other poets. Several polymaths propound the time of Kalidasa may have been between the 1<sup>st</sup> c B.C. to 5<sup>th</sup> c A.D. Kalidasa may have lived between the 4<sup>th</sup> c A.D. to 5<sup>th</sup> c A.D.

Savants conclude from a close scrutiny of the works of Kalidasa that Ujjain is his birthplace. His poems contain profuse detailed descriptions of Ujjain which exhibit his endearment to the place. His poems suggest pundits to formulate the above opinion. It maybe conjectured that he had travelled the length and breadth

of Bharata from his vivid portrayal of several cities, mountains, rivers, etc in the Raghuvamsha.

In all, there are seven works of Kalidasa.

They are –

१. रघुवंशम्
२. कुमारसम्भवम् ----- महकाव्ये
३. मेघदूतम्
४. ऋतुसंहारम् ----- खण्डकाव्ये
५. मालविकाग्निमित्रम्
६. विक्रमोर्वशीयम् ----- त्रीणि नाटकानि
७. अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलम्

In the lists of literary works, several critics speculate that there are several other compositions of Kalidasa. But in all the lists of the critics, as the titles of above seven works are seen, everyone unanimously agree those to be the works of Kalidasa. 'श्यामलादण्डक' and innumerable other stotrams and works are penned under his name.

From the perspective of plot and sentiment, the three dramas of Kalidasa are unequalled. The anecdotes chosen in the three dramas revolve around the sentiment of Love/शृंगार । But, in these dramas love is presented in various stages from a psychological viewpoint.

१. मालविकाग्निमित्रम् । – This is a नाटक of five acts. King Agnimitra is the hero and princess Malavika is the heroine. The beautiful love between the two is portrayed.

२. विक्रमोर्वशीयम् । This drama consists of five acts. The hero of this drama is the King Purarava belonging to the lunar dynasty. The heroine is the celestial nymph, Urvashi. This basic plot has elements from the Rg Veda, Shatapatha Brahmana. The love episode of Purarava and Urvashi is attractively presented.

३. अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलम् । This is the magnum opus of Kalidasa. Indian critics rate this drama as the best in dramaturgy.

‘ काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यं तत्र रम्या शकुन्तला । ’

[Among all the literary genres, drama is charming, and among the dramas, Shakauntala is the most charming.] Western scholars too have accepted this as the best of the dramas. It contains seven acts. The hero of the play is the king of Hastinavati, King Dushyanta. The heroine is the daughter of Sage Viswamitra and the celestial nymph, Menaka, Shakuntala. The love between the two, the Gandharva form of marriage, the curse by Sage Durvaasa, Dushyanta's rejection of Shakuntala as his wife, Menaka carrying away her daughter, Shakuntala, to live in the ashrama of Mareecha, Dushyanta recalling Shakuntala on sighting the signet ring, Dushyanta's pangs of separation and repentance, and lastly, the uniting of the two in the ashrama of Mareecha with the son, Bharata, forms the main elements of this drama.

Though the plot for the drama has been drawn from the Mahabharata, the dramatist has made several changes. The episode of the curse of Durvaasa, the fisherman's episode, Anasuyaa-Priyamvada, and other characters are the fantastic imagination of the poet.

In the three dramas, Kalidasa's ingenuity in the realm of the innovation of drama is visible.

‘ उपमाकालिदासस्य ’is the saying earned by Kalidasa by the extensive use of simile. The use of similes has heightened the aesthetic beauty in his works. The language of Kalidasa is simple and lucid.

The depiction of characters in these three dramas have rendered them prolific characters in our daily lives. The portrayal of the characters are naturalistic and complete. Of all the dramas, Kalidasa’s Shakuntala is incomparable. The Shakuntala is translated not only into several Indian languages, but also into about forty foreign languages.

That Kalidasa’s works exhibit the skill of the fruition of the rasas, comes to our awareness. Whichsoever rasa is taken up for depiction, that rasa is beautifully conveyed. Sringara rasa is the predominant rasa in all the three dramas of Kalidasa. The portrayal of Nature, the harmonious and indispensable need between man and Nature, the national feeling, the decorum and culture of Bharata - all the above are indicated in a manner pleasing to the mind. An overview of his works reveal his knowledge of Veda, Smriti, Purana, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Dharmashastra, the polity of statecraft, finearts, astrology, Ayurveda and other allied topics. His works present both bliss and ideal characters in life.

## कालिदासप्रशस्तिः ।

१. पुरा कवीनां गणना प्रसङ्गे कनिष्ठिकाधिष्ठित कालिदासः ।  
अद्यापि तत्तुलयकवेरभावात् अनामिका सार्थवती बभूव ॥
२. काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यं तत्र रम्या शकुन्तला ।  
तत्रापि च चतुर्थोऽङ्कः तत्र श्लोकचतुष्टयम् ॥
३. ' कविकुलगुरुः कालिदासो विलासः ।' [ जयदेवः ]
४. निर्गतासु न वा कस्य कालिदासस्य सूक्तिषु ।  
प्रीतिर्मधुर सान्द्रासु मञ्जरीष्विव जायते ॥ - [ बाणः ]
५. ' उपमा कालिदासस्य' ।
६. ' दीपशिखा कालिदासः ' ।

श्री हर्षः / हर्षवर्धनः

SRI HARSHA / HARSHAVARDHANA (590 – 647 A.D.)

Sri Harsha is one of the famous dramatists in the field of Samskrita drama. Unlike other Samskrita poets, there is no room for any doubts or questions regarding the time of Sri Harsha. Historical records clearly indicate the same. According to these, the particulars of the time and life of Harsha are available in detail and are decisive, as seen in the prose-poetry of Bana's 'Harshacharitam', HieunTsang's writings and several inscriptions.

Harsha was born in 590 A.D. His parents were Prabhakara Vardhana and Yashomati. His brother was Rajya Vardhana and Rajyashri was his sister. After the death of Rajya Vardhana by a Gowda king, Harsha took over the reins of the kingdom. Harsha was known by the title of ' उत्तरापथचक्रवर्तिः ' ।

He ruled the kingdom from Sthaneshwara and Kanyakubja for about forty years. He showed great interest in Dharma, Literature, Theology and fine arts. Bana, Mayura, Matanga, Diwakara and innumerable other famous poets adorned his court. The famed Nalanda University existed during his reign. He exhibited equal regard towards both the Vedic and Buddhist religions.

Sri Harsha wrote प्रियदर्शिका, रत्नावली and नागानन्दम् । A question existed if the dramas were penned by a scholar in the court of Sri Harsha. Several sources indicate Sri Harsha encouraged and supported poets, and was himself a writer. Itsing, a Chinese traveller visiting the court of Harsha Vardhana writes of a stage performance of the story of 'Jeemootavahana'. Bana praises the poetical abilities of Sri Harsha. In this manner several poets have vouched Sri Harsha as a good poet. 'श्रीहर्षो निपुणः कविः' – this line occurs in the प्रस्थावन of his three dramas, and reinforces the poet in him.

Sri Harsha wrote प्रियदर्शिका, रत्नावली and नागानन्दम् । The first of the two belong to नाटिका form of drama and the third to the नाटक form.

१. प्रियदर्शिका । – This is a नाटिका in four acts. The hero is the King of Vatsa, Udayana and the heroine is the daughter of the King of Anga, DhruvaVarma, by name Priyadarshika. In the process of the marriage of Udayana and Priyadarshika, Priyadarshika escapes the protective ring of security and reaches the palace of Udayana. As she was sighted in the forest, she dwells in the inner apartments of Vasavadatta, under the name of Aranyaka. Here, the development of love for Udayana is thwarted by the Queen Vasavadatta. Upon knowing Aranyaka herself to be none other than Priyadarshika, the Queen happily unites King Udayana and Priyadarshika – this forms the main plot of the drama.

२. रत्नावली । This is a नाटिका in four acts. Ratnavali, the daughter of the king of Simhala, Vikrama Bahu is the heroine and the king of Vatsa, Udayana is the hero of the play. As in the Priyadarshika Natika, the heroine here, Ratnavali is to wed Udayana. But in the course of the travel by sea, a storm separates her from the crew. She manages to reach the palace, and hence the name ' सागरिका ' । She serves in the inner apartments of the Queen Vasavadatta. Here, the love between the two developed. This enraged the Queen who proved to be an obstacle for their union. Ultimately, on the knowing the truth, the Queen joyfully unites King Udayana and princess Ratnavali.

The plot, hero, sentiment, the expression of feelings, style of writing, the wife, and several other elements are similar in both the नाटिकाs, रत्नावली and प्रियदर्शिका । In the two नाटिकाs, the king woos the two royal princesses who become a part of the royal harem. Their union is facilitated by friends. Queen Vasavadatta imprisons them. As the heroines try to end their lives, the hero rescues

them. The kin of the heroines recognize them. The Queen's prior intended actions and on becoming aware of the future family connections, she herself aids in the marriage of the King and royal princesses.

These two नाटिकाs are composed in accordance with the rules of नाटिकालक्षण ।

३. नागानन्दम् । This is a नाटक in five acts. The prince of the Vidyadharas, Jeemootavahana is the hero of the play. Malayavati, the daughter of King Vishwvasu, is the heroine of the play. The meeting and marriage of the two forms the plot of the first three acts of the play. The following two acts revolve around the self-sacrifice of Jeemootavahana for the people of the Nagas. In order to protect the Nagas, Jeemootavahana offers himself as food to Garuda. Witnessing the same, the parents of Jeemootavahana and his wife, Malayavati intend to enter the fire. At this juncture, Goddess Gowri restores the life of Jeemootavahana. Garuda sprinkles Amruta (nectar) on all the Nagas and are revived. Garuda vows to abstain from killing any Nagas in the future. Thus ends the drama with a mangala shloka.

The predominant rasa in the first two dramas of Sri Harsha is Srungara. Karuna rasa is the primary rasa in the drama नागानन्दम् । The writing style of Sri Harsha is lucid and pleases the mind. On observing his works, it maybe remarked that he was specially influenced by the writing styles of Bhasa and Kalidasa. Undoubtedly, Sri Harsha has secured a place in the field of Sanskrit literature with his works.

