

## I. Introduction

### **Title:**

The title of my thesis is “Application of Shringara Rasa in Kalidasa’s *Abhijnanashakuntalam*.”

### **Purpose:**

The main purpose behind writing this research work is for the submission to the Central Department of Sanskrit under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the tenth paper of the second year for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sanskrit.

### **Objectives:**

Its main objective is to study the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* for the application of shringara rasa. Here in the research work, shringara rasa, along with its permanent mood or sthayibhava Rati, is described in details and other rasas are only slightly discussed as they are not the primary focus of this very research.

### **Hypothesis:**

The great poet Kalidasa applies Shringara rasa in the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* to elevate love from mere physical pleasure to an experience that is highly spiritual.

### **Review of Literature:**

Kalidasa’s works are a major contribution to take Sanskrit literature to the forefront of all other literatures. *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is the play that is regarded as his masterpiece. The perfection in his art has always attracted the appreciation of critics. Two major poets of the seventh century, Dandi and Bana, have praised Kalidasa’s works. Dandi has appreciated Kalidasa for refining the vaidharbha style.

Banabhatta, the famous author of the *Kadambari*, speaks of him in the following words:

निर्गतासु न वा कस्य कालिदासस्य सूक्तिषु ।

प्रीतिर्मधुरसान्द्रासु मञ्जरीष्विव जायते ॥

(*The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa xxiv*)

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?” (Shukla116). Such appreciation for Kalidasa’s work came not from one or two poets, but his works are admired and followed by all even today. Almost every Sanskrit scholar has in his mouth the following memorable verse:

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(*The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa xxv*)

It means among the *kavya* the drama is the most charming. Among dramas the *Shakuntala* is especially charming. Even there the fourth Act is the best. And lastly, the four shlokas of the Act are especially most beautiful. Appreciating Kalidasa’s genius K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

Kalidasa’s genius is as much evident in his poems as in his plays. We have seen that love occupies a central place, whether, he writes a lyric or an epic like the *Kumarasambhava*. All his three plays, again, centre upon love. (Krishnamoorthy 52)

Robert E. Goodwin in the second chapter of his book *The Playworld of Sanskrit Drama* writes:

The aesthetic-erotic ideal of *kavya* as thematized in the mythic framework of the *Shakuntala* seems to prove that any flirtation with Eros inevitably subverts *lila's* transcendent claims. A curse hangs over the solipsistic garden-world of the first three Acts, which can be lifted only when the *rasika* seeks to translate the Sri of his imagination into the real world with its social and practical implications. The *Shakuntala* moves to the side of desire for fulfillment of the promise enshrined in the erotic paradise: the utopian hope of happiness in love supported by a social system that honors the sentimental ideals of the heart. (Goodwin 56)

In the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* Shakuntala and 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 Shringara rasa.

From the time Dushyanta leaves Shakuntala waiting for him Kalidasa introduces Vipralamba Shringara. These two aspects of Shringara rasa one after the other dominates the drama. It 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 Vibhava of Shringara 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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 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 are a description of the physical beauty of Shakuntala. But Kalidasa is not concerned only with the Sambhoga Shringara where there is only physical union. He concentrates on the spiritualization of love.

The very core of the Sanskrit Natya theory is the creation of "Rasa". The word Rasa is derived from the root 'rasah' meaning sap or juice, taste, flavor, relish. The extract of a fruit is referred to as 'rasa,' which itself is the essence of it, the ultimate flavor of it. Bharata succinctly encapsulates the theory of Rasa in his most famous formula-like Rasa sutra thus: " विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद् रसनिष्पत्तिः ।" (*Kavya Prakasha* 64). The critics like Bhatta Lollata, Shree Shankuka, Bhattanayaka and 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).

*Meghadutam* is the perfect example of his use of Vipralambha Shringara. Karuna and Veera rasas dominate *Raghuvamsam*. The dominating rasa in his play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is no doubt Shringara, but Kalidasa knows that man has several other sentiments ingrained in him. So he deals with Karuna, Raudra, Veera and Shanta 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 prakaranavyakrate. 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).

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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam* “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. (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 have been posed by other critics, too. But such remarks are very few and quite insignificant to disgrace Kalidasa's application of shringara rasa in his works as K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

Kalidasa shows his soundness of judgement in divesting the shringara rasa from its association with adbhuta in his *Malavikagnimitra* (a semi-historical play) and with low comic hasya in *Vikramorvasiya* and *Shakuntala* (legendary plays). (Krishnamoorthy 52)

It is due to this perfect utilization of shringara rasa in *Abhijnanashakuntalam* that it has been awarded as the crown of Kalidasa's plays.

### **Methodology:**

Intensive study of the text is the core point of this research. The critical writing and reviews available on both the author and the text are thoroughly studied. Rasa theory has supplied the theoretical tool to study the text for the application of the Shringara rasa in the concerned drama.

In addition, internet, library consultation and related commentaries are used as supportive materials. Moreover, the guidance from respected gurus and the help from friends are further inspiration to bring the thesis into its complete shape.

### **Chapterization:**

The present dissertation consists of the five main chapters.

#### **I. Introduction:**

It simply introduces only the major aspects of the research work in short.

#### **II. Kalidasa and Oriental Dramaturgy:**

Chapter two gives a brief sketch of Kalidasa's life and his works, his date and the place of his origin, and his predecessors, successors and his influence on them. Besides these, it also deals with origin and characteristics of Sanskrit drama to some extent.

### III. Theoretical Approach:

Rasa theory, which is a study on the evolution of rasa in dramatic performance, is used merely as a theoretical tool to study the text for the application of Shringara rasa in the concerned drama. Hence, Shringara rasa, along with its sthayibhava Rati, is described in details and other rasas are only slightly discussed as they are not the primary focus of this very research.

### IV. Textual Analysis of the Play:

The fourth chapter, right after the discussion of synopsis of the play, emphasises on reflection of Shringara as a dominant rasa in the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. To some extent, development of the theme along with the sources of the play in brief, nature in the play and finally justification of the title in the play are also slightly dealt with.

### V. Conclusion:

The very concluding chapter shows how far Kalidasa was successful in applying Shringara rasa in his play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*.

### **Works Cited**

## II. Kalidasa and Oriental Dramaturgy

### Kalidasa's Life and His Works

Kalidasa was a renowned Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in Sanskrit language. His is the first great name in Sanskrit literature after Ashvaghosha, a philosopher and poet believed to have been the first Sanskrit dramatist and considered the greatest Sanskrit poet prior to Kalidasa. Moreover, Kalidasa is known as a supreme poet of love and no doubt his treatment of Shringara has earned for him the widest popularity. Shringara rasa has met with its indiscriminate treatment by all and diverse, down the ages. Kalidasa alone among the classical poets in Sanskrit maintained a dignity, even when absorbed in setting out love's amours or displaying eroticism. In a way he alone touched the heart of intensity while being vigilant to restrain the mind from wallowing in sensuousness. His culture and traditional upbringing in the epics taught him that the supreme merit of love lay not in its physical attraction but in its sublimation.

He has 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 and Kavikulaguru. The key to his perfect art is his graceful presentation of aesthetic beauty where human emotion is the soul of his artistry and nature's beauty is the charm. His mastery over sound and language and brevity in style has showered utmost satisfaction on his readers.

Kalidasa's works are a major contribution to take Sanskrit literature to the forefront of all other literatures. *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is the play that is regarded as his masterpiece. The perfection in his art has always attracted the appreciation of critics. Two major poets of the seventh century, Dandi and Bana, have praised Kalidasa's works. Dandi has appreciated Kalidasa for refining the vaidharbha style.



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Kalidasa in his play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* satisfies all the expectations of the spectators. The earthly excitement is fulfilled through the love of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Their places of union give 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 works. The western critics did not restrict their study to *Shakuntala*. Other works of Kalidasa were also equally appreciated. *Vikromarvashiya* 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. Ruckert translated a few verses from *Raghuvamsham*. Griffith translated *Kumarsambhavam* into English. The great Indian men like Rabindranath

Tagore and Shree Aurobindo were the men who actually helped the western critics to understand Kalidasa and take him to their countries. Tagore writes:

This ancient poet of India refuses to recognize Love as its own highest glory. He proclaims that Goodness is the final goal of Love. He teaches us that the Love of man and woman is not beautiful, not lasting, not fruitful, so long as it is self-centered, so long as it does not beget Goodness, so long as it does not defuse itself into society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours. (Sarma 7)

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 Virgil, 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. (Shukla 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 Anandavardhana, Vishwanatha, Amritananda, Panditaraja Jagannatha 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*, *Vikramorvasi* and *Abhijnanashakuntalam* all of them exhibiting his strict adherence to the rules of Sanskrit dramaturgy. But their beauty lies in his power to delineate human emotions in their manifold expressions.

Regarding the plays of Kalidasa, K. Krishnamoorthy comments:

In the first play, the king's conquest in love is not crowned with a heir's birth. The myth of the nymph and the hero is also bound up with the birth of a heroic son in the second play. But in the third, the reunion of the broken family is integrally bound up with and has the primary goal of getting a mighty son as heir, one fit to be the first of a line of great kings. (Krishnamoorthy 67)

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 *Vikramorvasi* are inspirations from epic legends. But the plot of *Malavikagnimitra* is the depiction 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 as well.

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. Seven of these works are unanimously accepted as authentic works of Kalidasa. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* has divided them into three groups. These are the plays, the epics and the poems. *Shakuntala* or *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, *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. In fact, the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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 Kashyapa'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 Pururavas, Urvashi, an apsara (a celestial nymph) is kidnapped by the demons. King Pururavas 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 Pururavas 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 Shiva 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 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 Ashadha 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 reverberates with Shiva'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 description of the natural beauty of each season. The seasonal beauty is attached to human sentiments. Regarding the themes of the poems *Ritusamharam* and *Meghadutam* V. Raghavan writes:

The theme of the poem on the seasons is that when the seasons change, the changes only enrich the love of man and woman with variegated expression. In the Cloud Messenger, a lover punished by his master

with separation from his beloved, a penalty for his over-indulgence, imagines a messenger in a passing cloud and sends a message of hope and reunion to his beloved pining in a distant city. (Raghavan 67)

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, who represents the Augustan age of Sanskrit poetry, is a versatile and exceptional talent. Regarding the writing styles of Kalidasa, K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

His use of simile and metaphor, poetic fancy and hyperbole, even pun and paradox, is very masterly. His fancies are always fresh and carry the stamp of a vivid imaginative vision. Any verse of his will provide an example of one figure of speech or another and will illustrate what a suggestive evocation of an emotion or mood or feeling is in its bearings. Such a balance between restraint and opulence, conformity to convention and unfettered creativity, beauty and profundity, is very rare in the history of the world literature. Indeed, Kalidasa has a permanent place in the hearts of all like-minded connoisseurs, Indian and western. (Krishnamoorthy 79)

The lyrical grace of his poetry is exhibited through his simple and lucid style. There are mainly three styles in poetry viz. the vaidharbhi, the panchali and the gaudi. Among them vaidharbhi is regarded the finest and Kalidasa's creations are the best examples of vaidharbhi style. The similes he has used are incomparable for its naturalness and spontaneity. The sources of these similes range from mythology, nature, shruiti, smriti to vyakaranas and shastras as well. 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 luster 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 luster laid down by the sun at the end of the day” (Nagaiah 10). Appreciating the quality of his similes an anonymous critic writes:

उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् ।

दण्डिनःपदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥

(*The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa xxv*)

Here are a few examples of his brilliant similes like the lamp-flame (Dipa-Sikha) in the sixth act of *Raghuvamsam*. In act one of the same play Sudakhsina and Dilipa, when they are driving towards Vashishtha’s hermitage is described as chitra. Chitra is the constellation moving with the moon in a clear sky. In act one of *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. The description of the Himalaya in the *Kumarsambhavam* is an example of it. 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. 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 in *Abhijnanashakuntalam*:

क्षामक्षामकपोलमाननमुरः काठिन्यमुक्तस्तनं

मध्यःक्लान्ततरः प्रकामविनतावंसौ छविः पाण्डुरा ।

शोच्या च प्रियदर्शना च मदनक्लिष्टेयमालक्ष्यते

पत्राणामिव शोषणेन मरुता स्पृष्टा लता माधवी ॥

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 96)

The king Dushyanta, in these lines, describes that face of his beloved has its cheeks excessively emaciated; her bosom has its breasts destitute of hardness; her waist is even more slender; her shoulders are exceedingly sunken; her complexion is pale, she,

thus tormented with love, appears both lovely and deplorable, like a Madhavi creeper shaken by the wind causing its leaves to wither.

*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 his epic poems *Raghuvamsam* and *Kumarasambhavam* we get the graphic description of spring. In the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* the mango buds do not bloom as the king is sad:

मुनिसुताप्रणयस्मृतिरोधिना मम च मुक्तमिदं तमसा मनः ।

मनसिजेन सखे प्रहरिष्यता धनुषि चूतशरश्च निवेशितः ॥

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 216)

This means the king says that his mind is freed from darkness which obstructed the memory of his love for the hermit's daughter, and at the same time the mango-shaft has been affixed to his bow by the mind-born God, wishing to strike him. So, Kalidasa is a lover of nature, but never separates it from human sentiments. His description of nature, which is not limited to earth, extends to several worlds like in *Meghadutam* and *Abhijnanashakuntalam*.

As a whole, 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 flavor of his works ever fresh.

### **Kalidasa's Date and the Place of His Origin**

The detail description of each aspect in his work left no room for his admirers to get confused or think it as 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 inadequate 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 Vatsabhathi 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 of tradition, such as Gautami-Putra Satakarn [...]. The question is to determine which of the many Vikramadityas 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 Mahendraditya 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. was 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.

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 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 fervor 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 "yakshas" 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.

Like Kalidasa's 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 Rajashekhara and Aufrecht:

... there lived not only one author by name of Kalidasa, but at least three known to Rajashekhara [...]. Aufrecht (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".

### **Kalidasa's Predecessors, Successors and His Influence on Them**

According to western scholars Ashvaghosa's *Sariputraprakaranam* is the earliest existing Sanskrit drama. Bhasa who probably lived in the third century B.C. is mentioned by Kalidasa, Bana and Rajashekhara. *Pratima Abhisekha*, *Madhyamavyayoga*, *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 Shudraka's name is not mentioned by him. Kalidasa's works are characterized 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*, *Priyadarshika* (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. An anonymous critic writes, "He has excelled his great predecessor in the delineation of the heroic and the wonderful". Kalidasa followed vaidarbha style. Bhavabhuti (736 A.D.) is a follower of the gaudi style. *Mahaviracharitam*, *Malatimadhava* and *Uttararamacharitam* are the three plays written by him. M. R. Kale in the introduction of his book *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* writes:

The only dramatic poet whom we can compare with Kalidasa is Bhavabhuti; and although as a poet on the whole we must place Kalidasa above Bhavabhuti, as a dramatic poet the palm is certainly disputed with him by the latter.

(*The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* xxvii)

Bhavabhuti's *Uttararamacharitam* is generally said to be overflowing with the sentiment of Karuna. Regarding the rasa applied in Bhavabhuti's *Uttararamacharitam* Sadashiv A. Dange in his *Critics on Sanskrit Drama* writes:

This gives scope to the Karuna no doubt; but the Karuna here depends upon the shringara – not of the lovers united, of the lovers that are separated from one another. In other words, the vipralambha shringara reigns supreme while the karuna is simply fostered by it. The love between a man and woman forms a different entity and the karuna has to place upon its fields cautiously. (Dange 2)

Vishakhadatta lived in eight hundred sixty A.D. *Mudrarakshasa* 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. Then came Rajashekhara in the last decade of ninth century A.D. with four plays- *Balabharata*, *Karpuramanjari*, *Balaramayana* and *Viddhasalabhanjika*. Kshemisvara (*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. Krishnamishra of the latter half of the eleventh century A.D. is known to have revived the old tradition. His *Prabodhachandaudaya* is the first Sanskrit allegorical drama. *Moharajaya* of Yashapala (thirteenth century), *Chaitanyachandrodaya* of Paramandalasena, Kavikarnapura (sixteenth century), *Dharmavijaya* of Bhudeva Shukla (sixteenth century), *Amritodaya* of Gokulanatha (seventeenth century) are some of the allegorical dramas. Thus Kalidasa is placed after Bhasa and before Harsha.

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 tranquility 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* or *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is a repository of various “rasas” and shringara is used as a dominating rasa in the play.

### **Origin and Characteristics of Sanskrit Drama**

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 *Natyashastra* 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. Shiva 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 Shurasena is known to be the land of Krishna worship. Shauraseni 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.

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 *Mahabharata*, *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 Vidushaka, Pratinayaka all smell Greek.

But there are also points that show the Greek drama and the Sanskrit drama are diametrical opposites. Sanskrit drama like in *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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 Acharya Vishvanatha 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), and bhana (*Karpuracharita* 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 *Karpuramanjari* 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.

Similar to the English drama, Sanskrit drama also has a main plot and a subplot, aadhikarika and prashangika. The aadhikarika is concerned with the main characters i.e., the hero and the heroine. The prashangika 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 Avasthas. They are: (i) "Arambha" 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 sandhis act as the connecting link between the aadhikarika and prashangika. These are also of five types viz. mukha, pratimukha, garbha, avamarsha, nirvahana. Beeja and arambha combine to give mukha sandhi. 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 the further sprouting of the original bija. Avamarsha sandhi is accompanied by niyatapti. Here the beeja has grown more luxuriantly than the garbha. But the end is postponed by the intervention of a new problem. Like in *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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 dhiroddhata. But the dhirodatta is the best with eight manly qualities viz., sobha, vilas, madhurya, gambhiry, dhairy, tejas, lalitya and aaudarya i.e., modest, decorous, comely, munificent, civil, of sweet address, eloquent, noble ancestry, etc. The hero is assisted by (i) peethamarda, 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 or 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, dhatreyi, prativeshika.

Rasa is the feeling produced in a man of poetic sensibility by the proper action of the vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabhicharibhavas. 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., shringara, hasya, karuna, raudra, veera, bhayanaka, vibhatsa, adbhuta. There is also a ninth rasa known as shanta rasa corresponding to the sthayibhava shama.

A Sanskrit drama is characterized 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. 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 Shakuntala* 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 social status. Vidushaka speaks Prakrit, Shauraseni; Maharashtri 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, Paisachi 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. 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 *praveshaka* or *vishkambhaka*. 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 plays 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 *Natyashastra* mentions the details of a stage in a Sanskrit drama. “The text mentions three shapes of playhouse: oblong, square, and triangular” (Rajan 34). The 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* in which as little or no scenery was used. Language became very important for most of the descriptions. Like in Act I of

the play *Shakuntalam*, the king Dushyanta describes the tranquillity of the hermitage of Kanva. The stage always faced east. The walls of the stage were carved with beautiful paintings and colorful figures. Equal importance was given to costume, jewellery and hairstyle. The line from this play “Enter the king costumed as suffering from remorse” (Rajan 250) from the Act VI of *Shakuntala* shows the importance of costume to express emotions.

### III. Theoretical Approach

#### Rasa Theory

Bharata's *Natyashsatra* is considered to be an oldest independent available text of oriental aesthetics and literary criticism. Ancient Sanskrit poetics holds a very rich tradition of literary criticism divided into six different streams or schools namely rasa, alamkara, riti, dhvani, vakrokti, and auchitya.

Being the first and most important theory of the tradition, rasa theory occupies the prominent place among all these schools of Sanskrit Poetics. Bharata is acknowledged to be the first exponent of the theory of relish or rasa, which he has systematically set forth in his celebrated treatise on dramaturgy, *Natyashastra*. Tradition considers *Natyashastra* as an additional Veda. The natya is depiction and communication pertaining to the emotions of the entire triple world: the pious behaviour of those who practice religion, passion of those who indulge in sexual pleasure, the repression of those who go by a wicked path, the act of self restrained of those who are disciplined. All of Bharata's interpretations on rasa are mainly in the context of dramatic representations. In *Natyashastra* Bharata has interpreted every aspect of literature in terms of rasa. Even though, his main concern was for the dramatic art form, the rasa theory has been applied to study all forms of literature including other forms of art and aesthetic creation also. The theory emphasises on the emotional aspect of the text and how it is received by the reader/receptor.

In Sanskrit literary criticism rasa is discussed in three aspects, as a poetical element, as a theory and as a literary school. In *Natyashastra* Bharata interpreted every aspect of literature in terms of rasa. Bharata interpreted the human feelings and emotions are bhavas. Emotions or bhavas are transformations of consciousness of particular mental states. Consciousness is unchangeable, it cannot undergo

transformation. Other objects generally help in some or other in bringing the emotions into being, which are further classified to three categories: sthayi or permanent mood, vyabhichari or transitory moods and sattvik bhavas or temperamental reactions or rasa-sutra as under responses to the rise of a permanent emotion. In terms of bhavas Bharata stated his formulation concisely in his well-known aphorism: “विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद् रसनिष्पत्तिः।”(*Kavya Prakasha* 64). It explains how rasa is relished. The term rasa is related to the sentiment that is aroused in the minds. The sentiments may be shringara (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:

मा निषाद ! प्रतिष्ठां त्वमगमः शास्वती समाः ।

यत्क्रौञ्चमिथुनादेकमवधीः काममोहितम् ॥ (Sankaran7)

This melodious shloka 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 the shloka. The meaning of the shloka is: O nishad (hunter) you shall not come to any good in your life for you killed one of the pair of loving Kraunches. This shloka occurs in the Balakanda of *the Ramayana* when Maharshi Valmiki utters these words (shloka) extempore.

Rasa has its existence in the 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 flavor 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 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 shift 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 propounder of the rasa school. For Bharata the aesthetic principle of a work of art was nothing beyond rasa- “न हि रसादृते कश्चिदर्थः प्रवर्तते ।” “No meaning proceeds from speech without 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 Shloka: मन्निषद...” (Sankaran7). The pathos he experienced was the resultant of two elements – vibhava (the cause) and anubhava (ensuant). Valmiki’s shloka 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 shloka 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 theory of rasa first emerged in its systematic shape.

The aphorism by Bharata, “विभावानुभाव...” 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 theory 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 within the heart of the men of taste by the reading of kavya or the witnessing of a dramatic performance” (Sharma, 155). Sthayibhava 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:

रतिर्हासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा ।

जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेति स्थायिभावाः प्रकीर्त्तिताः ॥ (*Kavya Prakasha* 86)

They are: (i) Love (rati), (ii) gaiety (hasya), (iii) sorrow (shoka), (iv) anger (krodha), (v) energy (utsaha), (vi) fear (bhaya), (vii) disgust (jugupsa) and (viii) astonishment (vismaya). There is a ninth sthayibhava recognized by Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta as passiveness (nirveda) as Mammata writes: निर्वेदस्थायिभावोऽस्ति शान्तोऽपि नवमो रसः । (*Kavya Prakasha* 88) The nine sthayibhavas are connected respectively with the nine sentiments (rasas), viz., shringara, hasya, karuna, raudra, veera, bhayanaka, bibhatsa, adbhuta and shanta. 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.” (Sankaran15). 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 vibhavyate (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 communicates the emotion felt by the characters. What is experienced by the characters of the play is made to be 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 searching 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, horrification, change of voice, trembling, change of color, weeping and fainting. “Vyabhicharibhavas are transitory or evanescent emotions that tend only to develop the main sentiment, such as anxiety, anger etc.” (Sankaran15). In the word vyabhichari, “vi” and “abhi” are prefixes of the root “chara” that means “to go”, “to move”.

Thus, vyabhichari 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 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam* explains how rasa is relished:

Skilled actors represent Dushyanta and Shakuntala. These first meet in the pleasant, beautiful groves of the hermitage (Vibhava). Each, stuck with the rapturous beauty of the other, casts eager, longing looks. At forced parting Shakuntala finds an excuse to steal a glance at her lover (Anubhava). In their extreme diffidence and anxiety they pine away one for the other (Vyabhicharibhava). Happily Shakuntala’s mate helps her in declaring her love through a letter. Dushyanta 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 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 there occurred the varied theories on rasa. Bhatta Lollata suggested the theory of utpatti-

vada, Shankuka came with anumiti-vada, Bhatta Nayaka with bhuktivada and Abhinavagupta with abhivyakti-vada. After experiencing various stages of development, rasa in the work of Vishvanatha was finally established as the “soul” of poetry. At first the theory 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 theory of rasa.

Bhatta Lollata, a commentator of the eighth and ninth centuries is among the earliest of Bharata’s 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, there by 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 (shringara) 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 (upachita) by vibhava, etc., becomes rasa. (Sharma 157)

Rasa creeps in the same way in Kalidasa’s *Shakuntala*: The hero Dushyanta falls in love with Shakuntala. The dramatist describes this by 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 character through anusandhi or anusandhana, 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.

Shree Shankuka 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 anumitivada. 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 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). *Bhavakattva* 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* into the background. The preponderance of the *sattva* elements produces illumination and a 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 strengthened by Bharata's explanation of the term bhava as "kavyani bhavayanti iti bhavah". According to Bharata 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* 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 Shaivism propounded the theories of rasa and dhvani 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 (vyangya) 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 a 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-realization is called “veetavighna prateetih”. 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 spectator’s 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.

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 theory of rasa as already stated was first given by Bharata. After defining the theory of rasa-sutra, he classifies rasa into eight types:

शृङ्गारहास्यकरुणरौद्रवीरभयानकाः ।

वीभत्साद्भुतसंज्ञौ चेत्यष्टौ नाट्ये रसाः स्मृताः ॥ (*Kavya Prakasha* 78)

“In accordance with the eight dominant emotional moods, which, when develop, transform themselves into the rasa” (Sankaran 15). These sentiments are (1) Shringara (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 marvelous 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 shringara rasa.
- (2) Vistara (Amplitude) leading to the arousal of veera rasa.
- (3) Kshobha (Agitation) leading to the arousal of raudra rasa.
- (4) Vikshapa (Distraction) leading to the arousal of vibhatsa rasa.

Bharata has also pointed out eight colors symbolizing these eight sentiments. The erotic sentiment is green (shyama); the comic sentiment white (shweta); the pathetic sentiment grey (kapota), the furious sentiment red; the heroic sentiment yellowish (gaura), the terrible sentiment black; the odious sentiments blue and the marvelous 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 (Shiva) of the odious; Kala of the terrible; Indra of the heroic and Brahma of the marvelous sentiments.

Bharata has also discussed various factors that enunciate rasa realization. These he says are expressed through the four varieties of abhinaya (action). They are angika (action through limbs); vachika (through speech); aharya (through dress); sattvika (certain outward expressions of emotion). These abhinayas are again

subdivided into several types that promote the different rasas. Bharata in his *Natyashastra* has given an elaborate theory of rasa. The theory of rasa is well utilized by Kalidasa in his works and where *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is the best example of shringara rasa.

### **1. Shringara Rasa:**

According to Bharata, shringara rasa or mutual enjoyment of love between male and female is the reciprocal joyful gestures of a young man towards a young woman contributing to mutual love and enjoyment. So, the erotic rasa or shringara rasa arises from the permanent mood of rati or love – the agreeable inclination towards the desired object, in presence of the lover and beloved (i.e. alambana vibhava). If we try to interpret shringara rasa as per Bharata's division of all constituents of rasa like, sthaya bhavas or permanent moods, sattvika bhavas or involuntary bodily responses, vyabhichari or transitory moods, uddipana vibhavas or exciting causes and alambana vibhavas, it will come as under; sthaya bhava: rati-agreeable inclination towards the desired object. Sattvika bhavas: sveda (sweating), romanca (hair standing on end), svarabheda (changes in one's tone of voice), vepathu (trembling), vaivarnya (changes in the colour of one's face). Alambana vibhavas: Heroes, heroines or the men, women are involved in Rati/love towards each other. Uddipana vibhavas: The moon, garden, cool breeze, river bench, sweet music, picture gallery etc. Anubhavas: love-soaked speech, smiling, affectionate exchange of glances, embracing, kissing, twisting of brows etc. So, the exciting causes or determinants (or the uddipana vibhavas) of shringara rasa or the erotic are the atmosphere of the place where the two persons meet, for example the sweet voice of night-birds, the moon, garden, cool breeze, river bench, sweet music, picture gallery etc. This situation gives rise to anubhavas or



physical manifestation– how the lover and beloved express themselves to each other, it may be love-soaked speech, affectionate exchange of glances, embracing, kissing, twisting of brows or holding hands etc. It produces involuntary bodily responses (the sattvika bhavas) like sveda (sweating), romancha (hair standing on end), svarabheda (changes in one's tone of voice), vepathu (trembling), vaivarnya (changes in the colour of one's face) and also may give rise to complementary (or transitory) emotional states or the vyabhicharibhavas. Gupteshwar explains it as according to Bharata, each rasa is developed from a stable state (sthayi bhava), which dwells in all human hearts as an innate idea or tendency and is fed by a number of minor feelings more than one mood. After Bharata, all theoreticians of Sanskrit poetics have accepted shringara rasa or love as an important part of human psyche and behavior as well as the driving force of human life and existence.

Rati or love in shringara rasa is love or inclination of man or woman towards each other on the basis of mutual involvement or consent of each other. Rudrata clearly mentions in *Kavyalamkara* that no other rasa is capable of proceeding that bliss or pleasure which the shringara rasa does. The sentiment permeates all human beings, and more than that even the flora and fauna. Anandavardhan in *Dhvanyaloka* considers shringara rasa among all rasas as sweetest and the most exhilarating. Bhoja holds Shringara to be synonyms of self and ego (Ahamkara). Here, the term ahamkara (ego) as used by Bhoja does not mean false pride or arrogance, but is indicative of innate attachment of man to one's own self. Because of this very ego and self-attachment he begins to expand his personality. When a lovely damsel casts glances on a man, it awakens an emotion of self consciousness, self confidence and self attachment and plunges him headlong into bliss. This is verily the state of ahamkara, in which he feels an ecstatic thrill, regards himself as fortunate, gratified and

an object of sweet and tender love. Bhoja considers ego as the main attribute of soul, which binds all human beings with this world. No one can feel happy if his ego is not satisfied. We love those who love us. Ultimately we come to love ourselves. So, Bhoja claims the erotic to be the basic rasa and declares that poetry is beautiful only because of the erotic. Indrapala Singh writes in his *SRINGARA RASA KA SASTRIYA VIVECHANA: A Critical Discussion of the Sentiment of Love*:

Bhoja said that at the root of all Bhavas lay the germ of Ahamkara otherwise called Shringara and Abhimana. It is a Guna of the Atma and is the result of past acts. By Ahamkara is meant a self consciousness or the sense of 'I', which marks off the cultured from the uncultured. It is that by which not only for himself but for others and other objects also does man have any love. In this sense, it is called Atma Rati. It is this 'Ego', or 'self-love' that is the one Rasa. Its manifestations are Rati, Hasa etc. (Singh 17)

Hence, the permanent feeling of the erotic is represented by the feeling of love, and Sanskrit poetics speaks of two types of this feeling; love in union and love in separation. So, shringara is divided into two categories samyoga or union and viyoga or separation. When the lovers feel themselves united and in perfect harmony is samyoga and in the other side when the lovers feel themselves separated and are incapable of living in perfect harmony with each other, is called vipralambha shringara or viyoga. Union oriented shringara takes place when two lovers enjoy the company of each other. Separation oriented shringara takes place when two lovers are separated from each other due to some cause or situation. It is also called vipralambha. Vipralambha is further divided into four parts- purvaraga, mana, pravasa and karuna. The situation of hero and heroine inclining towards each other before

actual union is called *purvaraga* (predisposition). So, *purvaraga* is love before union. This is generated by looking a person to be loved in picture, dream or hearing about him/her from others. *Mana* (anger in love) means anger or displeasure, generated by exceeding love or jealousy. In this situation lover and beloved stay at the same place, but there is an absence of exchange of kisses, embrace etc. It is further divided into two categories *pranaya mana* and *irshya mana*. *Pranaya mana* is the situation when a sort of anger develops between the two lovers sometimes without any solid reason and *irshya mana* is the situation of doubt, suspicion or jealousy among each other may be due to presence of another person male or female between them. Third category of vipralambha is *pravasa* (separation due to travel) or person (nayaka) being abroad. Departure may be occurred by business, by curse or by some fear etc. Fourth category is called *karuna* (separation causing grief). This happens when one of the lovers has died and hope of re-union declines. A. Berriedale Keith in his book *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development Theory and Practice* writes:

The erotic Sentiment (crngara rasa) is of two kinds, the union (sambhoga) or sundering (vipralambha) of two lovers, according to Castra and the great mass of theorists, but the Dacarupa distinguishes three cases, privation (ayoga), sundering (viprayoga), and union. Privation denotes the inability of two young hearts to secure union, because of obstacles to their marriage; such love passes through ten stages: longing, anxiety, recollection, enumeration of the loved one's merits, distress, raving, insanity, fever, stupor, and death. Sundering may be due to absence or resentment, and this in its turn may be caused by a quarrel by two determined lover, or indignation at finding out, by sight, hearing or inference, that one's lover is devoted to

another. The hero may counteract anger by conciliation, by winning over her friends, by gifts, by humility, by indifference, and by distracting her attention. Absence again due to business, to accident, or a curse; if reason is death the love sentiment can not, in Dhananjaya's view, be present, though others allow of a pathetic variety of this sentiment. In union the lover should avoid vulgarity or annoyance. (Keith 323)

Bharata has minutely described almost all aspects of love between male and female through a detailed discussion based on different examples from ancient Indian literature. Not only this, he has presented shringara rasa as the prominent rasa among all other rasas present in his eight rasa division. After Bharata many other Indian scholars like Vishvanatha, Bhoja, Abhinava Gupta, Panditraj Jagannatha, and Mammat etc. have also accepted the importance of shringara rasa as compared to the others. It has further been accepted that other permanent moods like humor, wrath, and terror may vary in ratio or may not be present in all human beings, but rati or love is a universal feeling or emotion that is always present in all the persons.

Hence, considering the importance of rati or love some scholars have declared shringara rasa in which all other rasas like hasya, adbhuta, and veera can easily merge. Bhoja has discussed shringara rasa in his famous work *Shringara Prakasha* assigning the utmost importance to shringara rasa and declaring shringara rasa as the most significant and widespread concept to analyse human behavior and psychology in different conditions and circumstances. The concept of shringara rasa provides an approach or way to observe and analyse almost all unexplored dimensions of human erotic behavior in different situations of mutual enjoyment, pleasure, union and separation. Shringara rasa presents, rati or love or the erotic as the most important

driving force of human act and conduct in life, which has a power to control or alter the priorities of a person's life. In this way, through shringara rasa the human erotic behavior and its impact on life can be aesthetically observed and evaluated.

As explained by Bharata, the sthayibhava of the erotic sentiment is love (rati) and it 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 vipralambha. Samyoga is the rasa of union and vipralambha is that of separation. The determinants of samyoga shringara 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 vipralambha shringara 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 Bharatas's rasas of union and separation Acharya Dhananjaya has mentioned another rasa of privation. He has named them as sambhoga (union), viprayoga (separation) and ayoga (privation). The viprayoga and ayoga of Dhananjaya together correspond to the vipralambha of Bharata.

## **2. Hasya Rasa:**

The sthayibhava of the comic sentiment is laughter. It is aroused by the determinants such as an unusual dressing, impudence, greediness, quarrel, strange moment of limbs, use of irrelevant words, uncouth behavior 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, and color 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 classes 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 color 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 rakshasas, danavas, and 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, exorcising, 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 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., shanta 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 *Natyashastra*. Those who do not recognize shanta as a rasa have their own arguments. Shama is accepted as the sthayibhava of shanta rasa. The shanta rasa is rejected by many critics on the ground that:

It is contrary to the teachings of Bharata. Bharata has enumerated the Bhavas to be forty-nine and Shama 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 Shanta rasa but only Tattvavijnana or the knowledge of eternal truths, and so austerities, etc., also cannot be the Vibhavas of Shanta. 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? Dhriti (fortitude), etc., which are related to sensual enjoyment cannot be the Vyabhicharibhavas of Shanta. So there does not exist a Rasa, called Shanta, (Sankaran 112)

Hence to accept shanta as a rasa would be to go against Bharata's rasasutra. Since the real nature of shama 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 shanta as a rasa. He argues that drama or poetry is not confined to the trivarga purusharthas, dharma etc. only. It also takes into account the highest purushartha or moksha. This emotional mood is shama, which is the sthayibhava of shanta rasa. Critics like Vishwanatha accept shanta as a rasa as according to them shanta is not solely the cessation of all activity. This too is being represented and appreciated on stage. "The *Alankarashastra* (too) recognises nine rasas: shringara, veera, karuna, adbhuta, hasya, bhayanaka, bibhatsa, raudra, shantah"(Nagaiah 6). When shanta is accepted as the ninth rasa what then are its sthayibhavas, vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabhicharibhavas. The sthayibhava of shanta rasa is shama. If vibhavas (determinants) are the pursuit for spiritual knowledge and freedom from worldly desires, it is to be represented on the stage by anubhava (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 *Natyashastra* Abhinavagupta has said that Bharata has dealt with shanta and its sthayibhava. Bharata's treatment of shanta

rasa in *Natyasastra* is before the sixth chapter. Here shanta 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 shanta and are in the end submerged in it. Shanta is a state of 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 shama 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 vyabhicharibhava. Hence rasa lies in the work of art and the spectator just enjoys it.

#### IV. Textual Analysis of the play *Abhijanashakuntalam*

##### Synopsis of the Play

Kalidasa's *Abhijanashakuntalam* is the most popular and very widely read drama compiled in seven acts. It is a love-drama, and belongs to that class of rupaka which is known as the "nataka". Its subject is taken from history in its main outlines. King Dushyanta is the hero of this drama. He is a dhirodatta hero who is represented in the play as possessed of almost all the qualities that form the connotation of such type of hero. Shakuntala, the heroine of drama, is a beautiful picture of womanhood. It is based on the well-known love-story of king Dushyanta and the maiden Shakuntala.

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 Prologue of the *Shakuntala* sets up a paradigm of aesthetic rapture that leads directly into the play itself. The Stage-Manager, having praised the intelligence and taste of the audience, has summoned the leading Actress to the stage to sing for the audience's delight a song evoking the summer season in which the first three Acts of the play are set. (Goodwin 26)

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:

वैखानसः- (हस्तमुद्यम्य । )  
 राजन् आश्रममृगोऽयं न हन्तव्यो न हन्तव्यः ।  
 न खलु न खलु बाणः संनिपात्योऽयमस्मि-  
 न्मृदुनि मृगशरीरे पुष्पराशाविवाग्निः ।  
 क्व बत हरिणकानां जीवितं चातिलोलं  
 क्व च निशितनिपाता वज्रसाराः शरास्ते ॥  
 तत्साधुकृतसंधानं प्रतिसंहर सायकम् ।  
 आर्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि ॥  
 राजा-एष प्रतिसंहृतः । (इति यथोक्तं करोति ।)

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 18)

Dushyanta could realize that he is about to do a great mistake. So he puts down his bow and arrow. In this very context K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

Fate brings King Dushyanta to this hermitage on a pretext of hunting. Symbolically, the poet suggests that the king's party was hunting down harmless deer in the ashrama without any compunction. He is to be told not to do so. This is the premonition of what is in store for the deer-like girl who is destined to meet him and fall an unsuspecting victim. (Krishnamoorthy 69)

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, who is first seen on the bank of the river Malini. Here she is watering the plants with two of her companions Priyamvada and Anasuya who are more involved in flattering Shakuntala's blooming youth:

शकुन्तला-सखि अनसूये अतिपिनद्धेन वल्कलेन प्रियंवदया

नियन्त्रिताऽस्मि । शिथिलय तावदेतत् ।

अनसूया- तथा । (इति शिथिलयति ।)

प्रियंवदा-(सहासम् ।) अत्रपयोधरविस्तारयित् आत्मनो यौवनमुपालभस्व ।

मां किमुपालभसे । (I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 26)

It means Shakuntala tells Anasuya that she is hard pressed by the bark-cloth fastened very tightly by Priyamvada and so she requests her to loosen it. As Anasuya loosens it saying very well, Priyamvada, with a laugh, tells Shakuntala rather to blame her own youth which expands her bosom and not to her. While Dushyanta 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:

शकुन्तला-न एष धृष्टो विरमति अन्यतो गमिष्यामि ।

कथमितोऽप्यागच्छति । हला परित्रायेथां मामनेन दुर्विनीतेन मधुकरेणाभिभूयमानाम् ।

उभे-(सस्मितम् ।) के आवां परित्रातुम् दुष्यंतमाक्रन्द । राजरक्षितव्यानि तपोवनानि नाम ।

राजा-अवसरोऽयमात्मानं प्रकाशयितुम् । न भेतव्यं न भेतव्यम्- (इत्यर्धोक्ते स्वगतम् ।)

राजभावस्त्वभिज्ञातो भवेत् । भवतु एवं तावदभिघ्रास्ये ।

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 32)

In the very conversation, Shakuntala says that the impudent creature does not yet refrain and so she will go elsewhere. When the bee goes even there, she requests her friends to save her who is being assailed by that ill-mannered bee. In response, Anusaya and Priyamvada tell her that they are not the one to deliver her and so she should call out Dushyanta as the penance-forests are said to be defended by the king. This is the time or opportunity for him to discover himself and therefore appears there

telling her not to fear. For him, this way his royal character might be known. 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:

अनसूया- हला शकुन्तले उचितं नः पर्युपासनमतिथीनाम् ।

अत्रोपविशामः (इति सर्वा उपविशन्ति ।)

शकुन्तला- (आत्मगतम् ।) किं नु खल्विमं प्रेक्ष्य तपोवनविरोधिनो

विकारस्य गमनीयास्मि संवृत्ता ।

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 36)

Here, in this conversation, Anasuya tells Shakuntala that it is proper time for them to wait on their guest and so they should sit there. This very time Shakuntala expresses that on seeing that guest; she has become susceptible of emotion which is inconsistent with or contrary to life in a penance-grove. To come closer to Shakuntala the king conceals his real identity:

राजा- (आत्मगतम् ।)

कथमिदानीमात्मानं निवेदयामि कथं वात्मापहारं करोमि । भवतु ।

एवं तावदेनां वक्ष्ये । (प्रकाशम् ।)

भवति यः पौरवेण राज्ञा धर्माधिकारे नियुक्तः

सोहम विघ्नक्रियोपलम्भाय धर्मारण्यमिदमायातः ।

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 38)

He introduces himself as a royal attendant appointed by his majesty of the Puru race to supervise religious rites and has come to this sacred grove to ascertain if the religious observations are free from obstacles. Act I also reveals the true parentage of Shakuntala:

अनसूया-शृणोत्वार्यः । अस्ति कोऽपि कौशिक इति गोत्रनामधेयो

महाप्रभावो राजर्षिः ।

राजा-अस्ति । श्रूयते ।

अनसूया-तमावयोः प्रियसख्याः प्रभवमवगच्छ । उज्झितायाः

शरीरसंवर्धनादिभिस्तात काश्यपोऽस्याः पिता ।

राजा-उज्झितशब्देन जनितं मे कौतूहलम् । आ मूलाच्छ्रोतुमिच्छामि ।

अनसूया-शृणोत्वार्यः । गौतमीतीरे पुरा किल तस्य

राजर्षेरुग्रे तपसि वर्तमानस्य किमपि जातशङ्कैर्वैमेनका

नामाप्सराः प्रेषिता नियमविघ्नकारिणी ।

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 40, 42)

Here, Anasuya informs the king that there is a certain royal sage of mighty prowess whose family name is Kaushika. The king says that they have heard of him. Then she further tells him that Kaushika is the generator, in other words, natural father of their friend Shakuntala. Father Kashyapa is her father by reason of his having reared up her body after she was abandoned. The word 'abandoned' has excited his curiosity and so he wishes to hear from the beginning. Therefore, Anasuya tells him in details that the nymph named Menaka, as it is said, was sent as an obstacle to penance by the gods, whose fear was somehow aroused, against that royal sage, when formerly practicing rigorous austerities, on the bank of the Gautami. Hence, she is the daughter of the apsara Menaka and the sage Vishwamitra (Kaushika) and Kashyapa or Kanva is her foster-father. Politely addressing Shakuntala, Dushanta describes that every part of her body is being exhausted by watering the trees and therefore makes her free from debt, and by saying so he offers his ring to her as a token to love:

राजा-भद्रे वृक्षसेचनादेव परिश्रान्तामत्रभवतीं लक्षये । तथा ह्यस्याः ।

सस्तांसावतिमात्रलोहिततलौ बाहू घटोत्क्षेपणा-

दद्यापि स्तनवेपथुं जनयति श्वासः प्रमाणाधिकः ।

बद्धं कर्णशिरीषरोधि वदने धर्माभसां जालकं

बन्धे स्रंसिनि चैकहस्तयमिताः पर्याकुला मूर्धजाः ॥

तदहमेनामनृणां करोमि । (इत्यङ्गुलीयं दातुमिच्छति ।)

(उभे नाममुद्राक्षराण्यनुवाच्य परस्परमवलोकयतः ।)

राजा-अलमस्मानन्यथा संभाव्य । राज्ञः परिग्रहोयमिति राजपुरुषं मामवगच्छत ।

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 46, 48)

Both Anasuya and Priyamvada on reading the letters of the name inscribed on the ring, stare at each other. Then the king tells her not to take him as someone else as it is a gift from the king to know him and therefore to be a kingly person for her. 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.

In this very act, the gestures of Shakuntala reveal a similar feeling of love creeping in her heart for Dushyanta. She is also struck by the grace and charm of the new visitor:

शकुन्तला-अनसूये अभिनवकुशसूच्या परिक्षतं मे चरणं

कुरवकशाखापरिलग्नं च वल्कलम् । तावत्परिपालयत मां यावदेतन्मोचयामि

(शकुन्तला राजानमवलोकयन्ती सव्याजं विलम्ब्य सह सखीभ्यां निष्क्रान्ता ।)

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 52)

Here, she tells Anasuya that her foot is pricked by a young kusha shoot and her bark-



garment is caught in a Kurabaka-branch and so she appeals her to wait for her till she releases it. In fact, it is just her pretension as it is clearly seen that she goes away with her friends gazing at the king delaying under pretexts. The king also departs, head over ears in love, and determined to encamp there and see it through.

Act II is mainly a dialogue between the king and his companion Madhavya. The inner desire of Dushyanta to meet Shakuntala is slowly getting intensified:

राजा-

कामं प्रिया न सुलभा मनस्तु तद्भावदर्शनाश्रवासि ।

अकृतार्थेऽपि मनसिजे रतिमुभयप्रार्थना कुरुते ॥

(स्मितं कृत्वा ।)

एवमात्माभिप्रायसंभावितेष्वजनचित्तवृत्तिः प्रार्थयिता विडम्ब्यते ।

स्निग्धं वीक्षितमन्यतोऽपि नयते यत्प्रेरयन्त्या तया

यातं यच्च नितम्बयोर्गुरुतया मन्दं विलासादिव ।

मा गा इत्युपरुद्धया यदपि सा सासूयमुक्ता सखी

सर्वं तत्क्ल मत्परायणमहो कामी स्वतां पश्यति ॥

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 56, 58)

He says it is true that the dear one is not easy to obtain, yet his mind feels comforted on perceiving her emotion of love. Although love has not got its object, reciprocity of solicitation gives him delight. He also happens to mock the suitor who infers the feelings of his cherished one from his own.

In a hope to see her again he orders to encamp near the hermitage. His desire to meet Shakuntala again seems to materialize 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 Madhavya all his love filled feelings for Shakuntala.

विदूषकः- यद्येवं प्रत्यादेश इदानीं रूपवतीनाम् ।

राजा - इदं च मे मनसि वर्तते ।

अनाघ्रातं पुष्पं किसलयमलूनं कररुहै-

रनाविद्धं रत्नं मधु नवमनास्वादितरसम् ।

अखण्डं पुण्यानां फलमिव च तद्रूपमनघं

न जाने भोक्तारं कमिह समुपस्थास्यति विधिः ॥

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 72)

Here the king tells him that her flawless beauty is a flower not yet smelt, a tender sprout not plucked with the nails, a gem yet imperforated, fresh honey whose flower is yet untasted, and the reward of collected merit not yet exhausted by enjoyment. He does not know whom providence designs as her enjoyer.

Madhavya is his close companion so close that he sends Madhavya to break the royal Mother's fast. He is unable to go as he is tied with his duty to guard the hermitage:

राजा- सत्यमाकुलीभूतोऽस्मि ।

कृत्ययोर्भिन्नदेशत्वाद् द्वैधीभवति मे मनः ।

पुरः प्रतिहतं शैले स्रोतः स्रोतोवहो यथा ॥

(विचिन्त्य ।) सखे त्वमम्बया पुत्र इति प्रतिगृहीतः ।

अतो भवानितः प्रतिनिवृत्य तपस्विकार्यव्यग्रमानसं मामावेद्य

तत्रभवतीनां पुत्रकृत्यमनुष्ठातुमर्हति ।

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 84)

Here the king says that he is really in a fix. The two duties having to be performed in different places, his mind is divided between the two like the current of a river obstructed by a hillock in front. He further tells Madhavya that he has been regarded as a son by Mother and so he can return from there, and having told that the king's mind is engrossed by the business of the sages, he can discharge the duties devolving on a son, towards Her Majesty. Before Madhavya 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:

राजा-(स्वगतम् ।)

चपलोऽयं बटुः । कदाचिदस्मत्प्रार्थनामन्तःपुरेभ्यःकथयेत् ।

भवतु । एनमेवं वक्ष्ये । (विदूषकं हस्ते गृहीत्वा । प्रकाशम् ।)

वयस्य ऋषिगौरवादाश्रमं गच्छामि । न खलु सत्यमेव

तापसकन्यकायां ममाभिलाषः ।

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 84)

The king tells him that he goes to the hermitage on account of his reverence for the sages and certainly he has no desire for the daughter of the sage. He does so in order 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 Madhavya:

राजा-वयस्य किं बहुना ।

चित्रे निवेश्य परिकल्पितसत्त्वयोगा रूपोच्चयेन मनसा विधिना कृता नु ।

स्त्रीरत्नसृष्टिरपरा प्रतिभाति सा मे धातुर्विभुत्वमनुचिन्त्य वपुश्च तस्याः ॥

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 72)

Describing her beauty, he says that when he considers the omnipotence, she appears to him to be quite a special or matchless creation of the jewel of womankind. 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:

सख्यौ-(उपवीज्य । सस्नेहम् ।)

हला शकुन्तले अपि सुखयति ते नलिनीपत्रवातः ।

शकुन्तला-किं वीजयतो मां सख्यौ ।

(सख्यौ विषादं नाटयित्वा परस्परमवलोकयतः ।)

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 92)

The fever is actually due to her longing for Dushyanta. The other side of the play shows Dushyanta in deep love for Shakuntala. Dushyanta is wounded by the arrow of Shakuntala's beauty as in the soliloquy he says:

तव कुसुमशरत्वं शीतरश्मित्वमिन्दोर्द्वयमिदमयथार्थं दृश्यते मद्द्विधेषु ।

विसृजति हिमगर्भैरग्निमिन्दुर्मयूखैस्त्वमपि कुसुमबाणान्वज्रसारीकरोषि ॥

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 88)

Here he says that her having flowery-arrows and the Moon's cool rays: both these things appear to be untrue in the case of persons like him; for the moon showers fire with rays having cold in the interior; and she too makes her flowery-arrows have the hardness of adamant. 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". In a love-affected condition the king says:

अभ्युन्नता पुरस्तादवगाढा जघनगौरवात्पश्चात् ।

द्वारेऽस्य पाण्डुसिकते पदपङ्क्तिर्दृश्यतेऽभिनवा ॥

यावद्विटपान्तरेणावलोकयामि ।

(परिक्रम्य तथा कृत्वा । सहर्षम् ।)

अये लब्धं नेत्रनिर्वाणम् । एषा मे मनोरथप्रियतमा सकुसुमास्तरणं

शिलापट्टमधिशयानासखीभ्यामन्वास्यते । भवतु । श्रोष्याम्यासां

विश्रम्भकथितानि । (इति विलोकयन्स्थितः ।)

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 90)

Here he says that at the entrance of the bower where there is white sand is seen a line of fresh-prints, raised in the front part and sunken deep towards the hinder one, on account of the heaviness of her hips. 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 Shakuntala watering her tender nursery with her favourite friends. Struck by her beauty he begs for an interview. He overhears the reciprocation by love of Shakuntala, meets and marries her. He gives her his ring and with a promise to fetch her soon he returns to his palace. (Krishnamachariar 192)

They get married by Gandharva tradition as the king convinces her that many daughters of royal sages are heard as married by the Gandharva form of marriage, and were approved of their father.

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:

राजा-

अपरिक्षतकोमलस्य यावत्कुसुमस्येव नवस्य षट्पदेन ।

अधरस्य पिपासता मया ते सदयं सुन्दरि गृह्यते रसोऽस्य ॥

(इति मुखमस्याः समुन्नमयितुमिच्छति । शकुन्तला परिहरति नाट्येन ।)

(नेपथ्ये)

चक्रवाकवधुके आमन्त्रयस्व सहचरम् । उपस्थिता रजनी ।

शकुन्तला- (ससंभ्रमम् ।)

पौरव असंशयं मम शरीवृत्तान्तोपलम्भायार्या गौतमीत एवागच्छति । तद्विदपान्तरितो भव ।

राजा- तथा । (III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 114)

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 slap", on "the bed of flowers crushed by her body":

तस्याः पुष्पमयी शरीरलुलिता शय्या शिलायामियं

क्लान्तो मन्मथलेख एष नलिनीपत्रे नखैरर्पितः ।

हस्ताद्भ्रष्टमिदं विसाभरणमित्यासज्यमानेक्षणो

निर्गन्तुं सहसा न वेतसगृहाच्छक्नोमि शून्यादपि ॥

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 118)

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, the angry sage, Durvasa, comes and enquires about the possible hospitality in the hermitage. But poor Shakuntala whose entire mental and 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:

आः अतिथिपरिभाविनि-

विचिन्तयन्ती यमनन्यमानसा तपोधनं वेत्सि न मामुपस्थितम् ।

स्मरिष्यति त्वां न स बोधितोऽपि सन्कथां प्रम्क प्रथमं कृतामिव ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 122)

He cursed that the person whom she was thinking of would no more recognize 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:

प्रियंवदा-यदा निवर्तितुं नेच्छति तदा विज्ञापितो मया ।

भगवन् प्रथम इति प्रेक्ष्याविज्ञाततपःप्रभावस्य दुहितृजनस्य भगवतैकोऽपराधो मर्षयितव्य इति ।

अनसूया-ततस्ततः । (तदो तदो ।)

प्रियंवदा-ततो नमे वचनमन्यथाभावितुमर्हति किं

त्वभिज्ञानाभरणदर्शनेन शापो निवर्तिष्यत इति मन्त्रयमाण एवान्तर्हितः ।

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 124)

The power of his curse would cease the moment she presents some ornament as a token of recognition. 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:

प्रियंवदा-(विलोक्य ।)

अनसूये पश्य तावत् । वामहस्तोपहितवदनाऽऽलिखितेव प्रियसखी ।

भर्तृगतया चिन्तयात्मानमपि नैषा विभावयति । किं पुनरागन्तुकम् ।

अनसूया-प्रियंवदे द्वयोरेव नौ मुखे एष वृत्तान्तस्तिष्ठतु ।

रक्षितव्या खलु प्रकृतिपेलवा प्रियसखी ।

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 126)

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. This very act 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 into the hermitage a holy voice informs him that in Shakuntala's womb grows the "glowing energy" of Dushyanta:

दुष्यन्तेनाहितं तेजो दधानां भूतये भुवः ।

अवेहि तनयां ब्रम्हन्नग्निगर्भा शमीमिव ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 132)

Hence, 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:

क्षौमं केनचिदिन्दुपाण्डु तरुणा माङ्गल्यमाविष्कृतं

निष्ठयूतश्चरणोपभोगसुलभो लाक्षारसः केनचित् ।

अन्येभ्यो वनदेवताकरतलैरापर्वभागोत्थितै-



दत्तान्याभरणानि तत्किसलयोद्भेदप्रतिद्वन्दिभिः ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 138)

This means to say that a fine silk garment, white like the moon, was offered by a certain tree, and suited to this auspicious occasion; by another was exuded the lac-dye for application to this feet, and ornaments were presented from other trees by the hands of sylvan deities put forth as far as the wrist and vying with the bursting of tender sprouts from there. Then, she leaves the hermitage with blessings and good wishes from her lovely friends, the inanimate plant, the inarticulate deer and all other indwelling divinities. Shakuntala leaves the sylvan surrounding with tears rolling down her cheek. But an inner joy to meet her husband was also there. After much lamentation, Shakuntala departs and her foster-father Kanva finds peace.

The next two Acts (V and VI) are set in the palace, a place of unnatural disorder, in contrast to the natural world of the hermitage. In Act V, one of Dushyanta's wives, Hamsapadika, sings a lament over losing the king's favor to another woman as it is seen in a conversation between Vidushaka and the Dushyanta:

विदूषकः - (कर्णं दत्त्वा ।)

भो वयस्य संगीतशालान्तरेऽवधानं देहि । कलविशुद्धाया गीतेः

स्वरसंयोगः श्रूयते । जाने त्रयभवती हंसपदिका वर्णपरिचयं करोतीति ।

राजा-तूष्णीं भव । यावदाकर्णयामि ।

(आकाशे गीयते ।)

अभिनवमधुलोलुपस्त्वं तथा परिचुम्ब्य चूतमञ्जरीम् ।

कमलवसतिमात्रनिर्वृतो मधुकर विस्मृतोऽस्येनां कथम् ॥

(V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 158)

The words return to the metaphors of the mango and the bee, thus the lament operates

on two levels, and Dushyanta reacts emotionally. He ascribes the feeling to vague memories of a lover from some previous life. In this very act, the pregnant Shakuntala is presented to the king, who is attracted by her beauty, but can't recognize her:

राजा-(शकुन्तलां निर्वर्ण्य । आत्मगतम् ।)

इदमुपनतमेवं रुपमक्लिष्टकान्ति प्रथमपरिगृहीतं स्यान्न वेत्यव्यवस्यन् ।

भ्रमर इव विभाते कुन्दमन्तस्तुषारं न च खलु परोभोक्तुं नापि शक्नोमि हातुम् ॥

(V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 178)

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. So, she tries to remove his doubt by showing him a token of recognition in the following lines:

शकुन्तला-भवतु । यदि परमार्थतः परपरिग्रहशङ्किना

त्वयैवं प्रवृत्तं तदभिज्ञानेनानेन तवाशङ्कामपनेष्यामि ।

राजा-उदारः कल्पः ।

शकुन्तला- (मुद्रास्थानं परामृश्य ।)

हा धिक् हा धिक् । अङ्गुलीयकशून्या मेऽङ्गुलिः ।

(इति सविषादं गौतमीमवेक्षते ।)

गौतमी-नूनं ते शक्रावताराभ्यन्तरे शचीतीर्थसलिलं

वन्दमानायाः प्रभ्रष्टमङ्गुलीयकम् ।

(V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 182)

To her misfortune, her signet ring is lost. It has slipped off her finger in Sachee's pool while she was taking her bath. Any extent of pleading would not work to neutralize the powerful curse. Shakuntala also 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:

शकुन्तला - सुष्ठु तावदत्र स्वच्छन्दचारिणी कृतास्मि

याहमस्य पुरुवंशप्रत्ययेन मुखमधोर्हृदयविषस्य

हस्ताभ्यासमुपगता । (V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 188)

Here, she says that deservedly, indeed, she has been made a wanton woman, who through the faith in his ancestry fell into the hands of one who has honey on his tongue but poison in his heart. Then she starts weeping covering her face with the skirt of her garments.

She is left alone bewailing her wretched fate and her disgrace before the whole court. Even her own men Sharngarava, Sharadvata and Gautami leave her helpless and return to their ashrama:

शारद्वतः- शार्ङ्गरव किमुत्तरेण । अनुष्ठितो गुरोः संदेशः ।

प्रतिनिवर्तामहे वयम् । (राजानं प्रति ।) तदेषा भवतः कान्ता त्यज वैनां गृहाण वा ।

उपपन्ना हि दारेषु प्रभुता सर्वमुखी ॥ गौतमी गच्छाग्रतः । (इति प्रस्थिताः ।)

शकुन्तला-कथमनेन कितवेन विप्रलब्धास्मि । यूयमपि मां परित्यजथ ।

(V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 190)

So, before anything could be decided about the poor lady she appeals to venerable Earth to open a grave for her and vanishes with a flash of light in a woman's shape:

शकुन्तला- भगवति वसुधे देहि मे विवरम् । (V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 194).

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. It is so clearly expressed in the dialogue between the Superintendent and the Fisherman:

श्यालः- (विहस्य ।)

विशुद्ध इदानीमाजीवः ।

पुरुषः-भर्तः मा एवं भण ।

सहजं किल यद्विनिन्दितं न खलु तत्कर्म विवर्जनीयम् ।

पशुमारणकर्मदारुणोऽनुकम्पामुदुरेव श्रोत्रियः ॥

श्यालः- ततस्ततः । (तदो तदो ।)

पुरुषः-एकस्मिन्दिवसे खण्डशो रोहितमत्स्यो मया कल्पितः ।

यावत्तस्योदराभ्यन्तरे प्रेक्षे तावदिदं रत्नभासुरमङ्गुलीयकं

दृष्टम् । पश्चादहमस्य विक्रयाय दर्शयन्गृहीतो भावमिश्रैः ।

मारयत वा मुञ्चत वा । अयमस्यागमवृत्तान्तः ।

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 198)

As he sees the ring his eclipsed memory gets cleared. He recollects all the promises he had made to Shakuntala. The very 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 lament his fate. He forgets all the joys of life. Even the spring festival is not being celebrated. Life becomes colorless for him. He curses himself for his rudeness towards Shakuntala:

राजा-(ध्यानमन्दं परिक्रम्य ।)

प्रथमं सारङ्गाक्ष्या प्रियया प्रतिबोध्यमानमपि सुप्तम् ।

अनुशयदुःखायेदं हतहृदयं संप्रति विबुद्धम ॥

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 212)

Here, turning round slowly as if in his daydream, he says that previously buried in slumber though being roused by my fawn-eyed beloved, the accursed heart of him has now awakened to experience the anguish of remorse. The handsome king now looks charmless and weak. K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

The king's grief grows so much that he almost loses his balance of mind. Like the Pururavas we saw, he too starts addressing the ring, the bee, flamingo and so forth. He tries to forget his sorrow like the Yaksha in the poem by painting a portrait of his beloved against the backdrop of a mountain landscape, with river, hut and grazing deer of the hermitage. (Krishnamoorthy 74)

In remorse, he passes sleepless nights:

राजा-वयस्य कथमेवमविश्रान्तदुःखमनुभवामि ।

प्रजागरात्खलीभूतस्तस्याःस्वप्ने समागमः ।

बाष्पस्तु न ददात्येनां द्रष्टुं चित्रगतामपि ॥

सानुमती-सर्वथा प्रमार्जितं त्वया प्रत्यादेशदुःखं शकुन्तलायाः ।

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 236)

He is so grief-stricken that the Royal duties are also neglected by him. Madhavya 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 into Sachee's pool. Rajan comments on the role of Madhavya as:

Madhavya is not the typical Vidushaka, he is hardly involved in intrigue. As Shakuntala is a different kind of heroine, Madhavya 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. Madhavya, as we noted earlier never enters the “green world”; he stands on its fringes complaining about his aching joints. (Rajan 101)

Madhavya’s first appearance is in Act II and he reappears in Act VI. In Act II the king discloses to Madhavya 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:

विदूषकः-मैवम् । नन्वङ्गुलीयकमेव निदर्शनमवश्यं

भाव्यचिन्तनीयः समागमो भवतीति ।

राजा-(अङ्गुलीयकं विलोक्य ।) अये इदं तावदसुलभस्थानभ्रंशि शोचनीयम् ।

तव सुचरितमङ्गुलीय नूनं प्रतनु ममेव विभाव्यते फलेन ।

अरुणनखमनोहरासु तस्याश्च्युतमसि लब्धपदं यदङ्गुलीषु ॥

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 222)

Madhavya consoles the king telling him that, indeed, the discovery of the ring is itself an indication that a union, which must take place, is brought about in an unthought way. After that, looking at the ring, the king says that the ring, indeed, dropped from a place not easy of access, is lamentable. Addressing the ring, he further says that verily ring, the stock of its merit is extremely small like that of his, as is judged from the result; since having once obtained a station on her fingers, charming on account of the glowing nails, that has fallen off. Thus, 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. Sanumati 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 take place in the beautiful surrounding of the penance groves of Kanva. In this context, K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

Kalidasa's art reaches its apex here in identifying Shakuntala herself as the fairest flower of the penance-grove and Dushyanta as a bee that can not shed his fickleness until he breathes the rarefied spiritual heaven. The imagery of Kalidasa relating to the bee and flowers recurs regularly in almost every significant scene of the play, but Kalidasa concludes with the observation that only the works of the learned who have drunk of the founts of scriptural truth deserve recognition (*sarasvati srutimahatam mahiyatam*). (Krishnamoorthy 88)

Here we see the fresh green colors of the trees, colorful flowers, hovering honey bees, clear cool water of the Malini, the fragrance of blooming flowers, tender shoots. It represents "fresh colors of the wood-lands and of budding youth" (Rajan 85). Act VII

takes place in Kashyapa's ashrama, the place of highest penances. At a conversation when Matali well-secures the chariot, both of them get down and he tells Dushyanta to enjoy a sight of the penance-groves of the venerable sages the king beholds with astonishment:

मातलिः-संयन्त्रितो मया रथः । वयमप्यवतरामः । (तथा कृत्वा ।)

इत आयुष्मन् । (परिक्रम्य ।) दृश्यन्तामत्रभवतामृषीणां तपोवनभूमयः ।

राजा-ननु विस्मयादवलोकयामि ।

प्राणानामनिलेन वृत्तिरुचिता सत्कल्पवृक्षे वने

तोये काञ्चनपद्मरेणुकपिशे धर्माभिषेकक्रिया ।

ध्यानं रत्नशिलातलेषु विबुधस्त्रीसनिधौ संयमो

यत्काङ्क्षन्ति तपोभिरन्यमुनयस्तस्मिंस्तपस्यन्त्यमी ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 262)

Here everything 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 spirit; it is not a world of nature, spontaneous, informed by instinct, but of Nature perfected by restraint and discipline” (Rajan 85). Dushyanta, with a great surprise, asks Matali to know about the mountain which is seen like a wall of evening clouds, entering the eastern and western oceans and emitting golden fluid. In the very response, Matali describes him about it in the following lines:

राजा-मातले कतमोऽयं पूर्वापरसमुद्रावगाढः

कनकरसनिस्यन्दी सांध्य इव मेघपरिघः सानुमानालोक्यते ।



मातलिः-आयुष्मन् एष खलु हेमकूटो नाम किंपुरुषपर्वतस्तपः संसिद्धिक्षेत्रम् । पश्य ।

स्वार्यभुवान्मरीचेर्यः प्रबभूव प्रजापतिः ।

सुरासुरगुरुः सोऽत्र सपत्नीकस्तपस्यति ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 258, 260)

It is a world much above the normal man's vision and the place is "Hema-kuta", the home of kimpurusas. 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.

बालः-जृम्भस्व सिंह दन्तांस्ते गणयिष्ये ।

प्रथमा-अविनीत किं नोऽपत्यनिर्विशेषाणि सत्त्वानि विप्रकरोषि ।

हन्त वर्धते ते संरम्भः । स्थाने खलु ऋषिजनेन सर्वदमन इति कृतनामधेयोऽसि ।

राजा-किं नु खलु बालेऽस्मिन्नौरस इव पुत्रे स्निह्यति मे मनः ।

नूनमनपत्यता मां वत्सलयति ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 266)

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".

राजा-(आत्मगतम् ।)

किं वा शकुन्तलेत्यस्या मातुराख्या । सन्ति पुनर्नामधेयसादृश्यानि ।

अपि नाम मृगतृष्णिकेव नाममात्रप्रस्तावो मे विषदाय कल्यत ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 274)

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 arises when Dushyanta learns that the child is a descendant of the Puru dynasty. Meanwhile the child's amulet with divine power falls off his hand. If anyone 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:

प्रथमा- (विलोक्य । सोद्वेगम् ।) अहो रक्षाकरण्डकमस्य मणिवन्दे न दृश्यते ।

राजा-अलमावेगेन । नन्विदमस्य सिंहशावविमर्दात्परिभ्रष्टम् । ( इत्यादातुमिच्छति ।)

उभे-मा खल्वेतदवलम्ब्य- कथम् । गृहीतमनेन । ( इति विस्मयादुरोनिहितहस्ते परस्परमवलोकयतः।)

राजा-किमर्थं प्रतिषिद्धाः स्मः ।

प्रथमा-शृणोतु महाराजः । एषाऽपराजिता नामौषधिरस्य जातकर्मसमये भगवता मारीचेन दत्ता ।

एतां किल एतां किल मातापितरावात्मानं च वर्जयित्वाऽपरो भूमिपतितां न गृह्णाति ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 274)

He is overwhelmed as he realizes 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 Maricha 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:

राजा-(शकुन्तलायाः पादयोः प्रणिपत्य ।)

सुतनु हृदयात्प्रत्यादेशव्यलीकमपैतु ते

किमपि मनसः संमोहो मे तदा बलवानभूत् ।

प्रबलतमसामेवंप्रायाः शुभेषु हि वृत्तयः

स्रजमपि शिरस्यन्धः क्षिप्तां धुनोत्यहिशङ्कया ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 280)

Falling at Shakuntala's feet, the king, addressing her fair-bodied one, appeals her to let the unpleasant feeling caused by his repudiation of her pass from his heart; somehow, great was the infatuation of his mind then; such for the most part are the modes of action towards auspicious things of those seized by a powerful delusion; a blind man shakes off even a garland of flowers thrown on his head, mistaking it for a serpent. In fact, his suffering made him to realize her true worth and thus the title of the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* seems pretty much relevant.

प्रवर्ततां प्रकृतिहिताय पार्थिवः सरस्वती श्रुतमहतां महीयताम् ।

ममपि च क्षपयतु नीललोहितः पुनर्भवं परिगतशक्तिरात्मभूः ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 296)

These are the last lines of the play. These lines are an invocation to Lord Shiva. "The dark and Light" in the original Sanskrit text is "Nila-Lohita" where nila (dark) suggests the dark blue color developed in Lord Shiva'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 Shiva to balance all the polarities and maintain equilibrium in the world as he had done at the beginning. The play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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). In this play the union of lovers brings a complete lokaranjana. The element of grief is prevalent all through, but the lovers are not separated permanently. Kalidasa’s play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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 and shringara is a dominating rasa the play-wright has applied in this very play.

### **Reflection of Shringara Rasa in the Play**

Kalidas’s works show his belief in the theory 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. *The Abhijnanashakuntalam* is his most cherished play which 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 where the physical earning transcends into a more matured and spiritual love when they get finally united. On this maturation of love Chandra Rajan says:

Shakuntala, having delineated love’s ecstasy and fulfillment 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 in-depth knowledge of human sentiments which is named as rasa. Shringara, love in its many aspects, is a perennial theme of lyrical poetry. The nataka *Shakuntala or Abhijnanashakuntalam* is about love of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Hence shringara is the rasa that dominates the play. The most dominant characteristics of the erotic sentiment or shringara rasa are freely displayed in the descriptions of alingana (embracing), chumbana (kissing), keshagrahana (holding of hair), nakha-chhedya and danta-chhedya (making of nail and tooth marks), urumulasamvahana (shampooing of the upper thighs), surata (coition) and surata-shrama (exhaustion due to surata) in Sanskrit dramas and some of which are clearly seen in Kalidasa's play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* as well. Kalidasa in this very play explores the twin aspects of shringara rasa – sambhoga shringara and vipralambha shringara where the sambhoga shringara is presented as erotic and the vipralambha shringara as sublime. The first instance of sambhoga shringara rasa is when the king experiences something that indicates a good omen is a fine example of vyabhicharibhava:

राजा- (परिक्रम्यावलोक्य च ।)

इदमाश्रमद्वारम् । यावत्प्रविशामि ।

(प्रविश्य । निमित्तं सूचयन् ।)

शान्तमिदमाश्रमपदं स्फुरति च बाहुः कुतः फलमिहास्य ।

अथवा भवितव्यानां द्वाराणि भवन्ति सर्वत्र ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 22)

Here after entering the hermitage, the king experiences that the site of hermitage is peaceful, and yet his arm throbs; from where is there any fruition for it? Or rather

things destined to happen find access everywhere. 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. (Rajan 175)

The beautiful surrounding, the inner joy of Dushyanta and of course the beauty of Shakuntala triggers the feeling of love in him. Though standing behind the bushes he too is unable to control himself from adoring and appreciating Shakuntala's magical youth as seen in the lines:

शकुन्तला-अतः खलु प्रियंवदासि त्वम् ।

राजा-प्रियमपि तथ्यमाह शकुन्तलां प्रियंवदा । अस्याः खलु ।

अधरः किसलयरागः कोमलविटपानुकारिणौ बाहू ।

कुसुममिव लोभनीयं यौवनमङ्गेषु संनद्धम् ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 28)

He says what Priyamvada has spoken to Shakuntala is the truth. In fact, her lower lip has the redness of young sprouts; her arms imitate tender twigs; and youth, attractive like a blossom, pervades all her limbs.

Images of the bee are interlaced throughout the play. A bee is so much attracted to Shakuntala. Its art gently humming as if whispering a secret; and in spite of waving her hands, its art kissing her lower lip that is the sole treasure of delight. So, looking at her, the king says:

चलापाङ्गां दृष्टिं स्पृशसि बहुशो वेपथुमतीं  
 रहस्याख्यायिव स्वनसि मृदु कर्णान्तिकचरा ।  
 करौ व्याधुन्वन्त्याः पिबसि रतिसर्वस्वमधरं  
 वयं तत्त्वान्वेषान् मधुकर हतास्त्वं खलु कृति ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 30)

Here the word 'रति' ('Rati' or 'love') is inserted into this verse which, in fact, is the sthyibhava or the permanent mood of shringara rasa or erotic sentiment. Act I portrays the physical charm of the hero and the heroine. It also shows Dushyanta's fascinating towards the feminine beauty of Shakuntala:

राजा-काममननुरूपमस्य वपुषो वल्कलं न  
 पुनरलंकारश्रियं न पुष्यति । कुतः ।  
 सरसिजमनुविद्धं शवलेनापि रम्यं  
 मलिनमपि हिमांशोर्लक्ष्म लक्ष्मीं तनोति ।  
 इयमधिकमनोज्ञा वल्कलेनापि तन्वी  
 किमिव हि मधुराणां मण्डनं नाकृतीनाम् ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 26)

This means the king says it is granted that the bark-cloth is unsuited to her form, yet it is not that it does not give her the charm of ornaments. He further describes that a lotus, even though covered with moss, is charming; the spot though dark, heightens the beauty of the moon; this slender-bodied lady is lovelier even with her bark-cloth; to sweet forms, what, indeed, is not an embellishment.

The flattery of Priyamvada and Anasuya are also the major forces who initiate Shakuntala to express her love through a letter:

प्रियंवदा- (विचिन्त्य)

हला मदनलेखोऽस्य क्रियताम् तं सुमनोगोपितं कृत्वा

देवप्रसादस्यापदेशेन तस्य हस्ते प्रापयिष्यामि ।

अनसूया-रोचते मे सुकुमारः प्रयोगः किं वा शकुन्तला भणति ।

शकुन्तला-किं नियोगो वां विकल्प्यते ।

प्रियंवदा-तेन ह्यात्मन उपन्यासपूर्वं चिन्तय तावत्किमपि

ललितपदबन्धनम् । (III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 103)

In this conversation, when Priyamvada and Anasuya encourage Shakuntala to write a love-letter with their flattering words, she gets convinced and tells them that their arrangements are never questioned by her. Their words excite Dushyanta too. Doing as directed, Shakuntala reads the love-letter:

शकुन्तला-(यथोक्तं रूपयित्वा ।)

हला शृणुतमिदानीं सङ्गतार्थं न वेति ।

उभे-अवहिते स्वः ।

शकुन्तला-(वाचयति ।)

तव न जाने हृदयं मम पुनः कामो दिवाऽपि रात्रावपि ।

निर्घृण तपति बलीयस्त्वयि वृत्तमनोरथाया अङ्गानि ॥

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 106)

As they are attentive to see if the love-letter is properly arranged or not, she reads: “I know not your mind, O cruel one, but, day and night, Cupid causes acute pain to the limbs of me whose affection is centered in you.” Concerning this very issue of love, K. Krishnamoorthy writes:



Shakuntala's first upsurge of love is described by the poet as a departure from the sacred ethos of the hermitage. Though she is growing here, she is the offspring of a nymph and her heredity asserts itself in spite of her environment. She is so much shaken that the friends lose hope of her normal recovery. Burning fever is baking her limbs and all home-remedies fail to revive her drooping spirits. The friends guess from their knowledge of books that she must be a victim of Cupid's arrows, and cleverly worn out her heart's secret, namely love of Dushyanta. They arbitrarily decide to save their friend by arranging a secret union of the lovers without consulting any elderly persons. The king is only too eager to get that chance because he is also deeply in love by that time. (Krishnamoorthy 69)

Right after she reads the letter, Dushanta hastily approaches there and says:

राजा-(सहसोपसृत्य ।)

तपति तनुगात्रि मदनस्त्वामनिशं मां पुनर्दहत्येव ।

ग्लपयति यथा शशाङ्कं न तथा हि कुमुद्वतीं दिवसः ॥

सख्यौ-(विलोक्य सहर्षमुत्थाय ।)

स्वागतमविलम्बिनो मनोरथस्य ।

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 106)

Here, he addresses Shakuntala a slender frame lady and tells her in response that Cupid pains her, but for him- he simply burns ceaselessly. The sun does not cause the (moon-) lotus to fade so much as he does the moon. Seeing and rising with joy, they welcome to the object of their friend's desire that comes without delay at an appropriate moment. In this context, Amal Dhari Singh writes: "Kalidasa makes the

cool and fragrant breeze incessantly favourable to the lovers who are excessively tortured by the cupid.” (Singh110).

Before the lovers could express their love for each other, Kalidasa separates the lovers. But this vipralambha 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 Madhavya about his growing love for Shakuntala:

राजा-माधव्य अनवाप्तचक्षुःफलोऽसि । येन त्वया दर्शनीयं न दृष्टम् ।

विदूषकः-ननु भवानग्रतो मे वर्तते ।

राजा-सर्वःकान्तमात्मीयं पश्यति । अहं तु तां (एव)

आश्रमललामभूतां शकुन्तलामधिकृत्य ब्रवीमि ।

(II, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 68)

In this conversation, the king tells him that he has not obtained the fruit of his eyes; for he has not seen the object most worthy to be seen. Then Madhavya asks the reason and also responds him that the king himself is before him. The king tells him that every one considers his own as beautiful. Here, he speaks with reference to that Shakuntala, the ornament of the hermitage. Appreciating the matchless beauty of Shakuntala Amal Dhari Singh writes:

The heroine of the play *Shakuntala* is a unique creation of the artist. She must have been conceived first of all by the imaginative mind of Brahma. May be that the material for this lovely creation consisted of the mass of beauties. With the substance of these beauties, He made the portrait of Shakuntala and again infused life into it. Therefore, she became matchless amongst womanfolk. (Singh 110)

On the other side Shakuntala suffers from fever. Virahotkanthita Shakuntala begs:

शकुन्तला-तद्यदि वामनुमतं तथा वर्तेथां यथा तस्य

राजर्षेरनुकम्पनीया भवामि । अन्यथावश्यं सिञ्चत मे तिलोदकम् ।

राजा-संशयच्छेदि वचनम् ।

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 100)

She means to say that if they approve of it, the course she is going to suggest to do that by which she may be commiserated by the royal sage; or else offer her the sea mum-water that refers to look upon her as dead. The king says that this very declaration of her has cut down all his doubts.

Act three of the play is full of the erotic elements of sambhoga shringara. 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 girl had already lost her control over her emotions:

शकुन्तला-कथं गते एव ।

राजा-अलमावेगेन । नन्वयमाराधयिता जनस्तव समीपे वर्तते ।

किं शीतलैः क्लमविनोदिभिरार्द्रवातान्सञ्चारयामि नलिनीदलतालवृन्तैः ।

अङ्गे निधाय करभोरु यथासुखं ते संवाहयामि चरणावुत पद्मताम्रौ ॥

शकुन्तला- न माननीयेष्वात्मानमपराधयिष्ये ।

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 112)

Here when she says what to do now as her friends are gone, the king tells her not to be uneasy as the person who is near her is the minister to comfort her. He asks her if he will set in motion the cool breezes with the cool and languor-removing fans of lotus-leaves or she, with thighs beautifully tapering like the forearm, he will shampoo them so as to soothe her.

She becomes powerless to put up any resistance to the advancement of the young and handsome royal lover. They get married by Gandharva tradition:

शकुन्तला-पौरव रक्ष विनयम् । मदनसंतप्तापि न खल्वात्मनःप्रभवामि ।

राजा-भीरु अलं गुरुजनभयेन । दृष्ट्वा ते विदितधर्मा

तत्रभवान्नात्र दोषं ग्रहीष्यति कुलपतिः । पश्य ।

गान्धर्वेण विवाहेन बहव्यो राजर्षिकन्यकाः ।

श्रूयन्ते परिणीतास्ताः पितृभिश्चाभिनन्दिताः ॥

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 112, 114)

In this conversation, addressing him king of Puru race, Shakuntala tells him to keep to decorum though smitten with love, she is not master of herself. Then, calling her timid one, the king tells her to be away with her fear of the elders on knowing that the revered patriarch, who knows the holy law, will not find fault with that. Moreover, he convinces her that many daughters of royal sages are heard as married by the Gandharva form of marriage, and were approved of their father. In the context of love-marriage, K. Krishnamoorthy writes:

Kalidasa encapsulates here the eternal problem of humanity about love-marriage which precariously hangs on the slender thread of mutual trust. That explains in part the play's eternal interest for all generations of readers. (Krishnamoorthy 69)

Here lovers are left alone after they are united with the help of Anasuya and Priyamvada. Right after the king convinces her for their Gandharva form of the marriage, Shakuntala wants to depart to take counsel with her friends. At this very moment she asks the king when he permits her to go for counseling, the king responds her in the following way:

राजा-अपरिक्षितकोमलस्य यावत्कुसुमस्येव नवस्य षट्पदेन ।

अधरस्य पिपासता मया ते सदयं सुन्दरि गृह्यते रसोऽस्य ॥

(इति मुखमस्याः समुन्नमयितुमिच्छति । शकुन्तला परिहरति नाट्येन ।)

(नेपथ्ये)

चक्रवाकवधुके आमन्त्रयस्व सहचरम् । उपस्थिता रजनी ।

शकुन्तला- (ससंभ्रमम् ।)

पौरव असंशयं मम शरीरवृत्तान्तोपलम्भायार्या गौतमीत एवागच्छति । तद्विदुषान्तरितो भव ।

राजा-तथा । (III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 114)

Here, he tells her that after the honey of her lip, yet untouched and tender is gently sipped by him, thirsting for it, as is that of the fresh flower by the bee. Then when he tries to raise her head, Shakuntala gesticulates preventing him doing so. From behind the scenes it is heard “O female Chakravaka, bid goodbye to your mate; the night has approached.” With trepidation Shakuntala tells the king, calling him descendant of Puru, that undoubtedly the venerable Gautami is coming there to inquire about her health and therefore she informs him to hide himself behind the branches. For Shakuntala, vipralambha 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.

Act IV is the fulcrum upon which the play balances. It looks back to all that has happened and sets the stage for everything to come. There is a considerable lacuna in the action between acts three and four. The love of Dushyanta and Shakuntala has been consummated, Shakuntala is pregnant, and Dushyanta has departed for the city. In this very act Shakuntala’s foster-father Kanva first appears on

the stage. Right after he steps into the hermitage, a holy voice informs him that in Shakuntala's womb grows the "glowing energy" of Dushyanta:

दुष्यन्तेनाहितं तेजो दधानां भूतये भुवः ।

अत्रेहि तनयां ब्रम्हन्नग्निगर्भां शमीमिव ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 132)

To a great extent, the act is a study in the bhava (emotion) of shoka, separation from a loved one. Lost in shoka, Shakuntala fails to extend a greeting to a guest. The guest turns out to be Durvasa, a well-known literary character known for his curses. He places a curse of forgetfulness on Dushyanta. Shakuntala's friends try to undo the damage, but Durvasa will relent only so far as to say that Dushyanta will remember her again when he sees the ring he has given her. They do not tell Shakuntala of the calamity.

Nature becomes a character in this act. The plants and animals of the hermitage are affected by the sorrow of parting from Shakuntala who was their loving friend. The trees provide her with royal robes and ornaments to make her queenly. Carrying the blessings of the elders and bidding farewell, Shakuntala in deep melancholy is prepared for her departure with her party. K. Krishnamoorthy comments:

Unlike other plays, sages in the hermitage play a direct part in the progress of this play and add a new dimension to the emotions portrayed. Love in its various forms-sexual, sensual, conventional, and romantic - have all a core of selfish egoism. But it can be broadened at the base to include the selfless affection of not only brotherly and sisterly love, but love of youngsters for elders and *vice versa*, and finally the whole world of living creatures-bird, beast and plant, ending

up in love of god. It is in this fourth Act that we get vignettes of these sublime manifestations of love which also form part of the empire of shanta shringara in its unopposed state of harmony.

(Krishnamoorthy 70)

After much lamentation, Shakuntala departs and her father Kanva finds peace.

But it is in Act V when Dushyanta does not recognize her and refuses to accept her, the separation becomes a grief for her which is seen in her expression:

शकुन्तला-सुष्ठु तावदत्र स्वच्छन्दचारिणी कृतास्मि याहमस्य पुरुवंशप्रत्ययेन  
मुखमधोर्हृदयविषस्य हस्ताभ्यासमुपगता ।

(V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 188)

This means to say that she has been made a wanton who through faith in his ancestry fell in to the hands of one who has honey on his tongue but poison in his heart. Then she weeps bitterly covering her face with the skirt of her garments. Dushyanta realizes his mistakes as he sees the lost ring found by the fisherman. Now begins Dushyanta's vipralambha.

In Act VI, he withdraws all his interest from worldly pursuits and repents on his cruel behavior towards his beloved as he speaks to Madhavya that he has become quite helpless having remembered the state of his beloved and distressed at her repudiation:

राजा-वयस्य निराकरणविक्लवायाः प्रियायाः समवस्थामनुस्मृत्य  
बलवदशरणोऽस्मि । सा हि-  
इतःप्रत्यादेशात्स्वजनमनुगन्तुं व्यवसिता

स्थिता तिष्ठेत्युच्चैर्वदति गुरुशिष्ये गुरुसमे ।

पुनर्दृष्टिं वाष्पप्रसरकलुषामर्षितवती

मयि क्रूरे यत्तत्सविषमिव शल्यं दहति माम् ॥

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 218)

This means that for Shakuntala, attempting to follow her relatives when discarded from the court of the palace, stopped when her father's disciple, as venerable to her as her sire himself, loudly bade her stay, and again cast at Dushyanta's cruel self a glance, dim on account of the flow of tears. It is this that pains him like a barb smeared with poison. In grief, Dushyanta bans the celebration of the spring festival. His costumes too symbolize his grief. These are the vibhavas of vipralambha shringara. The king's disgust and guilt towards himself are the anubhavas. His fainting is the vyabhicharibhava. All this combines to produce love-separated i.e., vipralambha shringara.

Act VI begins with a note of pleasure at the advent of the vernal month, but suddenly it is cut away by the Kanchuki; for such is the order of king Dushyanta. Sanumati, the friend of Shakuntala, who is in the background, actually sees the plight of the king and his remorse at the eviction of his beloved wife Shakuntala. It is as good as Shakuntala herself being there in the place of Sanumati. Krishnamoorthy K. writes:

Kuntaka, the great Sanskrit literary critic, regards the sixth act as the best illustration of Kalidasa's genius because it is exclusively his innovation. Though it is difficult to believe in such a complete change of heart, it is made credible by the introduction of a character like Sanumati (a messenger of Menaka) to bear witness to it and report it duly to Sakuntala so that her heart also may be softened towards re-union, though so much hardened by the cruel rejection earlier.



(Krishnamoorthy 74-75)

Here the representative of Shakuntala is hiding behind a creeper of the Madhavi-arbour. We hear Dushyanta admitting before the Vidushaka how his mind is split asunder by the love for Shakuntala after the signet-ring. Sadashiv A. Dange in his book *Critiques on Sanskrit Drama* writes:

To fill up the gap, as if, due to the absence of the heroine here, we have the picture-board with Shakuntala's portrait on it. King Dushyanta expresses his grief at the loss of Shakuntala, and Sanumati feels consoled by the king's repentance. When Sanumati exclaims that the worthy union (of Shakuntala and Dushyanta) was caused to fail by fate. Then goes on the elaborate depiction of Dushyanta's memories about Shakuntala while Sanumati is witnessing everything from her place of hiding. (Dange 82)

Ultimately, when she is convinced of Dushyanta's innocence and with joy, that the sorrow of repudiation in the case of Shakuntala is completely washed off, she goes away.

In Act VII, Kalidasa returns to sambhoga shringara rasa. But the reunion in the seventh act does not show sensuous love like it was in the first act as it is seen in the following conversation of the king and Shakuntala:

शकुन्तला-जयतु जयत्वार्यपुत्रः ।

(इत्यर्धोक्ते बाष्पकण्ठी विरमति ।)

राजा-सुन्दरि ।

बाष्पेण प्रतिषिद्धेऽपि जयशब्दे जितं मया ।

यत्ते दृष्टमसंस्कारपाटलोष्ठपुटं मुखम् ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 280)

This means to say that while saying victory to her husband, she stops in the middle of her speech and her voice being choked with tears. Then addressing his lovely beloved, the king says that he has gained a victory although her utterance of the word ‘victory’ was impeded by tears, since her face with its lips-red owing to want of decoration, has been seen by him. Here, rather the meaning of love has been raised from the physical to the spiritual ideal. Shringara rasa is no more in its erotic aspect, it has transcended to a more meditative behavior of the matured lovers. The lovers unite in the serene surrounding of Kashyapa’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:

राजा-स्पृहयामि खलु दुर्ललितायास्मै ।

आलक्ष्यदन्तमुकुलाननिमित्तहासैरव्यक्तवर्णरमणीयवचःप्रवृत्तीन् ।

अङ्गाश्रयप्रणयिनस्तनयान्ब्रहन्तो धन्यास्तदङ्गरजसा मलिनीभवन्ति ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 268)

Here, he means to say that he really longs for this wayward boy. The blessed alone, who, bearing their little sons fondly wishing to sit on their lap, with their budlike slender teeth slightly visible by their innocent smiles, and their charming prattle uttered in indistinct accents, are soiled by the dust of their sons’ limbs. Hence the complete cycle of shringara rasa. The repudiation of Shakuntala is no doubt vipralambha shringara. In this very context, Dr. V. Raghavan in his book *Sanskrit Literature* writes:

Whether it is in this short portrayal of love in separation, or in its ample treatment in his drama, the *Abhijnanashakuntala*, Kalidasa only

illustrates his message that it is Separation that is the test of love, that the suffering of Separation chastens love, that in the fire of Separation the dross in love's ore is burnt away and a physical fascination sublimated into a spiritual welding of two souls. Towards the end of spiritualizing love, Kalidasa employs the Child. The rapturous description of the child Raghu in the life of Dilipa in the *Raghuvamsa* is unequalled; it is again the appearance of the child that ennoble both the dramas-*Shakuntala* and *Vikramorvasiya*. (Raghavan 67)

But it also arouses the pathetic sentiment i.e., karuna 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 vyabhicharibhavas 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 everyone's eyes. Even the dear and 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 realization that their separation was permanent one could not stop sage Kanva also from sighing in grief:

काश्यप-

यास्यत्यद्य शकुन्तलेति हृदयं संस्पृष्टमुत्कण्ठया

कण्ठः स्तम्भितवाष्पवृत्तिकलुषश्चिन्ताजडं दर्शनम् ।

वैक्लव्यं मम तावदीदृशमिदं स्नेहादरण्यौकसः

पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं नु तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 140)

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, 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:

शकुन्तला- (सरोषम् ।)

अनार्य आत्मनो हृदयानुमानेन प्रेक्षसे । क इदानीमन्यो

धर्मकञ्चुकप्रवेशिनस्तृणच्छन्नकूपोपमस्य तवानुकृतिं

प्रतिपत्स्यते । (V, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 186)

In Act V when Dushyanta failed to recognize 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:

राजा-(सत्वरमुपसृत्य ।) आः ।

कःपौरवे वसुमतीं शासति शासितरि दुर्विनीतानाम् ।

अयमाचरत्यविनयं मुग्धासु तपस्विकन्यासु ॥

(सर्वा राजानं दृष्ट्वा किञ्चिदिव संभ्रान्ताः ।)

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 34)

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:

राजा-(सविस्मयम् ।)

उपोढशब्दा न रथाङ्गनेमयःप्रवर्तमानं न च दृश्यते रजः ।

अभूतलस्पर्शतयाऽनिरुद्धतस्तवावतीर्णोऽपि रथो न लक्ष्यते ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 260)

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 Shanta rasa. On the hermit's request the king withdraws his arrow. The furious mood that ventured to kill the deer now cools down with a desire to get purified with the sight of the holy hermitage. The tranquility of both the hermitages, Kanva's and Kashyapa's are examples of shanta rasa. Enjoying the serenity of Kanva's ashrama Dushyanta describes:

कुल्याम्भोभिः पवनचपलैः शाखिनो धौतमूला

भिन्नो रागः किसलयरुचामाज्यधूमोद्गमेन ।

एते चार्वागुपवनभुवि च्छिन्नदर्भाकुरायां

नष्टाशंका हरिणशिशवो मन्दमन्दं चरन्ति ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 20)

Such an example proves Kalidasa's acceptance for the ninth rasa i.e., the shanta 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. Broadly speaking, all these sentiments are only auxiliary to the main one - the shringara rasa. Thus, to judge the main sentiment in the drama, it is of utmost importance to be unbiased. The drama is a simple tale of love- separation and reunion of the two lovers favourable to one another. The sthayibhava (rati) is constantly present and the sentiment is shringara as Robert E. Goodwin also writes:

But exactly what is the outcome for the *rasika*? Viewed positively, the conclusion represents reconciliation with male authority and the recuperation of female indulgence. It is the stuff of all romance. We can even say that the shift from ecstatic eroticism to familial tenderness – the movement from Sakuntala's breathtaking sexual allure to her chastened dignity as wife and mother - is all for the good, since it seems to represent a more balanced ideal of love between man and woman. (Goodwin 54)

So, Kalidasa in his most cherished play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* uses shringara rasa not only to ornament his play but also to elevate love from mere physical pleasure to an experience that is highly spiritual. Hence the freshness of the play prevails till today. A poetic genius alone can conceive such a configuration. It is Kalidasa's genius, who could write such a wonderful play, where its aesthetic configuration is so perfect that it outshined all other plays for centuries.

### Development of the Theme in the Play

The play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, which is regarded as the masterpiece of Kalidasa, 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam*:

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 and so much attracted by her beauty:

राजा-उपपद्यते ।

मानुषीषु कथं वा स्यादस्य रूपस्य संभवः ।

न प्रभातरलं ज्योतिरुदेति वसुधातलात् ॥

(शकुन्तलाधोमुखी तिष्ठति ।) (I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 42)

As the king says Anasuya is right that how else among mortal women there could be the birth of such beauty. The flash with quivering light arises not from the surface of the earth. Hearing this, Shakuntala stands with down-cast looks. Unfortunately the curse of Durvasa falls upon their tender love. The lovers separate as Dushyanta's memory fails to recognize Shakuntala. Ironically when he recollects his beloved she is

not near him. Finally the lovers meet in Kashyapa's hermitage. The "complete fruition" of their love is their son Sarvadamana who in history was known as Bharata. As Maricha tells the king in course of a conversation blessing his son to be a universal sovereign:

मारीचः- तथाभाविनमेनं चक्रवर्तिनमवगच्छतु भवान् । पश्य ।

रथेनानुद्धातस्तिमितगतिना तीर्णजलधिः

पुरा सप्तद्वीपां जयति वसुधामप्रतिरथः ।

इहायं सत्त्वानां प्रसभदमनात्सर्वदमनः

पुनर्यास्यत्याख्यां भरत इति लोकस्य भरणात् ॥

राजा-भगवता कृतसंस्कारे सर्वमस्मिन्वयमाशास्महे ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 292)

He tells the king that having crossed the sea in a chariot whose motion is steady being free from jolting; he will conquer the earth consisting of the seven continents with no antagonistic warrior. Moreover, here, from his forcibly subduing all the animals, he is called sarvadamana; but again, by his protection of the world, he will acquire the name 'Bharata' (the protector).

The dramatists of Indian classical literature took themes from epic history. These stories were always the vikhayata (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" (Singh 53). Here there is no reference to the love of Shakuntala and Dushyanta. In the thirteenth book of *Satapatha Bramhana* 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 (Ashva 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 Shakuntala conceived (bore) Bharata”. This is the earliest literary reference to Shakuntala and her son (the little boy Sarvadamana in the play) who performed many horse-sacrifices [...]. The original story of Shakuntala referred to in the SB (*Satapatha Brahmana*) is lost to us; we have only a very long and earthy version of it is the epic. (Rajan 80)

*The Mahabharata, the Bhagavata and the Padmapurana* are believed to be the three major sources of the great Indian play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. But it is more widely accepted that Kalidasa is more indebted to the “*Mahabharata*” for the making of *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. 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 Vishvamitra. 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:

राजा-अपि सनिहितोऽत्र कुलपतिः ।

वैखानसः-इदानीमेव दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय

नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 20)

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 *Abhijnanashakuntala* the lover and the beloved get sufficient time to know each other and their love-affair is known to Shakuntala's friends. (Singh 54)

In the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, 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:

शकुन्तला-सखि यतः प्रभृति मम दर्शनपथमागतः स

तपोवनरक्षिता राजर्षिः । (इत्यर्थोक्ते लज्जां नाटयति ।)

उभे-कथयतु प्रियसखी ।

शकुन्तला- तत आरभ्य तद्गतेनाभिलाषेणैतदवस्थास्मि संवृत्ता ।

(III, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 98)

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 Shakuntala did not know about the curse up to the last act, her friends kept it as secret:

अनसूया- प्रियंवदे द्वयोरेव नौ मुखे एष वृत्तान्तस्तिष्ठतु ।

रक्षितव्या खलु प्रकृतिपेलवा प्रियसखी ।

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 126)

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 Shakuntala in love, which causes Dushyanta genuinely to forget Shakuntala 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 Dushyanta 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 Dushyanta returns to his palace and Shakuntala remains at the hermitage, where a son is born to her. When he is six years old she takes him to the emperor, but he disowns them. Finally a voice in the air confirms that the boy is Dushyanta'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 and the couple meeting in Kashyapa'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 show that "beneficence achieves complete fruition" (Krishnamachariar 590). The two meeting places of the lovers – Kanva's ashrama and Kashyapa's ashrama symbolize love as a holy deed. In the course of the play Kalidasa has uplifted the passionate love to the spiritual level. 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:

शाडूर्गरवः -भो राजन् किमिति जोषमास्यते ।

राजा-भोस्तपोधनाः चिन्तयन्नपि न खलु स्वीकरणमत्रभवत्याः

स्मरामि । तत्कथमिमामभिव्यक्तसत्त्वलक्षणां प्रत्यात्मानं

क्षेत्रिणमाशङ्कमानः प्रतिपत्स्ये ।

(V, *The Abhijanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 178)

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, there occurs the separation. It is in this separation that matured the lovers and spiritualized 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. The place chosen by Kalidasa is where the heaven and the earth have met. It is in Kashyapa'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 Dushyanta with Shakuntala. Amal Dhari Singh gives his views on the theme of *Abhijanashakuntalam* 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 *Abhijanashakuntalam* 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 Kashyapa'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 as it is hinted in her response to Dushyanta when he falls at her feet:

शकुन्तला-उत्तिष्ठत्वार्यपुत्रः । नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं

पुराकृतं तेषु दिवसेषु परिणामाभिमुखमासीद्येन

सानुक्रोशोऽप्यार्यपुत्रो मयि विरसः संवृत्तः ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 280)

Here, Shakuntala appeals her lover to get up. She tells him that certainly an evil deed done by her in a past life obstructing the action of her virtue (merit) was in those days about to bear its fruit, by which her lover, although compassionate by nature, became hard-hearted towards her. 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.

### **Nature in the Play**

In the play Kalidasa has laid out several worlds. First the world of Shakuntala is the green world of nature. Shakuntala is portrayed as the "Lady of Nature". She is the child of nature. She has sisterly affection to the trees in the hermitage as it can be grasped in the dialogue between Anasuya and Shakuntala:

अनसूया-हला शकुन्तले त्वत्तोऽपि तातकाश्यपस्याश्रमवृक्षकाः

प्रियतरा इति तर्कयामि । येन नवमालिकाकुसुमपेलवापि

त्वमेतेषामालवालपूरणे नियुक्ता ।

शकुन्तला-न केवलं तातनियोग एव । अस्ति मे सोदरस्नेहोऽप्येतेषु ।

(इति वृक्षसेचनं रूपयति ।) (I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 24)

Anasuya thinks that the trees in the hermitage are dearer to Father Kashyapa even than Shakuntala; for which reason she, though tender like the blossom of Jasmine, is appointed by him to fill the basins of these trees with water. Shakuntala replies that it is not only by Father's direction that she does that work, but she has also sisterly affection too for these. Right from her birth she was abandoned by Menaka. She was growing in the care of the birds. There is also a bird called "Shakunta". 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 affection between Nature and Shakuntala is so deep that Kanva first requests Nature to allow Shakuntala to go to her husband's place:

काश्यप-भो भोः सनिहितास्तपोवनतरवः ।

पातुं न प्रथमं व्यवस्यति जलं युष्मास्वपीतेषु या

नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि भवतां स्नेहेन या पल्लवम् ।

आद्ये वः कुसुमप्रसूतिसमये यस्या भवत्युत्सवः

सेयं याति शकुन्तला पतिगृहं सर्वैरनुज्ञायताम् ॥

(IV, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 142)

Requesting the neighbouring trees of the penance-groves, he says that she, who never attempts to drink water first, when they have not drunk it ( i.e., before they are watered), she who, though fond of ornaments, never plucks their leaves through affection for them, to whom it is a festivity when they first put forth their blossoms, that same Shakuntala now departs to her husband's house; so they are requested for her permission. The whole action of the play centers round this Lady of Nature. It is Dushyanta'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 as it is reflected in the comment of the king:

राजा-कृतं न कर्णार्पितबन्धनं सखे शिरीषमागण्डविलम्बिकेसरम् ।

न वा शरच्चन्द्रमरीचिकोमलं मृणालसूत्रं रचितं स्तनान्तरे ॥

(VI, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 232)

Here the king comments that a shirisha flower with its stalk fastened on her ear and its filaments hanging down to the cheeks, has not been painted; nor has a necklace of lotus-fibres tender like a beam of the autumnal moon, been drawn between her breasts. 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 Kashyapa 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:

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. It was 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 Vishvamitra. Menaka was an apsara from Indra's court and Vishvamitra 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:

अधरःकिसलयरागः कोमलविटपानुकारिणौ बाहू ।

कुसुममिव लोभनीयं यौवनमङ्गेषु संनद्धम् ॥

(I, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 28)

It means her lip has the redness of young sprouts; her arms imitate tender twigs; and her youth attractive like a blossom, pervades all her limbs.

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 Pururavas. So in this 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. It is clearly seen in the dialogue between Maricha and the king:

मारीचः -(एकैकं निर्दिशन् ।)

दिष्ट्या शकुन्तला साध्वी सदपत्यमिदं भवान् ।

श्रद्धा वित्तं विधिश्चेति त्रितयं तत्समागतम् ॥

राजा-भगवन् । प्रागभिप्रेतासिद्धिः । पश्चाद्दर्शनम् ।

अतोऽपूर्वः खलु वोऽनुग्रहः । कुतः ।

उदेति पूर्वं कुसुमं ततः फलं घनोदयः प्राक्तदनन्तरं पयः ।

निमित्तनैमित्तिकयोरयं क्रमस्तव प्रसादस्य पुरस्तु संपदः ॥

मातलिः - एवं विधातारः प्रसीदन्ति ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 288)

Pointing to each, Maricha says that the virtuous Shakuntala, the noble boy, and His Honour; fortunately the triad of Faith, Fortune and Performance, is here united. Addressing Maricha Divine sir, the king says that first the fulfillment of desires; afterwards the favor of him, therefore, it is indeed marvelous. For, first appears the flower and then the fruit; first the rising up of clouds, afterwards the shower of water; this is the order of cause and effect; but prosperity comes before the favor of him. After that Maricha says that thus do rulers of destiny show their favor.

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 Kashyapa. 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.

### Justification of the Title in the Play

The title of the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* has the theme hidden in it. Etymologically Abhijnana means “Recognition”. Thus, the title translated to English means “Recognition Shakuntala”. Recognition by whom? It is the king Dushyanta who recognizes his wife Shakuntala:

राजा- प्रिये क्रौर्यमपि मे त्वयि प्रयुक्तमनुकूलपरिणामं संवृत्तं

यदहमिदानीं त्वया प्रत्यभिज्ञातमात्मानं पश्यामि ।

शकुन्तला - (आत्मगतम् ।)

हृदय समाश्र्वसिहि समाश्र्वसिहि ।

परित्यक्तमत्सरेणानुकम्पितास्मि दैवेन । आर्यपुत्रः खल्वेषः ।

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 278)

Addressing her darling, the king tells her that even the cruelty inflicted by him upon her has come to have a favorable end, since he now finds himself recognized by her. Then talking to herself, Shakuntala appeals her heart to take consolation and further says that she is commiserated by Fate having set aside its spite. Now only she gets sure that he is indeed her husband. 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 Shakuntala 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, there occurs the separation between the lovers. But in the fisherman scene Dushyanta realizes 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:

राजा- (शकुन्तलां विलोक्य ।)

अये सेयमन्नभवती शकुन्तला यैषा ।

वसने परिधूसरे वसाना नियमक्षाममुखी धृतैकवेणिः ।

अतिनिष्करुणस्य शुद्धशीला मम दीर्घं विरहव्रतं विभर्ति ॥

(VII, *The Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa* 276)

Here she stands dressed in dusky garments and her face fined thin from observing strictest vows. 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’s thought is perfected. He is now matured. He could now see the true self of Shakuntala, i.e., the beauty of her soul.

## V. Conclusion

The play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* or *Shakuntala* is an unparalleled work of the great poet and playwright Kalidasa whose works are considered as a most important contribution to take Sanskrit literature to the front position of all other literatures. No other composition of this poet displays more the richness of poetical genius, the warmth and play of fancy, the profound knowledge of human heart than this masterly production. His plays are not completely 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 emotional love. He understands clearly all the aspects of human life and passion. He has given importance 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. 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 surroundings. Kalidasa has dealt in detail each aspect of India. The 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 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam* 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.

Kalidasa who represents the Augustan age of Sanskrit poetry 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. Out of which vaidharbhi is considered the best. And Kalidasa's creations are the best examples of vaidharbhi style. The similes he has used are incomparable for its naturalness and spontaneity and the sources of which range from mythology, nature, shruti, smriti to vyakaranas and shastras. 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. 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 *Abhijnanashakuntalam* and the mango buds do not bloom as the king is sad. Kalidasa is a lover of nature, but never separates it from human sentiments. Broadly speaking, his description of nature

is not limited to Earth. It extends to several worlds, like the types of worlds he has so beautifully portrayed in *Meghadutam* and *Abhijnanashakuntalam*.

Kavya aims at aesthetic pleasure, i.e. rasa. Rasa is created by the causes of emotions, vibhavas and the effects of emotions, 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. The characters in the drama are basically 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. *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is an example where the hero and the heroine are both portrayed to relish shringara rasa. Shringara rasa is the prevailing sentiment in Kalidasa's plays. Shakuntala and 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 shringara rasa. From the time Dushyanta leaves Shakuntala waiting for him Kalidasa introduces vipralambha shringara rasa.



These two aspects of shringara 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 vibhava of shringara rasa is beauty. 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 play has dealt with both levels of beauty, physical and spiritual. But it is so obvious that Kalidasa is not concerned only with the sambhoga shringara where there is only physical union. He concentrates on the spiritualization of love which is made possible only through separation. Henceforth, the vipralambha shringara gets resulted to the exposure of the inner spiritual beauty of the lovers. Now, it clearly shows that love cannot end; true love has to continue on its own path. Here, Shakuntala's and Dushyanta's love gets continued to flourish through their offspring Sarvadamana, who by his protection of the world, will acquire the name "Bharata." Thus, Kalidasa applies the very dominant sentiment-shringara in his play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* to elevate love from mere physical pleasure to an experience that is highly spiritual.

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