CHAPTER 6
Narratives from the Past: *Shakuntala, Prabodh Chandrodayanatak* and *Sujan Vilas*

It is difficult to deny that at almost every historical juncture, the ancient normative models were attempted to be adjusted to the prevailing reality. Thus, the values and traditions mediated through stories, for instance, instead of remaining static and fixed continued being shaped and reshaped in terms of the demands of the existing social conditions. This implied interpretation of the past which, in turn, meant continuity and change. It is valuable to examine and analyse this important feature of the dynamics of our history.

One such tradition during the period under review was the storytelling by our poets at the courts of their patrons. These poets were instructed by their masters to versify and narrate a specific story chosen from the past into the language they were familiar with—Braja being the most popular among these languages. It also did not matter if the patron was a Mughal emperor or some Hindu ruler and if the poet was a Hindu or a Mulsim. Thus, these lyrical stories may be seen as expressions of wider sense of identity which these audiences shared in different cultural contexts. In the following chapter, we analyse three such stories which were narrated into Braja, *Prabodh Chandrodayanatak*, *Shakuntala* and *Singhasan Battisi*. There are two versions of *Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak*. One is a translation from the original Sanskrit by Gulab Singh; another was a translation from the Persian version of the work by Brijwasi Das.
As for *Singhasan Battisi*, its translator, Somnath himself admitted in the first verse of his adaptation that he transmutated the Sanskrit text *Singhasan Dwa Trinsica*. Somnath called his translation as *Sujan Vilas*. Newaj is the author of *Shakuntala* of our period. He says that he composed the story on the basis of the plays the Dushyanta-Shakuntala that he himself saw. The story in Newaj is however close to the one in Kalidasa’s *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*. The theme was however popular in our period through various other channels reiterating the Epic story and the Sanskrit play as well. These stories are of diverse natures—*Shakuntala* is a love story; *Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak* is allegory of ethics and *Sujan Vilas* contains discourses on kings and kingship. We attempt to locate continuity and change in these stories by comparing these with the original Sanskrit texts.

Newaj called his story *Katha* or story. We have attempted to situate Newaj’s story to the existing socio-cultural context. The story of Shakuntala, as we know, was known to the people both through the oral and written mediums; its significance in the changing perspectives is to be appreciated in terms of gender and power relations it contained.

*Prabodh-Chandrodaya Natak* was composed by Krishna Mitra, in Sanskrit in the form of play during the eleventh century. In our period it was rendered in Persian, Braj and Gurumukhi as well during the eighteenth century. As we submitted above we take notice of the transmutations by Gulab Singh and Brijawasi Das against the backdrop of the original play. The text pertains to ethics, delineated allegorically in different characters. Ethical ideals rarely represent the actual conditions. We may, however, assume that through these ideals the translators of our period aspired to reduce the gap between norms and reality. Various versions of the text also
indicate the choice of a particular tradition that suited the needs of the time.

Somnath’s *Sujan Vilas*, has been discussed with a view to examining the prevailing value system concerning the king and kingship. In the Braja text, the courtly culture, the status of brahmans and ethical values did represent a change from the earlier standards.

**Abhigyan Shakuntalam and Newaj’s Shakuntala**

Kalidasa’s *Abhigyan Shakuntalam*, (A.S.) as we know, is a play, based on the story of Dushyanta and Shakuntala in *Mahabharata*.¹ There are, however, some changes in Kalidasa’ version of the story.² *Shakuntala* is a versified narrative. It was composed in Braj during the seventeenth century. According to some Hindi Scholars Newaj, a Brahman, enjoyed the patronage of Chhatrasal, the Bundela ruler and also of Prince Azam Shah, the son of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.³ 1680 has been accepted as the date of composition of the text. But Masood Husain Rizvi Adib, examining the details in modern Hindi and Urdu works on the text, refutes this views. Newaj, according to him, was a Muslim poet, a protege of the Mughal emperor Farrukhshiyar (1712-1719).⁴ Adib suggests many other possible patrons also like Prince Azam Shah, Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah (1707-12), Azam Khan Koka and Maula Shah. Adib also opines that Newaj drew upon

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his narrative on *Mahabharata* and not on Kalidasa. For us it is difficult to accept Adib’s view because the ring episode has been described by Newaj which is available only in Kalidasa. However, Newaj’s story is distinctly different in the sequence of events, in style, and in the description of various characters.

To begin with, Kalidasa’s drama is entitled as *Abhigyan Shakuntalam* in which the name of the heroine is written and pronounced as Shakuntal, with a long first “a”, while Newaj mentioned her as Shakuntala with a short first “a” and sound of “a” at the end. Sanskrit drama begins with recitation of sacred varses devoted to Shiva:

यामाहु: सर्व बीज प्रकृतिरति यथा प्राणिन: प्राणन्तः।
प्रत्यालभ: प्रपन्न सतनुभिखतु वस्तामिरस्थिनिरस्तः।

(He, whom learned people call the creator of this world and he, who keeps everything alive, should protect all of you.)

After the worship of the God, the Impresario introduced the audience with King Dushyanta carrying a bow and chasing a deer:

कृष्णसारे ददवच्चतुर्वृत्त्व चाथिज्ञकाम्बुर्के।
मृणानुसारिण साताल्य परमाभीन विनाकनम्।

(I see the dark complexioned deer being chased by the king, who carrying the bow appears like Shiva.)

Newaj on the other hand, begins his narrative with the story of Shakuntala’s birth. He writes that Vishwamitra once performed hard penance. God Indra fearing the ascetic’s supernatural power, which could

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be attained through such penance, sent the nymph Menaka to obstruct his austerity:

एक समय मुनिनायक कौसिक कानन जाय महातप कीन्हों?
लप धंग करन काँ बेलि सी फुरसति सी फूली फली।
एक महुरत के सुख कारन खोयो तु परि वर्ष हजार।

(Once upon a time, a great ascetic Kaushik observed penance; Menaka, like blossomed flower went there to obstruct his penance; the ascetic lost his thousands year old penance for momentary pleasure.)

The story how Shakuntala was born is thus the beginning of the story in Newaj. We may trace two significant trends here. The Reeti-Kal poet was perhaps influenced by the tradition of writing biographies during the medieval period. Moreover, we find that the story in Newaj was solely focused on the character and events in the legend of Shakuntala. It then sounds like a biographical narration of Shakuntala. The poet might have also been influenced by the medieval Reeti tradition of writing love-stories. A number of authors, independent of Reeti tradition during the period, composed

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8. Though *Harsha charit* of Bana Bhatt and *Raj Tarangini* by Kalhana may be taken as exceptions, the tradition of writing proper biographical accounts of the kings and people was a peculiar feature of Persian biography in India. Mukund Lath in his introduction to *Ardha Kathanak* of Banarardas believes that the Persian tradition of writing autobiography might have influenced a few as the impact of Persian learning was confined to few (P. XXII). In our understanding, the tradition of biographies and autobiographies was certainly esoteric as we do not find the desire among the Indians, before Islamic rule, for asserting their identity. The art, architecture and paintings of earlier period were anonymous. The Reeti poets also did not reveal in most of the cases, their identity and their biography till date remains obscure. In a period when the women’s issues were being dealt at great length by Reeti poets, the legend of Shakuntala was given exclusive adoption and Newaj wrote a sort of biography for asserting her identity as woman.

Premakhyanas or love-lyrics. Chandayan of Mulla Daud, Satwati Katha of Ishwardas, Mrigavati of Qutuban, Chitravali of Usman, Padmavat of Jaisi and Nal-Damayanti theme reiterated by Narpati Vyas and Mukunddas were primarily nayika-based love stories. Apart from Hindi Premakhyanas, the period also witnessed the creation of Sufi Premakhyanas in which the stories of Persian origin were retold as poems of love in Braja and other local dialects. The Sufi Premakhyanas also focused the female characters. The popular katha and the drama of Kalidasa were adapted by Newaj; and the different socio-cultural milieu influenced his portrayal of Shakuntala. Shakuntala was no more a secondary figure in the text; her image was exalted to the status of a nayika as was assigned to Padmavati or Mrigavati in other love lyrics.

We also find emphasis not only on Shakuntala, but also on women in general as the descriptions of Menaka’s beauty and her role were delineated at great length by Newaj. How she fascinated the ascetic, how she embraced him, conception of the child, delivering the child, her hesitation in carrying the human offspring to heaven; her departure for heaven leaving the infant girl in the forest and the girl being taken away by Saint Kanva to his Ashram find much more space in Newaj. The description of the birth of Shakuntala figures in Kalidasa’s story when the king Dushyanta wanted to know the

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10. Bhagirath Mishra, Hindi Sahitya Ka Brihat Itihas, p. 210. He believes that the stories of Laila Majnu, Yusuf Julekha by Nasir and Indravati by Noor Mohammad were Sufi love lyrics. Mostly written by the Muslim writers these stories represent the Persian tradition of narrating the stories. It is, however, not accepted by many other Hindi scholars for different reasons. It is not our concern at the moment to justify either view; It is more significant for us is the Indo-Persian culture of telling the stories with greater focus on female characters, that might have motivated the patron and the poet for delineating the story of Shakuntala.
lineage of Shakuntala. Then follows very brief account of her birth. Ansuiya, an intimate friend of Shakuntala tells the king about the incident only in one sentence:

अनसुया:— गौतमी तीरे पुरा किल्लतस्य राजेवर्गूः वर्तमानस्य।

किमपिजातशक्तै देवैर्मन्नका नामस्सर प्रेयिता नियमविध्न कारिणी।

राजा: परस्ताज्जायत एव।

(Ansuiya: On the banks of Gautami river, the great ascetic was observing penance. Other Gods being suspicious of some mishapening, sent Menaka to obstruct his devotion. The King: the further description is obvious.)

The incident in *Shakuntala* was described as the main event in the narrative wherein gender roles were twisted with a kind of bias against Vishwamitra:

छोड़ि दियो मुनि जोग का आसन। जप तप सयम धरम नसायो।

मोहि मेनका के दिया आयो। अंग अंग सो आनि लगायो।

(The ascetic renounced the seat of contemplatation. He lost all worship, penance, abstinence and religion. He came near Menaka and embraced her.)

The sequence of events in both the drama of Kalidasa and the poetry of Newaj then follows the same line. The King Dushyanta goes to Ashram all alone; the ascetic requests him not to kill the deer which belongs to them, the king not killing it on their request; the ascetics bless him, the king visiting Kanva's Ashram fall in the same order. Within these descriptions in both the texts, we still observe some differences. In Kalidasa' play the ascetics invite king Dushyanta to visit the Ashram:

12. *Shakuntala*, p. 3.
In Newaj's work, king Dushyanta himself desired to visit the Ashram:

करी प्रणाम नृप पूछी यह तब | कहो कण्व को आश्रम कहें अब ||
आज पाप पुराणि परिहरें | मुलिवर को चलि दर्शन करिएं |

(The king wished the saints and asked them where the Kanva’s Ashram was; let us be blessed with a visit to the great ascetic Kanva.)

The king’s benovence enabling the ascetics to lead a safe and protected life in Kalidasa’s story was overshadowed by the greatness of Saint Kanva in Newaj’s poem. This is very much in line with the image of a contemporary saint. The medieval sants of Indian and Islamic traditions were generally indifferent to courts and politics.15

Moreover, Kalidasa explained the king’s leaving the chariot at a distance from the Ashram in terms of his (king’s) gesture —the king was

15. S.A.A. Rizvi informs that the eminent sufí saints generally dissociated themselves with the political intrigues. The names of Baba Farid and Nizamuddin Aulia have, in general, been cited by Rizvi and M. Majeeb in context of the saints’ indifference to the politics. Nizamuddin Aulia refused the financial assistance offered by Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji and even declined to visit the royal court of Alauddin Khalji at his invitation. See for the discussion, S.A.A. Rizvi, History of Sufism, Vol. I, p. 144-60, M. Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 260 and R.N. Das, ‘Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia’ in Mohammed Taher (ed.) Sufi Saints, p. 39-64. The Bhakti saints like Kabir, Dadu, Guru Nanak and many other were also indifferent to political developments. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Vaishnavaite saint, also refused to meet King Rudra Pratap of Orissa by telling that meeting the kings is like a drought or poison. See, Prabhat Mukherjee, History of Chaitanya Faith in Orissa, p. 82.
concerned about the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram which he did not disturb with the creaking sounds of his chariot:

राजा—तपोवरानि वासिनीनमपरे मा भूत। एतावते वृश्चिक स्थापय। 16
(The king—The residents of the Ashram should not be disturbed, so stop the chariot here only.)

Though Newaj mentions that the king left his chariot at a distance from the Ashram and walked down to the Ashram, he does not give any reason for this:

स्थसारथी संगत टिकायो। आश्रम निकटि आपु चलि आयो। 17
(He dropped the chariot with the charioteer and walked up to the Ashram.)

It is, perhaps, because Shakuntala is central in Newaj's story, and not the king Dushyanta, that the poet described this in brief.

The centrality of Shakuntala becomes more evident in Newaj's version when she encounters the king. In Kalidasa's drama, King Dushyanta was attracted towards Shakuntala, still, the passion was governed through reason. Any relationship with her demanded an enquiry about her lineage and familial status. In Newaj's poetry, the king is presented little concerned about Shakuntala's lineage or about the feasibility of his match with her. The poet further assigned his nayika greater importance when the ascetics of the Ashram informed the king about Kanva's absence in the Ashram. They then told the king that Kanva had gone on a pilgrimage entrusting to his daughter—like Shakuntala the responsibility of the management of the Ashram:

16. A.S., Part I, V. 120.
(Shakuntala was brought up like a daughter to whom he entrusted the Ashram.)

Newaj’s concern with Shakuntala here reveals a better position of women during the period under review. It was not that the women, in general, were given prominence by the Reeti Kal poets; the high political circle where the poet lived had actually produced ladies of remarkable personality. Humayun’s sister Gulbadan Begum, Akbar’s mother Hamida Bano, his wife Salima Sultan, Jahangir’s queen Nur Jahan, Shah Jahan’s queen Mumtaz Mahal and his daughter Jahan Ara exerted considerable influence on court politics.19 The mother of Prince Farrukhsiyar, also played a crucial role in politics after the death of Bahadur Shah (1707-1712). In the battle against Jahndar Shah (1712-13), she successfully mobilized the Sayyid brothers of Barha in her son’s favour, leading to the accession of Farrukhsiyar as the Emperor.20 As a witness to these developments, the poet had observed the active role of women in different spheres. There is, thus, an elevation of the character of Shakuntala when she is shown as managing and coordinating the life in the Ashram in the absence of her

19. M. Mujeeb, Indian Muslims, p. 367; Ratnamayidevi Dikshit in her book Women in Sanskrit Dramas, p. 365-66, also believes that ever since the age of Kalidasa till the nineteenth century, the woman as heroine was always found a frail creature having no strength of her own. She then qualifies her statement by treating the women in Sanskrit dramas as the normative models but in reality, the Indian history produced courageous woman like Padmini, Durgavati, Razia Sultan, Chand Bibi and thus finds a contrast between literature and society. Newaj was, however, clear on this issue about the image of women in society and we find Shakuntala of Newaj as dominating the entire text and its audience.
20. William Irvine, Later Mughals, 205-06.
guardian. She is also represented as a courageous woman to have survived with dignity in spite of her perennial difficulties and sufferings.

The story proceeds in both the works with Dushyanta's arrival in the Ashram; the king watching Shakuntala and her friends watering the plants, hiding behind a tree and listening to their talks; he is charmed by Shakuntala's beauty, is amused at the black bee teasing her, but then comes out to protect her, followed by expressions of love from both the sides, their love marriage and ascetic Durvasa's cursing to Shakuntala.

Within these descriptions again we find some differences between the two. As Newaj wrote the poem without an expressario, King Dushyanta had to keep his love affair secret and decide the course of action by himself. In Kalidasa, on the contrary, there are a number of verses wherein the king is shown to consult the expressario on many issues pertaining to his relationship with Shakuntala. Dushyanta, when revealed his fascination for Shakuntala, was advised not to get involved in it. The reference of a message sent by king Dushyanta's mother for coming back to his kingdom and the king sending the expressario in response to the message and his stay in Ashram on pretext of protecting the Ashram from devils had been deleted by Newaj. The poet was seemingly not concerned with the king; his intention was primarily to narrate the incidents related to Shakuntala.

The relative autonomy of woman in Newaj is also visible in the way the ring episode is described in Shakuntala. Kalidasa described the ring as a souvenir only when king Dushyanta refused to recognize Shakuntala. It is not clear when and how the king had given her his ring. Newaj, on the other hand narrated that Shakuntala demanded something from Dushyanta as a souvenir:
(Give me something as souvenir which would console my heart.)

The king, thereupon, before departing gave his ring to Shakuntala:

तब नृप खोलि अगूँदी लीन्छ। शकुन्तला के कर में दीन्छि।

(The king then took out his ring and gave it in the hands of Shakuntala.)

Shakuntala of Newaj was not an innocent and simple girl. She knew it well that she had entered into a secret marriage alliance and that her impetuous love and rash marriage needed to be rationalized. Avoiding a risk of being deceived, she demanded some token from Dushyanta that could ensure her position as his legitimate wife.

Moreover, both Kalidasa and Newaj differ in giving the context of cursing by the ascetic Durvasa. In Newaj's story, it is a live incident whereas Kalidasa described it as a past occurrence. In the former's text, the ascetic came to the Ashram and felt offended due to the negligence of Shakuntala, who thus received the curse. The intimate friends of Shakuntala then appealed the ascetic to forgive their friend as she had committed the fault for the first time in her life:

सुनत शाप सखियाँ उठि घाई। हरवर दुर्वासा डिग आई।
करो न कोष दया मन ल्यावधु। करहु छमा यह शाप मिटावधु।

(Listening the curse, the friends ran and went near the Saint Durvasa.

22. Ibid.
23. Prabhati Mukherjee, Hindu Women: Normative Model, p. 44-46. The author describes many legendary images of women as Sita, Parvati and Radha. She believes that the description of ideal women remains incomplete without the reference of Shakuntala, the romantic heroine of Kalidasa. She defines her character as simple and innocent who lived in the natural surroundings and was ignorant of the ways of the world.
24. Shakuntala, p. 42.)
They requested him not to get angry and to be kind. He should forgive and remove the curse.)

In Kalidasa, Priyamvada, a friend of Shakuntala narrated the event to another friend and told her how she sought the saint's pardon for Shakuntala with great difficulty. The description of this incident further strengthens our position that Newaj's principal interest was in elaborating those events which could highlight Shakuntala as an ideal nayika. The secret marriage as a result of love at first sight, in the light of the ascetics curse, was justified and Shakuntala escaped any stains on her character on this count.

Shakuntala of Newaj also received more attention as a symbol of power and represented perhaps the changing gender relations. Dushyanta asked Ansuiya, the friend of Shakuntala, if she would marry or remain devoted to the ascetic life of the Ashram throughout her life. The reply in Newaj's text was as follows:

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\text{तब अनसूया उत्तर दीन्हा, कन्य महामुनि यह प्रण कीन्हैं}^{26} \\
\text{शकुंतला सम सुन्दर है। करिहां शकुंतला जो कहि है।} \\
\text{ऐसा बर काह लिख पैंहै। तब ही व्याहि तहें दैहैं।}
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(Ansuiya answered that Kanva has decided to marry her to a person who is

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25. See Chapter three in the thesis; and see also, Wendy Doniger, *Splitting The Difference*, p. 304. The author exhibits her strong belief in gender differences in mythical stories. She writes that 'the authors being male, the interpretation of single myth does not produce a corpus of mythology in which genders are portrayed as the same or equals'. Newaj and other Reeti-Kal poets whom we have discussed, however, present a different image of woman. Though they do not reject the idea that women were treated as inferior objects during the period concerned, they still concentrate, at least, in their writings on those issues which suggest a better position of women.

as beautiful as she is; He will do what Shakuntala says; if he finds such a groom, he will marry her to him.

The reply in Kalidasa was as follows:

आर्य धर्मं चरणेऽपि रघु जानि?

गुरुः पुनर्स्या अनुरूप कर प्रदाने संकल्पः।

(Priyamvdda: Arya, she is a perfect adherent of Arya dharma, the Guru has decided to give her to a person who is alike.)

These citations present a sharp contrast in the images of Shakuntala in the two texts. Kalidasa highlighted the pious virtues of Shakuntala whereas Newaj stressed her physical beauty. We know that the outward look of beauty was an essential quality of the nayika of the Reeti poets. Newaj saw Shakuntala’s beauty as a source of her power. It is interesting to note that while the ancient/early medieval period text does not authorize the woman to express her desire in important decisions related to her life, Newaj, in late 17th-early 18th century, could mention Shakuntala’s choice as the final determinant in the selection of her partner.

The events in the remaining part in both the works are in the same sequence. Kanva rishi’s return from the pilgrimage, his knowing about the happenings during his absence; his decision to send Shakuntala to king Dushyanta; the arrival of Shakuntala to Dushyanta’s court with Gautami and two other disciples of Ashram; Dushyanta’s refusal to recognize her; Shakuntala’s being accused of bad conduct and the king’s being reprimanded by Gautami and the other disciples of Kanva; the Purohit’s invitation to keep her in his house, Menaka’s escorting of Shakuntala, the fishermen’s finding of the ring, the king’s repentance, Indra’s message to

King Dushyanta through his charioteer, Matali; Dushyanta’s departure for heaven, his meeting with his son and Shakuntala; Saint Marich informed Shakuntala about the mishappenings as predestined fortune and the return of King Dushyanta with Shakuntala and his son to his kingdom are all described in the same sequence by both Kalidasa and Newaj. But a close analysis reveals that they differ in matters of details of events. Kalidasa, for instance, was less devoted to the state of Viraha and he depicted the king repenting more for his son, whom Shakuntala might have delivered. He feared he may die without a male heir due to his own mistake:

राजा: अस्मातपरम् बत यथा श्रुति समृद्धानि।
को न: कुले निवपनानि नियम्ब्रन्नीति।

(Who would perform the Vedic rituals after my death.)

In Braja text, the king yearned for Shakuntala and there was no reference to the king’s lamentation for his son. The king’s sole interest, in the play, appears to have an heir. Newaj on the other hand deleted the story of wealthy merchant, who died without a son and whose property was confiscated by the State. Newaj was not concerned with the king’s grief for his son and his fear for his property; he was interested in revealing the king’s yearning for his beloved. Newaj’s Shakuntala seems to be more in the tradition of Viraha, a popular poetic genre during the Reeti-Kal. The poetry of the period equally dealt with the joyful love unions and pains of separation. Viraha has generally been treated as a feminine trait but here again we find the reversal of gender roles. Shakuntala was confined in the

28. A.S. Part VI, V. 164; the text seems to have been drawn upon the brahmanical laws. The Ordinances of Manu, iii, 37 also refers that the forefathers were extinguished from the sins when their sons performed certain rituals after their death. A marriage was also a ritual for procreating, specifically, a male child.
safe surroundings of Marich’s Ashram where she was engaged in bringing up her child, and performing various services for the Ashram. Dushyantha, on the contrary, was portrayed as a mad lover who suffered the agony of separation. He cherished in recollecting the memories when in the union with Shakuntala; remembering the unfortunate day when he did not recognize Shakuntala in the court. He saw Shakuntala in every object; in the climbers in the garden, in the flowers and in the street. He groaned the whole day and night for her negating his kingly duties. King Dushyantha of Kalidasa, though repented his abandonment of Shakuntala, still performed the duties. We thus find that Newaj enhanced the womanhood by portraying her as a sensible woman who faced the circumstances boldly. *Viraha*, a feminine attribute was devoted to the once powerful and dignified King of Kalidasa. Moreover, feminity of Shakuntala as identified with the natural surroundings in Kalidasa’s text is also not reflected in the text of Newaj.  

In suggesting the changing gender roles in the poem of Newaj, we may not deny that Shakuntala as an ideal woman was guided by Saint Kanva to render some feminine duties assigned to a woman in the domain of domesticity. It was certainly the notions of *pativrata nayika* as we have discussed elsewhere in the thesis, which were put into the mouth of Saint Kanva by Newaj as follows:

![Verse](https://example.com/verse.png)

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29. Romila Thapar, *Shakuntala*, p. 70. Newaj does not describe the natural surroundings so elaborately as to give as a cause of identifying Shakuntala with the nature. In brief poetic text, the attention was given to the events and incidents which directly influenced her life.

(Serve your mother-in-law and sister-in-law, don't forget them in the love of your husband; live amicably with the co-wives but donot reveal your secrets to them.)

These were the conventional norms for an ideal woman and should not be treated only as a gender bias. Woman as embodiment of various qualities was also reflected in her role as an ideal wife. Even within the exclusively medieval feminine role, she possessed power.

It is also interesting that the residents of the Ashram, including Kanva himself, were not devoid of the worldly life. The ascetic was even aware of the abstract emotional attitude of a co-wife and, therefore, guided Shakuntala to deal cautiously with her. It has, in general, been argued by some modern scholars that Shakuntala was totally unaware of the worldly life in Kalidasa's story. We, however, do not notice either in Kalidasa's text or in Newaj's story this extreme ignorance towards worldly life. Shakuntala in both the texts was extremely sensitive and responded positively to the expressions of love by King Dushyanta. She also argued in both the stories regarding the implications of physical relations. She told him that such relations without socially sanctioned institution of marriage were illegitimate.

She lived in the company of friends of her age, and elderly persons, including the wives of the ascetics. The mates, both males and females of the Ashram

31. Suresh Upadhyay in his supplementary notes to M.R. Kale (ed.) The Abhijiman Sakuntalam, p. 65-66 writes that the Shakuntala of epic was out spoken practical girl whereas Shakuntala of Kalidasa was innocent, shy and affectionate girl living in the natural surroundings. See also, for such notions of Shakuntala in Kalidasa's drama, Romila Thapar, History and Beyond, 3rd Part, Cultural Transaction and Early India, p. 10-11; She also finds a decline in her empowerment in the Sanskrit Drama in comparision to epic's Shakuntala. She writes that Shakuntala in the epic was confident, high spirited and assertive and in the Play she became submissive, shy and subservient.
were proficient orators who utilized their skills as an when needed. Shakuntala's image in the texts was an ideal balancing of various religious, moral and worldly qualities that came to identify Shakuntala as an ideal woman.

It is not clear if Newaj based his adaptation on Kalidasa's A.S. or on the epic Mahabharata. If we accept the views of those modern scholars who believe that Kalidasa improved upon the epic version by changing the context and story of the epic, we may have to accept that Braja story was also borrowed from the epic as the characters of Dushyanta and Shakuntala in both these texts are not portrayed as so graceful and venerated. In the well-established monarchical set up, the upgrading of monarchy through the character of Dushyanta, and also the character of Shakuntala are portrayed as more graceful and modest in Kalidasa's adaptation. A.S. reflects a moral tone, full respect for gods and ascetics, observance of duty, forgiveness and self abnegation. Newaj's Shakuntala seems to be different from Kalidasa's drama. The concept of kingship received more dignified treatment in the equatic play. Newaj deviated from Kalidasa's approach to the concept of kingship when he situated King Dushyanta as a passionate lover, blinded by the enthralling beauty of Shakuntala.

These differences and similarities between the A.S. and Shakuntala on one hand and between the epic story and Shakuntala on the other could also be seen in the light of the confession of the poet in the last verse of the

32. Romila Thapar, Shakuntala, p. 44-82.
33. Aruna Roy, 'Tagore's concept of Love', Indian Literature, Vol. XIX, No. 5, 1976. Aruna Roy shows that Tagore understood the love between Dushyanta and Shakuntala as the ideal one where physical attraction was replaced by the emotional love.
poem. He wrote that he composed the poem after seeing the stage performances:

जो देखा सोई लिखा मोर दोष जिन देव।

Since both the epic story and A.S. were known and since the themes were also introduced to the Mughal audiences through the Persian translations of *Mahabharata*, it is difficult to ascertain the choice of the stage performers. Moreover, Newaj’s dependence on stage shows also leads us to speculate if the changes in the story were already there in the *katha* or stage plays or these were added by Newaj himself. Whatever the case may be, it is significant for us that Newaj’s *Shakuntala* represented a change without breaking away from the tradition.

The finding of the ring, for instance by fisherman, though did not alter the plot or sequence of the events in the story, is still not the same in both the texts. Kalidasa’s fisherman found it from the stomach of a fish while peeling it, whereas in Newaj’s story it is the boatman who found it directly from the river. The saint Kanva was informed through divine communication about the *gandharva* marriage in Kalidasa’ play but the saint of Newaj came to know of it through sacrificial fire. In *Mahabharata*, the story was subordinated to the main theme—to establish the lineage of Kurus and Pandus, but Kalidasa selected it with a view to expose his skills of dramaturgy and literary quality. Newaj focused primarily on the character of Shakuntala and produced a *nayika*-based love lyric.

There is a sharp difference between A.S. and *Shakuntala* in terms of literary style too. Newaj wrote the story in a period when poems in *shringar* mood were written without any restraints, while Kalidasa described the

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34. *Shakuntala*, p. 85.
intimate moments of the union between Dushyanta and Shakuntala with some reservation, through metaphors and similes in general. The most open expression in Kalidas, for instance, is:

अपरि त कोमलस्य यावतः कुसुमस्य एव नवस्य हस्तदेशः।

अधरस्य पिपास्ता मया ते सदरं सुन्दरी गृहयले रसेनास्य।

(As the black bee (six footed) sucks the juice of flowers, I am sucking your soft lips.)

In contrast, Newaj’s description of the love-making between the two is unrestrained:

कर सो नृप छतिया गहि मसकी। शकुंतला लील्ही तब सिसकी।

चुम्बनि कियो नृपति मन भायो। शकुंतला मुख झङ्कि छुड़ायी।

(The king crushed her breast with his hands and Shakuntala hissed; he kissed and enjoyed; Shakuntala freed herself from his grip.)

Our poet was carefree while writing about the intimacy, no matter if it was about a king or an ascetic. The descriptions of the beauty of Menaka and Shakuntala are also noteworthy, which obviously represented the prevailing Reeti trend. Kalidasa was not as erotic as Newaj was.

A word about the language of Newaj who frequently used Persian and Arabic words, in pure or in distorted forms. We have noticed that the great Acharyas like Keshavdas also could not resist the use of such

36. Shakuntala, p. 35; such description sound to be more in keeping with erotic traditions of the time of Newaj. Compare the citation with the following verse of Rasleen, another Reeti-Kal poet:

छीजतहु मीजत कुचन रीजत मृति बनाई।
उरज गहत अटिलाई जै भै नीले मुसकाई।

(Ras Prabodh, V. 145 and see also, V. 836)
vocabulary. It is then not surprising that the charioteer of Indra wished the King Dushyanta in Islamic ways:

मातलि करयो सलाम तब पूछन लगयो नरेस।

The Kotwal, Chubdar and Khilvat also denote the Mughal milieu. The theme, the language and the style of Newaj may be understood as a link between the Sanskritic culture and Indo-Persian culture of the Mughals on one hand and between the high elite form of expression and popular culture on the other. Though change was reflected in many ways in the later poem, it still retained continuity by retaining the aesthetic, moral and cognitive values embedded in the earlier Sanskrit play.

**Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak of Krishna Mitra and its Transmutations**

Krishna Mitra composed the famous Sanskrit drama *Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak* during the eleventh century. King Keerti Verma of Bundelkhand was his patron. The translators of the text Brijwasi Das and Gulab Singh, whom we have included in our study identified him as a native of South India but the idea has been refuted in the light of historical and inscriptional evidence. Brijwasi Das called him Krishnadas Bhatt:

दक्षिण भूमि भयो एक पड़ित ...... कृष्णदास भट असता नामा।

The historians and scholars of Hindi treat Krishna Bhatt and Krishna

38. Saroj Aggarwal, *Prabodh Chandrodaya Aur Uski Hindi Parampara*, p. 1-14, She discusses all the internal and external evidences and concludes that Krishna Mitra composed the Play under the portonage of King Keerti Verna (1049—1100) of Bundelkhand.
Mitra as the same person and hold the play as his creation. It has been treated as an allegory representing yet another addition to the literary allegories in Indian literary tradition since Vedic period. The Sanskrit text was reiterated in Persian, Gurumukhi and Braja languages during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a number of poets but we have selected the translations of Brijwasi Das and Gulab Singh. Brijwasi Das prepared his text in 1760 while Gulab Singh’s work is assigned to the year 1789. Brijwasi Das wrote in Braja while Gulab Singh originally used Gurumukhi script and Braja language which was later transcribed and translated in Hindi Script. Both these texts contain six sections, each patterned on the original Sanskrit text.

The basic plot in all these three texts is almost same but the descriptions reflect the significant differences in the social, cultural and philosophical concepts. In the first section, Mana is the son of Purush and Maya. Mana produces two sons Moha and Vivek from his two wives Pravriti and Nivriti respectively. The sons turn rival of each other. Vivek is supported by Shanti and Shradha while Moha is backed by Passion, Anger, Greed and Desire. Vivek tells his wife Mati that his relations with Upnishad would procreate Prabodh for liberating the Purush from worldly bondage. In the second section, Moha lays out his strategy to stop the rise of Prabodh and invites Dambha (arrogance) and conceit to help him. He sends them to destroy all the four major Ashrams for liberation in Kashi.

In the next section Shanti (peace) and Shradha (faith) are separated by Mithya Drishti (False vision) who was deputed by Moha for this purpose. Shanti roams here and there in search of Shradha and in this process, she

40. Saroj Aggarwal, p. 34-64.
meets Buddhist monks and Jain sadhus who propagate their ideology. Tantricism is also used to hinder the birth of Prabodh. Karuna informs Shanti that Shradha is with Vishnubhakti.

In the fourth section, Vivek appoints Meditation as his commander to fight the battle against Moha, Forgiveness against Anger, Satisfaction against Greed and in this way plans to destroy violence and pride. Fifth section describes the defeat of Moha. In the last section, Mana renounces Maya and accepts Reason, the path leading to salvation. Moha, though defeated, used Mithyadrishti to distract Mana’s determination. Mana gets attracted towards Mithyadrishti but Reason saves him well in time. By this time, Upnishad, who had been staying in Mathas working for divine knowledge, meets Vivek. They produced Prabodhchandra who removed the ignorance. Purush went to Vishnubhakti and thus got liberated.

It is interesting to note that the Braja texts, composed seven centuries after the Sanskrit drama written by Krishna Mitra, have successfully preserved the theme. Both the writers of the eighteenth century have described in simple language the conflicting concepts of dharma, darshana and liberation. It is through these allegorical constructs that the common masses could apprehend the ideology of Salvation being propagated by different schools of philosophy. Gulab Singh clearly writes his aim of writing the text in the following verse:

सुनै पढै झू जे जना, निवार मोह बच्ना।
लहै अपार मोक्ष को, दुर्धै समस्त फूह्ना।
(Those who listen or read it (Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak) are disillusioned; get Salvation by breaking all the bondages.)

Brijwasi also thinks that reading or reciting this text would enlighten the people:

पढ़े सुने समुझे गुने जो कोज यह ग्रन्थ!\(^{42}\)

ताके उरसे दूरि अहम अविद्या पथ।

(One who reads, listens and comprehends this text, ego and ignorance is removed from his heart.)

Ignorance misguides the soul and knowledge extinguishes in a man the fire desires. Knowledge as the essential feature had also found the similar treatment in Krishna Mitra’s text:

तेषमृ ब्रह्मणिदाम् विद्याय विघितव्याणनित्यकर्म विषया!\(^{43}\)

प्रायश्चित्तमदम् मया पुनरस्रो ब्रह्मकत्ता नीयते।

(Knowledge removes all those illusions which distract the heart and take it away from the Supreme; knowledge alone guides towards the unity of the soul and Brahma.)

We must also note that the Reeti Kal writers did not translate Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak from the original Sanskrit. Brijwasi, for example, admits that he had translated the Persian version of the drama:

बलीराम ताकी करो भाषा यमन किताब!\(^{44}\)

सोऊ विद्या अति कठिन समुझ्िन पर्यं शिताब।

भित्र एक ऐसी कही जो यह भाषा होय।

सरल होय तो सबीन को सुनि सुख पावे लोय।

ताते यह भाषा करी अपनी मति अनुसार.......

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42. Brijwasi Das, Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak, p. 120, V. 166.
(Bali Ram translated that text in Persian language. That language is too tough to understand quickly. Its language should be easy enough so that everybody can enjoy after listening. I translate it according to my understanding.)

Despite the fact that Brijwasi did not utilise the Sanskrit text, the Braja translation of the Persian version nowhere deviates from the original text. The explanation of various doctrines at different places in Brijwasi's text is more detailed than the explanations in the Sanskrit text but it does not lose the originality. We may also interpret these details as the need to communicate the message inherent in the text to people of different communities. There seems to have prevailed widespread unrest and dissatisfaction all over. Therefore it was felt that the message of peace and modes of resolving the uneas, contained in Prabodh Chandrodaya, should be disseminated. The Sanskrit drama which was written during the eleventh century was thus retold in different popular dialects.

Peace was the dominant theme of the Sanskrit drama. It has been admitted by both the eighteenth century writers that Krishna Mitra wrote the drama for his patron Keertiverma. They describes Keertiverma as an able warrior and powerful king who believed in expansion and conquests. After winning a battle against his rival Karan Singh, he feels exhausted. He feels discontented even after his victory due to unhealthy violent atmosphere created by wars. He hunts for peace and his friend-cum-adviser invites the court poet Krishna Mitra to compose something which would give Keertiverma peace. Brijwasi writes:

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(The feeling of satisfaction aroused in the heart of the king; you sing song of peace before him.)

In Gulab Singh’s *Prabodh Chandrodaya*, the Impresario tells his female that Gopal has told him to present the text:

रस सांत प्रसन्न विनोदनि के हित
हे नटनी सुगुण बुलाएं।

(Oh Impresario, Gopal has called me to write to please and pacify the disturbed king.)

Taking into account the theme of the drama if we consider the time period assigned to all these Hindi translations of the Sanskrit drama, we find that all the works were written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the exception of two or three translations. The period was witnessing major political changes involving wars and conquests. The drama was repeatedly written in common dialects as it was considered to be necessary to think of some device to check the greed for wealth and power.

Gulab Singh translated *Prabodh Chandrodaya* directly from the Sanskrit drama. He did not depend on the secondary translations as Brijwasi Das had done. His text, like the original Sanskrit drama, is not too descriptive. Brijwasi Das, on the other hand, gives detailed explanations on many occasions. For example, Gulab Singh explains merely in one verse

45. Brijwasi Das, Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak, p. 6, V. 43.
the cause of rivalry between Vivek and Moha:

\[ \text{जो इक आमिश ते निपजे तिन बैर प्रसिद्ध कथे जगमाहीं}^{48} \]

भूति निमित्त लरे कुरु पांढव मूप खरे जिनके रणमाही।

(Born out of the same flesh, their enmity was known everywhere; even Kuru-Pandav fought for land and many kings died in their battle.)

Brijwasi Das on the other hand devoted five to six couplets to explain the cause of their rivalry. He writes that King Moha abides by his father Mana. Whatever Mana desires, Moha fulfills at once. Vivek, on the contrary, does not obey his father and thus was deprived of the property. Moreover, the enmity between the two brothers for the sake of kingdom and wealth has been a regular feature of the history of our period. \(^{49}\) Inspite of the details, the writer does not distort the argument. He succeeds in maintaining the real sense which Krishna Mitra preserved in his Sanskrit text and Gulab Singh had done in Braja language. To quote from Krishna Mitra’s text:

\[ \text{निर्देहति कुलविशेषम् ज्ञातीनां वैतस्मयं क्रोधः}^{50} \]

(Mutual rivalry leads to ruin of two families.)

Brijwasi Das has used very simple language and picked up popular examples to explain the abstract concepts. He warns the people not to be dominated by the Mana as it renounces its own existence after being entrapped by the sensory organs:

\[ \text{भेड़िन में जिमि सिंह सायक रहयो भुलाय....}^{51} \]

\[ \text{आप अपनपी खोय भयो भेड़िन में भेड़ी} \]

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51. Ibid, Section I, V. 117.
(As a cub forgets his identity among the herd of sheep; the heart like cub looses its individuality and behaves like sheep among sheep.)
The use of such similes was perhaps, intended for the purpose of making the deeply philosophical text more comprehensible for common masses.

However, there are also some features in Gulab Singh’s text which distinguished it from the original. While Brijwasi Das added detailed explanation to his text, Gulab Singh included a short story which is not given in the Sanskrit drama. He writes about the power of passion which even moved the great ascetics. In this context, he tells the story of Shringi, the great ascetic. The Rishi was to be invited to visit the drought affected kingdom. It was expected that the appearance of the Rishi would bring rain. For this purpose, a prostitute was deputed. This part of the text, though different from the original text, communicates the message that passion can overpower wisdom.

The characterization of Vivek, Vastu-Vichar (Reasoning), Forgiveness, Satisfaction, Shradha, Shanti, Mati Karuna, Maitry and Purush etc. is given as means to remove ignorance and, thus realize the Brahma or the Ultimate and is exactly the same in all the three texts. Krishna Mitra writes as follows:

मोहान्यकारम् अवधय विकल्प निद्राः  
मुन्मथ्य कोऊयाजनि बोध तुषार रशिः।  
श्रद्धा द्विवेक भवि शान्तियमादिकेन  
विश्वात्मकः स्पृहति विषुरहम् स ऐश।

52. Gulab Singh, Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak, Section I, p. 9-12.  
(The darkness of love would be removed, the world would wake up; The birth of Prabodh and cooperation of Shradha, Vivek, Mati and Shanti etc. would liberate the people in this world.)

These characters are taken to represent weapons to fight Pride, anger, lust, Greed and ego. Illusion of maya which is the main cause of keeping Atma away from Partmatma is destroyed due to knowledge and Vishnubhakti. In the process of presenting the conflict between wisdom and delusion, people are guided to overpower all those sentiments which make your life unpleasant. Tranquility is the only means to reach the Ultimate:

सीत अरु उष्ण भय भरम भागे।
भनरि जबहिँ सुख शांति हिय माहिँ आवे जब।

(Heat and cold, fear and delusion disappear as the heart gets tranquility.)

All these texts contain in the similar fashion the discourse between different characters and the monks associated with different cults. The writers preach the non-dualism of Shankaracharya and thus condemn the different cults on different grounds. To them, Shaivites are not less than the ghostly persons engaged in dreadful acts:

स्वान स्वा वृक पित्र गन जैसे भक्त गीता।
मलिन भयानक भेष तुम मनदु पिचास बिलास।

(As dog, deer, wolf, and vultures eat flesh; ugly and dreadfully dressed, your heart is ghostly abode.)

54. Ibid, Part I, V. 17 and 28 refer to Maya and for Vishnubhakti as means of attaining freedom from the evil deeds, see Part II, V. 72 and part VI, V. 26.
56. Ibid, p. 54, V. 65.
Jainistic, Buddhist, Nyay, Mimansa, Charvak, Sankhya or Yoga thoughts are also criticized and Brahna is established in its absolute non-dual form:

\[ \text{Brahma is omnipotent, invisible, eternal and without any form.} \]

We are, however, not concerned with the question of accepting or rejecting a particular argument. It is evident from the discussion among the monks and saints that they were not really engaged in religious activities. They were disseminating their cults by ostentatious modes and, were dissimulators. Note the following verse to quote from Brijwasi Das:

\[ \text{(Long saree is tied on waist, wearing the scarf on which names are written; the cap is bright red, mark on the forehead, the sacred books lying here and there, they keep their pillow and seats very bright.)} \]

Gulab Singh also describes the in the following verse:

\[ \text{(With their heads shaven they are called the pandits but do not have knowledge....)} \]

The poet is not only critical of the attitude of the so-called saints, he

57. Ibid, p. 92, V. 119. Compare, Krishna Mitra’s version given as follows: एकभेद सदा ब्रह्म सत्वमन्यविष्कल्पस्य। (Part V, V. 15)

58. Brijwasi Das, Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak, p. 27, v. 11. See also, Krishna Mitra’s P.C., Part II, V. 5-6. Krishna Mitra condemns such saints and ascetics who believe in ostentations and ritualistic ways of devotion.

feels that they merely loved money, collected it in the name of religion to enjoy this worldly comforts:

नाम तो सन्यास मोग भिक्षा विलास करें 60

(They beg in the name of asceticism and lead a luxurious life.)

At another place, he ridicules the hermits of Shaivite cult and says that they are indulged in accumulating wealth:

घर में लेहि कुसीद भीख पुनि मांगन जाये 61
उर निसाबासर दमझा चहें कबहूं होवे रामरति......

(They receive interest inside their house and go for begging like hermits; they desire money day and night and never speak the name of Rama.)

In this way, they disapproved of the saints and ascetics of all the cults. They did so with a belief that religion had become a source of corruption, falsehood and ostentation during the period. This image is, however, also visible in the text of Krishna Mitra written during the eleventh century.

We are acquainted with three additional characters in one eighteenth century text; they support Delusion in his war against Wisdom. Anachar (misconduct) came from the north direction, writes Gulab Singh:

उत्तर दिशा ते आइयो, अनाचार प्रतिहार......62

(The messenger of Anachar came from the north.)

He further exemplifies the activities under the influence of Anachar as follows:

People don’t understand the essence of God but recite his name; The women have become adulterous and many times act like chameleon; the stories of righteousness disappeared and unchastity dominates; Born in the north, Anachar salutes King Moha.)

From the above quotation, it is apparent that righteousness and chastity were driven away by misconduct or Anachar. These traits were probably not peculiar to the eleventh century society, therefore, the Sanskrit writer did not refer to the term ‘misconduct’ even though he described other demerits at great length. Still more interesting sounds the word ‘north’ in the eighteenth century text which is not given in the Sanskrit text. If we accept the internal evidence the poet writes that he composed the text in Kurukshetra, during the eighteenth century. It is not possible to judge in the light of the metaphor ‘north’ if the poet was hinting the chaos which bred and legitimated misconduct in the wake of foreign invasions from the north-west direction during the eighteenth century. We could also conjecture the Sikh disturbances for which the poet in Kurukshetra used the term ‘north’. The poet, however, believed that misconduct was a demerit of the eighteenth century social life.

63. Ibid, p. 54, V. 104.
64. The notions of Dharma may differ in different historical periods and in different contexts. The depiction of fallen women here has been seen as changing gender relations elsewhere in the thesis.
Second distinct character of the eighteenth century text is *Kubuddhi* i.e. Dissolute.\(^66\) *Moha* appreciates *Kubuddhi* for it has impaired people of their virtues and they are no more wise. Falsehood is another character created by Brijwasi Das.\(^67\) *Moha* is very confident of his officer and feels that Vivek and his supporters will be entrapped by all his men. With addition of these characters, we may say that the number of demerits had increased by the eighteenth century. It appears that misconduct, dissolute and falsehood very common social vices and caught the attention of the writers. The writers were dissatisfied with immoralities to an extent that they incurred additions in the original text.

The people if we assess on the basis of these texts during the eighteenth century had become greedy. They were always trying to accumulate wealth. Their actions were guided by greed. Even after collecting huge amount, their desires were still insatiated. People adopted every means which served their purpose. They stand with folded hands in front of the king and try to please him and get *jagirs* in return:

कोउ कह बैंधि कर परिकर को सेवा नृप की कीजै \(^68\)

ऐसी भौति रिझावे नृप को सौ जानीरें पावै।

(Someone believes in serving the king with folded hands; they please the king in such a way that they get *jagir*.)

People even resort to theft and robbery for earning money. The most preferred target of human beings was thus accumulation of wealth:

\(^{67}\) Brijwasi Das, p. 13, V. 87.
\(^{68}\) Ibid, p. 41, V. 113.
(People spend their life yearning for wealth; Don’t trust anyone even in the

With the exception of these few changes, the Braja versions do not

It is probably because the

Reiteration of the text by many poets and writers during the

The highly philosophical concepts of the

Singhasana Dwa Trinsica and Sujanvilas of Somnath

Singhasan Dwa Trinsica was composed by some anonymous writer

The text is also not dated. Somnath wrote the same

In the following lines we will examine

For convenience we have taken

The translation is entitled as Vikrama’s Adventures or The Thirty Two Tales of the Throne.

Translated by Franklin Edgerton, the work was published by Harvard University Press in 1926. The text is translated in four horizontally parallel

69. Ibid.
recensions. It is difficult to decide which recension of the four is more authentic. The Southern Recension, the Jainistic Recension, the Metrical Recension and the Brief Recension sound to be all the more same. We have taken into account all these recensions though emphasis is more on the Southern Recension for comparing it with Sujan Vilas.

There are twelve sections of the Frame-Story numbered with Roman numerals I to XII. Stories told by the statutte are numbered with Arabic numerals 1 to 32. The Roman or Arabic numerals in the translation refer to the original order of the sections or stories of Vikramaditya. Sujan Vilas of Somnath contains thirty-three sections. Sections one to thirty-two narrate the stories of thirty two statuettes and the last section is attributed to the causes of the creation of the text and its significance. Both the texts reveal material, philosophical and divine elements at great length.

The Sanskrit text begins with the homage to the Elephant-faced Ganesha who is mighty and cleaver of the obstacles. The writer then pays homage to Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva. Goddess Saraswati is also worshipped before the writer begins the work. Somnath, on the other hand, begins with a verse in which Sujan (Suraj Mal) dictates Somnath to compose this text:

समा नहि इक दिन कहीं श्री सुजान मुसिक्याह।
सोमनाथ या ग्रन्थ की भाषा देहु बनाइ।

(One day, Sri Sujan told Somnath smilingly to compose the text in his words.)

70. Sujan Vilas, p. 623, V. 1.
Receiving the command, Somnath writes the text *Sujan Vilas* which contains the stories of Vikrama's adventures. The eighteenth century poets dedicates his work to his patron while seventh century writer offers his prayers to divine Gods whom he considers responsible for creation of such a work. It is important to note that Somnath writes the text to please his patron and entitled it after the name of his patron. The Sanskrit text, on the contrary, suggests that the Goddess Parvati asked Shiva to tell a story which would amaze the minds of all the people in the world. Shiva narrates the tale of Vikramaditya to her and elements of divinity appear from the beginning in the narrative. The *Reeti* poet was probably completely this—worldly and to please the king was his first duty. It is not the beginning only where he admires his patron, he reaffirms his devotion to his master in the concluding verse of each section in the text. Further, he admires not only Sujan or Suraj Mal but also his father Badan Singh:

श्री बदन सिंह भुवाल जदुकुल मुकुट गुजनि बिसाल है [...]

(King Badan Singh who wears the crown of Yadu family possesses immense qualities.)

It does not imply that only the *Reeti* poets were creating literature for their patrons and that only during this period there existed a tradition of court patronage to poets. The difference lies perhaps in the fact that the earlier kings wished to promote, through patronage, the cultural and intellectual life of society, without asserting that their names must also figure in the texts. The medieval kings, on the other hand, being the patrons of the poets interfered and dictated the themes for the sake of their pleasure.

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71. Ibid, p. 651, V. 196.
The poets had to express unalloyed allegiance to their patrons. The poets asserted the power and authority of the king who, in turn, ensured and promoted their welfare.

There are also many other variations in the stories of Singhasan Dwa Trīnsica and Sujan Vilas. The Braja version begins with the reign of Raja Bhoj, his finding of the throne, the King's attempt to mount the throne and lastly the sequence of thirty two stories told by the statuette. Singhasan Dwa Trīnsica on the other hand, begins with the story of Bhartrihari King, his renunciation of the worldly life, Vikramaditya obtaining the kingdom, Indra presenting Vikramaditya his throne, death of Vikramaditya and hiding of the throne. It is after all these narrations that we are introduced with Raja Bhoj in the Sanskrit text. Moreover, the story of Bhartrihari king is told by Siva to Parvati in old text, while the first statuette narrates this story to Raja Bhoj in Sujan Vilas.

Apart from minor changes in many stories, we come across a number of stories which are totally different. The story told by twenty-ninth statuette in the Sanskrit text is not the same. Thirty first story in the old text is written in the first section of Sujan Vilas. In the last story, the statuette simply applauds King Vikramaditya in the old text but in Sujan Vilas, the thirty-second story is about Vikramaditya's truthfulness. The concluding section in Sujan Vilas explains the reason how the thirty-two nymphs were converted into statuttes. It is also told that they were released from the curse after they narrated the story in the court of Raja Bhoj.

The Sanskrit text tells about the gift of Indra's throne to Vikramaditya in the III(b) frame story. This frame story is missing in Sujan Vilas.

A thorough study of the two texts reveals variations within the structures of the stories also. In the second story, for instance, the king
Vikramaditya took air-bath in the old text while the king had a bath in the river in Braja text. The brahman during the reign of Raja Bhoj himself goes to the King and informs about the strange platform in his field:

इक दिने बिन्न करिके बिचार। पहुँच्यो सु भोज नगरी मझार।

तब तासी डिन्ज ने बात एह। अचरज भरी उच्चही बवेह....

(One day, the brahmin went to the city of Raja Bhoj, narrated this astonishing event.)

In the Sanskrit text, Raja Bhoj goes on hunting expedition and observes the change in the attitude of the Brahman after ascending and descending the particular mound in the field. To quote another example from the fourteenth study, Vikramaditya tells the ascetic a story to assert the role of destiny in one's life. In this story, the Sanskrit text informs that the elephant garlands the destitute King Jaishekhar and the ministers then performed coronation. (p-134 in Harvard series). Somnath writes that the ministers nominate Jaishekhar the king:

सब मंत्रिन मिलि के तहरावो। याको राज देहु छबि आयो।

(All the ministers consulted and conferred the kingship upon him.)

Similar differences are visible in the twentieth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth and twenty-seventh stories. It seems that the Reeti poet incorporated many things in his stories from his observation of the existing condition. The King, the palace and the court in Sujan Vilas mirror what and how they were in the eighteenth century.

The main character in both the texts is Vikramaditya. It is interesting to note that the concept of kingship did not change over span of centuries.

King Vikramaditya was an ideal ruler according to the Sanskrit text. He satisfied the requirements of the gods and the brahmans, as well as of the poor, the lame and the crippled. He gave complete protection to his subjects, made his servants contended and won the hearts of his minister and vassals. The king ruled his kingdom by the virtue of his good conduct. King Vikramaditya was a man of noble character and protected the whole universe. Gods helped and supported Vikramaditya as he was brave and vigorous. To quote from the text: "Courageous activity, boldness, vigor, insight, strength and valor-whoever possesses these six, even a god is afraid of him." Moreover, he imbibed the qualities like magnanimity and kindness. Heroism, wisdom and religious activities were the common property of many people but Vikramaditya possessed the virtue of liberality which is worthy of praise. Compassion, discrimination and firmness were the other virtues of the King. He was a righteous man having uniformity of thought, word and deed. To be kind, to speak pleasantly and to show boundless affection were his inborn traits. With all these qualities his fame had reached the three worlds. The king knew all the arts and was especially well-versed in the art of dance and music. For this quality, the God Indra invited him to select either Menaka or Rambha to be deputed to interrupt the penance of Vishwamitra.

Vikramaditya in Somnath's text has been described, more or less, in similar words. The poet begins with the description of his physique which carries royal insignia:

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75. Ibid, p. 59. see also, p. 17 and 150 for the qualities of the King. For concept of kingship, see the chapter in the thesis.
(In the person of Vikramaditya, the royal signs definitely exist.)
The king is well versed in fourteen types of education which includes the knowledge of four Vedas, astrology, performance of rituals, grammar, music, etymology, Puranas, Mimansa and Nyaya. This description is the same as given in the Sanskrit text. Vikramaditya has also been described as a caring man. He removes the sufferings of the others and brings pleasure to all. He is a divine personality. None is in distress during his rule and everybody is engaged in fulfilling one's duty according to the Varna. He patronizes and discusses literary works and aspires for righteous deeds. He is benovelent and takes pains for the welfare of all. He believes in speaking the truth and observes reticence in reprehension. Considering eventually that body was perishable, he always thinks of Brahma. He treats wealth as transient and has faith in generosity. Virtuous people in his domain are actively engaged in carrying out good deeds. Such a concept of king and kingship is quite similar to the one given in Singhasan Duva Trinsica. Somnath writes in detail all the qualities of the King and state of affairs in the kingdom while the Sanskrit text, briefly mentions these traits probably due to its prosaic nature. Even if we take into account the poetic exaggeration, Sujan Vilas still produces the same ideal image of the King as given in the Sanskrit text.

77. Ibid, p. 633, V. 15.
There is however a notable difference in the description of the surroundings. In Somnath’s text, we find the exhibition of affluence of the king which is restricted in the Sanskrit text. The eighteenth century poet, on frequent intervals does not fail in describing the extraordinarily precious throne of Vikramaditya. He repeatedly tells that the King’s throne was made of gold and studded with precious jewels:

कंचन मनि मंडित महा तिहि सिंहासन मंडळि...  
(The King sat on gold and jewel studded throne.)

The jewel studded throne is not the only reflection, the poet describes the tributary stream of the king in different ways. The entrance of the palace, as described by the poet is given as below:

उत्कं रंग रंग के दुरंग राज द्वार पै। खरे करौ अनेक जो नबंत निल शार पै।  
(The horses of different colours are placed on the entrance of the palace which dance on the rhythm; the exultant elephants beautified with jewel studded accessories also stand there.)

Such descriptions which are indicative of the wealth of the king are peculiar to the eighteenth century text only. It implies that ostentatious display of wealth was an added quality of kingship during the period when of centre’s authority declined and the regions were engaged in contest for power. The changed surroundings are also reflected in the description of the courtiers:

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78. Sujan Vilas, p. 635, V. 28. see also, p. 728, V. 31.
80. C.A. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazars, Introduction. We discussed elsewhere they the regions had enormous wealth and the kings of these regions were attempting to legitimate their position by ostentatious life style.
It is interesting to see bakhshi and sardars in the court of Vikramaditya. A considerable number of words have also been used by the poet which were either Persian or were distorted form of Persian. Guman, Mukam or Alam are a few examples of such words. It is also interesting that Somnath uses the word dinar for the currency of Vikramaditya’s reign.

The description of the cities, the villages and the markets is also noteworthy in this context. In contrast to the Sanskrit text, Somnath’s account contains detailed descriptions of the villages, markets and towns:

(Wandering about, he reached in a village. There were beautiful temples and many markets. Most of the people were merchants’ and abundant wealth existed. At every point precious and rare goods were being sold.)

The city life was further depicted in its greatness as follows:

82. Sujan Vilas, p. 808, V. 73.
83. Ibid, p. 733, V. 7 & 8.
84. Ibid, p. 794, V. 16.
(Vikrama went to the city....... There were big markets and huge mansions). The poet then enumerates the goods sold in the market. The cities were populous and affluent.

The expressions of natural surroundings, flora and fauna, cities and villages and those of the markets were exclusively added by Somnath by neglecting the sections of the original text on detailed moral teachings. The four parallel translations of the Sanskrit text emphasize certain aspects of morality which are missing in Sujan Vilas. The traits of noble man and noble conduct, 85 for example, are discussed at frequent intervals in all the four recensions. It is suggested that the intercourse with the noble averts both present distress and future threats. A noble man should not accept bad advice even though it comes from an old man. Noble people preserve righteousness as it is the only refuge in the world and the only friend of the learned people.

There are innumerable passages suggesting what a man should do or should not do to make one's life happy. Fortune favours him who is resolute, prompt in action, knowing his business, not addicted in vices, bold and steadfast of purpose. One should not perform any action in haste and ill-considered judgment is the greatest cause of misfortune. One should not trust rivers, animals, man carrying swords, women and princes. 86 One should not reveal age, wealth, a hole in the house-wall, a charm, a medicant, sexual intercourse, a gift, an honour and disgrace. A wise man, in order to be happy avoids crossing a great river, enmity with a great man and a strife with a crowd. He should, under no circumstances, put confidence in actions

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86. For this description see, Vikrama's Adventures, p. 40 & 76.
of women, in a king’s favour and in the love of merchants.

We come across repeated instances presenting guidelines for the general behaviour of mankind both in personal and private life. A man should support the aged parents, a faithful wife and young son even if they have committed a hundred misdeeds. A man must try to possess and retain wealth as all the virtues are believed to rest upon gold.\textsuperscript{87} One should prefer death to poverty. At the same time, the man is warned to earn wealth through proper means. Moreover, when wealth is bestowed upon worthy persons, its value increases. Wealth is said to have been waisted if not spent or donated. It further tells people to have friends as by sharing one’s grief with faithful friend, sorrow is reduced. Giving and receiving, telling secrets and asking about them, entertaining and being entertained are the signs of friendship. A friend, who is himself happy when his friend is happy and sad when he is sad, is a good friend. This aspect of friendship is related to the virtue of charity highly propagated throughout the text. Helping others, to live for others, to guard others’ lives brings joys of heaven.

To say that only the ancient text contained the themes of morality and ethical values would not be correct. We have noticed elsewhere the ethical teachings in the Reeti text. The territory of the king was administered justly. People were engaged in wise acts and so on:

\begin{quote}
चरचा रहै धर्म की नित्त जाकै, नहीं पाप कों रंचे आलाप ताकै।\textsuperscript{88}
\end{quote}

(Discussions of dharma were carried daily; no sins were committed.)

The poet writes about dharma and sin. The concept of dharma or sin might have varied over time. In the new set of values, Somnath writes not to fight

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, p. 58, 59, 110, 111, 118 & 119.

\textsuperscript{88} Sujan Vilas, p. 717, V.4.
with the preceptor and not to touch the cow with foot. To deceive a friend and gain pleasure is an evil deed. To kill an enemy is cruelty. To have sexual intercourse with elderly ladies is unwise. To do backbiting with malintentions is not good. To support the dishonest and cause fight shows bad conduct.

Singhasan Dwa Trinsica stresses some rituals to be observed by people in all the circumstances which are not referred in Sujan Vilas. A man should not come empty handed to see a king, a deity, a guru, a beloved wife, a dear friend or a young son. One should not break the commands of kings. To neglect the dues of the brahmans is misdeed. It is difficult to discuss all the teachings and preaching contained in the ancient text as every page contains such elements. Each of these teachings is supported by some incident or story. Whether being told in particular situation, the statement is always generalized. These generalizations are, however, contradictory in some places. For example, the writer says that the true philosophy of conduct tells, “He who has money has friends, he who has money has relatives; he who has money is a scholar." In a different section, he writes,” If one has wealth one should enjoy it and give it away, not hoard it.

While these generalizations within the texts are contradictory, it should not be surprising when Somnath deliberately omits such generalized teachings. It is also possible that the aspects of morality, code of conduct, wisdom, charity or religion being abstract perceptions had change over the years and the eighteenth century atmosphere did not motivate the poet to incorporate these elements in the text. The community in which he was

89. Vikrama's Adventures, p. 118.
90. Ibid, p. 59.
writing the text might have preferred reading or listening different sets of ethics. It may also be true that the court poet avoided such ideal and philosophical themes based on reasoning and argument which reduced the pleasure of the poetry.

In this connection, the brahmanical myths, rites and rituals deserve mention. The ancient text beholds the supremacy of Brahmans in every sphere of life. Let it be the visit of Raja Bhoj to the fields of the Brahmans where the throne was hidden, moving the throne to the palace or performance of any other act, brahmans were revered. The kings were generally advised to honour the brahmans for different reasons. Take the following quotation from the text: “O King, if you desire your son's welfare, give gifts to the brahmans, the brahmans are the highest of the castes.”

It was emphasized that brahmans were not to be antagonized. For any desire to be fulfilled or evil to be removed, brahmans should be offered gifts. They were invited to interpret the results of the dreams, read and tell astronomical forecast and perform all the religious rites.

This adherence to brahmans and brahmanical traditions seems to have been reduced during the medieval period. Heesterman has discussed the role of brahmans as purohits in ancient Indian period. The power of the king was legitimized as authority by sanction of the priest, who happened to be a brahman. The royal consecration of the king was addressed by the purohit for he commanded greater spiritual authority than the king. As the brahman could not live on his spiritual authority alone, provisions were made for sacrificial gifts which may be viewed as salary for their specific

91. For importance of the brahmans, see Vikrama's Adventures pages 39, 82, 87, 188, 189 & 238.
92. Heesterman, The Inner Conflict, p. 141-57
services. Kutilaya’s principles reduced purohit’s influence and treated him only as magicians who could avert the calamities and bring happiness through religious rituals. With the establishment of the Muslim rule, the position of brahmans was further reduced. The bhakti movement also added to the loss of their position and power at courts. Therefore we find in Sujan Vilas that even as the Jat ruler Badan Singh had a purohit in his court, the significance was seemingly conferred upon the ministers. Though brahmans are involved in many activities, they are not placed in the superior most position in the society. It is not the brahman but a ministers of Raja Bhoj who tell the king the way in which the throne could be moved. The minister and not the brahman knew what sacrificial rite was to be performed;

इहों पहिले करिये कछु दान, कछु बलि दिज्जाइ रीति प्रमाण।  
इती सुनि कर मंत्रिय बेन कहयो नृप नै....  
उचित जु जानहु सो तुम अच्छ, करी बलिदान यु हे अनगच्छ  
(You donate here something, perform some oblation; The king, after listening to the minister told him to do the desired; whatever he considered was wise, he should do that.)

Similarly, in the ninth story, the ancient text highlights the significance of being born in a brahman family. The Purohit upbraids his son for not studying and performing righteous deeds even after being a brahman’s son. On the contrary, in Sujan Vilas, it is more significant to be a human being and not a brahman. The father advises his son to study and act wisely because he is a human being:

In *Sujan Vilas*, we nowhere come across a verse to advise not to treat brahmans with disrespect or to worship them like gods with gifts, honours and praise. Unlike the ancient text, Somnath does not describe them as the supreme human beings through whom gods accept sacrifices and offerings.

Apart from the deteriorating position of the brahmans, Somnath produces the ostenatious image of the ascetics. From many instances, let us quote the following verse:

(Sitting on a throne was brahman Uday Prabhakar; Reciting the Vedas as if clouds were thundering; The dust of Yajna was placed on forehead and earrings in the ears; wearing thousand rudrakh on his person and eye are very big and red.)

Such descriptions of the ascetics or brahmans resemble to those given by Gulab Singh and Brijwasi Das in *Prabodh-Chandrodaya Natak*. There are many other instances where the dresses, the make-up or mode of worship of the brahmans and the ascetics is depicted.\(^96\) Such descriptions were not

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95. Ibid, p. 691, V. 17. These descriptions reiterate the notions of *bhakti* saints. The medieval Indian saints had also protested against these ritualistic ways of worship. The religious leaders who did not possess true knowledge but claimed to be superior on account of their status and publicity were sharply criticized by the *bhakti* saints.
available either in Prabodh-Chandrodaya natak or in Vikrama's Adventures composed during earlier periods. It emerges that religion and religious activities had become more ritualistic and pretentious display was more important rather than actual worship. Moreover, the earlier text simply refers at many places that a particular worship was offered for a God or Goddess. Somnath, on the other hand, dedicates a number of pages to different Gods and Goddesses. In any story, whenever the reference is made of the worship of a God, he writes many verses in praise of the Divine.97

A number of other variations also become visible as we move from morality and religion to other themes. The illustrations of female beauty, for example, within different stories told by the statuette is common in both the texts. But in Somnath, there is lascivious description of female beauty, in line with the Reeti Kal tradition.

The Sanskrit text also contains the narrations describing the female beauty but those are not so extensive and licentious. In the second story, the writers tell about some king Nanda who always paid attention to the suggestions of his distinguished minister Bahushrutta. The king was in deep love with the beautiful queen Bhanumati. In this context, the beauty of the queen Bhanumati is described. In the Sanskrit text, delicacy, full blown-blue-lotus eyes, lovely like water-lily, brilliant, giving honour to elders, brahmans and the Gods, gentle and graceful walk etc. are certain aspects of her beauty. Somnath on the other hand, begins with transparant precious chunri on her head, hairstyle, forehead and touches the nails of her feet in his writing. The lewdness is reflected in the following verse in which he writes about her breast:

(Cupid has come in form of betel-nut; her small breast is like quince fruit.)

The poet then writes about the other private parts of the body as well using such similes. The Nakh-Shikh of the statuettes in the concluding section also presents the similar picture.

Whereas the writer of the Sanskrit text talks of females as Goddess in high esteem, he places the ordinary women in wretched position at the same time. He suggests people not to trust women at all as none can predict the thoughts and actions of women. He considers it easy to catch a flying bird than to control the fickle heart of a woman. The woman is portrayed as deceitful, who even after experiencing the best sensual pleasure with a man yearns for another man. It is further stressed that even without muttered charms, incantations, knowledge or education, women are able to deceive a man who has riches of knowledge. To him, women laugh and weep for the sake of profit, they induce men to trust them and never trust anyone themselves; therefore, a man of a good lineage should always shun them. He advises his readers not to tell women any secrets.

Such a generalized negative assessment of woman might have fitted in the earlier perspective, but during the eighteenth century, a woman was seen as observant daughter, affectionate sister, faithful wife and caring mother. The woman now was not simply to be feared or shunned. She participated in social, economic and political activities, she was not merely an object to be used and checked. Their emotive aspect was also highlighted. Her beauty and body were praised and highly emphasized. Sexuality and passion were no more interpreted as lewd symbols, at least, among the

98. Ibid, p. 642, V. 96; and see also, p. 692, V. 28.
literary people. It is, therefore, possible that Somnath deliberately deleted those delineations from the transmutation which portrayed a totally negative image of woman.

The Sanskrit text lays out the rules and reasons as to why a woman should perform sati ritual after the death of her husband. A woman, by sitting on the pyre protects her husband from being wooed by heavenly nymphs. According to it, the fools as well as the learned people know that a woman, who enters into the fire after her husband's death, enjoys bliss in heaven. Until a wife burns herself in fire after the death of her husband, she is not expected to attains salvation. By observing sati, she will dwell in the heaven for three and half crores years. As a snake-charmer powerfully draws a snake out of a hole, so a wife draws her husband upward by burning herself and enjoys bliss with him. She should perform sati whether her husband be good or wicked. A woman, who has lost her husband, is treated as a wretched woman and her body is considered to be useless. A woman, endowed with excellent qualities, surrounded by sons and kinsfolk, is miserable and poor creature when deprived of her husband. The perfumes, ornaments, garments and comforts are of no use for a widow. The husband is the only protector, friend and refuge for a woman even if he is poor, old, crippled, outcast as stingy. There is no other misery for woman like widowhood. A woman, who dies before her husband, is considered to be the happiest among all.

In Sujan Vilas, the wife weeps bitterly after her husband died and opts for burning herself in the fire. Because it was inevitable to avoid the description, Somnath included the lamentation of widow and the sati ritual;

the poet neither talks about it as righteous act nor depicts it as desired act. The only reason he attributes for performing sati is expressed in terms of woman's own wish:

\[ \text{रिष्यों निसंक, धरि याहि अंक।} \]

(Drenched in love with my husband, I sit in fire boldly; I embrace him and die without any fear.)

From this only verse about the widowhood, it is difficult to say that sati was the only remedy for a widow. It emerges that there had not been prevailing any such conventions about widows during the eighteenth century.

To be noted is, however, the fact that poets like Gulam Nabi Rasleen and Mati Ram, describe the widows as dependent on the family, not permitted for re-marriage. It was also atonement through personal austerity, piety and penance. They have rather raised a question as to why a widow should discard her beauty and beautiful dresses. Somnath unlike the Sanskrit text writer also did not plead the cause of sati.

While discussing the concept of woman in the light of two literary texts belonging to two different periods of time, we must not neglect the concept of ganika or concubine. Reference is not made of a concubine in the Sanskrit text, but it is there in Sujan Vilas. In the story of Bhartrihari's renunciation, Somnath tells that the queen gave the fruit of immortality to...

101. We have discussed in the section on women that Reeti poets did not deal with the theme. Though much has been written by the scholars on the issue, we believe that it was not a common and widely prevailing practice to receive attention of any of the poets.

102. Sujan Vilas, p. 800, V. 27.
the concubine who considers the fruit useless for herself and presents it to
the king Bhartrihari:

गानिका ले फलाहाथ बिचारी अपने में।
अजर अमरता मोहि कहा करनी यह तन में।
कुकरम कीणें धरै निध जग मंद्द्र कहाई।
ताते नूप की घेट करायेंगी फल सुखदाई।

(The concubine carrying the fruit in her hand contemplated; what I have to
do of immortality; I have performed all misdeeds and thus reproached; so I
should gift it to the king.)

The couplet contains many aspects within it. Firstly, prostitution as an
institution was prevailing in the eighteenth century and therefore, the poet
thought to incorporate it in the story though it was not given in the Sanskrit
text. But this does not mean that at the time of the compilation of the
Sanskrit text the society was free from prostitutes. Secondly, prostitution
was evaluated as fallen profession and the prostitutes were looked upon
with contempt. Lastly, the prostitutes were in close contact with the royal
household so that the queen could give her the fruit and she could also
offer the same to the king.

In the process of transmutation, Somnath consciously or
unconsciously presented an image of the eighteenth century society against
the backdrop of the seventh century political, socio-religious life. The regional
ascendancy with reflections of the Mughal culture, prosperity and affluence
of these regions and issues of identity and recognition which we will see in
some detail in the following Chapter were implicitly revealed in the text.