CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF SANSKRIT DRAMA

There are different works laid down to us at different time on poetics. Amongst these works Bharata’s Nātyaśāstra, Mammta Bhatta’s Kāvya-Prakasha, Viswanātha’s Sāhitya-Darpana, Dhananjaya’s Daśarupaka etc. are popular.

Bharata’s Nātyaśāstra is regarded as the oldest theories on Sanskrit poetics. It has spoken there of the four Alamkāras, ten gunas and thirty-six laksana of a perfect Kāvya. This particular work has shown an unmistakable proof of a systematic tradition which has helped the later authorities as a better source of inspiration.

Viswanātha’s Sāhitya-Darpana is also a work on poetical writings comprises of ten chapters and the sixth chapter is on the theoretical technicalities.

Poetics is of two types- Drṣya Kāvya and Śravya- Kāvya. This Śravya Kāvya is of two types- rupaka and uparupaka. Daśarupaka is the best poetical work by Dhananjaya. It is a work on ten types of theatrical compositions, i.e., Rupaka.

The general term of all dramatic composition is Rupaka. It is the chief embodiment of all dramatic characters and feelings to exhibit the natural indications of passion. Dramatic compositions are of two types- Rupakas and Uparupakas. There are ten species of the former and eighteen of the latter one.
NĀTAKA

‘Yattu Pañcacatuḥ-sastiścatur-Paṅcaikavinsatīh/
sattṛṣatravatīśca tat-Nātakam∥/ A Nātaka is having five Arthaprāktī, five karyavasthas, sixty-four sandhyaga, four vrittis, five sandhis, twenty-one sandhyantārā, thirty-six ābhumānas and ninety music. The main part of a rupaka is pradhān, netā and rasa.

Nātaka is the most logical and perfect dramatic composition. There the subject should always be celebrated and important. In the Sāhitya-Darpana Viswanātha has defined it. There he tells that the story should base on mythological or historical fact but Dhananjaya in his Daśarupaka asserts that it may be also fictition and partly the certainty of the author.

The hero of the Nātaka is to represent worthy or exhausted personage only, he must be a monarch, a demigod. Its action or passion should be on heroism. The plot should be simple, the incidents are consistent; the business should spring direct from the story.

Prakhyāta-vamso rājarṣih-divyo-vā yatra nāyakah/ tat-prakhyātam vidhātavyam ērtam-ātra-ādhikārikam∥/

An interlude should always be made in between the acts of a drama and performed by one or more characters middling or inferior who connect the story of the drama and the subdivisions of the plot by briefly explaining to the audience what has occurred in the intervals of the acts or what is likely to happen later on.

In the drama there must be three or four characters and at the end of the acts all the characters left the stage. Among the four styles a Nātaka should have either Kauśiki or Śātvati style.
The whole plot should be divided into five parts having inter-relation with each other. According to the plot the act should introduce the hero first as it relates the presence of sentiment in the Nātaka. A Nātaka should comprise of one rasa either śringāra or veera and in the conclusion Adbhuta rasa became prominent.

_Eko rasa-angī-kartavyo virah śringāra eva vā //
angamanye rasah sarve kuryānnirvahane-adbhutam/_

Regarding the time the elder authorities has told us that it should not exceed one day but Viswanātha has extended it to a few days or even to one year. If the actions can not be completed within the time than some events should have to be left or an interpreter should explain it to the audience whatever they may require to know. The diction of the Nātaka should be polished and its acts should not less than five and not more than ten.
_Paṇca-āṅkaṃ-etadvaram dasāṅkam Nātakaṃ param/_

In the presentation of the drama long travels, murder, war, state-revolution, conspiracy, dressing etc. should not be staged. These can be established by the interpretation of the interpreter. The killing of hero should not be shown any where in the Nātaka.

_Duradhvanam vadham yuddham rājya-desadiviplavam//
samrodham bhojanam snānam, suratam, ca-anulepanam/
amvarā-grahanādini pratyakshāni na nirdiset na-
adhikārivadham kvāpi tyajyam-avasyakam na ca/_

In short the characteristic of Nātaka was 'the imitation of a solemn and perfect action of adequate importance, told in pleasing language, exhibiting the several elements of dramatic composition in its different parts, represented through the
instrumentality of agents, not by narration and purifying the affections of human nature by the influence of pity and terror.’ (Wilson H.H. Dramas, p14)

PRAKARANA

‘Atha prakarane vṛttam-upādyā lokasamsraya’

The second species of Rupaka is Prakarana. In this the event is drawn from the real life incidents. Its plot is arranged by the poet itself and the most appropriate subject is love.

‘Amātya-vipra-vaniyam-ekam kuryāt-ca nāyakam’.
‘Dhira-praśāntam śapāyam dharmakārya-tatparam’

The hero may be of ministerial rank, a Brāhmaṇa or a trader. The main sentiment of the Prakarana is Śṛṅgāra. The hero belongs to Brahmin caste. His character is the sole constituence of Dharma, Artha and Kāma. He belongs to Dhira-praśānta group. He is brave and calm.

The heroine of prakarana is of two types- one from the noble family and the other is courtesan and somewhere it may be both. (Abhiḥ prakaranam tredhā, sankirnam dhurtasaṅkulam). In the former case the prakarana is śuddha and in later it is saukarana or mixed. By the courtesan we are not to understand a female who has disregarded the obligations of law or the precepts of virtue, but a character reared by a state of manners unfriendly to the admission of wedded females into society and opening to only at the expense of reputation to women, who were trained for association with men by personal and mental acquirements to which the matron was a stranger. (Wilson H.H, Dramas). Among these two types of nayikas the
noble lady resides in the inner apartment and courtesan stays outside.

‘Śeṣam Nātaka vat-sandhi-praveśakara-śādikam’

The prakarana consists of five sandhis- Mukha, Pratimukha, garva, vimarṣa and samhriti. Just like the Nātaka the presence of these five sandhis is equally important in Prakarana. The Nātaka is of five Acts and cannot exceed more than ten acts.

In short the Prakarana is a social drama. It is based on reality. This type of drama brings a humanistic approach towards the audience.

BHĀṆA

Bhāṇavastu dhurta-Cāritam sva-anubhutam parena vā/ yathā-paVarṇayedeko nipunah pandito vītah//
Sambodhana-ukti-prayikti kuryāt-ākaśa-bhāSitāih/
Sucayet-vira-sṛṅgārau saurya-saubhāgya-samstāvaih//

The BHĀṆA is such a type of Rupaka where some expert and intelligent vita narrates dramatically a variety of occurrences as happening either to himself or others. It is a one act play. In this type of plays a sound id used which seems to be the voice from the air. Love, war, fraud, intrigue and imposition are the appropriate topics. There is a use of polished language, singing and music should precede and close the performance. By the explanation of valour vira-rasa is established and the sports and the pastimes show the influence of Sringara rasa. There is a predominance of Bhārati Vritti and it has two sandhis. These are Mukha and Nirvahana. The entertainers assist to give effect to the imaginary dialogues.
**PRAHASANA**

_Tādvaṭ-prahasanam tredhā suddha-vaiṅṛta-śankaṁaih_.

Prahasana is a comic satire. It has the same characteristic features as like the imaginary plots, sandhis, lasyanga etc. as presented in the BHĀNA. It has divided into three parts- suddha, vikṛta and śankara. It is a type of drama composed in one act. The story should be fictitious and the hero may be an ascetic, a Brāhmaṇa, a king or a rogue. The dramatic personae are to be composed of courtiers, menials, mendicants, servants and prostitutes, the inferior persons are to speak the local dialect.

**DIMA**

_Dime vastu prasiddham syād vṛttayah Kaiśiki m vinā/
Netāro deva-gāndharva-yaksha-rakṣomahoragah//
Bhuta-preta-piśāca-adīh symbols sodasa-atyantam-uddhātah/
Rasai-hāṣya-sṛṅgāraṁ sadbhāh-diptaiṁ samanvitaiṁ/
Mayā-indrajāla-sangrāma-kroḍhah-bhrāntadīcesṭhitaiṁ/
Candra-sūrya-parāgaiṁ ca nyāyye raudra-rasa-angini//
Caturaṅka-caṭurh-sandhiṁ-nivirmarṣo dimah smṛtaṁ/

Dima has a well-known plot. Among the four vṛttis Śatvati, Arbhati and Bhārati are present in this type except Kaiśiki. Deva, Gāndharva, Yaksha, Rākṣasa, Mahāsarpa, bhuta- Piśaca etc. sixteen elevated heroes are there in this. Except hasya and sṛṅgāra it witnessed the six other sentiments. Amongst these six sentiments raudra-rasa is predominant. This type of drama is included earth-quake, eclipses both solar and lunar, incantations, sieges, battles etc. It consists of four acts. According to Viswanātha there should not be any Viskambaka
and Pravesaka. In these four acts four sandhis are prominent except vīmārsa.

VYĀYOGA

Khyāta-iti vṛttto vyāyogah khyāta-uddhāta-narāśrayah/hino
garbha-vimarsabhyām diptah syuh-dīma-vad-rasah/
Astir-nimitta-sangrāmo jamadagnyajaye yathā/
Ekaha-Cāritaekaṅko vyāyoga bahuḥbih-nareh/

Vṛtttyoga has a renowned story. The author takes the help of famous and elevated characters to popularize the play. It is free from Garva and Vīmārsa sandhis. Just like Dīma it also has six sentiments. It is restricted to one act, one action and a duration of one day. Except Kaiśiki other vṛttis are present. In this type of dramas female characters are limited. Generally it is male centered. Battles and conflicts are there but women have nothing to do with it. The hero must be a king, god, uddhata.

SAMAVAKĀRA

Kāryam samavakāre-api amukham Nātakādivat//khyātam
devāsuraṁ nirviṣam-astu sandhayah/
Vṛttayo manda-kaiśikyo netāro daiva-dānavah/
Dvādasa-udāṭta-vikhyātah phalam tesām pṛthak-prthak
Bahuvira-rasah sarve yat-vatmbhodimanthane/

Samavakāra is dramatic composition based on popular mythological fables. The story is about the gods and demons. There is no individual hero or the heroes. It has only three acts. Heroism is the predominant passion. There are three tricks, three tumults and three sṛṅgāras. In Samavakāra the three tricks are natural, divine and demon; there natural calamities,
war and air and fire etc. are three tumults. Dharma, Artha and Kāma are three sṛṅgāras. In this the first act is to occupy nine hours; the second takes three and a half and the third an hour and a half. The meter used in this type are ushṇih and Gāyatri. In it artha-prākṛt it is named as Vīdu and artha-pakshepam, pravesaka is not present.

**VITHI**

_Vithi tu Kaiśikī-vṛttau sandhī-anāgastu bhānavat//
Rasah sucyastu sṛṅgārah spresēdāpi rasānTārām/
Yukta prastāvanākhyātaih-āngai-rudrāghatyaih-kādībhīh//
Evam vithi vidhātavya dvayeka-patra-prayojita/

It is something similar to BHĀNA. It has one act and also played by one actor. Though according to the Daśarupaka it may be of two actors. It is a love story having comic dialogues. Use of voices from the air is also available in this system. In this Sṛṅgāra rasa is prominent and other rasas are also present in this. This type of drama is written in Kaiśiki vṛtti, has two sandhis, i.e., Mukha and Nirvahana. It is added with the prasthavana’s and gets introduced with an abrupt dialogues. Vithi consists of actions, mystery, criticism, jest, witty comments, misconstruction, misapplications etc.

**UTSRSTIKĀNKA**

_Utsṛṣṭikāṅke prakhyātam vṛttam buddhāya prapañcayet/
Rasastu karunah sthāyi netārah prakṛta narah/
BHĀNA-vat-sandhi-vṛtti-āngaih-yuktīh striparidevitaih//
Vaca yuddham vidhātavyam tatha jayaparajayau//

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It is also named as Anka, having one act only. In it the poet has to describe the popular historical stories on his own. Pathos is the main sentiment in these dramas. The hero may be a moral. Just like the BHĀṆḍa it has mukha and nirvahana sandhi; Bhārati vṛtti. It generally contains the lamentation of women. In it controversies, battles, victory and loses are produced but these are never staged in the stages.

IHĀṆṆGA

Miśram-ihāṅṛge vṛttam catuh-aṅkam trisandhimat/
Nara-divyavaniyamannayaka-pratināyakau/
Khyātau dhiraddhātavantyo viparyasādyukta-kṛt/
Divya-stṛyam-anicantim-aphārādinecchataḥ/
Śṛṅgārabhāsam-āpi asya kincit-kincit pradarsayet//

The Ihāṅṛga is an intrigue of four acts. The story used in it should be famous and mixed one. The hero is a god or illustrial mortal and the heroine is a goddess. Both the hero and his adversary are renowned characters. The adversary of the hero as because of his foolishness commits mistakes. The heroine may be the object of war and the devices of the hero may end in disappointment but not in death. Love and mirth are the prominent sentiments of Ihāṅṛga. It has three sandhis- Mukha, Pratimukha and Nirvahana.

The dramas are fully free from the tragedy, the interchange of lyrical stanzas with prose dialogues and the use of Sanskrit for some characters and of prākṛt for others. The Sanskrit DRAMASare of mixed origin. It has never sad ending. The hero and the heroine are often in the depths of despair. The emotions
of terror, grief, pity with these the spectators are inspired and this laid to the happy termination of the story.

Generally the dramas start with a prelude where the reader and the audience are introduced with the author, his works, the actors and the earlier events as related with the story of the drama. In the prelude only two people are present i.e., the manager and one of his companions.

Lyrical passages have taken a prominent role in the Sanskrit drama. Lyrical passages are composed with various metres. These types of poetries are famous for its richness and beauty in which the poetic imagination is found as free to play.

Use of different types of dialects are found Sanskrit dramas. Sanskrit is employed only by heroes, kings, Brāhmanas and men of higher class; Prākṛt by all women and men of lower birth.

The first part of the introduction is named as Purva Ranga. This generally opens with a prayer in praise of a deity as a sort of prologue at the beginning of any drama and in the poetical language it is termed as Nāndi. This benediction may consist of one, two or three stanzas but the earlier writers have said that it may be extended to three or four also.