CHAPTER X

The Skanda Purāṇa from the Literary Point of View
CHAPTER X

THE SKANDA PURANA FROM THE LITERARY POINT OF VIEW

Winteritz calls the Puranas as ancient ascetic poetry.¹ Puranas evolved as a literary medium to propagate the vedic religion. Sk.P. notes the classification of literature under three Sammatas, i.e., ways of telling, viz., (1) Prabhu sammata - the order of a king, (2) Mitra sammata - the suggestive request of a friend and (3) Kāntā sammata, the cajoling, living, captivating words of a wife.² The Puranas class themselves in the second category of 'Mitra Sammata'. A friend's advise may not be carried out forthwith. But its options are accepted as conducive to one's good. The Puranas evolved their own type of narrative (skill) method of driving home the point suggesting the options to be followed by observing the conduct of a particular individual and its consequences in a particular context. The literary tool used is that of Kathā (story), Itihāsa (anecdote) and Vṛttānta (episode). In these various types of narratives, the events are narrated dramatically focussing the attention on the life of a hero or divinity. The easy and cryptic 'Amuṭubh' metre is used to facilitate narration. Many other metres like vasanta-tilaka, Upajāti, are also used.³ Popular expressions

---
¹ M. Winteritz - History of Sanskrit Literature, Vol.III.
² Sk.P., IV/1/55. Mammeta calls this Sammitas.
and popular maxims are made use of to attract the attention of the listener.

THE SŪTA TRADITION:

The Purāṇas brought into vogue the 'sūta' tradition of narrating the stories. In this tradition, the narrator sometimes becomes so effective that the audience and the narrator partake in the event or ritual which is being explained. This transformation of the 'audience' into the performer is a singular achievement of the sūta tradition of legendary narration.

PURĀNIC TECHNIQUE OF NARRATION:

The Purāṇas coming after the Brāhmaṇaś, 'Upanishads' and 'epics' have assimilated the elements of (1) Bandhutā
d4 style of narrative, (2) the speculative and mystical narrative and (3) conversational narrative styles. They have achieved a harmonious combination of these, evolving a new narrative genre for themselves. The sweep with which even abstract things are narrated in the so little compass of an anustubh metre makes one wonder about the literary ability of these poets. The Purānic sweep and stamp is so authoritative over this anustubh media that they could engulf into their fold any subject on earth and thus they grew encyclopaedic in nature. With all this, their simplicity and directions deserve special praise.

4. Bandhutā is a style of narration in Brāhmaṇaś, by which the different stages of a story get connected like the different stages in a ritual, even though they seem to be unconnected. See chapter II, p.16.
The narrative method of Skanda Purāṇa:

Sk.P. is megalithic in its proportions and is comparable to the epics, Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana. It has to be admitted that structurally the extant Sk.P. is not homogenous. The available text of Sk.P. does not stick to any central theme, on which the later portions were developed. Some Adhyāyās are very small and some are very long. In some of the chapters, some material appears suddenly and abruptly ends. But it is to the greatness of Sk.P. that the language used is very lucid and very effective. The narrator effectively sustains the dramatic energy. Ornateness is seen in the stotras, āstottaranāma, sahasranāma, dhyānaslokas, etc. The Dhyānaslokas found in the beginning of some of the Khandas need a special mention. A special mention is also to be made of the Upamālankara (Similies) used in Sk.P. All the varieties of Upamā are used. They add a special charm to the literary value of the Purāṇa. In keeping with contents of the Purāṇa, 'vṛtti' or the literary style of the Sk.P. is loser to the 'Sāttvatī vṛtti' as defined by Viśvanātha in śhitya darpana. There is no predominant sentiment. The entiments viz., Adbhuta (astonishment) well-supported by

Sk.P. refers to Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana by name.

IV/1/95.4; VII/1/2-94-95(a); VII/1/278.8.

E.g., VI/36, 37, (shorter); I/11/40, III/11/50 (longer).

A list of Śivastutis in Sk.P. is given in the Appendices.I

Sāhitya Darpana, VI/128-129.

"Sāttvatabhūlā satvasaurya tyāgadayārjavaiḥ,
Saharśā 'suddhasṛṅgārā visokāsadbhutā tathā."
Vira (heroic), srngāra (erotic), bhayānaka (fear), bhūhatuṣa (loath some) and hāsyā (laughter). Seasons like Saradra, varsatu, are described. Mountains, Vanas (forests), rivers, birth of a son, a city, ocean, etc., are described. Many gods partake in the proceedings and in many of the cases the denouncement depends on them. The vastu (plot) is Prakṛtya in as much as it deals with Lord Śiva and other gods. It is sometime Utpādyāya where it draws from Dharmaśāstra, Tantrasāstra and Jyotisya, Ramayana, Mahābhārata, Brhatkatha by which Sk. P. was influenced. All this 'Vastu' comes mainly as a part of the descriptions of the various tīrthas. Thus the Sk. P. has all the mould of a mahākāvyya and certainly the influences of mahākāvyya genre on it can be evidently ascertained. Sk. P. had great impact on the later writers like Ballālasena, Aparārka, Madhvācārya as they have quoted it with respect in their works.

Before taking up the study of the literary aspects of Sk. P., we may refer here to passage in Sk. P. which has the following riddle like description of 'Kathā':

"Kathāṁ vadiśye dvividhāṁ dvisarīrāmtathaivatva -
Divyabhāṣā samopetāṁ vedādhisthānasamyutāṁ;
Panca sandhisamāyuktāṁ sadalaṅkārabhūsitāṁ -
Saptasādhana samyuktāṁ rasāṣṭagunaranjitaṁ;"

10. Ibid., 61-66.
12. Ibid., VII/1/36, III/1/17.
13. Ibid., I/11/21.2-7-19.
15. Ibid., VI/7/64-68.
16. Ibid., V/111/13, 88.
17. There is close resemblance between the chapters dealing with Skanda's birth in Sk. P. and Kālidāsa's Kumārā-sambhavam.
I am going to tell you about Kathā as told by Vyāsa, which is suspicious, meritorious and which destroys sin. You please listen. The 'Kathā' which is of (a) two vidhas (types or kinds), (b) two śārīras (bodies), (c) endowed with divya bhāsā (divine language), (d) combined with or (having) the base of Vedas, (e) having five sandhis (stages), (f) possessing six alaṅkāras (figures of speech), (g) having seven sādhanas (means of attainment), (h) shining with the excellence of eight rasas, (i) charged with nine guṇas, (j) free from ten dosas (blemishes), (k) decorated with vibhāsā (folk languages), (l) dependent upon one, (m) having five kāraṇas (causes), (n) having four kāraṇas, (o) again of two vidhas (kinds) and (p) capable of giving a fund of knowledge. The use of words like śārīra, bhāsā, Sandhi, alaṅkāra, guṇa, rasa, dosa, kāraṇa and karaṇa here shows that the passage is intimately connected with the general suspects of a 'Kāvya'. In Kāvya, we have two main subdivisions, viz., śṛavya (that which can be heard) Drṣya that which can be seen. In all, the varieties of Kāvya like Padya, Gadya, etc., we find the characteristics. Sk.P. with a view to showing the characteristics of a Kāvya which it calls 'Kathā' here, has pressed into use the different characteristics of a Kāvya, as enumerated by rhetorians.
like Bhama, Dandi, Mammata and others. A Purana katha (Puranic story) has all the viable qualities of a kavya. In a Kavya, the itivṛtta (the plot or the story) is made appealing to the audience by the use of various techniques which have been referred to here. The Purana text further gives a classification of the eighteen mahā-purāṇas with the question - tell me the nature of katha with their virtues and blemishes, so as to determine the nature of 'Kavya' of the sages and men - 'Kathāyāh Laksanam brūhi gunadosānsavistaran; Ārseyā pauruseyānām kāvyā cihaparīksaṇam'. The intention of the author here is to show the characteristics that help to know the nature of Ārseya (archaic) or Pauruseya (human) Kāvyā. The different characteristic as applying to the Purana katha in Sk.P., may be briefly explained thus:

(a) The two vidhas: This refers to the two types of Kavya viz., Arseyā Kāvyā and Pauruseya Kāvyā.

(b) The two sarīras: Nātyasāstra defines Sarīra thus - 'Itivṛttam nātyasya sarīram' viz., the body of nātya is plot or the story. So also the plot of a Kāvyā is of two kinds: (1) Adhikārika main plot (principal) or (2) Pṛasaṅgika (incidental) or sub-plot. In Sk.P., the main plot is the description of gods. The anecdotes relating to sages, kings and men constitute to the sub-plot.

(c) Divyabhāsa: This refers to the divine language used, i.e., Sanskrta in Sk.P.

(d) *vēdādhīsthāna samyutām:* We know that Purāṇa was brought into light by Brahmā to supplement the four Vedas viz., (1) Rk, (2) Yajus, (3) Sāman and (4) Atharvan. Thus the Vedas or the foundation of a Purāṇa Kāvyā.

(e) *Pancasandhīs:* The Pancasandhis are connected with the development of plot. They are (1) mukha sandhi (2) prati-mukha sandhi (3) garbhasandhi (4) avamaśa sandhi and (5) nirvahana sandhi. These are also found in a Purāṇa Kathā. They may be taken to refer to the five characteristics of a Purana, viz., Sarga, Pratisarga, Vamsā, Manvantara and Vamsānucarita.

(f) *Sadālankaras:* Four alankaras viz., Upamā, Dīpaka, Rūpaka and Yamaka are generally used in a Kavya. To these, we may add Utpreksā and Parisaṅkhya used in Sk.P.

(g) *Sapta Sādhana:* These are not clear. But we can take the seven Khandas of Sk.P. as the seven sādhanas.

(h) *Rasāṣṭaṇaṇaṃ:* Here the problem is in construing the numeral asta. Whether it goes with rasa or guna. But as the gunas are mentioned separately immediately they have to be ruled out here. Then we have to find fault with the reading. R.S. Bhattacharya takes it so and gives the reading 'Rasāṣṭakapranarjanitam'. This seems to be unnecessary. The meaning of the compound word is that which has the excellence with eight rasas. The eight rasas mentioned in Nātyasāstra are well-known (Aṣṭaunātyorasā smṛtāh).

---

The gūnas are taken as the attributes of Rasa and they are well-known.

Bereft of ten doṣas or blemishes Māmaṭa speaks of ten doṣas of Kāvyā.

Here the 'vibhāṣās' are the local and other speeches, belonging to different countries.

Sk.P. states Deśabhāṣā vibhāṣīnyah, probably hinting at the fact that it has drawn material probably from works written in local languages.

Dependent on only one. This obviously seems to be either Śiva, Viṣṇu or Brahma or Devī.

These are not very clear. Probably they may refer to the categories of the Pāśupata school of Śaiva Philosophy described in Sk.P.

This refers to the two kinds of Kathās, viz., Daiviki and Mānuṣī or Dharmāśāstra kathā and Śāurya kathā referred to in Sk.P.

That which gives a fund of knowledge. Purāṇa vidyā is considered as a sum-total of all knowledge. In fact Sk.P. says that, whichever is not found in a Purāṇa is not to be considered as knowledge or architecture or art. 21

Thus the 'kathā' riddle in Sk.P. refers to all the salient features of a Kāvyā. Some of these aspects of Kāvyā as found in Sk.P. will be taken up for study under the following headings:

(1) Legends in Sk.P.,
(2) Alabhārās in Sk.P.,
(3) Rasas in Sk.P.

1. LEGENDS IN SKANDAPURĀNA:

India is a cradle of many legends. Legends symbolically represent the many facets of human civilisation and culture. They are the rich treasures to be possessed and propagated by any country. In India, the history of legends is very fascinating and it is the legends and stories which have fought the onslaughts of other alien cultures from the fore-front and it is they that have assimilated those alien elements.

The Vedic Samhitās are the precursors of the later legendary core in India. During their time itself legends had assumed importance. Many obtruse ideas were made understandable by means of cryptic narratives. The Brāhmaṇas in the later Vedic age with the help of gathas, nārāsamsis, itihāsas, kalpas embellished the Vedic narratives and the legendary genre had already come into existence as these are references to Purāṇa in Brāhmaṇas and Ṛgveda.
The epics Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata paved the way for the legends to spread far and wide. The Purāṇas brought into vogue the 'Sūta tradition' which may be called the legendary tradition. History, philosophy, religion, astrology, ethics all were brought under the fold of Purāṇas by the mode of legends. The legends grew into such huge proportions absorbing the local traditions, that to seive the real from the unreal ones is itself now a Herculean task. But the materials these legends possess and the cultural vistas they open up have made them an unenviable treasure of India.

Sk.P. is a vast store house of legends connected with divinities like Agni, Indra, Varuna, Yama, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahma, Sūrya, Skanda, Gāṇeśa, Goddesses like Parvatī, Cāmuṇḍī, Durgā, Bhūtamātā, holy places like Kedāra, Mahiśāgara, Avantī, Kāśī, Camatkārapura, Prabhāsa. Sages like Dadhīca, Bhrigu, Visvāmitra, Vasistha, Kings, Brāhmīns, Birds and beasts, rivers and mountains. In the event of legendary cxtense Sk.P. may well be compared with Mahābhārata.

The study of legends in Sk.P. is by itself an interesting subject. The legends in Sk.P. may be classified under the following heads:

(a) Vedic legends,
(b) Trinity legends,

(c) Devī legends, 24
(d) Skanda and Ganesa legends, 25
(e) The legends concerning rivers, 26
(f) The legends concerning mountains, 27
(g) Tīrtha legends, 28
(h) Epic legends, 29
(i) Legends concerning sages, 30
(j) Miscellaneous legends dealing with Geography, 31, Art, Architecture, 32 Philosophy, 33 Astrology, 34 Astronomy, 35 Ethics, 36 etc.

The literary value of these legends is immense. As pieces of poetry, they are not of mean order. The rhetoric they use is innovative and imaginative. The technique ofVyāsa (extension) and Saṃśa (contraction) are made use of when the same narrative is either abridged or expanded. 37

These legends assuming the form of myths, compress into themselves various levels of meaning. They may be interpreted historically, ethically, philosophically or from the point of religion or psycho-analysis. But they as myths outweigh all these interpretations and standby themselves.

27. Ibid. VII/1/32, IV/1/2. 3. 28. Ibid., I/1/2; I/ii/1.
29. Ibid. IV/ii/1, I/ii/60-66.
30. Ibid. V/3/42, 97; 170-172, VI/4-8 Chapter IV. p. 149.
33. Ibid. I/1/35. 34. Ibid. VII/1/32, VI/28.
35. Ibid. V/10. 36. Ibid. IV/1/35, 11.
37. The story of Skanda in Sk. P. is an example of this - Sk. P. VI/246 (Samāsa), Ibid. I/ii/14-34 (Vyāsa).
2. ALAñKARAS IN SKANDAPURĀNA:

ALAñKARAS as we know are embellishments which bring beauty to the intrinsic communicative ability of poetic speech. Purānas were not composed for the critical acclaim by the literary critics, but for the easy understanding of the masses. They give elegance and charm to their style by the use of ALAñKARAS. Both SabdalañKARAS and ArthālañKARAS are used. Among the SabdalañKARAS and ArthālañKARAS, Amupraśa is used profusely. Among the ArthālañKARAS, Upamā, Gūpaka, Utpreksā, Atisayokti, are made use of. Comparisons are used to facilitate comprehension and bring natural grace to the narrations. Hence Upamā is used in all its splendour. Sk.P., as already observed, has all the ingredients of Mahākāvyya and it profusely uses the different variety of ALAñKARAS. A special mention is to be made here of KāŚI Khaṇḍa which is considered to the best specimen of ornate poetry. Now a few examples will be studied:

(i) Amupraśa:

Amupraśa or alliteration has a lulling effect on the listener besides the rhythmic effect it brings in during narration. For example: see this description of the trees of KāŚI.

"Ānīlalola-kañkola-vallīhallīsakāyitam;
Lavallalavilābhirlāsyalilālayam kila." 39

Here the use of 'la' brings the image of trees shaking in the wind. The idea is brought home very well.

38. 'Kāvyarūpākarāndharmānalañkārān pracaś-cete.'
Take the example of the picture of those running away being defeated.

"Evam parājitāssarve palāyanaparāyanāh,
parasparam parisvajya gatāste pi trivistapam."\(^{40}\)

The alliterative use of 'pa' may be seen in the above passage. The description of 'sun' in the following example makes use of anūprasa in a very effective way:

"Tapasi pacasi visvaṃ pūsaṃ bhamīkarosi
Prakatayasi mayūkhaiḥ hādayasyaṃsugarbhaiḥ;
Mrjasī kamalajamā pālayasyācyutākhayah
Kṣapayasi ca yugānte rudrarūpatvamekāḥ."\(^{41}\)

The use of the ending 'si', is very effective in bringing out the chain of actions here.

(iii) Upamā;

Upamā is the most popular figure of speech. It is found profusely used in Sk.P. We can find at least one in every page. Almost all the objects belonging to the living, non-living and divine spheres, have been pressed into service. Even 'terse' topics are made easy by taking the common household objects as standards of comparison (upamānas). For the convenience of study, upamās used in Sk.P., may be studied under the following heads:

1. Upamas concerning common household objects,
2. Celestial objects like Sun, Moon, etc.,
3. The world of vegetation,

\(^{40}\) Sk.P., I/i/4.17, 18.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., VII/i/11-169.
4. The world of birds and insects,
5. The world of human beings,
6. The animal world.

Let us take these one by one.

1. Upamāṇas concerning household objects:

(A) Danḍa (A staff):

Danḍa is a frequently used as an Upamāṇa in Sk.P. It is mostly used for indicating an uncompromising flat prostration to the master. Dakṣa when restored by Śiva through Vīrabhadra fell at Śiva's feet like a danda and started beseeching pardon.

"Dandavat Pratito bhutvā kṣamāpayitumudyatāh."42

When Mahiṣa was confronted by Devī, he fell at her feet, in her front, like a danda.

"Dandavat devīm pranāmya avasthitah purah."43

(B) Ghata (A pot):

Another object closely associated with danda is ghata. It is used in a simile as follows:

"Sacchindreca yathā toyam na tisatīghate anvapi, 
Tathaivasukṛtam pāpe hiyate ca pradaksinam."44

As water does not remain even a little in a pot, with a hole, so through a hole called sin, merit and pradaksina (prostrations) trickle away. Here the Upamāṇa of trickling away of water in a holed-pot is very aptly used.

42. Sk.P., I/1/5.15.
43. Ibid., I/11/27.52.
44. Ibid., I/1/15-50.
Closely associated with ghāṭa in our domestic circle is the Kumbha made of a metal. The Kumbha simile is used as follows:

"Lohakumbhe yathānyastah pacyate kascidagninā; Garbhakumbhe tatha kṣiptam pacyate jātharāgminā."

As something kept in a metal pot is cooked by fire, so a being is cooked by the stomach-fire in the womb-pot.

Here by the simile of Kumbha, the whole gamut of physical, chemical and organic reactions are brought to mind. It is commonly observed that anything in a pot gets cooked by fire and so also in an 'human-womb-pot' a child is cooked by stomach-fire of its mother.

More common than Ghāṭa and Kumbha is Bhanda - a vessel. The simile of Bhanda is used thus:

"Ūsare vāpitam bijam bhinnabhānde ca goduham; Rhasmanīva hutam havyam murkedānamaśvatam."

When someone uses a broken vessel, for milching a cow, the milk does not remain there. So also charity given to a fool goes away. The idea of impermanence is brought home very well here. If milk stays in the vessel, it fetches permanent rewards. Milk gives curds, curds give butter and butter gives ghee. Chain of permanence continues.

46. Ibid., I/11/5/12.
but if the vessel is broken, milk goes away and breaks the chain of permanence. Similarly, dāna given to a worthy person turns out to be permanent and it gives permanent rewards to the givers. But when it is given to a fool who is unworthy to receive it, it goes away. The idea of 'pātratva' in dāna is very well brought out here with the simile of a vessel.

(s) Gehadarpāṇa (Domestic Mirror):

"Nityam nityam pramāṛṣṭi gehadarpāṇayoriva."\(^{47}\)

A mirror at home should be kept clean to give as a clean image. Otherwise it gets sullied. So one is advised to clean his sins daily, as he cleans his domestic mirror daily.

(f) Gold Ornaments

One would aspire to see himself his clean sinless image, in a daily cleaned mirror decorating his body with gold ornaments. But he should understand this instance of 'gold' being present in whatever gold ornament - pure or impure to have the knowledge that Śiva is there in all whether one is "Pure" or "Impure".

"Yathā suvarpaṅjāṭāni bhūṣaṅāni bhūtānaḥ;
Svarṇam sarvaśu cāṣṭyeva tathaiva sa sadāśivaḥ."\(^{48}\)

But he should also know that the impure gold when cleansed becomes pure and not identical so also when the soul is purged of the bodily impurity, goes to heaven and

\(^{47}\) "ibid., 1/11/41-137(b).
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 7/11/40-78.
does not lose its identity. The elements of value, purity, identity, inlife and immanence of Lord Śiva in the world are finely brought out by this 'golden simile'.

"Hīnarūpam śodhitam sacchudhīmeti na caikatām;
Tathēdamsādhitam deham sudham divī vrajēṣphutam." 49

(g) Tīla and Dadhī:

The idea of immense is seen both in the sesame and curds. This is made use of in the simile of Tīla and Dadhi in which 'oil' and 'ghee' are secretly hidden, to demonstrate the fact that Śiva is seen secretly hidden in this world:

"Yathā tīla sthitam yathā dadhīgatam ghṛtam;
Tathaivādhiśthitam sarvam tvayā guptenā vai jagat." 50

(H) Kulālacakra:

It is the potters wheel which has caused the creative upsurge of human mind to thrive ahead. The axle of the potter's wheel moves slowly. So does the movement of the sun, when compared to that of Earth:

"Kulālacakramadhyastho yathā mandam mandamprasarpati;
Tathā udagayane sūryah sarpaṁ manda vikramah." 51

This simile shows the understanding of the Puranic readeractor had of the comparative movements of sun and earth.

49. Sk.P., I/ii/40.79.
50. Ibid., VI/614.
51. Ibid., I/ii/38.16.
2. *Concerning Celestial Objects:*

**A. Sun:** Sun is the source of our life. He is an ideal of shining. So one would wish to shine like Sun.

"Tejasā paramenaiva bhrājāmānam yathā rāvim"\(^52\)

**B. Moon:** Moon is very pleasant to us. Can anybody catch the moon in the sky by standing on earth. So one cannot reach Siva unless one leaves the earthly elements in his endeavour. High soaring aims although pleasant are in vain when attempts are not sincere. This is very well suggested in this Upamā:

"Gaganastho yathā candrāh grahītum na sakyate;
Tathaiva dūrdamaḥ Sambhūḥ jānīhi tvam śucismite"\(^53\)

**C. Vyoma:** Sky is that which has the Sun and the Moon. when it is clear, it appears blue. The blueness is that of a blue lotus. This is brought out beautifully in the following simile.

"Babhūvānāvilam vyoma nīlotpala dalaprabhām"\(^54\)

**D. Rivers:** Rivers which have connections with the Sun, Moon and the Sky have always fascinated the poetic mind. The image of a river carrying those who swim across its upsurging flood is given in the following simile:

"Kālo harati samprāpte nādīvega ivonmukhān."\(^55\)

Kāla or time carries away those who come in its fold, if they try to fight against time. The element of one’s helplessness against Kāla is very aptly described here by way of the river simile.

---

52. Sk.P., I/16, 81(b).  
53. Ibid., 21.151.  
54. Ibid., I/14/21.101(b).  
55. Ibid., I/11/21.293(b).
What does a small river in spate cause? So what can the little wealth of a bead do? If the former causes the "banks" to collapse, the latter causes the family to collapse:

"Shavetkūlankaśā yadvadelpavarsena kannādi; khalardhiralpavarsena tadvatsyātsvakulamkaśā."56

Here the contrastive use of 'Kūlankaśā' and kulaṅkaśā is very charming.

3. The World of Vegetation:

A. Trees and Fruits: The rivers help the growth of vegetation by the alluvial soil brought by their floods. Even in the tree called 'cosmos' it is time which ripens the fruit called 'world'

"So'yam kālaḥ pacedviśvam vr̥kṣe phalamivāgatam57.

When one looses the ground, one appears like a tree uprooted.

B. Seed: The seed of a Kapittha fruit is covered with a Katahā (outer crust) so also this 'cosmos' is covered by Katahā:

"Brahmāndam samvṛtamhyetatkatāhena samantataḥ; Kapitthasya yathā bijam katahena susamvṛtam;"58

Here the employment of the word 'Katahā' (Cauldron), Anda (Egg), etc., gives the feeling that the ancients had the knowledge of the elliptical nature of the universe.

56. Sk.P., IV/1/5.67.
57. Ibid., I/11/21.284(b).
58. Ibid., 38.40.
C. Banana and its Skin: The simile based on this is used to show that the essence of life is not the outer skin surrounding the body. It is something else. Like the outer skin of a plantain, it can be thrown away:

"Tvāṅgamātra sāraṇissāro kadālīdala saṁnibham"\(^{59}\)

D. Creeper Bower and Flowers:

"Yathā puspā grhe kascitprasātayāṅga phālguṇa."\(^{60}\)

Anybody could enter anything pleasantly as one enters a creeper bower.

In autumn the sky will be clear. In this season a clean pond one can see a 'drop' of water sitting on the blooming cluster of lotus flower:

"Tato'stra visphuliṅgakaḥ tamah śuklamvyājāyata; Protphullāruṇa padmaugham sārdīvāmalamsaraḥ"\(^{61}\)

Like this, the darkness caused by the sparks of clashing weapons disappeared like the cloud in the autumn and like water on the lotus flower god is not vitiated by earthly sins. Everywhere the rays of the Sun can be seen, but not the 'sun' like 'Nīpa flower' seen from the top to bottom of a Nīpa tree but not the tree.

"Mayūkhā eva dṛṣyante tiryagūrdhvaṁadho'pica; Aṁityasya nacādityo nīpasuṇaṁpasthītheriva"\(^{62}\)

---

59. Sk.P., IV/1/42.66(b).
60. Ibid., 13.37.
61. Ibid., 15.50.
62. Ibid., IV/1/40/32.
The sight of birds returning to their nests is very common. But when the birds are young and they are on their wings, they leave their nests and fly away. This is made use of in a simile to state that the Vedas leave a man at the time of death:

"Nīḍam śakuntā ivājatāpaksāh chandāmsyenam prajahantyanta kāle."63

Here there is pun on the word (Chandāmsi). The word has the meaning of 'one's will'. This is made use of very well.

B. Doves

The doves are pet birds used to carry messages. But their life carries a message for us. They collect the grains on the ground very diligently without hurry and waste. So a Sādhaka should live by taking alms from others.

"Pātita ye karābhūmau samharatikapotavat, udṛṣṭyājīvanamyesām kapotaratetau sādhakāh."64

Cakora is known for its gentle behaviour. So when anybody is shocked, he would shake like a cakora.

"Dhriyamānāyapiyatnena cakora iva kampate" 65

64. Ibid., VII/1/65-57.
65. Ibid., 2/27.57.
d. Fire Fly:

Let the Cakora take a leaf out of the steady 'mimiscicule', fire-fly, which stands out as 'beaming' light in the cloudy darkness. In the beginning of creation in the world of darkness 'Brahma' will be shining, all alone like a fire-fly.

"Divyam varṣa saahasram tu khadyotaivarūpavān"66

E. The Industrious Bee:

The ever flying bee is a mark of industriousness. The grace of the 'Āree'(glory) is like that of a female bee naturally fickle and flying away:

"Nisarga capalām prāpya bhramārikātvāni śaṃśriyam"67

But mark these female bees when they unitedly arrest the attack of other flies which doing their activity:

"Saraghā iva maṃśikam rurudhuh sarvatastatah".68

So also by industriousness and effort wealth remains for long.

F. The Messy-Moth:

What better example there can be for one who voluntarily and inadvertently puts himself in a mess than a moth. This is stated thus:

"Tīve pataṅga mahasi pataṅgatvabhayaśīva"69

Here there is slesa also on the word 'Pataṅga'.

67. Ibid., I/i11/7.6.
68. Ibid., I/i11/20.67.
69. Ibid., IV/IV/40-31(b).
5. The world of Human beings:

A. Teaching and Man:

Enlightenment can be caused by the instruction of a teacher. But the instructions should go into the head of the good student. Just as the instruction of a teacher imparted to a good student, get absorbed in his mind, so the arrows shot by the demon got absorbed in the Lord. This idea is brought out in the following simile:

"Tāṇyastrāṇi prayuktāṇi vivisūḥ puruṣottamam; Upadeśa-guroryadvatsacchiṣyam bahudheritah." 70

B. The Deaf and Dumb:

When one gets up with cough and cold, this hearing ability goes away and he faulter in speech. This idea is used in the following simile:

"Sītenanastasrutayo bhraṣṭavākyāsca te yathā." 71

So those who came to attack the Devi were rendered deaf and dumb.

C. The Soul:

In the human body, no work is done if the 'soul' which is behind all his actions is absent. This is given in the following simile:

"Yathatmanā vinā dehe kāryam kincinnasiddhyati." 72

As a fort-guard conquers his slaves easily, so the house-holders win over them.

---

70. Sk.P., 1/11/20.10.
71. Ibid., 18. 77(b).
72. Ibid., 2.627/b.
D. Sons and Fathers:

All the gods prayed and prostrated like 'sons' praying and prostrating before their father:

"Tus'uvuh pranatah sarve pitaram putrakam yatha" 73

6. The Animal World:

A. A Hit Animal:

The picture of an animal hit by arrows is very common. This is used to explain the state of an individual hit by doubt in the following simile:

"Sandehannasukham seta banaviddho mrgo yathaa" 74

3. A Lordly Elephant:

Demon Taraka gulped all the gods as a Lordly elephant gulped a morsel of food. Here the ease with which Taraka destroyed the gods is brought home by a majestic simile:

"Tanarsvan so'agrasaddaityyo yuthapa'h kavalanivaa" 75

Taraka said, I wander on this earth like an intoxicated elephant:

"Vicarani mahimeetam madandha Iva varanah". 76

One should follow Dharma, because this life and all the wealth are fickle like the ears of an elephant.

"Karikarpagracapalam jivitam vividham vasu" 77
A Lion is a ferocious animal. Tāraka looked like a ferocious Lion ready to kill.

"Yathā simhomadonmatte hantukāma-sthathaivaca." 78

Thus in Sk.P., Upamāśa is used with all variety and in a very effective way.

OTHER ALANKĀRAS

III. UTPREKṢĀ

Utpreksā is the another alaṅkāra which is used with felicity in Sk.P. Let us take a few examples:

"Dhvajaḥ saṅgutthito bhāti yātu-kamaivāmbaram." 79

A flag which was 'appearing' prominently appeared as if it was desirous of going to the sky.

"Anantagaganasyāntam kurvadbhiḥ 'sikharairiva." 80

The peaks of the mountain were as if they were ending the endless sky.

"Yadyattātra sthitam tatra citranyastamivākhilam." 81

Whatever was there appeared as if written in a picture. This obviously reminds Kālidāsa's usage of the same in Raghuvamśa and Kumārasambhava.

"Giriḥ Kharvataro bhūtva vivikṣuravanīmiva." 82

The Vindhyā mountain paved the way for Sage Agastya by shortening itself. It appeared as if the mountain was entering the earth below.

78. Sk.P. I/1/30.27(a). 81. Ibid., 76.
79. Ibid., I/1/16(b). 82. Ibid., 5.45.
80. Ibid., IV/1/2.
In Sk.P., Kāśī Khanda while describing a Kingdom, it is stated thus:

"vibhramo yatra nārīṣu, na vidvatsu kvacit, nadyah kutilagāminyo, no yatra viśaye praṇāh.
Tamoyutāḥ kaśā yatra bahulesu, na māṇavāḥ, Rajoyutāḥ striyo yatra na dharmabahulā nārāḥ."

In this passage while describing the ideal administration of a King, the Parasāṅkhya is very effectively used. Here the Parasāṅkhya is based on slesa (pun). In the first half of the first verse, it is stated that 'Vibhrama' was found only in women and not in scholars. Vibhrama has two meanings 'grace' and 'excess of infatuation' (vi-bhram).
The word 'Kūṭila' also has two meanings viz., 'zig-zag' and 'crooked path'. The words Tamas, Rajas and Bahula in the second verse also have two meanings.

The description further runs as follows:

"Dhanairanandho yatrāsti Mano, naivacā bhojanam, Anayaḥ syandanam yatra na ca vai rājapūrūṣah.

Where there was no blindness even with money, but not meals without mixed rice (Andhas = food). Where only the chariot was without iron (Anayas) and the Royal officers were not without the principle of justice (anayah). Here the Slesa is between two genders of the words.

"Dandah parasukuddālavālavavyajanarājīṣu, Ātapatresu nā'nyatra kvacit krodhāparādhahajah, Anyatāksikavyadebhyah kvacinnaparidevanam, Āksīkāevadṛṣyante yatra pūrakapānayaḥ."
Danda (staff) was seen only in an axes, sickle, basins, fans and umbrellas. Nowhere else was Danda (punishment) born out of anger or offence. Except among the gamblers wailing was not seen anywhere, for the gamblers alone carried the dice or bound their own hands with dice.

"Jādyamyatra jaleśveva strīmadhya evadurbalāḥ;  
kathoraḥrdayāyatra sīmāntinyonamānāvāḥ,  
Ausadhesveva yatrāsti kusṭhārogo na mānuse;  
Vedho'pasyanta suratnesu śūlam mūrtikaresuvai."

Where coolness was seen only in water, weakness in the waist of women, where only women were heard-hearted and not men. Where 'Kusṭha' (white spots) was seen only in herbs and not in human beings), perforation (killing) was found only in the case of precious gems and the trident (gallons) was found only in the hands of images.

"Kampah sāttvikabhāvottho no bhayaḥ kvāpikarnicī;  
samjavourāḥ kāmajo yatra dārīdram kalusāyaca.  
Dhurlabhhatvam sadā kasya sukṛutanaça vastuñah;  
Ibhāśvāpramatta yuddhamvīcyorjalasaye."

Where shuddering was found in any body, anywhere, not out of fear but only as a 'sāttvikabhava'. Where the fever of love, the blemishes of poverty were not there because of the presence of meritorious objects. Where only elephants were intoxicated and the clash was found only between waves in a pond.
"Dānahāνirgajesveva drumesvevahë kantakah;
Janesvovanñhāři nakasyācidurasthali,
Gōnesuguna visleso bandhoktih pustakedhrdha;
Snehātyāgaḥ sadaivāsti yatra pā aupatejane."

Where loss of dāna (ichor or charity) was only in the elephants, thorns (enemies) only in trees, mist (covering) was found in water and not in the hearts of any one. The separation from guna string virtues was found only in the case of arrows but not in the case of people. Where harsh words were hard bound in the books; the loss of affection (attachment) was only found in the followers of Pāșupata school.

"Dandavattāsadāyatra kṛtā sanyāsakarmanām;
mārganān scāpakesveva bhikṣukā brahmaśārinah;
yatra ksapanakaeva drṣyante maladhārinah;
prāyomadhuvratā eva yatra cancalayṛttayah"

Where the use of staff (punishment) was seen only in the use of ascetics; arrows (spies) only in the bows, beggars only among the celibates; only the Ksapanakas were seen to (carry) smear the dirt and only beeś were the fickle ones.

We find the variety in the Parisaṅkhyās used in Sk.P., one important aspect about the Parisaṅkhyās in Sk.F is that they reflect on the just rule of the King.

v. Rûpaka (Metaphor):

Rûpaka is another alabhāra which is often used in Sk.P. A few examples may be studied here:

(a) Mind-Mirror:

"Bhavadbhakti vibhūtyā me sōdhite citadarpaṇe;
Bimbate sakalamjñānam sakṛdevopadesatah."84

In the 'mind-mirror' cleansed by the glory of your devotion all the knowledge instructed, even once reflect. Here the metaphor is between the mind and mirror.

(b) Mercy-incarnate:

"Karanarmanyāpi sadā krupāmūrtirnabādhate."85

Even in very sensitive acts, one who is mercy incarnate will be unmoved. Here mercy is said to have assumed the form a human being. This is the basis of the charming metaphor.

(c) The foot-hold:

"Pradaksinamahāvīthī silāsakala ghaṭṭitam;
Padam sandhāryate pumsām śripayodhara kumkumaiḥ."86

By the saffron on the breasts of Śrī, the flight of the people hit by the coarse pieces of stone on the great road for Pradaksinā, is borne. This is a rûpaka (atiṣayokti) wherein the saffron on the breasts of Śrī are described as holding the foot-steps of people.

---

84. Sk.P., I/iii/1/7.
85. Ibid., I/iii/1/347.
86. Ibid., I/III/1/9.91.
The Life battle:

"Caladala Ilam caucule jIvaloke,
Trunalava laghusare sarvasamsarasankhys...
Apaharati durasah sasanam brahmanahanam
Naragahanagnartavartapatsuko yah".87

In the world of beings which is fickle like the moving leaf. Worthless like a piece of straw and in the battle called the cycle of 'Samsara', the greedy king wishes to take away the grants given to Brahmins with an eagerness to fall into the whirlpool in the forest called men.

(e) Arrow-looks:

"PratyatkataksaviksepaIn Saravatsairivsmarah
svayam tadangamasthaya tadayamamAmAhramdhum."88

Lord Cupid as if stationed in her body hit me by the shower of arrows (by love) in the form of her looks. His is a fine mixture of rupa and upreksa. The looks metaphorically explained as the shower of arrows of Cupid stationed in the body of La Belle.

f) The body-house:

The body is metaphorically described as a 'house' many a times. This is found in the following verses of K.P. which has a malarupa - a series of rupakas:

"Asthipatta tulasthambhe snayubbandhena yantrite
Raktamamsa madelipte vimrutadravyabhajane;
Kesaromatramacchane suvarnatvaksudhrtake,
Vadanaika mahadvare sadgavaka vibhusite;
Osthadvaya kapatascatathadantargalavite."

Sk.P. III/41/35/47.
Nâdîsveda pravaha ca kâlavastranala sthite; Syavamvidhe grhe ghe jîvonamâstisobhane.  89

The individual soul resides in a house held with supporting pillars called (beams), skeletons, joints called sinews, painted with paints called blood and flesh with the materials and utensils in the form of urine and excreta, roof covered with grass called hairs, held in the sacks called golden wired skin, having one big door called mouth, having six windows, two almirahs called two lips and bolts called teeth. Drainage in the form of circulation of the blood in the nerves and sweating and being cooked in the fire of the mouth of Kâla. Thus the rûpakas used in Sk.P. have variety and charm.

1. RASAS IN SKANDAPURĀNA:

Rasa or the sentiment is the relish of the sthâyÎbhâva in the Sahâdaya, consisting in an 'uncommon' joyful experience.

Rasas are said to be nine in number. They are:


To this, some writers and Bhaktirasa as the tenth one.

In Sk.P., there are portions which contain all these rasas.

But what is the main rasa of Sk.P? Is 'Shakti rasa' the main sentiment? Is Šânta or the sentiment of 'calm' the predominant sentiment since the element of Vairâgya or attachment is found in the seven Khandas of Sk.P?

-491-

The element of wonder is found in all the seven Khandas of Sk.P. in as much as the element of 'wonder' plays a major role in all the myths of Sk.P. Indeed fascinating is the study of rasas in the Purānas. But it has its own limitations. One of the important limitations is that it is difficult to decide the principal sentiment in a Purāṇa. But all the rasas described in a Purāṇa can be studied as a rasa khanda by a rasika.

Let us take the sentiment of Adbhuta. Adbhuta rasa is defined as follows:

The expansion of the mind by seeing (realising) an 'uncommon object'. An uncommon object is that which transcends the limits of the ordinary world. Wonder is that expansion of the mind caused by the ' beholding' of the 'uncommon' object.90

In Adbhuta Rasa, the Vibhāvas or the causal factors are of two kinds (1) the accidental gaining of an object and (2) the seeing of the uncommon object. The widening of the eyes, the reflective exclamations and the like are the Anubhāvas, the consequential emotions. And all this gamut of experience is well supported by joy, anxiety,91 etc., which are the Vyabhicārībhāvas. Let us take a few examples:

In the Sk.P., the Dakṣa-Vṛttānta92 has this element of wonder in the creation of Virābhadra by Śiva

2. Ibid.
and the destruction of the sacrifice, the cutting of the head of Dakṣa and the replacing of his head by Virabhadra. The surrender of Dakṣa and the wonder and joy of the gods and sages at the end also nourish the element of wonder.

In the same Khaṇḍa, the Liṅga episode has the element of wonder because both Brahma, Viṣṇu, on the one side and the gods on the other side are baffled by the infinite expansion of the Liṅga in the form of a column of lustre.

In the Tāraka episode coming to the same Khaṇḍa, the very birth of Skanda, the wonder kid of gods has the element of Adbhuta.

In the Sk.P., there is an instance of 'Adbhuta' when Brahma beheld Śiva in Kailāsa in all his splendour. Brahma seeing that blissful nature of Śiva jumped in joy being unable to decide what to do.

(a) The sentiments of Viṣṇu, Raudra and Bhayānaka:

These three sentiments are found in a series, each leading to the other. In the Sk.P., Viṣṇu is seen in Virabhadra's march towards the sacrificial arena of Dakṣa. It is seen in the battle between him and the gods.

The element of Raudra is seen in Śiva's anger.

The element of Bhayānaka is seen in the fear caused by

93. Sk.P., I/1/56.
94. Ibid., I/1/27.
95. Ibid., I/1/11/11/8.
96. Ibid., I/1/3.
virabhadrā and sivāsenās in the gods, demons and sages, who had assembled there.97

(b) The sentiment of Srṛghāra:

This is mainly described in the Tāraka episode and the other instances of the love of the divine couple Siva and Pārvatī.

1) In the Sk.P., there is a description of Siva's desire to play with Pārvatī.98

2) There is also an instance of a king Kāśīraja who was dissatisfied in his love relationship.99

3) The instance of Bhadrayu enjoying with his wife also comes in the above Khandā itself.100

4) The instance of Visvāmitra and Menaka comes in the Sk.P. The description of the luring of Visvāmitra by Menaka is significant from the point of view of Srṛghāra.101

5) The inciting of passion of women at the sight of Siva is found in Sk.P.102

6) There are some instances of Srṛghārabhāsā also. For instance, in the same section, there is an instance of a Brahmin by name Mandara who was licentious.103

7) The amorous advances of demon Mahīsa before Goddess (Candi), comes in many places. One in Nāgara Khandā may be noted for its element of Srṛghārabhāsa in it.104

98. Ibid., VI/246; I/1/26; I/11/1/2-4. I/1/35 describes Siva's viraha.
100. Ibid., 22.
101. Ibid., VII/1/2.
102. Ibid., VII/111/10.
103. Ibid., III/111/10.
104
The present study of Sk.P. from the literary point of view is made with a view to showing its merits as a poetic composition. The use of legends for inculcating the religious culture among the masses is first highlighted. It is in these legends (myths) we come across some samples of good poetry, embellished with different alankaras and charged with Rasas. The study of only a few alankaras has been given. Some of the instances of rasas are presented. As a part of the socio-cultural study of the Sk.P., a study of the Purāṇa from the literary point of view is only to highlight the poetic manner in which the intended socio-cultural message is given to the people. The main objective of the Purāṇa is the inculcate a religious culture conducive to faith and devotion towards gods, the holy places, the elders and spirit of patriotism. This being the objective the question of the predominance of 'Bhakti-Rasa' can be considered. All other rasas, the instances of which are given above, are subservient to this purpose. This is from the point of view of those who accept Bhakti as a separate rasa.

According to the conventional alahkārikas, this element of bhakti can be portrayed as a part of Sānta rasa itself. Like Mahābhārata, which has different rasas in different parts, and yet has Sānta as the predominant sentiment so is Sk.P., having Sānta as the predominant sentiment to which all other sentiments are subservient.105, we will

"Sāntyacaraparayātustyā ājñātavyohisadāśivah."
close this chapter with the following couplet from Sk.P.:

"Amrtenodarasthena
mriyante sarvadevatāh;
Kanathasthita visenāpi
yojīvati sapātuvah." 106