CHAPTER II

KĀLIDĀSA: His Life and Works

The formidable flood of Love and Passion, Nature and Art, beauty and celestial peace that this great poet has released in Sanskrit literature is so clear, serene, and purifying that it gives to all who dip into it a novel vision and a grand view of Indian Culture. Who was this great poet? What was his native land? When did he flourish? Which works did he create? All these questions are so far unsettled. There is no finality about them. There is no determining evidence about them. Conjectures can only be made from references in his works about his life, his age and his works.

Let us give a brief resume of the different views regarding the age of KĀLIDĀSA.

KĀLIDĀSA has not made any reference about himself in any of his poems anywhere. There is a very slight reference made by him about himself his place. But these references do not provide us with any authoritative evidence. Much material coated in imagination is compiled in the BHŌJA-PRABANDHA. But this is a compilation of the sixteenth century A.D. King BHŌJA himself flourished in the eleventh century. The material incorporated in this work, therefore, cannot be attributed any historicity.
The plot of MALVIKAAGNIMITRA has been drawn from the incidents in the life of king AGNIMITRA of the ŚENGA dynasty. This AGNIMITRA was the son of PUŠYAMITRA. There is, therefore, a school of thought which accepts the age of AGNIMITRA as the age in which KĀLIDĀSA flourished. - Scholars are of opinion that this AGNIMITRA ruled around 150 B.C. KĀLIDĀSA could not have flourished before this date, KĀLIDĀSA is referred to in HARSA-CHARITA by BĀNA. There is also a reference to him in the stone inscription at ALHOLE. These references may be dated in the seventh century A.D. This evidence goes to show that KĀLIDĀSA flourished before this period.

A definite statement can be made to the effect that this great poet lived and worked at some time between the second century B.C. and the seventh century A.D. A number of views differing among themselves have been current with respect to the exact point of time between these two limits. A discussion of all these views is not relevant here. A passing reference to some of the important views is therefore, sufficient.

1. There is a weighty opinion which places KĀLIDĀSA before the beginning of Christian era. KĀLIDĀSA, according to this view, flourished in the court of VIKRAMĀDITYA. The era inaugurated by VIKRAMĀ preceded the Christian era by 56-57 years. References to VIKRAMĀ in the denomination of VIKRAMORVĀŚIYA and also at some other places in the utterances of the characters, are considered to be good
evidence to support this hypothesis. Sir William Jones, Pandit Nandargikar, C.V.Vaidya and others are in favour of this view.

2. Another important view places KĀLIDĀSA in the reign of CHANDRAGUPTA II. This CHANDRAGUPTA ruled between 375 A.D. and 413 A.D. KUMĀRAGUPTA was the name of his son and SKANDAGUPTA was the name of his grand son. References to KUMĀRA in KĀLIDĀSA's works and the use of the root GUP in several places are, according to this view, pointers suggesting KĀLIDĀSA's age. Another argument in support of this hypothesis is that the GUPTA age was a golden age in the history of India, and KĀLIDĀSA's works are a reflection of the greatness of that age.

3. Dr. Weber Lawson, Jakobi, Monier Williams, etc., place KĀLIDĀSA between the second and the middle of the fourth century A.D.

4. Dr. Bhau Daji places him in the sixth century A.D.

5. Dr. McDonell, basing himself on the similarity of language between the language of the stone-inscription of VATSABHATTI and the language of the works of KĀLIDĀSA, places him before 473 A.D.

6. Dr. HARNEL and several other scholars have come to a conclusion that KĀLIDĀSA must have flourished somewhere in the fifth or sixth century A.D.

7. Shree A.C. Chatterji places him in the sixth century A.D.
8. There are two conclusions arrived at after astronomical calculations. Both of them place Kālidāsa before the end of the third century A.D.

9. Shree R. Kṛṣṇamāghārya, in his commentary on Mañgāsandraśa suggests that Kālidāsa was a contemporary of Dīnagāghārya and therefore, he flourished in the sixth century A.D.

10. Dr. Kunhan Raja places Kālidāsa in the second century B.C.

11. The reference to Hunas in the Rāghuvāmśa in the fourth canto verses 66 to 68 has led Prof. Pathaka to a conclusion to the effect that the poet flourished in the fifth century.

Thus, there is a large number of viewpoints with regard to the age of Kālidāsa. Recent research has reduced the number of acceptable viewpoints to only two: viz.

(1) that Kālidāsa flourished in the first century before Christ, and

(2) that he flourished towards the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. Historical research has not yet succeeded in building a unanimous opinion acceptable to all.

In these circumstances, instead of defining a definite date for Kālidāsa, it seems more appropriate to make some such generalization as Sri Aurobindo Ghosh in his book 'Kālidāsa'.
"Many centuries after these poets, perhaps a thousand years or more, came the third great embodiment of national consciousness, KĀLIDĀSA. There is a far greater difference between the civilization, he mirrors than between Vyāsā's and Vālmiki's. He came when the demonic orgy of character and intellect had worked itself out and ended in producing at once its culmination and reaction in Buddhism. There was everywhere noticeable a petrifying of the national temperament, visible to us in the tendency to codification: philosophy was being codified, morals were being codified and knowledge of any and every sort was being codified. It was on one side an age of scholars, legislators, dialecticians, philosophical formalisers, on the other side, the creative and aesthetic enthusiasm of the nation was pouring itself into things material into the life of the senses, into the pride of life and beauty. The arts of paintings, architecture, song, dance, drama, gardening, jewellery, all that can administer to the wants of great and luxurious capitals, received a grand impetus which brought them to their highest technical perfection. That this impetus came from Greek source or from the BUDDHIST seems hardly borne out. The latter may have rather shared in the general tendencies of the time, than originated them, and the Greek theory gives us a maximum of conclusions with a minimum of facts. I do not think, indeed it can be mantained that this period, call it classical or material or what one will, was marked off from its predecessor by any clear division. Such a
partition would be contrary to the law of human development. Almost all the concrete features of the age may be found as separate facts in ancient India. Codes existed from old times. Art and drama were of fairly ancient origin, to whatever date we may assign their development, physical yoga processes existed almost from the first and material development, portrayed in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, is hardly less splendid than that of which the Rāghuvaṃśa is so brilliant a picture. But whereas, before, these were subordinated to more lofty ideals, now they prevailed and became supreme, occupying the best energies of the race and stamping themselves on its life and consciousness. In obedience to this impulse the centuries between the rise of Buddhism and the advent of Śaṅkarāchārya became though not agnostic and sceptical for they rejected violently the doctrines of Chārvāka, yet profoundly scientific and outward going even in there spiritualism. It was, therefore, the great age of formalised metaphysics, science, law, art and the sensuous luxury which accompanies the art.

Nearer the beginning than the end of this period, when India was systematising her philosophies and developing her arts and science, turning from Upaniṣad to Purāṇa, from the high rarefied peaks of early Vedānta and Sāṅkhya with their inspiring sublimities and bracing dry intellectualism of metaphysical logic or else to the warm sensuous humanism of emotional religion, before its full tendencies had asserted themselves in some spheres, before it had
taken the steps its attitude portended, Kālīdāsa arose in Ujjaini and gathered up in himself its current tendencies while he fore-shadowed many of its future developments.

Just as there are different view points with regard to the age of Kālīdāsa, so also, there are different view points with regard to the place of his birth as well as the place of his activity. Of course, in the case of the place where he lived and worked, there is a growing unanimity of opinion. It is now almost generally accepted that Ujjaini was the place where Kālīdāsa lived and worked. There is no such unanimity in respect of the place of his birth. There are different points of view in this regard and we shall take note of the more important of these. Several Bengali scholars consider Kālīdāsa to have been born in Bengal. The name Kālīdāsa is, according to the supporters of this view, Bengali. Astronomical evidence is adduced in support of this view also.

Kālīdāsa's observation of the Himalayas is elaborate and therefore, it is believed that Kālīdāsa belonged to Kashmir.

A third view point considers Vidarbha as the birth place of Kālīdāsa.

The last view point, which appears to have a greater force than any of the preceding ones, holds that
UJAYINI is the place of his birth as well as the place of his activity.

There are many popular beliefs about the life of Kālidāsa. There seems to be very little truth in these. There is no historical evidence to support them. They have, therefore, no scientific significance. Heresies, and popular beliefs of an exaggerated character always crop up around the names of the great in all places and in all ages.

It is believed that Kālidāsa was a Brāhmaṇa and a follower of the Śaiva sect.

About the works of Kālidāsa also, there is a wide variety of views. There is an opinion that he had composed a large number of works. Abhīnāna-Sākuntala, Vikramorvasīya, Māñjnikāgñimitra, Raghuvansā, Kumārasambhava, Mekhūpata, Kuntalasvarpauntya, Rtu-Sāmhitā, Ambāstava, Kalyāṇastava, Kālisthātras, Kavyanatakālakāraṇa, Gāṅgāstaka, another Gāṅgāstaka, Chatkarpāraṇa, Chandikādandakastotras, Charchāstava, Jyotiśvídabharana, Durgahatkāvyā, Nalodayas, Navaratnākāla, Puspabāñavilāsas, Makarandstavas, Māṅgalāstaka, Mahāpadyāstakas, Ratanakosas, Rākṣasasāśāya, Laxmistavas, Lachustavas, Vidyāvinodakāvyā, Vindavanakāvyā, Valmikanāgrahā, Suddha Chandrika, Śrīgāhatrikā, Śrīgūra-Sākāvyā, Śāmalādanapakas, RtuBodhas, Šrutabodhas and Šetubandhas: all these have been claimed as works of Kālidāsa.
RAGHUVĀNŚĀ are beyond any doubt the works of the poet. A brief account of these works with particular reference to our objective is relevant here.

**RTU-SĀMHIĀRA**

RTU-SĀMHIĀRA is a KHANDKĀVYA about the seasons. The poet has given a narrative of the six seasons of the year GRĪŚMA, VARŚA, SARĀN, ŚRĪMANTA, ŚŚĪRA and VASAṬA - in that order.

Some critics consider RTUSĀMHIĀRA as a poem of little value. Some of them even go to the length of saying that a poet of the calibre of KĀLIDĀSA would not stoop to produce such a weak poem. This point of view seems to be unfounded. No poet rises to great heights from the beginning of his career, how-so-ever great he may be. He develops through study and experience. Of course, KĀLIDĀSA seems to have composed this poem in his prime. The descriptions, the characteristics of youth, the amorous attitudes, the repeated use of the same words, some errors of grammar and the limited extent of the canvas; all these indicate that this poem is a product of immature youth.

KĀLIDĀSA was a lover of nature. The seasons arriving in their changing costumes were dear to him. Just as dawn and dusk arrive in variegated hues, just as a new-wed bride adorns herself in ever new costumes, so also, these elegant seasons of KĀLIDĀSA arrive in their own characteristic forms to please us.

KĀLIDĀSA'S partiality for the seasons is not
limited only to RTU-SAHARA. We find the same enthusiasm in the other works whenever a reference to seasons becomes necessary.

The sole object of RTU-SAHARA is a full throated praise for the six seasons. The seasons unmistakeably touch the poet's heart. There is no impediment to be found anywhere in this description. The sweet and beautious nature with all its aspects - living and non-living is depicted here. Flowers, fruits, vegetation, birds and similar other phenomena appear here in this panorama. Trees like KADAMBA, BANDHUKA, PALASA, ASUKA etc., creepers like MADHAVILATA and MALAI, beasts like lion, deer, elephant, tiger and bear, birds like the peacock, the swan, CHAKRAVAKA and the cuckoo are all referred to. The poet has brought out the influence of the seasons on all living things from beasts and birds to the passion ridden humans. The description that the poet presents breathes of nature and it is therefore, that we, for a time, begin to feel that the seasons have come before us in concrete forms. Elements like the sun and the moon, the stars, the dawn, the dusk, the night and the earth are all harnessed in the service of this inspired description. The sweet note of the swan, the thirst of the CHATAKAS, the croaking of the frogs; all these appear to be echoing in our ears as we read this description. As a result, the effect on beasts and birds, trees and creepers and the changing of the mental attitudes of the passion ridden humanity becomes so real that the individuality of each season assumes a distinct shape.
The burning heat of Ghu\$MA, the overflowing passion of VAR\$A, the shape of the new-wed bride of the SARAD, the enticing attraction of HIPANTA and \$IRA and the charm of the VASANTA appear before us as if the youthful dance, that nature is, parades before us in her various moods of passion and of love.

The moonlight in GRH\$MA is delightful, water sport is interesting, a desire to enjoy the bliss of life in the open terrace in company with the beloved and to the accompaniment of music, and the cold, sweet, fragrant-breeze that blows in the evening twilight brings excitement to the passionate humans. At mid-day, even the birds and beasts seek refuge mutually and rest with closed eyes. The realistic description of GRH\$MA presented by the poet creates as it were, in the reader a sensation of unbearable warmth.

All life that is tortured in the GRH\$MA finds a relief when the VAR\$A arrives. The cloud that is heavily laden with water is a source of pleasure and peace for the CH\$ATAK, the peacock, the frog and the way-farer. It also, serves as a test for the love of the lovers. The VAR\$A serves as a reminder of love according to K\$LID\$SA as has been indicated in the RTU-SAMH\$R\$A as well as the M\$H\$UTA. The VAR\$A is the generator of passion. Thunder and lightning, the down-pour of rain and the dreadful dark nights push not only the human beings, but beasts and birds as well, towards the close and consoling embrace of
the dear ones.

Next comes Sārad who has outlived the irresponsibility of the Varṣa and who has assumed the modesty of the newlywed bride. A little modesty, a light smile mixed with seriousness and grace, white garments adorned with all these the Sārad appears to be slowly spreading its peace and beauty on the earth. The brilliance of the moon, the gravity of the night, the swans peacefully swimming on the surface of the river, the lotuses in the ponds, the rows of the Sāraśa and Anḍāja birds, and the captivating beauty of the Mālati flowers create a suspense in the mind as to whether this Sārad is a season or a damsels.

The description of Hīṭanta and Śīlā has generated irresistible passion, and consequently the whole description is soaked in marital love between man and woman - the passion to possess the bodies of the lovers. The influence of nature and the action to which it leads is depicted here. The result is an absence of inspired description of nature here.

The description of Vasanta is charming. The trees bowing under the weight of flowers, the lakes adorned by lotuses, the fragrant breeze, all these seem to captivate our bodies as well as minds.

Thus, the Rtu-Saṁhara has become a poem of the beauty of external nature and of passion. This is quite natural. Youth, the first experience of the emotion of love and an intellect that has not yet matured in the absence
of experience as well as study, would naturally keep all restraint away. And yet, the poet seems to be having the first glimpses of his philosophy of love. If he has described the influence of the seasons on the trees and the birds and the beasts, he has given an equally brilliant picture of their influence on the human beings and has thus suggested that the human being is only a distinct form of nature.

The poet has utilised all literary devices to make his descriptions effective. There are some other defects as well, compared to the ornate description of the seasons in the Rāmāyāṇa this one appears a little dull. Yet, on the whole the observation and presentation here, is as realistic as it is effective.

Meghadūta.

Meghadūta is an original production of the form of a Khaṇḍakāvya composed by Kālidāsa. The poet's imagination has soared to great heights in depicting the happy life in love and marriage of the main characters. At the same time, it is a grand song describing India, its wealth and beauty as well as its greatness. The poem begins in the setting of the top of the Rāmagiri hill and as the narrative advances the cloud messenger rises higher and higher symbolising the flight of the individual soul towards the universal soul.

Himālaya is the height of holiness. It was there that the Panḍavas ascended for their final destination, it was there that Rāma had lived, it was there that Śaṅkara had undertaken a severe penance, it was there that sages and
saints had undertaken the pursuit of devotion and knowledge and it was there that the pure white current of discipline and peace was flowing. To his chaste wife residing in this HIMĀLAYAS, the YAKṣa requests the cloud to carry his message of his well being. Who else but the cloud can rise to this great height? Either the YAKṣa or the cloud could reach this height. But the YAKṣa, being under a curse could not do so. The cloud that sprinkles invigorating waters over the rivers and mountains, the cloud that is not shaken by the glances of beautiful women, the cloud that is faithful to his beloved as much as RĀMA was, was the only proper messenger to carry this message as a friend and none else.

The poet's imagination is of the highest order. The high souled YAKṣa being unable to share his dejection with anybody else, builds up a friendship with the cloud and utilises his services. The love that a friend bears towards the friend's wife is always pure.

The poet's imagination becomes richer and richer as he advances in the description of nature. There is no effort anywhere. The theme develops on its own.

The theme of the poem is as under:-

A YAKṣa in the service of KUṢERA the lord of ALAKĀ, through indolence errs in his duties and is cursed to a year's separation from his beloved. The YAKṣa under the curse resides on the RĀMAGIRI hill which has been sanctified by the bath of SĪTĀ, the daughter of JANAKĀ with a firm
determination he passes eight months. But when he sees the sky over-cast with clouds in the monsoon the pangs of separation become unbearable. In this frame of mind, he approaches the cloud with a request to carry his message to his beloved. Over-powered by intense passion that the YAKṣa is, he fails to recognise the distinction between living and non-living things. He does not realise the real character of the cloud which is constituted of smoke, light, water and wind. The YAKṣa seeks consolation in identifying himself with an element of nature that is moving.

He assumes fullest modesty. He offers the new-blooms of KUṬAJA to the cloud. He describes the route to ALAKĀ.

This cloud, in the view of the YAKṣa, is not lifeless. It needs rest in his journey.

It needs nourishment. It acts and reacts towards all elements of nature, towards the holy temple of MAHĀKĀLE-SĀRA, towards the dancing women and the women moving out in the night to meet their lovers.

The poet describes the YAKṣa's residence in the latter part of the poem. Beginning with the majestic description of ALAKĀ, the poet comes to describe the creepers and trees bowing down under the weight of fruits and flowers, of the happy peacock, of the night wearing the beauty in moon-light, of the palaces shining because of crystals and gems. He also describes the make-up and
the ornaments of the YAKSA women. Ultimately he proceeds to a description of the YAKSA'S residence. The little MANDARATREI, the dancing peacock, the step-well, the MĀDHAVI bower, the mount of pleasure etc., bring life and interest to the poem. The metre of the poem is also matching with the emotional content.

The MĀHADUṬĀ is no doubt, an original creation. But there is a possibility that KĀLEDĀSA may have derived a suggestion for the poem from the message carried by HANUMĀNA in PĀΜĀYĀNA.

KUMĀRASĀMBHAVĀ.

The following is a brief outline of the theme of KUMĀRASĀMBHAVĀ.

BRAHYĀ blessed TĀRAKĀSURA with a boon, TĀRAKĀSUHA then began to vex the Gods. To end this vexation, the only course that was left open was through the Agency of the son born of the union of ŚIVA and PĀRVĀTI.

With a view to develop this story and to make ornate the poet begins the epic with a description of the wonder of the HIMĀLAYAS. The HIMĀLAYA is as powerful as it is high, and he is emblazoned with all the virtues and characters of greatness. The HIMĀLAYA gets united with MENA, the virtuous daughter of the sages. They beget a beautiful daughter who is named PĀRVĀTI. The captivating beauty of PĀRVĀTI is extraordinary. The prophecy of NĀRADĀ in connection with her marriage delights HIMĂLAYA. He sends his daughter to serve ŚANKARA, who is performing austerities.
On the other hand following the suggestion of BRAHMA the Gods appeal to IN DRA and he in his turn, sends KĀMĀDEVĀ with VASANTA to kindle passion in ŚANKARA. VASANTA, the friend of the proud KĀMĀDEVĀ, has without effort blossomed nature, but this artificial spring does not assume the natural beauty of real spring. Even so, influenced by the powerful attraction of VASANTA and by the floral arrow of KĀMĀDEVĀ, ŚANKARA for a moment casts a passionate glance at the beautiful and decorated PĀRVATĪ. But the next moment he recovers his balance and burns down KĀMĀDEVĀ. PĀRVATĪ who has failed in reaching her objective through physical beauty, resorts to severe austerities. Day and night, SĀRAD, GRIŚKA or VARSA do not make any difference to her and she unshakingly goes on performing her austerities. Her austerities are intense and such as could be performed only by women. ŚANKARA had been shaken in his austerities, VIŚVĀMITRA also was shaken, but in spite of a crafty test by ŚANKARA, PĀRVATĪ remained unmoved.

To resume the main thread of the theme we return to the event of the burning of KĀMĀDEVĀ. Following that event HĀTI begins to mourn and the poet presents before us a type of supreme love.

There is a moral in the theme of this epic. Matrimony based on mere physical attraction is of no avail and for the procreation of KĀNISHA who is meant to destroy all evil, it was necessary to base the love of the couple on restraint and austerities. ŚANKARA and PĀRVATĪ are the symbols of these virtues. Love begins
on a physical basis, no doubt, but to be ideal and permanent, it has to accept a spirit of dedication. Nature comes before man in two distinct forms. There is a form in which it entices and misleads. Those that fail in resisting the influence of this form are undone. SAKUNTALĀ, PĀRVATĪ, MĀLAVIKĀ are all instances of this class. SĀNKARA is an instance of the opposite class.

RAGHUVĀMAŚA.

The epic begins with a prayer to PĀRVATĪ and PĀRAMĀŚVARĀ. Then comes the story of Dilipa. Happy on all counts that this king is he has only one unfulfilled desire. That is the desire for progeny, with a view to satisfy this desire, he along with his wife SUDAXINĀ goes to the hermitage of VĀŚISṬANA. Following the advice of the sage he devotedly serves the celestial cow, NANDINI. Once upon a time, NANDINI puts the king to a test. The king who is absorbed in observing the delightful beauty of nature, forgets all his surroundings. Just at that moment, a lion springs on the cow. The cow screams and the king, awakened from his absorption in nature, raises his arm to strike the lion. But the lion is divine. He, therefore, becomes helpless. In the end, the spirit of dedication of DILIPA pleasesthe cow and the lion. NANDINI blesses him and in consequence of this boon, DILIPA and SUDAXINĀ get a son RAGHŪ, who is the hero of the line of RAGHUS. Following this story the narrative leads on through AJĀ, DĀSĀKHAṬHA, RĀMA, LIKAṆUSĀ and the later sovereigns of the
line of RAGHU.

Parallel with the main theme of this poem is a stream of a grand epic of nature running and expressing a significant message. The description of the hermitage of VAMŚHA, the beauty of the HIMALAYAS, the grace of NANDINI and the majesty of the lion, the descent of the GANGA: all these are so real that we feel as if we are in the midst of this moving nature. Nature as she is when RAGHU goes to the rescue of the horse, as she is when ÁJÁ destroys PRIYAṆVADĀ, as she is in the background when INDUMATI is killed by the fall of a flower garland, SITĀ'S entry into fire as well as her acceptance by the earth: all these are aspects of nature. As in all works of KALIDĀSA, in this epic also we find nature sympathising with the human being and living on the side of Justice. Not only this, nature also appreciates the spirit of sacrifice in man as happened in case of DILIPA, when he exhibited a spirit of complete surrender in the incident of the lion springing on the cow.

**The Plays.**

The plays of KALIDĀSA depict the human sentiments as well as nature. Of the three plays, ABHIṆĀṆA-SĀKUNTALA is the best. Its majestic imagination and its penetrating vision transforms nature into a character and the emotional impact of nature, here is as effective as the emotion of love or the other human emotions, if not more. Nature which is one with SĀKUNTALA or which adopts various forms in VIKRAMAṆVASIYA or which adds further beauty to MĀLAVIKA becomes serene, beautiful and steady like a YOGI when it
achieves the majesty of the HIMALAYAS. Nature in the plays of KALIDĀSA, blooms on the terrestrial plane and behaving like the humans, co-operates with humanity and nourishes it. But, it never rises above the human level and throbbs with life.

There is another point to be noted in respect of these plays. Every one of them begins with the seasons.

The main sentiment of all these plays is love. Nature is closely interwoven with love in all of them. Love in MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRA is physical. There is no deep sentiment nor is there any great sacrifice. VIKRAMORVĀŚIYA has an element of penance and intensity of love. But the highest and the most mature form of love is depicted in ABHĪŚANĀ-SĀKUNTALA.

Let us now review the three plays in this order:

MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRA

MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRA is a five-act play, depicting the development and fulfillment of love between AGNIMITRA and MĀLAVIKĀ. MĀLAVIKĀ is a princess sent by VIRASENA the brother of queen DHĀRINĪ for her service to AGNIMITRA'S capital. Impressed by her bearing, DHĀRINĪ makes an arrangement to teach her music and dance under the guidance of GANADĀSA. GANADĀSA and HARADATTA are two prominent dramaturgists of the time. There is a conflict arising out of jealousy between these two. They, therefore, decide upon getting their capacities for teaching tested in a competition. Just
at this juncture, AGNIMITRA has been attracted towards MĀLAVIKA only on the basis of a glance at her picture in a group. He, therefore, seeks to utilise this idea of a competition with a view to have a better look at the beautiful damsel who has set his heart aching. The competition is observed by AGNIMITRA and as a result he is drenched head over ears in his fascination for MĀLAVIKA. MĀLAVIKA is also similarly touched. The queens of AGNIMITRA do not naturally appreciate this development. They adopt stratagems to prevent them from meeting. The first meeting of the lovers takes place in front of the ASOKA tree as MĀLAVIKA, under instructions from DHĀRINI, comes to strike it, so that it may blossom. The whole incident of the ASOKA is symbolic and is meant to convey KĀLIDĀSA's philosophy of nature. The blossoming of the ASOKA disentangles the whole web of hurdles in the way of the fulfillment of the love between MĀLAVIKA and AGNIMITRA.

Nature in this play is not as rich and as variegated as it is in the other works of KĀLIDĀSA. The identity of nature with the human being that is so prominent a character in ASHWINĀ-SĀKUNTALĀ is absent here. The grand interweaving of love and nature that is so effectively delineated in VIKRAMORVASIYA is not seen here. The king, of course, goes on describing the beauty of MĀLAVIKA in terms of Nature. But there, it comes more as background than as a living presence. In the midst of this UNKĀLIDĀSA's portrayal of nature there is a very suggestive incident and that is the incident of the blossoming of the ASOKA tree. None other than KĀLIDĀSA could have developed this symbolisation so effectively.
VIKRAMORVASIIYA

Love and co-operation are the elements, which go to build marital bliss. Separation, no doubt, is unbearable when love is intense. But, infidelity is still more unbearable. Such in the main, is the essential idea of VIKRAMORVASIIYA.

URVASHI, who, drawn by the love for PURURAVAS errs in her performance at the court of INDRA and is cursed to a life on the earth, leads a life of unquestioned attachment for PURURAVAS. But the lover is not as steady in his love. He casts amorous glances at another APSARAS. Aggrieved URVASHI leaves him and by mistake wanders into the KUMARAVAMA to which entry is forbidden to women. She, therefore, is metamorphosed into a creeper. Love-lorn PURURAVAS wanders through the forests bewailing his loss and his separation. His itinaria through the forest is a symbol of the repentance of the human being in the presence of all forms of nature, bringing out a note to the effect that love and nature are twins. It is after a pretty long repentance in the midst of nature, that PURURAVAS is reunited with his beloved. The development of the play even after this climax is pregnant with KALIDASA'S philosophy of nature which unfolds itself right up to the end.

The portrayal of nature in this play is gorgeous. The insanity of PURURAVAS in the midst of nature is an instance of superb craftsmanship unequalled anywhere in all literature. It succeeds in creating a sympathy that is of a unique type. Nature, here, has been brought in to -
emphasise the psychology of insanity not from the angle of a psychologist but from the angle of a superb aesthetician. Love is the main theme here and nature is a nourisher of love and a consoler in separation.

**ABHIJÑĀNA-SĀKUNTALĀ**

Man aspires for heaven. He seeks happiness and peace. But, happiness is not achieved as long as he does not sublimate his passions. It is this truth that KĀLIDĀSA aims at emphasising in this play through the portrayal of ideal marital relationship. Led by passion, the couple that misses the main objective of life fails to achieve real happiness. Physical attraction is certainly a stage in the development of love. But that stage must lead on to a higher and maturer stage, where it becomes a source of strength in fruitfully performing the social duties jointly. Love that ignores the call of duty is, therefore, cursed in the ABHIJÑĀNA-SĀKUNTALĀ. Repentance follows, penance follows and ultimately the lovers meet in the presence of the fruit of their love experiencing, genuine love for each other.

This theme has been developed by KĀLIDĀSA in ABHIJÑĀNA-SĀKUNTALĀ in a manner that effectively brings out his philosophy of nature. SĀKUNTALĀ'S identification with nature is complete. The portrayal of the TAPUŚWANAS is significant.

**DUŚYANTA**, the king of HASTINĀPURA while on a gaming expedition, arrives in the vicinity of the hermitage of KĀŷVA. As he is on the point of discharging an arrow
at a deer, he is warned by the hermits and desists from killing the deer. Putting aside all the royal paraphernalia, he enters the hermitage with a spirit of humility. There, he sees, the virgin beauty of SAKUNTALĀ and is captivated. SAKUNTALĀ also is no less under the spell of EROS. They meet, their love develops and a consummation of their love takes place in the form of a GĀNDHARVA marriage. The king departs, leaving a remembrance ring with his lady-love. SAKUNTALĀ, lost in the memories of her lover fails in attending to YUVĀSIS who happens to arrive at the hermitage and is cursed to a separation. After the arrival of her foster father, SAKUNTALĀ is in due course sent to her husband's capital, but is rejected. The intervening scenes are extremely significant from the point of view of our thesis. Nature and its intimate relationship with humanity is brought out with an artist's touch and we almost forget the distinction between SAKUNTALĀ and the phenomena of nature. With the rejection of SAKUNTALĀ by the king the tragedy of the theme begins to mount. She is rebuffed even by her own kin. In this hour of distress, she is given a refuge by her mother, who carries her to the MĀRICHA hermitage. The hermitage thus, again symbolises a phenomenon of nature sheltering and protecting and sympathising with the human being when there is no human sympathy available. It is there in the MĀRICHA Āśrama that SAKUNTALĀ meets her husband and achieves a serene state of mind which is a reflection of love sanctified by austerity.

Nature holds the stage in this play from the
beginning to the end. It is nowhere in the background. Not only the TAPVANA, but trees and creepers, beasts and birds and all the phenomena of nature seem to play a very significant role in the development of the theme. The choice of the phenomena of nature made by KALIDASA is always appropriate to the sentiment to be conveyed.

Thus, of the three plays of KALIDASA, ABHIJNA-SAKUNTALA is the one in which fullest expression is given to the poet's philosophy of nature.

An overall review of the three plays of KALIDASA leads us to a conclusion that KALIDASA is definitely a poet of nature. Love, beauty and nature are the elements which provide the warp and the woof of the artistic pattern. All these elements are essential to life. Just as SAKUNTALA and MADHAVILATA, MALAVIKA and the ASoka tree, YAKSHINI and MANDARAKREE, PARVATI and the plant are mutually interpenetrating, in the same way there is no work of KALIDASA where nature and love of nature are absent.

The question then arises, why does KALIDASA attribute to nature such a dominant place? The answer is obvious. Nature and humanity, in the opinion of KALIDASA seem to be indivisible. Just as a system of philosophy propounds the inevitable unity of PUKUṢA and PRAKRITI, so KALIDASA accepting that philosophy provides an aesthetic representation of the same. KALIDASA considers nature as living and feeling as the human being.