CHAPTER - IV
ECO-AESTHETIC ELEMENTS IN KĀLIDĀSA'S NĀṬAKAS

Introduction

There is enough scope for a kāvya to describe city, ocean, season, rise of sun and moon, gardens, water sports, festivals and such other aspects of nature. But a Nāṭaka is supposed to be staged or acted with less descriptive portions in it. But Sanskrit drama always kept the elements of poetry prominent. As Indu Shekhar opined, the Sanskrit dramatist, in order to heighten the sentimental effect, inserted descriptions of natural scenes, which more often were not suited to the stage beyond their poetic value.¹ The fourth act of Kālidāsa's Vikramorvaśīya is the best example for this. In this play the dramatic or action element is subordinated to the poetic elements. "Instead of producing a drama full of action, the dramatist produced literary master-pieces within the frame work of dramatic traditions".²

Vikramorvaśīya

The love story of King Purūravas and nymph Urvaśī is the plot of the drama Vikramorvaśīya. In the first act the king saves Urvaśī from the demon and Urvaśī's release from senseless condition is as follows:
As the night released from the darkness owing to the rising moon; as the flames of fire at night released from the deep smoke and as the muddy stream of the Ganges becoming pure after the floods.  

King looks at Urvaśī and thinks about her 'was the moon of lovely brightness her creator'? Or Kāmadeva himself who joys in love and love alone? Or the vernal month? For how could an aged sage who has grown dull through the study of the vedas, and who has withdrawn himself from all worldly pleasures, fashion such a lovely form? Seeing Urvaśī’s beauty King thinks that, she appears from, Hemakūṭa, like the moon emerging from an eclipse. Kālidāsa compares Urvaśī as the Vasantaśrī and her anxious friends as creepers.

Her friends were anxiously waiting for Urvaśī, now rescued from the danger as the people who love the moon and therefore, eagerly waiting for the time when the eclipse will be over.
King observes that someone was descending to the peak of the mountain from the sky - his armlet gleaming like heated gold, like a cloud adorned by lightning. 

अर्यं च गगनालः कोपि तथाचामीकराहंदः।
अवरोहिति शैलग्रंथं तत्तवानिव तोयं। [Vikra.I.13]

Citraratha arrives there and expresses gratitude to the king for saving Uravaśī. The king returns to his kingdom. The second act begins with the conversation between Vidūṣaka and Nipuṇikā who observes that the mission of the king and that of the sun is to discharge a similar function - the king drives out of the confines of his kingdom the dark tendencies of his subjects, and the sun chases darkness from the universe for the benefit of his denizens, again, the sun suspends the course, for a moment, in the central vault of the sky, and the king follows his inclinations in the sixth division of the day.

Nipuṇikā and Vidūṣaka talk about the problems raised by the love of the king for the nymph of heaven. The king wants to see Urvaśī, and he explains about her, her form is an ornament of ornaments, an excellent decoration of decorations. As a reply Vidūṣaka says, you have taken the vow of the cātaka, yearning as you do for heavenly drink. They enter the Pramadavana garden, then Vidūṣaka says that love will be agreeable to
him by yielding him the object of his desire. Here the king’s seeking peace of mind in the garden is imagined to be an attempt to swim against the current when he is actually borne down by it. For the beautiful things he sees in the garden, instead of pleasing his mind, excite his passion for Urvaśī and make him all the more mad with love. Vidūšaka says, my friend, you notice the beauty of this garden, heralding the advent of spring. 8

Then the king noticed the spring:- The mango-trees of the garden, whose pallid leaves have been blown away by the Malaya breeze, are showing fresh sprouts. King notices every tree. There is the Kurabaka flower red at the tip like a woman’s nails, and black at the sides, the young Aśoka bud charming owing to increased redness, is ready to burst, the new blossom of the mango is yellow at the ends as the pollen is yet imperfectly formed, the beauty of spring stands, between childhood and youth. 9 Vidūšaka says that the king may dissipate his longing for Urvaśī with his eyes captivated by those lovely creepers.

There enter Urvaśī and Citralekha through the air. They reach the palace of Purūravas, the crest-borne gem of Pratiṣṭana, which appears as it were to look at its own reflection in the waters of the divine Ganges, rendered particularly holy by her confluence with the Yamunā. Seeing this
place Urvaśī says that the heavens have been transferred to another place. Urvaśī and Chitralekhā are hidden by the power ‘tiraskariṇī' or covering charm. Urvaśī writes her love letter on a bhūrja leaf and throws it towards the king before revealing herself. He takes and reads it with joy.

King reads:- "Lord if I am indeed, what in your ignorance, you make me out to be, towards you who love me, how is it that even the heavenly breezes are felt to be so hot to my body even while reclining on a bed of crushed Pārijāta flowers".

Here Urvaśī separated from her lover does not find even a moment's relief from the oppressive pangs of love. We see that she of long separation drawn the portrait of her lover and sings songs in his memory. She becomes absent minded and loses all taste of pleasures. She wears dusky garments with her braid tied once for all. Then they remove their Tiraskariṇī and approach the king.

The king waiting for Urvaśī in the pleasure park is imagined to be like the newly risen moon awaiting moonlight. Citralekhā implies a corresponding eagerness on the part of the king to see Urvaśī. The idea, here is that the moon rises first and is followed by moonlight. Thus it is the moonlight that gives perfection to the beauty of the moon.
Citralekhā withdraws tiraskarīṇi charm and approaches the king. The king is disappointed to find her alone as she is unaccompanied by that friend. She does not delight him like the river Yamunā, formerly seen at the confluence, fails to gladden one without the river Gaṅgā.

Then enters the queen and Nipuṇīkā. After their conversation with Vidūṣaka, they reach near the king, and they give him the lost love letter of Urvaśī which he was searching for. In their conversation with king and Vidūṣaka, he says that his heart is given to Urvaśī, yet he retains his former regard for the queen. And he looking upwards understands it is midday and describes it, "exhausted by the heat the peacock now rests in the cool basin round the root of tree, the bees lie inside the Karṇīkāra buds, having forced them open at the top, the water fowl leaves the heated water and lurks in the lotus plant on the brink, while the drooping parrot in its cage in the pleasure house calls for water." ¹¹

The third act starts with the king, who surrounded by the torches in the hands of his attendant maids, is imagined to appear like a mountain, possessed of motion on account of its wings not being cut off with karṇīkāra trees in blossom along its slopes.¹² The image of mountain in motion elevates the dignity, majesty and stalwart personality of king. The image of the thin, tall karṇīkāra tree with its bright flowers on the slopes of
the mountain suggests the charm and grace of the thin, tall female attendants with the blazing torches in their hands. The king feels the changes in atmosphere. The rays of the moon about to rise and so concealed behind the rising mountain drive away darkness. The eastern quarter, is becoming visible and is imagined to be a lady. Darkness is imagined to be the tying up of the curls by an attractive lady. When he sees the moon, he remembers her. So the king's eyes are, therefore, attracted by that scene. The king is expecting love from Urvaśī, severe is the agony of his heart as he says:

\[ \text{नद्या इऽ प्रवाहो विषमशिलासंकटस्खलितिवेगः} \]

\[ \text{विस्मित्समागममुखो ननसिशयः शतगुणोभवति।। [Vikra.III.8]} \]

Here the progress of love increasing hundred fold when the pleasure of union is obstructed, is compared as the current of a river dashing on hard rock divides itself into hundred channels. At this time Urvaśī and Citralekha arrive there.

In the fourth act from the conversation with Citralekha and Sahajanyā, we can understand that Urvaśī had fallen in a dangerous situation. Urvaśī with the king, celebrates honeymoon in the Gandhamādana groves. At this time, the king looked intently at Udayavatī, a Vidyādhara damsel playing with sand on the banks of the river.
Mandākinī, and that angered Urvaśī. Then not accepting the apologies of her husband and with her mind darkened by the curse the preceptor had denounced her with, she entered the grove sacred to God Kumāra (Kumāravana), which is forbidden to women. And after she had entered it, she was transformed into a creeper.

The king unaware of what happened to Urvaśī, is in that same forest passing days and nights in searching for her. In this act, Kālidāsa narrates the feel of nature in all its complexities. The king being separated from Urvaśī discovers the trace of her image in different aspects of nature. Here we can see that in the love stricken eyes of the king, all the beauty of nature somehow or other represent the beauty of Urvaśī. Many times the mad Purūravas becomes one with the nature and speaks to it. Here we can say that some sort of eco-spirituality is present in Kālidāsa's poetry who imagines the unification of man and nature. It is clear that this world, which is full of life, is better than any other divine place. This is the viewpoint of the poet, who loves the world so passionately, and is proud of being the part of it. To him, the world is not only for human beings, it includes all the worldly and 'non-worldly' living and non-living things. This view, the oneness of all beings of the universe is the essential part of Kālidāsa's eco-sensibility.
Purūravas cannot bear this stroke of fate. In his wretchedness and sorrow at the loss of his sweet heart, he loses his mental balance and becomes half-mad. Like the love-lorn Rāma in the great epic, he begins to talk to the denizens of the forest as if they are communicable beings who can help him in his hopeless quest for the lost beloved. He addresses one after another the cuckoo, the swan, the bee, the elephant, the cloud, the river, the aśoka tree etc...

The king asks the cloud on the mountain, 'Where are you going, taking my beloved? From the mountain peak he rains showers of arrows on me'. He looking into the sky says "I have suffered severance from my beloved which is unbearably painful, here the fresh clouds appear making the days so genial by diminishing their intense heat? I Can’t suffer by grief seeing the signs of the rainy season. The clouds spread his splendid canopy, shot with the gold of lighting streaks. The Nicula trees wave their blossoms as chowries, the peacocks growing clamorous, now that summer is gone".15

The fresh Kandali plant with its flowers streaked with red veins, painfully reminds him her eyes. If she were to touch the earth with her feet, whose sandy soil is showered over by the clouds, then would he trace her
lovely footprints marked with the ālaktaka dye, pressed deep in the soil at
the back, owing to the heaviness of her hips.

He asks the blue necked peacock, with eyes white at the corners,
did he see his love-lorn lady of broad big eyes in this forest? The king
says, he did not like to ask because, the peacock, seems to be happy in
another’s misfortune. Here a koil is sitting on the jambu tree, her passions
inflamed at the end of summer. She is a wise bird among the winged
flock. He asks her about his beloved. The bird tasting the jambu fruit is
imagined to suck the lower lip of her lover which is described as
containing nectar and which is of soft pink colour. Then the king feels from
the walk of the swans the jingle of anklets of his beloved. But the cooing
of swans who, seeing the space darkened with clouds are filled inwardly
with a longing to go to the Mānasā lake.

Then the king asks the Lord of elephant with his mate, who was
resting his trunk on the stem of a nīpa tree whether he will give the news
about his lover. O Lord of mountains, have you seen that lovely woman,
beautiful in all limbs, in this charming forest? The king is so tired, that he
can’t enjoy the breezes from its caves. Here is the red kadamba tree,
whose flowers, uneven on account of its filaments being incompletely
formed and suggesting the end of summer, used by Urvaśī to deck her hair. The gods seems not to pity him in his condition.  

In searching his beloved, he causally picks up a bright red stone and it turns out to be Samgamaīya gem 'a gem of Union' the remover of curse, as promised by Pārvatī herself. Although without knowing that it was Urvaśī he goes straight to a creeper and observes its likeness to his beloved and embraces it. Then Urvaśī comes back to life. The creeper becomes woman again! The happy couples. They return to the palace.

The fifth act begins with the conversation that the Samgamanīya gem has been borne away by a hawk. The king explains that carrying the gem looking large owing to its flashing lustre, the bird seems to adorn the face of the quarter as with an ear-ornament made of a bunch of aśoka flowers. Here the gem with its halo of rays is compared to the bunch of red aśoka flower with red leaves around. This points the tender beauty of the gem. But the gem is soon recovered by king's men who report that the bird was shot by some one whose arrow-mark bore a signature. It reads that it belonged to Āyus, son of Purūravas and Urvaśī. Meanwhile, a lady messenger from the hermitage of sage Cyavana comes with the story that this son of Urvaśī cannot stay any longer in the hermitage because of his misconduct in shooting the bird. The king comes to know
for the first time that Urvaśī had kept the news of her son's birth hidden from him mainly to prolong her stay with him and now it is time for her to depart. His joy of seeing his son is tinged with the sorrow of her parting. But Indra sends sage Nārada to announce that Urvaśī might stay with Purūravas for life since his whole-hearted help against demons is needed.

Kālidāsa portrays in his works the dreams of an age when the inherent contradictions between a life of enjoyment and an ascetic way of life had been resolved in a life which is in perfect harmony with nature. Purūravas does not shun the call of the forest or duty towards the subjects or his good relations with his first queen.

**Nature in Vikramorvaśīya: Kālidāsa's Approach - Critical Remarks**

In the Vikramorvaśīya Kālidāsa describes the love of Urvaśī and Purūravas in the Gandhamādana mountain. In KS sarga VIII, as we have seen, the same Gandhamādana mountain is described in detail as the place of the divine love of Union between Śiva and Pārvatī. This proves that Kālidāsa had a special attachment to Gandhamādana mountain. His treatment of Gandhamādana in Vikramorvaśīya is also coloured with mythical elements along with the delineation of natural beauty.

In KS, Gandhamādana creates a perfect environment suitable for the love of Śiva and Pārvatī. The pictures of Gandhamādana mountain
and valleys makes the love scene of Śiva and Pārvatī refreshing and beautiful. The Gods involved in *Sambogaśṛṅgāra* (love in union) acts as passionate human beings full of love within an ideal environment, that satisfies their desires. In the drama *Vikramorvaśīya* the same nature is described as the ingredients of *Vipralambaśṛṅgāra* (love in separation).

Urvaśī entering the kumāravana is transformed to a creeper. She becomes the part of nature itself. At the same time the creeper has the soul of Urvaśī. The creeper can feel what happens around. More over all living beings met by the king during the search for Urvaśī is imagined as having human emotions.

Purūravas could not suffer separation of Urvaśī and he becomes mad. He talks with nature as the Yakṣa in *Meghadūta* 'कामात्म य भिक्रृतिकृष्ण चेतनायथे चेतनेषु' The people suffering from Kāma do not discriminate between living and non-living. Here Purūravas's behaviour is equal to that of Yakṣa in *Meghadūta*. He prompts to ask to every objects of nature about Urvaśī. Purūravas thinks that he belongs to the forest community and imagines that he could communicate with animals, birds etc.. Although he is mad, the situation is highly charged with emotions, and constitutes a dramatic scene where the human mind
always seeks analogy from natural surroundings and desires for a positive reaction from the environment.

नवजलधरः संनद्धोत्यं न द्वितिनिशाचरः
सुरधनुरिदं दूरालक्षणं न नाम शरासनम्।
अयमयि पद्धोरासारो न बाणपरंपरा
कनकनिकखिस्स्ट्विद्वृत्त प्रिया न ममोवेशी॥ [Vikra. IV.1]

This is a fresh cloud ready to shower and not a haughty friend girt in armour. This is the heaven's rainbow striding a vast length and not a bow stretched out, and this is pelting shower of rain that is so sharp and not a valley of arrow; while this is only a flash of lightning gleaming like a streak of gold on the touch-stone and not my beloved Urvaśī.17

Kālidāsa sees the bodily features and character of heroine Urvaśī in the natural phenomena like rivers plants etc.. The divine Urvaśī becomes one with earthly nature. Her qualities are attributed to the kandali plant, forest, trees, etc...

आरतराजिभिरियं कुसुम्मेन्वकन्दली सलिलयमः।
कोश्यद्वाबः स्मरयति मां लोचने तथ्या:॥ [Vikra. IV.5]
This fresh kandali plant with its flowers streaked with red veins and with water inside them painfully reminds me of her eyes with the tears starting inside them.\(^{18}\)

इदं रुणक्षिण मां पद्मामण्डलः कृतकष्ट्पदम्।

मया दुष्टार्थं तत्वः ससीत्कार्मिकवाननम्॥ [Vikra. IV.21]

The lotus here amidst whose petals the bees are sweetly murmuring arrest me, it is like my beloved face, murmuring protest at my somewhat rudely sipping its lower-lip.\(^{19}\)

In the absence of Urvaśī, Puruśaras imagines her presence in the beautiful form of nature. He feels that Urvaśī herself is transformed to the beauty of nature.

तरंगतंभष्णा क्षुभिविहिग्रन्तरसना

विकर्षेन्द्र फेरेन वसन्नमिथ्व संरंभाषाशिलम्॥

यथाविदं सति स्वर्लितमभिसंधाय बहुशो

नदीभावनेयं ध्रुवसहनं सा परिणता॥ [Vikra. IV.17]

The rippling wave in her arching brow; the fluttering line of birds her girdle; drawing along its foam, which is as it were her garment loosened through anger, it flows on, avoiding the many obstacles in the way, like my
beloved who stumbles along as she remembers my faults; so surely that
irresistible one has been transformed into this river.\textsuperscript{20}

Pūrūravas thinks that Urvāśī may become a creeper by her divine powers because she is angry with him. With this suspicion in his mind he perceives her presence in all beautiful things. He sights a very beautiful creeper and fancies that it is as if Urvāśī transformed into a creeper.

\begin{quote}
तन्वी मेघजलापपवजतया धौताघरेवाश्रुपेभः

शून्यवाभरणे: स्वकालवरहादृ विश्रान्तपुष्पोद्गमा।

चिन्तामोनकवास्थस्यता मथुरिनां शवदेविनां लक्ष्यते

चण्डी मामवधूय पादपतितं जातानुतप्पेव सा ।। [Vikra. IV.38]
\end{quote}

The slender one, and the tender leaves wetted by the clouds, her lower lip washed by her tears, not decked with blossom, as it is past its time of flowering, it is she with her ornaments cast aside since the bees are not humming to it, she has been silent in anxious thoughts, so it is that irascible one, who having spurned me, now seems to be stung with remorse.

Here Urvāśī appears as plant; thin, crying with sorrow not wearing the ornaments, she is silent with regression. Seeing this plant the king embraces and it becomes Urvāśī. Thus Urvāśī comes back to life.
Kālidāsa narrates very beautifully the effects of the man-made and artificial environments on the living-beings. Man wants the beauty of nature around him. Man's efforts towards that end through preparing for himself artificial pleasure places like gardens etc., are seen in his plays like Mālavikāgnimitra and Vikramorvaśīya. These types of royal gardens are not shown in Aś with importance.

The drama Mālavikāgnimitra begins with the conversation between the manager and his assistant. They decided to act the play 'Mālavikāgnimitra' during the spring festival. The assistant wonders that how the spectators could have passed over the compositions of famous poets and done such great honour to the work of a modern, poet Kālidāsa, the former tells him that it is all right. 'For a poem is not good because it is old, nor is every new poem to be blamed because it is new', he decides to carry out the order of the spectators.

Then enter Kaumūdikā and Bakulāvalikā and we learn from their conversation that king Agnimitra has seen in the picture-gallery a new painting of queen Dhārinī and her attendants. Seeing the portrait of the servant girl Mālavikā in a painting, he falls in love with her at first sight.
But the jealous queen takes special care to guard the girl from the sight of the king.

Gaṇadāsa, the dancing-master from whom Bakulāvalikā learns that Mālavikā has proved to be an exceedingly clever and intelligent pupil learning dance under him, the queen informs him that the queen's brother of inferior caste, Vīrasena by name, who is in command of a frontier fortress, sent this girl as a present to his sister.

The king is listening to a dispatch from the king of Vidarbha, who had imprisoned the king's cousin Mādhavasena together with his wife and sister. In response to Agnimitra's demand that they should be liberated, he declares that the sister had disappeared in the confusion of the capture, and that Mādhavasena would be released only if Agnimitra set at liberty his brother-in-law, the Maurya minister. This letter so angers Agnimitra that he orders his army under the command of Vīrasena to march against the king of Vidarbha.

At this moment, Gautama (Vidūṣaka) enters and informs the king that he has devised a plan for bringing Mālavikā into the king's presence. For this to come about, Mālavikā's dance-master has to quarrel with another dance-master who is the best. It is agreed that each shall exhibit his best pupil before the king, the queen, and the learned Parivrājikā,
Kauśikī. The sound of drum now is heard which was a signal for them to proceed to the concert-hall of the palace where the orchestral arrangements are by now made ready.

The second act begins in the dance-hall. The Parivṛṣṭikā, the mistress of the ceremony, directs that Gaṇḍāsa shall exhibit his pupil first, upon which Mālavikā enters in thin stage-constume and she dances and sings a song which pretty clearly expresses her own passion for the king. Seeing her beauty Vidūṣaka comments that she is lovelier than the picture. The king thinks that the smiling face of the long-eyed one, is lovely with the teeth but half visible like an opening lotus with its filaments partially seen. The hour of noon is now announced whereupon the exhibition of the other dancing-master is postponed.

The IIIrd act is held in the Pramadavana garden. From the conversation we learn that the teaching skill of Gaṇḍāsa was ranked the higher of the two on account of the admirable qualities of his pupil, Mālavikā. The king is now desperately in love with her, but in order to spare the feelings of Dhārinī, he makes no use of his power to behold the object of his desire. There is a favourite Aśoka tree which is late to blossom and it requires to be touched by the foot of a handsome woman to be induced to burst into blossom.
After this introductory scene, the king and the Vidūṣaka enter. The former describes how desperately he is in love with Mālavikā. Vidūṣaka and the king enters the Pramadavana. Vidūṣaka says that Pramadavana seems to beckon the king to hurry up with its fingers of leaves waving in the wind. Then the king explains the spring.

"By the sweet notes of the slightly intoxicated koil, he seems to be compassionately inquiring whether I can bear the torture of love, while the south breeze with its soft touch and its incence mango-blossoms is like the palm of spring's hand stroking my limbs." ²¹

They enter the Pramadavana to enjoy the spring time. Vidūṣaka says, "the goddess of Pramadavana, desiring to allure you, has put on the garment of spring flowers that puts to shame the dress of a young lady". ²¹
The gleaming red of the Aśoka excels the paint that is applied to the bimba like lip; the kuvaraka with its dark and bright and red, surpasses the paintings on the forehead; the tilaka blossoms, with the bees clinging to them like collyrium, have thoroughly grasped the art of adorning the forehead with the tilaka mark; thus vernal beauty seems to hold up to ridicule the art of adorning the face as practised by women.\(^{22}\)

Then enters Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā. Seeing Mālavikā Vidūṣaka commends that the treacle is offered to you who have been troubled with drinking wine. Mālavikā reaches near the Aśoka tree and she says "This Aśoka is awaiting the fulfillment of its delicate longing, and not assuming its robe of flowers". She sits on the cool slab under its shade. Mālavikā was commissioned by Dhāriṇī to touch the Aśoka tree with her foot and thus induce it to blossom, for the Queen herself is disabled to perform the ceremony. Bakulāvalikā tells her how the king also is pining for her. She says that her foot looks as lovely as a red lotus. By all means, let it be on the king’s lap. Mālavikā need not be afraid of the queen. Is the mango-shoot, spring’s all-in-all, not to be used as an ear-ornament because bees are clinging to it?

They were going to inspire the Aśoka to blossom. Mālavikā takes a tender leaves into an ear-ornament and gracefully raises her feet to the
Asoka tree. Seeing this the king and Vidūṣaka enter. King expresses his love for Mālavikā. Irāvatī, King's another wife, mad with jealousy informs Dhāriṇī of what is going.

In IVth Act, the Vidūṣaka informs the King that Mālavikā and her friend are locked up in the celler by the queen because Irāvatī told about the meeting of the King and Mālavikā. Hearing this the king says that the sweet-voiced cuckoo and the bee clinging to the opened mango-blossom have been driven to seek a hollow by an unseasonable shower preceded by a strong gale. Queen Dhāriṇī orders the door-keeper that they shall be let out only on presentation of her signet-ring bearing a seal of a serpent.

Then Vidūṣaka, and the king thinks about a plan to release them. The king then pays a visit to the queen to inquire how she is doing. At that time Vidūṣaka rushes into their presence, pretending that he has been bitten by a venomous snake on the finger, and shows them the two marks of the teeth. Then the King announced to call the doctor, Dhruvasiddhi. The doctor requests that something bearing a serpent seal should be found out for the magic remedy. The queen gives her signet ring. Vidūṣaka thus procures the freedom of Mālavikā and her friend and leading them to the summer-house brings about a meeting between the
king and Mālavikā. The scene is again interrupted by Irāvatī, but the timely news that princess Vasulakṣmi has been terribly frightened and would be comforted only by him, saves him from a very embarrassing situation. The act ends with the announcement of Bakulāvalikā that the Aśoka tree is covered all over with blossoms.

The Vth act begins with the introductory scene, the conversation between Madhukarikā and Sārasaka. Sārasaka informs that the victorious army of the king led by Vīrasena and others has subjugated the king of the Vidarbhas, and his relative Mādhavasena is set free. He had sent many valuable presents to his Majesty. The Queen has sent word to king that, she desires him to go with her to see the beauty of Aśoka in blossoms. For that the King and Vidūṣaka enters, the king says that his heart feels both happy and sad like a lotus in the sun when it is struck by the rains. Then Jayasena comes there and reports them that Queen and her attendants including Mālavikā are waiting for him under the Aśoka tree. Seeing the Pramadavana Vidūṣaka says spring seems to be somewhat past his youth, the youth of spring is in its ripeness, with the Kurabaka flowers scattered and the mango-tree bursting with fruit, fills the mind with longing'. Vidūṣaka says that the golden Aśoka-tree appears to have attired in a vesture of clustering flowers. Seeing Mālavikā and the queen,
the King says it looks like the earth waited upon by royal Glory who has forgotten to hold a flower in her hand.²⁴

Seeing Mālavikā in her ornaments the king says:

अनतिलम्बितुकृतनिवासिनी रङ्गेरियारफर्णे: प्रतिभाति मे ।

उठुगणेरदयोन्मुखचन्द्रका गतहिमेरिव चंजविभावरी।। [Māl. V.7]

Wearing a short silk dress and with scanty ornaments she appears like a night in the month of Caitra, when moonlight is imminent with the clusters of stars free from mists. Seeing Mālavikā king says the love-lorn hero is separated from his beloved by the queen Dhārinī and compares himself with the cakravāka bird.²⁵ At this point the chamberlain comes with a message from the minister that the present sent by the king of Vidarbha included two accomplished maidens who were till now not introduced because they represented themselves to be fatigued with the journey. They are now brought before the group gathered under the tree and give considerable surprise to everyone by falling prostrate before Mālavikā whom they address "Our Princess". Hearing this Dhārinī says: "I have been defiling sandalwood by using it as a slipper".

Then they inform the king that Mālavikā was the younger sister of Prince Mādhavasena and that she was secretly carried off by Sumati, the
minister of the captive prince while attendants like them were left behind. At this point, the Parivrājikā takes up the tale and declares how her brother, who was the minister of Mādhavasena, had rescued her and Mālavikā from the king of Vidarbha and had started for Agnimitra’s court; but they were set upon and overpowered by bandits, her brother was killed and she herself separated from Mālavikā who came from the power of the foresters into that of Vīrasena and was sent by him to the queen. Agnimitra now issues orders regarding the terms to be granted to the king of Vidarbha, half of whose territory he now assigns to Mādhavasena, the brother of Mālavikā, their dominions to lie respectively north and south of the Varadā river. Now a letter arrives from Puṣpamitra announcing that Vasumitra has won victory over the Yavanas. Puṣpamitra further invited the court to be present at the sacrifice which he could now offer.

Queen Dhāriṇī, overjoyed by the news of her son’s victory, now sends an attendant to the ladies of the harem with the glad news and asks her to tell Irāvatī of the promise she had made to Mālavikā when she deputed her to perform the ceremony of fertilizing the Aśoka, and of her birth also. They make the arrangements of wedding-ceremony. Parivrājikā said to Dhāriṇī that “Good women, who are devoted to their husbands, serve them even by making rivals to themselves as rivers take
hundreds of streams along with them to these. Queen Dhārīṇī presents Mālavikā to the king.

Here the drama Mālavikāgnimitra gives delineation of nature in human terms at the first level of love. Aśoka tree is a living character in this drama, testifying to the princely purity of the heroine by blossoming within five nights of her touch and by bringing about the union of the lovers after removing all but insuperable obstacle in the way.

There is no drama without any conflict and in this play it is between the natural pull of love and the self-interest of rival queens. The heroine Mālavikā has to undergo in her fortune for a period of one year, suffering the worst indignities as a chamber-maid of the chief queen. Popular folk-beliefs and nature-myths are so inter-welded with man-woman fascination that difference between animate and inanimate relations vanishes altogether. In this play nature in its manifold manifestations of beauty is expressed through vegetation, landscape etc..

**Nature in Mālavikāgnimitra: Kālidāsa's Approach - Critical Remarks.**

The Incidents in Mālavikāgnimitra takes place in the palace of Agnimitra and its surrounding gardens. In this urban set-up forests, rivers, mountains, and such natural surroundings are absent. Unlike AŚ and VU the nature in Mālavikāgnimitra is artificial or man-made without any wild or
original energy. It is a civilized or tamed nature which stands for the pleasure of the king and his company. King passes time in the palace garden especially during the time when he is fallen in love with some beautiful women. The colourful garden acts like a stimulator of the feelings of the king. It is the meeting place of lovers.

The spring season of pramadavana is personified as a beautiful young-lady. She is the source of erotic delight. The garden is a place for pleasure and relaxation. In the Mālavikāgīnimitra the garden is also a site for intimate relation between human beings and plants. This beautiful relation is expressed in the incident of 'Dohada' of a flowerless Aśoka tree which by the touch of the foot of Mālavikā bears flowers. The 'Dohada' is conducted as a ritual of pregnancy. In the drama, Mālavikā is assisted by her friend, Bakulāvalikā. Agnimitra watches this hidden somewhere in the garden.

The scene is very beautiful. The presentation of 'Dohada' is expressed through the intimate conversation between Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā, Irāvatī and Nipuṇīkā. The King and Vidūṣaka also witness the ritual. Bakulāvalikā decorates Mālavikā's foot by beautiful paint under the shade of the Aśoka tree.
Bakulāvalikā: (Painting the foot) Friend Mālavikā, how do you like these lines of paint on your foot?

Mālavikā: I am ashamed of praising it, as it is on my own foot. Tell me who taught you this art of decoration.

Bakulāvalikā: I am pupil of the king in this art.

Mālavikā: Happily you are free from conceit

Bakulāvalikā: Surely I shall be full of conceit, now that I can exhibit my skill on worthy. Your foot looks as lovely as a red lotus, sit on the King's lap.

Mālavikā: You don't speak the truth for I haven't secured the king's love.

Bakulāvalikā: You haven't indeed. Only it is to be seen in the beautifully pale and thin limbs of the King.

Mālavikā: How do you talk as suits your fancy?

Bakulāvalikā: No, no! these are but the words of the king echoed by me which are so sweet through love.

Mālavikā: My heart grows in different as I think of the Queen

Bakulāvalikā: You simple girl, is the mango-shoot spring's all in all, not to be used as an ear-ornament because bees are clinging to it?

Mālavikā: But, Surely you will help me greatly in my distress.
Bakulāvalikā: I have finished painting your other foot also. So now I will put anklets on them. Friend, rise, do the Queen's bidding of causing the Aśoka to blossom!²⁶

Mālavikā after arranging the tender leaves into an ear-ornament gracefully raises her foot towards the Aśoka.

The King: "Honoured with her foot delicate as a fresh lotus and tinkling with the jingling anklets by this slender-waisted one, O Aśoka, if you are not immediately covered with blossoms, then in vain do you cherish the delicate longing which is also cherished by sportive lovers."²⁷

After five days the Aśoka blossomed. The King is happy to see the Aśoka flowers and comments.

It appears as if the flowers of all other Aśoka trees that first exhibited the wealth of spring have been transferred to this tree, now that its longing is fulfilled.

Along with the blossoming of Aśoka tree Mālavikā's love towards the king also blossomed. She is given to Agnimitra in marriage by queen Dhārīṇī.
ABHIJÑĀNAŚĀKUNTALA

AŚ begins praising lord Śiva, in his aṣṭamūrti form, (water, fire, ether, earth, air, the Śun and the moon and the ritual sacrificer) which is the symbolic representation of this universe itself. In Kālidāsa's descriptions eco-aesthetic elements are found not only in the mythical concepts like Aṣṭamūrti but in the delineation of Śakuntalā, Kaṇvā and Duṣyanta in natural surroundings. This drama introduces a life in the holy presence of nature. Śakuntalā and her household take care of each and every plant and animal with kindness and affection as if they were all her family members. Śakuntalā is a child of nature, loving all and loved by all. According to the German master poet Goethe: Śakuntalā is the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn, that which charms and that which entrances in a world of both earth and Heaven.28

The king chasing a deer in hunting entered the āśrama, hearing a request, "Oh, King, to the hermitage belongs this deer, he should not be killed". From this he understands that it is the hermitage of Kaṇvā that obeyed the order of non-violence. He wants to enter there and receive the hospitality. He left his weapon, and when he entered that hermitage, he noticed that under trees are the grains of wild rice fallen from the mouth of the hollows in the interior of which live parrots; in some places
are oily stones indicated as being used in breaking the nuts of the Ingudī trees, the deers having acquired confidence bear the noise, and the passages of the reservoirs are marked with lines of water dripping from the fringes of bark-garments. These scenes are indicative of the peaceful atmosphere created in them by the calm and affectionate behaviour of the sages towards all living things.

The king entering the hermitage, saw Śakuntalā and her two companions Anasūyā and Priyamvadā watering the plants with sisterly affection. Watching them from behind a tree the king gives expression to his feelings of wonder and admiration in a figurative manner. He never expected such beauty of form to reside in forests, their proper resort being the secluded harem in the city, where alone, like creepers in a garden, beauty is developed and nourished. Such forms are met within the woodland retreats, then it clearly signifies a defeat of the garden-creepers by the forest ones untended and uncared for by human being.

Śakuntalā’s youth is described by Duṣyanta that the bark-garment is not a fitting apparel for such a lovely form whose charms are definitely marred by it. Indeed she does look beautiful even with a bark-garment by her physical charm.
The lotus, though moss may overlay it, is nevertheless, beautiful; the spot on the moon, for all its darkness, heightens the charm of the moon this maiden is more lovely even in her dress of bark; for what indeed is not an embellishment of sweet forms.

Her lower lip glows like a tender leaf, her arms resemble flexible stalks. And youth, bewitching like a blossom, shines in all her lineaments.) Seeing the Sahakāra tree Śakuntalā thinks that, at a charming season, the union between the pair the creeper and the tree has taken place. Vanajyotsnā shows her youth in her fresh blossoms, and the Sahakāra his readiness to enjoy, in his sprouting young leaves. From these we can guess that how in her mind youthful charm is associated with the pleasure of union.
Meanwhile Śakuntalā is disturbed by a bee and the king appears in front of them, and gives her protection introducing himself as an officer of the king. The curious king wants to know something more about Śakuntalā. Her friends told her birth story. The royal sage Kauśika was leading a life of stern austerities on the banks of the river Gautamī. The kings of Gods becoming somehow alarmed, sent the nymph Menakā to block his penance. Then at the advent of spring having beheld her intoxicating beauty he received her and Śakuntalā was born. The two friends of Śakuntalā told him that her father's intention was to give her to a suitable bridegroom. Meanwhile Śakuntalā is also attracted by the handsome king. After this meeting Duśyanta takes leave but feels that,

गच्छति पुरं: शरीरं धावति पश्चादसंस्तुतं चेत:

चौनांशुकिमिव केतो: प्रतिवालं नीयमानसय।। [ AŚ. I. 34 ]

Body moves onwards, but my heart runs back, like the silken cloth of a banner borne against the wind. 31

The king falls in love. It gives him no rest at night and deprives him of all his zest for the pleasures of hunting. He recounts his feeling to his companion Vidūṣaka, Later he gratefully receives the request of the young hermit to protect the hermitage against the attacks of the rākṣasas. A messenger from the palace requests the king's presence at a sacrifice
there, and this gives the king the opportunity to dismiss all his retinue and with vidūṣaka. Before leaving the hermitage, in order to prevent a scandal the king tells him that his feelings for Śakuntalā were not made in earnest. The king stays at the āśrama and marries her secretly. Then he departs for his city promising to take her away soon presenting her the signet ring.

Sage Durvāsa is hurrying away after pronouncing a terrible curse on Śakuntalā that the lover she is thinking of will not remember her. The innocent Śakuntalā had forgotten herself and was lost in her thoughts of her beloved. She had not noticed the saint’s arrival and failed in her duty of offering him worshipful hospitality. Her friends appease the sage and become satisfied that the curse would cease at the moment when the king was shown the emblem of his love, the signet ring. The remedy is literally in Śakuntalā’s hand and they keep it a secret from her to avoid adding to her grief.

Nature becomes a dominating character in the fourth act of Āś. From a divine voice Kaṇva comes to know of Śakuntalā’s love marriage and her prospective mother-hood. He at once decides to send her to her husband’s palace, selecting a party of hermits from the hermitage to conduct her to the palace. In this act we can see the whole world of living creatures bird, beast and plant throbbing with love and compassion. The
plants and animals of the hermitage are all affected by the sorrow of parting with Śakuntalā.

During the love scenes in the third act of Āśā Kālidāsa narrates about the charming effects of the banks of Mālinī river, endowed with bowers of creepers and the free breeze with water drops fragrant on account of lotuses. Kālidāsa explains Śakuntalā’s lovely appearance, she has worn only bracelets of lotus fibres for cooling purpose, but due to heat, it gets loose. About the departure of Śakuntalā saint Kaṅva says:

यास्यत्यादशकुन्तलेऽर्त हृदयं संस्यृष्टमुत्कण्ठयः

कण्ठः स्तम्भितवाणुप्रौंतिकुण्डलिनिताण्डे दर्शनम्।

बेकुञ्ज्यं मम तावद्रदशमाणि सहादशरणेकसः:

पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कर्थं न तनयाविरलेष्टुःखेनेवः।। [ĀŚ. IV. 5]

Śakuntalā departs today! My heart is smitten and anguish, voice is choked by suppressing the flow of tears, and senses are paralysed by anxious thoughts. If such, through affection, is the affliction even of me a hermit, with what pangs the fathers of families should be afflicted at the first parting with their daughters.

Then Kālidāsa shows the nature’s sympathy with her daughter. For the daughter’s send off, the silken garments, the paints to be applied to the feet and the ornaments required by her are given as gifts by trees and
the sylvian deities. Thus Kālidāsa brings forth a striking conformity between the feelings of both plant and animals along with humans. Kaṇva addresses the trees of the hermitage:

पातूँ न प्रथमं व्यवस्थितं जलं चुप्पार्गवीलेषु या

नादते प्रियमण्डलापि भवताः स्नेहेन या पश्चवम्।

आद्ये व: कृमुप्रसृति समये वस्मा भवत्युस्ववः:

सेयं याति शकुन्तला पतिगृहं सवेँरनुज्ञायताम्। [AŚ. IV. 8]

She who would not drink water first before you were watered, she who cropped not through affection for you one of your fresh leaves though she is so fond of ornaments, she whose chief delight was in the season of the first appearance of your bloom, even that same Śakuntalā is going to the palace of her wedded Lord. Let all give their consent.32

Śakuntalā's farewell is very heart-touching. The plants and animals of the hermitage are all affected by the sorrow of parting from Śakuntalā who was their loving friend. The trees provides her with royal robes and ornaments to make her queenly. Śakuntalā is given leave to depart by the trees, the companions of her forest life, since a song to this effect, a sweet cuckoo song was employed as an answer by them. Śakuntalā says good bye to vanajyotsnā, her sister among the trees. She had very much
attachment towards the animals. A little deer stops her journey and Kaṇva reminds her:

यस्य त्यथा ब्रणविरोपणमिदुंदीनां
तेनेन्द्रियतमुखे कुशरूपविचित्रे।
श्यामाकुष्णिपरिवर्धितको जहाति
सोपं न पुत्रकुलक: पदवीं मृगस्ते।। [AŚ. IV. 5]

The adopted child, the little fawn whose mouth, when the sharp points of kuśa grass wounded it, was sprinkled by thee with the healing oil of Ingudī, who has been tenderly reared by thee with handfuls of syāmāka grains; and who now will not leave thy foot steps.33

At the palace, the song of Haṃsapadikā has caused a strange disturbance in Duṣyanta's soul. The king has been represented by her as the bee who flies from flower to flower in his eager search for fresh honey. In this mood with a heart filled with a longing like sweet pain, he comes to face Śakuntalā and the hermits. Seeing them, king asks about their hermitage. They replied that when the bright sun blazes, should darkness make its appearance. When they told about their wish, the king had forgotten Śakuntalā because of the curse and hence he does not recognise her. The ring of recognition has already been lost. When she failed in direct evidence the poor Śakuntalā makes verbal evidence
occurred at the forest. When they were drinking water the fawn Dīrghāpaṅga, her foster-child came up. "Then you took pity on him, and gave him drink first, but he refused it. But later, when I held the same water, he linked it. Then you said "Everyone trusts his own kindred. You are both foresters alike". This evidence also rejected by the forgetful King.

The sixth act begins with the recovery of the lost ring from the body of a fish, which a fisherman had opened. The poet describes how the king recognizes the wrong unwittingly done, Duṣyanta’s heart is filled with sorrow at the loss of his beloved wife. He seeks to console himself with a portrait he had himself drawn of his love. King was very sad and he depressed. He had rejected the earth sown with seed at the right season when she promised the rich fruit. Mean while the screams of the Vidūṣaka, who has been roughly handled by Mātali, awakens the king from his despair.

In the 7th Act Mātali and King returns from heaven through the air. Mātali refers to the earth 'How grand, how noble is earth (अहो! उदात्तरमणीया पृथिवी). This reveals Kālidāsa’s mind about his love for earth.

On the way they happen to see Marica’s āśrama. At the sanctuary of the Prajāpati, the mandāra trees are reared by Aditi and they feel that
this place is more delightful than heaven. (स्वर्गादिशिकतरं निवृत्तिस्थानं)। The hermitage is described as:

प्राणानामहिमेन वृत्तिरविचिता सत्कल्पवृक्षे वने
तोऽय काशनपद्मसंपकसे धर्माभिषेकक्रिया।
ध्यान रजसिवाततेषु विबुधवीरसनिधां संयमो
यतःकृष्णति तपोभिरप्रयुक्तसतिसंपतपरन्त्यमी।।[AŚ. VII.12]

Here in this forest of Kalpa-trees, the sages draw air, life’s necessary sustenance; in waters yellow with the golden dust of the lotus they perform ablutions for religious vows; on jewelled slabs, they meditate, and restrain their passions in the midst of celestial nymphs; they practice penance in a place which other sages by their austerities seek to win.34

वल्मीकार्धिनमन्यमूलिन्द्रसा संदिधदांपत्यवा
कण्ठे जीर्णलताप्रतापनवल्पनायत्वसंपेदितः।
अंसवाप्य शकुंतलाददिनिन्दि विध्रुवामण्डलं
यत्र स्थापुरिवाचलो मृगिरसावथ्याक्कविष्ठं स्थितः।। [AŚ. VII. 11]

There stands a sage, facing the Sun’s orb, immovable and half buried in an ant hill with his chest closely encircled by the slough of a serpent. His neck is heavily squeezed by a coil of the tendrils of old
creepers, and he has a mass of matted hair that covers his shoulders and is filled with the nests of birds.  

When he enters āśrama he hears the matrons chiding an unruly boy and finds him dragging at the tousled mane of a lion’s club. Seeing him Duṣyanta’s heart goes out to him; then as he stretches his hand, the marks of imperial birth are revealed. Then the child begins to look about for his mother Śakuntalā. It is only when he touches the magic amulet, and is told by the matrons that none but his father or mother can touch it with impunity, that the king realises that the boy is his own son.

In AŚ, sage Kaṇva’s sympathy for mankind is depicted, which is closely related to his passionate love for all the living things of nature. Śakuntalā is the very essence of all the beauty of the nature and she was found guarded by the Śakunta birds at her birth. When Śakuntalā is going to her husband's house, Kaṇva attributes his sorrow to the creepers, deers to the flaura and fauna near by the hermitage.

Nature in Abhiññāśākuntala: Kalidāsa's Approach - Critical Remarks

Kālidāsa portrays Kaṇva's hermitage as in tune with nature. They fulfilled their needs taking materials from the forests. They were satisfied from these. In AŚ Kālidāsa presents Śakuntalā as the daughter of nature. She retains all her charms and holiness of hermitage. She is born and
bred up in the sacred wood of a sage. According to Monier Williams ÁȘ displays "the richness and fertility of Kālidāsa’s poetical genius, exuberance of his imagination, the warmth and play of his fancy, his profound knowledge of the human heart, his dedicate appreciation of its most refined and tender emotions, his familiarity with the workings and counter workings of its conflicting feelings".36

Barbara Stoler Miller observes that "heroines of Kālidāsa are initiately related to nature". In the Mahābhārata, Śakuntalā is born to the nymph Menakā by Viśvāmitra. Barbara says that it is noteworthy that Menakā, meaning "women", is a paradigmatic figure of feminine beauty. The wife of the mountain king Himālaya, and the mother of Pārvatī, has a variant of this name, Menā. Menakā is sent by Gods to seduce Viśvāmitra from his ascetic powers. She succeeds and becomes pregnant, a daughter born to her is kept to birds of prey near a river. The birds, worship and protect her until the another sage, the ascetic Kaṇva, finds her and brings her to his hermitage, as his daughter. Having found her among the Śakunta birds, he names her Śakuntalā.

That Kālidāsa was a devotee of Śiva and the Goddess Pārvatī is evident from his work as well as from his legends. The powerful images of nature that dominate his poetry and drama are ultimately determined by
his conception of Śiva’s creative mystery. This implicit in the doctrine of Śiva's eight forms (aṣṭamūrti) which he states in the benediction of the Śākuntalā.\(^{37}\)

The water that first created, the sacrifice bearing fire, the priest, the time setting Sun and Moon, audible space that fills the universe, what men call nature the source of all seeds, the air that living creatures breathe, are his eight embodied forms.\(^{38}\)

In Kālidāsa's works a heroine represents the energy of nature. She is the ‘Śakti’ with whom Śiva unites. In the description of heroine Śākuntalā, Pārvatī or the wife of Yakṣa, the heroine’s body is cited with elements of nature. The hero personify the creative energy of nature. According to Barbara Stoler Miller the patterns of the Indian dramatic universe move towards a closure in which the magic of the heroine's fertility produces an environment of auspicious relations expressive of cosmic renewal. It is the universe, where the all forms of life are originally related, where valuptuous young woman share their fertility with trees in elaborate vegetation rites, where a women's feet are ornamented with ritual anklets and red lac before she kicks the tree with her left foot to make it bloom.\(^{39}\) In the ‘Malavikāgnimitra’ when the lost princess is found by the chief queen’s low-caste half-brother and sent to his sister as an
offering, her arrival magically coincides with the coming of spring. The
king sees her in the painting of court ladies as the goddess of spring
incarnate. Mālavikā is sent by the queen to the grove of Lakṣmī, 
Goddess of fortune to perform the annual Aśoka blossom ritual called
"Bringing the Pregnant Aśoka Tree through the Labour of Birth".40

The king encounters her there and through a series of metaphors,
he evokes her as a goddess composed of every spring flower. The kings
evocation establishes an identification of Mālavikā with both the goddess
of the grove, Lakṣmī and her seasonal transformation, the goddess of
spring Mādhavī, when the flower-maid Bakulāvalikā adorns Mālavikā for
the Aśoka blossom ritual, she says: "your foot shines like a hundred
petaled red lotus; may you be constantly at the king's side". The ritual of
spring simultaneously brings her into contact with the tree and the king.
This ritual in the grove is the crucial scene of the drama. Its fulfillment
assures the king's political victory and the revelation of Mālavika's true
identity.41

According to Barbara Stoler Miller, this explains clearly why natural
environment with its special harmony of lines, colours and life and
movement should be preserved, for it gives aesthetic joy, thereby a bond
of love is established between it and us. We grant values to nature on
account of the qualities it has. Thus emerges the aesthetic moment when the forest is imaginatively explored and when any thought of using it for our interest or personal benefit becomes completely fulfilled.

Kālidāsa has portrayed forests in several ways. As we will see later in Vikramorvaśīya, it is a wilderness which could not be controlled by any human power. The forest dictates laws and even Urvaśī had to live as a creeper. The mad Purūravas wandered in the forest seeking Urvaśī but his cry is not answered. In this sense though Purūravas is seeing as attributing human qualities to the forest, the forest is indifferent towards his sufferings. Hence the nature is autonomous in its powers.

In Abhijñanaśākuntala Duṣyanta hunts in the wilderness. He tries to dominate the wilderness by his strength, but is stopped from killing by the hermits. From the wild forest he enters into a tapovana. The wilderness is extreme in its form and contents whereas the tapovana is having a tamed, calm and settled environment. The nature in tapovana is beautiful, pure and without any conflict. This area of forest is shared by sages and the animals and birds of the forest that are loved and cared by the dwellers of the hermitage. The physical power of the king or other human-being is irrelevant inside the āśrama. The environment of āśrama is filled with non-violence love and compassion.
Śakuntalā the innocent child of nature is loved by everyone. She is loved because she loves and cares for everyone. She is in full harmony with her surroundings. This creates an extra-ordinary beauty in her appearance. In the morning she is seen by the king while she watered the plants of the āśrama along with her friends Anasūya and Priyamvadā. Her love for each tree and creeper makes them the members of a special family of her own which consists of animals, plants and human beings. Nature is not left alone or rejected in the tapovana. It is loved and absorbed as the part of the community life practiced by the hermits. The natural and raw instincts and emotions if uncontrolled often cause harm to the harmonious flow of life. In the āśrama the wilderness is without its dark sides. The physical or material features are always harnessed and directed by spirituality. It gives a balance and rhythm to the life in the tapovana.

Kaṇva’s hermitage was situated in the forest and Kālidāsa has high regard for hermitages. The hermitage is situated on the banks of the river Mālinī. The animals of the hermitage wander in the forest here and there without any fear. They rest undisturbed under the trees. The hermit girls water the plants and creepers regarding them as there as brothers and
The hermits practiced self-control against the temptations of material pleasures.

But they were ready to understand and sympathize with the sorrow of other living beings. This sympathy is innate to the whole of tapovana. Sharing Śakuntalā’s sorrow the deer left fall the moresel of darbha-grass, the peacock stop their dancing, and the creepers whose pale leaves fall to the ground appear to shed tears. That time the deer clings to her dress not allowing her to move on.

By all these passages at the time of Śakuntalā’s departure Kālidāsa constructs an ideal image of the cordial and harmonious relationship between nature and human-beings. Kālidāsa’s vision is not at all human centred. In the hermitage people see the other beings of nature as equal to them and respect them. All these are given equal right to live and blossom. The principle of diversity and symbiosis and the belief that man is an inseparable part of nature has been suggested here. We can see ideas like these appearing in the philosophy of deep ecology as proposed by Arnae Naess.

Nature is the place where all living and non-living things are in constant touch and in communication. Its beauty consists in the harmony of existence which is a continuity like a flow of music. Multiple voice come together in this symphony and diversity creates the chorus of co-
existence. The fourth Act of AŚ is an example of an inclusive world that consists of everything in nature, both organic and inorganic, charged with love and compassion. The event of Śakuntalā’s departure from Kaṇva’s hermitage shows the depth of her relation with it. She can converse with every objects of her surroundings. Her spirit is an indivisible part of the spirit of nature.

The spirit of nature is the centre of everything that happens in 4th Act. Details of tapovana come to the centre point of action and Kālidāsa gives an eco-centric view of life in this act. Śakuntalā and nature are one and same. The human emotions and the natural emotions flows united here. This Advaita of man and nature is the universal feel in Kālidāsa’s poetry.

Conclusion

In this chapter Kālidāsa’s Nāṭakas were examined in the light of ecological ideas. The heavenly lady Urvaśī is attracted by the earthly Purūravas and comes down to live on earth. She and the king lives happily on the Gandhamādana enjoying the beauty of nature. Urvaśī is turned to a creeper and the king searches for her everywhere in the forest. The rainy seasons the behaviour of animals of the forest the rivers on the mountain all are given a holistic presentation linked by love and other
emotions. In Mālavikāgnimitra instead of wild forest Kālidāsa portrays the Palace garden. Here also he uses the technique of personification of nature. He gives great importance to the relationship of human and nature. The Aśoka tree blossoms by the touch of Malāvika’s foot. Her desire of the union with the king also fulfilled by this ritual of fertility. In AŚ the description of Kaṇva’s hermitage presents a life in full harmony with the surrounding nature. Kālidāsa refers to Śiva’s cosmic form, asṭamūrti. there is a special harmony of forest life and human life in AŚ. The nature in tapovana is beautiful, pure and without any conflict. Nature is not left alone or rejected. It is an integral part of community life practiced by the sages. The physical and material features are directed by sympathy and spiritual outlook. Kālidāsa’s vision of nature is not human-centred, all living beings are given equal right to live and prosper. He shows that the principle of diversity and man’s connectivity to nature is important in literature.
Notes:


2. Ibid., 22.


4. Ibid., p.13.


6. Ibid., p.17.

7. Ibid., p.29.

8. Ibid., p.35.

9. Ibid., p.37.

10. Ibid., p.49.

11. Ibid., p.64.

12. Ibid., p.71.

13. Ibid., p.75.


15. Ibid., p.107.


18. Ibid., p.106.

19. Ibid., p.115.

20. Ibid., p.117.

21. Ibid., p.123.

22. Ibid., p.43.


24. Ibid., p.47.

25. Ibid., p.91.


27. Ibid., p.137.


30. Ibid., p.18.

31. Ibid., p.38.

32. Ibid., p.112.

33. Ibid., p.117.

34. Ibid., p.218.
35. Ibid., p.219.


41. Ibid., p.31.

42. Ibid., p.17.

43. Ibid., p.115.