CHAPTER VII

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In this long discussion of ours it has been observed and amply established that the history of Indian rhetoric is the richest one of the cultural evolution of a nation. Different courses have got merged in this history following the movement of thought in various directions. At times one course happened to be quite opposite to the other. The Bengali intellect have succeeded in their mission of assimilating this rich heritage of rhetorical thought into the Bengali language. Though a kind of special awareness among the Bengalies about Sanskrit Rhetoric was observed during the 19th century, its impact, however, made way to Bengali literature even in the hour of her origination. The influence of Sanskrit rhetoric was inseparably present in our Bengali literature during the early and the middle ages. In the nineteenth century the concern of Bengali scholars about Rhetoric did not remain confined to the sphere of literary creation; on the contrary it also bore a hallmark in the intellectual discussion. This discourse has come to light in various ways and in a variety of gestures and postures.

The role of Bengali authors in the work of translating Sanskrit rhetoric was a remarkable one. The trend of the translation of Sanskrit rhetoric was found simultaneously during the nineteenth and the twentieth century in other Indian languages also, such as, specially in Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, Tamil, Kanara, Malayalam etc. In this field, the role of Bengal was an important one. Translation of various books starting from Bharata’s *Nātyaśāstra* to Panditaraja Jagannatha’s *Rasagangādhara* along with their commentaries and annotations found their places in the Bengali language. With great sincerity
and devotion the translators have endeavored to cater to the curiosity of the Bengali readers, either versed in or ignorant of the Sanskrit language and the knowledge of Sanskrit poetics. In the course of this discussion evaluating the success, or otherwise, of the eminent intellectuals like Nagendranath Chakraborty and other as translators we have noticed that though the language of these works of translation is in mostly Sanskritized as well as limping, still they were able to transmit Sanskrit ideas on poetry into Bengali language in an undistorted manner. As a result of this, new terms had been added to the Bengali language. In Bengali critical literature also new thoughts began to take root. We have to recognize the contribution of the translator above mentioned in the evolution of the thoughts and ideas of Bengali in keeping with Sanskrit rhetoric.

Just as the scholars of Hindi, Marathi and Gujrati languages have discussed and interpreted ancient Indian poetics in the light of the modern sciences like psychology, sociology etc. so also, the achievements of the scholars of Bengal in this particular field is also praiseworthy. In this context, the names that cross our mind at the very outset are those of Sitikantha Bachaspati, Lalmohan Vidyanidhi, Atul Ch. Gupta, Sudhir Kumar Dasgupta, Bishnupada Bhattacharya etc. This commentary-oriented discussion of Sanskrit rhetoric, particularly of the history of the evolution of Sanskrit rhetoric, the introductory details about the rhetoricians, the time and place of the advent of these rhetoricians etc, the place where the presentation of all these controversial subjects have found place in the Bengali language which is undoubtedly one of the richest of the Indian languages. In course of this discussion comparative studies of the various subjects of Indian poetics side by side with those of the west have also occupied a place here. As a result of this, through the discussions that have taken place in Bengali, the Indian rhetorics have got an opportunity, crossing over their native limits, to occupy
a position of importance on a par with the rest of the world’s ideas on poetry. In fact, this is a matter of pride for the Bengali language.

This kind of research-oriented studies in Bengali has spread out in some other directions also; for instance, those particular aspects of poetry which had been identified as its dosa or blemishes in Sanskrit rhetoric have been collected together and long discussion on these also have been geared up in the Bengali language. In this context, the name of the learned lady Anima Saha as the author of *Saṅskṛta Alāṁkār Śūstre Doṣatattva* deserves to be mentioned. Apart from this, it has also been very beautifully presented in Bengali language how rhetoricians, in spite of having made their presence in one particular trend of Sanskrit rhetoric, differed from one another in their respective thoughts as well as in their mode of expressions. Consequently, in the field of *Rasavada*, the deliberation that has found place in Bengali, initiating the comparison of *Utpattivāda, Anumitivāda, Bhuktivāda* and *Abhivyaktivāda* in their mutual relationship is undoubtedly a matter of glory for the Bengali language.

The achievement of the Bengali genius in giving birth to new ideas of poetics followed by various theories of Sanskrit rhetoric doubtlessly tops the rank compared to other Indian languages. Indian rhetoric was basically confined to the studies of the mystery surrounding the creation of poetry, the true nature and characteristics of poetry etc. Naturally, there was hardly any place in it for the studies of painting, sculpture, music, dance etc. But in the twentieth century Abannidranath came forward to take up the work of analyzing the real nature of painting and sculpture etc on the basis of the theories of Sanskrit aesthetics/rhetoric. Though at the beginning of such discussion the presence of Indian rhetoric was very much palpable, it
however, extended to the newer and newer areas of art, of course, along with this Western aesthetic concepts were also added.

In this field another eminent personality of the twentieth century was Nalini Kanta Gupta was added a new dimension. He had developed and refined the theories of Indian rhetoric and formulated some more new theories with the help of which he came forward to evaluate the world literature. As a result, Indian rhetoric itself had been able to come out in a new outfit and take its stand in the international perspective.

Though their discussion spread widely in different directions, at the root of it the role of the pathfinder was played by Sanskrit rhetoricians. In this respect Rabindranath had allowed a certain place to Indian poetics in various ways in course of his discussion on the subjects of literature; he, however, proceeded in the light of his own genius. Still the influence of the Indian rhetoric on this discussion relating to literature cannot be denied. The endeavour that could be seen in the Bengali language shaping and moulding newer literary principles in the light of Indian rhetoric which resulted from an awareness of the nature and development of contemporary world-literature as well as art and sculpture, is undoubtedly endowed with the glory for the Bengali geniuses.

So far as the history of Indian rhetoric is concerned, it must be mentioned that not only the Sanskrit language, rather in the native or regional languages too, a practical aspect of Sanskrit rhetoric became obvious even in the middle ages. During the middle ages the main support of this trend was Bhakti-literature. Among the eminent scholars who had composed their works giving recognition to bhakti as rasa complete in itself, were Srirupa Goswami (Ujjvalanīlamāṇi, Bhaktirasamṛtasindhu), Madhusudan Sarasvati (Bhaktirasāyanam). In the process of the translation of these works, writing
commentaries on them, the evaluation of literature in accordance with these books—containing various theories contribution made by Bengali intellectuals is remarkable. Awareness concerning the theoretical aspect of Bhaktirasa in the Bengali language dawned on the men of letters even from the time of Caitanyacaritāmṛta itself. In the modern age this consciousness has found expression in analytical prose. The discussion which has occupied a place in Bengali regarding the history of Bhaktirasa, its evaluation, the presentation as well as the refutation of the views of the opponents of Bhaktirasa etc. is of a very high standard. The books which have been written on this subject in keeping with Sanskrit rhetoric have made room for the origination of a parallel literary principle depending on wonderful rasa-śāstra relating to the subject of bhakti.

In the context of this discussion it can be mentioned that not only the experts of Sanskrit poetics had seriously, particularly regarding the trend that developed in poetry, of using various rhetorical figures endeavoured for the embellishment of the beauty of poetry, but also many among them went to the extent of even accepting rhetoric as the very soul of poetry. Simultaneously with this, Sanskrit rhetoric was specially enriched by giving definition of various kinds of Sabdālaṁkāra and Arthālaṁkāra and giving illustrations of these from Sanskrit poetry.

Knowingly or unknowingly, the use of these rhetorical figures had, as it were, begun in the Bengali language since the hour of its very inception. In this matter the awareness of the Bengalis was particularly observed in the Vaisnava literature of the middle ages. In the modern age this consciousness, instead of remaining confined to the use of rhetorical figures, extended to the extent of defining the figures and analyzing them with illustrations from Bengali poetry and presenting them comparatively with Western rhetoric,
gained ground in the Bengali language and worked a lot for its prosperity. But, in this field, the contributions of Sitikantha Bacaspati, Lalmohan Vidyanidhi, Shyamapada Chakraborty, Sudhir Kumar Dasgupta etc, deserve a special mention. In fact, Sanskrit rhetoric spread beyond its boundaries with the whole — hearted toil of the Bengali eminent men of intellect, because, these figures of Sanskrit rhetoric in company with other rhetorics of the world specially vindicated the inherent beauty of Sanskrit rhetoric. In this field, Bengal’s success in comparison with other Indian languages is not negligible in any measure.

It has to be summarily admitted that in the translation work of Sanskrit aesthetics, in the writing of commentaries and in the attempts at formulating new theories in accordance with Sanskrit rhetorical principles and also in defining and illustrating these from Sanskrit poetry etc, — the vast area of literary criticism or critical literature that has developed in the Bengali language is undoubtedly something for us to be proud of. The vast extent of literature that was ushered around Caitanya’s bhāva Movement had its root in Bhakti which was established as rasa having evolved into an extensively new poetics, through translation and evaluation.

In fine, we have had no hesitation to say that no literature or language other than Sanskrit poetics has so far been able to enrich and glorify Bengali literature, and the title to the thesis *An Interpretation of Sanskrit Poetics In Bengali* is, we honestly and sincerely believe, to all intents and purposes justified.

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