CHAPTER VII
KAVISAMAYA (Poetical Convention)

The term 'kavisamaya' signifies the poetic convention, i.e. the similar behaviour of poets. In poetics the first use of this word is found in Rājaśekhara's Kāvyamāṃsā. Before that Vāmana uses the term 'Kāvyasamaya' in his Kāvyālakārasūtravṛtti (5-1), where under this heading 'Kāvyasamaya', Vāmana directs the poets to follow certain rules so that the errors relating to grammar, metre etc. may not occur in their writings. He includes the asāstriya and alaukika things under the blemishes of a work. But, Rājaśekhara includes them amongst the kavisamayas. He writes that the descriptions of asāstriya, alaukika, and parampara-āyāta things, which the poets use for embellishment, are the kavisamayas. Compare:

\[ \text{asāstriyam alaukikā ca parampara-āyātām}
\]

\[ \text{yamarthamupanibandhanti kavayaḥ sa kavisamayaḥ} \]

The kavisamayas are the pre-eminent causes for embellishment of kāvyas. They are not the adornments themselves, on the other hand they form the very life of ornaments.

Anyway, in the literature of Śrī Śaṅkara the adept handling of the poetical conventions is met with; and by the skilled application of kavisamayas Śrī Śaṅkarācārya elegantly gives a literary touch to his compositions.

1. Kāvyamāṃsā, chapter 14, P. 78.
Here a few examples will be suffice to testify to this statement:-

According to kavisamaya the Cakora-bird drinks the moon-beams. In Sāhityadarpaṇa, Viśvanātha writes 'jyotsnā peyā cakoraih'. Rājasekhara also says 'cakorānā' candrikāpānam ca. Rājasekhara cites a beautiful verse as an example of this poetic convention. In that verse there is a vivid description of the female cakora's drinking of the moon-beams raising its bill and swelling its throat, cf.

etāṣṭā malayopakāṇṭhasaratāmenākṣi rodhobhuvā -
ścāpābhyaśaniketanām bhagavataḥ preyo manojañmanat /
yāsu syāmanivasu pitatamaso muktāmayīscandrikāḥ
piyante vivṛtor dhvacancu vicalatkanthām cakorāṅgaṇāḥ //

Śrī Saṅkaracārya, however, employs this kavisamaya in a captivating manner while eulogising the beauty of the moon-like face of the Mother Goddess. He writes that as the cakoras drink the beams radiating from the smile of her moon-like face, their tongues become tasteless, because of excessive sweetness; and, therefore, every night cakoras, being desirous of sour taste, drink excessively the rushing stream of nectar from the cool-beamed moon considering it to be sour gruel. In this statement there occurs the figure of speech named Atisāyokti. This Atisāyokti becomes more charming as it is

2. Sāhityadarpaṇa, 7/32 (3) Kāvyāmimamsā, Ch.14, P.51.
(4) Ibid. Chapter 14, P.52.
adorned by this poetic convention. The verse runs as follows:

smitajyotsnajalam tava vadanacandrasya pibatām
cakorānāmāsīdatirasatayā cañcujadimā /
ataste Śītāsorāmrālāharīmālārarucayā
pibanti svacchandam niśi niśi bhṛṣam kañjikadhiyā / 

Elsewhere, Śankara, makes use of this Kavisamaya in a befitting manner. He says that as the bird cakora set: pleasure in drinking the moon-beams, a sādākṣa also gets Supreme Bliss by the meditation of Deva and Devī. The verse runs as follows:

visuddhau te śuddhasphatikavisādam vyomajanakam
śivaṁ seve devimapi śivasamānavyasaninim /
yayoḥ kāntyā yantyā śaśikiraṇasārūpyasaraniṁ
vidhūtāntardhvāntā vilasati ca korīva jagat/ 

It is presumed that the cakoras have great liking for the moon as per this convention of the drinking of moon-light by the cakoras. And, therefore, the cakora becomes the symbol of a true lover. The moon is the well-known standard of comparison for face, while the cakora for eyes. In the series of literature, the implication of the sweet relation of the lover and the beloved person through

5. Saundarya-laharī, 63.
6. Ibid, 40.
Metaphor occurs from this relation between the moon and the cakora. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya also uses this mode of comparison in his writings. Thus, on one occasion, while eulogising Acyuta he narrates Acyuta’s behaviour of cakora to the moon-like face of Gopikā.

gopikāvadana-candra-cakora, nitya nirguna nirañjana jīvino /
pūrṇarūpa jaya śaṅkara sārva, īśripate sāmaya duḥkha-māsēṣam //

For similar expression we may mention a verse from Jayadeva’s Gītagovinda. The verse runs thus:

abhīnava jaladhara sundara dhūptamandara et śrīmukhacandra-cakora ! jaya jayadeva hare /

As per the convention of poets the bird Cātaka or Hawk Cuckoo is said to have a relation with clouds, and it is said that the Cātakas drink no other water than the water of rain. It is described also that the Cātakas, being thirsty, pray to the clouds for a drop of rain-water. From this solicitation for a drop of rain-water their love mixed with devotion to the clouds is suggested. The Cātaka is, therefore, regarded as an ideal lover; and hence for the suggestion of true love the Cātaka is the best standard. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

7. Acyutaśataka, 5
8. Gītagovinda, 1.
adopts this convention of poets in his works. Thus, on one occasion, while making an eulogy of the river Yamuna, Śaṅkara very aptly applies this kavisāaya with a puja. The water of Yamuna is dark in colour. The Cātakas through their illusion take it for a visible cloud appearing anew; and out of their devotion to the clouds they roam by the side of the river Yamuna. There is also another meaning—the water of the river is as dark as the dark complexion of Śrīkṛṣṇa. The Cātakas take the river Yamuna for Śrīkṛṣṇa; and for their devotion to Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Cātakas roam by the bank of Yamuna. The verse is as follows:

\[
\text{lasattarāṅgasāngadhūtabhūtabjayatapātakā}
\]
\[
\text{nāvinamādurīdhurīnabhaktijātacātakā} /
\]
\[
\text{tattanta vāsadāsahamsasāvṛtāmnikāmadā}
\]
\[
\text{dhunoru no manomalam kalindanandina} \text{sadā //}
\]

Śrī Śaṅkara also uses this poetic convention of drinking of the rain-water by Cātaka with a nice illustration. Thus, when eulogising the Mother Goddess he writes that though he has no proper devotion unto her, yet the Mother Goddess should cast her compassionate glances to him. The clouds are used to pour rain-water into the mouth of the Cātakas. cf.

\[
\text{prabhūtā bhaktiste yadapi na mamālamanasa-}
\]
\[
\text{stvaya tu śrīmatyā sadayamavalokyo'hamadhunā} /
\]
\[
\text{payodah paniyam disāti madhuran cātakamukhe}
\]

10 bhṛṣṭām śaṅke kairvā vidhibhiranūṇātī mama matib //
As per poetic convention certain trees have different longings which have to be satisfied before their pregnancy i.e. blossoming forth. Thus, Sanskrit poets conventionally describe that the Aśoka-tree puts forth blossoms when kicked with left foot by a beautiful damsel cf. 'pādāghātādāsōkām vikasati' etc.  Kālidāsa employs this poetic convention in his various works. As an example of this kavisamaya, the following verse of Kālidāsa is oft-quoted:

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  raktasokascalakisālayah kesārastatra kāntah
  pratyāsannau kurubakavrtermādhavimandapasya /
  ekāh sakhyāstava saha mayā vāmapādābhilāsā
  kānkṣatyānayo vadanamadirām dohadacchadmanāsāyāḥ //
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Sīrī Sāṅkarācārya also, on one occasion, applies this kavisamaya in his Saundarya-lahari. Thus, when describing the feet of Devī he says that Śiva becomes jealous when the kankeli-tree or the Aśoka-tree longs for a kick as a 'dohada' i.e. pregnancy-desire. The verse is as follows:

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  mamovākām brūmo nayanaramanīyāya padayo-
  stavāsmai dvandvāya sputārucirālaktakavate /
  asūyatyatyaantar yadabhīhanānāya sprhayate
  pasūnāmīśānah pramadavanakahkellitarave //
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11. Sāhityadarpana 7/24
12. Meghadūtām, 2/18
The kurahaka-tree is said to put-forth flowers when embraced by a beautiful woman, cf. 'tilakakurabakam vikṣanālinganābhyām'. Śrī Śaṅkara has the notion of this kavisamaya while eulogising the chastity of the Mother Goddess. He eulogises the chastity of the Goddess saying that she alone does not embrace even the kurabaka-tree giving up her husband Śiva, cf.

kalatram vaidhātram kati kati bhajante na kavayaḥ
śriyo devyāḥ ko vā na bhavati patiḥ kairapi dhanaḥ
mahādevaḥ hitvā tava sati satInāmacaram
kucābhāyāmāśaṅgaḥ kurabakataroraparyasulabhah //

Sanskrit poets hold that Cupid is bodiless or embodied, cf. 'kāmasya mūrttatvamamūrttatvatm ca'. His arrows are made of flowers; and the bowstring is of black-bees. In the Sāhityadarpana Viśvanātha thus narrates this fact 'maurvi rolambamālā dhanuratha visīkhāh kausumāh puspakeṭo' etc. Śrī Śaṅkara adopts this kavisamaya puspakem too in his compositions. For example we may cite the following verse from his writings:

dhanuḥ pauspaṁ maurvi madhukaramayī paṅca visīkhāḥ
vasantaḥ sāmanto malayamarudayodhanarathaḥ /

tathāpyekāḥ sarvāṁ himagirisute kāmapi kṛpā-
mapāṅgatā labdhvā jagadidamanaṅgo vijayate //

14. Quoted by Mallēnātha in the commentary on the verse, No.2/18 of Meghadūtaṃ.
15. Saundarya-laharī, 96.
Here it is stated that the bodiless Cupid, whose bow is made of flowers, bowstring made of black-bees, whose arrows are five in number, whose minister is spring, the war chariot Malaya-breeze, conquers alone the entire earth being favoured by the compassionate side-glances of the Goddess.

It is poetically described that the Goddess Lakṣmī resides in the blue-lotus, which is also stated to bloom not at day-time, but at night. cf. 'ramāyah padmavāsitvām' - 'divā nisotpalaḥjānam vikāsitvām na varṇyatām'. Sri Sāṅkarācārya very elegantly uses this poetic convention in the panegyric of the Mother Goddess. He writes that Lakṣmī, when the blue-lotus folds up the cover of its petals like a door, leaves it at dawn, and at night, when the blue-lotus unfolds itself, enters it. cf.:-

tavyāparme karṇējanayananapaisūnyacakita
niliyante toṣe niyatamanimesāḥ śapharikāḥ /
iyāca śīrṣbaddhasaḥhacchadapuṭakavātaṁ kuvalayām
jahāti pratyūṣe niṣī ca vighaṭayya praviśati // 20.

Fame is represented by Sanskrit poets as white, while valour as red. cf.

suklatvam kīrttihāsādau kārṣṇyam cākārttipāpayah
pratāpe raktatoṣnātve raktatvaṁ krodharāgayoh // 21.

19. Alāṅkāracintāmani, 1/73 and 1/75
20. Saundarya-laharī, 55.
Anyway, the skilled handling of this kavisamaya is met with in Śrī Śaṅkara's works on several occasions. As for illustration we may cite the following verse:

\[
\text{vahatyamba stamberamadanajakumbhaprakṛtibhīḥ}
\]
\[
\text{samārabdhāṁ muktāmaśibhiramatāṁ śāralatikām /}
\]
\[
\text{pr kucābhogo bimbādhararucibhirantaḥ śābalītāṁ}
\]
\[
\text{pratāpavyāmisīrāṁ puradamayituḥ kirtimiva te // 72.}
\]

In this verse it is stated that the Mother Goddess wears a necklace of pearls originating in the frontal globe of the elephant-demon Stamberama. The pearls of the necklace white in colour, becomes red by the glow of the bimba-like lower lip of the Goddess; and therefore, it seems that the Mother, as if, holds upon her breasts the glory mixed with valour of Śrī Śaṅkara in keeping with the kavisamaya the river Sona is red, the Ganges white, while the Yamuna is blue. So says Lakṣmīdhara in his commentary on Saundarya-laharī - 'naṇaḥ puṃpravāheḥ sōnaḥ iṣṭanābhaḥ sa tu raktavāraḥ gaṅgā bhāgīrathī śvetavarna tapanatanaḥ kālindī nilavārṇā iti kaviprasiddhi '.23 Śrī Śaṅkara uses this convention while describing the triad of colours of the eyes of the Goddess. Śaṅkara fancies that the three colours such as red, white, and black pertaining to the eyes of the Mother Goddess at the confluence of the rivers Sona, Ganges, and Yamuna respectively. cf.

22. Saundarya-laharī, 74.

23. Lakṣmīdhara's commentary on the verse No. 54 of Saundarya-laharī.
pavitrīkartaṁ naḥ paśupatiparādhina-hṛdaye

dayāmitraīnnetraīnadravālasyāmarucibhiḥ /

nadaḥ sōna gangā tapanatanayeti dhruvamamum

trayanāṁ tīrthānāmupanayasi sambhedamanāyam // 24.

To Sanskrit poets the Śrāgāra-rasa or the erotic sentiment is red in colour. However, in Śaṅkara’s works the application of this convention is also met with. We may cite the following verse as illustration in point:-

gatāste manoṣṭvam druhiṇaharirudresvarabhṛtaḥ
śivah svacchacchāyāghatitakapatapracchadanatāḥ /
tvadīyānāṁ bhāsāṁ pratiphalanarāgārunatāya
śārīrī śrāgāro rasa iva drśām dogdhi kutukam // 25.

It is said here that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Ṛṣvam are standing as the four feet of the throne of the Goddess. Then as Śiva is asleep on the throne, there becomes a cover by his crystal lustre; and as the glow of the Goddess is reflected on sleeping Śiva, it becomes red in colour. Therefore, curiosity for amorous sentiment is roused in the mind of the beholder.

25. Ibid 94.