CHAPTER - II
A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SANSKRIT POETICS

Bharata's Nātyaśāstra is our oldest extant work on the Alahkāraśāstra. In the opinions of eminent scholars, this work belongs to the 1st century B.C. This work consists of 37 chapters and deals with dramaturgy. The composition and staging of a play as well as dramatic appreciation are dealt with in great detail; and as accessories of drama, such subjects as music, dancing and others are amply discussed. Apart from drama and dramatic theory, early beginnings of poetic theory too are visible in this work.

The importance of Bharata in the history of Sanskrit Poetics lies in his being the founder of the Rasa school of Poetics.

The next available work on Poetics is the Kāvyālāṅkāra of Bhāmaha. Bhāmaha's date is not definitely settled, but he is supposed to have flourished some time between 500 and 600 A.D.
This is the first attempt to deal with poetics separate from dramatic theory. Bhāmaha's importance lies in his being the oldest exponent of the Alāṅkāra school of Poetics. So, his work marks the beginning of an influential literary theory. Udbhata's Kāvyālāṅkāra saṅgraha and Rudraṭa's Kāvyālāṅkāra came subsequent to Bhāmaha's Alāṅkāra theory. Udbhata has written a commentary on Bhāmaha's work viz. Bhāmahavivarana. He flourished in 800 A.D. and Rudraṭa's date is between 800 and 850 A.D.

After Bhāmaha the next writer on poetic theory was the well-known critic and poet Daṇḍin- the author of Kāvyādārśa. Daṇḍin's date is approximately the same as Bhāmaha's viz. 6th century A.D. His work shows a more systematic presentation of material on Poetics than what Bhāmaha presented. He was the earliest theorist to devote attention to the Guna-Rīti aspect of Poetry. So, he is considered as the exponent of partly the Alāṅkāra school and partly the Rīti school.

Vāmana systematised Daṇḍin's concept of Rīti in his work viz. Kāvyālāṅkāraśūtrāṇi. Vāmana was a
contemporary of Udbhata; therefore his date is about 800 A.D. He is the great exponent of the Riti school of Poetics. He boldly declares that Riti or some special arrangement of words is the soul of Poetry. (Ritirātma kāvyasya). It may be mentioned here that Vāmana shows a partiality for drama and considered that as the literary form par excellence.

The 9th century A.D. was an outstanding period in the history of Sanskrit Poetics for, it saw many important theoretical works. Out of them the place of eminence easily goes to the Dhvanyālōka of the famous aesthetician Ānandavardhana. This can be reckoned as the most important work in the entire history of Sanskrit Poetic theory. The Dhvanyālōka along with its commentary Dhvanyālokalocana written towards the end of 10th century A.D. by Abhinavagupta revolutionized the entire trend of this śāstra and placed it in an entirely new perspective. Ānandavardhana for the first time elaborately formulated the dhvani theory of Poetics. He is therefore, rightly regarded as the founder of the Dhvani school. Moreover, Ānandavardhana and his followers deserve further credit for their success in satisfactorily incorporating the concept of Rasa into their critical framework, thus effecting fine synthesis of the two
The 10th century A.D. also was an outstanding period for Sanskrit Poetics. Because, the period from Bhāmaha
to Ānandavardhana only concentrated on literary theory of poetry. But, after a long period, valuable works on dramaturgy were composed. Bhāṭṭanāyaka, author of the Ṣṛdayadarpana, Bhāṭṭatauta, the author of the Kāvyakautuka, Bhāṭṭa Lollaṭa and Śrī Śankuka have dealt with the Rasa and dramatics. But their works are not available today; their views on Rasa are found quoted by Abhinavagupta, Mammaṭa, Hemacandra and others. Notable author of this period was Abhinavagupta. He wrote a commentary on Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra viz. Abhinavabhārati and a commentary on the Dhvanyāloka viz. the Dhvanyālokalocana. Another important work of this period is Daśarūpaka of Dhanaṇḍaya. These two treatises comprise the greatest contribution to drama and dramatic theory by the Sanskrit rhetoricians. Another famous rhetorician of this period was Rājaśekhara, author of the Kāvyamīmāṃsā. Herein are discussed a variety of subjects which has direct bearing on Poetry, and this supplies a wealth of valuable information. The origin of Kāvyasāstra and the extant lore on the subject, qualifications necessary for a Poet, categories of poets the śāstra that a poet should necessarily learn, daily life of a poet, poet's borrowings from other poetical works, Poetic licence and Poetic beliefs - these are some of a multitude of subjects treated in this work. Many details are given in the chapter dealing with 'Causes of Poetry'.
Thus this treatise is a store house of information-practical information necessary from the point of view of the poet rather than that of the critic.

Minor work of this period was *Abhidhāvṛtti mātra* of Mukulabhaṭṭa. One of the outstanding works belonging to this century was the *Vakroktijīvita* of Kuntaka (950 A.D.). This treatise is of particular significance because it postulates the *Vakrokti* school of Sanskrit poetics. He denies to *dhvani* or suggested sense an independent status and includes it under the all-pervading term *Vakrokti*.

Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy observes: "In the whole range of Sanskrit poetical theory, we do not have any one who can be termed a practical literary critic in the modern sense of the term except Kuntaka. Most of the early rhetoricians like Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin are so interested in rules and definitions that they offer examples of their own authorship for the points in question and they do not even select examples from master poets. Even those who do select examples from literature, like Vāmana, are satisfied with illustrating petty details noted by them and their works reveal but partial glimpses of literary beauty in individual bits. None of them even attempt the task of reviewing or appreciating a literary work as a whole, analysing the
various elements that work up to a unity of impression. Bharata's rules regarding dramatic plot-construction, characters and *rasa* are simply taken for granted but never illustrated in detail with reference to any specific work. Though Anandavardhana subjected the two major epics to an examination revealing a total perspective, he too did not extend his literary analysis to the Sanskrit classics of poetry and drama. Kuntaka indeed is the only writer who attempted this task of literary analysis, critical appreciation and appraisal from a total perspective, of almost all the major poets and playwrights in classical Sanskrit literature. Not only the renowned works of Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Bhāravi, Māgha, Viśākhadatta, Bhaṭṭa nārāyaṇa are analysed with depth and literary insight, but also less known and lost classics like *Abhijñāna Jānakī* and *Puspadūṣitaka*.

Kuntaka may not be as great philosopher as Anandavardhana; he may not be as good a logician as Bhāmaha or as fervent a dialectician as Mahimabhaṭṭa; but as a literary critic in the true sense of the term, Kuntaka stands unrivalled. He was very sensitive critic with genuine literary taste. His literary criticism itself often rises to the level of good literature. Kuntaka is indeed peerless in his aesthetic sensibility which animates the whole of his work.
and makes it full interest to one and all interested in pure literary criticism. Kuntaka appears thus as a true successor of Anandavardhana, giving a new orientation to literary study itself." (VJ. Intro. Pp.xxxv-vi).

Another new theorist of 11th century is Mahimabhaṭṭa, the author of the Vyaktivicaka. He started a new theory viz. Anumitivāda. According to him there was no separate function called dhvani in poetry; and what dhvani theorists postulated as the novel function of suggestion was none other than the logical process of inference. But his Anumitivāda did not get recognition as a separate school of Sanskrit Poetics.

Bhoja of this century is famous for his works, viz. the Śṛṅgāraprakāśa and Sarasvatīkāṇṭhābharana. Bhoja is also noted for his view that there is only one rasa in literature and that is Śṛṅgāra.

Notable author of this period is Kṣemendra. He wrote three works on literary theory viz. Aucityavicāracarca, Suvṛttatilaka and Kavikāṇṭhābharana. The first one is noteworthy because it exposes the concept of Aucitya. So, Kṣemendra is considered as the exponent of Aucitya school. It was being the last of the schools of critical
thought in Sanskrit Poetics. Rudraṭa alias Rudrabhaṭṭa's minor work viz. Śṛṅgāratilaka is found in this period.

At the end of this 11th century A.D. the brightest luminary in this phase of the śāstra was Mammaṭa, the author of the Kāvyaprakāśa. Mammata was a staunch follower of the dhvani school. His work takes the form of a handbook on the subject with all the concepts and theories woven into one organic and compact whole. It is a profound work and numerous commentaries were composed to elucidate the teachings contained therein.

Prof. S.V.Dixit says -

"The causes of the great popularity of the Kāvyaprakāśa are mainly four-fold: (i) Firstly it epitomises all the important theories and doctrines before him. He has taken all that he thought to be good from the four schools of Poetics prevalent then viz. Rasa, Dhvani, Vakrokti, Rīti and Alāṅkāra schools; (ii) Secondly he gave a systematic pithy survey of the entire field of Poetics (barring dramaturgy). He has all through remained concise and workman-like and has generally eschewed over-elaboration; (iii) Mammaṭa's vast erudition was also great cause of the popularity of the Kāvyaprakāśa;(iv) His emphasis on Dhvani and Rasa, which were the most popular schools of the day,
and deservedly so, also added to the popularity of his work." (KP. Intro. p.xix).

Hemacandra's *Kāvyānuśāsana* (composed between 1136-1143 A.D.), Ruyyaka's *Alaṅkārasarvasva* (1135-1150 A.D.) Vāgbhaṭa I's *Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra* (1125-1143 A.D.) and Vāgbhaṭa II's *Kāvyānuśāsana* (probably flourished in the 14th century) closely follow Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa*. Ruyyaka was the author of *Nāṭaka mīmāṃsā* - a treatise on dramaturgy.

And again during 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries attention is focussed on drama and dramatic theory. *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra (12th c.), Bhāvaprakāśa of Śāradātanaya (13th c.), Nāṭakalakṣāna-ratnakosa of Sāgaranandin (13th c.) and Nāṭakaparibhāṣā of Śiṅgabhūpāla (14th c.) were composed in this period.

Vidyādhara's *Ekāvalī* (1300 A.D.), Vidyānātha's *Pratāparudrayaśobhūṣana* (1325 A.D.), Jayadeva's *Candraloka* (13th c.) are designed to cover the entire field of Sanskrit Poetics.

Next important work is the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha. Viśvanātha's date is about 1350 A.D. Next to the
Kāvyaprakāśa the Sāhityadarpaṇa is the most popular work in the history of Alāṅkāraśāstra. Its peculiarity is that it treats the whole of the science of poetics including dramaturgy, and also it gave a new turn to Bharata's Rasa theory.

P.V. Kane opines-

"Its greatest merit is that it presents in the compass of a single work, a full and complete treatment of the science of rhetoric in all its branches. Most Sanskrit writers on Sāhitya, such as Daṇḍin, Mammaṭa and Jagannātha, leave out the treatment of dramaturgy. The Sāhityadarpaṇa, however, contains a thorough disquisition on the technicalities of the dramatic art and forms, together with the Nātyaśāstra of Bharata and Daśarūpa of Dhanaśījaya, a triumvirate in the domain of the Sanskrit drama. Another merit of the work is that it is written in a simple and flowing style. The reader is often hampered in going over the Kāvyaprakāśa of Mammaṭa by the author's studied efforts at brevity. Jagannātha frightens the student by his scathing criticisms of his predecessors Viśvanātha, although he displays here and there a love for hair-splitting, is generally clear in expression. He is however, more or less compiler and not an original writer." (HSP, p.303).
During 15th and 16th centuries writers like Bhanudatta, (15th c.), author of three works viz. Rasaśānjari and Rasatarāgini and Alāṅkāratilaka; Rupagovāmin (16th c.) author of Ujjvalanīlamanī; Kavikarṇapūra (16th c.), author of Alāṅkāra kaustubha; Keśavamīśra (16th c.), author of Alāṅkāra-śekhara; Prabhākara (16th c.) author of Rasapradīpa, Appayya Dīkṣita (16th c.) was the author of three works viz. Vṛttavārtikā, Kuvalayānanda and Citramāṃsā and these stand in secondary importance.

Jagannātha is the last great writer on the Alāṅkāraśāstra. He composed two works viz. the Rasagaṇādhara and the Citramāṃsā-khaṅḍana. His literary activity fell between 1620-1660 A.D. He was a typical product of ancient India, a scholar, a critic and a poet, united in one. A characteristic of his writing is his supreme set-confidence which more often than not is justified. His Rasagaṇādhara ranks in importance and authoritativeness next only to the Dhvanyāloka and the Kāvyaprakāśa.

P.V. Kane appreciates:

"His verses are composed in an easy, flowing and graceful style and exhibit great poetic talent. His method is first to define a topic, then to discuss it and elucidate it by citing his own examples and to comment on the views of his
predecessors. His prose is characterised by a lucid and vigorous style and displays great critical acumen. He is always independent in his views and boldly criticizes on occasions esteemed ancient writers,... His criticism displays great sanity of judgement, maintains a high level of brilliant polemics and acuteness and is generally couched in courteous language (except when dealing with the views of Appayya). The justice of his criticism has to be acknowledged in most cases." (HSP, pp.321-2).

After Jagannātha the line of eminent writers on Sanskrit poetics draws to a close.

Even though minor works like Nātyapradīpa of Sundaramiśra, (17th c.), Alaṅkāraśāhīra of Viśveśvara (18th c.), Alaṅkāraśāhīra of Amṛtānanda Yogan (second half of 14th c.), Camatkāra Candrikā of Viśveśvara, Kavicandra (1380-1400 A.D.) etc. appeared after Jagannātha. These works were meagre importance and contained no original thinking.

So, undoubtedly it can be concluded that with Jagannātha the history of Sanskrit Poetics comes to a standstill.