A study of the Vakroktijīvita reveals that Kuntaka holds Kālidāsa in high esteem. He names him as Satkavi or master-poet. According to Kuntaka, Kālidāsa 'is full of beauties packed with natural elegance'. Again he eulogises: "Kālidāsa 'is such a creative genius that one might well deem him as the embodiment of the Muse of Rasas at their best.'

But Kuntaka is not a blind admirer of Kālidāsa. He is an objective literary critic and as such he does not hesitate to point out the defects which he notices in the works of Kālidāsa. It is also pertinent to examine how far Kuntaka is justified in picking holes in Kālidāsa's coats.

While showing the importance of the qualities viz. 'propriety' and 'splendour' in a poetic composition Kuntaka says:
"These twin literary qualities (propriety and splendour), very appealing in all the three styles permeate every element of poetry like word, sentence and the work as a whole."\(^4\)

It means, the qualities 'propriety' and 'splendour' pervade all elements of poetry: the word, sentence and the work as a whole and also these qualities permeate all the three styles of poetry namely, the 'elegant', the 'brilliant', and the 'middling'.

Kuntaka rightly remarks: "The propriety of the word is nothing but its artistic turn and it admits of several varieties. The highest secret of artistic beauty consists in a spontaneous description of truth in nature. Since a sentence has only appropriate expression as its life-breath, absence of it even in a part will destroy the delight of the connoisseurs."\(^5\)

As an example he cites a verse from the Raghu.

Rāma was returning to Ayodhyā in the aerial car with Sītā after the conquest of Lāṅkā. He shows all the places to Sītā. When they reach the spot of the Niṣāda king Guha, Rāma says:
"Here is the town of the lord of the Niśādas in which when I tied my matted hair having first put aside the crown, Sumantra began to weep exclaiming "O Kaikeyī, your desires have been completely fulfilled." 6

Here Kuntaka opines, "Here Rāma is to be upheld as an ideal hero endowed with all heroic qualities. That such a great personage remembers the meanest incident of this kind and, what is more, states it in so many words, smacks of extreme impropriety." 7

Yes, here, Kuntaka's statement is correct. That eminent personage Rāma, who is called as an ideal king should not have remembered bad incidents. But Rāma did the same here. He ought to have said 'this is the town of Guha'. But by this statement of Rāma, can we say that he was disgusted with Kaikeyī because he was sent to the forest by her? Or, was it the intention of the poet to indicate that Rāma was also a mere man, though he was such a great personage? Any how, it should be noticed that the works of such a great poet like Kālidāsa also contain impropriety in some parts.

Afterwards Kuntaka continues, "In a work as a whole also, if some part should lack in propriety, it becomes
tarnished even like a clothing which becomes wholly spoilt though burnt only at one end." For this, he cites the dialogue between king Dilīpa and the lion from the Raghu.

According to the instructions of Vasiṣṭha King Dilīpa begins to attend upon the holy cow Nandinī, which is able to fulfil his desire of getting a son. Once, he was immersed in enjoying the grandeur of Nature, while Nandinī was grazing grass. All of a sudden, he heard her agonized cries and he saw a lion sitting upon the holy cow. Then he got ready to draw his arrow from his quiver, but his hands became immovable. The astonished king prays to the lion to leave his preceptor's cow and eat his own body. During this conversation the lion says to Dilīpa:

"But if you fear to meet the great displeasure of your single-cowed preceptor, who is the very image of fire, it is in your power to allay his anger by presenting him crores of cows, whose udders are as big as pitchers of water (i.e. having ample and full udders)."

Kuntaka's opinion here is, this sentence of the lion, which was told to mock the king is proper. But as he gives more importance to his honour, his own life seems contemptible to the king. So he replies:
"And again how is it possible to avert the wrath of the great sage by offering other cows? Know that this cow is in no way inferior to Surabhi, and it is only through the influence of the god Rudra that you have been able to attack her."\(^{11}\)

According to Kuntaka "This is full of extreme impropriety. For, one can construe the king as entertaining the possibility that both his teacher and he himself could afford to neglect the life of this cow without blame, provided other cows of the same calibre existed."\(^{12}\)

If the king had said only the first half viz. 'how is it possible to avert the wrath of the great sage by offering other cows?', then we could say there appeared impropriety. But the next half shows his respect for Nandini. Even the intention of his reply which is given to the lion is proper and full of respect. In his conversation he says if a Kṣatriya does not fulfil his obligation of protecting his subjects what use is a kingdom and life to him? In the utterance of such a person how is it possible for impropriety to appear? And except Kuntaka no one has said there is impropriety here.

Elucidating impropriety Kuntaka gives another instance from the Kumāra. Therein Cupid boasts:
"Should your fickle mind be after another's devoted wife, with a body famished by religious vows because of her irresistible charm you have only to say a word. I shall see she sheds her shyness and runs to clasp your neck." 

The unbearable troubles given by Tārakāsura made gods to ask the help of Indra. Then, Cupid called by Indra to seek help boasts of his prowess as quoted above.

According to Kuntaka, "This whole speech bristles with bad manners. That the lord of heaven with all his majesty should be amenable to such indecent endeavour as suggested by the words taints it with impropriety." 

Here Kuntaka's opinion is correct. Indra is the lord of all gods. The way of talking of Cupid is wrong to such a person. C.K.Venkataramayya's opinion is also the same.

On the other hand, these talks of Cupid suit his character. Because after all Cupid's work is to compromise the lovers. So, he is talking according to his character. In his speech we can see the over confidence and boastfulness.

Thus according to Kuntaka even the works of great poets like Kālidāsa contain impropriety. And this loss of propriety though may be in some parts destroys the delight of the readers.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

CHAPTER IX.

1. "येन मार्गण सत्काव्य: कालिदास्प्रसंगतयो गता: प्रयाता: ....."
   - V.J. p.34

2. "लहजौद्वाराप्रतितिद्वितिस्य ऐङ्ग दर्शनस्तन्तर यस्य (कालिदास क्रेम:) ....."
   - V.J. p.150

3. "..... पर्यायसतततरस्वतीस्यवायमानकृतिभावविमाननकुलसेन
कविता (कालिदास्सन) ....."
   - V.J. p.395

4. स्तवितकवी मार्गः गृहमित्यमुक्तस्य;
पदार्थायण्यानां व्यापकत्वेन वर्ति इ;
   - V.J. I.57.

5. तत पदस्य तावदैवित्य बुद्धिमभिन्नो व कहाय: I
स्वभावस्वाच्छेत्उपनस्य प्रकारेण परिपराधनवा वक्रताया: परं
रहस्यम् I उपयोगिकीभिन्नतवाद साधक्यमेव देनशः
न्यौचिल्विशेषादाततश्चिहावहि
   - V.J. p.150

6. पूर्व रिबादायविदतत्त्वत: यादिविच्छेताय भौतिक प्रवाह इ.
अत्ति भावसत्कालस्मात्
कैथियादि कामा: फलात्तितेति II
   - Raghv. XIII. 59
   Transl. G.R.N.

7. अनु रुपेन्तरपन्नमानमानेवत्तत्वेन वर्ण्याननस्य "कैथियादि
कामा: फलात्तित द्वयेत्विधितुष्टतत्त्वदर्शस्तराया
तदभिन्नो वात्स्यनाय तनाय विविधावहि
   - V.J. p.150
8. प्रष्ट-धार्मिक वर्तमानकर्त्त्रेऽपेक्षाय महायत्वविरहादेकः
-वृज. प. 62

9. अवक्षेत्रोपरार्धविपत्ति
-राग्हु. II. 49.
Transl. G.R.N.

10. इति सर्वस्मिन्नमुनितामेव, राजोपाध्यायस्यर्थेनाभिभिमानतवा
-वृज. प. 62

11. कदं न शाक्यानु गर्दने महर्षि-
-राग्हु. II. 54.
Transl. G.R.N.

12. इतययास्तं गर्य तत्तिरस्यमुदान्योऽयतस्तथा यदि क्रावितर्भवति
-वृज. प. 62
Transl. K.K. p.357.

13. कमेखायतः दिलोऽजमय याय प्रविष्टाम्
-कुमार. III. 57.
Transl. K.K.
14. इत्यविनयानुसार त्रिविदपापित–
प्रतिविद्धाय तथा विद्याभिन्न नतीजः
परत्वमानं भीतिः
–Mallikarjuna

Read: तत्त्वेयन्द्रिय परदारित्वादुक्तम्।
तथा य

मृत:– “अहंप्यां जारः” इति।

–Mallikarjuna.

15. Vide: Kālidāsa Mahākavi (Kan.Ed.)
by - C.K. Venkataramayya.