A BRIEF SURVEY OF TREATISES ON DRAMATURGY

Sanskrit Literature is divided primarily under two heads: (i) Dráya and (ii) Sravya. Dráya literature means essentially dramatic literature which is specially meant "to be seen" as against the other type of literature viz., Sravya which is to be heard or read and not to be staged or seen. It is not that Dráya literature i.e. drama is meant only to be seen and cannot be heard or read. Drama is a form of literature and can very well be enjoyed even when read in an easy-chair. But the reason why it is differentiated from ordinary literature is its peculiarity and speciality of stage-worthiness which other forms of literature do not possess.

Writers on poetry have generally omitted the discussion of drama through the fear of the work being too bulky. They do discuss the general principles of literature like Rasa, Alamkāra, etc., but do not venture to discuss this form of literature which is the most delightful and the popular form of literature. Some give a brief and

2. Kāvyēṣu Naṭakam ramyaṁ
   also Kālidāsa : Nātyam bhinnaruceh janasya bahudaṁ
   Api Ekam Samārādhanam - Mel, I. 4.
cursory treatment to this topic but it is very rare that writers on poetry in Sanskrit discuss thoroughly the nature and form of drama. We here take brief survey of the works on dramaturgy or the science of drama or dramatic art:

**EARLY WORKS ON DRAMATURGY**

Panini (500 B.C.) in his celebrated work on Sanskrit grammar called Aṣṭādhyāyī makes references to the Nātaśūtras of Śilālin and Krśā́va which may be recognized as the earliest books of the Indian drama. But some scholars hold that these works laid down rules for the guidance of dancers or may be pantomimes. In fact, it is not possible to exactly assert their nature and contents so long as the works remain hidden in oblivion.

There are references to other writers whose works are not extant. They are Kohala, Dattila, Satakarni, Aśmakaṭṭha, Nakhaṭṭha and Bādarāyana. Later writers on dramaturgy quote from these but not a single work of any of these has been still discovered.

1. Hemacandra : KS VIII.
2. The SP of Bhoja has treated of dramaturgy at good length. Viśvanātha (SD) also has devoted a full chapter to dramaturgy.
3. They are included in the list of one hundred sons of Bharata. Cf. NS I, 26-40.
The earliest and the oldest extant work on the science of drama is *Natyasāstra* ascribed to Bharata. It is difficult to say who this Bharata was. Ancient Indian tradition calls him a great sage. Some call him a mythical personage while according to some he must have been an actor or the manager of some dramatic company. Whoever he may be he was a man of wide experience, who had drunk deep into the science of drama. For want of sufficient data it is difficult to decide his date also.¹

The *NS* deals with almost all topics concerning dramaturgy. It encompasses the whole field of drama. It starts with the origin of drama and discusses the building of a theatre, its dimension, the stage and its various parts, etc. It also deals with religious ceremonies to be performed before a drama is actually staged, the dress, gesticulation, equipment of the actors, the use of language, the mode of addressing, the plot and its divisions, various sentiments, emotions and factors that are essential for arousing them, the different types of dramas and their characteristics, etc.

It will be easily perceived that the *NS* treats almost all topics on dramaturgy. It is thus the most perfect and the oldest authoritative work on the science of drama. The later writers have profusely drawn upon this work and they rightfully acknowledge their debt to this sage Bharata.²

1. M. Ghosa puts the *NS* between 100 B.C. to 200 A.D.
   M.M. P.V. Kane puts it before 300 A.D.
   H. Sastri puts it in the 2nd Century B.C.
2. Cf. DR. I, 4.
What later writers have done is to explain, elucidate, expound or systematise what the IS has already stated.

But the text of the IS has been most carelessly handed down. There are two different recensions and the text itself includes a lot of confusion, complexity and repetition.

: COMMENTATORS ON THE NS :

Many a commentary has been written on the IS. Lollata, Udbhata, Śānkalā, Bhāṭṭanāyaka, Abhinavagupta, Manu and others have tried to elucidate this work by writing learned commentaries over it. Out of these, Abhinavabhārati by Abhinava, the celebrated commentator who flourished at the close of 10th century A.D., is the most important as it reveals the great learning and erudition of the author.

: MEDIEVAL WORKS ON DRAMATURGY :

Later writers on this science quote from or refer to theorists such as Nandi, Katyayana, Harṣa, Matṛgupta, Sabandhu, ¹ and others, but no work of these persons has still been discovered though it stands beyond any shadow of doubt that they must have contributed some works pertaining to the subject.

¹. For details refer to IS: K. Ghosh (Introduction pp. LXV - LXVII).
The Purāṇas, from early days, have been considered to be 'the mines of Indian lores'. They are not merely mythological accounts of particular deities or dynasties, but they also shed considerable light on various other subjects which may not be relevantly forming a part of the subject-matter.

In Adhyāys 337 to 347, the AP deals with Poetics. Chapter 338 treats very briefly of dramaturgy: viz., the types of Rūpaka, Prastāvanā, five types of Arthaprakṛtis, Sandhis, etc. Chapter 339 deals with Rasa, the hero and the heroines. Chapter 340 has a discussion on the four types of Rītis and Vṛttis. Chapter 341 discusses the four types of Abhinayas. Remaining chapters treat of topics connected with rhetorics: viz., figures of word and sense and both Guṇas and Dośas of poetry etc.

At many places the AP has literally followed the KS. There is a remarkable resemblance in the definitions of some figures between the AP and the Kāvyādāra of Dāṇḍin (and at places the KL of Bhāmaha). Prof. S.K. De puts this portion on poetics after Dāṇḍin i.e. about 7th century. Dr. P. V. Kane thinks that the AP is later than the 7th century at least and that the section on Poetics was compiled about or a little after 900 A.D. and probably after 1050 A.D.

The Visnuadharmottara Purana (Date: 400 A.D. to 500 A.D.) is divided into three Khandas. It treats of dramaturgy in Chapters 17 to 31 in Kanda II (earlier three chapters i.e. chapters 14 to 16 treat of figures of word and sense.) Chapter 17 treats of the twelve types of Rupakas, types of characters, eight types of heroines and nine sentiments. The remaining chapters deal with music, dance, construction of stage, Purvaranga, Abhinaya, Angaharas, Karanas etc. Chapter 31 treats of 49 Bhavas.

At most of the places the Visnuadharmottara has followed the MS.

Late Works on Dramaturgy:

In this (late) period, one of the most important works is the Dasarupaka of Dhanañjaya and its commentary Avaloka by Dhanika. Its date can be fixed as the last quarter of the 10th Century A.D. The work attained wide popularity next to the MS only. It supplanted all other works on dramaturgy that existed in its times and superseded even the MS so much so that later writers on dramaturgy have largely drawn upon this work.

Dr. P.V. Kane puts the work in 500 A.D. to 600 A.D. (H.S.P. p. 70).
Shri M. Ghosh takes it to be not earlier than the 8th Century (Nāṭyaśāstra (Intro.) p. 67.

The title Dasarūpaka clearly indicates that it is a treatise on ten types of Rūpakas. The work is divided into four chapters and contains 300 verses in all and within the limited space treats almost all relevant topics concerning dramaturgy, such as plot – its stages (Avasthās), Arthapraṇātis, Sandhis with their 64 limbs, the hero and the heroine, different types of drama – their varieties and essential features, the states, sentiments, etc.

The text is supplied with a celebrated commentary called Avaloka written by Dhanika who is reckoned to be his brother, both being the sons of Viṣṇu and proteges of the King Munja of Dhārā. Some scholars regard them as identical but it seems to be wrong.

The noteworthy characteristic of the DR is its brevity which has been brought even at the cost of intelligibility. Thanks to the commentary of Dhanika but for which the text would have been half-unintelligible. The DR has drawn mainly upon the NS and merely put the views of the NS in a precise and systematic manner.

"Slightly earlier than the DR or contemporaneous with it is the Nāṭakalakasarnaratnakosa of Sagaranandīn". The NLR, as the name suggests, is a precious collection of dramatic theory from different writers on the subject, representing

1. Vide M. Ghosh : Nāṭyaśāstra (Intro.), p. LXVIII. Prof. Gode puts the work between 920 A.D. and 1180 A.D. Vide: Kane, H.S.P., p. 401. Dr. Raghavan puts the work after Bhoja and Abhinava and before Saradātanaya, vide Nāṭakalakasarnaratnakosa, (Intro.)
diverse traditions of the art. Unlike the DR, the NLR does not treat exclusively of dramaturgy but refers to histrionics wherever necessary. Though the author professedly depends on no less than seven authorities such as Aśmakaṭṭa, Nakhakaṭṭa, etc., yet his dependence on Bharata seems to be the greatest. The author of the NLR often differs from other writers on dramaturgy. While dividing Vṛttis from the point of view of Rasa he follows Kohala instead of Bharata. He differs from Abhinava on a point, viz., a living King cannot be the hero of the drama.

Next we turn to Bhoja, a voluminous writer, the author of the Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharana and the Śṛṅgārāprakāśa, who flourished in the first half of the 11th century A.D.\(^1\)

The SK is the work chiefly concerned with poetics rather than dramaturgy. It is a work divided into five chapters, last of which deals with sentiments, emotions, heroes and heroines - their various types and essential characteristics, the five Sandhis such as Sukha, Pratimukha, etc. and the four Vṛttis such as Bharati, Sattvati, etc.

Another work of Bhoja that deserves our notice is the SP, which too deals with poetics as well as dramaturgy. It propounds that Śṛṅgāra is the only sentiment in the true sense.\(^2\) It contains thirty six chapters. It begins as

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1. Dr. Buhler ascribes a date still later (Introduction to Vikramāṇkadevacarita Pp. 19-25) but does not seem to be correct vide : Kane, H.S.P., P. 250.\(^\text{k}^{25}\)

2. Cf. Bhavabhūti who thinks that Tragic (Karūṇa) is the only sentiment and others are merely its varieties.
usual with the definition of Poetry, Sabda, Artha, etc.

Chapter 11 treats of the sentiments and of various types of Prabandhas out of which twenty four are Drāya (fit to be seen). Chapter 12, deals with Avasthās, Arthapraakṛtis, Sandhis, Vṛttis, Lasyāngas, Vīthyaṅgas, Sandhyayaṅgas, Patākāsthānakas, etc. In chapter 13 it deals with Vṛttis and Ṛtis. In the remaining ones he touches Vībhāvas, Anubhāvas, Saṅcāribhāvas, etc., and in Chapter 21 different types of heroes and heroines and their characteristics, and ends with a discussion on Śṛṅgāra.

After Bhoja we may make a mention of Someśvara, the author of the celebrated commentary "Saṁketa" on the KP of Mammata. Prof. R.C. Parikh is inclined to put him before Hemacandra and considers 1950-60 A.D. as the probable date of the composition of this Saṁketa.¹

Someśvara is not known to have written any independent work on dramaturgy as such but in his commentary on the KP he treats of certain topics which are not treated by the KP. Thus at the end of his commentary on Chapter VIII of the KP he briefly deals with some aspects of dramaturgy.² Most of the definitions have been verbally drawn from the NS. The topics treated are types of Rūpakas, Arthopakṣepakas, Prastāvanās, five Arthapraakṛtis, Vṛttis and Geya Rūpakas (Uparūpakas.)

2. KP: Saṁketa, pp. 213-222.
It will be in the fitness of things if we make here a reference to the Kāvyānusāsana (1140 A.D. Circa) of Hemacandra, (1088 to 1172 A.D.), the learned preceptor of the authors of the ND. This work also deals mainly with Poetry. It is divided into 8 chapters. In Chapter 7 it deals with different types of the hero and the heroine and their characteristics. Chapter 8 casts a cursory glance at the problems of drama as it discusses the different kinds of poetry in which drama occupies a very important place.

'The KS is a compilation and exhibits hardly any originality'. Yet Hemacandra is verily 'the brightest star in the galaxy of Jain writers.'

Ruyyaka (alias Ruka) who happened to live in the 12th century A.D. has written a work on dramaturgy named Nāṭakamīṁāṁśa, as is known from his commentary on the V.V. of Mahimabhaṭṭa. But the work is not extent.

The next to the DR comes the Nāṭyadarpaṇa or the Nāṭakadarpaṇa (Middle of the 12th Century). Dr. Keith in his Sanskrit Drama while discussing the treatises on Dramaturgy does not refer to this work which shows that the work was not available to him when he wrote his Sanskrit Drama. The ND was first brought to publication

by the G.O.S., Baroda, in the year 1929 and thus it is but natural that the work is not mentioned by Keith though he does refer to Rāmacandra as a dramatist. ¹

The work consists of two parts: Kārikās written in the Anuṣṭubh metre and the Vṛtti on them. It treats of dramaturgy following the earlier works on the subject. Its debt to the NS and the Abhi. is certainly great. It mentions the views of others especially the DR and at times criticises them.

The language is very simple and lucid, and the treatment systematic and exhaustive.

The Bhāvaprakāśana of Sāradātanaya is a very important work (1175-1250 A.D.) in the field of dramaturgy. It deals with dramaturgy in greater detail than both the J and the ND. Its treatment of Uparūpakas is very exhaustive. The author of the BP depends much upon the earlier writers for the material of his work. Yet his approach to the subject is to some extent original. The work includes all possible topics on dramaturgy. It mainly depends on Bharata and

¹. Sanskrit Drama, pp. 225, 258, 259. The work was originally discovered by Prof. Sylvain Levi in 1922, Dr. Raghavan puts it after Thoja and Abhinava and before Sāradātanaya, not earlier than 13th Century. But the date of the ND can be fixed with more precision in view of the conclusive evidence regarding the date of its authors discussed in the chapter I of the thesis.
occasionally refers to writers like Kohala, Mātrgupta, etc. It also makes a reference to some unknown authorities on Rasa such as Vāsuki, Vyāsa, Nārada, etc. It refers to a large number of good dramas and poems which are no longer extant now. The work is a mine of information on various topics concerning Rasa or Bhāva and dramaturgy. "It represents a compendium of all activities of the writers of literary criticism from Bharata down to Kṣemendra in the 11th Century, together with a succinct account of allied subjects like music and dance." It marks considerable development in the scientific study of dramaturgy.

After this we come to the Pratāparudrayaśobhūṣaṇa of Vidyānātha (Circa 1275-1325 A.D.) which is a mediocre compilation from the DR and the KP of Māmaśṭa, covering the whole field of poetics; it illustrates the formal rules of the drama by the composition of a drama in honour of Pratāparudra. The work is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter deals with the hero, the second with poetry, the third with drama, the fourth with sentiment and the rest with blemishes, merits and figures of word and sense. In order to illustrate the salient features of Nātaka in Chapter 5, the author composes a drama named Pratāparudrakālyāṇa. The work has gained popularity in Southern India.

The Rasārvavasudhākara of Śiṅga-Bhūpaḷa (Circa 1330 A.D.) treats of drama towards its end. It, however, makes no special contribution to the science of drama. It is divided into three chapters called Vilāsas. In the first chapter the nature and qualities of the hero and the heroine are described. It also treats of four Vṛttis. The 2nd chapter deals with Nasa in a very lucid and perspicuous style. In the 3rd chapter drama (Rūpaka) and its various elements are nicely dealt with. In south it has been more popular than the DR, as its treatment is more lucid and elaborate.

Śiṅga Bhūpaḷa is also said to have written an independent work on dramaturgy called Nāṭakeparibhaṣā. But no manuscript of the work is still discovered.

The Sāhityadarpāna of Viśvanātha (1300-1340 A.D.) is a very popular work on poetics and dramaturgy both. In Chapter VI of the work it treats of drama. Most of the Sanskrit writers on Poetics, such as Bhāvaḥa, Daṇḍin, Rudraṭa, Mammaṭa, leave out the treatment of dramaturgy. "The SD, however, contains a thorough disquisition on the technicalities of the dramatic art and forms, together with the NS of Bharata and the DR of Dhanañjaya, a triumvirate in the domain of the Sanskrit drama." 2 The style of the work

2. Kane : B.S.I., p. 292. But this view deserves consideration and it has been considered later in chapter IX.
is easy and flowing. Vidvanèthe, however, is not so much an original writer. His work may be considered a compilation rather than an original work. Simplicity and lucidity of style make the work highly useful to a student of rhetorics.

P.V. Kane points out some serious blamishes of the DD as far as postica is concerned, but concludes that "Inspite of these blamishes his work forms an only suitable introduction to Sanskrit Sahitya."

As regards his treatment of the drama, which is fully dealt with in the Chapter VI, Dr. A.R. Keith aptly remarks: "His handling of the drama is based largely on the DD and its commentary but he introduces a good deal of matter from the US in his sixth chapter including details of the characteristics and ornaments of the drama, which the US omits. In this Vidvanèthe indicates his servile character, which however renders his work more valuable as an example of the orthodox doctrine."*  

There are no less than four commentators on the work, the fact which goes to prove its popularity.

The Alakarandagina of Amakaranadoga (middle of the 14th Century). - The work is, like the DD and the DD, a work on rhetorics. It is divided into eleven chapters, out of which Chapter 5 deals with Kasa, Phâva, etc.,

Chapter 4 with the types and qualities of the hero and the heroine and their companions and assistants; the Chapter 7 with Arthaprapakrtis, Avasthas, Sandhis and Sandhyangas, the Chapter 8 with Vṛttis; Chapter 9 with Rūpakas, Uparūpakas and some of the miscellaneous things like Purvarūga, Nāndī, Prologue, etc., chapter 10 with Nātyalamkāras. The author is highly indebted to ancient works such as the NS, the KP, the KD, the Kāvyālamkāresūtra, the SD, etc.

The Kāvyānusāsana of Vāghātaka who was the son of Namikumāra and lived in about the 15th century A.D. is a work primarily dealing with Poetics. But in chapter I while discussing the forms of literature he discusses the ten Rūpakas. In the last chapter he deals with the sentiments and the different types of heroes and heroines, ten stages of love, Rasa-dosā, etc. But the work betrays very little of originality.

The Nātekacandrika of Rūpa Gosvāmin (the end of the 15th Century and early part of the 16th Century) at the outset acknowledges the debt towards the Nātya-sāstra and Rasa-sudhakara, probably Rasārṇava-Sudhākara and criticises the lack of order and errors in the SD of Viśvanātha but the work does not show any improvement on the work of the predecessor whence it draws much of its material. It deals with the characteristics of Sanskrit Drama,

1. The work is divided into five chapters called Adhyāya.
2. De : H.S.P. c, p. 255.
Nāyaka, Nāndī, etc., Sandhis, Arthopakṣepakas, Bhāṣāvidhāna, Vṛttis, etc. Here the illustrations are more often drawn from the Vaiṣṇavite works.

Rūpagosvāmin has also written other works on Poetics such as the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu and the Ujjvalanīlamanī.

The Nāṭyapradīpa of Sundaramiśra (1613 A.D.) is another work on dramaturgy. The work has fully exploited the DR and the SD and cannot be said to claim any special worth.

The Naṅjarājayāsobhūṣana of Marasiḥa (16th Century) is a work in the praise of the poet's patron Naṅjarāja, a powerful minister of the King of Mysore. Marasiḥa bore the title of "Abhinava Kālidāsa". This work seems to have been written on the model of Pratāparudrāyasobhūṣana. The work consists of seven chapters. The first chapter treats of the hero; then Kāvyā, Dhvani, Rasa, Doṣa, are discussed in the following chapters. Chapter VI treats of Nāṭaka and the last of figures of speech. Chapter VI contains a full-fledged Nāṭaka in praise of the poet's patron, which illustrates all the characteristics of a Nāṭaka. The work does not show any originality.

Many other treatises on drama are known by name or exist in manuscripts but none can be said to have any special merit or repute.