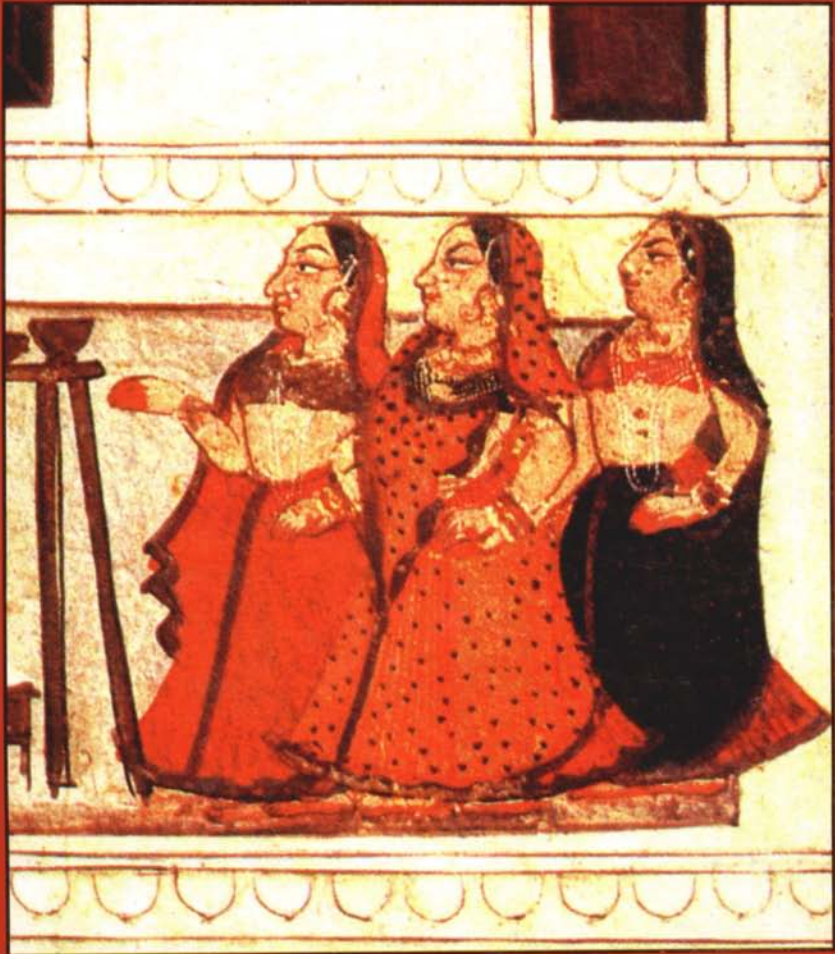




The  
**Vikramorvaśīyam**  
of Kālidāsa



**M.R. KALE**

# THE VIKRAMORVAŚĪYAM OF KĀLIDĀSA



THE  
VIKRAMORVAŚĪYAM  
OF KĀLIDĀSA

*Edited with*

*A New Sanskrit Commentary and Arthaprakashika,  
Various Readings, Introduction, A Literal  
Translation, Exhaustive Notes in  
English, and Appendices*

*by*

M.R. KALE

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## Preface to the Eleventh Edition

The revised edition of 1966 was almost sold in short time and I am called upon to publish the present eleventh edition of Vikramorvaṣīyam edited by late Shri M. R. Kale, B.A. This drama is often prescribed as a text for Inter Arts Sanskrit examination. The appreciation which the book meets of professors and students alike, renders it unnecessary to have any more preface; but a note is quite necessary. In 1966 edition, note sections, references to pages of text were incorrect. This mistake is corrected. I have added at the end appendices which will be useful for reference and especially the University Questions will be helpful for students to know what is expected from them and a guide for refreshing their knowledge just before examination.

I must thank the proprietors of M/s. Motilal Banarsidass, who brought out the publication of this edition in a short period of two months. With the earnest hope that the additions made in present edition, may assist in accomplishing the purpose for which they are intended. I wish the students do make best use of them and achieve grand success.

25-B, Goodwill Building  
Mohim, Bombay 16 (DD) }

V. M. Kale.  
June 1967.



## CONTENTS

<i>Preface to the Eleventh Edition</i>	v
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Abbreviations</i>	39
<i>Dramatis Personae</i>	40
भूमिका	41
TEXT AND TRANSLATION	
विक्रमोर्वशीयम् (The Vikramorvaśīya)	
प्रथमोऽङ्कः (Act I)	46
द्वितीयोऽङ्कः (Act II)	82
तृतीयोऽङ्कः (Act III)	136
चतुर्थोऽङ्कः (Act IV)	178
पञ्चमोऽङ्कः (Act V)	218
परिशिष्टम् : चतुर्थोऽङ्कः (Appendix : Act IV)	258
Notes	281
<i>Appendices</i>	
I. <i>The Sources of the Plot</i>	381
II. <i>The Metres used in the Play, their Definitions and Schemes</i>	389
III. <i>The Subhāṣhitas occurring in the Play</i>	392
श्लोक सूची	394



# INTRODUCTION

## I. THE SANSKRIT DRAMA<sup>1</sup>

We shall begin with a brief outline of the general structure and arrangement of the Sanskrit Drama, without a knowledge of which the technical remarks on the construction of the present play here, as well as those made in the Notes, will not be intelligible to the general reader.<sup>2</sup> Poetry in Sanskrit, from its inherent nature, as apart from its intrinsic merit, is divided into two kinds—दृश्य 'what is capable of being seen or exhibited and श्रव्य 'what can only be heard or chanted.' The drama falls under the first division. 'Rūpaka' is the general term in Sanskrit for all dramatic compositions, which also comprises a subordinate class called *Uparūpaka*. The 'Rūpaka'<sup>3</sup> which has Rasa or sentiment for its substratum, is divided into ten classes, viz., नाटकं सप्रकरणं भाणः प्रहसनं (हिम्भः) व्यायोगसमवकारौ वीथ्यङ्केहाष्टगा इति ॥ Of the *Uparūpakas* or Minor Dramas there are eighteen species, the most important of which are *Nāṭikās* such as the *Ratnāvalī*, *Viddhaśālabhaṅjikā* etc., *Trotakas* such as the *Vikramorvaśīya* and *Sattrkas* such as the *Karpūramañjarī*,—all differing very little from the general features of a *Nāṭaka*.

1 The first two Sections are almost the same as those prefixed to our Śāk.

2 The information given here has been mainly culled from the *Das'arūpaka*. The minor particulars not noticed here will be found in my *Sāhityasārasaṅgraha* (Nir. Ed.)

3 अवसानुकृतिर्नाट्यं रूपं दृश्यतयोच्यते । रूपकं तत्समावेशाद्दशधैव रसाश्रयम् ॥ D.—R; रूप्यतेऽभिनयैर्यत्र वस्तु तद्रूपकं विदुः । नाटकाद्यैर्दशविधम् । *Nāṭya* is another and perhaps a wider term for the drama or the dramatic art and is so called because it represents the different situations in ( the scenes presented by ) life. The sage Bharata is the founder of the science of music and dramaturgy and his work is styled the *Nāṭya śāstra*. *Nāṭya* is also called *Rūpa*, in as much as it has *dṛśyatā* or the capability of being seen, and *Rūpaka* in as much as its subject-matter is represented by actors assuming particular characters.

Having thus disposed of the divisions into which the whole of the scenic art is capable of falling, we turn to the principle of division among the *Rūpakas* themselves, which is threefold<sup>1</sup>—(1) वस्तु or the Plot of the play ; (2) नेता or the Hero ; (3) and रस or the Sentiment. These three are the essential constituents, nay, the very life-blood, of every dramatic piece. Each of these we shall succinctly deal with in its order.

### VASTU OR THE PLOT

*Vastu* is primarily of two kinds : आधिकारिक or 'Principal' and प्रासङ्गिक or 'Accessory.' The Principal is that which relates to the chief characters or the persons concerned with the essential interest of the piece, and pervades the whole arrangement. The Accessory is that which appears in furtherance of the main topic and is concerned with characters other than the Hero or the Heroine. This latter is of two kinds: viz. *Patākā* and *Prakarī*. *Patākā* or 'Banner' is an episode by which the progress of the plot is illustrated, furthered or hindered (so as to give additional interest to it). It is of considerable length, and sometimes extends to the very end of a play. The *Prakarī* is also an episodic incident—of limited duration and minor importance—one in which the principal characters take no part.

Besides these two, there are three other elements requisite for the development of the plot. These are बीज or the seed, बिन्दु or the drop, and कार्य or the final issue. *Bīja* is the circumstance leading to the ultimate end briefly, stated, which as the plot develops bears multifarious results<sup>2</sup>, and which is as it were, the seed of the plot. *Bindu*<sup>3</sup> is what cements a break in the plot caused by the introduction of some other incident. *Kārya* is the final object of the plot, which being attained the whole is finished. These five are technically called *Arthaprakṛtis* ( अर्थप्रकृतयः ).

The *Vastu* which is thus divided into five classes may again be divided into three classes according to the source of its derivation. It may be borrowed from history or tradition,

- 
- 1 वस्तु नेता रसस्तेषां भेदकः ।
  - 2 खल्पोद्दिष्टस्तु तद्वेतुर्बीजं विस्तार्यं नेकधा ।
  - 3 अवान्तराथविच्छेदे बिन्दुरच्छेदकारणम् ।

or it may be fictitious or mixed, *i. e.* partly drawn from history and partly the creation of the poet's fancy. A *Nāṭaka* belongs to the first class, a *Prakarāṇa* to the second.

As regards its development a dramatic plot has five stages or conditions called *Avasthās*. They are—(1) आरम्भ beginning or setting on foot of the enterprise, (2) यत्न effort, (3) प्राप्त्याशा prospect of success ; (4) नियताप्ति certain attainment through the removal of obstacles, and (5) फलगत obtainment of the desired object. While these five stages are in progress there must be some links to connect them with the principal and subordinate parts of the main action (the episodes and incidents). These are called the *Samdhis*. They are five in number, answering to the five *Arthaprakṛtis*, each of which is joined with its corresponding stage, *viz.* मुख, प्रतिमुख, गर्भ, अत्रमर्श, and निर्वहण (also called उपसंहृति or उपसंहार). This *Mukhasamdhi* is the combination of the *Bija* and *Ārambha*, *i. e.* wherein the seed is sown, so to speak, with all its *Rasas*. In the *Pratimukha* there is the means (*yatna*) to the chief end, as originally implied by the *Bija* in the *Mukha* which herein sprouts up. In the *Garbha* there is attainment and non-attainment of the desired and implying a further sprouting up of the original *Bija*. There are impediments, but the main plot gains ground under resistance. The *Avamarsa samdhi* is that in which the seed attains a more luxuriant growth than in the *Garbha*, being accompanied by *Niyatāpati* of the end, but, whose final result is postponed further off by fresh impediments of various sorts (as in the *S'ākuntala* the King's forgetting *Śakuntalā* after marriage owing to *Durvāsa's* curse). The *Nirvahaṇa* or consummation is the harmonious combination of all the aforesaid parts in the final catastrophe.

The subject-matter, whether historical, fictitious or mixed is, from its inherent nature, capable of a twofold division. It is divided into—(1) सूच्य deserving to be suggested or implied only, as being of a dry or otherwise unfit character ; and (2) दृश्यश्रव्य fit to be represented and heard as being highly sentimental and pleasing. The suggestions or implications are made in five ways : विष्कम्भचूल्काङ्कास्याङ्कावतारप्रवेशकैः ।  
 (1) For *Viṣkambha* see Notes Act III. (2). *Chūlikā* is the suggestion of some incident from behind the scenes (नेपथ्ये).  
 (3) An अङ्कास्य<sup>1</sup> is one wherein is suggested by the actors at

1 अङ्कान्तपानेरङ्कास्यं लिङ्गाङ्कस्यार्थसूचनात् ।

the time of their departure the connexion between the Act finished and the one to be commenced, which otherwise would look disconnected, as the speech of Kāmandakī and others at the end of the 3rd Act of the *Mālatī-Mādhava* (4) अश्कावतार<sup>1</sup> consists in implanting the seed of the subject-matter of an Act in the previous Act before it has drawn to the close, so that the Act following is a continuation of the one preceding; e. g. the sixth Act of the *S'ākuntala* the germ of which is cast at the end of the fifth Act; *Mālavikāgnimitra* II. and *Mālatī-Mādhava* II. are other instances. (6) A प्रवेशक or 'Introducer' is one of which being interposed between any two Acts suggests like the *Viṣkambhaka* some past or future event to show the connection between the parts of the story through the conversation of low characters. It can never introduce the first Act. According to Jagaddhara the language in a *Praves'aka* is generally *S'auraseni* or any similar dialect as opposed to the Sanskrit found in a *S'uddhaviṣkambhaka*.

The subject-matter is further divided into three kinds- सर्वश्राव्य or प्रकाशं, अश्राव्यं or खगतं, and नियतश्राव्यम्. The terms are explanatory of themselves. The last is of two kinds: जनान्तिकं and अपवारितकं (which are explained in the Notes). Independent of these divisions there is one called आकाशभाषितं ( आकाशे ) or 'speech from the void'.

### NETĀ OR THE HERO

The Hero is required to be modest, decorous, comely, munificent, civil, of sweet address, eloquent, sprung from a noble family &c.<sup>2</sup> Herces are mentioned to be of four kinds:

---

1 अश्कावतारस्त्वकान्ते पातेऽश्कस्याविभागतः ।

The distinction, however, between an *Aṅkāśya* and an *Aṅkāvatāra* is considered by some to be merely imaginary. *Viśvanātha* actually supplants the latter by *Aṅkamukha* which he defines as that where, in one Act, the substance of all the other Acts is suggested.

2 नेता विनीतो मधुरस्त्यागी दक्षः प्रियंवदः । रक्तलोकः शुचिर्वाग्मी हृदयेशः स्थिरो युवा ॥ बुद्धयुत्साहसृष्टिप्रज्ञाकलामानसमन्वितः । शूरो हृदय तेजस्वी शास्त्रचक्षुश्च धार्मिकः ॥ मेदैश्चतुर्धा ललितशान्तोदात्तोद्धतैरयम् ॥ D.-R.

viz. धीरोदात्त, धीरललित, धीरशान्त and धीरोद्भूत. '*Dhīrodātta*' or the Hero of sublime qualities, is one who is magnanimous, patient, not given to boasting, self-possessed, of firm resolve, whose high spirit is concealed and who is true to his engagements. We are not concerned with the other three classes of Heroes here. Each of these Heroes may be of one or other of four sorts. He may be दक्षिण or 'gallant', i. e. equally devoted to many women though principally attached to one ; or शठ 'sly', i. e. one, who being attached to one lady, covertly acts in a way unpleasant to her ; or he may be धृष्ट 'bold', openly making his profession to another, and not ashamed even when reproached ; or lastly he may be अनुकूल 'favourable', devoted to one Heroine only. The धीरोदात्त hero has eight manly qualities-शोभा, विलास, माधुर्य, गाम्भीर्य, धैर्य, तेजस, लालित्य, and औदार्य.

Among the assistants of the Hero, the principal is पीठमद the hero of the Patakā or episode, clever in discourse, devoted to his master, and a little inferior to him in qualities. Next comes the Vidūṣaka, his constant companion, whose business consists in the repartees of wit, in helping his friend in his love-intrigues and thus assisting in the general *denouement* of the play. The third, and of equal rank with the Vidūṣaka, is Viṭa, who knows one art only and is thereby useful to the Hero. The Hero thus equipped may still take into his service ministers of state and ministers of religion, ascetics, &c. as well as eunuchs, mutes, barbarians (Yavanas) &c. Sometimes there may be a Rival-Hero called प्रतिनायक, who is avaricious, bold, impetuous, criminal and of evil conduct.

Nāyikā or the Heroine, who must be possessed of qualities similar to those of the Hero, is of three kinds.<sup>1</sup> She may be the wife of the hero (स्त्रीया), as Sitā in the Uttar., or one belonging to another (अन्या or परकीया), or a common woman (सामान्या or साधारणस्त्री) as Vasantasenā in the Mr̥ch. The परकीया (so called because she is in the power of her guardian) may be a maiden or the wife of another. But the latter must not be introduced as the Heroine in a play.<sup>2</sup> The maiden's love, however, better helps the *rasa* and is,

1 खान्या साधारणस्त्रीति तद्गुणा नायिका त्रिधा ।

2 अन्यस्त्री कन्यकोटा च नान्योटाङ्गिरसे क्वचित् ।

therefore, the most favourite theme with many Sanskrit poets. Further divisions and subdivisions of the *Nāyikā* are not introduced here, as they have very little to do with the construction of the drama. For her assistants the Heroine may have a सखी, दासी, धात्रेयी, प्रतिवेशिका and others, possessing qualities corresponding to those of the friends of the Hero.

### RASA OR SENTIMENT

*Rasa* is that lasting impression or feeling produced to his overwhelming delight in a man of poetic sensibility by the proper action of the *Vibhāvas*, and *Anubhāvas* as well as the *Sāttvikabhāvas* and the *Vyabhicāribhāvas*.<sup>1</sup> *Bhāva* (भाव) or Feeling is the complete pervasion of the heart by any emotion, whether of pleasure or of pain, arising from the object under sight. *Vibhāva* (विभाव) or an Excitant is that which being perceived nourishes the main sentiment. It is divided into *Ālambana*, that which is, as it were, the support or substratum of the *Rasa*, the person or thing with reference to which a sentiment arises—such as the Hero or the Heroine, and *Uddīpana*, or what excites or enhances (adds to the development of) the sentiment, such as the moon, the beauties of the vernal season &c., beauty, decorations &c. of the principal characters, in the case of गृहकार. *Anubhāva* or Ensuant is the outward manifestation of the internal feeling through the eyes, face &c. The *Sāttvika* or natural *bhāvas* are a subdivision of *Anubhāva*, and are mentioned as eight in number—स्तम्भप्रलयरोमाञ्चाः खेदौ वैवर्ण्यवेपथू। अश्रुवैखर्यामित्यष्टौ। The *Vyabhicāris* or the Accessories are those *Bhāvas* which are not strictly confined to any *Rasa*, but appearing and disappearing, like waves in the ocean, they serve as feeders to the prevailing sentiment and strengthen it in different ways. *Sthāyibhāva* (स्थायिभाव) or the Permanent Sentiment of a composition is one—the ocean melting all salt into water—which, not being inter-

1 विभावैरनुभावैश्च सात्त्विकैर्व्यभिचारिभिः । आनीयमानः स्वाद्यत्वं स्थायी-  
भावो रसः स्मृतः ॥ मुखदुःखादिकैर्भावस्तद्भावभावनम् । ज्ञायमानतया तत्र  
विभावो भावपोषकत्वं ॥ आलम्बनोद्दीपनत्वप्रभेदेन स च द्विधा । अनुभावो विकारस्तु  
भावसंसूचनात्मकः ॥

rupted by any sentiment contrary or akin to its nature occurring at intervals, converts all of them into its own nature.<sup>1</sup> Now a *Rasa* would prove contrary to another if the आश्रय or substratum of both were the same. But as अङ्गी (principal) and अङ्ग (subordinate) a *रस* may be mixed with one or more of others.

There are eight Sthāyibhāvas: रति, हास, शोक, क्रोध, उत्साह भय, जुगुप्सा and विस्मय, on which are based respectively the eight sentiments: शृङ्गार the Erotic, हास्य the Comic, करुण the Pathetic, रौद्र the Furious, वीर the Heroic, भयानक the Terrible, बीभत्स the Loathsome, and अद्भुत the Marvellous. There is a ninth sentiment, that of शान्त the Quietistic, having शम or tranquility for its Sthāyibhāva. But it is not suited to dramatic purposes and rarely occurs as a main sentiment in a drama. Of these eight sentiments, शृङ्गार and हास्य, वीर and अद्भुत, बीभत्स and भयानक, and रौद्र and करुण are akin to each other, as they proceed from the same condition of the mind. As we are concerned with the Erotic alone, that being the prevailing sentiment in Kālidāsa's plays. We shall say something about it here. शृङ्गार is mainly divided into विप्रलम्भ or Love-in-separation and संभोग or Love-in-union. The former, the Daśarūpaka subdivides into two kinds: अयोग the Non-consummation of marriage, and विप्रयोग the Separation of the lovers deep in love after marriage. The former, which arises from the dependent position of one or the other of the parties, or through distance, or through the intervention of adverse fate, has ten stages, अभिलाष, चिन्ता &c. mentioned in the com. चिन्ता 'anxiety' occurs through मान, प्रवास or some such cause. मान, 'jealous anger', arises from a breach in the duties of love (प्रणयभङ्ग) and may be on both sides (rarely, however, the Nāyika is *mānā*). This मान has several varieties, such as ईर्यामान, अनुमानिकमान &c. It is capable of being dispelled in six ways—साम्ना भेदिन दानेन नत्युपेक्षारसान्तरैः—and is called गुरु, लघु or मध्यम according to the greatness or the smallness of the effort required to make the Nāyikā give it up. संभोग is when the two lovers are in the enjoyment of each other's company, engaged in looking at each other, kissing each other &c.

1 विरुद्धैर्विरुद्धैर्वा भावैर्विच्छिद्यते न यः। आत्मभावं नयत्यन्यान्स स्थायी लवणाकरः ॥

## THE GENERAL CONDUCT OF THE NĀṬAKA

Every dramatic piece opens with a prelude or prologue (प्रस्तावना) which is itself introduced by what is called the *Nāndī*. This *Nāndī*, according to some, must suggest the gist of the whole plot. The *Sūtradhāra* may sometimes retire after the recital of the *Nāndī*, in which case another actor called *स्थापक* (for he *establishes* as it were the topic of the play) takes his place. In the Prelude, which may begin with a brief allusion to the poet's literary attainments, his genealogy &c., the *Sūtradhāra* or the *Sthāpaka* suggests the subject in the form of the *Bīja*, or by a simple beginning, or by naming the character about to enter (as in the *Śākuntala*). He must please the audience with sweet songs descriptive of some season and couched in the *Bhārativṛtti*. The प्रस्तावना is of two kinds—(1) प्ररोचना as in the *Ratnāvalī*, and (2) आमुख in which the *Sūtradhāra* holds conversation with the actress or his assistants, bearing on the subject to be introduced. This latter is of three kinds, of which one is प्रयोगातिशय. When the entry of a character is directly indicated by the *Sūtradhāra* saying 'Here he enters', that is *Prayogātiśaya*.

The Prelude being over the piece is commenced, being hereafter arranged and exhibited in the manner indicated in the three foregoing Sections. The whole matter should be well determined and divided into Acts and Scenes. A *Nāṭaka* may consist of from five to ten Acts. The Hero should be *Dhīrodātta*. The prevailing sentiment should be *रङ्गार* or *वीर* (or sometimes *कृष्ण*), others being introduced as conducive to its development. Nothing should be introduced in the play which either misbeseems the Hero or is discordant with the main sentiment. An Act must not be tiresomely long, should be full of *Rasa*, and introduced by *Viśakambhaka* etc according to necessity. Its close is marked by the exit of all characters. Such incidents as journeys, massacres, wars &c., should not be represented in a play; they may only be indicated. The death of the Hero must never be exhibited. This accounts for the somewhat monotonous character of Sanskrit plays and the absence of tragedies in Sanskrit.<sup>1</sup> The play should end, as it began, with a benediction or

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1 Wilson observes—"They (the Hindu plays) never offer a calamitous conclusion, which, as Johnson remarks, was enough to constitute a Tragedy in Shakespeare's days; and

prayer, called the Bharatavākya, which is repeated by the principal personages, and contains an expression of their wishes for general prosperity and happiness. The Unity of interest or action must be maintained throughout. As regards the language to be used in a piece, Hero and the higher characters speak in classical Sanskrit, while females and other minor characters speak in the different Prakrit dialects.

The student will see from the foregoing sketch, that the characteristic peculiarities of the Indian drama are mainly three :—(1) its peculiar structure ; (2) the absence of the distinction between Comedy and Tragedy ; (3) the diversity of language to be spoken by the characters. The above-mentioned general characteristics of a Nāṭaka belong with certain modification to the other divisions of the Rūpaka as well. Of these we may notice the Prakaraṇa and the Troṭaka. The plot of a प्रकरण should be fictitious and drawn from real life in a reputable class of society. The Hero, who must be धीरप्रशान्त, may be of ministerial rank or a Brāhmaṇa or a merchant (Vaiśya). The Heroine may be a maiden of a noble family, or a courtesan. The most appropriate sentiment is the Erotic. Gamblers and other low characters should be introduced. There should be ten Acts. The Mālatī Mādhava and the Mṛcchakaṭīka belong to this species. A Troṭaka may consist of 5, 7, 8, or 9 Acts. The characters to be represented should be celestial as well human (as in the Vik.). The Vidūṣaka should take a prominent part in it and be present in every Act. The prevailing sentiment should be शृङ्गार. In other particulars it does not differ from the Nāṭaka.

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although they propose to excite all the emotions of the human breast, terror and pity included, they never effect this object by leaving a painful impression upon the mind of the spectator. The Hindus in fact have no Tragedy.....The absence of tragic catastrophe in the Hindu dramas is not merely an unconscious omission ; such a catastrophe is prohibited by a positive rule. The conduct of what may be termed the classical dramas of the Hindus is exemplary and dignified. Nor is its moral purport neglected ; and one of their writers declares, in an illustration familiar to ancient and modern poetry, that the chief end of the Theatre is to disguise by the insidious sweet, the unpalatable but salutary bitter, of the cup."

## II. KĀLIDĀSA

### (A) HIS LIFE, WORKS AND POETRY

#### His Life

To turn now to the poet it must be admitted that we have absolutely no trustworthy information regarding the personal history of Kālidāsa, by universal consent the greatest of Indian poets. The curiosity of the querist who would ask—'Where and when was he born?' 'Who were his parents?' 'When did he die?' &c.—must ever remain unsatisfied. The poet has studiously observed complete silence about himself in his works. Read them howsoever we may, we find no allusion, no incident mentioned, that may directly shed any light either on his personal history or on any remarkable event of his life. Under these circumstances we have to content ourselves with gathering what little information we can about a poet of world-wide repute from external sources and a few incidents found here and there in his works, which may be supposed to have a distant bearing upon the history of his life. Reserving for another Section the question of the date of the poet, we proceed here to state the few facts that can thus be known about him. A time-honoured tradition, supported by internal and external evidence, associates the name of Kālidāsa with that of the epoch-making king Vikramāditya of Ujjayinī. The keen interest and admiration with which the poet describes the Mahākālā, the Śiprā, and other beauties of Ujjayinī unmistakably point to the conclusion that he must have been a native of that city. And the various covert references<sup>1</sup> to the name of Vikrama in fully eulogistic terms, which are doubtless meant to immortalize king Vikramāditya, are inexplicable if that monarch be not regarded as the poet's patron. Kālidāsa also betrays considerable acquaintance with court-life in his works. This circumstance, coupled with the fact that there is no allusion in his writings to the goddess of wealth having ever frowned upon him, shows that he was in affluent circumstances, and had not the misfortune

1 E. g., अनुत्सेकः खलु विक्रमालंकारः । (Vikar.); विक्रममहिम्ना वर्धते भवान् । (Ibid.)

ever to drink the bitter cup of poverty. He was a Brāhmaṇa by caste and was a devout worshipper of Śiva, though by no means a sectarian. He seems to have travelled a good deal, at least in Northern India. For, as Dr. Bhau Daji remarks he is the only poet who describes a living saffron flower the plant of which grows in Kashmir. His graphic description of the Himālayan scenes looks very much like that of one who was an eye-witness. Unlike Bhavabhūti and many other brother-poets, he appears to have enjoyed great popularity during his life-time. He was 'an admirer of field-sports', and 'describes their beneficial effects with the exactness of a true sportsman'. Though fond of pleasures he was not the unscrupulous voluptuary as he is supposed to be by some critics, as is clear from the many noble sentiments expressed in the Śākuntala.<sup>1</sup> It also appears from the same play that he was against love-marriages, though always actuated with the most generous sentiments towards the fair sex. His works bear further testimony to his considerable acquaintance with the Vedas, the philosophy taught by the Upaniṣads, the Epics and the Purāṇas, the Bhagavadgītā, the systems of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta as propounded by Bādarāyaṇa, Medicine, and the rudiments of Astronomy. Beyond these few facts nothing is known for certain about our poet at present. It is inevitable that, during the course of time, a number of fanciful stories and legends should have clustered round popular hero of literary India. Thus there is a story which relates how the poet was born a blockhead and a dunce, but had wisdom bestowed upon him in consequence of his subsequent propitiation of the goddess Kālī, whence his name Kālidāsa. Another story makes him a friend of King Kumāradāsa of Ceylon, in whose city Kālidāsa was murdered by a courtesan. No reliance need be placed on such accounts. Many such stories will be found in the Sanskrit *Bhojaprabandha*, and in a collection which under the title of *Tales of King Bhoja and Poet Kālidāsa*, is a popular book in many Indian vernaculars. A few conjectures have been advanced as to some other particulars, but to test their veracity falls strictly within the province of the antiquary.

1 Cf. अनिर्वर्णनीयं परकलत्रं &c. Śāk V. and our note *ad loc.*

## His Works

The poet's silence about himself in his works gave an opportunity to many unscrupulous inferior poets to father their own works upon him. The following is a list of the works generally attributed to him:—(1) शाकुन्तल (2) विक्रमोर्वशीय (3) मालविकाग्निमित्र (4) रघुवंश (5) कुमारसंभव (6) मेघदूत (7) कुन्तेश्वरदैत्य (8) ऋतुसंहार (9) अम्बास्तव (10) कल्याणस्तव (11) कालीस्तोत्र (12) काव्य-नाटकालंकाराः (?) (13) and (14) two गङ्गाष्टक (15) घटकर्पूर (16) चण्डिका-दण्डकस्तोत्र (17) चर्चास्तव (18) ज्योतिर्विदाभरण (19) दुर्घटकाव्य (20) नलोदय (21) नवरत्नमाला (22) पुष्पवाणविलास (23) मकरन्दस्तव (24) and (25) two मङ्गलाष्टक (26) महापद्यषट्क (27) रत्नकोश (28) राक्षसकाव्य (29) लक्ष्मीस्तव (30) लघुस्तव (31) विद्वद्विनोदकाव्य (32) वृन्दावनकाव्य (33) वैद्यमनोरमा (34) शुद्धिचन्द्रिका (35) शृङ्गारतिलक (36) शृङ्गारसाष्टक (37) शृङ्गारसारकाव्य (38) श्यामलादण्डक (39) श्रुतबोध (40) सप्तश्लोकीरामायण and (51) सेतुबन्ध. Of these the first six are acknowledged by all critics to be undoubtedly his. (7) is not yet discovered but is known only in a quotation by the Kashmirian scholar Kṣemendra, in his Aucityavicāracarcā. The authorship of (8) is somewhat doubtful; while the remaining ones are certainly to be dismissed as the productions of other poets. There is another fact also which should be borne in mind in this connection. In Sanskrit literary history there have been many poets who bore the name Kālidāsa, and at least three were known to Rājasekhara who wrote एकोऽपि जीयते हन्त कालीदासो न केनचित् । शृङ्गारे ललितोद्वारे कालिदासत्रयी किमु ॥ It is possible, therefore, that Kālidāsa other than the author of the Raghuvamśa are responsible for the trifling pieces mentioned above. Here, then, we are concerned with the first six only. The most convenient and reliable method of studying the development of a poet's mind and relation in his productions would be to read his works in their chronological order. But we have no external evidence whatsoever, to ascertain the chronology of Kālidāsa's works. It must, therefore, be based wholly on internal evidence. Judged as such the works would stand in this order—Poems— कुमार<sup>०</sup> मेघदूत and रघुवंश—Plays मालविका<sup>०</sup>, विक्रमो<sup>०</sup>, and शाकुन्तल or, both indiscriminately, as—कुमार<sup>०</sup> मालविका<sup>०</sup>, विक्रमो<sup>०</sup>, मेघदूत, शाकुन्तल and रघुवंश. Space will not permit us even to refer to these briefly. We will only remark in passing that the last three are the outcome of the poet's matured poetic faculties and riper years.

## His Poetry

Kālidāsa is indisputably the greatest master-mind in Sanskrit poetry. His genius has been recognized in India from very early times. He has been and will ever be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen as the Prince of Indian poets. Most Indian successors of Kālidāsa have expressed in suitable words their admiration of the poet, who stood far ahead of them in perfection of his art. Thus Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the famous author of the Kādambari, speaks of him in the following words:—

निर्गतासु न वा कस्य कालिदासस्य सूक्तिषु ।

प्रीतिर्मधुरसार्द्रासु मञ्जरीष्विव जायते ॥

“When Kālidāsa’s sweet sayings, charming with sweet sentiment, went, forth, who did not feel delight in them as in honey-laden flowers?” Kumārila, who flourished about the first half of the eighth century, has quoted with approval the passage from the Śakuntala, “सतां हि संदेहपदेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाणमन्तःकरणप्रवृत्तयः” There is a Subhāṣita which says:—

पुरा कवीनां गणनाप्रसङ्गे कनिष्ठिकाऽधिष्ठितकालिदासा ।

अद्यापि तत्तुल्यकवेरभावादानामिका सार्धवती बभूव ॥

“While once the poets were being counted, Kālidāsa (as being the first) occupied the last finger. But the ring-finger remained true to its name (अनामिका=nameless), since his second has not yet been found (by whom it can be occupied).” Paṇḍita Govardhanācārya thus speaks of our poet:—

साकृतमधुरकोमलविलासिनीकण्ठकूजितप्राये ।

शिक्षासमयेऽपि मुदे रतिलीलाकालिदासोक्ती ॥

“Two things only, viz. love-sport and Kālidāsa’s poetry delight the heart even at the time of instruction, as they mostly consist of the sweet, tender and touching words of a sportful girl.” Almost every Paṇḍita has in his mouth the following memorable verse:—

काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यं तत्र रम्या शकुन्तला ।

तत्रापि च चतुर्थोऽङ्कस्तत्र श्लोकचतुष्टयम् ॥

“Among Kāvyaś the drama is the most charming. Among dramas Śakuntalā is specially charming. Even there the fourth Act is the best; and lastly, four s’lokas<sup>1</sup> therein are specially most beautiful”. The highest place is assigned

1 They are—यास्यत्यद्य शकुन्तलेति &c.; शुभ्रूषस्व गुरुन् &c.; अभिजनवतो भर्तुः श्लाघ्ये &c.; and भूत्वा चिराय चतुरन्तमहीषपत्नी &c.

to Kālidāsa among poets for the construction of happy similes, when it is said :—

उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् ।

दण्डिनः पदलालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥

Among later writers, Jayadeva has called our poet कविकुलगुरु the lord of poets 'and the विलास or 'Graceful Play' of the Muse of Poetry.<sup>1</sup>

That his countrymen should place him at the head of all Sanskrit poets, unparalleled and unsurpassed by those who have preceded or followed him, is natural enough; but he has evoked spontaneous outpouring of praise and manifestations of admiration even from foreign scholars and poets who had access to works either directly or through translations. Goethe has voluntarily bestowed the highest meed of praise on him—so much was he enraptured by the charms of Kālidāsa's Muse and struck with his poetic genius. This is what he says about the Śākuntala—

“Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,

And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed ?

Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combine ?

I name thee, O Śākuntalā, and all at once is said.”<sup>2</sup>

When we remember that Goethe himself was the greatest poet of Germany and one of the greatest of the world, we realize the importance of his estimate of our poet. The well-known philosopher and traveller, Humboldt, pronounces the following judgment—“Kālidāsa is a masterly describer of the influence which Nature exercises upon the minds of lovers. Tenderness in the expression of feelings and richness of creative fancy have assigned to him his lofty place among the poets of all nations. The celebrated critic, Schlegel, has assigned him a very high position amongst the glorious company of the 'Sons of Song'. Several eminent modern orientalisists have also offered their tribute of praise to our Indian Shakespeare, as Sir William Jones was the first to call him—the very comparison of Kālidāsa

1 भासो हासः कविकुलगुरुः कालिदासो विलासः ।

2 As translated from the German by Mr. E. B. Eastwick.

to Shakespeare is the highest form of eulogy that could be bestowed upon him by foreign critics. Sir Monier Williams, while writing about the Śākuntala, thus expresses himself:—"No composition of Kālidāsa displays more the richness of his poetical genius, the exuberance of the imagination, the warmth and play of his fancy, his profound knowledge of the human heart, his delicate appreciation of its most refined and tender emotions, his familiarity with the workings and counterworking of its conflicting feelings—in short more entitles him to rank as the Shakespeare of India." Prof. Lessen calls him "the brightest star in the firmament of Indian poetry."

We thus find that Kālidāsa has established his sovereignty in the hearts of all alike. Now it may be asked, 'What is that in Kālidāsa which establishes his undisputed claim to the highest honour which is thus bestowed upon him?' Unless this question is satisfactorily answered Kālidāsa's merits as a poet cannot be said to be determined.<sup>1</sup> His poetic genius has brought Sanskrit poetry to the highest elegance and refinement. His style is peculiarly pure and chaste. It has neither the laxity of the Purāṇas nor the extravagant colouring of later poems. It is unartificial and characterized by brevity consistent with perspicuity. An unaffected simplicity of expression and an easy-flowing language mark his writings which are embellished with similes unparalleled for their beauty and appropriateness and with pithy general sayings. His diction is marked by the absence of long compounds, involved constructions, over-wrought rhetoric and artificial puns. Kālidāsa excels other poets in his description of the sublime and the beautiful. It is a principle recognized by all modern critics that 'Nature must be the life and essence of poetry,' and in respect of this, Kālidāsa may be said to be essentially a poet of Nature (of course in the limited sense of the term which it is possible to attach to it in those times of gay luxury and general prosperity). He describes with most effective touches the gorgeous scenery of the mountain Himālaya—its snow-clad and mineral-covered summits, the peaks where sunshine ever reigns, the fragrant and cool breezes blowing there, the wilds with the hunters, the musk-deer, the potent herbs shedding lustre at night; the cāmara deer, the Mānasa lake &c., and his description of

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1 For this the student is referred to pp. 27-29 of our Introduction to the Śākuntala, 5th ed.

the Ganges and the peaceful hermitage-life is very striking and life-like. His descriptive powers are great, and some of the scenes in the Śāk., the Megh. and the Ragh. are so enchanting as to hold his readers spell-bound. And as regards ध्वनिकाव्य, the kind of poetry which suggests even more than what it expresses, he is a master of acknowledged skill.

### (B) HIS DATE

The problem of the date of Kālidāsa is a vexed one and it has yet to be finally settled. The earliest mention of Kālidāsa by name is in Aihole Inscription dated 634 A-D., and it furnishes the 7th Century A. D. as the downward limit of the poet's date. Tradition mentions Kālidāsa as a contemporary and a court-poet of king Vikramāditya. One king of that name founded the era known after him, which is accepted as commencing with 57 B. C. Some antiquarians once did not accept this date as the correct one but brought Vikramāditya down to A. D. 544, propounding what was known as the *Korur Theory*. The battle of Korur marked a turning-point in Indian history. Vikramāditya having defeated the Mlecchas in it. Curiously enough, Mr. Fergusson held that to commemorate the battle an era was invented, and that its beginning was placed back 600 years. So he put the true date of Vikramāditya at 544 A. D., and this theory for a time held away, since no inscription was discovered bearing a date prior to 600 of the Vikrama era. But the discovery of the Mandasor Inscription, which is dated Samvāt 529, made this theory untenable and the traditional date remained unshaken. Then there is the theory of the *Nine Gems* 'Nine eminent men called the 'Nine Gems' adorned the court of king Vikramāditya—

धन्वन्तरिक्षपणकामरसिंहशङ्कुवेतालभट्टघटकर्परकालिदासाः ।

ख्यातो वराहमिहिरो नृपतेः सभायां रत्नानि वै वररुचिर्नव विक्रमस्य ॥

Of these अमरसिंह is said to have lived between 414 A. D. and 642 A. D. Varāhamihira is believed to have died in 537 A. D. On the strength of these dates of Kālidāsa's supposed contemporaries, Dr. Keru placed him in the latter half of the sixth century. But in this there are many *a priori* conclusions and speculation as to probabilities. If the tradition proves anything definitely, it proves the connection of Kālidāsa with King Vikramāditya; but as regards

the contemporaneity of the nine authors, the tradition cannot be true. Next there is the theory of *Renaissance* propounded by Prof. Max Müller. He divided the whole Sanskrit literary period into two parts. The first began with the Vedas and ended with the first century A. D. Then came an *Interregnum*, a period during which foreigners invaded India and so literary activity was dormant. The Professor placed the Renaissance of Sanskrit learning in the sixth century A. D. with the reign of Vikramāditya. But as has been shown by Drs. Peterson and Buhler, the period called *interregnum* was really not destitute of literary productivity, and therefore, if Kālidāsa is to be considered as the first poet of the new school, he must be placed considerably earlier than Prof. Max Müller did.

There are some minor things which have been pushed into the controversy. They are—(1) the alleged covert references to Diñnāga and Nichula in the Meghadūta, the former a foe and the latter a friend of Kālidāsa : (2) the identity of Mātrgupta, a king of Kashmir and Kālidāsa (for names in Sanskrit are often titles and Mātrgupta, lit. 'protected by the mother,' may also be taken as Kāligupta or Kālidāsa), (3) and the supposed astronomical references in the works of Kālidāsa to the astronomical theories of Āryabhaṭṭa, who lived in 476 A. D. Prof. R. N. Apte has examined all these at some length, and on the first point he comes to the conclusion that Diñnāga and Nichula were not contemporaries of the great Kālidāsa, but must have been contemporaries of some other Kālidāsa. On the second point he observes that Mātrgupta and Kālidāsa were two different persons, since they are differently quoted by Kṣemendra and other writers and commentators. The supposed astronomical references have really no astronomical significance at all, and it cannot be said that Kālidāsa was acquainted with the astronomical works of Āryabhaṭṭa. Mr. K. B. Pathak, the latest exponent of the 6th century theory, repeats the argument given above, but principally bases his conclusion on his theory about the Hūṇa kings, allusion to whom is made by the poet in the Raghuvamśa. He argues that since there is no mention made of the Hūṇas in the Rāmāyaṇa, the conclusion follows that Kālidāsa

unconsciously refers to the Hūna, kings of his own time who held sway over Punjab and Kashmir in the second quarter of the sixth century. But this rests merely on assumption; for there are references to the Hūnas even in the Mahābhārata. Prof. Apte has also shown that just beyond Bactria or the threshold of ancient India, the Hūnas had constituted a powerful empire from the middle of the 3rd century B. C. to the end of the 1st or the 2nd century A. D.

Modern European scholars are generally inclined to hold that Kālidāsa must have flourished under one or more of the Gupta kings. The Gupta period (about 300–650 A. D.) was noted in ancient Indian history for a revival of Sanskrit learning and arts. The late Mr. Vincent A. Smith (see his *Early History of India* p. 304, 3rd ed. 1914) believed that Kālidāsa must have lived in the reigns of the first two, or even in that of the third, of these Gupta Kings:

Chandragupta II (c. 357–413)

Kumāragupta I (413–455)

Skandagupta (455–480)

Both Chandragupta II and Skandagupta had adopted the title of *Vikramāditya*. To quote the words of Mr. Smith, "It is not unlikely that the earliest works of Kālidāsa ..... may have been composed before A. D. 413, that is to say, while Chandragupta II was on the throne; but I am inclined to regard the reign of Kumāragupta I (413–455) as the time during which the poet's later works were composed and it seems possible, that the whole of his literary career fell within the limits of that reign. It is also possible that he may have continued writing after the accession of Skandagupta". Mr. Smith thus makes Kālidāsa's literary career extend over a period of not less than thirty years. Note that, even according to Mr. Smith, there is nothing wrong in the tradition about a Vikramāditya having been our poet's patron; only we must arrive at an understanding as to which Vikramāditya is meant, because various kings in the history of ancient India called themselves by that title. We ourselves hold, for reasons given below, that we must accept as our poet's patron that king Vikramāditya whose traditional era commences at 56 B. C. The attempt to place Kālidāsa in the court of the Gupta kings rests merely on the fact that Chandragupta II was named Vikramāditya. But the existence of prior kings of that title is now a certainty<sup>1</sup>.

1 The Rājataranginī mentions an earlier Vikramāditya, a contemporary of Pratāpāditya of Kashmir.

Vatsabhūti, the author of the Mandasor inscription, copies several ideas from Kālidāsa; the latter must, therefore, have lived prior to 472 A. D. Again, Aśvaghōṣa, the author of the *Buddha-Carita* which is a life of the great Buddha in Sanskrit, has numerous passages similar to those occurring in the works of Kālidāsa. Now, Kālidāsa was an original poet borrowing his subjects from Vālmiki and other ancient authors. Aśvaghōṣa was more a philosopher than a poet, and may, with greater probability, be supposed to have borrowed his ideas from Kālidāsa. The date of Aśvaghōṣa is given as 78 A. D.; and if we suppose him to have borrowed from Kālidāsa, the latter will have to be placed earlier than 78 A. D. and in this view Dr. Peterson also concurs when he says '*Kālidāsa stands near the beginning of the Christian era, if, indeed, he does not overtop it*'.

There is also internal evidence pointing to the same conclusion. We have first the evidence obtained from the state of the law of inheritance and the penalty for theft as they are indicated in passages in the *Śākuntala*. The passage in the sixth Act of the drama, announcing the death of the merchant Dhanamitra who died heirless, seems to Prof. Apte to refer to a period when the widow of a deceased person could not inherit his estate. Such a period is to be found only before the Christian era, when Manu, Āpastamba and Vasiṣṭha held sway, and Brhaspati, Śaṅkha Likhita and Yājñavalkya had not yet written their Codes. The penalty for theft, as indicated in the prologue to the sixth Act, seems to have been the extreme one, and there is also a passage of similar import in the *Vikramorvaśya* (आत्मनो वचमाहर्ता &c. V. I.). The penalty for theft has been from time mitigated with the progress of civilization. Manu and Āpastamba lay down the extreme penalty, the option of fine being introduced later on, as we find it in the *Smṛti* of Brhaspati. These two circumstances tend to show that Kālidāsa flourished at a period which is anterior to Brhaspati, the latter being generally placed in the first century A. D.

Prof. Apte further calls attention to the fact that there is no reference to the Nyāya philosophy in the works of Kālidāsa [except perhaps in *Ragh.* XIII. 1, in which the word शब्दगुणं (आकाशं) occurs, but which the poet might have borrowed from the *Sāṅkhyas*], and concludes that he must have lived before the development of that philosophy. Then

again we have the evidence of style. The artificiality of diction and the fondness for long compounds and double meaning words which mark the writings of Daṇḍin (who in his *Kāvyādarśa* says that an abundance of compounds constitutes the quality of *ojas* in poetry). Bāṇa, Bhavabhūti (7th century A. D.) and other medieval writers, are entirely absent in Kālidāsa's writings—a fact which shows that he must be placed some six or seven centuries before them, a period necessary to cause such a revolution in the art of literary composition, considering the scanty means of the propagation of learning in those times. It thus becomes clear that Kālidāsa lived in the first century B. C. at the latest<sup>1</sup>.

### III THE PLAY

#### (1) THE PLOT

Purūravas, the son of Budha and Ilā and king of Pratiṣthāna is the hero of the play. His queen is Auśīnari, daughter of Kāśīrāja. Urvaśī, a nymph of heaven, is the heroine.

*Prelude*—After the *Nāndī* and the announcement of the play, the screams of heavenly nymphs crying for help are heard.

#### Act I

##### SCENE—*Peak of the HEMAKŪṬA Mountain*

King Purūravas, while driving back to the earth after having paid his respects to the divine Sun, hears the shrieks of the nymphs and asks them what kind of help they need. Learning from them that the seizure of their friend Urvaśī along with Citralekhā by the demon Keśin was the cause of their distress, he sets out against Keśin, the nymphs promising to wait for him on the peak of the Hemakūta mountain. Presently the king returns successfully with Urvaśī

1. Prof. S. Ray refers to the discovery in 1909-10 of the Bhita medallion, which pictures a scene which looks exactly like opening scene of the *Śākuntala*. The medallion is assigned to the Sunga period (184 B. C.-72 B. C.), and Prof. Ray assumes that Kālidāsa is anterior to the date of the medallion, though the Archaeological Survey authorities, holding to the Vincent Smith's date, are inclined to dispute the identification of the scene with the one in the Play.

and Citralekhā. On their way back Urvasī recovers from her swoon; the king is captivated with her peerless charms and she with his nobility; neither, however, knows the real feeling of the other. They meet the other nymphs. Chitraratha, the Gandharva king, who was deputed by Indra to rescue the nymphs, arrives, congratulates the king, and invites him and Urvasī to heaven. The king very courteously excuses himself; the nymphs depart. Urvasī pretends to be caught by a creeper and casts at the king a longing glance, which the latter returns with equal affection.

## ACT II

### SCENE I.—*Environs of the VIMANAPARICCHANDA Palace*

The king, returns to his city, but his heart is wounded by Love. His queen marks the altered state of his mind and asks one of her maids to learn the king's secret from his intimate friend, Mānavaka. The foolish Vidūṣaka betrays the love of his friend.

### SCENE II—*The private garden of the palace of PURŪRAVAS at Prayāga*

The king, on his part pining after Urvasī, seeks with Vidūṣaka, rest in the pleasure-garden. There he unbosoms the real state of his mind to his friend. At about the same time, Urvasī, irresistibly drawn by her own heart, comes, accompanied by Citralekhā, to the garden where the two, remaining invisible by their divine power, overhear the conversation between the king and the Vidūṣaka. Urvasī, discovering that the king is uncertain as to *her* feelings, avows her love to him by means of a birch leaf, and then delights him with her presence. She is, however, suddenly called away by a summons from the lord of the gods about to witness a performance. In the meanwhile the queen, being informed by her maid Nipuṇikā of the king's love for the heavenly courtesan, comes, accompanied by her, in search of the king, in order to ascertain the fact herself. Through Mānavaka's carelessness, the birch-leaf, which was committed to his care, falls into her hands, and she enters, burning with jealous anger. The king in vain endeavours to pacify her. He, however, hopes that she may soon repent as she has openly slighted his prostration.

## ACT III

SCENE II—*The Hermitage of BHARATA*

In the performance exhibited by the sage Bharata before the heavenly assembly, Urvas'ī who played Lakṣmī, stumbles in her speech. For, when questioned by Menakā who acted the part of Vāruṇī—'On whom hast thou set thy heart,' the words 'On Purūravas, instead of ' On Puruṣottama,' escape her lips. Enraged at this the sage pronounces a curse upon her, thereby depriving her of her residence in the upper world. She, however, finds favour with Indra, who graciously allows her to repair to the monarch, his ally in battles, and to remain with him till he beholds the offspring she shall bear him. Sometime after this, Urvas'ī, dressed as an *Abhisārikā*, comes with Citralekhā to the Maṇiharmya palace to pay a visit to the king, but, remaining invisible, watches the business going on there.

SCENE II—*Part of the garden of the Palace*

The queen, as was anticipated by the king, feels remorse and wishes to make amends for her conduct under the pretext of a religious performance which she names 'Priyānuprasādana.' She sends word to the king requesting him to be present at the Maṇiharmya palace where she wishes to worship the moon. The king consents, and repairs to the terrace of the palace accompanied by the Vidūṣaka. The queen duly appears, performs the ceremony, and at its conclusion gives her consent to the king's marriage with Urvas'ī. The king assures her that he will ever be true to her.

The queen departs to take her meal after a whole day's fast. Urvas'ī, who was a witness of the whole scene, now steps forward visibly and is happily united with the king. Thereupon Citralekhā, requesting the king to treat her friend kindly, returns to heaven. The Vidūṣaka, too withdraws under some plea, and the king and Urvas'ī retire to rest.

## ACT IV

[This act is a kind of melodrama and is quite exceptional in dramatic plays.]

SCENE—*The groves of the GANDHAMĀDANA mountain*

After many years are passed in happy union, Urvas'ī goes with the king to the Gandhamādana forest to sport. There

the king happens to fix his glance for a moment upon a *Vidyādhara* girl. This rouses the jealous wrath of *Urvaśī*, who, disdainful of the king's apologies, leaves him, and unmindfully enters the proscribed environs of the grove sacred to *Kārttikeya*. The curse of the deity at once takes effect, and she is transformed into a creeper. Ignorant of this, the king, mad with grief, roams through the forest, asking every object he meets with-animate or inanimate—to give him some tidings of his beloved or to restore her to him. In the course of his rambles he finds the gem *Saṅgamaṇīya* ( the Uniter of separated lovers ). With that jewel in hand he embraces a certain creeper which he fancies to be his beloved, and O wonder! that very instant the metamorphosis is undone and the creeper re-transformed into the lovely nymph! When eyes closed the king enjoys the touch, and when he opens them after some time, whom should he behold but the darling of his heart! *Urvaśī* excuses herself in suitable terms, and then they go back to *Pratiṣṭhāna*, riding a cloud which *Urvaśī* changes into a balloon by her superhuman power.

#### ACT V

##### SCENE—*The Palace of PURŪRAVAS*

The king was hailed back to the city with rejoicing by the citizens. He ruled peacefully ever his subjects securing their affection and loyalty. Excepting a son there was nothing wanting to complete his happiness, and even this blessing he was soon to have. A few days after the king's return, the *Saṅgamaṇīya* jewel is carried away by a vulture. The king tries to shoot the bird but it escapes. Soon after, report is brought to the king sitting in company with the *Vidūṣaka*, of the bird's having been shot by an arrow from an unknown hand. The gem and arrow are produced, and from the inscription on the arrow the shooter is found to be none else but king's own son, *Āyus*. The king is lost in wonder mingled with joy, but does not know how to account for the fact. He, however, remembers that on the occasion, when he performed a sacrifice in the *Naimiṣa* forest, he was separated from *Urvaśī*, before which time she had betrayed some faint marks of pregnancy. The *Vidūṣaka* attributes the fact to the mystic nature of divine beings. Just at the time the arrival of a female ascetic with a boy from the hermitage of the sage *Cyavana* is announced, and are immediately admitted to the royal presence. At the sight of the boy the king feels a strange emotion rise within him.

Urvaśī is sent for. When she arrives, the female ascetic hands over the boy to her and repairs to the forest. Urvaśī then explains to the king how she was commanded by Indra to stay with Purūravas till he should see the face of a son born of her, and how, afraid of early separation, she handed over the boy to sage Cyavana for being educated; she then adds—'Now that you have seen the face of your son, separation is inevitable; I must go back to my master.' The revelation plunges all into sorrow. In his heaviness the king determines upon leading a forest life after putting his son in his place. At this crisis Nārada arrives from Indra with a message to the king that he should not lay down the sceptre so soon, and that Urvaśī should bear him company till death. The message is received with heart-felt thanks. After the delivery of the message, Nārada, in accordance with Indra's wishes, installs the young prince as *yuvarāja*, and unmixed joy crowns the whole business. The Play then terminates with the customary stanza of Benediction (Bharatavākya).

It will be noticed that the principal points in the development of the plot of the play are:—(1) the rescue of Urvaśī and the agitated state of the heart of the two lovers; (2) the obstruction in the nymph's upward passage which deepens the feeling of love; (3) the Vidūṣaka's betrayal of the king's love; (4) the curse of Bharata; (5) the interference and permission of Indra; (6) Urvaśī's avowal of her love; (7) the falling of the birch-leaf into the hands of the queen; (8) the queen's indignant scorning of her husband's prostration and her consequent remorse; (9) the consent of the queen; (10) Kārttikeya's curse and Urvaśī's transformation into a vine, (11) the Gem of Union and Urvaśī's restoration, (12) the vulture; (13) the Tāpaśī's arrival with the boy; and (14) the final favour shown by Indra.

## (2) THE SOURCES OF THE PLOT AND THE CHANGES EFFECTED BY THE POET

Purūravas is mentioned for the first time along with Manu in R̥gveda I. 31. 4, where he is called beneficent (सुकृते) and a friend of Agni. His love to the *apsaras* Urvaśī is described in very obscure language in R. V. X. 95 in which he requests the nymph once more to bless him with her company, thus implying his previous separation.

In the 18th verse the gods address him as the son of Idā (Ilā) and promise him happiness in heaven and their company if he would propitiate them with oblations. (See Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V. pp. 236, 421). In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa II. 5. 1, an interpretation of hymn X. 95 is given which is itself not much clear either. The student will get an idea of the Vedic version of the story from Sāyaṇācārya's introduction to the hymn above referred to, given in an Appendix to this Edition.

The account of the love of Purūravas and Urvasī differently given in different Purāṇas is based more or less on the Vedic version. According to the Mahābhārata, Purūravas had a contest with the Brāhmaṇas, fetched the three fires from the world of the Gandharvas and had six sons from Urvasī, the eldest of whom was Āyus. Nothing is mentioned there of his separation from Urvasī and re-union with her.

The story is very fully and connectedly given in the Viṣṇu-P. as also in the Pad.-P. We give in brief the story as related in the former Purāṇa, which in this part closely follows the Vedic version. Urvasī, a nymph of Indra's court, incurred the anger of Mitra and Varuṇa who cursed her to become the consort of a mortal, forfeiting the pleasures of heaven. On beholding her descended to the earth in a human form of exquisite beauty, Purūravas, a king of the lunar race, was inspired by fervent love. She became his wife after exacting from him his consent to two conditions. These were—(1) that he should take under his charge her two pet rams and keep them safe, and (2) that she should never see him divested of his raiment. The denizens of heavens, deprived of the enlivening society of Urvasī, felt their pleasures stale in heaven and attempted to recover her as soon as the curse ended. Some Gandharvas undertook to effect this object. They entered the sleeping chamber of the monarch and carried off the goats. Their bleating roused Urvasī and the king. The latter, fancying that darkness of the night would screen him from the eyes of his wife, leaped naked out of his bed, in order to pursue the ravishers. Thereupon the Gandharvas produced a flash of lightning which revealed him to Urvasī's view, who, her stipulation being broken, at once disappeared, accompanying the Gandharvas to the heaven of Indra.

When Purūravas came to know his loss, his grief was intense; and, his intellect being affected, he wandered over the world for several years in quest of his wife until he came to a lake in Kurukṣetra where he saw Urvas'ī sporting along with other nymphs. Recognizing her he implored her to return. She refused to return, but promised to pay him a yearly visit, provided he resumed his station and kingly duties. Her annual visits were regularly repeated, and the result of these was the birth of six sons: Āyus, Dhīmat, Amāvasu, Viśvāvasu, Śatāyu, and Śrutāyu. The king, however, sighed for the permanent enjoyment of the nymph's society and the Gandharvas gave him a brazier charged with fire to perform a sacrifice, as a means of attaining his wishes. He put the vessel in a thicket and went in search of Urvas'ī. Not finding her he came back to the spot where, in the place of the brazier he found two trees grown up, Śamī and Asvattha. Purūravas broke a branch from each and returning to his palace rubbed them together and generated fire.<sup>1</sup> With this primeval fire he performed a series of sacrifices, and, getting the rank of a Gandharva and being elevated to the heavenly regions, he there enjoyed the eternal society of his beloved nymph.

The story of the two lovers is also told in the *Brhat-kathā* (see *Kathās. Taraṅga* 17), but in a manner totally different from both the play and the *Purāṇas*. Purūravas, a great devotee of Viṣṇu, while once taking a stroll in the *Nandana* grove chanced to see Urvas'ī when both were enamoured of each other. Knowing the state of the king's heart, Viṣṇu sent word by Nārada to Indra, asking him to bestow the nymph on the monarch. They were then united and lived happily. Then there was a war in the upper sphere in which the gods gained a victory mainly through the prowess of Purūravas. There were great festivities at Indra's court accompanied with music and dancing in celebration of this victory. While Tumburu, the heavenly preceptor of dancing, was superintending the affair, Rambhā, who was dancing there, committed a mistake, whereupon the king laughed at her. Angry at what seemed to him a piece of audacity on the king's part, Tumburu cursed him to

1. The latter circumstances of this legend seem to indicate the introduction of fire-worship into India by Purūravas, considered as a historical personage. (Wilson)

be separated from Urvasī until he would propitiate Viṣṇu. When the king came down to the middle world he found Urvasī carried away by the Gandharvas. He then went to Badarikāśrama to gain the favour of Viṣṇu by penance. He succeeded in this, and, by the order of that deity, Urvasī was restored to him by the Gandharvas.

According to Wilson the whole plot of the Vikramorvaśīya is an allegory. The hero is the Sun and the heroine is the Dawn. They are together for a time and then they are separated. The sun alone wanders over hills, dales and rivers and then at the close of the day they are again united.

The account of the Matsya-Purāṇa, however, comes nearest to the plot of the play. We, therefore, give it here in the words of Wilson:—

“Budha was the son of the royal Soma by Tārā. His father conferred upon him the dominion of the earth and inaugurated him supreme over the world. The holy Budha begot by Ilā a son who performed by his own might a hundred Aśvamedhas. He was named Purūravas, and was revered by all the worlds. He worshipped Viṣṇu on the peaks of the Himālaya, and thence became the monarch of the seven-fold earth. Keśin and myriads of Daityas fell before his prowess, and Urvasī, fascinated by his personal graces, became his bride.

“Virtue, Wealth, and Desire, once paid this monarch a visit, curious to ascertain which of them held the first place in his esteem. The king received them with respect, but paid to Virtue his profoundest homage. Wealth and Desire were offended by the preference shown to their companion. Wealth denounced a curse upon him, that Avarice should occasion his fall; and Desire declared that he should be separated from his bride, and on that account suffer distraction in the forest of Kumāra on the Gandhamādana mountain; but Virtue declared that he should enjoy a long and pious life, that his descendants should continue to multiply as long as the sun and the moon endured, and should ever enjoy the dominion of the earth. After this the divinities disappeared.

“Purūravas was in the habit of paying a visit to Indra every day. Having ascended his car, accompanying the Sun in his southern course, he beheld on one occasion the demon Keśin seize and carry off the nymphs Citralekhā and Urvasī. The king attacked the demon and destroyed him

with the shaft of Vāyu, by which he not only rescued the nymphs, but established Indra on his throne, which the Demon had endangered. For this service Indra repaid the monarch with his friendship, and gave him additional power, splendour, and glory.

“Having invited the king to a festival at which was represented the celebrated story of Lakṣmī’s election of a husband, the invention of Bharata, Indra commanded Menakā, Rambhā and Urvaśī to perform their respective parts. Urvaśī who represented Lakṣmī, being engrossed by admiration of the king forgot what she had to enact, and thereby incurred the high displeasure of the sage, who sentenced her to separation from the prince on earth, and condemned her to pine fifty-five years, transformed into a Vine until restored to Purūravas. Urvaśī, having made the king her lord, resided with him, and after the term of the curse had expired, bore him eight sons: Āyus, Dhṛtāyu, Aśvāyu, Dhanāyu, Dhṛtimat, Vasu, Divijāta, and Śatāyu, all endowed with more than human power”.

Thus it will be seen that the theme of our play claims a high antiquity, and must have been well known among the educated classes in the times of Kālidāsa. Whatever version we take to be the original of the story, we find that the poet introduced many changes into it so as to give it a dramatic character, and we think they are such as greatly heighten the stage-effect. We will here mention the principal of them: they are—(1) The king’s marriage with Auśinari prior to his love for Urvaśī. The Mahābhārata and the other sources of the plot mentioned above do not refer to his marriage with Auśinari. The Harivaṃśa calls Urvaśī his only wife. The rivalry of the queen which forms the chief factor in the development of the plot in the second Act as also in the third seems to be entirely an invention of the poet. (2) The curse of Bharata and the favour of Indra which smoothen the further path of the lovers. (3) The reversing by Indra of his first decree as to Urvaśī’s residence with the king. The tale of the two lovers as told in the Purānas ends with their melancholy separation; such tragic end suited neither the requirements of Hindu drama nor the taste of Hindu audiences. Kālidāsa’s genius at once found a way out of the difficulty. Just at the moment when separation is imminent, Nārada arrives with the joyful news

that Indra has graciously allowed the hero and the heroine to live together until death would put an end to their mortal career. The other changes, which are less important, can be easily marked.

### (3) TECHNICAL REMARKS

It will be found that the *Vikramorvaśīya* satisfies most of the conditions laid down in the first Section of our Introduction. The play opens with a Benediction which also suggests the subject-matter, and closes with the usual *Bharatavākya*. The *मुखसंधि* introduces the heroine to the hero, and love germinates between them. The final object is their union in wedlock. The ground for the seed was prepared, in the case of the king when the *Apsaras* gave him a graphic description of *Urvaśī's* charms. The seed is cast when the king and *Urvaśī* see each other. It takes up the whole of the first Act and the prologue to the second Act. The *प्रतिमुखसंधि* fills up the whole of the second Act and a portion of third Act. The seed sprouts up in this, which is marked by the *Vidūṣaka* and *Citralkhā*, and by the *Cetī* and the queen. The effort or *Prayātna* is implied in आ दर्शनात् &c. II. 2. The search for means to the desired end, *Urvaśī's* departure at the summons from her lord, and the queen's interference notwithstanding, form the *Bindu*. The *गर्भसंधि* begins from where the *Pratimukha* closes, and ends with the departure of the queen. The seed is shown to grow further, in as much as the king hears from *Urvaśī* an actual confession of her love. There is hope of success (प्राप्त्याशा) as the obstacle from the queen is removed. This *Saindhi*, however, is characterized by the absence of the *Patākā*. The *अवमर्शसंधि* actually begins with *Urvaśī's* entrance and extends to the close of the fourth Act. There is *नियताप्ति* or certain attainment, but it is obstructed by *Urvaśī's* metamorphosis. The *निर्वहणसंधि* occupies the last Act. In it all the foregoing arrangements terminate in happy union of the husband, wife and son.

The action, which is less varied than that of the *Śāk.*, is progressive in its main parts and sustains the interest to the last, although not with the same degree of intensity throughout. The introduction of a rival wife, and the love

meeting and their interruption which form a necessary ingredient of love plays excepting in a few cases, the description of female beauty and the feelings of the two lovers, the contrivance of making one party overhear the conversation or the soliloquy of the other, are much the same in this as in other plays. In making the queen give up her jealousy apparently without an adequate cause the poet has perhaps counted a little too much on the nobility of her mind and the good sense of the audience. A curious feature of Kālidāsa's plays is that the Vidūṣaka plays a conspicuous part in the Mālav., is a mediocre in this play, and almost a non-entity in the Śākuntala.

With regard to the extraordinary number of the Prakrit passage found in the fourth Act in some Editions, it must be observed that they are not genuine. We have shown these to be interpolations (see our Notes). It is a strange coincidence that both the third Act of the Śāk. and the fourth Act of the present play should have been tampered with by meddlesome critics or poets.

#### (4) THE TIME REQUIRED BY THE ACTION OF THE PLAY

It is very difficult to determine the exact time required by the events represented in the play. The approximate age of the king's son is given in the fifth Act, as being about twelve years. The business of the first three Acts, each of which describes a day's events, is accomplished in about twenty days. From the many references to the spring season in these three Acts ( विशाखासमीपगत इव चंद्रः &c. II. 4, 6; वसन्तानन्तरे उष्णसमये &c.), the events in the first Act seem to refer to the first or the second day of Caitra as the creepers have not yet fully resumed their vernal beauty (लताभिः श्रीरिवालेवी I. 12). The description of moon-rise in the third Act evidently refers to the fourth day of the dark half of a month (probably Caitra) which is a fasting day, and on which the moon appears like a *Khaṇḍamodaka*. About a fortnight's interval seems to have elapsed between Urvāṣī's first meeting with the king and her second visit to him. The events in the third Act immediately succeed those related in the previous Act. A very long period, about thirteen years, seems to separate the fourth Act from the third. The incidents mentioned in the fifth Act follow closely the king's return to his capital.

## (5) GENERAL REMARKS

The Vikramorvaṣīya is the second of the three dramas attributed to Kālidāsa. That play is an emanation from the same hand as the Abhijñāna-śākuntala is doubted by no critic. It is a love drama and belongs, according to the Sāhityadarpaṇa to that subdivision of dramatic compositions which are known as 'Troṭakas' (a division not perhaps known to the poet himself). The language employed in it displays all the elegance and the beauties of Kālidāsa's style, though less perfect than in the Śākuntala. Wilson thus compares the two plays—"The subject of each is taken from heroic mythology, and a royal demi-god and nymph of more than human mould are the hero and the heroine of either; there is the same vivacity of description and tenderness of feeling in both, the like delicate beauty in the thoughts and extreme elegance in the style. It may be difficult to decide to which the palm belongs, but the story of the present play is perhaps more skilfully woven and events rise out of each other more naturally than in the Śākuntala; while on the other hand, there is no one personage in it so interesting as the heroine of that drama." We may further observe that we notice in both almost the same elevation of the poet's genius, the same richness of imagery, the same chaste, style of composition and the absence of any forced construction or offensive conceit, the same command of language and felicity of expression the same ardent love of the beautiful, and the same power of penetration into the inmost recesses of the human heart and its conflicting feelings. The Vikramorvaṣīya abounds in beautiful descriptions especially of scenery. Popular saying and pithy maxims season the conversational portion, and its language though less refined and elaborate than that of the Śāk., is neither tumid nor low. The metres, which are mostly of the shorter kind are very musical and full of variety.

The mastery of Kālidāsa in the choice of comparisons<sup>1</sup> is conspicuously seen in this play. Among the most striking passages are to be noted his comparison between the king and the Sun as to their work and mid-day rest (II. 1) further

1. The similes of Kālidāsa are considered to be the happiest in the language. Cf. the traditional opinion of the Pandits— उपमा कालिदासस्य भारवेरर्थगौरवम् । दण्डिनः पदालित्यं माघे सन्ति त्रयो गुणाः ॥

between the king and the leader of the elephant-herd (IV. 25) between Urvaśī and the creeper (IV. 38). Other similes of exquisite taste and gracefulness are those with which he illustrates the recovery of Urvaśī from the swoon (I. 7), the anxious waiting of her friends (I. 10) and her expected meeting with them (I. 12), the aspect of the East at moon-rise (III. 6) the approach of Nārada (V. 19), and others too numerous to note here, but which we have taken care to point out in our Notes. We cannot however, close these remarks without referring to the passage (V. 22) in which the royal dignity shared by father and son is compared with Ganges dividing its waters between the Himālaya and the ocean.

### The Poetical Merits of the Play

As regards its poetical merits and artistic finish the Vikramorvaśīya ranks but second to the Śākuntala. Considered by itself the Vikra. does ample credit to Kālidāsa's poetic powers. The love-story is simple; the incidents are few and easily intelligible even to those not acquainted with the social life and the thoughts of the Hindus. With the exception of the central story of the Plot—the love of the hero and the heroine—everything in this play owes its birth to the creative imagination of our poet; and we may observe that in the construction of the plot of the present play the poet has shown great originality of conception and imagination. All the Acts of this drama are original in their conception, and in the creation of some of the incidents the poet's imagination is at its best. Wilson seems to see a special beauty in this that 'both the persons and the events are subject to an awful control, whose interference invests them with a dignity superior to their natural level. Fate is the ruling principle of the narrative; and the monarch and the nymphs, and the sovereign of the gods himself, are portrayed as subject to the inscrutable and inevitable 'decrees of destiny.' And, if by the 'decrees of destiny' he means the carrying away of Urvaśī by Keśin, the curse of Kumāra, the conditional favour by Indra &c., the justice of his remark may be admitted. 'The chief charm of this piece', he further remarks is its poetry. The story, the situation, the character, are all highly imaginative, and nothing can surpass the beauty and