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# APPOINTMENT WITH KĀLIDĀSA

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**L. D. SERIES 83**

**GENERAL EDITORS**

**DALSUKH MALVANIA**

**NAGIN J. SHAH**

**By**

**G. K. Bhat**

**Ex-Director**

**Bandarkar Oriental**

**Research Institute**

**POONA**

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**L. D. INSTITUTE OF INDOLOGY AHMEDABAD-9**

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**Research Institute,**  
**Pune**



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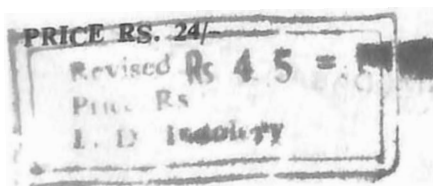
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## FOREWORD

The L. D. Institute of Indology has great pleasure in publishing the book *Appointment with Kālidāsa* by Dr. G. K. Bhat, Ex-Director, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. The book will, no doubt, prove a good introduction to Kālidāsa. Therein Dr. Bhat treats of Kālidāsa's life, date and works, his world of thought, his personality and art, his outlook on life and the values he cherished in art and life. His appraisal of Kālidāsa's Supreme theme : Sṛṅgāra or love is particularly very interesting and illuminating. He evaluates the problem in the context of social atmosphere prevailing in the days of Kālidāsa. He does not favour the 'sublimation' thesis or 'spiritual' interpretation and argues out his case very convincingly. His treatment is throughout lucid and authentic.

We hope that the book will be of great interest to scholars of Sanskrit Literature in general and of Kālidāsa's works in particular.

L. D. Institute of Indology,  
Ahmedabad-380009.  
26th January, 1982.

Nagin J. Shah  
Director

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## PREFACE

The L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, invited me, in June 1979, for a couple of lectures on "Kālidāsa's Philosophy of Living". Severity of my arthritic ailment prevented me from keeping the engagement. The authorities of the Institute were kind to me and kept the invitation open. I took the lectures on the 26th and 27th November 1979 under the auspices of the Institute.

During the interval the Institute made another offer to me inviting me to write a small book on Kālidāsa which the Institute undertook to publish. The present work is my response to the kind offer.

I have called the book "APPOINTMENT WITH KĀLIDĀSA" for a reason. It naturally includes the material which I used for my lectures. But it is meant as an introduction to Kālidāsa : introduction to the life and literature of Kālidāsa, his world of thought, his personality and art, his outlook on life and the values he seems to have cherished in art and life. I made an imaginative effort to be on the inside of the poet, as it were. If I am able to help the reader towards a better understanding of the great poet and appreciate his peerless art, that is all the reward I hope for.

I am grateful to the Institute's former and present Directors, Pt. D.D. Malvania and Dr. Nagin Shah, for the courtesy and affection with which my convenience was looked after. I wish also to express my gratitude to my several former pupils and friends who gave an enthusiastic attendance at my lectures.

A 12, Svapnanagari Apartments,  
Karve Road, PUNE-411 004.  
November, 1979.

**G. K. BHAT**



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APPOINTMENT  
WITH  
KĀLIDĀSA

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“वागर्थाविव संपृक्तौ  
वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।  
जगतः पितरौ वन्दे  
पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥”

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# 1 PERIOD OF LIFE AND LITERARY ACTIVITY

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It still appears difficult to fix the date of Kālidāsa, the periods of his life and literary activity. Silence on the part of the poets and lack of precise, decisive evidence lead, at the most, to some probable inferences. But the deductions are bowled down if the literary evidence on which they are based are shown to be capable of a different interpretation; sometimes, the interpretations act like double-edged sword cutting both ways. The evidence of edicts, copperplates, coins etc. is generally regarded to be reliable as authentic historical material. But evidence of this kind is inadequate in the case of Kālidāsa. Moreover, it appears that there were a number of poets in Sanskrit literature who did have the same name Kālidāsa.<sup>1</sup> Rājaśekhara, of the 10th-11th century A.D., poetically refers to three Kālidāsas.<sup>2</sup> Though it is likely to be an allusion to three works of Kālidāsa, such literary references are confusing, and they make the question of the poet's date more complicated.

But the discussion over the years has yielded some well defined limits within which the date of Kālidāsa could now be tackled. (a) The dramatic plot of *Mālavikāgnimitra* is based on the life of king Agnimitra, who belongs to the Śuṅga dynasty known to ancient Indian history; the period of this dynastic rule is 2nd to 1st century B.C. It is therefore clear that Kālidāsa could not be earlier than this limit of time. The opinion of Fauche, who regarded Kālidāsa as a contemporary of the last king of the Raghuvamśa, Agnivarṇa and ascribed him to 800 B.C., will have, therefore, to be rejected. (b) The downward limit of Kālidāsa's time is determined by two factors : A Jain poet Ravikīrti has mentioned Kālidāsa and Bhāravi together,<sup>3</sup> this is recorded in the Aihole Inscription which is dated 634 A.D. Secondly, Bāṇa, the protege of emperor Harṣavardhana (606-647 A.D.) is known to have paid a glorious tribute to Kālidāsa.<sup>4</sup> These two references show that the date of Kālidāsa cannot be taken beyond the 6th-7th century A.D. The assumption in *Bhojaprabandha* that Kālidāsa was a court poet of Bhoja of Dhārā (10th century A.D.) or that he was a senior contemporary of Bhavabhūti (700-730 A.D.) as a popular legend assumes, will both appear to be fortuitous.

The period of Kālidāsa's life and literary activity, thus, falls between first century B.C. and sixth century A.D. The precise date within this period of time is, again, a matter of opinion and shows some distinct divergence. Two views stand out prominently :



(i) A large number of scholars like Lassen, Keith, Bhau Daji, Rameshchandra Dutt, Haraprasad Shastri, Pathak, Mirashi etc. think, with some variations, that Kālidāsa must be assigned to the Gupta period of Indian history.

(ii) On the other hand, William Jones, C. V. Vaidya, Kunhan Raja etc. are inclined in favour of the early date, first century B.C., which is linked with 57 B.C., the beginning of Vikrama Samvat.

#### Evidence for Gupta Age :

The variations in the opinions of those who assign Kālidāsa to the Gupta age are due to the fact that the period of the Gupta empire extends from 320 to 569 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Different centuries within this period have been considered for Kālidāsa by different scholars.

#### Sixth Century A. D.

(i) A poet Abhinanda says in his epic poem *Rāmacarita* that the works of Kālidāsa or the poet himself were raised to unique fame by 'Śakārāti'.<sup>6</sup> This Śakārāti is Yaśodharman, the powerful king of Malwa, who ruled in the sixth century A.D. and who had defeated Mihirakula, the formidable Hun king. Yaśodharman assumed the title Vikramāditya and put his learned friend and poet Mātṛgupta on the throne of Kashmir. This Mātṛgupta is identical with Kālidāsa. This evidence, which is upheld by Haraprasad Shastri,<sup>7</sup> puts Kālidāsa in the sixth century A.D.

Historians find a confusion of history in these assumptions. Huen-Tsang was in India at this time; the king whom he mentions with respect and esteem is not Yaśodharman, but Śīlāditya I of Valabhi. Further, it does not appear from the inscriptions of Yaśodharman that he had taken the title Vikramāditya.

(ii) The famous astrologer Varāhamihira belongs to the sixth century. He fixed the beginning of monsoon as from the first day of the month Aṣāḍha. The reference in *Meghadūta*, 'aṣāḍhasya prathamadivase',<sup>8</sup> bears a striking resemblance to Varāhamihira's opinion.

However, it cannot establish that Kālidāsa was a contemporary of Varāhamira. More important is the fact that monsoon breaks in the beginning of Aṣāḍha in some parts of India; and one can see the rain-filled black clouds with one's eyes. Is it necessary to seek the authority of a work on astronomy to support such a patent experience ?

(iii) A verse in the *Jyotiṛvidyābharaṇa*<sup>9</sup> states that the work was composed by Kālidāsa, who was patronised by Śakāri Vikramāditya, and who was one of the nine 'jewels' of the king's court.

Even if this work were accepted as of the sixth century, its faulty diction and pedestrian language cannot be accepted as coming from the author of the *Śākuntala*. The evidence, thus, loses all value.

On the whole, the sixth century hypothesis has not much to commend itself.

#### *Fifth Century A. D.*

In the *Raghuvamśa* Raghu is described to have defeated the Huns on the bank of Vaṅkṣu or the river Oxus.<sup>10</sup> It is known from history that the Huns established their imperial rule on the bank of Oxus in Balhika or Bactria by about 450 A. D., and from there they marched into India. It is proved from the Girnar Inscription (455-56 A.D.) of Skanda Gupta that this king of the Gupta dynasty defeated the Huns. Prof. Pathak thinks that Kālidāsa has deliberately woven this contemporary allusion in the legendary account of Raghu's military campaign; and thus he regards Kālidāsa as a poet of the fifth century A. D.

It is to be noted that there is another reading 'Sindhu' in place of 'Vaṅkṣu'. But even if 'Vaṅkṣu' were taken as the reading, the assumption of Prof. Pathak that Huns were not known to India till the fifth century A. D. is not correct. The Huns are mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, and *Lalitavistara*, a work of the third century, refers to the writing script of the Huns. Skanda Gupta, therefore, must not have been the first Indian king to counter and defeat the Huns.

#### *Fourth Century A. D.*

Many scholars are, therefore, inclined to accept the fourth century A. D. as the most probable period of time for Kālidāsa.

Tradition seems to have fixed Kālidāsa's connection with some Vikramāditya. The sponsors of the Gupta age view find many suggestive allusions to Gupta kings in the works of Kālidāsa, skillfully woven with the literary thread. For example, the repeated use of the word *vikrama* in the *Vikramorvaśīya*<sup>11</sup> is, the scholars think, a deliberate and suggestive allusion to Vikramāditya. The military campaign of Raghu for the conquest of the four quarters resembles that of Samudra Gupta. The rescue of Urvaśī by Purūravas from the hands of demon Keśin has a close parallel to the rescue of Dhruvadevī effected by Chandra Gupta disguising himself as a woman and securing entry into the enemy ranks. The title *Kumārasambhava* appears to have been chosen to bring a reference to Kumāra Gupta. At the same time, assuming that the poet refers to several Gupta kings from Samudra Gupta to Kumāra Gupta, it cannot be assumed that Kālidāsa lived during the reigns of all the three kings, unless he is granted a life of 150 years. So, it is held that Kālidāsa was an honoured poet of one of the Gupta kings: and in the opinion of majority it is Chandra Gupta II (380-415 A. D.) who was the patron of the poet. Chandra Gupta II and his grand son Skanda Gupta alone

had assumed the title Vikramāditya. The evidence of the inscriptions and of coins has shown that Chandra Gupta II destroyed the Śaka-Kṣatrapas of Kathiawar; this fits with the epithet *Śakāri*. It is also known that Chandra Gupta had made Ujjayinī as his capital. His generosity and patronage to learned men and poets are equally well known. The evidence is regarded, therefore, as strongly supporting Kālidāsa's connection with Chandra Gupta II.

Other considerations which support this date are as follows :

(i) Buhler, Keilhorn, Keith and other scholars have shown that the panegyric composed by the poet Vatsabhaṭṭī, recorded in the inscription of the Sun-temple at Mandor (473 A.D.) emulates to a considerable extent the poetic style of Kālidāsa. This suggests the influence of Kālidāsa and the fact that he must have preceded Vatsabhaṭṭī.

(ii) The verse, '*śuśrūṣasva gurūn...*' in *Śakuntala*,<sup>12</sup> in which Kaṇva's advice to his daughter and to the newly married girl is contained, shows a striking similarity of thought and diction with those in the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana. Kālidāsa's deep study of the *Kāmasūtra* is evident from his writings. The probable date of Vātsyāyana is 250 A.D. Kālidāsa obviously appears to have succeeded him.

(iii) The envoy mentioned in the poem *Kuntaleśvara-dautya* is probably Kālidāsa himself. The Kuntaleśa is the grand-son of Chandra Gupta Vikramāditya, the Vākāṭaka king Pravarsena II.<sup>13</sup> The daughter of Chandra Gupta, Prabhāvatīguptā, was married to Vākāṭaka Rudrasena (395 A. D.); Pravarsena is her son. He was a child at this time; so Prabhāvatīguptā was looking after the administration of the kingdom under the guidance and direction of her father Chandra Gupta. This political happening is corroborated by the description in *Kuntaleśvara-dautya*, 'The over-lord of Kuntala has placed the burden (of political administration) on you'. The particular verse is supposed to have been said by Kālidāsa himself according to the *Syṅgāraprakāśa* of Bhoja;<sup>14</sup> this suggests the possibility that the envoy or the messenger must have been Kālidāsa himself. The literary reference and history, thus, indicate fourth century A. D. as the date of Kālidāsa.

(iv) The Prakrit epic *Setubandha* or *Rāvaṇavaho* to which Bāṇa alludes is supposed to have been composed by Pravarsena, and belongs to a period earlier than the seventh century A. D. Pravarsena is Kuntaleśa mentioned above. It is likely that Pravarsena wrote this poem and Kālidāsa corrected and improved it; or Kālidāsa himself may have composed it for Pravarsena.<sup>15</sup>

(v) The Gupta Age is known as the golden age in ancient Indian history. It was an age of the revival of Sanskrit learning and arts which received an afflatus from royal interest; it was also the age which bestowed new glory on the Brahmanical religion. It is reasonable to associate Kālidāsa with an age of prosperity and glory; his literature bears the stamp of this age.

Chandra Gupta II ruled from 380 to 413 A. D. Thus, the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth appears to be the period of Kālidāsa's life and literary activity.

**Evidence for earlier date :**

Tradition connects Kālidāsa with Vikramāditya : there are many scholars who are inclined to accept an early date for Kālidāsa, synchronising with Vikram Samvat 57 B. C., that is, the first century B. C.

(i) The difficulty in commending this view was that history was not aware of any 'Vikramāditya' or of the commencement of some Samvat or Śaka in the first century preceding Christian era. But it appears from Vatsabhaṭṭi's Mandasor inscription that one 'Mālavagaṇa' was in vogue in this period of time.<sup>16</sup> It is, therefore, possible to say that the allusion to 'Mālavagaṇa-sthiti' in the inscription is not connected with a ruling gaṇa or tribe but with a particular system of calculating calender years. It is also possible that the Mālavagaṇa, suffering a defeat from the Greek soldiers in their confrontation with Alexander, may have moved down to Malwa and Rajputana where they tried to consolidate their hold. The leader of this gaṇa was one Vikramāditya; he had repulsed the Greek advance in the first century B. C., earning the title 'Śakāri', and had started his own era or Samvat; but considering that a gaṇa or tribe is greater than an individual, the era was not started with the name Vikrama-samvat but with the tribe's name Mālavagaṇa.<sup>17</sup>

A royal family called Gardabhilla was ruling at Ujjayinī in the first century B. C. Vikramāditya, son of Gardabhilla, had repulsed and driven out the Śakas from Ujjayinī and promulgated his own era, in about 56 B. C. This is recorded by a Jain writer Merutuṅga.<sup>18</sup> It is also a suggestive fact that the personal name of this Vikramāditya's father was Mahendrāditya : Kālidāsa has used the names or words 'Mahendra' and 'Vikrama' with some deep meaning in his *Vikramorvaśīya*, and the literary allusion is interesting.

If this evidence were acceptable, the problem of the existence of a Vikramāditya and Samvat era in the first century B. C. gets solved and Kālidāsa's connection with this period of time also becomes a reasonable assumption.

(ii) The poetic works of the Buddhist poet Aśvaghoṣa and those of Kālidāsa show a remarkable similarity in thought and style. About the mutual influence of the two poets scholarly opinion is divided. Mirashi and others who assign Kālidāsa to the fourth century A. D. naturally think that Kālidāsa has imitated Aśvaghoṣa. On the contrary Sharadaranjan Ray, Nandargikar, Karmarkar etc. are of the opinion that Aśvaghoṣa was influenced by Kālidāsa's writing.<sup>19</sup> Any way, the evidence suggests that the two poets may not have been far removed from each other in time; Aśvaghoṣa is supposed to belong to the first century A. D.

(iii) The dramatic plot of *Mālavikāgnimitra* draws on the life of the Śuṅga king Agnimitra. Those who believe that Kālidāsa lived in the Gupta age regard the date as a matter of history; and believe that any poet can draw on the historical material of the past; it is not necessary that he should be a contemporary of the historical personalities mentioned in his writing. Mirashi conjectures the play to have been written on the occasion of the marriage of Vākāṭaka Rudrasena and Chandra Gupta's daughter Prabhāvatīguptā.<sup>20</sup> However, the obvious references to the present, prevailing rule of king Agnimitra in the epilogue of the play remains a puzzle and is not at all explained by the advocates of the Gupta age view.

The epilogue refers to Agnimitra as a current ruling king<sup>21</sup> and suggests that Kālidāsa must have been his contemporary; the time is first century B. C.

(iv) A medal discovered at Bhita depicts the scene of deer hunt, reminding of Duṣyanta's hunt in *Śākuntala*. Prof. Ray thinks it to be of the Śuṅga period (117-72 B. C.).<sup>22</sup> The protagonists of the Gupta period do not accept that the scene is from Kālidāsa's play and do not take the period of the medal as conclusively proved.

(v) Some cultural and historical references in Kālidāsa's works are indicative more of an early age rather than the Gupta period. For example : the reference in *Śākuntala* to the *vaikhāṇasa-vrata* and the ancient *Vaikhāṇasa-smṛiti*; employment of Yavanīs, that is, Greek women as the personal body-guards of a king; the mention in *Meghadūta* of the village elders who still remember the legend of Vatasarāja Udayana; continuous reference to Aśoka; the rather unusual word used for Indra, Ākhaṇḍala, and its phonetic associations : Ākhaṇḍala > Ākhaṇḍara > Alexander. It is also worth remembering that the Gupta kings were Vaiṣṇava, while Kālidāsa, though non-sectarian, was particularly devoted to Śiva.

(vi) The linguistic evidence like the simplicity of Kālidāsa's language, his grammatical forms which go against Pāṇini's rules but which sometimes accord with Patañjali's sentence-construction,<sup>23</sup> and such other language and grammar peculiarities are in favour of an early period for Kālidāsa.

(vii) The problem of the dates of Sanskrit poets can be tackled from a fresh direction provided by Indian art. Prof. C. Sivaramamurti, ex-Director, National Museum, Delhi, has made a special study of Indian sculptures and paintings, and has come to the conclusion that, 'The understanding of a forgotten past is made possible and what is left unexplained or vague by one is explained and made clear by the other, as art and literature act as real mirrors'.<sup>24</sup> This approach is as interesting as it is valuable. A study of the parallelisms between Kālidāsa's poetic ideas and literary allusion on the one hand and art representations on the other necessarily lead to the belief that Kālidāsa must have been an early poet. A few examples are given further. (a) Kālidāsa describes the Kalpa tree as creating everything that a woman needs for her decoration, in his *Meghadūta*.<sup>25</sup> A sculpture from Barhut

rail-coping shows a wine-pot in a sling, jewels and variegated garments issuing from a Kalpavallī, and answers the description in the *Meghadūta*. The sculpture is of the Śuṅga period, 2nd century B. C. (b) Another Barhut rail-coping depicts the hand of Vanadevatā issuing from a tree clump. This also is of the Śuṅga period and recalls to mind the gifts of Vanadevatā to Śakuntalā.<sup>26</sup> Prof. Sivaramamurti observes that it 'is probably the best explanation of the verse in the *Śakuntalā*.' (c) Referring to the sport of married couples Kālidāsa describes, in the *Raghuvamśa*, Aja tenderly feeling the body of his beloved.<sup>27</sup> This idea is well depicted in a Nāgārjunakoṇḍā sculpture of the Ikṣvāku period, 3rd century A. D. (d) A verse in *Uttara-Megha* describes the flower decorations and marks of enjoyment of women.<sup>28</sup> Prof. Sivaramamurti believes that 'the entire verse has a vivid sculptural commentary in a panel from Nāgārjunakoṇḍā', which belongs to 3rd century A. D. (e) Describing the diversions of lovers Kālidāsa mentions the Yakṣapatnī speaking to the Sārikā in a cage.<sup>29</sup> A fine sculptural representation of this idea is found in Kushan work from Mathurā, 'of which the Bhūtesara Yakṣī addressing the parrot is probably the most charming'. This is of 2nd century A. D. (f) Rāma, in his aerial journey from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā, shows a fancy fish-elephant<sup>30</sup> in the ocean to Sītā. This *mātaṅga-nakra* is referred to as *ihāmrga* in earlier literature like the Rāmāyaṇa. This curious animal is depicted on the Amarāvati rail, of the Sātavāhana period, 2nd century A. D.

There are, of course, other pictorial representations inspired by Kālidāsa's literary art that belong to later periods up to the 12th century A. D. But these earlier specimens which show a close parallel between the literary idea and the pictorial-sculptural representation are not possible to be explained without assuming an early date, first century B. C., for Kālidāsa.

The discussion is enough, I believe, to make us aware of the wide difference of opinions and of the difficulty of determining precisely the date of Kālidāsa. Prof. Karmarkar seems to be willing to admit two Kālidāsas and two Vikramādityas, one of the first century B. C. and another of the fourth century A. D. It, however, appears that Kālidāsa has to be assigned to one of the two periods of time. The view of the earlier date has not been refuted by those who reject it, and the cumulative evidence, especially the recent one from art representations, is in favour of taking Kālidāsa as a poet of the first century B. C.

Determining the date of a Sanskrit poet is a major task of history. But a common reader is likely to be confused and baffled by the variety of opinions held; and, interested more in the literary art of a poet like Kālidāsa, would like to say in the words of Rabindranath Tagore :<sup>31</sup>

*Hāy re Kabe, keṭe geche, Kālidāser Kāl !  
Paṇḍiterū vivāda kare laye tārīkh sāl |*

*Hāriye geche se-sab abda  
Itivṛtta āche stabdha —  
Geche yadi āpad geche, mithyā kolāhal /*

### NOTES

1 The German scholar and researcher Aufrecht has mentioned six writers having the same name Kālidāsa

2 Quoted in *Sūktimuktāvalī*, 4. 60 :

एकोऽपि जीयते हन्त कालिदासो न कर्हिचित् ।  
शृङ्गारे ललितोद्वारे कालिदासत्रयी किमु ॥

3 Cf. येनायोजि नवेश्मस्थिरमर्थविधौ विवेकिना जिनवेश्म ।  
स विजयतां रविकीर्तिः कविताश्रितकालिदासभारविकीर्तिः ॥

4 Cf. *Harṣacarita*, I. 16 :

निर्गतासु न वा कस्य कालिदासस्य सूक्तिषु ।  
प्रोतिर्मथुरसार्द्रासु मञ्जरीष्विव जायते ॥

5 See, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. III; The Classical Age; ed. R. C. Majumdar.

6 Cf. 'ख्याति कामपि कालिदासकवयो(कृतयो) नीताः शकारातिना ।'

7 "Age of Kālidāsa", in *Journal of the Bihar-Orissa Research Society* (JBORS), Vol. II.

8 *Pūrva Megha*, 2

9 *Jyotirvidābharaṇa*, 22. 10 :

धन्वन्तरिक्षपणकामरसिंहशङ्कुवेतालभट्टघटकपर्परकालिदासाः ।  
ख्यातो वराहमिहिरो नृपतेः सभायां रत्नानि वै वररुचिर्नव विक्रमस्य ॥

10 Cf. *Raghuvamśa*, IV, 66-68; see particularly v. 67 ;

विनीताश्वथमास्तस्य वंक्षु(सिन्धु)तीरविचेष्टनैः ।  
दधुवुर्वाजिनः स्कन्धालम्बकुङ्कुमकेसरान् ॥  
v. 68 has, तत्र दृणावरोधानां भर्तृपु... बभूवे रघुचेष्टितम् ॥

11 Cf. Citraratha's compliments to Purūravas : '...विक्रममहिम्ना वर्धते भवान् ।' 'अनुत्सेकः खलु विक्रमालङ्कारः ।' and the title of the play. *Vikramorvaśīya*, act I.

12 *Sākuntala*, IV. 18.

13 See, Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Studies in Gupta History*, p. 54.

14 The full verse quoted in the *Syngāraprakāśa* is as follows :

असकलहसितत्वात् क्षालितानीव कान्त्या  
मुकुलितनयनत्वात् व्यक्तकर्णोत्पलानि ।  
पिबति मधुसुगन्धीन्याननानि प्रियाणां  
त्वयि विनिहितभारः कुन्तलानामधीशः ॥

15 See, M.M. Dr. V. V. Mirashi. *Kālidāsa* ( in Marathi and Hindi ); Marathi, p. 40,

- 16 Cf Mandasor Inscription :

मालवानां गणस्थित्या याते शतचतुष्टये ।

त्रिनवत्यधिकेऽब्दानामृतौ सेव्यधनस्वने ॥ Vatsabhaṭṭi's.

- 17 See Baladeva Upadhyaya, *Sanskrit Śāhitya-kā Itihāsa* ( Hindi ), pp. 157-158.

- 18 Alluded to by Nandargikār, *Raghuvamśa* ( ed. ), Introduction, p. 47; Karmarkar, *Kālidāsa* pp. 6-7.

- 19 Prof. Karmarkar is of the opinion that Aśvaghōṣa uses in his epic *Saundarananda* ( I. 26, I. 36 ) two allusions to Śākuntala :

कण्वः शाकुन्तलस्येव भरतस्य तरस्विनः ।

वाल्मीकिरिव धीमांश्च धीमतोमैथिलेययोः ॥ I. 26

जिज्ञासमाना नागेषु कौशलं श्वापदेषु च ।

अनुचर्कुर्वनस्थस्य दौध्यन्तेर्देवकर्मणः ॥ I. 36

This shows that Aśvaghōṣa knew *Śākuntala*; and since the allusion comes by way of a standard of comparison (*upamāna*) he must have regarded it as an ideal work worth referring to. See, *Kālidāsa*, pp. 9-11.

- 20 Mirashi, *Kālidāsa*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

- 21 Cf. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, V. 20 cd :

आशास्यमीतिविगमप्रभृति प्रजानां

संप्रत्यते न खलु गोप्तरि नाभिमित्रे ॥

- 22 Ray, *Śākuntala*, ed. Introduction, p. 9.

- 23 For example : the forms of *Ām* Perfect with the inflexion separated from the verb-element, 'तं पातयां प्रथममास,' 'प्रभ्रंशयां यो नहुषं चकार'; the grammatical construction with a noun and adjective with *yat*-ending termination which do not agree in gender. 'शक्यमालिङ्गितुं पवनः ।'; Kālidāsa is fond of the word '*pelava*'; but Vāmana (8th cent. A.D.) points out that it has an obscene sense. For the examples and other linguistic discussion see Ray, *Śākuntala*, ed., Introduction.

- 24 See, C. Sivaramamurti. *Sanskrit Literature and Art - Mirrors of Indian Culture*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 73; first ed. 1954; Reprint, Lakshmi Book Store, Janapath, New Delhi; 1972. The following examples and quotations are taken from this work.

- 25 Cf. *Uttara-Megha*, 12 d : एकः सूते सकलमवलामण्डनं कल्पवृक्षः ।

See also v. 2. for the use of flowers as decorations.

- 26 Cf. *Śākuntala*, IV. 5; particularly, the second half :

अन्येभ्यो वनदेवताकरतलरापर्वभागोत्थितैः ।

दत्तान्याभरणानि नः किसलयोद्भेदप्रतिद्वन्द्विभिः ॥

- 27 Cf. *Raghuvamśa*, VIII. 7 :

रादयं वृग्नुजे महाभुजः सहस्रोद्वेगमियं व्रजेदिति ।

अचिरोपनतां स मेदिनीं नवपाणिग्रहणां वधूमिव ॥

- 28 *Uttara-Megha*, v. 2.



29 *Uttara-Megha*, 25 cd :

पृच्छन्ती वा मधुरवचनां सारिकां पञ्जरस्थां ।  
कच्चिद् भर्तुः स्मरसि रसिके त्वं हि तस्य प्रियेति ॥

30 Cf. *Raghuvamśa*, XIII. 11 :

मातङ्गनक्रैः सहसात्पतद्भिभिन्नान् द्विधा पश्य समुद्रफेनान् ।  
कपोलसंस्पर्शितया य एषां व्रजन्ति कर्णक्षणाभ्रत्वम् ॥

- 31 The quotation is from the poem '*Sekala*': see the Sahitya Akademi publication, *Ekottaraśats*, 1961, p. 226. The substance of Tagore's lines is : Alas, that age of Kālidāsa is long past ! Learned men are now furiously debating about his precise date. One doesn't know where those years are lost is the limbo of Time. For, History holds complete silence in that connection. But if the age is gone, well and good; the worry is over ! Why this futile uproar for determining the poet's date ?

## 2 LITERARY WORKS

Thanks to the immense admiration, esteem and popularity that Kālidāsa appears to have earned from almost the prime of his literary career, it has happened in the history of Sanskrit literature that a number of works of all kinds came to be gathered round his name. Obviously, lesser writers must have palmed off their lesser works on Kālidāsa's name in order to bask in the reflected glory of the great poet. Perhaps, Kālidāsa may have been a hallowed name; and many writers may have assumed it, the adoption being facilitated by the easy etymological derivation of the name. Aufrecht has noted, as we have seen, at least six writers who bear the name Kālidāsa. And lack of historical sense, indifference to the necessity of maintaining accurate historical records, among the ancient Indians, as also the difficulties of communication and contact, all must have resulted in perpetuating the confusion about authorship, sometimes confounding it worse. One of serious tasks facing Sanskrit scholarship in the early days was to sift the genuine from the spurious ascription of literary works. And though such sifting may still continue in the case of some works or authors, there seems to be a general agreement now about the literary works of Kālidāsa.

Kālidāsa is the author of the following works :

- (i) Two lyrical poems : *Ṛtusamhāra*, *Meghadūta* :
- (ii) Two epics : *Kumārasambhava*, *Raghuvamśa*;
- (iii) Three plays : *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Vikramorvaśīya*, *Abhijñāna-śākuntala*.

### 1. *Ṛtusamhāra*

*Ṛtusamhāra* is a small lyrical poem of 144 stanzas in 6 cantos, mostly in Varnasāstha metre (cantos I, II, V, VI), the variation being Vasantatilakā (canto III) and Upendravajrā (canto IV). The poem gives a graphic and poetic description of the six seasons of India. Through the description Kālidāsa presents a vivid and eloquent picture of Nature. But instead of filling in details picked from accurate observation, as Vālmiki often does, Kālidāsa pays more attention to describing the effect of nature on the emotional life of man, particularly on the emotion of love. The descriptive poem is, therefore, neither a list of the seasons nor a record of nature's wealth in different seasons. The sympathetic association between nature and human emotion is the basis of the poetic description in the lyric. The familiar objects and

scenes in nature wear here the hues of love. The symbols like the kiss of the clouds, the embrace of creepers, the intoxication of freely flowing streams and others are, no doubt, conventional; and the description of the seasons lacks the splendour of the poetic vision in the *Meghadūta*. But the poem is still remarkable for its poetic spur, its limpid style and the relation it stresses between nature and human emotions.

The poem opens with a description of Grīṣma or the hot season. The days in this season are unbearable due to heat; but the moon-lit nights are particularly enjoyable to the lovers. The effect of the heat in the form of continuous thirst and laziness is, of course, noticeable on the human beings, birds and beasts. There are forest conflagrations in this season. Varṣā or the Rainy season follows Grīṣma with a fanfare, blowing the trumpet of the thundering clouds and waving the flag of lightning flashes. Clouds filled with rainwater move ponderously in the sky. The Cātaka birds heave a sigh of relief and eagerly look up. Streams of water knock at the trees on their banks and rush towards the sea, like a wanton woman, Nature wears a green cloak. And then Śarad or Autumn arrives, with the splendour of a new bride, the blooming lotuses for its face and hands, the ripe rice crops for its cloak, the warbling Kalahansas for its anklets. The creepers now appear like the arms of beautiful women; the Jasmine flowers sparkle like their white teeth; clusters of red Aśoka look like their smiling lips. With the advent of Hemanta the rice and fields are ripe and yellow; but lotuses wither; the farms are over-hung with mist. But the cold in this season is very delightful, especially in the close company of a beloved. However, as the cold increases in Śīśira, hot Sun during the day and blazing fire at night seem preferable to the closeness of one's beloved. The sixth and the last canto describes Vasanta or Spring, the prince of seasons. Wearing the Karnikāra flower in their ear-lobes, the blossom of the fiery-red Aśoka in their hair, young women start now with enthusiasm towards their trysts. The music of the Koil keeps them company. And the God of Love is ready to release arrows of mango-blossom on their hearts. It is a season which creates yearning and, sometimes, heart-burning; but it is also the season that young lovers love best.

Mallināth has not commented on the *Rtusamhāra*. The Anthologies do not quote from it. The language, descriptive style and the poetic imagination in this poem are on a lower level than what they are in the other poetical works of Kālidāsa. Some scholars are, therefore, inclined to believe that it is a work of some lesser poet fathered on Kālidāsa. But the poem obviously belongs to the apprenticeship period of the poet; and recognising this literary fact one can understand its comparatively lesser merit, without denying its genuineness.

## 2. Meghadūta

The *Meghadūta* is still smaller in extent than the *Rtusamhāra*, the first part or the Pūrva-Megha having 66 stanzas and the second half or Uttara-Megha 55. But

in concept, poetic style, superb imagination, masterly execution and in profound, heart-stirring emotional appeal it is a lyrical gem that can hardly be matched. The poem has a slender but delectable narrative thread which accounts for its genesis and which runs through its colourful fabric. A Yakṣa, servant of the lord of Alakā, Kubera, made some mistake in his duty; Kubera punished him with a curse, banishing him from Alakā into exile for a period of one year. As the poem opens, the Yakṣa has passed eight months of his banishment, living alone on the Rāmagiri, away from his loving wife. The first day of Āṣāḍha augurs the advent of the Rainy season and the sight of an elephantine cloud, black with rain-water, butting at the line of the horizon, fills Yakṣa's eyes with tears, bringing up his suppressed sorrow of separation, because the monsoon period is always hard on lovers close to each other in love but separated. An idea of sending a message of love and assurance to the pining wife far away in Alakā through the roaming cloud takes shape in the mind of the Yakṣa. As a matter of fact, a cloud is merely an aggregate of smoke, fire, water and windy vapour, and lacks the intelligent, efficient sense-organs for picking up, understanding and delivering a message couched in human language. But intense love, particularly the soul-scorching agony of separated love, can blind a person to the obvious, taking away the normal ability to distinguish between the animate and the inanimate. So, the Yakṣa decided to uncover his soul in agony before the cloud and turn him into his personal messenger. Hence the title of the poem.

The Yakṣa offered the cloud a loving greeting with the Kuṭaja flowers and spoke to him with words of tender love and persuasion. He praised the cloud for his high lineage and described him as the 'Prakṛti-puruṣa' of the bounteous Indra; he relied on the supreme quality of the cloud as a 'refuge of the tortured' and persuaded him to take with him his message to the city of Alakā in the Kailāsa mountain range, where the presence of Śiva bathes perpetually the terraces of its mansions in brilliant moonlight.

The Yakṣa then proceeds to describe the route the cloud can take to reach Alakā from Rāmagiri. It is a glowing description of various places, and not a geographical tour tinged with historical or legendary information. With every place mentioned on the route, the poet creates an image, a picture framed with ornate or poetic detail. The places will have their own charm each to delight the cloud; there will be birds, rivers, and women to greet him and show him the way; there will be rest-places like mountain-tops and occasions for personal enjoyment when the cloud came across a river; there will be places to offer devotional service, and opportunities to earn the gratitude of rain-thirsty earth, birds or the agricultural community. For example: the flying cranes can keep company with the cloud in his long journey, at least part of the way; and the Sāraṅga birds can show him the way. The river Rewā or Narmadā, breaking into several streams on the marble rocks will present the likeness of a huge black elephant decorated with white strips of colour. The fragrant earth and

a variety of flowers will be there to greet the cloud, as there will be village women, pushing the hair back from their eyes and looking up to him. There will also be playful women, on the Kailāsa mountain, who will poke the cloud with the points of their bracelets and turn him into a shower-house. At Ujjayinī the cloud can refresh his memory with the story of Udayana; he can attend the evening worship at the Mahākāla temple, where the attendants of Śiva will greet him because he resembles the dark-blue throat of Śiva in his colour, and he can take active part in the worship replacing the drums by his thunder. The rivers are the beloveds of the cloud; the one that looks emaciated the cloud will be able to revive with new vigour; the one that is buxom he can enjoy. The entire journey of the cloud will, thus, be crowded with pleasure and enjoyment.

The end of the journey is Alakā, which is the delight of delights. A semi-divine, fabulous city situated on divine precincts, it has all the splendour of the Lord of wealth, the luxuriance of nature and the charm of a dream city. All flowers bloom here all the year round, the nights are all moon-lit, the men and women are blessed with eternal youth, and the Kalpa tree alone creates all the things needed by women for their toilette and decoration. Yakṣa's own house is to the north of Kubera's mansion. There is a young Mandāra tree near it, reared by Yakṣa's wife, and so small that she can pick its flowers easily. There is a beautiful arch, and a well in the house in which golden lotuses with green jewelled stalks bloom and emerald steps lead to it; the swans come to rest here forgetting the Mānasa lake. There is a pleasure-hill near the well surrounded by gold plantain creepers, a favourite spot of Yakṣa's wife. A red Aśoka and a charming Kesara stand by the house; a marble board is fixed between them with gold sticks; it is a spot where the Yakṣa's wife loves to sit and teach the peacock to dance keeping the musical rhythm by clapping her palms to the accompaniment of her tinkling bracelets. Besides, a conch and a lotus are painted on the door-jamb. These are the signs by which the cloud will be able to recognise the house without difficulty.

One cannot be sure what time of the day or night the cloud will reach Alakā and Yakṣa's house. If the wife is asleep due to fatigue and the unbearable sorrow of separation, the Yakṣa would request the cloud not to disturb her but wait for a while. Mostly, she would be dragging herself through the long hours, keeping herself occupied doing the various cores. She may be placing the offerings on the doorstep; painting a picture of the emaciated Yakṣa; talking to the Sārikā in the cage; or humming a personal song to the tune of the lute, forgetting the words and the melody lost in her tears; counting the remaining days of the period of separation by placing flowers on the threshold. The Yakṣapatnī is a very beautiful woman, with an ideal form and perfect limbs; but the separation must have affected her terribly, making her lean, soiled, neglecting her toilette and decoration, somehow living on the hope that the separation will end and she will be in the arms of her husband. A

message of cheer will, therefore, be very opportune and will strengthen her hope and will to go through the remainder of days with patience and courage.

The Yakṣa asks the cloud to introduce himself as a beloved friend of her husband and to convey to her that he is unharmed in body in his hermitage on the Rāmagiri and is asking after her well-being. The Yakṣa has not been able to block the memory of his loving wife even for a moment; his body aches for her close touch; he sees her likeness in several objects of nature; lack of sleep deprives him of the delight of seeing her in a dream, and the waking hours of the day rob him of the pleasure of painting her likeness because the gushing tears spoil the effort. But he is living on hope and wants his wife to do the same; for happiness must follow sorrow in the universal scheme of nature. The curse will terminate on the eleventh day of Kārtika, and the remaining four months must be passed with eyes closed. When reunited in love, the beautiful autumnal nights brilliant with moonlight will be theirs to wipe out the agonies of separation with re-doubled pleasures of love. With this message of hope, consolation and abiding love, the Yakṣa also prays that the cloud may never experience separation, even for a moment, from his own beloved, the lightning.

The first half of the lyric presents a series of pictures of beautiful nature in which the flowers, creepers, birds and animals, rivers and mountains, come alive with a life of their own; and there are either loving associations connected with them or there is the tender emotion of love and attachment which illumines them. The second half of the poem is a picture gallery of human emotions, of love and love in separation, each picture mounted on the beautiful frame of marvellous nature. Kālidāsa has chosen the slow-moving Mandākrāntā metre which pauses in its pace, as a fitting vehicle for the expression of *vipralumbha śṛṅgāra*, so that the mood of pervading sorrow is matched by the slow, halting movement of the words. He has further shown an instinctive poetic genius in ending the poem on the message, with a definite promise of cheer, consolation and reunion, allowing the human heart to enjoy the bitterness of sorrow laced with the assurance of happiness, which is the deeper truth of life. And in keeping the background of the story and the personality of the central characters vague, lost in mythological belief and poetic imagination, he has endowed the poem with a universal quality and appeal. What does it matter who this Yakṣa is (*kaścit*)? It is not his story, but the story and the intensely moving emotional experience of the human heart. The poem is a sad-sweet song of the human heart. Its poetry, beauty and tenderness of emotion have made it an immortal piece of literature. Its imitations by the scores in the history of Sanskrit literature and its innumerable translations prove its abiding attraction and aesthetic value.

### 3. Kumārasāmbhava

The subject of *Kumārasāmbhava* is the love of Śiva and Pārvatī, their marriage and the birth of Kumāra or Kārtikeya, who later slays the demon Tāraka and reli-

eves the Universe of a dreadful worry and danger. Pārvatī is the daughter of Menā and Himavat. Kālidāsa personifies the Himālaya mountain and presents him as a human, loving father, deeply concerned with the happiness of his pet daughter; but at the same time the geographical and material aspects of the mountain range and the mythological fancies associated with it are carefully preserved and mixed in the dual personality. The epic begins with a gorgeous, marvellous description of the Himālaya which is the wonderful background and the 'scene of action' of this story of love and marriage. Himālaya is presented as the 'soul of the gods', on whose precincts wonderful herbs grow, some emitting light in darkness, some of unique medicinal value; it is a mine of numberless jewels and precious stones; its surroundings are hallowed by the presence of gods and of sages who practise uncommon penances. Its majestic peaks, wrapped in pure-white snow, rise above the clouds and reach heavens, blocking sometimes the movements of celestial beings travelling in air. But with all its snow and inaccessible heights, its wonderful majesty and its rich splendour continue to dazzle all beings, including the supernatural denizens.

The only daughter of Himavat is Pārvatī who was enticed by Śiva and wanted to marry him. Śiva is engaged in a penance, for some 'mysterious reason', and has sought a secluded corner of the rich, enticing regions of the Himālayas for his purpose. Pārvatī goes to the place to give him her personal service and attends on him with her companion while he chooses to remain undisturbed and unmoved in his mental concentration and penance. But it appears that the gods are themselves interested in the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī. An asura by name Tāraka has triumphed over the divine power and is poised to take the universe under his control. Since Prajāpati has given him a boon of indestructibility, neither he nor the Preserver of the Universe, god Viṣṇu, is able to deal with the growing might of the demon. It is predicted that a son born of the union of Śiva and Pārvatī will alone destroy the demon. So, the gods propose to help Pārvatī, in their way, in her own pursuit of love. To kindle the spark of love in the heart of Śiva, Brahmā asks Madana, the god of love, to do his bit. Madana comes to the Himalayan regions with his wife Rati and his companion Vasanta.

All of a sudden, the Himalayan region comes into glory with the bloom of an untimely spring. The flowering trees blossomed into a riot of colours. The deer started roaming the plains. The male Koel with its throat hoarse with new mango shoots burst into a sweet melody. The male and female bee perched on a flower to sip the juice, the male following his beloved. The black antelope scratched the doe with his horn and she closed her eyes in sheer happiness. The female elephant put a mouthful of scented water into the trunk of the male. The Kimpuruṣa could not help kissing the fragrant mouth of his beloved. Even the ascetics found it difficult to keep their minds in concentration, conscious of amorous activities all round them. Kāma eluded the watchful eye of Nandī and entered the inner sanctum where

Śiva was deep in *samādhi*. Pārvatī was near by silently watching, offering her worship and salutations to Śiva lost in his meditation. Kāma seized an opportunity, as Śiva opened his eyes and directed them to Pārvatī's lips while she was offering a garland of lotus-seeds. Kāma fixed the *sahmohana* arrow to his flowery bow. As he was pulling the bow-string Śiva saw him; and before the words of warning and appeal were out of the mouths of the gods watching the happening from the sky, a flame of fire issuing from the third eye of Śiva reached Madana and reduced him to ashes.

Rati's heart broke; her sorrow was beyond consolation. Her misery at the loss of Madana drove her to end her own life and she would have thrown her body on the pyre of burning wood prepared for her husband. But a heavenly voice assured her that Madana would be brought back to life and asked her to preserve carefully the ashes of his body. Pārvatī realised with a shock and amazement that her unparalleled personal beauty, which had put even Rati to shame, and all the blandishments of Kāma had no effect on Śiva. There was no way to reach his heart except perhaps penance of which he, as a Yogi, was the master. Bitterly disappointed but firmer in her determination she decided to start severe austerities, against the entreaty of her mother, subjecting her delicate body to fasts, living on fallen leaves, then giving up even these and subsisting on air, standing in cold water in the biting winter, and in summer kindling four fires round her and gazing at the mid-day Sun.

Utterly exhausted, yet persevering and hopeful, Pārvatī was biding her time, when a young celibate, blazing with Brahmanic lustre, entered the tapovana where Pārvatī was doing her penance. She received him with due honour and respect. The young ascetic with matted hair asked her about her well-being, her austerities, and complimented her for undertaking a penance which would serve as a model even to seasoned ascetics. He naturally wanted to know its purpose and showed his willingness to give her half the merit of his own austerities so that Pārvatī could have her wishes fulfilled. What was amazing was that there was no cause for undertaking any penance : Pārvatī was born in the divine family of Hiraṇyagarbha; she had the beauty at which all the three worlds were marvelling; splendour, riches and happiness were like hand-maidens in the house of her father; she was in the prime of her youth. What else could any one want to gain by penance ? She could not want to gain heaven, because her father ruled over the godly lands. Why did she don then a bark-garment which befits advanced old age, not youth and uncommon beauty ? The ascetic guessed that it was a matter of love and expressed a desire to know about the young man whom Pārvatī coveted. When he learned from her companion that Pārvatī had set her heart on Śiva, the young ascetic could not check either his words or the laughter that was about to break the bond of his lips. Love for Śiva ? That Śaṃbhu, who lives on the cemetery grounds, goes about without clothes, besmears his body with ashes from the cemetery, loves to put on an elephant-hide dripping with blood, and serpent coiled as a bracelet round his wrists ? Śiva's three eyes



leave nothing to be said about his personal charm; his nakedness proclaims what wealth he has; nobody knows about his lineage. How could Pārvatī come to love such a personality? How horrible it would be when Śiva's serpent-coiled hand would hold Pārvatī's hand in the marriage ceremony! How could his elephant-hide match with the silken brial dress of Pārvatī? And how ridiculous would the bridal procession be when Pārvatī would ride behind Śiva on the back of a bull! Pārvatī was flaring in anger as the Baṭu was proceeding; and now she came out with a stunning reply. To her mind there were hardly any people who realised the quintessence of Śiva's unique personality. Lacking garments to wear Śiva was the source of all riches; living in cemetery he was the master of the three worlds; dreadful in outward aspect he was known as Śiva or the auspicious. He symbolised the Universal Man, and it did not matter, therefore, what he wore, where he lived or how he acted. He may ride a bull; but Indra riding his Airāvata makes way for him and bows at his feet. It is no wonder if his lineage is not known; how could one know the birth of the god who creates the self-born Brahman? But Pārvatī did not wish to argue with a flippant, talkative chap, and ordered her companion to show him the way out; and she herself got up to leave the place, because listening to the abuse of the great is itself a sin.

The young ascetic threw away his disguise, and stood before Pārvatī as Śiva. He took her hand in his, and declared himself to be her 'servant, bought by her austerities' and, of course, her devotion and love.

The proposal of marriage is then brought formally to Himavat by Arundhatī and the seven sages. The marriage is celebrated with regal splendour and divine touch with full ritual and festivities. Kālidāsa devotes the eighth canto to describing the pleasures of love of the newly married couple.

The printed editions of the epic have nine more cantos which carry the story forward, describing the birth of Kumāra, his growing up, his exploits and his gigantic fight with the demon Tāraka in which he kills him. But in the execution of the story, poetic imagery, use and handling of metres, language and diction, the imitation of Kālidāsa can be recognised but not the sure and genuine hand of the poet. The commentary of Mallinātha is not available after the eighth canto. It is argued that the birth of Kumāra-Kārtikeya and Tāraka-vadha are an integral part of this legend and the story, therefore, ought to include them. But is it a literary compulsion for a poet to handle the whole legend? Does he not have the freedom of art to choose a part of the legend and leave the rest with enough poetic suggestion? That is what Kālidāsa seems to have done. The traditional belief that Kālidāsa wrote a full epic but the cantos after the eighth came to be lost somehow, is a belief I do not share. It does not appear from the title of the epic that Kālidāsa had planned a full story of *Śiva-vaiṣṇava* or *Kumāra-carita*. Kālidāsa appears to have in his mind the story of the uncommon love of Śiva and Pārvatī, culminating in their marriage.

With the pleasures of the wedded couple described, the 'possibility' and the 'birth' (the two meanings of the word, *sambhava*) of a son were assured. The poem then could end on the obvious poetic suggestion (*dhvani*) because the rest of the story is known from the established legend; and, moreover, the details are too full of the marvellous elements to attract human interest, which predominates in the story-portion of love and marriage. I am also not inclined to accept the other traditional belief that Kālidāsa's depiction of *śṛṅgāra* of the 'parents of the world' provoked strong criticism from lovers of literature and critics; and so, he left the composition of the epic after the eighth canto. This may be a matter of literary taste, which does change with the passage of time. But the view is not consistent with Kālidāsa's own outlook on love and life.

The story of the divine love of Śiva and Pārvatī is a symbol of the power of creation which moves, animates and perpetuates the entire Universe. It is in this sense that the mythical couple is to be recognised as the parents of the world. The other-worldly ascetics and yogis would like to burn *Kāma* and destroy the natural passion to ashes, as Śiva did in his agitation. But the divinities assure *rati* and *kāma* is brought back to life; it is the force of animation and nature's arrangement for the continuation of life in this universe. There is a pleasure and gratification of the body and mind in the fulfilment of love. But it is also true that physical union is not an end in itself. It demands unselfish devotion and hard penance sometimes, as the examples of Pārvatī and Rati show. When these motives combine there is real fulfilment in the form of a son who will be not only the delight of his parents but also an ornament to the world.

Kālidāsa seems to present this theme of universal love and its deeper significance through a mythical story. And in treating this story with its emphasis on the human angle, Kālidāsa's art blooms with Vernal splendour. In the description of the Himālaya, the advent of Spring and Pārvatī's severe austerities, poetic imagination and picturesque grace join hands together. The devoted love of Pārvatī and the heart-rending lament of Rati churn out the tender feelings and pathos of human life. In the disguise of Śiva there is a thrilling dramatic quality, as his own ridicule is the finest example of dramatic irony and humour and of the disarming ability to laugh at oneself. Nature and human emotions match in understanding response to make this story of love a poetic delight. It is said that Kālidāsa wrote *Raghuvamśa* after completing the *Kumārasambhava*. The two epics do not appear to be far separated in time, considering the stamp of maturity discernible in this epic.

#### 4. Raghuvamśa

*Raghuvamśa* is a massive epic in 19 cantos, and, judging by a long-established tradition of literature and of Sanskrit studies, the most admired work of Kālidāsa,

an epic which earned him unreserved praise from literary critics and the pet name of 'Raghukāra'.

Kalidāsa opens this epic with a salutation to Śiva and Pārvatī, the parents of the universe, blended inseparably with each other like word and sense. A poet's power of words may be limited; but he aspires to rise to the heights of fame. The effort may be inadequate; but the Raghu family hailing from the Sun possesses such dazzling and extra-ordinary qualities as to inspire any man of letters and lead him to burst into a flow of words in describing the worthy kings of this Solar race.

The son of Sūrya was Manu; in Manu's family was born an eminent king, Dilīpa. Physically Dilīpa was equipped with broad chest, massive shoulders and the stature of a Śāla tree; he had the intellectual and spiritual qualities to make him a fine administrator and a valorous leader of men; the kingdom of the earth was in his hands, and his people loved him. Queen Sudakṣiṇā was a worthy match for him. In the midst of this luxury and splendour Dilīpa and his queen suffered from one drawback which deprived them of the happiness of family life and closed the door of other-worldly happiness for them; they had no child. They decided to consult their family priest Vasiṣṭha. In their chariot ride to the hermitage, though their hearts were heavy with sorrow, nature and man did not forget to offer them a loving welcome. Gentle breezes removed their fatigue; peacocks sang their praises; the sārasa birds stood in a line to raise an arch over their heads; the villagers greeted them with jars of fresh ghee made from cows' milk. The royal couple too spoke to the simple village elders, asking them their names and of the trees not familiar to them. When Dilīpa reached the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha, it was evening; preparations for the evening fire-oblations were ready; the wives of the sages were feeding the young ones of the deer with handfuls of wild rice; fragrance of the burning incense had filled the atmosphere. Dilīpa spoke to the priest and Vasiṣṭha found out in *Samādhi* the cause of the king's misery. Dilīpa was, once, returning from the heaven after serving Indra, and in his eagerness to go back to his wife he had failed to notice the celestial cow Surabhi sitting under the Kalpa tree and had forgotten to pay his respects to her. Surabhi had cursed him for the lapse and so he was childless. The sage advised him to serve Nandini, the daughter of the Kāmadhenu, who was in the hermitage. Dilīpa and his queen immediately decided to act up to the advice. They chose a cottage to live, used *darbha* blades as a mattress to sleep on, subsisted on wild roots and fruits, and thus, observing the hermit's vow, started attending on the cow. Sudakṣiṇā would worship the cow morning and evening, Dilīpa would follow her like a shadow during the day in her roamings through the forest, feed her now and then with luscious green grass, walk behind her, sit when she sat and sleep after she had gone to sleep. The couple followed this ritual with devotion for twentyone days. Then, one day, Nandinī climbed a high and difficult peak of the Himālaya and started grazing there. All of a sudden she gave a cry of distress and Dilīpa found that the cow was in the clutches of a lion. Dilīpa tried to pull his arrow, but his

hand stuck at the quiver. The lion then spoke to him in human terms, explaining that he was an attendant of Śiva, the Devadāra tree in this precinct was an adopted child of Śiva and Pārvaṭī, and that he, Kumbhodara, was permitted to eat any animal that came in this region and molested the tree. Dilīpa found that he was helpless against the divine ordination; so, he offered his own body to the lion in place of the cow's, disregarding the ridicule and advice of the lion, bent only on doing his duty to the cow and fulfilling the kingly obligation of protecting one's subjects. But in stead of the lion pouncing on Dilīpa a heavenly shower of flowers greeted Dilīpa. It was all an illusion created by Nandinī in order to test Dilīpa and he had passed the test. Nandinī advised him to drink her milk and promised the fulfilment of his desire.

Nandinī's boon bore the fruit. In due course Sudakṣiṇā was blessed with a son. The desolate place turned into a treasure-house of joy and happiness as the little Raghu started rambling through the apartments, holding the finger of his nurse, and prattling delightful childish words and playing his games. Dilīpa looked after the education of the prince with care and soon Raghu became proficient in all lores and statecraft. He acquired good physique also, and standing near Dilīpa he looked like a young elephant by the side of a mighty elephant. Dilīpa arranged his marriage in due time and installed him as heir-apparent. Dilīpa then decided to perform the Horse-sacrifice. Raghu was entrusted with the protection of the horse assisted by a huge army. The sacrifice commenced; but suddenly the horse disappeared mysteriously. Once again Nandinī came to the help of the royal family. When Raghu washed his eyes with the sacred urine of the celestial cow his vision could penetrate all open and hidden obstacles. He saw that the jealous Indra had stolen the sacrificial horse. Raghu challenged Indra to a fight. Indra was amazed at Raghu's valour. But he told him that the title 'Śatakratu' must belong exclusively to Indra; Dilīpa can get, however, the religious merit of having completed the sacrifice. Dilīpa felt that he had obtained the fruit of his life. He handed over the reins of the kingdom to Raghu and went away with his queen to live the life of a forester.

Coming on the throne Raghu assumed a new brilliance. The invisible Lakṣmī held the royal parasol over his head as it were, and Sarasvatī sang his praises through the mouths of his bards. The Earth felt honoured and gratified at having such a king; and Raghu fully justified his designation 'Rājā' to his subjects by keeping them pleased and happy. When the Monsoon was over and Autumn came, Raghu decided to undertake a military campaign of all-round conquest. Accompanied with a fully equipped army Raghu first came to the East. His huge army crossing the eastern ocean looked like the mighty stream of Ganges coaxed by Bhagiratha from the matted hair of Śiva. Raghu conquered Suhya, Vaṅga, and planted his victory pillars in the stream of Gaṅgā. He turned then to the South. The Kalinga king paid him a tribute and saved his kingdom. Moving further down south Raghu crossed the Kāveri river and, along the southern coast, came to the kingdom of the Pāṇḍyas.

The Pāṇḍya king presented Raghu the tribute of pearls gathered in the sea near the mouth of the river Tāmraparṇī and accepted his suzerainty. Raghu crossed the sandal wrapped Malaya and Dardura mountains, went beyond Sahya range, defeated the kings of Kerala and Aparānta; and then moved up by the ground route in order to meet the Pārasikas. He covered the earth with the severed heads of the long-bearded foes. On the long beach of Sindhu, as Raghu's horses, their manes entwined with saffron shoots, rolled in the sands they were refreshed; it was easy for Raghu to crush the Huns, Kāmbojas etc. with his cavalry fresh and vigorous after the rest. Raghu then conquered the clans like Utsava, Saṃketa in the Himalayan region and came to Kāmarūpa — Assam. The king of Kāmarūpa offered flowers of jewels at Raghu's feet. With the conquest of four quarters Raghu returned to his kingdom. He performed the Viśvajit sacrifice and distributed all the wealth, his own as well as the acquired, with the generosity of showering clouds.

But as the sacrifice was over, Kautsa, a pupil of Varatantu, came to Raghu to beg for 14 million gold pieces which he wanted to present to his teacher as preceptor's fee. Raghu's treasury was empty. It was also his sacred vow never to send away a needy person without granting his wish. Kautsa was about to turn away; Raghu requested him to stay in the palace for a couple of days; he had decided to attack Kubera to get the necessary wealth. Kubera knew it, and he filled Raghu's treasury with showers of gold during the night. Raghu offered the entire wealth to Kautsa; but he collected only the exact amount, thanked the king and went away, giving him the blessing that he would have a virtuous son worthy of himself.

As the son was born to Raghu with the blessing of a Brahmin, he named him Aja (the unborn). Like a lamp lit from another lamp, Aja inherited his father's vigour, strength and nobility. When Aja came into youth, king Bhoja of Krathakaiśika sent his messenger to Raghu for the *svayamvara* of his sister. Raghu thought well of this possible relation with the Vidarbha kingdom; Aja was of a marriageable age; he sent Aja therefore with a suitable army. On his way Aja stopped for a while on the bank of Narmadā. There was a curious elephant in the river; its strong scent, bitter like that of the Saptacchada tree, repelled the elephants in Aja's army; they started running helter-skelter and the army camp was in uproar. Aja saw this confusion, selected a particular arrow and discharged it at the head of the rogue elephant. It was really the son of a Gandharva, Priyamvada, who had offended the sage Mātāṅga and was transformed into an elephant by the curse of the sage. In gratitude Priyamvada gave Raghu a *gandharva* missile, *sammohana*, and both went their ways. Aja encamped near the capital of Bhoja who welcomed him personally. The *svayamvara* was next morning; but Aja could not sleep thinking of it and of Indumati. Sleep came to him only in early hours of the morning, when he was awakened by the songs of his bards. Dawn was breaking; dew-drops had collected in the folds of reddish leaves; lotuses were opening; the parrot in the cage was repeating the songs sung by the bards. Aja got up and started his preparations to go to the marriage-hall.

Aja entered the hall in dignity and took his appointed seat. Other kings were already there and every one craned his neck to have a look at Aja. In a little while the professional bards came and sang praises of the royal family; the fragrant smoke of sandal and *aguru* filled the hall; conches were blown confusing the peacocks with the semblance of thunder-clap; and princess Indumatī arrived in the *svayamvara-maṇḍapa* in a palanquin. There was an immediate excitement among the kings gathered in the hall. One king started whirling the lotus in his hand; another held the jewelled necklace slipping from his shoulder and turned his neck to have a better look at the approaching figure; one turned his eyes down to his gold foot-stool and drew lines with his big toe on it; another turned to his neighbour to whisper something to him; one tore the Ketakī leaf in his hand inadvertently; the other rattled the dice in his hand and threw them down; the third was busy adjusting his crown. Indumatī was naturally unmindful of these erotic gestures on the part of the prospective suitors. She walked through the row of sofas, a garland in her hands, accompanied by the bold pratihārī, Sunandā, who was familiar with all the suitors. She described each one with all his special points. Indumatī would stop before a king while he was being introduced by Sunandā and then move forward. The particular king's face would be illumined with hope as long as Indumatī was standing before him, but it would be plunged in darkness of despair when she moved ahead. In a way Indumatī was like a lighted torch moving through the royal road, alternately illumining and throwing into darkness the turrets of the palatial mansions on the side. Indumatī could not feel any attraction for the various kings who were introduced to her, except for Aja whom she finally chose and garlanded. In a sense, it was the union of jewel and gold. All then turned towards the city to celebrate the wedding properly. As the couple was driven through the streets, the women in the city rushed to look at the bride and the groom and in their hurry and confusion forgot to complete their toilette. The marriage was performed in regal splendour. Aja took his bride with him and started home. The disappointed kings had not uttered a word during the marriage ceremony; but now they combined to block Aja's way and take away Indumatī from him by force. Aja gave a stiff fight. He realised, however, that it would take a long time to defeat the combined forces of the opposition and there was also an element of uncertainty about the final outcome. So, he used the *sainmohana* missile sending his enemies into sleep. He showed with just pride the kings lying in disorderly sleep to his delighted wife and returned home safe and jubilant.

Raghu was happy with the happiness of Aja and Indumatī. The kings of the Raghu family do not like to stick to the throne, particularly when they have a capable son. Raghu decided to use the rest of his life in the practice of yoga for his own salvation; and handing over the kingdom to Aja he repaired to the solitude of a forest. It was hard for Aja to bear the separation from his father; but he was trained in statecraft and did not falter or fail in his kingly duties. Then Raghu

passed away. It was fortunate that Indumatī had given birth by this time to a son who was named Daśaratha.

Once Aja and Indumatī were in the garden outside the city. Nārada was passing through air to Gokarṇa to pay his holy respects to Śiva located at that southern place of pilgrimage. The garland of flowers hanging from his lute broke loose and fell on Indumatī's breasts and she died on the spot. Aja fainted with the shock. But when he recovered consciousness the fact that he had lost Indumatī sent him in inconsolable sorrow. The heart-rending lament of Aja bewildered the birds, the trees wept with him shedding tears of falling leaves. How could a garland of flowers kill any one? And why did Indumatī go away without telling him? The whole place was filled with memories of her. Could not death show a little mercy? In taking Indumatī away death had robbed Aja of the mistress of his house, a wise counsellor, a companion and a beloved pupil in fine arts. There was nothing left for Aja to live for. Aja completed the funeral rites and somehow came back to the city. Vasiṣṭha was engaged in a sacrifice at the time; but he sent a message through his pupil. Death is a mystery; but no mortal can escape it. Death is the law of nature; life is a borrowed experience. So, it is not proper for the wise to mourn over death. It is true that Indumatī died suddenly; but she was an *apsarā* really, by name *Harinī*; Indra had sent her to spoil the penance of a sage, *Tṛṇabindu*, and it was due to his curse that she had taken a human birth; the curse was to end at the sight of a celestial flower; so, she went back to her heavenly regions. Aja should understand all this, said Vasiṣṭha, and control his sorrow. No amount of tears would bring the dead back to life; on the contrary the tears are supposed to burn the departed. Ending one's life is also no good, because it does not mean re-union with the departed. Vasiṣṭha's words were weighty, full of deep philosophical truth, and they carried sympathy and consolation. But Aja had decided otherwise. He lived for eight years somehow till Daśaratha came of age; and then committed suicide by fasting unto death at the confluence of *Gaṅgā* and *Śarayu*.

Daśaratha governed his kingdom well. He had the ideals of his father before him; his mind was tuned to the happiness of his people and the people too were happy. Personally he had no vice.

Once he thought of going on a hunting expedition. It was spring time. The scent of flowers, songs of birds, the cool touch of the gentle breeze were in the atmosphere, in addition to the riot of colours, the sweet honey of the flowers and other paraphernalia of nature to excite and gratify the senses and mind. Daśaratha could not but be affected by the emotion-charged atmosphere. The plumage of the peacock reminded him of the tresses of his beloved wife interspersed with flowers, and the sight of the deer of her eyes; he could not use his arrows against them. But he hunted and killed wild boar, rhino and tiger. With night-fall he encamped in the wood. In the early hours of the morning he thought he heard an elephant

drinking water at a nearby river. He sent a special arrow in the direction of the sound. To his horror he heard a human cry of agony. He rushed to the river and found a Brahmin boy, Śrāvaṇa, who had come to fetch water from the river and had become the victim of his fatal arrow. Daśaratha tended him and, on his telling, carried him to his old parents. The arrow was pulled out of the heart of Śrāvaṇa but the boy died immediately. The aggrieved father cursed Daśaratha in his anguish that he too would die by the grief over his son. The old parents died on the pyre of their only son, and Daśaratha returned to his capital with a heavy heart, solemn like the sea with the fire burning in its belly.

Is curse, sometimes, an augury of an unconscious bliss? Daśaratha was childless so far. He decided to perform the *Putra-kāma-iṣṭi*. The gods in heaven were waiting, at this time, for the human *avatāra* of Viṣṇu to deal with Rāvaṇa whose might was unchallenged and was further enhanced by the boon of Śiva. Viṣṇu agreed to take birth as Rāma. According to divine ordination, when the wives of Daśaratha ate the sacrificial *caru*, Rāma was born to Kausalyā, Bharata to Kaikeyi and Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna to Sumitrā.

In the following six cantos Kālidāsa presents the story of Rāma on the lines of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. There is a reference to the killing of the Krauñca bird by the hunter and Vālmiki's inspiration for the epic composition. The incidents, from the protection of Viśvāmitra's sacrifices in early childhood, through the training and education, marriages, Kaikeyi's insistence on putting Bharata on the throne, the exile into forest, Daśaratha's death, killing of Tāḍakā and a host of demons in the Daṇḍakā, abduction of Sītā, search for her, friendly alliances with Sugrīva and Hanumat, final crossing of the ocean, seige of Laṅkā, death of Rāvaṇa and the triumphant return to Ayodhyā after Sītā's purification by fire ordeal, are all briefly presented. Remarkable in this presentation is the picture of the lands of India (Bhārata-bhūmi) which Kālidāsa paints through Rāma as he and Sītā proceed from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā in the Puṣpaka aerial car. The pictures pulsate with life, accuracy of details, colour and variety.

The rule of Rāma was an happy augury of a just and righteous government. But the public scandal about Sītā's long stay in Rāvaṇa's captivity, in spite of her fire-ordeal, hurt Rāma very much and he abandoned her while she was advanced in pregnancy. Kālidāsa's Sītā does not blame Rāma, only questions his judgement in the light of her ordeal and the reputation of the family; her love for Rāma remains constant. Vālmiki looked after the abandoned Sītā and her twin sons, educated them, taught them his *Rāmāyaṇa*, which Rāma had an opportunity to hear when he met the boys in the course of his Aśvamedha performance. He recognised Kuśa and Lava as his own sons but wanted Sītā to demonstrate her purity before all the people. Sītā chose to disappear in the bosom of her mother Earth. This was a shock



to Rāma. He had put his brothers in charge of different parts of his kingdom. He now ended his life in the river Śarayū. Many citizens followed suit, such was their love for their king.

Śatrughna had dealt with the brood of Lavaṇa demons on the bank of Yamunā; his sons Śatrughatī and Subāhu were now given the charge of Mathurā and Vidiśā, the newly founded kingdoms on the Yamunā. Bharata had put down the rebellion of the Gandharvas in the Sindhu region and installed his sons Takṣa and Puṣkala to administer the kingdom of Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvati. Lakṣmaṇa's sons, Aṅgada and Candraketu, were ruling over Kārāpatha. Rāma had himself given the kingdom of Śārāvati to Lava and of Kuśāvati to Kuśa. After the decease of Rāma Kuśa as the eldest son became the chief ruler. But as he preferred to live in Kuśāvati, the city of Ayodhyā had a faded and dumb look. One night Kuśa had a vision. He was awake in his bed. Suddenly his bedchamber was flooded with brilliant light. A woman dressed like a *virahinī* stood before Kuśa with folded hands. She was the presiding deity of Ayodhyā. She described the desolate condition of the city and urged him to go back to Ayodhyā to restore her to her former glory. Kuśa accepted the plea. He returned to Ayodhyā and rebuilt the city. He asked some Brahmins to look after the kingdom of Kuśāvati and conducted his own state affairs from Ayodhyā.

Once as he was enjoying the water sport on the Śarayū, his bracelet fell in the river. It was given to Rāma by the sage Agastya, and Rāma had given it to his son. Kuśa organised an extensive search, but could not recover the lost bracelet. Thinking that a serpent may have swallowed it he employed the Garuḍa missile. The king of the Nāgas came up from the waters, returned the bracelet to Kuśa, and offered his younger sister Kumudvatī to him. From this incident Ayodhyā was freed from the danger of serpents and the serpents too earned protection from Garuḍa.

Kumudvatī gave Kuśa a son, Atithi. Later, when Kuśa was fighting the Durjaya demons for the sake of Indra, he and the demon both were killed. Kumudvatī followed her husband in death. The ministers put Atithi on the throne. Atithi had deeply studied the *Arthaśāstra* and political economy. He observed a careful timetable day and night and performed his duties with a sense of discipline. He had also mastered his senses, as he did his enemies. His kingly rule grew in glory; Indra and Kubera were his allies; the people enjoyed prosperity.

After Atithi twentyone kings ruled inheriting the kingdom by family descent. Sudarśana, the son of the twenty-second king Dhruvasandhi, came to the throne as a child. But as a crescent of the moon illumines the sky, a cub of a lion strikes terror in a forest, or a lotus-bud adorns a lake, Sudarśana brought prestige and glory to his rule. The experienced ministers helped him to acquire proficiency in administration. He lived long. In his old age he handed over the kingdom

to his son Agnivarṇa and, following the tradition of Raghu family, repaired to the forest to devote his time to the hermit's life and penance.

Sudarśana had enforced such firm and fine traditions that Agnivarṇa had nothing much to do for administering his rich kingdom. But Agnivarṇa was by temperament a pleasure-seeker, loving women, wine and music. He spent almost all his time in his apartment listening to or playing music. As if the women in his harem were not enough, he invited handsome maids and courtesans to keep him company. Agnivarṇa was a real expert in music. He personally played the *mṛdaṅga* as an accompaniment to dance, and pointed out to the female dancer her errors in keeping musical time. But all this pleasure-loving had its inevitable results. The administration was ruined. The subjects could hardly see their king. Once when the minister pressed him, Agnivarṇa thrust his foot out of a window of his bedchamber to give *darśana* to his people. The excesses with women and wine had also taken a toll of his health; he had contracted the wasting disease; ultimately death overtook him. For caution the ministers arranged cremation in the garden of the palace and suppressed the news of the king's death. Agnivarṇa's pregnant queen was put on the throne. The queen, the ministers and the knowing public began the waiting period, hoping, for the birth of a new successor to the royal family.

The epic is a saga of Solar kings. Kālidāsa named it after Raghu perhaps for a number of reasons. Raghu stands near the top with Dilipa in Kālidāsa's story and the succession of kings could naturally be described as the scions of his family. Raghu, on the whole, is the most exemplary of the royal family described here. Rāma is equally great. But he comes far down in the line; and besides, in the poet's eyes Rāma is good in human form; on the contrary Raghu is an extra-ordinary man who raised himself to divine heights.

By writing this epic Kālidāsa appears to have created a norm for a literary epic : a massive subject; elegant construction with a variety of personalities, incidents and emotions; beautiful expression which runs through varying style and metres; the poetic and dramatic quality of the descriptions; a stress on an ideological portraiture; and a noble thoughtful outlook on life: these are some of the characteristics that distinguish *Raghuvamśa*. There is no wonder if the 'Raghukāra' found a permanent place in the hearts of all lovers of literature.

### 5. Mālavikāgnimitra

The dramatic story of *Mālavikāgnimitra* is a story of love that finally succeeds through harem intrigue and opposition by clever plotting. Agnimitra, king of Vidiśā, happened to notice in his usual visit to the harem apartments a picture recently painted showing a group of ladies in the harem. There was a young girl there who particularly attracted his attention. But the senior queen Dhārīnī did not answer

Agnimitra's simple question about the girl, fearing undesirable developments. Dhāriṇī's young sister, a child, Vasulakṣmī, gave out the name of the girl as Mālavikā. The queen's silence was a tactical error, because it only served to increase the king's curiosity. The girl was sent to the queen by her low-born brother who was posted to command the fortress on the bank of Narmadā; the girl came into his hands as a refugee, and seeing her exceptional skill in dance, he had sent her to Dhāriṇī. Mālavikā was living in the harem as a personal maid of the queen and was receiving dance lessons from the royal preceptor of dance, Gaṇadāsa, as the younger queen Irāvati was being coached by another dance master Haradatta. These things were known in the harem apartments; so, when Agnimitra spoke to his companion and 'jesting pilot' Gautama and expressed his keen desire to see Mālavikā in person, the Vidūṣaka instigated a quarrel between the two dance masters as an indirect but sure remedy to fulfil the king's wishes. The dance masters were both experts in their special field and touchy; when they were challenged by each other about their respective superiority in their specialised art, the quarrel came to a head; both sought an interview with the king, as they were in royal employment and as the king is the final tribunal in matters of dispute. Agnimitra invited Dhāriṇī and her learned companion Parivrājikā-Pāṇḍita Kauśikī to hear the dispute in order to maintain an appearance of personal unconcern and indifference. Dhāriṇī was clever enough to see through this manoeuvre and tried desperately to stop the quarrel by several arguments; but Gautama continued to provoke the old Gaṇadāsa by accusing him of lack of skill, of doing nothing to earn his salary, and comparing the two dance masters to rams and elephants who would give no peace till one of them was vanquished in a fight, which, any way, would be great fun. Unfortunately for Dhāriṇī, Parivrājikā did not exactly take her side; she suggested that the masters demonstrated their skill by the performance of their pupils, for undisputed skill in an art is not a matter of theoretical knowledge only but also of an ability to train a pupil. So, a show was finally arranged to be held immediately in the music apartment of the palace. Gaṇadāsa was given priority because of his age; Parivrājikā was to act as a judge; and a difficult piece, the *Chaliya* dance, based on the fourth quartet of Śarmiṣṭhā's composition, was selected for presentation by both the contending parties. The performance of Mālavikā is shown in the second act; that of Haradatta's pupil is reported. Mālavikā gave a perfect exhibition of the difficult *nāṭya* and came out the winner. Agnimitra had the pleasure of watching Mālavikā at close quarters, admire her exquisite personal beauty and her accomplished skill in dance and *abhinaya*. The experience resulted only in increasing his interest in the girl; he fell in love with her and pressed the Vidūṣaka to arrange for a meeting with her.

The opportunity came partly by a coincidence. Dhāriṇī had a favourite *Aśoka* tree; it had not come into blossom though the season was ripe; it was necessary to fulfil the tree's *dohada*; normally Dhāriṇī would herself have fulfilled the longing of the tree by kicking it gently with her left foot; but she sustained a fall from the

swing and injured her foot; this may perhaps have been Gautama's trick; any way, the work came to Mālavikā; Dhāriṇī promised her that she would accord to her wish if the golden Aśoka blossomed in five nights due to her effort. Gautama, however, had managed to take Bakulāvalikā, a harem maid and a personal friend of Mālavikā, into his confidence and asked her on the king's behalf to prevail on Mālavikā and make her respond to the king's love. The third act shows this beautiful, romantic scene of *Aśoka-dohada-pūraṇa*. Mālavikā comes into the Pramadavana, slightly puzzled but hopeful, and already entertaining thoughts of love for king Agnimitra. Bakulāvalikā comes with the personal ornaments of queen Dhāriṇī and decorating materials to give her assistance to Mālavikā. While applying the red lac-dye to the tender foot of Mālavikā she opens up the topic of the king's attraction for Mālavikā and wins a confession from her of her love for the king, and also of the difficulties in her way. Bakulāvalikā gives her encouragement and promise of all help. The Vidūṣaka had brought Agnimitra to the scene and both were watching the developments from behind a creeper. As Mālavikā rises up to kick the Aśoka with her decorated ornamented foot and fulfils the tree's longing, Agnimitra steps forward and begs Mālavikā to fulfil his own longing for her. The romantic scene of love is spoiled by Irāvati who jumps into the scene. As a matter of fact, Agnimitra had promised his younger queen Irāvati to be with her to enjoy the swing in celebration of the Spring; Irāvati had come to the royal garden with her maid, slightly drunk; had discovered Mālavikā near the Aśoka, wondered about it; but knowing the reason of the maid's presence felt a pang of jealousy too. Now, seeing her husband making overtures of love to Mālavikā she could not control her anger. She rushed forward and taunted Mālavikā and the king with words of bitter and jealous anger. The Vidūṣaka was taken by complete surprise and could not think of any means of escape, except running away from the scene. The king, equally taken aback, tried to explain the situation away by bluffing and actually apologised to Irāvati touching her feet. But Irāvati was irate; she raised her fallen girdle to strike at the king, checked herself somehow, and went away in anger, predicting disaster like the fiery planet Mars. Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā had already excused themselves and run away from Irāvati. The king and the Vidūṣaka were left on the spot, frustrated and fearful of unknown consequences.

They came without delay. At the instance of Irāvati, Dhāriṇī was compelled to throw Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā into confinement in the cellar of the Samudragṛha, and the garden-keeper and guard, Mādhavikā, was instructed not to set the girls free unless the queen's signet-ring was shown along with the order for release. Gautama has now to employ a series of tricks. The most important thing was to obtain the possession of the queen's ring. For this purpose he plays the hoax of serpent-bite. He pretends that he had gone to pick a few flowers for the queen for his visit to her when he was bitten by a poisonous serpent. When he is brought in the presence of Dhāriṇī he acts the part superbly, shaking all over, and requesting

Dhārinī to pardon all his faults and look after his family after his death. The queen is alarmed that she was an indirect cause of a Brahmin's death. The physician is sent for. Gautama has taken a number of people into his conspiracy, particularly Jayasenā, the messenger and go-between. She brings the medical opinion, as taught, that a surgical operation to let out the poisoned blood was necessary, which Parivrājikā confirms from her knowledge; in addition, a *mantra* procedure was necessary for which some object with an effigy of serpent was required; Dhārinī in her anxiety and fear for the Brahmin's safety takes out her signet-ring and gives it to Jayasenā, because it has the serpent's figure carved on it. The Viḍuṣaka is apparently taken to the royal physician; but he and Jayasenā meet on the way; she is left back to carry the message, after proper interval of time, to the queen that Gautama was out of danger to his life; and the Viḍuṣaka armed with the ring, collects the king and together they go to the Samudragṛha. Gautama shows the ring to Mādhavikā; he silences her suspicion by bluffing that the king's stars were not favourable and so it was decided to release all prisoners as a mark of auspiciousness; further, Dhārinī had put the girls in prison to humour Irāvati; she did not want to hurt her feelings; so, in stead of sending her own servant she had sent Gautama with the ring as it would give the impression that the king was personally interested in setting the girls free. The entire hoax works perfectly. Agnimitra is able to meet Mālavikā in the privacy of the Samudragṛha. Gautama chooses to sit near the gate, sends Bakulāvalikā to watch the path leading to the Samudragṛha, and the lovers are left to themselves. But it happens that Irāvati is on her way to the Samudragṛha. She is still fuming with anger, but is repentent also of her rash behaviour in the Pramadavana. A little uncertain and also proud she had decided to present her apology to the picture of Agnimitra placed in the Samudragṛha. When she and her maid see Gautama at the entrance they suspect some intrigue. The maid drops a crooked stick on the Viḍuṣaka who was dozing at the moment without any care in the world. His instinctive fear for the serpent suddenly rouses him and he shouts in alarm for help. Agnimitra and Mālavikā come out running from the house, and Bakulāvalikā too from another direction. Irāvati understands everything in a flash. The situation has repeated itself. Only a lucky coincidence saves it. Vasulakṣmī, playing with a ball, was frightened by a brown monkey and was shaking like a leaf in fear. Everybody's attention is turned to the child. Agnimitra runs to console her; Irāvati in her natural concern for the child forgets her anger; and Gautama finds, to his relief, that a partisan, a brown monkey, has come to his assistance and saved the situation.

A number of things happen in the fifth and the final act. The golden Aśoka blossoms into full luxury before the five nights are over. Dhārinī is delighted. She arranges a special festive ceremony around the Aśoka and orders that Mālavikā be dressed in a bridal dress used by Vidarbha maidens. This work is particularly entrusted to the clever Parivrājikā. There is a side-thread in this story of love, namely, the dispute between the two Vidarbha princes Yajñasena and Mādhavasena; the

latter is a partisan of Agnimitra; and to counter the treachery and arrogance of Yajñasena, who had thrown Mādhavasena into prison, Agnimitra had ordered a military attack on Vidarbha. Dhārinī's brother Virasena was in charge; the results of this battle come to hand now. Yajñasena is routed, Mādhavasena is freed from prison, and the loot collected after the military victory, along with two girls skilful in music, is being sent. When the girls arrive they immediately recognise Mālavikā. She is, in fact, the princess of Vidarbha and the younger sister of Mādhavasena. Her marriage with Agnimitra was already negotiated; but the political upheaval came in the way. With Mādhavasena's imprisonment his minister Sumati arranged to take Mālavikā, his own sister Kauśikī (the Parivrājikā) and a few people to the safety of Vidiśā through a secret route in the Vindhya mountain range. Unluckily the party was attacked by a band of marauders in the Vindhya mountain pass; Sumati fought bravely; but he was alone; he died in his effort to save the women. Mālavikā was lost; as we know she came to the hands of Virasena who sent her to Dhārinī. The distressed Kauśikī became a nun and finally found her way in the royal harem as Dhārinī's companion. This part of the story is narrated by Paṇḍita-Kauśikī, who is also recognised by the two girls. The narration revealed, for the first time, that Mālavikā was not a maid but a princess. Kauśikī explains to the apologetic Dhārinī that she did not reveal Mālavikā's true identity because it was predicted from her horoscope that she would be required to live like a maid for one year before happiness came to her. Dhārinī was glad and wanted to make full amends for treating Mālavikā as a maid though it was not her fault. At this moment another piece of good news comes. Dhārinī's son Vasumitra was guarding the sacrificial horse for his grandfather Puṣyamitra, and Dhārinī was in perpetual anxiety for his safety. The news comes that he has routed the Yavanas and won the final victory. Puṣyamitra has also sent an invitation to the entire royal household to attend the celebration of his Aśvamedha. In this moment of all-round joy, Dhārinī gives the hand of Mālavikā to Agnimitra.

The play is a comedy of royal love, and a hilarious comedy, as it is full of amusing situations, mirth and laughter, with the serious undercurrent of a deep mutual love. But it is obviously the first dramatic work of Kālidasa and he could not avoid certain shortcomings. The major is the portrayal of Agnimitra. He is shown as a king who is entirely dependent on his dependents. His armies, commanders and his young son fight the battles; and there is no political work for him except deciding the strategy and directing the campaigns. Even in the matter of his personal love he relies completely on his companion, the Vidūṣaka, whom he describes as his 'minister of personal affairs'. The Vidūṣaka dominates the action of the play. And with Agnimitra's unimpressive portrait the modern reader, at least, is in doubt about who the real hero of the play is. Gautama is quite clever and resourceful; but should a minor character assume such an importance in a sophisticated play? The embarrassing situations in which Agnimitra is placed in the Pramada-vana and Samudragrha scenes are not flattering to his personality, like the fun Gautama makes of him.

The play is also full of coincidences which luckily help the development and fulfilment of love. The pattern Kālidāsa chose is of a low-level comedy; but it is not suitable for a dignified play. Kālidāsa, of course, improves his technique in the following plays. But it appears that even *Malavikāgnimitra* set a vogue; for, we find Śrī Haṛṣa, and later Rājasekhara, imitating Kālidāsa in creating their court comedies of love.

### . Vikramorvaṣīya

This is also a play of love, technically a *Toṭaka*, because the heroine is a celestial nymph and the hero a renowned king of the earth. It is the story of love between the heavenly Urvaśī and the mortal Purūravas, a Vedic legend to which Kālidāsa has given a poetic form and human garb. The pattern is varied too; the development of love goes through the stages of union, separation and reunion.

King Purūravas is returning from heaven after paying his holy respects to Sun. When in mid-air, he hears a cry of help, as if some small birds had cried out in distress. Obviously the danger was to some woman or women. Purūravas learns from the distressed nymphs that Urvaśī, the ornament of heaven, was abducted by the demon Keśin as she was returning from the mansion of Kubera, along with her friend Citralekhā, and the rescue had escaped in the North-Eastern direction. The rescue was possible only by one who was a partisan of the gods and who had the ability to travel on aerial paths in the sky. Purūravas promises all help to the nymphs and they promise to wait for him on the peak of the Hemakūṭa mountain. The chariot of Purūravas flies through the sky and in no time overtakes the demon. Purūravas rescues Urvaśī and her friend and brings them back to the Hemakūṭa to their anxious companions. Urvaśī is quite safe; only she had fainted in face of the danger. Now, when she opens her eyes it is like lotus opening its petals at the close of a dark night. Urvaśī had thought that she was rescued by her patron Indra; but Citralekhā draws her attention to the king who was an equal of Mahendra in prowess; Urvaśī looks at the king and suddenly feels that the demon had obliged her by bringing her into contact with the king. Purūravas, on his part, is amazed at the heavenly beauty of Urvaśī and thinks that if she were the mental creation of sage Nārāyaṇa it must be a myth. It is a case of love at first sight. But the background is of *Vikrama*, the brave rescue effected by Purūravas. If Urvaśī's extra-ordinary beauty attracted Purūravas to her, Urvaśī had every reason to fall in love with him; Purūravas was majestic and handsome; his valour was matchless; and he had put Urvaśī under a loving obligation by saving her life. Citraratha arrives on the spot, because the news of Urvaśī's abduction had reached heaven and Indra had despatched an army of Gandharvas for her rescue. Citraratha thanks Purūravas on behalf of Indra and the parties depart. But it is once again obvious that Urvaśī is leaving her heart behind. The emotions of Purūravas are not different.

A taste of these mutual feelings is had in the second act. Purūravas is love-sick for Urvaśī, and the current Spring season only serves to increase his longing for her,

Urvaśī is in no better position. But being a denizen of heaven she has greater freedom. She decides to go down to the earth to meet the king taking Citralekhā with her. They find Purūravas in the garden of his palace musing with himself and his companion the Viduṣaka. The nymphs keep themselves invisible by their 'lore of concealment' and listen to the conversation. The king is talking of his love for a woman and how it has affected him. Urvaśī decides to reveal her own love. She snatches a birch-leaf, writes a poetic letter of love, and drops it near the king. The fool of the Viduṣaka, proverbially afraid of snakes, mistakes it for the slough of a serpent; but as the leaf is turned over by the breeze the letters become visible. The king picks up the leaf, reads the letter and confesses his own love for Urvaśī. He asks the Viduṣaka to hold the letter for him, because his sweating fingers might spoil the letters written on it. Citralekhā and Urvaśī discard their concealment and come into the presence of the king. But before they could talk much, Urvaśī is called back to heaven for the dramatic performance in which she is playing a major role. The lovers' meeting is abruptly ended; but they are both fired by love and mutual response.

The king wishes to turn back to the letter as some kind of consolation. The fool, however, has lost it. The wind carries the birch-leaf away; and, as if by a dramatic coincidence, it gets stuck at the anklet on the foot of queen Auśīnarī who is coming in the garden. The queen has noticed the listlessness and paleness of her husband and suspects a love-affair. The letter now confirms it. She confronts the king with the letter, to which the king has no convincing answer. He apologises to his wife; but she leaves him in anger.

The antagonism of the queen is not the only obstacle for the fulfilment of the love. The real difficulty is bringing heaven and earth together in a wedlock. How could a heavenly being like Urvaśī leave heaven and come to live on the earth with a mortal king as his wife? The difficulty is solved rather unexpectedly and in a curious way. The dramatic performance in which Urvaśī was playing a part was a drama, *Lakṣmīsvayamvara*, composed by Sarasvatī and directed by Bharatamuni; Urvaśī was acting the heroine's part. In a scene she was asked by her companion about whom she loved most; and she was to reply that her heart was set on Puruṣottama, Viṣṇu. But her heart being with Purūravas now and the love engulfing her emotional life, Urvaśī made the natural psychological blunder in saying her line and took name of Purūravas in place of Puruṣottama's. Bharata was angry; he banished her from the world of heaven. Indra took mercy on her and permitted her to live on earth with the king till a son was born to her. In a way, some good came out of the blunder and the curse; Urvaśī's way to the fulfilment of her love was cleared. The king's way was also cleared for him; because queen Auśīnarī realised, in spite of her hurt and resentment, that it was no use going against the wishes of her lord and master; she undertook the 'priyaprasādana' vow and on its completion, on a full-moon



night, made a religious offering to her king-husband, on the terrace of the Mañiharmya palace, promising that she would be friendly to any woman who had won her husband's affections. After the queen's departure Urvaśī arrives. It is clear that their union is in sight.

The interlude of the fourth act gives us the reason for the separation of the lovers. Purūravas and Urvaśī after their marriage had gone to the celestial Gandhamādana-vana to enjoy their married love. There Purūravas happened to notice a vidyādhara girl playing in the sands building hills. The beauty and the self-absorption of the child took his attention from Urvaśī. Urvaśī resented this. She was very short-tempered, and her love was deep, demanding and possessive. She walked away from Purūravas in anger and by mistake stepped into the sacred grove of Kārtikeya which was forbidden to women. She was immediately turned into a creeper, though she retained her powers of mind and knowledge. Urvaśī's disappearance proved to be a mental shock to Purūravas. He lost his sanity. The main scene of the fourth act is a scene of Purūravas' mad search for his lost beloved.

I think the treatment of this scene is deliberate and carefully worked out. There are a number of Apabhramśa verses which describe by symbol the condition of the love-lost Purūravas. There is music and dance; the stage-directions show that even Purūravas takes dance steps. In other words, the scene is constructed like a ballet. To my mind, this is the only way prolonged pathos could be effectively presented on the stage. Purūravas is present on the stage continuously for nearly half an hour; and his inquiry with different objects about his lost Urvaśī is bound to be monotonous and tiresome in a stage representation. So, the dance and music technique. The objects are not a part of stage scenery, which did not exist much on the ancient Indian stage. They are represented by a dancer or a group of dancers doing the swan or peacock dance as the case may be; and Purūravas too approaches the objects with dance steps to put his inquiry. This is how the scene is designed for stage play.

In the course of his mad search Purūravas comes across a precious stone. He is about to throw it away. But he is warned by a heavenly voice that it is a 'gem of reunion' (*saṅgamanīya-maṇi*) issued from the lac-dye applied to the foot of Gaurī. Purūravas picks it up; and when he embraces a creeper that draws his attention with the gem in his hand, the creeper is changed into Urvaśī. The separated lovers are united. Urvaśī has witnessed in her inner mind the agony and sorrow of Purūravas and obtained the proof of his deep and sincere love. The couple returns to the Capital from the heavenly gardens, and Urvaśī commands a cloud to carry them back like an aerial car by her celestial powers.

Happiness now reigns in the house of Purūravas, except that he is still not blessed with a child. Then an incident takes place. Purūravas and Urvaśī have come to the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Purūravas has been guarding the 'gem of reunion'

with his life. It was placed away while he was bathing; and as a servant was taking it back to him on a palm-leaf covered with a silk cloth, a hovering vulture snatched it away mistaking it for a piece of meat. For a moment Purūravas was lost admiring the beautiful movements of the bird in the sky and the sparkling display of red light emitted by the gem in the vulture's beak; but he became aware of his loss and ordered his bow and arrows. Before he could shoot the bird, however; an unknown arrow killed the bird. The chamberlain brought an arrow and the beloved gem to the king. The king picked up the arrow to read the name inscribed on it, it announced that the arrow was of Āyus, son of Urvaśī and Aila-Purūravas. On the heel of this unexpected news came a female ascetic from the hermitage of Cyavana with a six year old boy. Urvaśī recognised her own son and explained everything. She was permitted to live with Purūravas till he saw the face of a son born to him from Urvaśī. Urvaśī loved Purūravas so much that she sacrificed her motherly love and kept the boy away in the hermitage of Cyavana. Now that the boy had acted against the āśrama discipline in shooting at the bird he was brought back to his mother. But with this Urvaśī's stipulated period of stay was also over. The prospect of a perfect family reunion was thus spoiled, and the atmosphere became heavy with impending separation and sorrow. Luckily for the couple and the boy a favour materialised, Nārada bringing the news. A serious war between the gods and the asuras was about to break; Purūravas had always been an important and valuable ally of the gods; Indra, therefore, would not like Purūravas to retire from his kingly life and take to hermit's vows as he was planning to do at the departure of Urvaśī to her heavenly abode; in return for the king's assistance in the coming war Indra granted a special favour so that Urvaśī was permitted to live on earth with Purūravas as long as he lived. The threatened separation changed into life's union.

It is *vikrama*, the valour of Purūravas that won Urvaśī for him; it is *vikrama* again that enabled him to have her all his life. That is why the word figures significantly in the title of the play.

### 7. Abhijñānaśākuntala

The *Śakuntalā-upākhyāna* in the *Mahābhārata*, which is the obvious source of Kālidāsa's drama rather than the Puranic versions, is rather crude, full of improbabilities and supernatural elements. To give a beautiful poetic form to this legend, change the characterization, invest the story with convincing and moving human emotions, bring nature into responsive harmony with man, infuse the tale with a definite philosophical outlook on life, and, above all, to write in such a poetic and dramatic style as to convey an impression that heaven and earth are combined in this play, is the supreme achievement of Kālidāsa.

The story of the *Śakuntala* also runs through the stages of union, separation and re-union. But they are worked out here more elaborately in seven acts and with

greater intensity of convincing human experience. The first three acts complete the stage of union by the *gāndharva* marriage; the reason of separation is found in the interlude of the fourth act in the form of the curse of Durvāsas; the actual separation occurs in the fifth act when Duṣyanta, losing his memory due to the curse, rejects Śakuntalā; the sixth act is a preparation for the reunion; which is shown in the final seventh act.

Duṣyanta comes to the hermitage of Kaṇva by chance, in the pursuit of a deer he is about to kill. He is stopped by the hermits as the deer belongs to the hermitage. Duṣyanta accepts the plea, is invited in the āśrama, and meets Kaṇva's daughter Śakuntalā, along with her companions Anasūyā and Priyamvadā, watering the trees in the hermitage; Kaṇva is away on a long pilgrimage to Somatīrtha which he has undertaken in order to pacify the adverse fate of Śakuntalā. Duṣyanta is terribly attracted by the natural unadorned beauty of the girls, particularly of Śakuntalā, and considers whether he can take Śakuntalā as his wife. The story of Śakuntalā's birth and the knowledge that she is the daughter of a celestial nymph and the royal sage Viśvāmitra convinces him that there is nothing untoward from the religious angle in his desire for her. Śakuntalā too has been moved by the sight of Duṣyanta and experiences the stirrings of love, which she feels 'contrary to the tapovana life' in her innocence. Both have responded naturally to the impetus of love. Duṣyanta is no longer interested in his hunting project. He confesses to his companion the Vidūṣaka his feelings for Śakuntalā. The Vidūṣaka ridicules the idea, first, with several objections : Trying to marry a Tāpasa-kanyā, a daughter of a Brahmin sage, was against the normal religious code; Duṣyanta's attraction for the girl may be a passing fancy, like a person tasting a sour tamarind as a change from sweet things; and if Duṣyanta were to entice this girl and reject her after he had his pleasure it would be a moral crime, because it would ruin the entire life of an innocent girl. Duṣyanta answers these objections convincingly; religion is no bar to this love, as Kaṇva is only a foster-father to Śakuntalā; Śakuntalā's beauty is heavenly; a person must be out of his senses not to want her permanently as his life's partner. The Vidūṣake convinced of Duṣyanta's deep attachment and sincere love tells him to stock enough provender for himself as the journey of love is going to be a long one. Duṣyanta wants an opportunity to go back to the āśrama; this is unexpectedly provided. The hermits find that in the absence of Kaṇva their daily sacrifices are disturbed by invisible demons; they invite Duṣyanta to live in the hermitage to guard their sacrifices. But at this moment a message comes from Duṣyanta's mother asking him to return to the Capital. The mother is observing the vow of *Putra-piṇḍa-pālana*; Duṣyanta is childless; the completion of the vow will take place in four days, and Duṣyanta's presence on the religious occasion was necessary. Caught in a dilemma, Duṣyanta decides to send the Vidūṣaka in his place, dismisses the army, and remains alone in the tapovana to do his religious duty for the ascetics. The opportunity to be near Śakuntalā in his spare time naturally helps the development of mutual love. While Duṣyanta is

yearning for her, Śakuntalā suffers heavily the pangs of love. Her companions decide to help her. They prevail upon Śakuntalā to write a letter of love. In a moving poetic scene in the third act Kālidāsa brings the lovers together who open their hearts to each other in the presence of Śakuntalā's companions. Duṣyanta removes any doubt from Śakuntalā's mind by promising that she will be the *pratiṣṭhā*, the glory and the stability of his family and proposes *gāndharva* marriage.

The fourth act shows that Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā are married. Duṣyanta's religious duty in the āśrama is over. He gives his ring to Śakuntalā and returns to his Capital, promising to send an escort for her within a few days. Unfortunately, on the very day of Duṣyanta's departure, and as Śakuntalā is experiencing the first pangs of separation and is lost in her own grief, Durvāsas arrived in the hermitage uninvited; and because Śakuntalā fails to notice his arrival curses her that her husband will not remember her. Anasūyā and Priyamvadā somehow pacify the angry sage and he concedes that the curse would cease to operate at the sight of a 'token or recognition' (*abhijñana*). The girls feel that Duṣyanta's ring which is in possession of Śakuntalā will withhold the effect of the curse, They keep the incident of the curse a secret but advise Śakuntalā to take care of the ring.

Kaṇva has now returned from his pilgrimage. He comes to know of Śakuntalā's marriage through an incorporeal voice in the fire-sanctuary; congratulates his daughter for the choice of her husband as both are extremely worthy and perfectly matched, and promptly makes arrangements to send Śakuntalā to her husband's house. The main scene of the fourth act is one of the finest poetic interludes imaginable. It is a scene of parting, a married daughter leaving her parental home. All the soft and silken emotions of the human heart come out on this occasion; even Kaṇva finds it difficult to check the rising tide of his own emotions; but everything is held in superb control and the auspicious occasion of a daughter's departure is not allowed to be dissolved in tears and sorrow. Nature also joins the farewell, not only by giving Śakuntalā precious wedding gifts but also by shedding silent tears at the departure of this daughter of nature, a mother to the creepers as to the young deer, a sister to the trees, and a beloved relation of the whole nature. Kaṇva gives some wholesome advice to his daughter, removes her imaginary fears at the loss of the parental home, and prepares a solemn message to be delivered to Duṣyanta. The party leaves.

The beginning of the fifth act and the song of Hamsapadikā is a warning that the curse has affected Duṣyanta's memory. As we know a little later, Śakuntalā has lost the ring on her way and is without any means to convince Duṣyanta of her marriage to him and to revive his lost memory. When the āśrama party arrives, Duṣyanta is completely puzzled. The young woman standing before him, far advanced in pregnancy, claims to be his wedded wife; but he has no recollection of any such happening; the Vidūṣaka is not with him; and the statements of the party do not produce any conviction; Śakuntalā herself is unable to give any evidence to support

her claim. Under the inevitable circumstances Duṣyanta's mind suspects a foul play. In fact, it is a moral dilemma for him. If the girl's claim is true by rejecting her Duṣyanta would be abandoning his wife; but if he were correct in his stand, by accepting her he would be taking in the wife of a stranger; which is the greater sin? That is why, on moral grounds Duṣyanta decides to take the risk of *dāra-tyāga* as a lesser evil and repudiates Śakuntalā. The scene is full of terrific dramatic tension. Tempers rise, accusations are hurled at each other and emotions come to a breaking point. The spectator would stand aghast at the sheer irony of fate that brought the situation to such a bursting point. The priest of Duṣyanta suggests a temporary solution. It is predicted that Duṣyanta would have a son who would have all the astrological signs of a sovereign emperor; if the young woman had such a son it would prove that she was Duṣyanta's wife. The Purohita offers to give shelter to Śakuntalā in his house till the time of her delivery. But as the party leaves the presence of Duṣyanta, a light in female form descends down from heaven and lifts the crying Śakuntalā away. This is Menakā, Śakuntalā's mother who had rushed to help her in her plight of life.

The interlude of the sixth act shows the miraculous recovery of the ring. Gautamī was right; While offering her homage at the Śacī-tīrtha the ring slipped into the waters from Śakuntalā's finger; it was swallowed by a fish; after a lapse of six years fisherman caught the fish and found the ring in its belly; as he was trying to sell it in the market he was caught by the officers, brought to Duṣyanta because it was a royal gem the theft of which was punishable by death at the order of the king himself. The things, of course, took a different turn. The sight of the ring wiped out the effect of the curse, Duṣyanta's memory came back and he remembered everything about Śakuntalā, including his cruelty in rejecting her. Duṣyanta's sorrow knew no bounds. He forbade all festivities in his kingdom, lost all interest in his state affairs, and helplessly surrendered himself to his sorrow. Duṣyanta's agony and torture was particularly enhanced by the case of the merchant Dhanamitra, who had died without a child; Duṣyanta realised consciously the spiritual importance of a son and successor to the family, and the rejection of the pregnant Śakuntalā come to him as the cruellest stroke of misfortune and an unbearable shock. Moreover, there was no news of Śakuntalā. The dramatist, however, arranges through Sānumatī, a nymph and friend of Menakā, to take his readers and audience into his confidence; it is learnt that Śakuntalā is in the hermitage of Mārīca on the Hemakūṭa mountain and her son is being properly cared for there. Fortunately Duṣyanta gets an opportunity to go to the heaven to help Indra in his battle against the asuras, and on his way back Indra's charioteer Mātali brings him to the hermitage of Mārīca. There Duṣyanta meets his son Sarvadamaṇa, and recognises him, through artistically presented signs, to be his own. Śakuntalā then comes forward, pale and emaciated, but devoted to her husband. Duṣyanta explains his action, begs her pardon for the wrong he unconsciously inflicted on her, wipes her tear with his own hand and touches her feet. Mārīca furnishes

the full explanation, including of the curse that caused the separation, gives his blessings to the couple and their son and predicts great prosperity and happiness for them.

The dramatic skill of Kālidāsa and his poetic abilities appear to have come to a luxurious blossoming in the *Śākuntalā*. The construction of the play is beautifully designed, logical, dramatically suggestive and suffused with the charm of poetry. The characters are neatly matched and contrasted, have an individuality of their own, and speak naturally. Nature is presented not only with its wealth and varied charm but also is, in this play, a living character in tune with the emotional life of man. The enticing atmosphere of nature, beautiful dialogue that speaks the hearts of characters, the fabric of the play steeped in graceful poetry, the delightful variety of sentiments like joy, sorrow, despair, laughter, love of young people and for child and nature, wonder and marvel : these make the *Śākuntalā* a triumph of literary creation. The deep sorrow and endurance of the earth and the dreamy happiness of the heaven seem to be combined in the *Śākuntalā*. As Goethe felt, it is a union of earth and heaven. Kālidāsa too must have felt that he had created the work of his life; otherwise, he would not have prayed to Śiva to grant him salvation at the conclusion of the play.

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### 3 GLIMPSES OF PERSONALITY

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A perpetual handicap in the study of Sanskrit Literature is the lack of information about the personal life of a poet and of the times in which he lived. The Sanskrit poets are very reticent about themselves. What tradition or legendary accounts tell about them is either scanty or often distorted by hearsay, imagination or the mistaken notion of heroworship. Some exceptions do occur. Bhavabhūti or Bāṇa write about their family and their childhood. The prologue of Śūdraka's play provides some distinct details about this king-poet. The dramatists Jayadeva and, more than him, Rājasekhara sing their own praises. Scanty as these details are they give, at least, an introduction to a poet. Kālidāsa seems to have risen to pre-eminence in his own lifetime; and later he became an immortal poet of Sanskrit language. But Kālidāsa has left only his name behind. The only poet who outdid Kālidāsa in this kind of reticence appears to be Bhāsa who omitted even his own name from his dramatic prologues.

Why should this happen? Acquiring fame is one of the urges of writing. Writers of Sanskrit Poetics like Maṃmaṭa endorse it.<sup>1</sup> Kālidāsa could not have been averse to fame. He pleads in his prologue to his first play that old is not always gold, and a new poet must have his chance and must be judged strictly on literary merit.<sup>2</sup> He admits at the beginning of his *Raghuvamśa* that he is soliciting literary fame.<sup>3</sup> King Dilīpa, offering his own body to the Lion as a substitute for Nandini, the daughter of the celestial Cow, begs him to be merciful to the body of his fame'.<sup>4</sup> It is possible to imagine that Kālidāsa too may have prayed in his youth to the God of Death to spare his *yaśaḥśarīra* : Any way, Time seems to have heard this unuttered prayer to bestow immortality on Kālidāsa's poetic glory! Silence of the Sanskrit poets about their personal life; therefore, remains a puzzle. It cannot be fully accounted by a poet's modesty. For, even if modesty be a striking virtue of a poet like Kālidāsa, there are other Sanskrit poets who are egotistical enough to blow their own trumpets; and if they checked their tongue or their pen, there are their admirers who would place them at the top and declare them as incarnations of the Goddess of Poetry. There is, of course, some truth in the observation that Sanskrit poets have no sense of time or history; if a few have, it is partial only and exceptional. It may mean, philosophically, that the Sanskrit poets cared more for the survival of their literary work rather than for the knowledge of its authorship or the time when it was produced; after all, men must die; and Time never remains stand-still; what Time and Death cannot touch is an outstanding literary work; Time is endless and the Earth is vast to safeguard and preserve a work of supreme art. Such an attitude to

one's literary productions is not impossible in our land. It may have prompted the writers to cloak themselves in comparative anonymity. It is also a general literary fashion noticeable in the old literature of the world, which has come down to us anonymously or only with the name of the writer. The old world had enough good writers but no literary historian.

The desire to know a poet in his personal life cannot be said to be born entirely out of human curiosity or admiration. These feelings are naturally there; but a factor of greater literary importance is a presumed connection between a poet's personal life and his literary creations. Even when such a connection is limited to the urge or inspiration for a particular piece of writing and the shape it gives to the experience presented, yet the threads of personal connection known from a poet's life often shed an interesting light on the literary creation and help to understand it better than a mere critical analysis ever can. Wordsworth's poetry, for example, contains a number of sweet and affectionate poems about a little girl Lucy. The admiring reader and critic looked upon these poems as a fine reflection of Wordsworth's love of nature and of child. The subsequent researches, however, showed that the poems had an intimate connection with the poet's private life which was not known till then. Wordsworth had lived in France for some time before the French Revolution. He fell in love with a woman there, and they had a daughter born to them. Difference in religious faith came in the way of their formal marriage, and Wordsworth had to return to England, disappointed and sad. But the memory of the girl never left his mind; it took the poetic shape of Lucy. This information, hitherto unknown, about the poet's intimate life serves now to throw a new light on the Lucy poems, and helps to understand the particular tenderness and depth of affection that are found in them. The literary pleasure is certainly enhanced by this personal detail.

A poet's personal life and his literary creations, thus, seem to be somehow connected, though the connection often remains hidden or unknown. The increasing curiosity about Kālidāsa's personal life may be reasonably related to such a literary background. As a matter of fact, Sanskrit literature has produced some remarkable writers who would outshine Kālidāsa in individual qualities. Kālidāsa does not have that emotional abandon and grandeur of diction which Bhavabhūti shows. The poetic imagination which travels from earth to heaven and back again, and the command of language which can give shape to such flights, which Bāṇa exhibits, is not a feature of Kālidāsa's writing. A 'string of soft and glittering words' is the forte of Jayadeva.<sup>5</sup> Bhāsa stands alone in delving the human mind and discovering unexpected traits of humanity in so-called villainous men and women. And yet, it is Kālidāsa whom tradition honoured as 'the grace and pleasure of Poetic Muse', 'the preceptor or chief of the family of poets'.<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that the tribute is due to Kālidāsa's graceful writing and his masterly art. But it is also true that Kālidāsa attained



unrivalled eminence in handling successfully such diverse literary forms as lyric, epic and drama, which no other poet in Sanskrit literature could do. That is why, we would have liked to know something about the personal life and personality of this great poet.

Since Kālidāsa is completely silent about himself, the unsuppressible curiosity must have led to the rise of several legends about his personal life, aided by the dazzling fame the poet seems to have acquired in his own life-time. The legendary stories look like the creations of imagination; they cannot have any historical truth in them. But if tradition raised these stories, making a mountain of a mole-hill, they deserve a critical analysis in order to discover the basic personal detail or quality the mole-hill — which may have provided the foundation for raising the superstructure of imagination.

(2)

According to one such legend, Kālidāsa was born in a Brahmin family but was an orphan. A family of cowherds looked after the boy and raised him. The boy grew up till 16 or 18 years of his age in the company of cowherd boys, illiterate and uneducated; but he was very handsome and fair and a picture of perfect health. It so happened that the king of that country had a daughter who was very beautiful (as heroines of stories are expected to be !). She was also educated in all the *śāstras* and trained in all the arts. When she came of age, she declared that she would choose her husband after testing him in sciences and arts, a whim though, quite consistent with the daughter of a king. But no young man could satisfy the princess who was herself a trained scholar and an accomplished artist. The king lost all hope for getting this girl ever married; and his minister too was frustrated and desperate. The minister wished to teach the obstinate princess a lesson. In his search for a suitable bridegroom, the minister chanced to see this handsome, healthy boy, Kālidāsa, and decided to work up a plot to hoodwink and outwit the princess.

Another version of the story gives a varying detail. The king of Banaras wanted his daughter to marry the famous grammarian Vararuci. The princess refused. Vararuci felt humiliated and insulted. He hatched a plot to punish the princess using a cowherd boy.

The minister, in our story, brought Kālidāsa secretly to his residence, kept him happy with good food, clothes and ornaments, gave him a little idea of what he intended to accomplish through him, and gave him a strict warning that he must not open his mouth to speak under any circumstances. Having thus prepared the boy the minister managed to bring from Kāśī a band of young boys trained in different *śāstras* and arts, and sent word to the king and princess for a meeting. Kālidāsa was posed as a young scholar who had arrived to woo the princess and

the young boys as his pupils. The only condition stipulated for the meeting was that the 'pupils' would answer the questions put by the princess, and if the answers did not satisfy the princess then only the 'guru' would speak to her. The princess agreed. The minister then dressed Kālidāsa elegantly for this special occasion, instructed the boys properly and repeated his warning to Kālidāsa. With complete preparation the meeting took place in the royal court. The result could be easily predicted. The questions the princess asked, from whatever science or art, were adequately answered by one boy or the other who was perfectly trained in that particular branch. The princess was impressed by the knowledge and skill of these boys and naturally supposed that their 'guru' must be an exceptional young man, though the 'guru' had no occasion to open his mouth. The 'guru' or Kālidāsa looked gorgeous in his clothes and ornaments and in his handsome appearance looked like a prince. Such a combination of rich personality and wide learning was indeed rare. The princess was overjoyed and consented to marry this young, handsome suitor. The wedding was duly celebrated.

However, when the couple met for the first time in the royal bedchamber, the boy Kālidāsa, left alone to manage for himself, was completely bewildered. The princess suspected something wrong and piled her husband with questions; but the young husband would not open his mouth to speak. The princess lifted a sword from the corner of the bed and threatened to kill the boy if he did not speak and tell her everything. Frightened beyond his wits, the boy narrated the whole story in his native, unpolished language. The princess was dumbfounded; then anger seized her, and also terrible shame. She was his wife, and could not do anything to her husband. She asked him to leave the palace, and not to show his face to her unless and until he accomplished something in his life and acquired some learning.

The incident and particularly the dismissal affected the young Kālidāsa very deeply. He went straight to the temple of Kālī, sat down before the idol, praying for enlightenment, and vowing that he would cut his head and offer it to the goddess were she not to answer his prayer. The sincerity and devotion of the boy moved Kālī and she placed her hand of blessing on the bowed head of the boy. He was endowed with knowledge and poetic genius as a favour of Kālī, and came to be known thence as Kālidāsa or a devoted servant of Kālī. Kālidāsa then went to Kāśī, the home of all learning and lore, and soon mastered many *śāstras* and arts.

Returning from Banaras Kālidāsa first went to pay a call of gratitude to the princess, who had remained faithful to her husband, sorrowing over her tragic fate but acting according to religion like a devoted Hindu wife. When she saw Kālidāsa she wondered whether the years had at least turned his rustic speech into the language of the polished and cultured gentry. She asked him, 'Is there any improvement in your speech'—*Asi kaścit vāg-viśeṣaḥ*? Kālidāsa picked up each single word

from her question and in reply recited on the spot, in a sudden burst of inspiration, an epic, a lyric and another epic : The *Kumārasambhava* begins with *Asti-uttarasyām diśi Devatātmā*, *Meghadūta* with *Kāścit kāntā-viraha-guruṇā* and the *Raghuvamśa* with *Vāg-arthā-viva saṃprkṭau*....The princess already pleased in her mind by the return of her long-lost husband was amazed by this spontaneous exhibition of poetic genius and birth of wonderful poetry, and rushed to welcome and hug her husband with love and joy. But the entire experience had worked a far deeper transformation in Kālidāsa's life. He regarded the princess as his spiritual *guru*, and refused to take her as his wife. This was a jolt and a shock to her. When all her pleadings failed to move Kālidāsa from his determination, the rejected wife cursed him that he would die at the hands of a woman for repudiating the love of his devoted wedded wife.

Kālidāsa was sad in his heart. But he left his royal wife and started an independent life of his own. He wrote plays and added to his growing reputation. He won wealth and patronage and was prosperous in his material life. But the curse had corroded his personal and private life, much of which he spent in the company of courtesans. Later, in his old age, he went to see his old friend Kumāradāsa, the author of the epic poem *Jānakīharaṇa*, who lived in Laṅkā. But in stead of going to his friend's house he stayed with a prostitute. Now, the king of Siṅhala-dvīpa (Laṅkā, Ceylon) had announced a substantial reward to any poet who would complete a metrical couplet by composing a second line to the one given. It is possible that Kumāradāsa himself might have thought of this trick and persuaded his king to act on it in order to trace Kālidāsa's whereabouts, whose arrival in the island was somehow known but not the place where he chose to remain in hiding. The first line of the verse given for completion was : *Kamale kamalotpattiḥ śrūyate na tu dṛśyate* (It is heard that a lotus arises out of a lotus, but no (instance) has been seen). No poet could come forward to complete the verse and claim the reward. Kālidāsa came to know about all this through the courtesan. He smiled and said to her, 'My girl, how is it then that two blue lotuses (eyes) have sprung from your face-lotus'? (*Bāle, tava mukhāmbhojāt katham indīvara-dvayam*). Kālidāsa had completed the verse and beautifully answered the statement in the first line of the couplet. The courtesan did not know the real identity of Kālidāsa. But she was enticed by the sudden prospect of winning fame and the greater and certain prospect of winning the reward. She decided to do away with Kālidāsa, got him killed, and went to the royal court to claim the reward. Kumāradāsa suspected foul play, because he was sure that none but Kālidāsa had the genius to complete the verse. When the courtesan was severely questioned under threat of punishment she confessed to all that happened. Kumāradāsa was grieved beyond consolation at the tragic death of his dear friend. The story is that he threw himself on the burning pyre when Kālidāsa's mortal remains were cremated and ended his own life. It is said that the place of cremation is still shown to tourists at Laṅkā. The curse given by the princess was somehow fulfilled.

The *Bhojaprabandha*, compiled by poet Ballālasena for king Bhoja, contains numerous stories of Kālidāsa's poetic genius in completing from the given line a verse, which skill he exercised not only for pleasure but also for helping poor Brahmins who had neither the ability nor the learning to recommend themselves for royal favour and gifts.

The imaginative stories and legends with which the name of Kālidāsa is surrounded in tradition imply the following details :

(i) Kālidāsa was born in a Brahmin family; he was an orphan; he had no education; learning and poetic genius came to him by a miracle, by the favour of goddess Kālī.

(ii) Kālidāsa came to be connected with a royal family, either by relation or by formal association.

(iii) Kālidāsa was a gifted poet; he would also amuse himself and give pleasure to others by playing intellectual games of poetrymaking.

(iv) He was generous in nature and helped poor Brahmins directly or through his patron-king.

(v) His private life was unsteady; he was given to pleasures of women and did not lead a precisely moral life.

### (3)

There are no means or evidence in existence to enable us to evaluate the deductions which the legends and popular stories yield. In the absence of real history and reliable records for varification of any personal detail of the poet's life, the only course open to us is to construct the literary personality of the poet and to see how far it is consistent with the picture the legends and stories give.

It must, however, be remembered that the literature of a writer is not his autobiography, nor even his biography and a record of traits of his character or actual happenings in his own life. It must also be acknowledged that the personal life of a writer and the literature he creates can, sometimes, be poles asunder. D H. Lawrence, for example, who gave a rude shock to the contemporary standards of morality by his novels of sex relations, was in reality a simple and straightforward person, almost ascetic in his personal life. Bernard Shaw whose tongue-slashing at the established order of society is notorious was a deep thinker and a vegetarian like an orthodox Indian Brahmin. On the contrary, Leo Tolstoy, who is hailed as a profound philosopher and a sage in the history of literature, led a different kind of private life, as some surprising details of his personal life revealed by later research show. Accepting both these literary principles it may still be conceded that a literary creation generally takes the colours of a writer's personality. The experience which

a writer chooses to present, the art-form which he imposes on the experience, the thoughts and ideas which take shape through his artistic picture, somehow reveal directly or indirectly the writer's personal predilections, his likes and dislikes, and the values of life he seems to accept and cherish. Milton said, 'A precious literary work is the life-blood of a master-spirit...'. The remark implies, at least, that a literary creation reflects, if not a writer in person, the writer's art-personality, some remarkable and possibly brilliant traits of the inner man. A search for such traits through the literary creations is likely to reveal, not the actual life of a writer but, at least, the image of his thought-life. This is the only purpose for which a comparative study of the legends about Kālidāsa's life and character and his literature is undertaken, although the legends and stories have no historical value and deserve to be dismissed as figments of popular fancy.

The details which relate to the time of Kālidāsa are evidently worthless. The list of nine brilliant jewels in the court of king Vikrama or Bhoja brings together poets and theoretical writers who belong to different centuries.<sup>7</sup> Bhoja lived in the 11th century A. D. and, in spite of a little uncertainty about Kālidāsa's date, Kālidāsa could not have been a contemporary of Bhoja to be the brightest jewel of his court. The relationship between Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti, assumed by another story,<sup>8</sup> has to be similarly dismissed as an historical anachronism.

There is a possibility that Kālidāsa's association with a royal family or a ruling king, which the legends relate, may have some basic truth. The subject of his three plays and of the epic *Raghuvamśa* is the life and personality of kings. The pictures in the epic are painted with the idealistic colours of myth and are modelled on the ancient legendary kings. But the royal heroes of his plays are drawn as contemporary models, and Kālidāsa shows not their legendary valour but their private love-life. The personal life of contemporary kings, their behaviour in the royal harem, their love-life, the women in the harem and their intrigues and rivalries, the etiquette of royal court and the code of courtly behaviour, men, women and officers of the king and the formal conventions of their conduct, are all presented with unerring accuracy and freshness, which suggests the poet's personal knowledge of and familiarity with royal life in private and in court. From the literary point of view Kālidāsa could be said to have created the form of a royal courtly comedy of love, or to have given the dramatic form popularity and prestige. It may be presumed, therefore, that Kālidāsa did have the opportunity of observing royal and court life first hand and from close quarters.

It does not appear improbable that Kālidāsa may have been more closely connected with royal life than a mere observer permitted in royal presence. It is commonly believed that Kālidāsa enjoyed royal patronage, that he was the court-poet (Rājakavi) of some king who had taken the title of Vikramāditya. Kālidāsa may perhaps have been more than an honoured poet of a royal court. The legendary

story describes him as the husband of a princess. It may not be true. But historical records prove that poets or learned Brahmins were in royal service as ministers or officers.<sup>9</sup> A reference in *Meghadūta* is worth investigating in this context. The Yakṣa praising the Cloud calls him as the '*prakṛti-puruṣa*' of Indra. The phrase is as striking as it is surprising. There is an opposition between the two words as the Sāṃkhya philosophy or even common knowledge would vouch : Prakṛti and Puruṣa are opposite concepts; one cannot be the other; so that the compound of the two words is not a case of apparent contradiction (*virodhābhāsa*) but of actual contradiction (*virodha*). How did Kālidāsa come to use such a contradictory phrase ? Considering Kālidāsa's perfect command of language, the coining must appear to be deliberate; and if so, the meaning of the compound expression must be determined from other than the philosophical source. It appears that the phrase has a political connotation. The word *prakṛti* denotes a king's minister, cabinet minister, or the subjects in the political context. *Puruṣa* has the sense of officer in Kālidāsa's own play.<sup>10</sup> *Prakṛti-Puruṣa* thus means 'a king's minister or officer'. Indra in the later mythology is a god of rain; and the cloud may be looked upon as a servant or representative of Indra whose duty is to distribute rain over the earth. There is poetry in this concept and an evidence of the flight of imagination. But this chief function of the cloud of showering rain-water is quite irrelevant, or at best incidental, in the theme of the *Meghadūta*. The peculiar phrase, therefore remains a literary puzzle. May we surmise that it is a projection of the poet's own psychology ? Perhaps, Kālidāsa himself was a '*prakṛti-puruṣa*', that is, a minister of a king, who in his capacity as a minister in charge of foreign affairs or as an ambassador, may have been sent out by his king on a political mission. He may have been required to stay away from his home and his beloved wife for a long time to carry out his mission. And the sight of the rain-cloud 'on the first day of Āṣāḍha' may have deeply stirred Kālidāsa's heart with tender memories of home and of love. The love-lyric *Meghadūta* may have been born in some such very personal circumstances. It is a surmise, an inference drawn from the writer's works. But it is tempting to believe that the lyric was inspired by an intensely moving personal experience. And then the puzzling phrase which is so unusual becomes clear. In describing the Cloud as the '*prakṛti-puruṣa*' Kālidāsa is imposing his own official position on the cloud, either deliberately or due to a psychological trick !

If Kālidāsa was closely connected with a king both as a poet and as the king's political officer, it follows that he must have been adept in contemporary lores and in political science; for without comprehensive learning and skill a high political office cannot normally be attained. Kālidāsa's own literature testifies to his comprehensive knowledge of different sciences and arts. Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gītā, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, as well as material sciences like Arthaśāstra and Rājanīti, are mentioned in his poetry and dramas with significant and skilled allusions,

Kālidāsa was exceptionally gifted; and yet he must have done his apprenticeship as a poet. Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and their grammar; study of prosody and poetics; the poet's grammatical similes which naturally come to the mind, the rhymes and alliterations in the 9th canto of *Raghuvamśa*, the Vedic Tristubh which Kaṇva uses to worship the sacrificial Fire, all these clever and skilled exercises in verse-composition; imbibing deep influences of ancient poets, particularly of the Ādi-kavi Vālmiki, as a guide to literary creations; deep study of Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas; perfect knowledge of the modes and conduct of love as outlined in the *Kāmasūtra* : these and such acquisitions can be legitimately inferred from the writings of Kālidāsa.

And so, in stead of believing the miracle that learning and poetic ability came to Kālidāsa suddenly through the blessing of a goddess, it is more reasonable to accept that Kālidāsa must have studied in some 'gurukula' or hermitage, of which he has given striking descriptions in his literature. It is possible that Kālidāsa was endowed with brilliant intellect so that he completed his formal education sooner than other pupils could do, like Kuśa and Lava for instance. Bhavabhūti describes a pupil Ātreya, who could not keep pace with the intellectual grasp of Kuśa and Lava, and who, therefore, left the Āśrama of Vālmiki and joined that of Agastī in order to complete her course in Vedānta philosophy.<sup>11</sup> It is said about the famous philosopher and social thinker Carlyle that he was very dull as a child; he could not articulate any words till he was three or four years old; and then he suddenly started speaking, using complete and accurate sentences like an intelligent adult. Such an exceptional happening may have occurred in Kālidāsa's own life. But when it is given the form of divine intercession and a miracle, one can understand it only as a symbol of hero-worship. The story of Vālmiki's poetic inspiration and the birth of Rāmāyaṇa comes in the same category. The miracle of reciting two full-length epics and a lyric in answer to a simple question must have, therefore, happened only in the mind of some dazzled admirer of Kālidāsa. The invented story looks like a charming effort of imagination to link up the three poems in a poetic connection; it is also an attempt to install a divine halo round the poet to extol his extra-ordinary creative powers. The poet's connection with Kālī is similarly a result of clever punning on the name.

The skill attributed to Kālidāsa in completing a verse from a given line, and his supposed association with courtesans, the two details from the legendary stories, have a curious connection with each other which is impossible to be imagined by any one not familiar with the old classical tradition. The courtesan of ancient India was a woman in a separate category of her own. Though born in a family and profession which compelled her to earn her living by selling her body, the ancient courtesan was a gifted woman, well educated and accomplished in fine arts. The contemporary elite (*vidagdha*) gathered in her luxurious residence or in public

assemblies where she was invited to be present to amuse themselves by discussions on poetry, sciences and arts or by musical sessions and dance exhibitions. These assemblies were known by the name of '*goṣṭhī*'. The *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana furnishes an interesting and suggestive description of such *goṣṭhīs*; Bāṇa mentions them in his personal account prefixed to his *Harṣacarita*. Among the forms of entertainment provided in these assemblies there were, besides the game of dice, such literary sports as *prahelikā*, *bindumatī* and *samasyāpūrti*,<sup>12</sup> in which the elite citizens and poets, as well as the courtesans, participated. Though lowly in birth the courtesans were highly educated and cultured, and that enabled them to mix naturally with the high-ranking intellectuals in society. The examples are Kālidāsa's Urvaśī and Śudraka's Vasantasenā. The odour of immoral life which the word courtesan or prostitute brings to a modern mind is, it will be seen, completely out of place in the ancient context. Further, these courtesans were not inextricably tied down to their low professional status. How otherwise could the marriage of Urvaśī and Purūravas, Vasantasenā and Cārudatta, Madanikā, and Śarvilaka have been possible? The fact that a king like Purūravas and Brahmin youths like Cārudatta and Śarvilaka married courtesans, *gaṇikās*, must be interpreted in the correct cultural light. When thus understood the prejudice against a courtesan, enforced by the later changed tradition, will be invalid. In the ancient society a courtesan had a distinctive place, and association with her was a kind of social get-together of educated, cultured and art-minded men and women on the level of art and intellectual exchange. So, even if the legend depicted Kālidāsa as associating himself with courtesans it cannot be taken as a bad reflection on his moral character; such an assumption would only betray stark ignorance of ancient social conditions and values.

Without, therefore, drawing any conclusions about Kālidāsa's moral character it may be assumed that Kālidāsa may have been a very prominent literary figure in the social *goṣṭhīs*. He may have a special skill in *samasyāpūrti*, and he may have helped many a Brahmin or half-baked poet by solving literary riddles for him. The generosity of mind attributed to him may have been possible due to his position in the royal court; but it also appears to be a trait of his mind and his character.

The gay and pleasure-loving attitude of the poet, which the stories imply, need not be objectionable, unless it is linked with the social morality of men and women, as some readers of Kālidāsa's literature mistakenly do. The denial of any immoral standards or values posed by Kālidāsa is not based, it must be told, on the respect, admiration or devotion which Kālidāsa's extra-ordinary literature, his unsurpassed art, engender. The fact is that there is no basis for so-called immorality or looseness of character and behaviour in Kālidāsa's writing. This poet who paints pictures of open and unrestricted love does not describe prohibited love. He describes with freedom of mind and art the loves of young people who get united in holy wedlock or of the husband and wife. His royal heroes are the social and political leaders of society



and stand for certain ideals. His heroines include young women from the innocent, bashful princess to the fearless daughter of Nature, and a daughter of a celestial person who could shame the tried ascetics by her severe austerities. Kālidāsa's women are devoted to their husbands and possess purity of character. In the love-inspired creation of Kālidāsa there are female companions who shower their selfless love on their friend; there are fathers like Himālaya and Kaṇva whose touching love for their children has a divine fragrance; and there are also children like Sarvadamana who would melt any one's heart with love. It is unthinkable to imagine that a poet who created this loving world of humanity had no private sense of morality and of moral virtue. It is wrong to interpret Kālidāsa's pictures of *śṛṅgāra* by the changing standards of later times or by imposing current ideas on old literary works. It is useless to read old masters by imagining ourselves to be defenders of current morality.

One more detail : The stories about Kālidāsa associate him with Ujjayinī and Kāśī. Kāśī or Vārāṇasī has been known as the centre of traditional learning from old days; it is not improbable that Kālidāsa had his education there. The Yakṣa in the *Meghadūta* particularly recommends to the Cloud to visit Ujjayinī, though the city does not lie on his chartered course of journey; the soft corner for Ujjayinī that Kālidāsa seems to have naturally suggests that he had a personal and private association with this city; Ujjayinī is very probably the birth-place or the work-place of Kālidāsa, as tradition also believes.

#### ( 4 )

Some other details of Kālidāsa's personality must now be collected from his writings. This is an attempt to construct the 'literary personality' of Kālidāsa.

(a) The poet's education, his acquisition of śāstric knowledge and his preparation for a literary career were referred to in the foregoing section. In the words of Mammata,<sup>13</sup> this is expertness or skill (*nipuṇatā*) which comes to a studious person by keen observation of the world and the people, śāstras and the poetic art. A few additional details could be filled in the picture. The system of education followed in the ancient 'gurukulas' does not appear to be one-sided. Study of grammar and the academic śāstras must naturally have received priority as the foundation of sound learning. But the other aspects of education, including the training of girls, do not seem to be neglected. Anasūyā diagnoses the physical ill condition of Śakuntalā as a result of love-sickness, without any personal knowledge of the matter but from her knowledge of the love-lorn young people described in histories and purāṇas.<sup>14</sup> The Brahmacārin in Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadatta* alludes to the cakravāka bird and other lovers described in Kāvya literature when he speaks about the tragic sorrow of Udayana.<sup>15</sup> It is evident, therefore, that poetry, historic and purāṇic story literature had also a due place in the academic syllabus at the centres of education. Another interesting reference occurs in the context of Nature's unexpected wedding gifts to

Śakuntalā. Śakuntalā's companions are confused for a moment by the wealth and variety of ornaments given by Nature. But they say, 'We will deck you properly with these ornaments with the help of our knowledge and practice of painting pictures'; and Śakuntalā is aware of the skill that her two companions have acquired in this art.<sup>16</sup> It appears that the girls received a special training and practice in the art of painting and also in the art of toilette and decoration. Bakulāvalikā, in *Mālavikāgnimitra*, is another girl who is expert in the art of decoration (*prasādhana-kalā*), and she says that she learnt this art from king Agnimitra.<sup>17</sup> It may be assumed, therefore, that girls received education along with boys at the *gurukula* or in a preceptor's hermitage, and the girls were particularly taught, with the basic courses, some useful fine arts. The royal children had special facilities to learn music, dance, histrionics (*abhinaya*) and the art of painting; it is clear from the *Mālavikāgnimitra* that renowned preceptors were specially employed in royal houses to teach these arts. Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta is a connoisseur of music, vocal and instrumental; and is himself expert in the art of painting. Education in fine arts and training in their critical appreciation appear to be a necessary part of ancient Indian education and culture. And so, the literary personality of Kālidāsa must be deemed to be not only rich in śāstric learning but also rich in artistic training. The allusions to music, dance and painting in Kālidāsa's writing do not appear to be 'bookish' but as coming from an expert. The musical allusions to 'peacock melody rising from the middle note'<sup>18</sup> and the 'song overflowing with scientific structure and emotion';<sup>19</sup> the allusion to the technical aspect of dance in 'branch-originated soft acting';<sup>20</sup> the background which Duṣyanta plans for the portrait of Śakuntalā,<sup>21</sup> and the pointed mention of the puffed spot on the canvas where Duṣyanta's tear had fallen and the spreading of pigment,<sup>22</sup> cannot be imagined to be the results of mere acute observation. It is probable that Kālidāsa really knew these arts. Aja mourning for Indumatī recalls that she was his 'beloved pupil in the practice of fine arts';<sup>23</sup> but the epic does not mention that Aja ever gave any lessons to Indumatī, as Udayana tutored Vāsavadattā to play on the lute. May we imagine that Kālidāsa's reference may have come from his sub-conscious mind and may have only a personal relevance? Psychologically it is just possible that a 'beloved pupil' may have become Kālidāsa's wife, or he may have taught some fine art to his wife turning her into a 'beloved pupil'! The point, of course, is that an expert knowledge of fine arts is a vital aspect of Kālidāsa's personality.

Śāstric erudition and instinctive love of art seem to have combined in the personality of Kālidāsa. This unique combination has bestowed a singular beauty on his literature. Bhavabhūti came to know, after writing one play, that śāstric erudition does not help literary creation;<sup>24</sup> and yet he could never help showing his learning. Jayadeva, the author of the *Prasanna-rāghava*, boasts of his ability to handle 'harsh logic' and the 'art of tender poetic skill' simultaneously.<sup>25</sup> But only a rare artist can achieve a creation which balances learning and art, so that his work has

the stamp of learning which does not deface his art, and his art does not become superficial for want of a solid foundation of knowledge. In the literary creations of Kālidāsa śāstric wisdom does not float on the surface like foam, but mingles with the delicious stream of his poetry; and since his creative structure is raised on unerring knowledge his art never becomes superficial. And so, the harmony of learning and instinctive art must be reckoned as a trait of Kālidāsa's literary personality.

(b) Another trait of Kālidāsa's personality is his deep sense of beauty. A poet is naturally expected to have a sense of beauty which common men lack. Kālidāsa's writing is so obviously beautiful, his scenes and visions, characters and actions, the natural ornaments of his language and the sweetness, lucidity and brilliance of his diction are so impressive that it would be redundant to speak of beauty as a special characteristic of the poet. What is meant is something different and unusual. A poet's sense of beauty is revealed, perhaps, in two ways. One is the appearance of unexpected but accurate content in the poetic description, which stands apart from the usual beauty of language and the embellishment of imagination. For example, Kālidāsa gives a beautiful picture of Kaṇva's *tapovana* and the surroundings of his hermitage, through the eyes of Duṣyanta. The familiar details of *āśrama* life and some others are very realistically presented here. But what Kālidāsa's eye specially notes are the small grains of wild rice dropped at the foot of trees from the nests of birds built in the branches above; small stones used for breaking *īṅgudī* fruits and greased with the fruit-oil; the narrow foot-paths sprinkled with drops of water dripping from the skirts of bark-garments as the hermitage girls fetched water in jars from the reservoirs.<sup>26</sup> The picture is not merely an example of minute observation; it is the poet's eye which discovers beauty in the unexpected, small details which may escape observation or poetic fancy. In the *Vikramorvaśīya*, Kālidāsa describes an evening scene in the royal palace. What he notes particularly is the old servants carrying lighted lamps in their hands and distributing them at the appointed places all over the palace apartments.<sup>27</sup> When the Cloud in *Meghadūta* will arrive at the Kailāsa mountain the celestial women living there will not be able to resist temptation of pricking the rain-cloud with the pointed ends of their bracelets, turning it into a shower-house, and bathing under the fresh water.<sup>28</sup> This unexpected touch is as delightful as the pleasure-bath is ticklish.

Another way in which a poet's irrepresible aesthetic sense manifests itself is as follows : The sense of beauty is absolutely spontaneous, and shows itself suddenly and unexpectedly, and sometimes on an unwanted occasion. Why is it that, confronted unexpectedly with a beautiful sight, a person bursts into an exclamation of joy ? A beautiful sight, a melodious stretch of sweet music, affects a person suddenly with a feeling of inexplicable yearning,<sup>29</sup> why ? Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta had this experience. He went to the hermitage of Kaṇva at the invitation of the hermits, to pay his tribute of reverence to the Sage. But in stead of meeting with matted and bearded

ascetics, as expected, he came across the hermitage girls each carrying a water-jar suitable in size to her delicate form and young age and watering the trees in the *āśrama*! The sight was as unexpected as it was breath-taking; for the girls were really beautiful. Duṣyanta, not a stranger to beauty in every possible form, had to admit to himself that the forest creepers had surpassed the garden creepers. He exclaimed spontaneously and with joy. 'Oh, what a sweet sight the girls present!' The song of Hamsapadikā moved Duṣyanta to his depths and he tried to explain his mysterious restlessness by the theory of previous birth.<sup>30</sup> Why Duṣyanta, even Purūras lost himself in watching a Vidyādhara girl playing with sand on a river-beach even though the touchstone of all beauty, Urvaśī, was close by his side!<sup>31</sup> Agnimitra is just a king; but when he stood watching the beautiful line of red lac-dye being painted on Mālavikā's fair tender foot he could not help imagining the foot as the new reddish foliage sprung on the tree of Madana whom Śiva had burnt to ashes.<sup>32</sup> There is an interesting anecdote about a professor. The professor while taking his class on a morning chanced to look out of an open window, and suddenly exclaimed, 'Gentlemen, the Spring is outside!'<sup>33</sup> He left his class, ran out and forgot to return to his class! Such a keen aesthetic sense, the effect of losing one's bearings by some heavenly fragrance,<sup>34</sup> or the ability to transport oneself into different world at the *diḍ-dā* ... .. *diḍ-dā* melody of a *sitar*,<sup>35</sup> betoken an impact of beauty different from conventional and channelled attitudes.

Such aesthetic sense is revealed, sometimes, when there is no occasion for it. A thief has bored a hole in the wall of Cārudatta's house and, securing an entry, has taken away the valuable ornaments Vasantasena had deposited with him in trust. This is indeed a grave occasion. One would think that the first thing that must be done was to institute an immediate search for the thief. But Cārudatta stood before the wall, lost in admiration, appreciating the beautiful pattern of the hole carved in the wall!<sup>36</sup> One can see that this aesthetic sense is of a different category. The 'gem of reunion which Purūras was fortunate to get, which brought his lost Urvaśī back to him, and which he was guarding with his life, has been snatched away by a vulture mistaking it for a bloody piece of meat. But before aiming an arrow at the vulture, moving in circles high above in the sky, with the gem in its beak, Purūras stands gazing in wonder at the predatory bird, creating circles of red fire, comparing them to the red circles made by a moving burning torch, and fancying the red gem held in the beak and emitting lustrous rays as an ear-ornament of red Aśoka blossom worn in the ear by the lady of Direction! The black vulture and the red gem in its beak remind Purūras of Mars in the vicinity of a dark cloud!<sup>37</sup>

Such perception of beauty in unusual places and at unusual moments may appear lunatic; but it must be remembered that there is no inconsistency in it; the aesthetic sense follows its own logic. Purūras is not prepared to accept that Urvaśī was a creation of the sage Nārāyaṇa whose finer senses were dulled by Vedic studies and

who had absolutely no interest in the charm of material things. If the logical principle is 'like cause like effect', Urvaśi must have been fashioned from Moon, Spring season or the god of love Madana, says Purūravas.<sup>38</sup> The incomparable beauty of Śakuntalā and the equally wonderful story of her birth from a celestial nymph satisfy the logical mind of Duṣyanta, because he is convinced that lightning which trembles with lustre cannot spring from the surface of earth.<sup>39</sup> Duṣyanta further thinks that the Creator god must have used an unusual process when he created Śakuntalā. He must have first drawn a picture of the most beautiful girl, improving it continuously till it was absolutely perfect; and when he was sure that it was perfect and flawless, then he must have breathed life into the picture and given to the world as Śakuntalā!<sup>40</sup>

It is necessary to understand this unusual sense of beauty that Kālidāsa shows. Without such an understanding one would fail to understand Kālidāsa's heroes, because the poet endows them with this sense; and then one would equally fail to understand Kālidāsa and his art. This sense of beauty has a close association with love. Both beauty and love, in their intensity, have a profound impact on some souls making them lose themselves. This is not a question of traditional or current morality. The failure to understand this is to miss the art of Kālidāsa. The miserable loss will be our own. For, the unusual sense of beauty is a very vital trait of Kālidāsa's personality.

(c) The third trait of Kālidāsa's personality is his feeling for nature. Nature has a great and very important place in Kālidāsa's literature. *Rtusamhāra* is, in a way, the story of nature's life. In the first part of his *Meghadūta* the numerous and varied pictures of nature throw into relief Yakṣa's deep feeling of love in separation; in the second part nature serves as a golden frame to the figure of Yakṣa's wife, pale and emaciated by the tortures of separated love. Kālidāsa describes, in his *Kumārasambhava* and *Raghuvamśa*, different rivers and mountains, creepers and trees, birds and beasts, with colourful imagination and striking realism; he also presents the Spring in its full grandeur.<sup>41</sup> Nature is always present in his dramas too; and in *Śakuntalā* nature seems to have assumed the vitality and dignity of a character. The conventional and mechanical manner in which nature descriptions occur in later Sanskrit poetry is not to be found in Kālidāsa's writing. One gets the impression that Kālidāsa did not look at nature through books or a composer's fancy but lived in close contact with nature. The poet who described the long journey of the cloud from Rāmagiri or Ramtek to Alakā with wonderful pictures of nature, who gave us a tour of the whole of India through Raghu's triumphant military campaign, who presented a version of Bhārata and of its water-drenched, fruit-loaded and harvest-green lands through the eyes of Rām travelling in the Puṣpaka aerial car from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā,<sup>42</sup> could hardly be imagined to have been looking at nature through the window of his apartment. One must assume that either Kālidāsa travelled extensively observing different

spots and places, flora and fauna, with loving observation, or he had the faculty, like Shakespeare, to learn and retain in memory all the information and bits of knowledge he picked up in his meeting with travellers from all over India. It is obvious from his literature that Kālidāsa was remarkably knowledgeable (*bahusruta*); and it is also true that his observation is minute, accurate and prone to beauty.

It is possible to find three or four rising levels in Kālidāsa's treatment of nature. The objective picture of nature, which result from keen and loving observation, are profusely scattered throughout his literature. But when a poet realises that nature is not merely an object to be looked at and admired but has an emotional life of its own, sometimes parallel to, sometimes contrary to, the human life, there is a distinct change in the poet's attitude to nature. The poet then speaks of emotional correspondence between nature and man by the process of description, as in the *Rtusamhāra*, or touching it through rhetorical figures like simile and poetic fancy. One discovers a reflection of human emotion in nature or the changes in nature seem to be an image of human emotion. In Kālidāsa's *Rativilāpa*, *Ajavilāpa*, in the lament of Purūravas over the lost Urvaśī, in Śakuntalā's departure from her father's *tapovana*, or in the word-pictures drawn by Yakṣa, we find this emotional association between man and nature. In such an attitude of mind, it is not surprising if the mournful lover discovered traces of the image or existence of his beloved in nature. Purūravas feels that nature has accorded him a reception worthy of a king;<sup>43</sup> king Dilīpa is also given a royal reception by nature;<sup>44</sup> Purūravas sees the image or some definite traits of Urvaśī in the swan, peacock or river;<sup>45</sup> this is indeed a merger of man's and nature's life. Once the poetic mind grasps this reflective identity of man and nature, it is but a natural step to imagine that it is not man who follows nature but that nature is imitating man. Purūrava's charge that the swan has stolen the graceful gait of Urvaśī<sup>46</sup> must be understood from this angle. This assumed identity between man and nature can be real for a poet; and in this next stage nature becomes a distinctive personality with a life of her own. Nature in the fourth act of the *Śakuntala* is such a live personality. And, therefore, when Śakuntalā is preparing to leave her father's hermitage to go to her husband's palace Nature showers a wealth of wedding gifts on her; the cuckoo sweetly sounds the hour of departure; wind blows gently and with fragrance.<sup>47</sup> The actual moment of departure is more intensely moving. The female deer let their mouthfuls drop from their open mouth, like children incapable yet to understand a grave situation and enjoying themselves in food and drink, suddenly becoming aware of something serious happening and then forgetting their food and gazing with open mouth; the peacocks stop dancing, like little grown-up children stopping their play and looking dumbly at the married girl leaving the house; and the silent creepers shed their tears of drooping leaves, like elderly women moved by the separation of the girl, standing back to the wall and shedding tears with their faces hidden behind their skirts.<sup>48</sup> Kālidāsa's treatment of nature progresses from charming objective pictures to the creation of a living, loving and moving

personality of nature. It is a distinct, classic feature of his literature and art. It must, therefore, be regarded as a trait of his literary personality.

(d) The fourth trait of Kālidāsa's personality is his cheerful and playful outlook on life. This outlook is clearly reflected in his description of life, love and the joys of family life. But a better representative of this outlook is Kālidāsa's sense of humour. Considering that many a learned man and even an artist may lack humour, this trait of Kālidāsa is apt to be very engaging. The usual vehicle for humour in Sanskrit literature is the character of the Vidūṣaka or the clown. His humour based on his silly remarks and his greed for food has become the stock-in-trade of the later Sanskrit drama; it is mechanical and lifeless. But there is a possibility that when Kālidāsa used these modes there may have been a freshness about them, for the simple reason that Kālidāsa is a very early writer. However, it is important to note that Kālidāsa's humour is not confined to conventional gadgets. Kālidāsa discovers something to laugh at or to provoke an amusing smile even in situations of family warmth or in an unexpected aspect of situation. Such humour is delightful. It does not belong exclusively to a particular character; it can come from any one who can look playfully at life; and it takes shape the moment an amusing detail is perceived. Freed from the grave charge of the theft of a royal gem, rewarded unexpectedly by Duṣyanta, the fisherman in *Śākuntala* who was threatened with life by the police men breathes now free air. He then asks the police officers who had made fun of his trade, 'Sir, what do you think of my profession now?' The police men also turn round about; the fisherman whom they were planning to send to the gallows or throw before a vulture becomes to them now 'the lord of fishermen'; and when he offers to share the reward with them, 'the police men embrace him as a dear friend and all move to a liquor shop to celebrate and seal the new friendship!<sup>49</sup> 'Who would not be amused by the situation and revelation of human nature? Priyamvadā is, true to her name, a delightful talker. When Śākuntalā complains that she had fastened her upper bark-garment with a tight knot restricting her movements, Priyamvadā rejoins, 'Why do you blame me? Blame your own bursting youth!<sup>50</sup> Noticing Śākuntalā gazing at the creeper Vanajyotsnā and lost in herself, Priyamvadā invites the attention of Anasūyā and remarks in mischief, 'Do you know what Śākuntalā is thinking of? The creeper has been united with a worthy husband; when will I get such a suitable husband?'<sup>51</sup> And the same Priyamvadā noticing the inscription on the singnet-ring offered by Duṣyanta to redeem Śākuntalā of her supposed debt, and recognising that the delightful stranger is king Duṣyanta himself, says to Śākuntalā with mock courtesy, 'My dear, your debt has been paid by this worthy gentleman.... one may say, by His the Majesty King Duṣyanta himself.'<sup>52</sup> The truth is that even Duṣyanta does not escape the amusing thrust of this delightful girl.

Such a delightful humour is sometimes manifested quite innocently and unconsciously, the speaker not being aware that he is saying something vastly amusing.

Duṣyanta recognises in Sarvadamana his own son born of Śakuntalā. He wants to pull the boy in his embrace and fondle him. But the little Sarvadamana complains to his mother, 'Mother see, this stranger is embracing me calling me his son !' Even when he is assured that the relationship is true, Sarvadamana tells indignantly to Duṣyanta, 'No, Duṣyanta is my father, not you!'<sup>53</sup> Who will not be moved by this delicious humour arising out of dramatic irony and innocence ?

The humorous thrusts of the Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa at the royal heroes are not merely fun-producing; the bite, ridicule and fun in the remarks of the Vidūṣakas are a revealing searchlight on the private life of ancient kings. The Vidūṣaka in his motley dress appears to be a real critic of life.

But one can always make fun of others. The crucial test of humour is the ability to laugh at oneself; and it requires a real playfulness and a broad mind. It appears that Kālidāsa had this ability. But as the Sanskrit writers rarely speak about themselves it is difficult to connect any humorous piece personally with an author. The evidence would be, if any, only indirect. The Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa while poking fun at others do not fail to ridicule themselves. Gautama and Mānavaka admit easily that they resemble monkies.<sup>54</sup> Mānavaka asks Purūravas, 'Is Urvaśī as incomparable in beauty as I am in ugliness ?'<sup>55</sup> The ability to laugh at oneself is seen at its delicious best in Śiva of the *Kumārasambhava*. Śiva comes disguised as a Brahmin student in order to test Pārvatī's love and devotion; and in speaking to her the fun he makes of the appearance of Śiva, his dress or rather lack of it and his ornaments, his habitat, his riding a bullock, and the laughter it would evoke when Pārvatī would ride behind him in the wedding procession, has no comparison. Śiva is the favourite deity of Kālidāsa. When we find Śiva here ridiculing himself, as no one else could have done, we feel that Kālidāsa would never have hesitated to laugh at himself. Such a free humorous attitude, a real playfulness and the largeness of heart that goes with it must, therefore, be regarded as the genuine traits of Kālidāsa's personality.

(5)

The image that Kālidāsa's literature creates is that of a poet rich in intellectual equipment, exceedingly sensitive to beauty in all forms, a lover of life, cheerful and playful in his outlook. At the same time it appears that Kālidāsa prefers to close his eyes at the dreadful and bitter in life. It is possible that royal patronage, comfortable and happy life, naturally pleasant temperament and such other factors may have limited his experiences, shutting off the furious and the dreadful in life and in nature from him. Whether the cause is environmental or mental, it is true nevertheless that Kālidāsa is prone to softness and tranquillity.

The descriptions of rivers, mountains and other objects in nature in Kālidāsa's literature are charming and pleasant. A mountain is a rest resort in the *Meghadūta*.



When the Cloud comes to rest on a mountain the poet visualises the Lady Earth, the mountain being her round breast.<sup>56</sup> A river appears to the poet's eye in the form of Urvaśī : The warbling row of birds moving on the river's surface is the tinkling girdle; the foam floating on certain spots is the white garment loosened in the confusion of love.<sup>57</sup> The imagery occurs in the *Meghadūta* too, with the difference that a branch of bamboo bending down and touching the water becomes the hand gathering the loose garment of foam.<sup>58</sup> Granting that these images appear to the mind anguished by separation in love, the poet's predilection for the pleasant and the tender is yet apparent. The impression the description of the Himālaya in the *Kumār-āsaṃbhava* creates is that of an object full of marvel and celestial. The mind is not awe-struck or thrilled by the tall precipices of the Himālaya, its grandeur and breath-taking vastness, its snow-capped peaks thrust into the heart of the sky; in stead, it entices us by its 'divine-souled' form and as the 'source of innumerable jewels'.<sup>59</sup> Bhavabhūti, on the contrary, sees the terrifying torrents of water cascading down from mountaintops, the clash of rivers and the mountain-like waves rising up from them, and he hears the angry music thundering from the clash of water currents.<sup>60</sup>

Kālidāsa describes the military campaign of Raghu and the hunting expedition of Daśaratha. But the march of Raghu and his army is like a pleasure tour; climbing a mountain and crossing its top is like a dalliance of love.<sup>61</sup> The peacock with its plumage spread reminds Daśaratha of the tresses of Kaikeyī, interwoven with many-coloured flowers and loosened in the sport of love; the sight of a deer is a vision of the fawn-eyed beloved.<sup>62</sup> Although the theme of the *Raghuvamśa* was quite favourable to the creation of the heroic sentiment (*vīra-rasa*) Kālidāsa prefers the mellowness of love and the delight of the marvellous. Bhavabhūti, again, creates a state of world-destruction even in the fight of two children, Lava and Candraketu.<sup>63</sup>

The cemetery grounds and the fierce goddess Cāmundā which Bhavabhūti describes create awe and terror. In the picture of Aghoraghaṇṭa the feelings of devotion and fury (*bhakti-bhāva*, *raudra-rasa*) are intermingled.<sup>64</sup> Kālidāsa describes the evening worship in the Mahākāla temple; but along with the furious form of Śiva in the *śaṅḍava* dance he likes to place the figure of Bhavānī keeping her eyes closed in fear.<sup>65</sup>

Bhavabhūti has drawn a picture of young students in the hermitage of Vālmīki in his *Uttara-rāma-carita*. These boys, in their private conversation, make fun of Vasiṣṭha who has arrived as an honoured guest. They discuss the menu arranged by their preceptor for feeding the guests. On the day of an unexpected holiday, when lessons are stopped in honour of the guests, the boys romp about the hermitage grounds in noisy abandon; their curiosity is terribly roused by an animal, 'horse', whom they had never seen; they discuss the animal with vigorous argument; and the moment they sight a band of armed soldiers they run away with the fleetness of deer.<sup>66</sup> Kālidāsa's picture of Kaṇva's hermitage is different. Here there are industrious ascetics; confident deer are grazing without fear on the green grass; smoke

of ghee is rising up from the sacrificial altars; the narrow footpaths are marked with drops of water fetched from reservoirs; wet bark-garments are suspended from the branches of trees; grains of wild rice dropped from bird-nests have collected at the foot of some trees; small stones besmeared with *ingudi*-oil are to be seen here and there.<sup>67</sup> The usual sounds are those of the recitation of Vedic mantras during the performance of the daily rituals, or the mild conversation of the hermitage girls watering the creepers and trees. Dust lifted up in clouds by the hooves of Duṣyanta's horses or the wild confusion created by an elephant frightened by the sight of Duṣyanta's chariot,<sup>68</sup> are occurrences of the moment, accidents that happen once in a while. The pupils also are like their teachers, thoughtful and sober. On the whole, therefore, the governing note of the āśrama is tranquillity.<sup>69</sup>

The comparison between the two poets is not intended to suggest the relative poetic merit of one or the other. It is significant only for understanding the difference in outlook, temperament and mental attitude between the two.

Describing the background which he intends to paint for the portrait of Śakuntalā Duṣyanta says :<sup>70</sup>

'I will draw the river Mālinī. On its sandy beach there will be a pair of swans reclining closely. All around will be the holy slopes of the Himālaya, with deer squatting on them. Bark-garments hanging down from the branch of a tree (will be shown) and under the tree I will paint a doe scratching her left eye on the tip of a black antelope's horn.'

Duṣyanta's concept of the picture very probably indicates the mental frame of Kālidāsa himself. The description, of course, shows the appreciative, artistic and aesthetic attitude of Kālidāsa. But there are indications also of the preferences of his mind and heart. There is love, symbolised by the pair of swans, the deer and the doe, a love not verbal but instinctive and filled with mutual trust. The river Mālinī and the Himālaya signify the feeling for holiness and grandeur. And a profound, wordless tranquillity which envelopes life is the keynote of the picture. The doe is scratching her eye on the antelope's horn-tip. Even the slightest movement of the antelope's neck would pierce the doe's eye. That this does not happen and the female is not injured is as much due to their mutual trust as it is due to the nature of the atmosphere from which any sense of fear or the possibility of danger to the life of the innocent, loving animals has been completely removed. Trust and peace rule the atmosphere.

So, holiness and certainty of divine presence, love blossoming through mutual trust, and peace and tranquillity covering consciousness like a silken cloak : these are qualities that Kālidāsa seems to like of life. He does not want noisy confusion, turbulence or violent conflict. These preferences seem to be a striking trait of Kālidāsa's personality. They indicate, perhaps, a limitation also of the literary and artistic personality of this great poet.

## NOTES

- 1 *Kāvyaaprakāśa*, I.2 : 'काव्यं यशसे...'
- 2 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, prologue Read :  
 पारिपार्थिकः — प्रथितयशसां भास-कविपुत्र-सौमिल्लाकादीनां प्रबन्धान् अतिक्रम्य वर्तमानकवेः कालि-  
 दासस्य क्रियाभिर्मां द्रष्टुं कथं परिषदो बहुमानः ।  
 सूत्रधारः — अये विवेकविश्रान्तमभिहितम् । पश्य  
 पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वम् न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवयम् ।  
 सन्तः परीक्ष्यान्यतरद् भजन्ते मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥ १.२
- 3 *Raghuvamśa*, I.3 : 'मन्दः कवियशःप्रार्थी...'
- 4 *Ibid.* II.57 : 'किमप्यहिंस्यस्तव चेन्मतोऽहं यशःशरीरे भव मे दयालुः ।'
- 5 Cf. *Gīta-Govinda*, I.3 :  
 यदि हरिस्मरणे सरसं मनो यदि विलासकलासु कुतूहलम् ।  
 मधुरकोमलकान्तपदावलीं शृणु तदा जयदेवसरस्वतीम् ॥
- 6 Cf. 'यस्याश्चोरः चिकुरनिकरः कर्णपूरो मयूरः  
 भासो हासः कविकुलगुरुः कालिदासो विलासः ।  
 हर्षो हर्षो हृदयवसतिः पञ्चबाणस्तु बाणः  
 केषां नैषा कथय कविताकामिनी कौतुकाय ॥
- 7 *Prasanna-rāghava*, I 22; also *Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍārā*, under सामान्यकविप्रशंसा, no. 68.  
 धन्वन्तरिक्षपणकामरसिंहशङ्कुवेतालभट्टघटखर्परकालिदासाः ।  
 ख्यातो बराहमहिरो नृपतेः सभायां रत्नानि वै वरश्चिर्नव विक्रमस्य ॥  
*Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍārā*, under सामान्यकविप्रशंसा, No. 67, *Jyotirvidābharaṇa*, 22.10.
- 8 The story is that Bhavabhūti read his *Uttara-rāma-carita* to Kālidāsa, who advised him to take one *anusvāra* out from the verse, I.12, रात्रिरेवं व्यरंसीत् emended to रात्रिरेव... See, my URC. Introduction, p. 26.
- 9 Rājasekhara, the author of *Kāvyaṁīmāṁsā*, held the post of a royal priest and Viśvanātha, the author of *Sāhityadarpaṇa* describes himself as 'सान्धिविग्रहिक-महापात्र...'
- 10 Cf. Duṣyanta's statement, राज्ञः परिग्रहोऽयमिति राजपुरुषं मामवगच्छथ ।' *Śakuntala*, I.29.<sup>3-4</sup>
- 11 Cf. *Uttara-rāma-carita*, act II, Viṣkambhaka.
- 12 See MM. Dr. Kane's notes to his edition of the *Harṣacarita* ch. 1, for the meaning of these literary terms.
- 13 *Kāvyaaprakāśa*, I.3 :  
 शक्तिर्निपुणता लोकशास्त्रकाव्यायवेक्षणात् ।  
 काव्यज्ञशिक्षयाभ्यास इति हेतुस्तदुद्भवम् ॥
- 14 *Śakuntala*, III.8.<sup>12-13</sup> Anasūyā says : हला शकुन्तले, अनभ्यन्तरे खलु आवां मदनगतस्य वृत्तान्त-  
 स्य । किन्तु यादृशी इतिहासनिबन्धेषु कामयमानानामवस्था श्रूयते तादृशी तव पश्यामि ।
- 15 *Svapnavāsavadatta*, I-13 : नैवेदानीं तादृशाश्चक्रवाका ।  
 नैवायन्ये स्त्रीविशेषैर्वियुक्ताः ॥

- 16 *Śakuntala*, IV.5.<sup>9-10</sup> सख्यौ-अये, अनुपभुक्तभूषणोऽयं जनः । चित्रकर्मपरिचयेन अङ्गेषु ते आभरण-  
विनियोगं कुर्वः । शकुन्तला-जाने वां नैपुण्यम् ।
- 17 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, act III. Read :  
बकुलावलिका-अपि रोचते तेऽयं चरणरागरेखाविन्यासः ।  
मालविका-आत्मनश्चरणगत इति लज्जे एनं प्रशंसितुम् । कथय केन प्रसाधनकलायामभिविनीतासि ।  
बकुलावलिका-अत्र खलु भर्तुः शिष्यास्मि ।
- 18 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I.21. निहादिन्युपहितमध्यमस्वरोत्था ।  
मायूरी मदयति मार्जना मनांसि ॥
- 19 *Śakuntala*, V. 'अहो रागपरिवाहिणी गीतिः ।', *Dusyanta's* remark on hearing his queen *Hamsapadikā* singing.
- 20 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, II.8 : 'शाखायोनिः सृदुः अभिनयः'
- 21 *Śakuntala*, VI.17. The verse is quoted further in full : see note no. 70.
- 22 *Ibid.* VI.15 : स्विन्नाङ्गुलिविनिवेशो रेखाप्रान्तेषु दृश्यते मलिनः ।  
अथ च कपोलपतितं दृश्यमिदं वर्णिकोच्छ्वासात् ॥
- 23 *Raghuvansī*, VIII.67 : गृहिणी सचिवः सखी मिथः प्रियशिष्या ललिते कलाविधौ ।
- 24 *Mālatīmādhava*, I.7 : यद् वेदाध्ययनं तथोपनिषदां सांख्यस्य योगस्य च । ज्ञानं तत् कथनेन किं, न  
हि ततः कश्चिद् गुणो नाटके ॥
- 25 *Prasannarāghava*, I.18ab :  
येषां कोमलकाव्यकौशलकलालौलावती भारती  
तेषां कर्कशतर्कवक्त्रचनोद्गारेऽपि किं हीयते ।
- 26 *Śakuntala*, I.14.
- 27 *Vikramorvaśīya*, III.2cd :  
आचारप्रयतः सपुष्पबलिषु स्थानेषु चार्चिष्मतीः  
सन्ध्यामङ्गलदोषिका विभजते शुद्धान्तवृद्धाजनः ॥
- 28 *Pūrva-megha*, verse 64 :  
तत्रावश्यं बलयकुलिशोद्घट्टनोदगीर्णतोयं  
नेष्यन्ति त्वां सुरयुवतयो यन्त्रधारागृहत्वम् ।
- 29 *Śakuntala*, V.2ab :  
रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुरांश्च निशम्य शब्दान्  
पथैस्तुकोभवति यत् सुखितोऽपि जन्तुः ।
- 30 *Ibid.* V. 2cd :  
तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वं  
भावस्थिराणि जननान्तररौहृदानि ॥
- 31 The incident is reported in *Vikramorvaśīya*, act IV, *praveśaka*.
- 32 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, III.11 : 'प्रथमामिव पल्लवप्रसूतिं हरदम्बस्य मनोभवदुसस्य ॥'

33. I do not now recollect the exact source of the book where I read it.
34. Cf. the story of Kapiñjala in Bana's *Kādambarī*.
35. I am referring to a beautiful Marāṭhī poem, *Sātūrīchē Bol*, by the herald of modern Marāṭhī poetry, Keshava-suta (1866-1905 A.D.).
36. *Myechakatika*, III. 'अहो दर्शनीयोऽयं संधिः ।' and verse 22 that follows.
37. *Vikramorvaiśya*, V.2, 3, 4.
38. *Ibid.* I.10.
39. *Sākuntala*, I.25.
40. *Ibid.* II.9.
41. *Rtusamhara*, canto 6; *Raghuvamśa*, IX.26-48; *Kumārasambhava*, III.24-42.
42. The references in due order are to *Meghadūta*, first half, verses 13-66; *Alakā* is described in the second half, vv. 1-14; *Raghuvamśa*; IV. 27-84; XIII. 2-67.
43. *Vikramorvaiśya*, IV. 13.
44. *Raghuvamśa*, II. 9-14.
45. Cf. *Vikramorvaiśya*, IV. 17, 22, 32, 33, 52 etc.
46. *Ibid.* IV.33
47. *Sākuntala*, IV. 5, 10, 11
48. *Ibid.* IV. 12 : उगलिअ-दब्भ-कवला मिआ परिच्चत्त-णच्चणा मोरा ।  
ओसरिअ-पंडु-पत्ता मुअंति अस्सणि विअ लदाओ ॥
49. *Ibid.*, act VI, *praveśaka*.
50. *Ibid.*, act I : शकुन्तला-सखि अनसूये, अतिपिनद्धेन वल्कलेन प्रियंवदया नियन्त्रितास्मि । शिथिलय तावदेतत् ।...प्रियंवदा-(सहासम्) अत्र पयोधरविस्तारयितृकम् धात्मनो यौवनमुपालभस्व । मां किमुपालभसे ।
51. *Ibid.*, act I : जानासि किंनिमित्तं शकुन्तला वनज्योत्स्नामतिमात्रं पश्यतीति ।...यथा वनज्योत्स्ना अनुरूपेण पादपेन संगता, अपि नाम एवम् अहमपि आत्मनः अनुरूपं वरं लभेय इति ।
52. *Ibid.*, act I : प्रियंवदा-(किंचिद् विहस्य) हला शकुन्तले, मोचितासि अनुकम्पिना आर्येण, अथवा महाराजेन । गच्छ इदानीम् ।
53. *Ibid.*, act VII : 'मातः, एष कोऽपि पुरुषो मां पुत्र इति आलिङ्गति ।'....  
'मम खलु तातो दुष्यन्तः, न त्वम् ।'
54. Cf. 'साधु रे पिङ्गलवानर साधु । सुष्ठु परित्रातस्त्वया सपक्षः ।'  
Gautama in *Mālavikāgnimitra*, IV; 'राजा-वत्स, इतस्तथ पितुः प्रियसखं ब्राह्मणम् अशङ्कितो वन्दस्व । विदूषकः-किमिति शङ्किष्यते । ननु आश्रमवासपरिचित एव शाखागुणः ।' Māpavaka in *Vikramorvaiśya*, act V.
55. *Vikramorvaiśya*, II : 'किं तत्रभवती उर्वशी अद्वितीया रूपेण, अहमिष विरूपतया ।'
56. *Pūrva-megha*, v. 18.
57. *Vikramorvaiśya*, IV. 52
58. *Meghadūta*, first half, vv. 29, 44.
59. *Kumārasambhava*, I.1 ('देवतात्मा'), 3 ('अनन्तरत्नप्रभव').
60. Cf. *Uttara-rāma-carita* II.20, 3.
61. *Raghuvamśa*, IV.51, 52.
62. *Ibid.*, IX.58, 67.

63 *Uttara-rāma-carita*, V. 6, 9, 13, 14.

64 *Mālatīmādhava*, V. 13-19; 22-23, 25 etc.

65 *Pūrva-megha*, v. 39.

66 *Uttara-rāma-carita*, IV. *Mīra-viṣkaṇbhaka*; v. 26 and ff.

67 *Sākuntala* I.14-15.

68 *Ibid.*, I. 31-32, and ff.

69 *Ibid.*, cf. 'गुरुशिष्ये गुरुसमे' in VI.9; 'शान्तमिदमाश्रमपदम्' in I.16; also 'शमप्रधानेषु तपोव्रतेषु' in II.7.

70 *Ibid.*, VI.17

कार्या सैकतलीनहंसमिथुना स्रोतोवहा मालिनो  
पादास्तामभितो निषण्णहरिणा गौरीगुरोः पावनाः ।  
शाखालम्बितवल्कलस्य च तरोर्निर्मातुमिच्छाम्यधः  
शृङ्गे कृष्णमुगस्य वामनयनं कण्ठ्यमानां मृगीम् ॥

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## 4 WORLD OF THOUGHT

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(1)

A writer is bound to express or suggest a number of thoughts and ideas on different subjects and different aspects of life. It need not be supposed that they are always his personal thoughts or opinions; because a writer can, sometimes, be purely objective and may be expressing the thoughts of the particular character he has created and he may be trying only to be true to life. However, it is equally possible to conjecture from the writer's characters, their thoughts and actions, how his mind works, what thoughts and ideas he appears to prefer, his outlook on life and the values he accepts; in other words, the thoughts expressed by a writer are a clue to his 'philosophy of life'.

Some of the thoughts are related to values of life; but some others may be contemporary ideas only. The former may have no relation to particular time or circumstances and may express timeless verities. The latter are circumscribed by the times in which the writer lived; and in that case the date of the writer becomes an important factor in order to understand the thoughts in their proper context. The date of Kālidāsa is uncertain; but the researchers so far have boiled down to two possibilities : Kālidāsa may either be regarded as a contemporary of king Agnimitra of the Śuṅga dynasty and, as such belongs to the first century B. C., or a contemporary of Gupta and Vākātaka kings and belongs to the third or the fourth century A. D.<sup>1</sup> Wide as the gap may appear, it does not pose a serious problem from the political angle. For, monarchical rule is the common aspect of ancient Indian history; and though the kings and their dynasties changed the political life continued in much the same way, and people were accustomed to the monarchical form of government.

It is when we look at society from the point of view of religion and philosophy that the changed outlook becomes important. The history of the ancient world testifies to social changes, sometimes overhauling changes in the life of a society, that religion and philosophy have wrought. There are possibly signs of such social changes in the period under consideration, and the literature of Kālidāsa reflects them unconsciously.

The work of composing and collecting together into unified forms of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gīta, the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa and some Purāṇas, which represent the wealth of ancient Indian religion, philosophy and literature, was completed by this time. The philosophy of life and of life beyond which the Upaniṣads teach was

widely spread among the people influencing the modes of their living. The horizons of scientific thinking were enlarging; and it was becoming increasingly necessary to codify all this diverse knowledge and preserve it in its essential principles in a form easy for memorising. In other words, it was the time for *sūtra* works and their commentaries extended to all branches of scientific thought. This was a period of striking intellectual activity.

As a matter of fact, the religious philosophy promulgated by the Vedic literature had permeated down to the life of the people and could have sunk its roots deeper still. Time had moved so far ahead. That this did not actually happen may be partially due to political rivalries and unsteady governments that this period in history witnessed. But the major cause appears to be the rise of new religions, like the Buddha and the Jain, which broke away from the Vedic tradition. There is no doubt that the thoughts of Buddha and the way of life he taught had deeply touched the mind of common men and had influenced some intellectuals of the time. During the period from the first century B. C. to the first-second century A. D. some ruling kings of North India had embraced Buddhist religion, giving it thus the prestige of political authority. The old religion had naturally to face this challenge. The period of time, therefore, is mainly that of conflict and transition; and it is with these times that Kālidāsa seems to be connected. A predecessor or a senior contemporary of Kālidāsa, Aśvaghoṣa (1st cent between 50 B. C. & 50. A. D.) who was a Brahmin-turned-Buddhist wrote some philosophical works on the Buddhistic doctrines and also composed Sanskrit epics, *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*, to teach the life and philosophy of Buddha, to carry the new message to the heart of the people through the alluring medium of literary art. The great need of the times was the coming on the horizon of a writer who would hold the attention of the people and who would champion the cause of the old religion and philosophy and recapture the glory of the ancient Vedic tradition.

The literature of Kālidāsa fulfilled this need indirectly. 'Indirectly', for two obvious reasons : Kālidāsa never wrote anything to propagate any particular philosophy or religious creed, as Aśvaghoṣa did. He was an artist to his finger-tips, and would not permit any *upadeśa* to swallow his art presentation. The opinion, therefore, expressed by a scholar,<sup>2</sup> that Kālidāsa's *Śakuntala* is an answer of the Brahmanical Culture to the Buddhist religion, is exaggerated and misleading. Kālidāsa is not a philosopher like the Upaniṣadic thinkers or like Śaṅkarācārya of the later period. He does not hold a brief for any particular opinion, has no personal axe to grind, but strictly adheres to his role as an artist. There is another reason also. Controversies and taking sides apart, Kālidāsa does not even invite attention through his characters to possible faults in the current religious behaviour of the people and to precepts that have lost validity of the context. A Śūdra, Śaṁbuka, practised penance



permissible only to Brahmins. This was a violation of the Vedic code. It was supposed to result in the untimely death of a Brahmin boy. The Brahmin came complaining to Rāma demanding justice. Rāma went to Pañcavaṭi in search of Śarabūka and killed him. The Brahmin's son came back to life. This incident is presented in the Rāmakathā of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*,<sup>3</sup> and Rāma is shown as a true defender of the ancient religious faith. It is also presented in the *Uttara-rāma-carita* of Bhavabhūti.<sup>4</sup> And though Bhavabhūti was born in an orthodox Brahmin family that had the prestigious right to a Soma drink in a Soma sacrifice, his Rāma is terribly shaken by this religious belief and the demand it makes on a ruling king. Bhavabhūti's Rāma executes his religious duty, killing the Śūdra Sage 'somehow', against his will, and confessing to his own 'cruelty', wondering what connection there could ever be between the death of a Brahmin's son and the penance of a Śūdra ! Kālidāsa does not appear to be touched to the quick by such social inequalities and religious beliefs that have lost their meaning over the passage of time. It will be seen, on the other hand, that Kālidāsa only reiterates the orthodox and traditional precepts of religious philosophy in his poems and dramas without commenting on them. That is why, it is not correct to assume that Kālidāsa's writing advocates positively any particular creed or philosophy. Whatever ideas we may gather have to be deduced 'indirectly' from his literature.

It must also be remembered that the stand that Kālidāsa takes in his writing is that of an artist. The old literature was didactic and was produced to preach and teach. But even after the aesthetic principle of *rasa* came to hold its own in literature, some poeticians still expected the fulfilment of the four goals of human life (*puruṣārtha*) from poetry and literature.<sup>5</sup> The literary opinion thus seems to waver continuously between pure aesthetic delight and wholesome advice as the purpose of literary art. The stand that Mammaṭa<sup>6</sup> has taken seems to be more correct. Literary art is principally concerned with aesthetic relish and delight; the advice or author's philosophy should come indirectly, like the advice given by a charming wife, never at the cost of art. Kālidāsa's literature exemplifies this literary principle. So, even from this point of view, any opinions or philosophy of life that Kālidāsa's literature presents will be 'indirect', a matter of inference and deduction.

( 2 )

The centuries under consideration seem to have changed to some extent the general aspect of the old Vedic religion. The Brahmanic religion based on the observance of rituals and performance of sacrifices, what is known as *karmakāṇḍa*, came into glory once again. The philosophical thought in the Upaniṣads had really diverted the peoples' minds from ritual action to knowledge, and had taught that pursuit of *jñāna* or knowledge with its emphasis on austerities and renunciation, although difficult, was a better way to spiritual liberation than the way of *karma* which promised only material rewards and kept man bound to existence. But the needs of common men

for happiness on this earth and prospects for heavenly pleasures after death, and more particularly the onslaughts of the Buddhist religious thought on the orthodox religion, must have made it essential, at this time, to revive the glory of ancient sacrificial system in all its former splendour. Kālidāsa accepts this spectacular aspect of religion. His king Dilīpa waits on the celestial cow in order to obtain a son and counteract a curse in the previous birth, at the advice of his family priest.<sup>7</sup> The Raghu kings are great performers of sacrifices. Rāma performed an Aśvamedha to establish his sovereignty; and Kālidāsa records a similar performance by an historical king of the times, Puṣyamitra of the Śuṅga dynasty, father of Agnimitra.<sup>8</sup> Raghu did one better, by performing the Sarvamedha, the Viśvajit Sacrifice, at the conclusion of which he gave away all his wealth in gifts, so that when a pupil approached him to beg for the sum of fees to be paid to his preceptor Raghu found his treasury empty, and had to think of attacking Kubera to obtain the money. During the reign of the Raghu kings the river-banks used to be studded with sacrificial pillars proclaiming the kingly glory to heavens. Sacrifices, great and small, had assumed such prestige and importance in the lives of the rich and mighty that even lowly people in the kingdom were conversant with them and the principles behind them. The fisherman in *Śakuntala* justifies his way of living by using the analogy of a Śrotriya, sacrificial priest. He points out that a sacrificial priest has to slaughter an animal in a sacrifice; but that does not mean that his heart is bereft of tenderness and compassion;<sup>9</sup> and so his profession of catching and killing fish for food must not be taken as a reflection on his personal character. It is likely that the poets upheld and extolled the institution of sacrifice for a number of reasons, like its being a symbol of the prosperity of life; the impressive grandeur of religious performances the sacrifice implies; the opportunity the sacrifice provides for bringing a host of people together in a religious context with other-worldly outlook; the distribution of wealth by way of sacrificial gifts among a large section of people, and as a link between the rich and common men on the basis of religion.

Since the time of the Brāhmaṇa literature the Vedic gods were gradually losing their importance and new gods connected with sacrificial performance like Prajāpati and Viṣṇu were coming into prominence. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad praises Rudra as the highest principle of religion and philosophy. These three gods represent the new Trinity upheld by the times and approved by the later Hinduism. Kālidāsa has described and praised Prajāpati-Brahmā and Śiva in the *Kumārasambhava*,<sup>10</sup> Viṣṇu identified in the personality of Rāma in the *Raghuvamśa*, and Śiva in all his dramas.<sup>12</sup> It appears, however, that Śiva was the favourite deity of Kālidāsa. The picturesque description of the evening worship in the Mahākāla temple at Ujjayinī in the *Meghadūta*,<sup>13</sup> the poetic presentation of the full life of Śiva and Pārvatī in the *Kumārasambhava*, the prayers addressed to Śiva in the *nāndī* verses of the dramas, and the prayer for final liberation from mundane life made to Śiva in the valedictory verse (*Bharatavākya*) of the *Śakuntala*, all point to Kālidāsa's devotion

and love for Śiva. But Kālidāsa's mind is not unduly partial and sectarian, as his praises of other gods clearly show. Kālidāsa's devotion to Śiva must, therefore, be taken only as a personal choice prompted by an individual religious faith. Considered from philosophical and poetic angle the divine form of Śiva is really enticing. In the Trinity Śiva is the deity of destruction (*saṃhāra*); but he is 'Śiva', that is, full of auspiciousness and bliss. Accustomed to live in the dreadful inauspicious cemetery grounds, he is the incarnation of the auspicious and the holy. The most beggarly, this god has unlimited splendour. So naive and innocent, his generosity of heart is boundless. He has such love of pleasure that Umā is his 'better half' not in a figurative sense but literally; and yet he is a Yogi *par excellence*. As a supreme exponent of art, he is the father of *rāṇḍava* and through Umā of *lāśya* dance; in his half-male-half-female form the art of *nāṭya* has achieved a visible shape. This extra-ordinary form of Śiva, full of mutual opposites, and yet firing imagination, stirring emotion and dazzling intellect, has been lovingly grasped by Kālidāsa.<sup>14</sup> The characteristic of creating new life and fresh urge of vigour, which the union of Śiva and Pārvatī symbolises and which Kālidāsa describes in the story of *Kumārasambhava*, must have a special attraction for the poet's mind.

The personalistic form of god can be traced to very ancient days. The thinkers of the Upaniṣads conceived an abstract, impersonal first principle, called it Brahman, and established it as the Ultimate Reality and the ground of all existence. The unification of the two aspects, personal and impersonal, was probably achieved in a convincing way by the Gītā, so that the threefold cosmic function of origination of the universe, its preservation and annihilation for the purpose of a new creation, though attributed to three separate gods, the Trinity really was a unity of three cosmic functions of one basic principle. This view of Unity, One Godhead, was intellectually satisfying and emotionally appealing. It appears that Kālidāsa was greatly influenced by this philosophical doctrine of triune unity and particularly by the teachings of Gītā. In the benedictory verse (*nāndī*) of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* he described Śiva as the supreme goal of man's devotion; in the *Śakuntala* he enumerated the eight visible forms (*aṣṭa-tanu*) of Śiva, thereby proving that the presence of god is not a matter only of Scriptural testimony, logical inference or transcendental perception available by Yoga, but also a matter of understanding and direct perception. It was, in a way, a poetic answer to the atheists and the sceptics. In the *nāndī* verse of the *Vikramorvaṣīya* he turned to Vedānta and asserted the unity of the impersonal, non-dualistic First Principle and the personalistic One Godhead. That the Unity breaks into three aspects is stated in the description 'The One Form split itself into three', which comes in the *Kumārasambhava*,<sup>15</sup> and, more distinctly, in the Prayer addressed to Viṣṇu in the *Raghuvamśa*.<sup>16</sup> Rāma is conceived as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. God descended on earth to kill Rāvaṇa; He consented to be born, although Total and Self-sufficient in Himself, for the purpose of saving the world from the tyranny of the unrighteous and as a favour to the distressed mankind.<sup>17</sup> Kālidāsa writes,

'There is nothing that you have not attained, nor wish to attain. The singular purpose of your birth and activity is gracious favour on the world and its people.'<sup>18</sup>

The phrasing of this prayer is reminiscent of Gītā,<sup>19</sup> and one feels that Kālidāsa is echoing the avatāra theory of Gītā almost in the words of the Gospel.

Kālidāsa naturally accepts the doctrine of the cycle of existences, with the attendant belief in previous birth and re-birth, a doctrine which is a plank of the Brahmanical and Hindu religion. Vasiṣṭha takes care to describe the previous birth and the action therein of Indumatī in his effort to console Aja lamenting over her sudden death by an incredible trifling cause.<sup>20</sup> And Duṣyanta, moved unaccountably by the song of Hamsapadikā, tries to seek the cause of his restlessness in the 'loves of previous birth'<sup>21</sup> Kālidāsa's final personal prayer, expressed in the *Bharatavākya* of *Śākuntala* is for the termination of re-birth.<sup>22</sup>

Kālidāsa liked the way of complete devotion to reach and realise god. But it appears from his description of the Vānaprastha stage of Raghu's life that he would have accepted the path of yoga and knowledge intellectually.<sup>23</sup> The practice of the Raghu kings was, he says, 'to take leave of the mortal body by the process of yoga'.<sup>24</sup> Kālidāsa describes, in the *Śākuntala*, the ascetics doing penance and practising yoga in the hermitage of Mārīca on the Hemakūṭa mountain; and gives a thrilling picture of the astounding penance Mārīca himself was doing.<sup>25</sup> The description is suggestive of Kālidāsa's own inclination and admiration. Youth is the time for enjoyment of the pleasures of world and for fulfilling the obligations demanded from a married householder; with these duties done and as the years advance, the time is ripe for retirement from worldly life; one should move to the solitary calm of forest residence, and engage oneself in attaining knowledge of god through austerities and yoga practices; blessed with knowledge of god, final stage is reached when one can discard the physical frame and merge in the divine.<sup>26</sup> Having enjoyed life fully, the final surrender to god should be equally intense and complete, characterised by supreme selfless penance :

'What sages generally seek to achieve by their austerities, in that heaven of happiness these ascetics (in the hermitage of Mārīca) practise further penance !'<sup>27</sup>

These words of wonder and admiration reflect Kālidāsa's own mental processes and his thinking. While accepting the religion and philosophy handed down by established tradition, Kālidāsa accepts each *puruṣārtha* individually and believes that fulness of life is possible by the fulfilment of each one of them, and not merely by the ideal of *mokṣa* at the cost of other human ideals.

All the three plays of Kālidāsa and his *Raghuvamśa* deal with the life of kings as the principal theme. No other Sanskrit dramatist seems to have painted the pictures

of royal life, including the private harem life of a king with the harem conflicts, jealousies and rivalries with such minute and penetrating details as Kālidāsa seems to have done. The Udayana plays of Śrī Harṣa show such pictures; but there is an obvious imitation and influence of Kālidāsa; and in the later plays the love life of a royal hero has a conventional set pattern, modelled on Kālidāsa's writing. It is reasonable to believe, therefore, that Kālidāsa initiated the court comedy of royal love. And this he could not have done by mere poetic observation from a distance, but by close contact with royal life. It has been already suggested that Kālidāsa must have been connected with some royal court not only as an honoured poet but also as an officer, perhaps as an ambassador, of a king. The intimate pictures of royal life given by Kālidāsa can be better understood on such an assumption; and they also show Kālidāsa's views on the ideals of kingship and monarchical government.

It is evident that Kālidāsa is a royalist; and this is not surprising on the background of ancient Indian history which shows that the form of government was prevailingly monarchical. But it must be remembered that Kālidāsa's political loyalties are not determined by the fact of royal patronage. It was a general belief of the people in those days that if a ruling king happened to be strong and brave, just and generous, the subjects had no worry about their welfare; that a good government under the leadership of a king would be free from difficulties and discontent of any kind. Kālidāsa shares this belief. The Raghu kings were, of course, ideal rulers. But even an earthly king like Agnimitra wins this encomium from Kālidāsa that under his rule no calamity, earthly or supernatural, ever visited his people.<sup>28</sup> A complete harmony between the wishes of a king and of his subjects is the basis of this belief.

It is obvious that the government of an ideal king would give no cause for discontent or opposition. Kālidāsa tells us that under the rule of Raghu kings the mass of their people did not swerve from the chartered path by even so much as a thin line.<sup>29</sup> But granting that a ruling king followed his ideals, what about the integrity of his officers whom he must appoint to share the burden of the administration? One or two instances in the *Śakuntala* certainly give an odour of hypocrisy and dishonesty. The meeting with Śakuntalā has taken away Duṣyanta's attention from the projected hunting. The comfortloving Vidūṣaka would naturally like the hunt to be abandoned; his opposition to hunting is selfish but consistent with his nature. But the attitude of Duṣyanta's commander of the army is definitely puzzling. He encourages the Vidūṣaka privately to be persistent with his opposition and promises that he will personally take the opposite stand only to please his master.<sup>30</sup> Is not the Senāpati's praise of hunting an obvious hypocrisy though his obedience to his master is transparent? The behaviour of Duṣyanta's chief of police and his two constables is openly dishonest. They terrorize the poor fisherman; later they are prepared to share half the reward with him; and take him to a liquor shop to celebrate their new friendship.<sup>31</sup> Duṣyanta may be an ideal king in himself; but his officers are shown to be hypocritical and corrupt; and the picture is contradictory to the assertion that the wrong

doers were severely punished under the rule of Duṣyanta.<sup>32</sup> Is it that Kālidāsa was tempted to try his hand at stark realism known to him from general sources, or that he had greater faith in the integrity of the king as the leader of society ? Any way, there is no picture of political oppression, discontent or revolt in Kālidāsa's writing. Nor does Kālidāsa speak of any other form of government, like the Buddhist Republics prevailing in Magadha, of which Kālidāsa must surely have some knowledge. It appears that Kālidāsa followed the political thought of Kauṭilya or he was by his own persuasion loyal to kingship.

There is another side to the picture given above, and it deserves to be noted. In the ancient monarchial government the king owned the ultimate authority. So, even if some of the officers were dishonest and corrupt the power vested with the king really; and it was always possible for the people to approach the king directly and seek just redress of all their grievances. This must have acted as a curb on the nuisance of corrupt officers and the possible harm they could inflict on common people. This is a possible interpretation of Kālidāsa's picture of small corruption lurking in society in spite of good government. As an artist, who had minute knowledge of human nature, Kālidāsa could not help putting his finger realistically on human weaknesses. And in doing this he is not suggesting that Duṣyanta was a naive king to have appointed spoiled officers to work for him, rather, he is indicating his firm belief in the integrity of the ruler at the top of the administration. In describing the personalities of his royal heroes Kālidāsa has particularly emphasised their devotion to the good of their people. Riding in full speed in eagerness and joy of hunting, Duṣyanta halts his chariot suddenly the moment the hermits raise their hands and remind him that the weapon put in his hand by traditional authority is meant for protecting the distressed and not for striking the innocent.<sup>33</sup> Duṣyanta accepts this plea with bowed head and withdraws his arrow immediately. According to the prevailing law the entire property of a man went into royal treasury if he had no son to claim it after his death. Duṣyanta's ministers had disposed the case of Dhanamitra accordingly. But Duṣyanta reverses the decision, thereby doing justice to the pregnant widow of the deceased merchant. King Raghu is not willing to send the pupil Kautsa back empty handed even though he has no money left in his treasury after the sacrificial gifts he has generously distributed; on the contrary, he requests Kautsa to wait for a while and plans to attack Kubera to get the money for *gurudakṣiṇā* for the boy.<sup>35</sup> These remarkable instances from Kālidāsa's literature suggest that not only the poet but the subjects also had firm faith in the generosity and sense of justice of their king. Kālidāsa's compliment to Duṣyanta, that his people looked upon the king as their relative and brother truer than the blood-relations,<sup>36</sup> must have originated not in poetic fancy but from complete faith in the king.

Kingship in those days was hereditary. It was also the source of all power. Law, execution and administration of law, and justice, under Democratic rule, are independent; and there is a clear decentralisation; justice is not under the control of govern-

ment administration, and the executive is fully responsible to the elected legislature. In theory, therefore, the form of government in ancient India will have to be described as Unlimited Monarchy, because all the three departments of government, law, administration and justice, were under the control of the king. The king, no doubt, was helped by cabinet ministers and administrative officers; but their appointment was made by the king and their authority was derived from and delegated by the king; the king was also the ultimate tribunal and the final authority in dispensation of justice, as the case of Dhana-mitra referred to above shows. In spite of such complete centralisation of power in the ruler the ancient people accepted kingship and were presumably quite happy under it. Modern critics would perhaps explain this political state as due to the absence of any political consciousness on the part of the people and their ignorance about individual rights. This is probably true. But Kālidāsa's writing shows the prevalence of certain curbs on the unlimited royal power.

Although the king was responsible for law and its administration the king was not a law-maker but a promulgator of traditional laws. The laws, rules and procedure were derived from the Dharmaśāstras and authoritative texts on polity. The theoretical foundation of government was provided by the Dharmaśāstras and the practice was described in scientific works like the *Arthaśāstra*. The sages who were the authors of Dharmaśāstra and composers of Smṛti works framed the laws; practical direction in the application and administration of laws, especially in the political sphere, was provided by experienced statesmen like Kauṭilya and sage-philosophers like Vyāsa in the Śānti and Anuśāsana parvans of the *Mahābhārata*. It appears therefore that a king's role was that of an administrator mainly, who executed the laws and rules of government and of political behaviour framed by the best, intellectual authorities of the day. It may be said, therefore, that the controlling power on royal authority was the power of the great social thinkers. A king rarely overruled this traditional authority, except in solitary cases when his sense of justice and compassion demanded a modification of the existing law.

The appointment of ministers and officers does not appear to be merely for the purpose of sharing the vast burden of administration. The king usually consulted them on matters of importance, followed their advice and, on occasions, left the entire administration to their care. Before taking the final decision of ordering a military attack on the Vidarbha king, Agnimitra wishes to consult his cabinet ministers; and when the chief minister tells him that the Amātya pariṣad had arrived at the same decision then only does Agnimitra issue the necessary orders.<sup>37</sup> When Duṣyanta receives an invitation from Indra to help him in a fight against Durjaya Asurās he hands over the responsibility of government to his chief minister and tells him, 'Let your thought and intellect look after our subjects during our absence. Our bow is temporarily engaged in another task.'<sup>38</sup> The administrative help of ministers and continuous consultations with wise political scholars provided another curb on the unlimited royal power.

Besides, the young prince who was to succeed his father on the throne was given a rigorous political education and training with great care and discipline. The political preceptors emphasised particularly the dangers of the unique combination of youth, wealth and power to their princely wards. The Sanskrit literature, and especially Kālidāsa's description of Raghu's training or the political exhortation of Śukanāsa to prince Candrāpīḍa, bear clear testimony to this fact. The Sanskrit literature also shows that, though kingship came by the law of heredity, the king or his wise ministers chose, on occasions, a worthy heir to the throne. So, education and training and inherent worth were recognised as important factors in political succession; and they must also have acted as healthy curbs on any capricious political behaviour.

Kālidāsa seems, however, to prefer the compelling influence of moral values and ideals. Kālidāsa does not derive the word *Rājā* simply from the root *rāj* to shine, to appear splendid; a king is to him a ruler who keeps his people happy;<sup>39</sup> and thereby he suggests that the ideal of kingship is complete devotion to the welfare and happiness of the subjects. Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta rules over his subjects treating them as his own children. With no thought for personal comfort or happiness he tires himself for the welfare of the people. He is firm in dealing with people who go by a wrong or crooked path; he puts down any disputes, conflicts or controversies by the rule of the law; and gives constant attention to the protection of the people. It is natural, therefore, that the subjects look upon Duṣyanta with affection as their brother, much more so than their own kith and kin.<sup>40</sup> Kālidāsa calls Duṣyanta as a 'royal sage' (*rājamuni*)<sup>41</sup> because of his devotion to his duties and service to people. The law sanctioned that a king received one-sixth of the peoples's earnings in coin or in kind by way taxes. But Duṣyanta refuses to recover taxes from the forest-dwelling ascetics, quite satisfied with the share in religious merit that he gets from them.<sup>42</sup> And even when taxes and tributes are collected the king's attitude is like the Sun, who evaporates the water on the earth only to return it to the earth thousand-fold in the form of rains;<sup>43</sup> the taxes are for the purpose of bestowing a thousand-fold prosperity on the people.

Kālidāsa feels that a ruler of a kingdom is not merely a protector of the people; he is their guardian, father. A king chastising a wrong-doer severely has the affectionate heart of a father. Acting according to the ideal enunciated by Kauṭilya,<sup>44</sup> a king who identifies his benefit and happiness with those of his people is able to fulfil his appointed role both as a master and as a servant of the people, enhancing thereby the prestige and glory of social life. Duṣyanta is one example of such a dedicated king. His conscience is always on the alert. When he receives the message that some ascetics have arrived from the hermitage of Kaṇva to see him, Duṣyanta starts wondering whether he has acted wrongly sometimes through inadvertence and that has affected the straight peaceful āśrama life; his mind is perturbed by a series of doubts.<sup>45</sup> When he comes to hear the tortured cries of the Viduṣaka for help, as



Matali, remaining invisible, pounds him, Duṣyanta suspects that his own house may be possessed by evil spirits. He confesses that a person is incapable of knowing the moral blunders he may be committing himself day by day; how could a king then become aware of the doubtful behaviour of his countless subjects!<sup>46</sup> If kings and rulers were to be so wakeful and ready to probe their own conscience at every happening in their states, what better could the people ask for !

About the Raghu kings Kālidāsa says<sup>47</sup> :

They enjoyed the pleasures of family life only with the awareness of religious duty of providing an heir to the family;  
they displayed valour and destroyed their enemies only to stabilise the glory of their government;  
they preferred few words to verbose prattle in order to preserve the prestige of truth;  
they amassed vast fortunes so that they could gift away their treasures to the needy, distressed and the virtuous.

Kālidāsa likes these ideals of kingship and government, these virtues and moral values of a dedicated life.

Kālidāsa describes king Dilīpa as a real father to his people and their own fathers as mere progenitors.<sup>48</sup> When Dilīpa started for the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha elderly men and cowherds from various towns and villages came to meet him. Dilīpa asked them their names and inquired after their well-being.<sup>49</sup> This was a personal contact of the ruling monarch with his humble subjects in their own surroundings. Kautīlya states in his *Arthaśāstra* that a king must sit in his Justice-hall every morning to give audience to his subjects, listen to their grievances and dispense justice forthwith. At these hours people had free and unchecked access to the king. It is obvious that a king like Duṣyanta observed this practice without fail<sup>50</sup>. An exception was made only when the king was indisposed either physically or mentally.<sup>51</sup> The personal contact of the king with his subjects, therefore, was not a gesture to win popularity but was a part of the ideals of royal conduct and moral values taught by discerning theorists. Kālidāsa accepted monarchical rule and was partial to royalty probably because of the self-sacrificing, noble and idealistic life the kings led. At least, the kings whom Kālidāsa knew created and maintained a political state where pursuit and realisation of the four ideals of human life was possible with ease, where happiness and prosperity ruled, where blazing examples of ideal personal life lifted common life also on to a higher plane.

(4)

It can be said that social life in ancient days was controlled by the precepts of religion. The observance of social customs and practices was believed by the people to be discharge of religious duty as well. The present attitude to religion is different.

We have demarcated the spheres of social and religious life; and we are prepared to believe that religion is a matter of individual faith and observance and individual ideas of spiritual aims. Religion was not so individual-based in ancient days. That is why, perhaps, a revolution in religion was likely to shake up the entire social life of a people. Ancient history bears testimony as to how Buddhist religion affected society as a whole, especially after its propagation from the ruling throne. Castes and their specific duties had no place in Buddha's religious thinking; and since he held life to be an existence rooted in misery, compassion and complete renunciation came to dominate the general tendency of the people influenced by his thoughts and teaching. The picture changed by the revival of Brahmanism in a new form. From the social angle it is plain that the Brahmanism is based on the division of society into clearly defined castes and of life into distinct stages to which specific duties and obligations are related under the banner of religion. Kālidāsa has advocated the superiority of this social religion founded on four castes and four stages of life (*varṇa-āśrama-dharma*) in his writings. This may be regarded as Kālidāsa's personal contribution to the revival of new Brahmanism.

The Gītā states that the division of society into four castes is really due to inherent qualifications and the occupations people have as individuals.<sup>52</sup> Individual qualities come by hereditary transmission; and the environment and surroundings in which a person is reared and brought up, the training and education he receives, determine his capacity, ability and skill for a particular kind of work and profession. Hereditary qualities and environmental influences give a decided direction to an individual's personal and social duty which is called the religion of the caste. Whatever that duty may be, accepting it without grudge and executing it to the best of one's ability ensures the good of the individual and is beneficial to the society as well.<sup>53</sup> This is the meaning of the Gītā's doctrine; and it may be presumed that Kālidāsa took the social doctrine in the same light. The kings described by Kālidāsa adhered scrupulously to their *Kṣatriya-dharma*, and understood that the weapon and power placed in their hands were meant for the 'protection of the distressed', for 'removing fear from the minds of the oppressed and tortured', and for giving them the feeling of safety and security.<sup>54</sup> The fisherman in the *Sākuntala*<sup>55</sup> states without mincing words that the duties which have come to a person on account of his caste and social position have to be accepted as such even if others thought his profession to be reprehensible; in fact, the profession can never be a clue to person's character; else, a Vedic Brahmin who has to slaughter an animal in a sacrifice will have to be dubbed as a merciless butcher ! It is, at least, clear from the example that all sections of people in the society were willing to accept and follow their caste duties.

Fulfilling caste duties and obligations was an individual responsibility. But the king was expected to see that this was done. The Raghu kings and Duṣyanta are shown as paying their personal attention to this obligation. The family priest of

Duṣyanta introduces his Master to the ascetics who have arrived with a message from Kaṇva as a 'defender of caste duties and the duties of life's stages'.<sup>56</sup> Kaṇva's pupil Śāradvata observes that, under Duṣyanta's rule, even the lowly men in society do not take to evil ways.<sup>57</sup> Duṣyanta himself is very careful to keep himself within the boundaries of religion. Though attracted irresistibly towards Śakuntalā he debates in his mind whether she is fit to be a wife of a Kṣatriya; he allows his heart a free play only when he is convinced that he can take Śakuntalā as his legitimate wife.<sup>58</sup> If a king chastised the evil-doers and were diligent in safeguarding the limits of the religious duties of castes, it could be expected that social life would be stable. It appears from Kālidāsa's literature that he cared for such social stability and peace within the framework of religion.

The *āśrama-dharma* or the duties and obligations imposed by particular stages in one's life are more closely connected with an individual than with a social group. The concept of life's stages (*āśrama*) is a philosophy of the graded and balanced growth of individuality. Kālidāsa seems to favour it much. In his description of a king's life it figures constantly. His ideal Raghu kings

'devote their energies to the study of different lores in their childhood;  
in their youth they long for the pleasures of life;  
when old age approaches they take to the life of ascetics and sages;  
and finally they shed their mortal frame by the practice of yoga.'<sup>59</sup>

Devoted study in childhood, worldly pleasures in youth, renunciation in old age and realisation of god by yogic processes when the end comes : this is the meaning of *āśrama-dharma*. And Kālidāsa thinks it to be an ideal arrangement for living an ideal life.

This probably means that Kālidāsa does not approve of the Buddhist teaching of withdrawal from life or the Upaniṣadic one of renunciation as the only ideal around which a man must mould his entire life. And similarly Kālidāsa would not approve of a man who constantly talked of *paramārtha* and *mokṣa* while seizing with lust every pleasure of life. Kālidāsa's philosophy of living does not consist in looking upon life as a straight and single-minded journey towards spiritual salvation. Life has its well-marked stages; every stage has its own demands and expectations; Nature and the wisdom of man have provided things favourable to the fulfilment of those demands and expectations; a man should fulfil these and then reach his final destination. This is Kālidāsa's view. It must be remembered that Kālidāsa prayed for *mokṣa* when he had completed his *Śakuntala*, when he had reached perfection in his literary art, when he had the feeling of satisfaction that he had accomplished the work of his life.

Consistent with this outlook on life is the comparative importance of the householder's stage in life, which the Smṛti works praise and which Kālidāsa describes in

his pictures of family life. King Dilīpa and his queen Sudakṣiṇā are miserable in their life because they have no son; they live in the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha, observe religious vows, and serve and worship the daughter of the celestial cow, Nandinī. Dāśaratha performs the *putra-kāmeṣṭi* sacrifice.<sup>60</sup> Even the Vidūṣaka is pained because king Purūravas has no issue. Duṣyanta's mother is observing the *putra-piṇḍa-pālana* vow praying that he may be blessed with a son.<sup>61</sup> The case of the merchant Dhana-mitra brings, like a flash of lightning, the spiritual significance of what a son means for a family man in the mind of Duṣyanta. If there were no male heir to a man there will be nobody to offer the obsequies to oneself and the Manes and their life in heaven will be miserable.<sup>62</sup> When Duṣyanta becomes aware of this firm religious faith and its significance, this mighty hero who had fought successfully the battles of gods for them but who had now been emotionally weakened by the agony of his repudiation of Śakuntalā, faints away. These pictures of Kālidāsa clearly show that the householder's stage in human life, which the Dharmaśāstras sponsor, is not merely a pious recommendation; it is a religious duty imposed on man; and there is no salvation for man unless he has fulfilled this obligation; the Smṛtis aver that a man who has no son has no prospect of spiritual emancipation. Ascetics like Kaṇva are an exception to the common run of humanity. But even they allow themselves to be involved emotionally in matters of family life and in their love for children. Kaṇva says with some pride that he knows the ways of the world even though he has spent all his life living in a forest.<sup>63</sup> His holiness Kāśyapa or Mārīca is a family man, and Kālidāsa shows him expounding the duties of an ideal wife to Dākṣāyaṇī and the wives of great sages.<sup>64</sup> The picture of Duṣyanta suffering the pangs of childlessness and melting at the sight of Sarvadamaṇa becomes poignant and moving against this heavenly background. The emotional faith of Kālidāsa, in truth, is that family life is a kind of sacrifice, and children is its fruit. His description of the Raghu kings that 'they performed the household sacrifice in order to procreate'<sup>65</sup> is tinged with this emotion and faith.

Kubera and his Yakṣas are eternally young.<sup>66</sup> But youth comes to humans once only in the life-time and lasts for some years. Once gone the youth does not return.<sup>67</sup> The Dharmaśāstras, therefore, hold that meeting the demands of youth is also a *puruṣārtha*, a goal of human existence. Kālidāsa, thus, accepts the householder's stage and family life on the foundation of religion, nature and fulness of life. If we forgot to understand Kālidāsa's poems and his dramas on this background of his view of life, if we allowed our vision to be clouded by the later religious philosophy of *tapasyā* and *mokṣa*, we would be doing terrible injustice to Kālidāsa and his incomparable sane art. The losers, of course, will be the miserable we.

This is not intended to suggest that Kālidāsa advocates unrestricted enjoyment of life's pleasures. Far from it. Kālidāsa paints in Agnivaṇṇa the picture of a libertine, of the danger of treating youth, wealth and power as a permit for free

pleasures, and the havoc it does work.<sup>69</sup> Kālidāsa places side by side the pictures of Śātakarṇī who was an easy prey to the enticements of nymphs and of Sutiḥṣṇa who was an ascetic by temperament and who had moral control over his conduct and actions,<sup>69</sup> and thereby indicates the supreme importance of self-control and restraint over senses. The heroes and heroines of Kālidāsa convey the message that enjoyment of pleasures has a definite place in human life; but just as the denial of youth and its pleasures is a mistake, even so is excess in the indulgence of pleasures; love, sex and other pleasures of life must not contradict the precepts of religion;<sup>70</sup> the *puruṣārtha* Kāma must obey the dictates of restraint.

## ( 5 )

Kālidāsa seems to accept the current frame of religious, political and philosophical thought ; his attitude is the same in regard to social philosophy, especially as it affects marriage and family life. The contemporary society had accepted polygamy and it was prevalent among the higher and rich classes. The heroes of Kālidāsa are polygamous, the two exceptions being the Yakṣa and Rāma. It is inevitable that a woman's place will be after the man; secondary to the male, in such a social setup. Kālidāsa has not expressed any dissenting opinion against this social order. On the contrary, he has accepted it as it is. Abandoned by Rāma, the message the forlorn Sītā sends to him through Lakṣmaṇa is,<sup>71</sup> 'You deserted me listening to public scandal; does it become your learning and wisdom, the prestige and glory of your family ?' As the rejected Śakuntalā tries to follow the āśrama party, Kaṇva's pupil Śārngarava orders her to stay back, stating. 'It is quite all right even if you worked as a maid-servant in your husband's family.'<sup>72</sup> And the philosophical, solemn Śāradvata too admits Duṣyanta's right to deal with his own wife in any way he liked; for, 'the authority of the husband over his wife is plausible and universal'<sup>73</sup>. The far-sighted and wise Kaṇva also has not been able to divine any answer to the social inequality between the sexes. On the eve of her departure to her husband's house he advises Śakuntalā, 'Serve your elders. Behave like a true friend towards your rival wives. Though humiliated or badly treated by your husband do not be angry and act against his wishes. . . . This is the way young women attain the position of good housewives. Those who act to the contrary become a bane to their family.'<sup>74</sup> The advice of Kaṇva is evidently an understandable compromise with the existing social conditions. A woman had no alternative but to please, satisfy and obey her husband. Religious and social laws had declared complete devotion and loyalty to the husband as the worthy goal of a woman's Life.

It appears that marriages, in those days, were generally arranged and settled by the elders in the family. But Kālidāsa's writing bears evidence to *svayamvara* and *gāndharva* forms, that is, love marriages. A girl's father tried to obtain a worthy bridegroom for his daughter by stipulating some wager or arranging a test to

discover particular talent or skill; or the young people chose their life's partner on the basis of mutual attraction and love. A woman in these cases enjoyed a certain freedom. But it must be limited : for, the social practice of free choice of a husband appears to be limited to the higher and rich classes ; and secondly, even in the case of a love marriage the husband's authority over the wife was undisputed. A woman's life was, thus, cramped and confined. Among the Sanskrit poets Bhavabhūti seems to be the one who has given a sensitive vent to this social inequality. He writes<sup>75</sup> : 'A woman's mind is soft like a flower. A girl born in a good family, inheriting its fine traditions, is naturally innocent, bashful, always afraid to hurt anybody's feelings by her word or act. Should any one be so cruel as to tyrannise over such a girl after marrying her, burn her sensitive and tender mind with words of fire ? But men are short-sighted, impudent and obstinate; they love to behave like dictators. Inevitably, therefore, a woman's heart is alienated; she starts believing that a woman's life is a perpetual pain which death alone can terminate. And the parents of girls and their relatives abhor the birth of a daughter.' What a dreadful social truth is concealed in these sincere words of Bhavabhūti, what poignant awareness of a form of social inequality, what human compassion for the weaker sex ! Kālidāsa has given moving expression to the profound love between man and woman, and to the unbearable pangs of the sorrow of separated lovers, in almost all his writing. But he did not touch this basic social inequality between the sexes. In stead of saying that Kālidāsa was insensitive to this pain rooted in the social arrangement, let us say that Kālidāsa was inclined to accept the existing social order and its philosophy, with the inherent good points and blemishes, as it was traditionally established.

( 6 )

Education is the foundation of the cultural life of a people. Kālidāsa has made a number of observations about the ancient educational system, expressing some opinions directly, suggesting some things through his pictures. These opinions and suggestions are naturally important for understanding Kālidāsa's general outlook on life.

It is known that *gurukula* was the centre of education; and the education imparted to the boys and girls in the hermitage of a preceptor was devised to be as comprehensive as possible. It is possible to say that the *āśrama* of Kaṇva in the *Śakuntala* was such a centre of education. Kaṇva has been described as a Kulapati. The dictionary sense of 'kulapati' is a Brahmin sage who provides board and lodging to ten thousand pupils and takes complete care of their education.<sup>76</sup> Leaving the exaggeration in the technical definition regarding the number of students, it is obvious that young boys and girls were required to leave their parental homes and live with the *guru* at his hermitage during the entire period of their education; and the *guru* was required to shelter his pupils, feed them and educate them. The pupils did not pay any regular fees to the teacher for receiving education, as at present. After their education was completed, when they had become *snātakas* and were permitted

by the teacher to return home, the pupils paid their fees, called *gurudakṣiṇā*, each according to his ability and capacity, and without a definite obligation. If education was thus free, it means that the king and the ruling government took up the entire financial responsibility of education. In view of the sanctity of *āśrama* life, the care and safety of the trees, birds and animals in the precincts of hermitages, it is necessary to infer that kings allocated free-hold lands to sages and ascetics who ran educational centres; and the natural and cultivated produce of the lands was treated as the property of the *āśramas*; and that it was this wealth that enabled the teachers to accommodate their pupils and feed them. It must also be noted that the land of the hermitage and the residents therein were exempted from paying any tax to the king. When Duṣyanta asks his companion the Vidūṣaka to think of some pretext which he could use to go back to the hermitage of Kaṇva, and the fool suggests that Duṣyanta could go as the collector of royal taxes, Duṣyanta reprimands the Vidūṣaka and asserts that the ascetics give him automatically one-sixth share of their religious merit; could one imagine any more durable wealth than this ?<sup>77</sup> The opinion of Duṣyanta indicates his feelings of gratitude and gratification; but it also suggests that kings refused to take any taxes from teachers and ascetics, even in kind. Even with these facilities, were there a poor student who wished to pay his teacher *gurudakṣiṇā* and did not have the means to do so, kings came forward to give the necessary gifts, as the story of the student Kautsa and king Raghu amply bears out.<sup>78</sup> Bhāsa narrates a similar incident in his *Svapnavāsavadatta*. Padmavati, the princess of Magadha, returning from her visit to the royal Mother, halts in a *tapovana* for rest; she announces through her chamberlain her desire to give away gifts to the needy; along with the usual material needs there is also a mention of money a student may need to pay his preceptor's fees.<sup>79</sup> It may be assumed, therefore, that kings, members of the royal family and affluent persons picked up willingly their share of educational expenses, making education free upto the graduation (*snātaka*) level for all. It is also true that kings and probably rich people appointed special teachers and paid them salaries to teach their wards particular courses in learning or fine arts. This is evident from Bhāsa's Udayana plays; Kālidāsa mentions Gaṇadāsa and Haradatta who were training Mālavikā and the younger queen Irāvati in histrionics and dance. The practice of appointing private teachers seems to have started from the epic days.

Education, thus, being a State responsibility and free, in a way, to people, the preceptor in charge of it had special rights naturally; he could accept or refuse a pupil according to his choice, though this was not likely to happen when the teacher had a salaried position; nevertheless, the pupil being entirely in the charge of the teacher, the teacher's moral responsibility to the pupil was always great. Through the quarrel of the two professors of dance in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* Kālidāsa expresses some interesting opinions in regard to education and educational principles.

Gaṇadāsa says, 'A preceptor must possess just pride about his family lore (*kulavidyā*). Pride about one's learning and skill in art is a sign of self-respect. There

are many people who, once they attain a position of honour, are in perpetual worry and endeavour to maintain that position at all costs. Were a rival to pick up some controversy with them, in stead of meeting the challenge to their knowledge with a forceful show of intellect, they try to bypass the discussion; and they pretend not to have heard any censure or adverse criticism. Such an attitude on the part of a teacher is selfish and mean. The purpose of learning is to spread the light of knowledge. If, therefore, some selfish and self-satisfied teachers were to hide behind their once-acquired knowledge or the position they were lucky to get, their so-called scholarship will be nothing but an instrument of livelihood. It is difficult to call such people teachers or preceptors; they are, in fact, merchants selling the merchandise of knowledge.<sup>80</sup> The Upaniṣadic statement, 'A learned man who has known the joy of the highest knowledge has no fear from any quarter !'<sup>81</sup> must be interpreted in everyday context to mean that a truly learned man is not afraid of challenges, controversies or criticisms.

It is natural that two persons who have identical knowledge or qualifications should entertain mutual competition and rivalry.<sup>82</sup> It will be unfortunate if one were in a high position and the other, equally competent, were to be ignored or discarded. And if the discarded person were to be envious of the other, it would be natural in the light of human psychology; it would also indicate self confidence. It is the reason why competitive spirit runs among persons who are equally qualified but are placed high and low by circumstances. Of course, the final test of knowledge is the considered judgement of the experts in the particular field. Many people may succeed in parading their knowledge or skill before an assembly of half-baked or mediocre men. A man of real sound learning, of firm and quick intellectual grasp and of transparent skill in imparting knowledge to others, would stand the test before an assembly of the learned. The true test of knowledge is a fire-test. Pure gold is not blackened by the flames of fire. A man whose knowledge and skill are not tarnished in the fire-test given by the experts is a truly learned man.<sup>83</sup>

Intellectual grasp of knowledge and the ability to impart it are different things : and not every teacher does have both. Teachers are, therefore, of different kinds. Some have a deep and comprehensive knowledge of their own subject, but lack the ability to teach; there are others who have masterly skill in imparting to the pupil what they know, and this skill is so impressive that one forgets to gauge the depth of their real learning; in the opinion of paṇḍita-Kauśīki, or rather of Kālidāsa, a teacher who possesses both the qualities, sound and profound knowledge of the subject and a matchless ability to put it across, is an ideal teacher, one who must be placed at the head of all preceptors.<sup>84</sup>

If Kālidāsa expects such sterling qualities from a teacher, he has some expectations about a pupil too. Were the teacher not to get a pupil worthy of his calibre, what chance is there for his learning and skill to scintillate with brilliance ? A rain-



drop falling in a conch-shell in a sea when the constellation *Svāti* looms in the sky is alone transformed into a pearl; in the same way, the learning and skill imparted by a teacher to a very worthy and deserving pupil blossom into real brilliance.<sup>85</sup> The implication of the analogy is that a pupil has to be worthy, with innate abilities, before a teacher may start teaching him; otherwise it will be a sheer waste. In the *gurukula* system in ancient India, the desire and insistence on the part of a teacher to take up only deserving pupils had a meaning and a significance. Instances of preceptors who would not impart real knowledge before putting a pupil to some kind of severe test are easily found in the Upaniṣads; and it appears that such a criterion continued to operate in educational life in later days also. It may have lost some of its validity, perhaps, with the employment of paid teachers. The teacher today cannot exercise this right of refusing a pupil; the ability to pay fees is the only passport to education.

In Kālidāsa's thinking a pupil too had a certain privilege as the teacher did have. It was considered unfair to ask pupil to show his knowledge or skill, in a test or examination, till he had fully assimilated it.<sup>86</sup> In modern language it means that tests or examinations were for the pupils; the pupils were not compelled to submit to them unless they were ready. And the guardians were equally alert about this principle. Queen Dhāriṇī's objection to the public show of Mālavikā's skill in the art of dance can be interpreted from this angle. But it is also true that the teacher, not the pupil or the pupil's guardian, will be in a better position to judge whether a pupil is ready for the test or must wait. If Gaṇadāsa insisted that Mālavikā gave an exhibition of her ability, even though Dhāriṇī thought that Mālavikā was yet 'not ripe', it means the teacher was confident of his pupil, whatever laymen may think.

There is an educational principle involved in the confidence a teacher may express like this about a particular pupil. The teachers in those days generally declined to accept a pupil with mediocre intelligence lacking the ability to complete a course in a branch of knowledge or in art. Dhāriṇī asks, 'If a girl with limited intelligence spoiled the instruction she had received from her preceptor, how could it be taken as the teacher's fault?' Gaṇadāsa replies, with confidence, that it would be the teacher's fault; because, 'In choosing a pupil not worthy of the standard the teacher shows his defective intelligence.'<sup>87</sup> It is evident that this principle cannot be operative in our present educational setup. It may have some scope still in the teaching of some arts like music or dance; but it is invalid in the sphere of general education. A teacher may come to grief if he used this principle. And educational institutions, guardians of students and even the government have no use of it. Strangely enough, the present day student also may not have any respect for a teacher with an independent mind and principles, concerned as he is with obtaining a certificate or a degree by hook or by crook. Kālidāsa's principle that a teacher would show lack of intelligence if he accepted an unworthy pupil is clearly out of date!

( 7 )

The thoughts Kālidāsa has expressed about the art of literature are few, mostly suggestive, but quite important to understand his artistic inclinations. Dealing with the Rāmakathā in his *Raghuvamśa* Kālidāsa says about Vālmīki that his

'sorrow arising from the sight of the bird wounded by the hunter transformed itself into a poetic verse.'<sup>88</sup>

This description of Vālmīki's poetic inspiration bears a close resemblance to the words of Ānandavardhana.<sup>89</sup> And since Ānandavardhana came later than Kālidāsa (in the 9th century A. D.) it is reasonable to believe that the poetician is imitating Kālidāsa's words and sharing his view. It is clear from Ānandavardhana's *Dhivanyāloka* and Abhinavagupta's commentary *Locana* on it that the poetic principle of *rasadhvani* is being enunciated with this literary allusion. The critical observation touches the process of poetic creation and literary expression. Poetry presents an aesthetic experience. A poet is stirred into an awareness of such an experience through emotional perception. Vālmīki's heart was profoundly stirred by the lament of a bird. The sorrow roused in his heart by the tragic spectacle could not but help seeking a spontaneous expression. But the expression also comes in suggestive words (*dhvani*), coloured by the emotion and blossoming through emotion (*rasa*). This is the nature of an aesthetic experience which Ānandavardhana is propounding here ; and as Kālidāsa has expressed the experience in words which Ānandavardhana found fit to be used, it may be concluded that both, the poet and the poetician, share the same view about the nature of true poetry : It is that poetry is a spontaneous expression of a deeply felt emotion ; poetry presents an emotional experience ; and as such its expression is indirect and suggestive so that it can evoke a similar emotional response. This is, in brief, the principle of *rasa-dhvani*, a suggestive presentation of a deep emotional experience and its emotional impact. It is obvious that Kālidāsa was aware of the true nature of poetry. His own writing furnishes abundant examples of *rasa* and *dhvani*, which have been regarded as the hallmark of literary excellence.

We call such emotional experience presented through the medium of art an aesthetic experience because it is also an experience of beauty. A beautiful sight, a haunting melody, an extra-ordinary divine smell, all have such a profound emotional impact on a sensitive mind as to make it unaccountably restless ; so do deeply stirred emotions affect us. There is something beautiful about this, including the restlessness. We may try to philosophise about the emotional effect or call it beyond explanation. But it is there ; and it represents the heart of the matter we call art.<sup>90</sup> Kālidāsa seems to be fully aware of this high purpose of art ; the picture of the emotionally disturbed Duśyanta on hearing the song of Hamsapadikā is a testimony to it.

Paying his homage of reverence to Parameśvara (Śiva) and Pārvatī, at the beginning of *Raghuvamśa*, Kālidāsa describes the divine couple to be 'as inseparably

united as word and sense'.<sup>91</sup> Reversing the simile it is possible to say that word and sense, especially in literary art, are as inseparably joined as Śiva and Pārvatī. In the sphere of literature a word cannot exist without a significant sense and no sense can be imagined except through words. This togetherness (*sāhitya*) of word and sense constitutes the texture of literary art (*Sāhitya-kalā*). But this also means that words are important in literature only in so far as they convey a sense, namely the intent of the poet, the emotional experience he intends to communicate. The poets often forget, particularly in the composition of longer poems and in narrative or descriptive passages, the relative value of word and sense, and are tempted to play with words only. It is true that the play with words has an ornamental effect; figures of word like alliteration, rhyme, and the picturesque arrangement of letters (*citrabandha*) which is a particular feature of Sanskrit poetry, owe their existence to word-play. It has a charm of its own; but it is not true or high poetry by common consent. Kālidāsa too was tempted to try his hand at word-play, as the ninth canto of *Raghuvamśa* shows; but the important thing is that he checked this temptation. The later Sanskrit poets revelled in the display of erudition, of mastery over words and in verbal acrobatics. In the history of Sanskrit literature this is a period of decadence. As a matter of fact, renowned literary critics and theorists had pointed out that poetry which has charm only of words and patterned arrangement of words, and of the manufactured ornaments of rhetorical figures, is of a very low order.<sup>92</sup> The awareness, therefore, that Kālidāsa shows about the proper function of word and sense, and of the nature of high poetry, is very important for the art of literature.

Gaṇadāsa, the professor of dance in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* has expressed some definite views on the nature and function of *nṛtya*. *Nṛtya*, which for Kālidāsa denotes dance and *abhinaya*, the histrionic or the representational aspect of drama, is described here as a 'visual sacrifice' (*cākṣuṣa kratu*).<sup>93</sup> A dramatic (or a dance) performance is to be enjoyed with our eyes (and ears); but in describing it as a sacrifice, a number of things are further suggested, like the grandeur and splendour of spectacle; association of religion and solemnity; the co-operation of many in a single accomplishment; a link joining several people from different levels of society in a team work; which are applicable to sacrificial as well as dramatic performances. Kālidāsa states through Gaṇadāsa, that *nṛtya* has two forms, the vigorous and the tender, demonstrated by the *tāṇḍava* and the *lasya* of Rudra-Śiva and Umā. It may be assumed that a dramatic spectacle was in the early stages a mimetic dance performance. This is borne out by the information available from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni; and Kālidāsa is probably speaking here about the origin and evolution of drama as a performing art.<sup>94</sup> From the point of view of the audience there is no doubt that drama is in its own class as a source of entertainment for all kinds of tastes. It is so because drama represents the many facets of human life; and it is one form of art which is a meeting place of several other arts like literature, dance, music, histrionics, architecture, engineering, painting and other handicrafts.

Paṇḍita-Kauśikī says in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* that, the principal thing about the science of drama is the value of stage-representation'.<sup>95</sup> Bharata describes drama as 'visual poetry' (*dṛśya-kāvya*.) *Nāṭya* or drama is literature, so far as the story, the development of the plot through different scenes, and the dialogue in prose and verse are concerned. But drama is equally an article of stage, and its theatric representation involves skillful use of different kinds of *abhinaya* and of the art of presentation. A dramatist, to be successful, will have to be careful about both these aspects of drama. Perhaps the stage aspect is more important, because drama is not a piece of literature to be read in privacy like a poem or a story, but an experience to be visualised on a theatre stage with the mass of humanity. This implies that a drama leaning heavily on the literary side may miss the stage values, and thereby become only a 'literary composition in dialogue form' (*prabandha*). On the other hand, a drama using all possible gadgets of successful stage performance may not have the depth of literature; and in that case it will be worthless as an experience. All students of Sanskrit drama know how in later days drama turned into a clever literary exercise using the same mechanical devices and patterns, losing in the attempt its value as performing art. The important thing is to achieve a nice balance between the literary and the stage aspects of drama. Kālidāsa's perception of these values and his own accomplishment in the art of drama by their conscious use establish him as a great dramatist.

The Sūtradhāra about to present the *Śākuntala* to the assembled gathering says with apparent diffidence, 'I cannot consider my special knowledge of drama production to be really well-unless the learned (the experts) are completely satisfied.'<sup>96</sup> If Kālidāsa said this when he wrote and presented his masterpiece, the remark certainly shows his benign modesty. But it is possible to interpret the remark from a literary angle and get additional meaning out of it. The learned critics, the experts, are the final authority in judging the merit of a dramatic or literary work. And this means that literature is not only the self-expression of a creative artist; it is also a communication. And so, the canons of appreciation and assessment cannot be disregarded. A gifted and inspired writer may create new standards and forge new forms or trends. Yet it cannot be denied that a creative piece of literature is as much for the delight and satisfaction of the artist himself as it must evoke similar response or satisfaction and pleasure from the discerning reader and the learned critic. The remark, thus, implies that Kālidāsa knew and accepted the value of literature as a communication.

(8)

Looking into thoughts of Kālidāsa on different aspects of life it is now possible for us to have some idea about his outlook on life and the values he accepted. In regard to religion and religious philosophy, social laws and the ideology behind them, Kālidāsa's attitude is of acceptance of the given framework. The historical background on which Kālidāsa created his literature may have made such an attitude inevitable or necessary. Even then the personal note is clear. Kālidāsa

does not brook any revolt or conflict; he prefers quiet, peace and steady established life. His literature, which reflects this preference, shows that he has connived at or avoided any conflicts in the religious and social spheres, and omitted any observation on the social inequalities and unfair traditions. He appears to believe that one can remain within the frame of religious and social philosophy of the day and still enjoy life and derive pleasure from it.

It need not be said that this attitude betokens defeatism. For, Kālidāsa maintains and advocates certain ideals of political government and of the social life of man. They underline the faith that given the necessary ideals and moral values the life of humanity can be raised to material eminence and spiritual good.

The feelings of peace and satisfaction, the contented and joyful outlook on life may, perhaps, conceal some deeper significance than a mere personal attitude. The philosophy of renunciation and spiritual good is very great; intellectually no objection or exception can be taken to it; as knowledge and a way of life it is incomparable. And yet it cannot be gainsaid that such an otherworldly philosophy is a negation of life as it is. A common man surrounded by such a philosophy is most likely to have a pessimistic outlook on life and miss even the simple natural joys of life. It appears that Kālidāsa does not want the common man to be affected so gloomily by a philosophy which is beyond his comprehension. So, while accepting the religious philosophy as it was and supporting the highest spiritual value of *mokṣa-dharma* as the guiding principle of man's life, Kālidāsa yet emphasised the religion taught by *Śmṛtis* and *Dharmaśāstras*, the religion of the four castes and four stages of human existence, leading a man gradually and step by step to the final goal of spiritual salvation, while enabling him to experience the fulness of every stage of existence. He described the lives of ideal kings and showed that every stage of life not only demanded certain duties from man but also offered some pleasures. Kālidāsa never suggests that a man should give himself to pleasures at the cost of his duties and obligations; that would be utterly ruinous. But one may not lean excessively towards the other extreme; at least the common man and the bulk of humanity should not. Kālidāsa's own philosophy of living is to live and enjoy every stage of life fully and work one's way in the end towards God.

Such an attitude, it will be seen, is essential for creative activity and the pursuit of art. It is really doubtful whether a person rejecting life as it is could ever be capable of understanding life and interpreting it fully. A seer and a philosopher knowing the essence of life would create a philosophy, not art. In order to create art you have to be an observer and a critic of life. You have to study life minutely in all its stages, aspects and facets; and the study can be authentic and complete only if you are prepared to go through life and live it fully. This viewpoint includes the spiritual philosophy of life naturally; but it includes also the joys and sorrows of a full life. A common man will speak the language of spiritual values and higher life

but will never be able to deny the pleasures to himself, creating thus an internal contradiction in his life and living like a smooth, self-deceiving hypocrite. The philosophy of phased life is, therefore, in the interest of the common man, the largest section of humanity. And for a creative artist it is the only philosophy that will work.

But once this attitude is accepted, with reasoning and logic and with the consciousness of the failings and weaknesses of man, one's eyes will be opened on the beauty and joy that lurk in the ordinary routine of life, the order and seasonal changes in nature, the small and neglected things; in fact, one would find '*tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.*'<sup>70</sup> According to philosophy the bliss of salvation, the joys of heavenly existence lie beyond this mortal life. But on the platform of art the joys and heaven are to be found on this very earth. Kālidāsa describes Duṣyanta returning to the earth from the heavenly world. He stops on the Hemakūṭa mountain, the residence of the sage Mārīca who is the parent of the gods. The place is just above the earth, many aerial regions below the world or heaven. It is significant that Mārīca chose this place near the earth for his residence. Seeing the hermitage of Mārīca Duṣyanta remarks, 'This place is more blissful than the heavens. I feel that I have been immersed in a pool of nectar !'<sup>71</sup> Duṣyanta's feeling is really significant because he has visited and lived in heaven. But Mātali's remark will probably carry greater weight. Mātali is Indra's charioteer and a denizen of the heavenly world. As he brings the divine chariot down through various aerial regions to the earth he spots the earth; and he exclaims with sheer joy, 'Oh, how gorgeous and beautiful is the earth !'<sup>72</sup> Kālidāsa shows us through the eyes of a heavenly being the beauty of our earth. This place of the mortals is as beautiful as heaven, nay, more beautiful than heaven. Art must bring such an experience to us.

## NOTES

1. See section II, 'Date : Probable period of life and literary activity.'
2. Śāradārājan Ray : Introduction to his edition of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*.
3. *Raghuvamśa* XV 42-53.
4. *Uttara-rāma-carita*, act II. See verses 8, 10-11.
5. cf., for instance, Viśvanātha, *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, I. 2.
6. *Kēvyaprakāśa*, I. 2. 'काव्यं...सद्यःपरनिवृत्तये कान्तासंमिततयोपदेशयुजे ।'
7. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, I. 65-81.
8. cf. *Raghuvamśa* I. 44, IX. 20. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, act V, dialogue between vv. 14 and 16, and the personal letter sent by Puṣyamitra.
9. *Śākuntala*, VI. 1.
10. cf. *Kumārasambhava*, I. 3-15; III. 45-50; V. 65-81.
11. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, X. 7-36.
12. cf. The *nāṇḍī* verses.
13. *Meghadūta*, vv. 37, 39,

14. See, for references, *Kumārasambhava* V. 65-81; the *nāndī* verses of the dramas; and *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I. 4b.
15. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 44 : एकैव मूर्तिविभिदे त्रिधा सा...
16. *Raghuvamśa* X. 16-32.
17. *Ibid.*, X. 44.
18. *Ibid.*, X. 31 : अनवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं न ते किञ्चन विद्यते ।  
लोकातुग्रह एवैको हेतुस्ते जन्मकर्मणोः ॥
19. cf. *Gītā* III. 22 : न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।  
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥
20. cf. *Raghuvamśa* VIII. 79-81.
21. cf. *Śākuntala*, V. 2. cd : तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वं । भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरमौहृदानि ॥
22. *Ibid.*; VII. 35 cd : ममापि च क्षययतु नोललोहितः पुनर्भवं परिगतशक्तिरात्मभूः ॥
23. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, VIII. 11, 14-22. cf. also *Śākuntala*, II. 34, VII-20.
24. *Ibid.*, I. 8 : 'योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम्'.
25. *Śākuntala*, VII. 11-12.
26. See *Raghuvamśa*, I. 6-8; *Śākuntala*, IV. 20, VII. 20
27. *Śākuntala* VII-12 : 'यत् काङ्क्षन्ति तपोभिरन्यमुनयस्तस्मिन्स्तपस्यन्त्यमी ॥'
28. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, V. 20 : आशास्यमीतिविगमप्रभृति प्रजानां  
संपस्यते न खलु गोप्तरि नाग्निमित्रे ॥
29. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, I. 17 : रेखामात्रमपि क्षुण्णादा मनोवर्त्मनः परम् ।  
न व्यतीयुः प्रजास्तस्य नियन्तुर्नेमिचृतयः ॥
30. Cf. *Śākuntala*, act II : सेनापतिः-( जनागतिवम् ) रुखे, स्थिरप्रातवन्धो भव । अहं तावत् स्वामि-  
नश्चित्तवृत्तिमनुवर्तिष्ये । and ff. upto v. 5.
31. *Ibid* act VI, *Praveśika*.
32. *Ibid.*, V : नियमयसि विमार्गप्रस्थितान् आतदण्डः ।'
33. *Ibid.*, I. 11 : 'आर्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि ॥'
34. *Ibid.*, act VI; see v. 23 and the dialogue preceding it.
35. See *Raghuvamśa* V. verses 24-25-26.
36. *Śākuntala*, V. 8 = अननुषु विभवेषु ज्ञातयः सन्तु नाम । त्वयि तु परिसमाप्तं बन्धुकृत्यं प्रजानाम् ॥
37. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I, opening scene and v. 8.
38. *Śākuntala* VI. 32.
39. Cf. *Raghuvamśa* IV. 12 : यथा प्रह्लादनाच्चन्द्रः प्रतापात्तपनो यथा । तथैव सोऽभूदन्वर्थो राजा प्रकृति-  
रञ्जनात् ॥ Mallinātha's comment on this is, यद्यपि राजशब्दो राजतेः दीप्त्यर्थात् कनिष्ठप्रत्ययान्तो,  
न तु रञ्जेः, तथापि धातूनामनेकार्थत्वाद् 'रञ्जनाद् राजा' इत्युक्तं कविना ।
40. See *Śākuntala*, V. 5 ( 'प्रजाः प्रजाः स्वा इव तन्त्रयिन्वा' ), v. 7. ( 'स्वमुखनिरभिलाषः स्त्रियसे लोक-  
हेतोः' ); v. 8 ( 'नियमयसि विमार्गप्रस्थितानात्तदण्डः, प्रशमयसि विवादं कल्पसे रक्षणाय । अतनुषु  
विभवेषु ज्ञातयः सन्तु नाम, त्वयि तु परिसमाप्तं बन्धुकृत्यं प्रजानाम् ॥' )
41. *Śākuntala*, II. 14.
42. *Ibid.*, II. 13.

43. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, I. 18 : प्रजानामेव भूत्यर्थं स ताभ्यो वल्लिमग्रहीत् ।  
सहस्रगुणमुत्तमधुमादत्ते हि रसं रविः ॥
44. *Arthasāstra*. I. 19 (Rājapranidhi) :  
प्रजासुखे सुखं राज्ञः प्रजानां च हिते हितम् ।  
नात्मप्रियं हितं राज्ञः प्रजानां तु प्रियं हितम् ॥
45. cf. *Śākuntala*, V. 9.
46. *Ibid.*, VI. 26 : मा तावत् । ममापि सत्त्वैरभिभूयन्ते गृहाः । अथवा,  
अहन्यहन्यात्मन एव तावज् ज्ञातुं प्रमादस्खलितं न शक्यम् ।  
प्रजासु कः केन पथा प्रयातीत्यशेषतो वेदितुमस्ति शक्तिः ॥
47. *Raghuvamśa*, I. 7 :  
त्यागाय संभृतार्थानां सत्याय मितभाषिणाम् ।  
यशसे विजिगीषूणां प्रजायै गृहमेधिनाम् ॥
48. *Ibid.*, I. 24 :  
प्रजानां विनयाधानाद् रक्षणाद् भरणादपि ।  
स पिता पितरस्तासां केवलं जन्महेतवः ॥
49. *Ibid.*, I. 45.
50. The *Arthasāstra* reference is I. 19, Rājapranidhi. Read : उपस्थानगतः कार्यार्थिनाम् अद्वारासङ्गं कारयेत् । दुर्दर्शो हि राजा कार्याकार्यविपर्ययसम् आसन्नैः कार्यते । तेन प्रकृतिकोपमरिवशं वा गच्छेत् ।  
cf. *Śākuntala*, V. 3 ff. Kañcuki's statement, '....इदानीमेव धर्मासनादुत्थिताय पुनरुपरोधकारि कण्व-  
शिष्यागमनम् अस्मै नोत्सहे निवेदयितुम् । अथवा अविश्रमोऽयं लोकतन्त्राधिकारः ।'
51. cf. *Śākuntala*, VI. 5.
52. *Gītā*, IV. 13 : 'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।'
53. *Ibid.*, III. 35 : श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।  
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥
54. cf. *Śākuntala*, I.11, II.16 ('आपन्नाभयसन्नेषु दीक्षिताः खलु पौरवाः ।')
55. *Ibid.*, VI. 1 : भर्तः मा एवं भण ।  
सहजं किल यद् विनिन्दितं न खलु तत् कर्म विवर्जनीयम् ।  
पशुमारणकर्मदारुणोऽनुकम्पामृदुरेव श्रोत्रियः ॥
56. *Ibid.*, V. 11 ff. : 'भो भोस्तपस्विनः, असौ अत्रभवान् वर्णाश्रमाणां रक्षिता प्रागेव मुक्तासनो वः प्रति-  
पालयति ।'
57. *Ibid.*, V. 10b : 'न कश्चिद् वर्णानाम् अपथम् अपकृष्टोऽपि भजते ।'
58. *Ibid.*, I. 22, 26-27.
59. *Raghuvamśa* I. 8 : शैशवेऽभ्यस्तविद्यानां यौवने विषयैषिणाम् ।  
वार्धके मुनिवृत्तीनां योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम् ॥
60. *Ibid.*, I. 65 ff.; X. 2,4.
61. cf. *Śākuntala*, act II, the Karabbaka episode.
62. *Ibid.*, VI. 25. Cf. with this *Raghuvamśa* I. 66, Dilipa's words to Vasiṣṭha : नूनं मत्तः परं वंश्याः  
पिण्डविच्छेददर्शिनः । न प्रकामभुजः श्राद्धे स्वधासंग्रहतत्पराः ॥



63. *Sākuntala* IV. (between vv. 17-18): 'वनौकसोऽपि सन्तो लौकिकज्ञा वयम् ।'  
 64. *Ibid.*, act VII (following v. 12).  
 65. *Raghuvamśa*, I. 7 : 'प्रजायै गृहमेधिनाम् ।' Mallinātha comments, प्रजायै सन्तानाय गृहमेधिनां दार-  
 परिग्रहाणाम् । न तु कामोपभोगाय ।  
 66. cf. *Meghadūta*, Uttara-megha, v. 14 : वितेशानां न च खलु वयो यौवनादन्यदस्ति ।  
 67. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, IX. 47 : 'न पुनरेति गतं चतुरं वयः ।  
 68. *Ibid.*, canto XIX.  
 69. cf. *Raghuvamśa*, XIII. 38-44.  
 70. cf. *Gītā*, VII. 11b : धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ also, X. 28 : 'प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः'  
 71. *Raghuvamśa*, XIV. 61 :  
 वाच्यस्त्वया मद्बचनात् स राजा वहौ विशुद्धामपि यत्समक्षम् ।  
 मां लोकवादश्रवणादहासीः श्रुतस्य तत् किं सदृशं कुलस्य ॥  
 72. *Sākuntala*, V. 27. ( 'पतिकुले तव दास्यमपि क्षमम् ।' )  
 73. *Ibid.*, V. 26 : तदेषा भवतः पत्नी त्यज वैनां गृहाण वा ।  
 उपपन्ना हि दारेषु प्रभुता सर्वतोमुखी ॥  
 74. *Ibid.*, IV. 18 :  
 शुभ्रष्व गुरुं कुरु प्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने  
 भर्तुर्विप्रकृताऽपि रोषणतया मा स्म प्रतीपं गमः ।  
 भूयिष्ठं भव दक्षिणा परिजने भाग्येष्वनुत्सेकिनी  
 यान्त्येवं गृहिणीपदं युवतयो वामाः कुलस्याधयः ॥  
 75. *Mālatīmādhava*, VII. ll. 46, 58-60, 68-72. See my *Bhavabhūti*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1979; ch. 6; p. 72.  
 76. Note, मुनीनां दशसाहस्रं योऽन्नपानादिपोषणात् ।  
 अद्यापयति विप्रर्विरसौ कुलपतिः स्मृतः ॥  
 quoted by Gajendragadkar in his text-edition of *Sākuntala*, on I 12.4,  
 77. cf. *Sākuntala*, II. 13 : मूर्खं, अन्यद् भागधेयमेतेषां रक्षणे निपतति यद् रत्नराशीनमपि विहाय  
 अभिनन्द्यम् । पश्य  
 यदुत्तिष्ठति वर्णेभ्यो नृपाणां क्षयि तद्धनम् ।  
 तपःषट्भागमक्षय्यं ददत्यारण्यका हि नः ॥  
 78. *Raghuvamśa*, Canto V.  
 79. See *Swapnavāsavadatta*, I. 8b : 'दीक्षां पारितवान् किमिच्छति पुनर्देयं गुरोर्यद् भवेत् ।  
 80. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, act I : 'कामं खलु सर्वस्यापि कुलविद्या बहुमता । न पुनरस्माकं नाट्यं प्रति  
 मिश्यागौरवम् ।' I. preceding v. 4; and v. 17 :  
 लब्धास्पदोऽस्मीति विवादभीरोस्तितिक्षमाणस्य परेण निन्दाम् ।  
 यस्यागमः केवलजीविकैव तं ज्ञानपण्यं वणिजं वदन्ति ॥  
 81. 'आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न विभेति कुतश्चन ।' *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II. 4. 1, 9.1.  
 82. *Ibid.*, I. 20b : 'प्रायः समानविद्याः परस्परयशःपुरोभागाः' cf. also I. 10.  
 83. *Ibid.*, II. 9 : उपदेशं विदुः शुद्धं सन्तस्तमुपदेशिनः । इयमायते न विद्वत्सु यः काखनमिवाग्निषु ॥

cf. also *Śakuntala* I. 2 : 'आ परितोषाद् विदुषां न साधु मन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम् ।'

84. *Ibid.*, I. 16 :

स्निग्धा क्रिया कस्यचिदात्मसंस्था संक्रान्तिरन्यस्य विशेषयुक्ता ।

यस्योभयं साधु, स शिक्षकाणां धुरि प्रतिष्ठापयितव्य एव ॥

85. *Ibid.*, I. 6 : पात्रविशेषे न्यस्तं गुणान्तरं व्रजति शिल्पमाधातुः ।

जलमिव समुद्रशुक्तौ मुक्ताफलतां पयोदस्य ॥

86. *Ibid.*, I. 17.<sup>1-2</sup> : Queen Dhārīṇī observes : '...अपरिनिष्ठितस्य उपदेशस्य अन्याय्यं प्रदर्शनम् ।'

87. *Ibid.* I. 16.<sup>6-9</sup>. Read : देवी-यदा पुनर्मन्दमेधा शिष्या उपदेशं मलिनयति तदा आचार्यस्य दोषो नु । राजा-देवि, एवमापद्यते ( उपपद्यते ) । गणदासः-विनेतुः अद्रव्यपरिग्रहोऽपि बुद्धिलाघवं प्रकाशयति ।

88. *Raghuvamśa* IV. 70b : 'निषादविद्धाण्डजदर्शनोत्थः श्लोकत्वमापद्यत यस्य शोकः ॥'

89. cf. *Dhvanyāloka*, I. 5 :

काव्यस्य स एव अर्थस्तथा चादिकवेः पुरा ।

कौञ्चद्वन्द्ववियोगोत्थः शोकः श्लोकत्वमागतः ॥

90. cf. *Śakuntala*, V. 2 :

रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुरांश्च निशम्य शब्दान्

पर्युत्सुकोभवति यत् सुखितोऽपि जन्तुः ।

तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमवोधपूर्वं

भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरसौहृदानि ॥

This is a difficult and intricate subject. If interested in further explanation, see my article "Pratibhāna" in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar O. R. Institute, Poona*. Diamond Jubilee Number, 1978

91. *Raghuvamśa* I. 1 : वागीर्थाविष संपृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।

जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥

92. cf. among others, Maṃmaṭa, *Kāvyaprakāśa*, I. 5 :

'शब्दचित्रं वाच्यचित्रमव्यङ्ग्यं त्ववरं स्मृतम् ।'

93. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I. 4 :

देवानामिदमामनन्ति मुनयः कान्तं कर्तुं चाक्षुषं

रुद्रेणैदमुमाकृतव्यतिकरे स्वाङ्गे विभक्तं द्विधा ।

त्रैगुण्योद्भवमत्र लोकचरितं नानारसं दृश्यते

नादयं भिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाप्येकं समाराधनम् ॥

94. See my *Bharata-Nāṭya-Māñjarī*, Introduction, pp. VII-X; also my *Sanskrit Drama, Karnatak University, Dharwar*, 1975; pp. 3-6.

95. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I. 15. 11-12 : देव, प्रयोगप्रधानं हि नाट्यशास्त्रम् । किमत्र वाग्व्यवहारेण ।

96. *Śakuntala*, I. 2. see Note no. 83.

97. Shakespeare *As you Like It*, act II scene 1 (Opening speech of Duke).

98. *Śakuntala*, VII. 11 4 : 'स्वर्गादधिकतरं निर्वृत्तिस्थानम् । अमृतहृदमिव अवगाढोऽस्मि ।'

99. *Ibid.*, VII. 8<sup>1</sup> : (सबहुमानमवलोक्य) अहो, उदाररमणीया पृथिवी ।

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## 5 SUPREME THEME : Śṛṅgāra or Love

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In understanding Kālidāsa's thoughts and ideas there was an attempt to discover his outlook on life. In this discussion Kālidāsa's thoughts on love were not touched. The reason is that they deserve a separate treatment. As the major theme of Kālidāsa's poetry and drama his views on love are very important in order to understand his art as well.

Kālidāsa may be described as the Prince of śṛṅgāra. Śṛṅgāra holds the kingly position among the rhetorical *rasas*, and Kālidāsa is the 'grace' of Poetic Muse who gives a 'beautiful literary expression' to this king of sentiments.<sup>1</sup> Two of his poems and all his three plays carry the theme of love. His lyric *Rtusamhāra* is principally devoted to the description of the six seasons of nature; but in describing the effect of the seasons on the emotional life of man the colourful shades of different emotions and particularly of love have naturally crept over the canvas. The *Raghuvamśa* sings the praises of ancient kings of the Solar dynasty and their royal life; but here again glimpses of married love and occasionally of youthful love cannot be missed. The basic emotion of Kālidāsa's literature is, thus, śṛṅgāra or love; it is the *sthāyī bhāva* of his writing.

Before examining Kālidāsa's treatment of love, it will be of some advantage to consider the objections raised in this connection. These objections come from different approaches. There is a section of critics who are traditionally very conservative. They always think that the variety of life can suggest a number of themes to a writer; harping therefore on the theme of love and such intimate subjects is meaningless. They think that śṛṅgāra and woman who symbolises its pleasures are a positive obstacle from religious and other-worldly viewpoint; the aim of human life must be realisation of God and salvation from the repeated cycle of life and death; as such, the literary or any other art that hinders the spiritual progress of man must be deemed to be completely irrelevant. Assuming that such an objection is sincere and honest, it has to be remembered that it is not confined to Sanskrit literature or to Kālidāsa; it can be, and has been taken at all times, in all countries, against erotic literature. It is not necessary to make any particular attempt to answer this objection. Those who honestly object to literature of love have other kinds of writing available to them, like the lives of saints and ideal men, and books on religion, philosophy and spiritual life. The truth, however, is that love has been a universal theme of literature at all times and in all countries. It is the essential and important emotion that

moulds and shapes all life. And no one has the right to tell a real artist what he should and should not present in his art. The emotion of love came to be born in this universe with the appearance of the first man and woman on the surface of this earth; and it is bound to remain here as long as there is man on the earth. Besides, love has inspired and shaped some of the most beautiful creations of art as universal history testifies. In other words, love has been a perennial theme of art; and in spite of any objections honest or hypocritical, it will remain so.

Another objection to *śṛṅgāra* is due not to the description of love as such but to the excess, the openness in it. An objection from this angle can be both honest and hypocritical as well. The element of hypocrisy lurk in it because these critics often enjoy such literature of love in private and turn to it again and again with relish. Only they lack the courage to admit their enjoyment in public or the cloak of decent culture with which they cover themselves in public appearance prevents them from speaking the truth. If the objection is on such a level of hypocrisy, the answer is that man is inevitably fond of love; the limits imposed on the public exhibition of love either in art or in life do undergo a change with the passage of time or with an evolution in culture; so that, what a person may regard as an unbecoming excess may not appear to be so to another person. A reasonable stand like this leaves no room for guarded hypocrisy. The readers who admire Bhartṛhari for his *Nīti* and *Vairāgya Śatakas* must remember that the same poet had scored a *Century of love*.

But the objection taken against the open description of love, when it is on the level of art values, is no doubt worthy of consideration, and literary criticism can not ignore it. This kind of objection has been levelled against a body of literature in all countries and Sanskrit drama and poetry do not escape from the charge of indecent eroticism. Kālidāsa is guilty too of an occasional excess in his treatment of love which offends the values of art. The usual example is the sexual love he describes of Śiva and Pārvatī in the eighth canto of his *Kumārasambhava*. Traditional criticism even in Sanskrit has expressed an unfavourable opinion against this gay picture; and it is believed, in old tradition, that Kālidāsa gave up writing this epic further in the face of the critical disfavour. Personally, I do not share this belief. For, the very title of the epic implies only the 'possibility' of the 'birth' of Kumāra; and considering Kālidāsa's leaning on the art of suggestion (*dhvani*) of which he is a master, the subject of the epic is really fulfilled with the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī and their union in love. If the story were to be extended further by describing the actual birth of the child born of the love union, his growing up, and his marvellous achievement, the epic theme would *not* be *Kumārasambhava*, but *Kumāracarita* or *Śivavamśa* ! Returning to the point of discussion, it must be pointed out that one of the ablest masters of Sanskrit literary theory and criticism, Anandavardhana, shows his frank disapproval of excesses in the treatment of *Śṛṅgāra*, drawing attention to the many

aspects of love which can be treated by poets with beauty and relish. But Ānandavardhana himself points out that a truly inspired writing of a really great poet can make all the difference:

*Mahākavīnām api uttamadevatā-viśāya-prasiddha-sambhoga-śṛṅgārādi anaucityām śakti-tiraskṛīatvāt grāmyatvena na pratibhāsate|Yathā Kumārasambhava Devī-sambhoga-varṇanani|<sup>2</sup>*

Ānandavardhana is speaking about the two kinds of defects that may creep in literary writing. The defects of the poet himself, his lack of adequate ability and constructive skill, making the composition defective; and the defects which are due to the writer's lack of innate creative power *śakti* or *pratibhā*. The defects of construction, language etc. are often shrouded by a poet's genuine creative power; the defects of the latter, *pratibhā*, alone expose the common worth of a writer. Kālidāsa's description of the sexual love of Śiva-Pārvatī does not descend to vulgarity due to his extra-ordinary creative ability and genius. What in the hands of lesser poets would have turned into indecent and vulgar amour has been illumined into beauty and joy by the poetic genius of Kālidāsa. The literary principle on the basis of which Ānandavardhana makes this distinction between art and vulgar exhibitionism is *aucitya* or art-propriety. And in his treatment of *rasa* theory Ānandavardhana states that there is no greater defect than impropriety causing break in aesthetic relish (*rasa-bhaṅga*) while appreciating literary art.<sup>3</sup> Love (*rati*) may be a favourite theme with the poets. But sexual union is not an exclusive aspect of love. Poetic imagination can conceive many forms through which love could be expressed. They could be cultured and decent; and they would have the appropriate impact on a reader's mind and give him aesthetic pleasure. A writer deserves to pay attention to this kind of propriety in art. But sometimes even great poets are carried away by their power or in their enthusiasm they write something which is not quite proper. When this happens, Ānandavardhana thinks, it is defective art :

*Na ca sambhoga-śṛṅgārasya surata-lakṣaṇaḥ eva ekaḥ prakārah, yāvad anye api prabhedāḥ paraspara-prema-durśanādayaḥ sambhavanti, te kasmād uttama-prakṛti-viśayena varṇyante ? yat tu evamvidhe viśaye mahākavīnām api asamīkṣyakārita lakṣye dṛśyate sa doṣa eva<sup>4</sup>.*

The principle of propriety in regard to the type of character described (*prakṛti*) and the theme or subject of the composition (*viśaya*) which Ānandavardhana insists on will be quite acceptable. At the same time it is necessary to accept, on the level of art, his advocacy of the extra-ordinary creative power (*śakti* or *pratibhā*) of a poet which puts a different complexion on a literary presentation. And it means that if a poet's theme, the type of principal character he has chosen to be depicted, and the expected art-form of his composition were not naturally favourable to *Śṛṅāra*, the erotic descriptions would prove to be ticklish and excessive and offend aesthetic taste and

response. On the basis of this literary and aesthetic principle, some of the open descriptive touches in the *Meghadūta* and the married love of Śiva-Pārvatī in the *Kumārasaṁbhava* could not be objectionable, at least from the angle of art. Individual taste may differ; and some would not be able to forget the religious or moral approach; but they are irrelevant in consideration of real art. The point will be clear, I hope, by looking at other examples from Kālidāsa's poetry. In the *Raghuvamśa* Kālidāsa says that Raghu, during his military campaign, lingered over the Southern mountains Malaya and Dardura for a while to enjoy and then he crossed the Sahya in order to turn towards the west. But describing this detail with a poetic fancy and double meaning, Kālidāsa presents the Malaya-Dardura mountains as the twin breasts of the Southern Quarter, and the Sahya as the *nitamba* (slope; buttock) of Medinī, Earth personified as a woman.<sup>5</sup> The erotic and sexual suggestion in this descriptive touch is plain; and in the context of a military campaign which is supposed to be brimming with the heroic sentiment (*vīrarasa*), the touch of sexual love is unexpected, irrelevant from the angle of art. A verse describing the death of Tāḍakā is objectionable on a similar ground. The arrow of Rāma hit Tāḍakā on her heart and she passed away to the abode of Yama, the god of death; using metaphor and pun Kālidāsa has likened her death to the journey of a woman in love (*abhisārikā*), hit by Cupid's arrow, wending her way to her lover's house.<sup>6</sup> This touch is uncalled for in the present context and situation. Such irrelevant erotic pictures are few in Kālidāsa's writing; mostly he adheres to the values of art. The point, therefore, is the erotic pictures would be objectionable only on the ground of art, and not for any other consideration. The objection cannot be taken against the treatment of love, but against the uncalled for, irrelevant excesses which offend aesthetic taste and response.

## ( 2 )

There is another class of critics who are, in fact, the admirers of Kālidāsa. They do not openly criticise Kālidāsa's pictures of love; but they put a different construction on them so as to sublimate the emotion of love with the colour of the Vedānta. The essential point of this interpretative criticism is that in Kālidāsa's treatment of love earth is transformed into heaven, and the physical love with its natural biological urge is sublimated into a bodiless union of two spirits or souls. And the critics imply by suggestion that a poet who raises physical love to the heavenly level of spiritual love must indeed be a very great poet and a supreme artist.<sup>7</sup>

A critical approach of this kind is the fruit of two trends of thought which need to be examined carefully. It is assumed in this approach that earthly or physical love belongs to a very low level of life; it has to be sublimated; man must rise to nobility from the mere physical level of love. Kālidāsa has done this in his literature; rather he had to do it to make his art worthwhile. This trend of thought is implicit or openly assumed in this approach. It is not beyond common knowledge that such an attitude to life is rather negative, born of the philosophy of renunciation. And yet, a

reader of Kālidāsa's literature cannot afford to forget that the poet treats of love, and of the relations between man and woman with uninhibited frankness and the care of a profound artist. The critics of this class seem to think that if Kālidāsa had treated love only on the level of physical necessity and pleasure he would have been a writer of the common run. Ordinary men and women love the pleasures of life. If literature were to cater to this necessity and taste, it would serve to nourish only the common tendency of enjoyment of pleasures and fail to raise man on to the higher level of noble life. It means that the approach implies another tendency of thought which demands from literature the uplifting of human life and sublimation of pleasure-seeking emotions either in a suggestive manner of art or even openly if necessary. In suggesting that Kālidāsa describes *rati* without any reserve, but he also lifts his readers to the higher planes of spirituality, there is an implicit defense of Kālidāsa's art, whether these critics intended it or not.

This Vedānta-coloured criticism is very pleasing to the ear and the heart. It has saved Kālidāsa from being a common poet in spite of his frank and open pictures of human love; it has also sublimated Kālidāsa whom we all love. And so, the approach is bound to delight us. We too have to gain something from this approach as readers. We may not be sure of what 'sublimation' exactly means. Our mind may linger, like that of Duṣyanta, over the cane-bower on the bank of Mālīnī; the picture of Duṣyanta getting jealous of the bee hovering round the lotusfragrant face of Śakuntalā may make a deep and pleasant impression on us; but we are free to enjoy the poetic and dramatic art of Kālidāsa according to our capacity; because some great critics have assured us that there is something very noble in Kālidāsa's treatment of love. In other words, this critical approach has saved the common readers as well!

The basic question, however, is what precisely does Kālidāsa intend by his poetic pictures to convey. An examination of this critical approach in depth is necessary not only to understand Kālidāsa's writing but also to understand the approach of true art.

In the light of the above critical approach, the Yakṣa in the *Meghadūta*, and Agnimitra and Purūravas, the two heroes of Kālidāsa's plays, will appear to be common men given to pleasures of sex and enjoyment of life. The ideal character in this critical approach is Umā in the *Kumārasambhava*. Umā practised very hard penance. Disregarding the frailty and tenderness of a woman's body, she abstained from eating food; lived on air; did the *tapa* with five fires blazing round her in hot summer; even seasoned yogis could not have done the penance Umā actually practised. Umā materialised in her life the noble values of spiritual existence. That is why she got Śiva; she was merged in the body of Śiva. The love of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā went through the trying test of sorrow. Their first mutual attraction was physical. But Śakuntalā was brought up in the hermitage of Kaṇva, under his care and teaching. And so, she was immediately aware of 'an emotion contrary to *tapo*-

*vana* life' that took possession of her heart.<sup>9</sup> But the awareness did not help her to check herself; she was swept off her feet by her emotion of love. This was her first mistake. It led to another. She failed to perform her duty as a hostess which Kaṇva had entrusted to her. She did not take cognisance of Durvāsas. This was an insult to the sage, an error, which brought its own punishment in the form of curse and her repudiation by her husband. The lonely vow of loyalty and devotion to her husband which she observed for six painful years in the hermitage of Māṛica consumed the dross in her life, purified her love, and she became fit to be reunited to her husband under divine blessing. Duṣyanta was a *pārthiva* in every sense of the word : a king no doubt, but earthly. In his first meeting with Śakuntalā he had greeted her courteously, asking, 'Does your penance prosper?'<sup>9</sup> But his own inclination was to turn the *tapovana* (penance-grove) into an *upavana* (pleasure-garden).<sup>10</sup> Duṣyanta was addicted to pleasures of life; he was a seeker of fresh honey, in the words of Humsapadikā. It was necessary that he too suffered from the pangs of separation as Śakuntalā did. When Duṣyanta realised the spiritual significance of son as a saviour of the fore-fathers from hell and as an assurance of family continuity, which is the other-worldly purpose of marriage, and when he got an opportunity to fight a battle of the gods against the demons and thereby execute a piece of work at once unselfish, philanthropic and serving a divine purpose, then only did Duṣyanta rise to the higher level of noble life, sublimating his earthly passions into spiritual love, and becoming fit to be reunited to his pious wife. This reunion of the chastened lovers then took place on the Hemakūṭa mountain, where the parents of the gods live, a place above the earth and more beautiful and pious than the heaven itself. Thus was earth transformed into heaven, the mundane into spiritual; the physical love was sublimated into heavenly love.

This construction put on the treatment of love in the *Śakuntala* and *Kumārasambhava* is very pleasing to read. But it is high time for some one to state in categorical terms that it is totally irrelevant to art and to the literary art of Kālidāsa in particular. Such literary criticism grafted on ancient works by later minds prejudiced by different philosophies is likely to create chaos in the field of art criticism. It is necessary, therefore, to expose the incorrectness of its approach which is based on a different outlook on life. This kind of criticism is born of a particular philosophical tradition. Already many critics and most of the college teachers are strongly influenced by it. Many a literary critic have used this approach to sing the glory of Bhārata in its emphasis on the ascetic mode of life and spirituality. Some have used it as a handy and convenient device; so that in any dramatic composition when the theme runs into union, separation and re-union these critics are ready with the labels, the first union being called 'physical' and the second 'spiritual'! And this is not naive criticism; these critics feel a glow of triumph in that they have bestowed on literature a noble and spiritual significance. A really close examination of this prestigious



critical approach is unavoidable for a healthy, unbiassed criticism of art and literature.

Umā observed such hard penance as would have daunted even determined ascetics. Why? In order to get Śiva. In the simple language of life Umā did this to get Śiva as her husband whom she loved from the depth of her heart. She resorted to *tapa* because Śiva was a *tapasvī*, a *yogi*, whose heart could be touched only by *tapa*; the attractions of youth and feminine beauty, stirring of human emotions and blandishments of nature had failed to produce any effect on Śiva's mind. The effort of Umā, therefore, is like that of a young girl who identifies herself completely with the absorbing interests of her young man, who struggles to achieve some measure of skill or efficiency in that interest, in order to win his heart for herself. In other words, were the hero of this theme different, interested, say in lute-playing, the heroine would have displayed absorbing interest in music, striven to get music lessons from him, and thereby work her way to his heart.<sup>11</sup> The art design is unmistakable; and it is useless to put one's own construction on it to suit one's fancy or pet philosophy. If penance undertaken to win a husband were to be regarded as spiritual exercise, what name is to be given to the careful efforts made to get a suitable wife and to the pain of waiting till fulfilment came? Śiva is the greatest of yogis by traditional standards. When the severe penance of Umā pleased him, why did he not appear before her in his true divine form and carry her straight to spiritual salvation? Why did he hold Umā's hand as common lover? And why did Kālidāsa himself describe the marriage of this couple with all the loving details of mundane celebration and carry it upto their honeymoon? In stead of showing Śiva and Umā perched on the peaks of Kailāsa and lost in divine *samādhi*, why did Kālidāsa choose to take his readers into the privacy of the couple's bedchamber? A child being born is an ordinary and natural event in the life of a married couple; but the gods belong to a different category altogether. If gods allow themselves to be born the birth underscores a divine purpose, that of 'protecting the righteous and punishing the evil-doers.'<sup>12</sup> Kālidāsa could have shown the birth of Kumāra in some marvellous, supernatural way, without describing the union of love; why did he not do it? It appears to me that the above, so-called spiritual approach of criticism is incapable of explaining some of these details in Kālidāsa's treatment of a love theme.

We will be driven to the same conclusion, I am afraid, if the story of the love of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā were to be examined without prejudice and pre-conceived philosophical attitudes. If Duṣyanta's first greeting to Śakuntalā was, '*Api tapo vardhate?*' was it not quite natural and merely polite in the *āśrama* surroundings? As a matter of fact, Śakuntalā was *not* doing any penance. Duṣyanta knew that she was frightened by the bee pursuing her, and he made his appearance before the girls challenging, on kingly authority, this *avinaya* or impudence perpetrated on the innocent girls of the hermitage. Duṣyanta should have really asked her about her fright and nervousness. In stead, if Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta puts a question about *tapa*, it means

only that he is on formally correct behaviour; or else he felt suddenly embarrassed in the presence of the girls, his interest in them clouding momentarily his sense of propriety. This is only psychological interpretation that fits the dramatic situation. Later when Duṣyanta asks about the possibility of an ascetic vow (*Vaikhāṇass-vrata*) that Śakuntalā may be observing, her friends assure Duṣyanta that Kaṇva intended Śakuntalā to get married to a suitable husband. With Kālidāsa's own plain statement that Kaṇva had never thought of rearing his foster-daughter into a *tapasvinī*, the reference of Śakuntalā to 'an emotion contrary to hermitage life' (*tapovana-virodhi-vikāra*) needs a better and correct interpretation. If Śakuntalā were a little frightened by an overwhelming emotion, she had never experienced before, if she is nervous by a sense of wrong, it is a proof of her keen conscience and of her ability to search her own mind even in an unexpected situation of embarrassment; it is also an evidence of the *āśrama* discipline which Kaṇva had taught and which Śakuntalā had absorbed. The truth is, as Kālidāsa suggests, that Śakuntalā was so innocent that she had not known love for a young man to this moment; and therefore when the emotion seized her all of a sudden, she did not know its meaning and thought that it was opposed to her *āśrama* way of life. The arrival of Duṣyanta in Kaṇva's hermitage disturbed its usual peace in a peculiar way : the agitation of the elephant frightened by the sight of Duṣyanta's chariot represents the outward form of this thrilling disturbance; the nervous agitation in the mind of Śakuntalā represents its inner, psychological form. Kālidāsa is almost unrivalled in piling colourful and suggestive touches in an atmosphere and creating out of them an artistically significant form. But what right have we to interpret a poet's artistic suggestions in any way we like?

The *śāstra* rule about *vyañjanā* or art-suggestion is that it must come in the wake of the expressed sense (*vāc्यārtha—ākṣipta*); that is to say, the context provided by the poet and his perspective on the theme, the character of the person speaking the line or of the listener in the story, and such other factors determine the direction of the suggested sense; it is not a fanciful meaning imposed by anybody's will. Such a scientific limitation (*Śāstra-maryādā*) is absolutely necessary, if a poetically suggestive sense were not to be a mockery or nonsense. So, if Kālidāsa had thought the love of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā to be really *tapovana-virodhi* his development of the love-story would lose all meaning. There would be no point in the assurance given by Śakuntalā's companions that Tāta Kāśyapa had decided to marry Śakuntalā with a suitable husband. And Kaṇva himself had no need to congratulate Śakuntalā on the choice of her love-partner and bless her from his heart. For, all such love is physical, and the craving of passion has to be restrained and controlled in higher, spiritual interests. Kālidāsa should have shown this daughter of a sage checking herself at the right moment, rejecting the earthly passion of Duṣyanta, and becoming an ideal *sanyāsinī*, to the delight of these philosophers of spiritualism. But this does not happen in Kālidāsa's play. It means, therefore, that the reference to the 'emotion contrary to hermitage life' and the jocular observation that Duṣyanta tur-

ned the *tapovana* into an *upavana* are intended by the poet to convey something altogether different. The artistic fact is that the unexpected meeting between Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta is not an everyday occurrence in the life of a hermitage. It happens once in a while; and when it does it cannot help affecting its usual peaceful and monotonous life. A serious love affair in the peaceful, disciplined life of ascetics or say of college students is an unexpected happening which is bound to cause an agitation and a stir. Such a thing may happen even today in a yoga-āśrama, a college or a school ; and it will create a great disturbance. We describe such a happening as 'virodhi' in the simple sense that colleges, schools or āśramas are not the places for love affairs or for fixing marriages. And yet unusual though, such things may happen occasionally. When they do, the normal discipline of educational or ascetic life is temporarily disturbed: The authorities may issue a warning or give common-sense advice to the young people concerned in the interest of their own future life. But no one would pronounce a deadly curse on their heads or rusticate them from the educational institution simply because they happened to fall in love. The warning and advice are perhaps necessary to maintain the general discipline and to see that the attention of the students is not deviated from their studies; childhood and young age are meant for study ; love and marriage can come at the end of the educational career ; this is the normal channel for normal life ; that is all. Further sometimes when love strikes a young heart there is always a possibility that the choice of a partner may not be correct; the young people are too blinded by their passion to see ahead, and that may seriously harm their future life. Kālidāsa shows this red light of possible danger by letting his Kaṇva use the imagery of a sacrificer whose eyes are blinded by sacrificial smoke and whose oblation may, therefore, fall outside the ritual fire. Fortunately Śakuntalā had fallen for the right kind of man. Kaṇva himself is convinced about his daughter's worthy choice ; Duṣyanta, according to him, is 'the foremost among the worthy' (*arhatām prāgrasarah*); and nobody could have made a better choice than this. Kaṇva, therefore, feels that in bestowing Śakuntalā on Duṣyanta he is handing over his *vidyā* to the worthiest pupil, and that there is absolutely no cause for any sorrow or repentance<sup>13</sup>. This is all that artistic picture of Kālidāsa conveys; and there is nothing in Kālidāsa's writing to indicate that the poet had any further suggestions to offer. How far, therefore, can the process of *vyājanā* be stretched ?

In this picture of Kālidāsa there is no repudiation of natural love, nor denial of marriage. This is not to be confused with any mistaken notion of promiscuous liberty. For, the students who were given education in the ancient *gurukulas* or the hermitages of learned sages had to follow a certain discipline, which was perhaps more exacting than the one prevailing in modern educational institutions. The boys and girls in the hermitages had their daily duties assigned to them<sup>14</sup>. Consulting the clocks of the Sun and the Moon they had to tell their preceptor the time for his daily ablutions, ritual and fire worship ; they had to collect and fetch from the for-

est the sacrificial faggots, flowers and fruits ; make preparations for the daily worship and the morning and evening prayers and offerings; the girls were required to water the trees in and about the hermitage, fetch water from river or water-reservoirs, help in preparing meals for the āśrama residents, and so on. The learning of lessons was accompanied by such daily discipline. If after completing the course of education a particular pupil wanted to lead an ascetic and celibate life there was no bar. But it is obvious that most of the pupils took their preceptor's blessing and entered the householder's stage of life. In the restrained and disciplined atmosphere of the contemporary *tapovana* or *āśrama* the pupils were principally devoted to their studies and to imbibing the moral and cultural discipline inculcated by the teachers. In this sense a *tapovana* could not be an *upavana*. But it does not imply that the elders taught the young generation to suppress and kill natural impulses and emotions. Were it so, the *gurukulas* and *āśramas* would have been schools for turning out *sanyāsins* and *yoginis*. The fact, on the contrary, is that the initiation and training to love creepers and flowers in nature, animals and birds, to behave with brotherly feeling and affection with one and all that the pupils got here, both by precept and example, was apt to prove to be a noble foundation of their future life. This is best illustrated in the life of Śakuntalā herself. Kālidāsa has nowhere repudiated the love that further leads to married life. No character in the *Śakuntala* has even covertly suggested that it was a terrible mistake on the part of Śakuntalā to respond naturally to the demand of her body and mind, and that, therefore, she rightly deserved the terrible punishment. The entire evidence of the play is against the interpretation of error, punishment and sublimation as the theme of the poet. The Vedānta-biassed approach is an after-thought, and a construction totally irrelevant to the design, purpose and intention of the artist.

The interpretation put by the above approach on the curse of Durvāsas is similarly twisted to suit its trend of philosophy and confuses the basic issues. Śakuntalā was not aware of the arrival of Durvāsas in Kaṇva's hermitage and that is why she did not go forward to welcome the guest. And she was not aware of any one's arrival because, we are told by the dramatist, Duṣyanta had left for his capital the same morning<sup>15</sup> and Śakuntalā was experiencing the fresh pangs of separation from her recently married husband. Though she was physically present in the āśrama her heart was not there<sup>16</sup>. If, therefore, in this condition of mind she did not hear the sage, is it a serious offence ? And whom was she thinking about, apparently neglecting the sage ? Was she not thinking of her husband only ? 'The anxiety about her husband has made her unmindful of her own person; how could she then be aware of an uninvited guest ?' This is the observation of Śakuntalā's companions. The critics of the spiritual approach have not the eyes, apparently, to see the dramatic situation created by Kālidāsa or the ears to hear the words of the companions. They would like to take the curse as a punishment to Śakuntalā for neglecting her duty of *atithi-satkāra*. Which Śāstra imposes the penalty of terrible curse on a newly married girl

for losing her mind at the first anguish of a separation and for thinking of her own husband at the neglect of a guest? The entire situation is handled by Kālidāsa with delicate suggestions; yet they are so eloquent that it is a wonder how any critic could miss them. Particularly worthy of note is the character of Durvāsa that Kālidāsa has created with a few deft touches. Durvāsa is an *āgantuka*; he came to the hermitage suddenly, unexpectedly, and without invitation. He is by nature *sulabhakopa*, easily provoked to uncontrollable anger without proper reason; he is *parkṛti-vakra*, crooked and twisted by temperament, and would refuse to listen to any plea however respectfully submitted by any one<sup>17</sup>. If neglecting a guest were an offence, Śakuntalā committed it unknowingly; it was the first ever offence in her life; and innocent as she is, she did not realise the terrible consequences the power of an off-ended ascetic could impose upon her for a non-deliberate, unintentional neglect. Considering the total circumstances should not the sage show mercy to Śakuntalā, a girl who is like a daughter to him, and pardon her?<sup>18</sup> Who could burn with his anger a daughter-like girl for an unconscious neglect, except, of course, Durvāsa? It is the nature of fire to burn anything that comes into its close contact<sup>19</sup>; it is the nature of an irascible sage like Durvāsa, puffed with the power of his penance, to pronounce any curse that comes to lips and refuse to take it back even when it is shown to be unjust. Else, who would pour boiling water on a delicate Navamālikā creeper<sup>20</sup> or subject an innocent girl like Śakuntalā to the dire consequences of an unmerited curse? A careful reading of the statements and epithets used by Kālidāsa in this situation (which I have paraphrased in my analysis), with their possible suggestions, will lead any one to believe, like the companions of Śakuntalā, that the poor Śakuntalā has been an unjust victim, by a stroke of misfortune, of the anger of an unreasonable, obstinate and egotistical sage. The words of the poet and the poetical suggestions that flow from them reveal this intent. There is no ground, therefore, in Kālidāsa's text to take the curse as a punishment for earthly or physical love, and suffering as a remedy for its sublimation.

It is obvious that Kālidāsa believes in previous existence. There was something untoward in the fate of Śakuntalā. Kālidāsa has dropped an artistic hint of the 'unfavourable fate' (*pratikūla daiva*) of Śakuntalā at the beginning of his play.<sup>21</sup> According to the religious philosophy of the Hindus, a person's fate is determined by the deeds done in *previous life* (*pūrva-janma*); what he does in the present existence will determine his next birth. In other words, the suffering of Śakuntalā is a result of something that happened in her former birth. It is this abstract notion of fate to which Kālidāsa gives a material shape in his art design by the curse of Durvāsa.<sup>22</sup> That is also why he keeps this dramatic, thrilling and shocking incident 'behind the curtain'; because the curse is *not* a material happening determined by cause and effect of the moment; it is a symbol of fate, the link of which goes back to previous birth. Śakuntalā's father Kaṇva tried to smoothen the consequences of the untoward fate by undertaking a pilgrimage to Somatīrtha. A father's unselfish love for his daughter may soften the attack of fate; it has no power to change it. So, Śakuntalā

suffered ; but the ascetic and religious merit of Kaṇva must surely have saved her life from total ruin. When she had gone through the misery destined for her she was re-united with her husband and happiness came in her life. Duṣyanta had nothing to do with the curse incident ; yet he too suffered because he was wedded to Śakuntalā and had to share the consequences of the curse with her. This is the meaning of the sufferings of the lovers in Kālidāsa's art. From the angle of art the story of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā is a tale of devoted lovers whose happiness was spoiled for some time by an angry, unfavourable fate ; it is a tale of love plunged into misery by misfortune ; or to use a Shakespearean phrase, it is a story of 'a pair of star-crossed lovers.'

( 3 )

The character of Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta must be considered along with his other dramatic heroes. One reason for doing so is that the criticism of Duṣyanta's character and actions is applicable, more or less, to the other heroes as well. Another reason is, among the literary creations in Sanskrit literature, women are generally shown to be loyal and devoted to their husbands ; on the other hand, the religious and social code permits men to have many wives and as such their loyalty or love for one particular woman appears to be rather suspect. There are some neglected women in Kālidāsa's literature ; but their loyalty is unquestionable. Umā was ready to throw away her life in rigorous austerities in her singleminded love for Śiva. Śakuntalā, clad in soiled dusy garment, endured the sorrow of a long separation in her devotion to her husband. Sītā accepted desertion and lonely stay in forest-regions without a word of reproach for her royal husband. Rati proved her undying love for Madana even after he was burnt to ashes. These are women pure in character and devoted to their own husbands. Dhārīṇī, Irāvātī, Auśīnari, Hamsapadikā, these queens had occasions to express their anger or displeasure at the conduct of their king-husbands ; but none ever rebelled against her husband or behaved contrary to his wishes. The Indian woman seems to inherit the generosity and tolerance of the mother earth. Kālidāsa's portraits of women naturally evoke respect, admiration, affection and sympathy. Besides, there is generally a stream of compassion in the minds of male readers for women characters. Except, therefore, for a little displeasure at the neglect of some women in a polygamous social picture, there is not likely to be any adverse criticism against the women characters of Kālidāsa.

The critical attitude to the heroes of Sanskrit drama is, however, different. With a few exceptions like Śiva and Rāma and Yakṣa heroes of Kālidāsa, particularly of his play, are polygamous. The dramatic story generally shows them falling in love with the young and beautiful heroine when they are already married and have one or two wives, and in the case of Agnimitra, even a child. The heroes' talk of love, therefore, appears to be an expression of passion or lust, sometimes quite open to be indecent to modern taste. Thus, the heroes take particular interest in beautiful young women ; they are pleasure-seekers ; bees, ever in search of fresh honey ; loving themselves primarily and their pleasure. How could then one feel any assurance

about their professed sincerity and devotion of love ? It is not possible to ignore this opinion or criticism if Kālidāsa's treatment of love and his philosophy of love were to be correctly appraised.

Does Kālidāsa really intended to paint man as inconstant, given to pleasures and treating woman as a mere object of enjoyment ? Even from the angle of realism it will not be possible for us to accept such an intention on the part of the poet. There are two reasons for rejecting the possibility : It is not only Rāma but Duṣyanta, Purūravas, even Agnimitra, that is to say the kings portrayed by Kālidāsa, stand for the contemporary ideals of men in social life; they represent the social ethos. If we do not want to accept these ideals we are, in the present day, at liberty to reject them totally. But we also have to remember that social ideas change with the passage of time; so that the ideals of one age may not appeal to people in another age. However, such a change in attitude does not alter the fact that the ideal men in one particular age were really ideal for the people in their age; this is the social and historical truth, which our present dislike or prejudice can neither suppress nor change. We are inclined today to look upon Rāma, who had only one wife, as the social ideal of man. But that does not give us any right or authority to treat Duṣyanta and other much-married men as mere pleasure-seekers and philanderers. Kālidāsa had to accept this social fact of his time; and with it he has painted Duṣyanta and his other heroes as ideal kings. If it were permissible to ignore this social and historical fact in private life, according to present-day likes and dislikes, to do so in the sphere of art is positively stupid. The second reason is that the Sanskrit theory of literature and drama had evolved certain canons for literary composition; it was laid down, in course of time, that the hero of a poetic or dramatic composition should be one of the four recognised types, namely, *dhīrodātta*, *dhīralalita*, *dhīroddhata* and *dhīraprasānta*. The Sanskrit writers generally followed these literary canons and endeavoured to present ideal or representative characters. If the literary canons had not yet been scientifically shaped in Kālidāsa's times, it must be remembered that he had the ideals of Vālmīki and Vyāsa before him. Besides, a student of literature is perfectly aware that all ancient literature leaned towards ideal and representative pictures of social life; to treat man as a lowly character with all his foibles, vices and crimes is a realistic tendency of the modern age. Thus, Kālidāsa's heroes fall in the category of *dhīrodātta* or *dhīralalita nāyakas*. They are ideals of that age. We have, therefore, no business to adopt a modern, extrarealistic attitude and treat these heroes as flippant, sex-hungry men, according to our standards of private and social morality. It is far better to let the ancient classics alone if we cannot understand the approach of art.

The point is that a reader has to cultivate an objective attitude in the study of art. The heroes of Kālidāsa and other characters in Sanskrit literature should be understood in their contemporary setting, without trying to judge them and their actions with our own standards of morality and behaviour. We owe at least this much

to our ancient writers. And how could one understand the men and women in the past age without understanding the contemporary context of time and place ? Shakespeare brought a ghost on the theatre stage and made him speak to his living son in human language; he made three witches dance round a boiling cauldron and predicted through them a future happening. Our readers are prepared, I think, to understand these scenes as consistent with public beliefs in Elizabethan England. What they apparently refuse to understand are the customs and beliefs prevailing in the past in our own country. An example is the social custom of polygamy. Does any one deny in the present day that it was an unfair social custom which created social imbalance and considerable misery ? But it existed in Kālidāsa's times; how could he make it un-exist and paint monogamous heroes against the glaring social conditions ? No writer can afford to run counter to the social life of which he himself is a part; and Kālidāsa, unlike Bhāsa, is not a rebellious writer; he works within the existing religious and social frame. What kind of art criticism it is which fails to recognise these facts and imposes criteria of the following ages ?

We understand from social history that not only kings but rich men also practised polygamy in those days. The case of the merchant Dhanamitra mentioned in the *Śakuntala* leaves no doubt about it. Apart from the sanction of religion and social practice, the question of polygamy is basically rooted in economy. A modern young man may be hard put to supporting one wife; how could he plan a harem ? But it appears that in the ancient economic conditions it was possible for a man to have more than one wife either for pleasure or for sharing the occupational burden of the family; rich men could afford many wives; and a farmer too would get more wives to work his farm because that was more economical than to engage paid servants to work for him. These conditions have prevailed upto quite recent times among the agricultural and labour classes in India. There was another consideration of social prestige which a student of social history cannot ignore. It was regarded as prestigious for a man to have many women besides his wedded wife; instances could be picked up till the eighteenth century during the rule of Peshwas in Maharashtra. The point is that it is wrong to use polygamy as a weapon to strike at the heroes of Sanskrit drama. Polygamy was an established social fact of the times. Rāma, whom a modern reader may very much admire as an ideal hero and a very loving husband, had three mothers. His own father Daśaratha had three wives, and instances like that of Rāma are exceptions to the prevailing social order. Had Kālidāsa bypassed this social fact, ran far ahead of his times (to please the twentieth century readers ?), his contemporary spectators would have rejected his plays as unrealistic, distorting the existing social facts. The question of personal likes and dislikes is, in this case, completely outside the design of art.

The context of the contemporary social realism discussed above will throw a different light of understanding on the women characters and their portrayal in



Sanskrit literature. Some of the epithets and vocatives used by the Sanskrit poets in a description of or conversation with a woman character would appear disrespectful and indecent today; nay, they might lead to court proceedings if used in modern writing. How could then the Sanskrit poets use them? The open references particularly in dramatic dialogues call for an explanation. The dramas were evidently written for stage performances and were staged at a king's order or on the occasions of religious holidays and festivals and in celebration of seasons, harvests or important events. Men from all ranks of society, including old people, children and women, attended them. Why did they not object to the open references to the heroine's breasts and buttocks in the poetic passages or conversation in the dramas. The point, I think, is obvious. Ideas of cultural decency do change from age to age. So, it is not true that the Sanskrit poets or their heroes are deliberately obscene or sex-mad; the truth seems to be that the modern readers have no perspective; men in the past age used the words and allusions in frank acceptance of the facts of life and in open-appreciation of the beauty of the female form; while the modern readers seem to read in them obscene motives and, ignoring the social conventions in the past age, accuse the old heroes of indecent attitude to women.

It is possible to look at the epithets and vocatives from another angle yet. Purūravas, in the third act of the *Vikramorvaśīya*, expresses a loving desire that Urvaśī came gently and closed his eyes from behind with her fingers.<sup>23</sup> Urvaśī who was standing at the back of the king, invisible by her divine powers, likes the idea and acts accordingly. Purūravas recognises the loving touch and says to the Vidūṣaka who is by his side, 'My friend, this is the *maiden with beautiful thighs* born from the thigh of the sage Nārāyaṇa !'<sup>24</sup> If the adjective used by the king were to be taken literally it would be a puzzle how the king could know that Urvaśī had a pair of beautiful thighs from the touch of her fingers on his eyes! It appears, therefore, that many words referring to the parts of a woman's body had lost their expressed sense at least in poetic and romantic contexts, and come to indicate the metaphorical sense of 'beautiful'. 'Varuru' in the example cited does not really express the sense of 'thighs' but indicates only 'a beautiful woman'.<sup>25</sup> These linguistic considerations are important for art criticism as well.

The detailed description of the physical beauty of a woman which is of common occurrence in Sanskrit literature may now be viewed from a correct angle. In the first place, such descriptions of a woman's beauty are the stuff of poetic writing, and would be found, with variations, in all literatures. Secondly, the basic intention in them is aesthetic, that of conveying a sense and feeling of beauty. Thirdly, the poetic imagination has always looked upon woman as an embodiment of loveliness, an image of beauty, a figure of irresistible charm and attraction. 'Thou art a handiwork of God' says Tagore about the woman. Two thousand years before him Kālidāsa conceived Urvaśī as created out of moon, cupid or the vernal season.<sup>26</sup> About Śakuntalā he thought that the Creator God could not have dared to fashion

her by the usual process of creation; he must have first poured all his skill and power in sketching a flawless, perfect picture of a woman on a canvas, improving it continuously with careful touches; and when He was convinced that it could not be further perfected, then he must have breathed life into the picture; Śakuntalā came to be born only in this way. !<sup>27</sup> Such descriptions of beauty are a treasure of all literature. And love for a woman is not merely the prerogative of a poetic mind, it is the abiding emotion of human heart and a bliss of man's life. Unfortunate are those who cannot enjoy beauty from poetic writings and from art on the aesthetic level.

(4)

Kālidāsa had to mind the social conventions and the literary canons prevailing in his times when he came to create the heroes of his literary pieces. It is very easy, in a male-dominated polygamous social state, to accuse a man of inconstancy in love, fickleness and selfish pursuit of one's own pleasure. But if a man's love for a woman were thus untrustworthy, it will be terribly unjust to the woman in the society, and it would also destroy the very essence of art, because in art, at least, if not in real life, we do expect 'poetic justice' to operate. It appears that Kālidāsa was fully aware of this conflicting situation in social life and in art. And to face the dilemma confronting art-representation of love in human life Kālidāsa appears to have used some artistic devices and used some special constructive effort :

(1) Kālidāsa arranges in his plays to ridicule or criticise his heroes for falling in love with a new, young, beautiful girl although they are married and have a wife or two, sparing the reader/spectator any effort at criticism for their amorous behaviour. The characters in the dramas ridicule the heroes without reserve or criticise them frankly. Kālidāsa maintains a playful atmosphere in his plays; but treats love quite seriously. It may not be wrong to say that it is the general pattern of Sanskrit drama, approved in theory, to treat the theme solemnly in spite of merry and light colours, which may be a concession to pleasant entertainment. Barring the pattern of *prahasana* and a *bhāṇa*, a flippant and merely amusing treatment of love is unthinkable in Sanskrit drama. From this theoretical angle the fun and criticism poked at the heroes by the dramatic characters themselves will appear to be purposeful. In fact, they provide a searching test for the integrity and sincerity of the love professed by the heroes.

The least likeable of Kālidāsa's dramatic heroes is Agnimitra. He has two queens, and a grown-up son capable of leading an army guarding a sacrificial horse. These circumstances give his love for Mālavikā the colour of a passing romantic escapade. What queen Dhārīṇī and Irāvati say to Agnimitra in connection with love affair has the sharpness of open taunt and the bite of anger and frustration. The plain-spokenness and ridicule in their words would not have been possible normally even for the queen of a ruler whose royal authority is beyond question. More blunt is Gautama, the clown and companion of the king, whose passing remarks through-

out the play leave Agnimitra without any vestige of dignity either as a king or as a hero of the dramatic action. It appears that Kālidāsa has exposed through this picture the hypocrisy and unfairness of the polygamous state of society.

Kālidāsa appears to have used the wedded queen and the clowncompanion of the king as weapons to test the hero's protestations of love. The Vidūṣka in the *Vikramorvaśīya* is a blundering fool. But his foolishness exposes the love affair of Purūravas and the king has to face the anger of queen Auśinārī. And when the king gets a little impatient in the company of Urvaśī on the terrace of the Mañiharmya palace under the brilliant full moon, it is this fool of a Vidūṣaka who asks the king sharply, 'Is it night of darkness for you two already?'<sup>28</sup>

By placing the king-heroes, whose social greatness could never be challenged, in such situations of amusing ridicule and sharp criticism what Kālidāsa suggests is that there is nothing clandestine or underhand in their love affairs. And when the king-heroes are shown to be accepting the open ridicule and biting criticism meekly, with a readiness to explain and apologise, when they could have stopped such nonsense and insubordination by lifting their little finger of kingly authority, there is a further suggestion that their love for the young heroine is not a flippant affair but an inevitable urge of the heart which cannot be checked. This is the meaning of Kālidāsa's portrayal of love.

In the portrayal of Duṣyanta Kālidāsa has deliberately avoided introducing his queens on the stage in order to save his hero from embarrassing situations which might affect his dignity as a king and as a hero. But while changing the form of dramatic construction in this manner Kālidāsa has not forgotten to provide the necessary comment on the hero's action in order to test the sincerity of his new love. The Vidūṣaka Mādhavya is the first critic of Duṣyanta. The Vidūṣaka's opening thrust is that Duṣyanta's love for Śakuntalā is only lust for an attractive hermit's daughter (*tāpasakanyā*)<sup>29</sup>. Surfeited with sweet dishes a person may turn for a change to the sour tamarind; Duṣyanta's passion for Śakuntalā, after his pleasures with the jewel-like women in his own harem is not in a different category; this is the Vidūṣaka's second attack.<sup>30</sup> The first implies an action against the accepted code of religion; Śakuntalā is a *tāpasa-kanyā*, that is to say, a daughter of a Brahmin; entertaining desire for a girl of the higher caste, Duṣyanta being a Kṣatriya, is a form of *pratiloma* family connection; and it is not normally desirable, as it upsets the code of religious duty expected from the four *varṇas*. The force of this criticism is that a king is bound by duty to respect and administer the religious laws in practice, and not set a bad example to his people by violating them himself. But, of course, the Vidūṣaka's criticism was not well founded. The factual account of Śakuntalā's birth removes this ground; the fact that she was born of a royal sage and a celestial nymph, and Kaṇva was only her foster-father, proves that she was fit to become the wife of a Kṣatriya (*kṣatra-parigraha-kṣamā*); if Duṣyanta, therefore, desired to have her there

was nothing objectionable in that from the point of view of religion. The second criticism of the Vidūṣaka implies that Duṣyanta's attraction for Śakuntalā may be a matter of 'change of taste', that is temporary, and lacking the permanency of a deep soul-stirring emotion. If so, Duṣyanta is likely to seduce the innocent girl, and after he had his pleasure desert her; this would be a moral and social crime, ruining the life of a young girl. In reply to this serious criticism Kālidāsa's Duṣyanta paints a glowing picture of the incomparable and exquisite beauty of Śakuntalā. The suggestion is that any one in the world would want a girl like Śakuntalā to be permanently his wife; if the utter loveliness of this girl awakened only a momentary lust the person must be an ass, not a human being with eyes, mind and a heart. The artistic suggestion of the entire scene is that Duṣyanta's love for Śakuntalā is neither against the religious code nor is it shallow and flippant. The Vidūṣaka is convinced of Duṣyanta's deep feeling and sincerity; and when he learns in further conversation that there are some signs of favourable response from the girl he then says to his royal friend, 'Take enough provisions with you; it's going to be a long journey.'<sup>31</sup>

(2) There is another suggestion from the above scene which deserves to be separately worked out. In all Kālidāsa's writings there is no example of a love affair which is either prohibited by decent social custom or which is against the accepted religious code. As a matter of fact, it is not necessary to adopt such an orthodox and holy attitude in the sphere of art. And yet, Kālidāsa observes this rule. It could only mean that Kālidāsa does not want his heroes' actions in love to offend religion. It goes without saying that the poet is trying artistically to guard his heroes against any moral lapse or loose behaviour. The love of Duṣyanta for Śakuntalā has been tested prior to its fulfilment by the Vidūṣaka; it is thoroughly approved by the sage Kaṇva; it is further tested by the terrible sufferings of Duṣyanta when his memory blighted by the curse returns; and it is finally blessed by Mārīca, the parent of the gods. Even in the case of Agnimitra queen Dhārinī consents to his marriage with Mālavikā when it is revealed that she is not a maid but a princess in disguise. Here again, the general rule of religion is unconsciously followed. Urvaśī is a nymph, a heavenly woman; this is the link of propriety that binds her to the mortal king, Puruṇḍara.

(3) A close scrutiny of Kālidāsa's pictures of love reveals yet another aspect. It does not appear that the love the heroes feel for the beautiful heroines terminate once their passion was satisfied. Love does not appear to be a conquest of beauty to them; so that once they marry the heroines and dump them in their harems they cease to care for them, like some of the Indian state Rulers. On the other hand, the heroes wish from the beginning to marry them legitimately, not have a casual passing affair; and after the marriage install them on the honourable position of the mistress of the palace and the crowned queen. The heroes do not show the slightest tendency to use their authority or the social helplessness of the woman to serve their selfish ends or gratify their momentary fancies. The physical impatience and the mental torture

of the waiting may be very intense; and occasionally they may be led to hold the heroine's hand, steal an embrace or attempt to kiss her; but such occasional physical liberties, prompted by the intensity of love, are immediately checked either by circumstances which the dramatist contrives to build or by the heroine herself. The liberty, thus, is confined to open declaration of love; the action is kept under proper control. The words of Śakuntalā, 'Paurava, preserve your discipline and modesty. I am consumed with love, but I am not my own mistress.'<sup>32</sup> are like a whip-lash to Duṣyanta's rash and impatient overture. The girls show this awareness of propriety and have the power or tact to control men. The innocent Śakuntalā has also the instinctive knowledge which women possess without any tutoring and the wisdom which comes with it (*a-śikṣita-paṭurva*). For, after the mutual confessions of love, Śakuntalā says to her friend, 'My girl, the Royal Sage has been separated from his harem for a long time, and must be pining to go home. Why take his time?'<sup>33</sup> Duṣyanta is touched to the quick by this apparently simple but cleverly administered thrust. A king is bound to have a number of wives. Śakuntalā is trying to find out obliquely and with a woman's inborn sagacity what her position would be in the royal harem if she accepted Duṣyanta's proposal of a love marriage and how far his confession of love was sincere. Pricked to the quick Duṣyanta replies, 'This is like hitting a person who is already wounded by the shafts of Cupid.'<sup>34</sup> He assures Śakuntalā and her companions on this occasion that, in spite of his previous wives, the stability and glory (*pratiṣṭhā*) of his royal family rests on his kingdom of the earth wrapped by the seas and on Śakuntalā.<sup>35</sup> The entire scene and the situation contrived by the dramatist provide a final test of the hero's sincerity of love and, at the same time, an assurance of a proper marriage and the future status of the lawfully wedded wife. That this did not happen as promised is not due to any fault or moral blemish on the part of the two lovers. Śakuntalā's adverse fate ruined their happiness for some time. It is clear from Kālidāsa's picture that the story of *Śakuntala* would have ended on a happy note in the fifth act had not the curse given it a drastic turn.

(4) It is necessary to probe a little deeper into Kālidāsa's pictures of love. Kālidāsa does not appear to aim at making his drama merely entertaining all round or displaying the charm and grace of his incomparable literary art. Considering the suggestions (*vyāṅgya-artha*) flowing from his poetic content one is led to believe that for Kālidāsa the freely given consent of the woman, her willing response of love, is an important test of love-fulfilment. If in a male-dominated, polygamous state of society, where the freedom and license of the male was an acknowledged fact, Kālidāsa shows his heroes caring for a real response of love of a woman and not rushing into a one-sided marriage until the woman has expressed her desire in plain, unambiguous words, it can only mean that Kālidāsa wishes to achieve poetic justice through his art, so that the woman whom the social and religious laws thrust into a position of inferiority was, at least in the pictures of art, the equal of man. Barring a few examples in poetry and drama Kālidāsa, it will be seen, has strongly advocated mutual and equal love between man and woman. In the *svayamvara* form of

marriage the desire and consent of a girl are taken for granted; but if there were some kind of stake or stipulation it would be an attempt to select the best possible bridegroom for a girl. The *gāndharva* form of marriage, on the other hand, is a pure love match, determined by the mutual love and consent of the young pair. Kālidāsa takes particular care about the treatment of love in his dramas and tries to ensure that the pictures do not remain one-sided and that the heroine is only waiting to get the proposal of marriage from the hero. The love the hero and the heroine deeply feel for one another does not merely depend upon the encouragement and assurances received from the helpmates; when they confess and express their love in a number of ways and in actual private meeting, then only the way to their marriage seems to open up. These scenes of mutual confessions of love are painted with all the intensity of emotion and the lyrical grace of poetry in the plays of Kālidāsa. It is quite interesting to see that Agnimitra, who is the least impressive of Kālidāsa's dramatic heroes, gives expression to a very deep philosophy of love : He says, 'Of the two lovers if one has an irresistible yearning, but the other does not show eagerness of any kind, there can be no joy in a married union of such lovers. On the contrary, if the two lovers share an equal and intense love, and were they to meet death in disappointment without the prospect of gaining each other, the death itself would be welcome !'<sup>36</sup> If an ordinary king like Agnimitra does have such a feeling for love in human life, feelings of heroes like Purūravas and Duṣyanta can be easily guessed. In showing the men forgetting their whim, obstinacy, authority and the animal force of passion, waiting for the woman's response of love and her willing consent, and suffering during the period the tortures of unfulfilled love, artists like Kālidāsa are trying to establish that man and woman, at least in the kingdom of love, and in the view of art, are equal; in fact, the woman is somewhat superior to man, because man must wait for her pleasure before the fulfilment comes. This is the way of art to remove the social inequality between man and woman.

(5) Another particular trait found in the dramatic heroes of Kālidāsa is that they are men of valour. As kings, statesmen and politicians, as heroes and real leaders of the contemporary society, their position is unexceptional. Even the love-lorn and passive Agnimitra must be granted these qualities. Apparently Agnimitra fails to create any striking impression on a modern reader, because he sees in the dramatic action Agnimitra's son fighting on a battle-front while the king himself is running after Mālavikā in his own palace garden; and even in his pursuit of love it is the king's companion, the Vidūṣaka Gautama, who plots and manoeuvres the whole development. However, these situations have a different meaning in the light of the contemporary standards. The dramatist gives an idea of the sound knowledge of Agnimitra of statecraft and polity in the opening scene. Agnimitra's decision in regard to the Vidarbha Prince is fully endorsed by his ministers and political counsellors. From the point of view of military strategy it does not happen that the chief of the army fights at the front himself in every engagement; he plans and directs the attack remaining at the back, and gives his junior commanders an opportunity to show

their mettle. This is true of modern fighting as well. So, Agnimitra's action in sending his son to lead the army must not be understood to mean that he wanted time off to run after a girl. The principle is the same which Duṣyanta states with reference to Indra; it is a question of giving suitable opportunity to younger men and men of secondary rank, who would otherwise never get the necessary training and experience to hold the superior command.<sup>37</sup> The valour and heroism of Purūravas, Duṣyanta and the Raghu kings is evident. Thus, in Kālidāsa's showing this is the *śṛṅgāra* of valorous men, of real heroes; not of men in authority and power who have done very little in their life save hankering after beautiful women. This artistic suggestion in Kālidāsa's pictures of love helps to elevate the image of his heroes.

(6) In the polygamous atmosphere, even if a man's new love were tested for its integrity, a comparative neglect of the previous wife or wives seems to be unavoidable. No woman would ever like her husband transferring his love to another woman or share her love in partnership. But there was no remedy against this contingency in the existing social conditions. An artist like Kālidāsa, therefore, advises an attitude of reconciliation, understanding and friendliness; it is expressed in the advice of Kaṇva to Śakuntalā : 'Behave like a loving friend towards your rival wives.'<sup>38</sup> Experienced and mature women accepted the woman's helplessness before her husband and reconciled themselves to the changing situation with dignity. This is obvious from the examples of Dhārīṇī, Auśīnarī and Vasumatī. The younger and less experienced queens like Irāvati and Harṣapadikā fretted and fumed and made a grievance of their neglect. But since it could not be helped in any positive way in the face of the social and religious sanction for polygamy, Kālidāsa seems to have come to the conclusion that any bitterness on the part of a woman against her husband would result only in destroying the peace and happiness of family life; hence, he advocates reconciliation and understanding with a largeness of heart.

But Kālidāsa also arranges a particular kind of assurance that the neglected wife would be treated by her husband with due honour and would never suffer any humiliation. Kālidāsa does this in two ways. First by showing that the heroes have a great respect for moral values and integrity, which they translate into their actions. The heroes fall in love with the heroine because the emotion is so natural and overwhelming that they cannot resist it as human beings. This is not like an irresponsible impulse to run after any beautiful girl that crosses one's path. The heroes have great respect for women, especially married ladies. Duṣyanta's behaviour in this context is exemplary. Śakuntalā arrives at the royal palace; due to the effect of the curse Duṣyanta does not recognise her; he looks upon her as a stranger's wife (*para-kalatra*). Duṣyanta is astounded by her uncommon beauty. But when the Pratihārī speaks with liberty Duṣyanta commands her to stop, telling her that, 'One should not look so closely at a married woman.' Further, when Duṣyanta is not convinced, under the circumstances, that he had married Śakuntalā, and refuses to accept her in his household on purely moral grounds, the Pratihārī is forced to admit, 'Ah, what regard

for principles of religion and morality ! Any one else in this situation would have stopped all thinking, considering the extra-ordinary beauty of the young woman !”<sup>39</sup> Total respect for married women, wives of other men, is a strong point with Kālidāsa’s heroes. We also know that it is a supreme moral value which Bhārata cherishes,

The *Vikramorvaṣīya* has a similar interesting situation. Urvaśī and Purūravaṣ have gone to the Gandhamādana-vana to enjoy themselves. The attention of Purūravaṣ is driven to a Vidyādhara girl. Urvaśī flares into anger and leaves him suddenly. I have not come across any comment of this situation which does not read fickleness of Purūravaṣ in it and blames him for the male trait of neglecting one’s wife for the sight of a beautiful girl. How low and lustful can a man be, the critics suggest, to fix his eyes on a strange girl when a heavenly beauty like Urvaśī and his recently married wife is close by him ! It is true that men can be so utterly selfish and mean. The question is whether it is what Kālidāsa intended to suggest through his picture. And the answer is in the negative if one were prepared to read Kālidāsa’s phrases and literary presentation carefully and think of their meaning and suggestive sense. Kālidāsa calls this girl Udayavatī a Vidyādhara-dārikā. *Dārikā* means, of course, a daughter; but it also denotes a small girl. Had Kālidāsa intended to suggest that Udayavatī was a young maiden, approaching the age of marriage, he could easily have used the phrase *Vidyādhara-strī* or *Vidyādhari* or *Vidyādhara-yuvati*. The suggestion is thus of a small girl; and this is further confirmed by the detail that she was playing on the bank Mandākinī building a ‘hill of sand’ (*sikatā-parvata*); this is not a sport in which married or marriage-worthy girls indulge; it is the sport of children. Purūravaṣ’ attention was caught and fixed by a beautiful child completely lost in its own play. This would happen to any one; and it acquires a special significance when we remember that Purūravaṣ has no child of his own, at least so far. When the situation is correctly understood one would feel that Urvaśī had really no reason to get angry; she should at least have asked for an explanation. But, as Sahajanyā says, Urvaśī had a very short temper; her love also was so intense, engrossing and possessive<sup>40</sup> that she was unable to tolerate even a momentary inattention even if it were caused by the sight of a beautiful child not her own. A blind and prejudiced criticism is bound to lead us astray and never reveal to us the secrets of a poet’s deep and suggestive art.

In addition to the correct moral attitude which Kālidāsa bestows on his heroes another thing that he does is to show that his heroes behave with great courtesy, respect and understanding with their wives, taking care to soften the emotional hurt to the best of their ability. The heroes seem to carry an awareness of guilt that their heart is with another young woman. They strive to keep the new love a secret, only to spare the feeling of their wives. And when it comes into the open somehow, they lie about it, explain it away, only to spare the emotional hurt again. All this must be understood on the simple human level; for when it is necessary the heroes do not hesitate to throw themselves prostrate at the feet of the wife, and honestly apologise



to her, even if she were a younger queen. Such occasions have arisen in the life of Agnimitra and of Purūravas. In Duṣyanta's portrayal Kālidāsa has avoided these situations. But Duṣyanta too is anxious to keep his attraction for Śakuntalā away from his queens; and he instructs the Vidūṣaka not to babble about the happenings in the *āśrama* before the inmates of the palace<sup>41</sup>. Later, with his memory awakened and the pain of Śakuntalā's repudiation and the anguish of separation torturing his mind and heart, when Duṣyanta commits errors inadvertently in addressing the woman in the harem, Duṣyanta feels so guilty as to lapse in shame and silence<sup>42</sup>. Untruth has different facets: Telling a lie for selfish profit or out of malice to hurt some person is one thing; to lie in order to spare the emotional hurt to others is quite another. In a society which has granted unequal authority to the male and with the fostering of the male ego, it requires moral courage and a largeness of heart to fall at the feet of one's wife and beg her pardon. Kālidāsa shows that his heroes, however high their position in society may be, have the honesty and humility to bend before their women. Whether in public or in private, they do not insult or humiliate their wives. Though another woman has captured their love their respectful behaviour towards their wives does not change; actually they become more respectful to their wives out of a sense of private guilt<sup>43</sup>. The picture that Kālidāsa presents deserves to be studied carefully on the background of the contemporary polygamous social life and from the angle of human psychology as well. It will strike us as an effort of art to find a way through the social inequalities of the times, and to give to the woman some measure of justice by preserving her status in marriage with courtesy and respect.

(7) The reaction of Duṣyanta to Hamsapadikā's complaint has a deeper meaning not apparent on the surface; it deserves a separate consideration. Hamsapadikā describes Duṣyanta as 'a bee greedy for ever-fresh honey' (*abhinava-madhu-lolupa*). This bee has drunk the juice of the mango-blossom to his heart's content and has now imprisoned himself, forgetting the mango-blossom, in the company of the lotus<sup>44</sup>. This is a taunt against Duṣyanta's behaviour in his harem. Though metaphorical and veiled its thrust is clear. Duṣyanta is not visiting Hamsapadikā now, and is spending all his time in the apartment of Vasumatī. The critical interpretation of this complaint against Duṣyanta's behaviour generally sees in it the emotional distress of Hamsapadikā, the younger queen of Duṣyanta, the unsteadiness of his love and his pleasure-loving lustful tendency. There is a further suggestion in this song of Hamsapadikā that Śakuntalā too would be reduced to the same plight one day, when Duṣyanta would discard her, as he did Hamsapadikā, in his search for new 'honey'. The interpretation, thus, presumes that Duṣyanta is a selfish lover, caring for only the physical thrill and pleasure of a woman's body. When, later, he suffers the tortures of a real separation (and gets an opportunity of doing an unselfish act in helping the gods) then does his self-centered-ness change; his love is purified; and he becomes fit for a reunion of heavenly love. We know this 'theory' of the transformation of physical love into spiritual love; we have examined in the case of Śakuntalā; we must look into it now so far as it concerns Duṣyanta.

The most relevant question is, again, that of the intention of the poet. And, as in the case of the Vidyādhara-dārikā incident in the *Vikramorvaśīya*, in the Hamsapadikā's song too, critics have not been fully alert in interpreting Kālidāsa's words accurately and in understanding his subtle suggestion. Some one gave an interpretation which delighted the ear and satisfied the ego of man; and everybody was apparently charmed. It is true that Duṣyanta must not have seen Hamsapadikā in her personal apartment for a long time. Her hurt and grief are quite natural and true. And it is also natural that she should complain about her husband's apparent indifference to her. But if her grievance is examined without pre-conceived notions and prejudice one cannot fail to notice that it originates from a personal hurt, the denial of a selfish pleasure, and is tinged with jealousy natural to a woman. There is no reason for the readers and the critics to assume that Hamsapadikā is the sole judge of Duṣyanta's behaviour and that her word is final. Do other women in the harem, including Vasumatī, complain about Duṣyanta's behaviour ?

Kālidāsa suggests much more through this song. On analysing carefully the poetic imagery in the song it becomes plain that the 'mango-blossom' is a symbol for Hamsapadikā herself, and 'lotus' for Vasumatī. The natural difference between a 'blossom' (*maiṅjarī*) and a 'lotus' (*kamala*) further suggests that Hamsapadikā is in the prime of her youth, yearning for the fructification of her life, as a blossom must naturally develop into a flower and then into fruit. By contrast a 'lotus' denotes a complete phase of development; Vasumatī is a mature woman. The mango-blossom is associated with spring; the lotus is a opened-up flower of all times; this difference also suggests the spring of youth and the advancing day of womanhood, which are to be connected respectively with Hamsapadikā and Vasumatī. The pleasure of the 'mango-blossom' is of hot kisses; intoxicating, overwhelming, holding the body and the mind a willing prisoner; by contrast the pleasure of the 'lotus' is only of company *vasati-mātra*, of nearness and understanding affection. These are Hamsapadikā's own words. The question then is, if Duṣyanta were a lustful pleasure-seeker, like the proverbial selfish and greedy bee, should he seek Hamsapadikā who was bursting with youth and who would give him hot, tantalizing love-response, or should he prefer the elderly Vasumatī who could offer him only company and an understanding heart softened with affection ? All critics must agree that Duṣyanta does not lack the sense of beauty and love to stumble on a wrong choice ! How can we explain this change in Duṣyanta then ? What made him turn to Vasumatī in preference to Hamsapadikā ?

In the correct answer to this question we will discover the essence of Duṣyanta's mental state and of his psychological transformation. The fact is, Hamsapadikā is revealing a very deep truth about her husband although her personal hurt and sorrow and her youthful inexperience have blinded her to see it; it is that Duṣyanta has turned away from the pleasures of the sex and has preferred the company of a mature mind. Hamsapadikā's statement itself is an open answer to the so-called charge that Duṣyanta is a selfish, sex-hungry pleasure-seeker. It also shows that the 'transforma-

tion' had already taken place in Duṣyanta's life; it did not come after the pangs of real separation, as some critics have imagined. Kālidāsa shows Duṣyanta, at the opening of the fifth act, to be a different man somewhat saddened but thoughtful and turned inward. And the change is not recent. Like the word of Hamsapadikā, Duṣyanta's own confession to the Vidūṣaka 'Once I was in love with her',<sup>45</sup> reveals it. The thread of Duṣyanta's psychological transformation is, thus, woven far deeper in Kālidāsa's art design.

Aimless pursuit of pleasure, without any definite purpose or achievement, is apt to tire a thoughtful and understanding person. This is a psychological truth. Kālidāsa's portrayal of Duṣyanta is of a thoughtful person, who has the habit of weighing the pros and cons of an issue; he would debate it in his mind before deciding the line of his action. In his first meeting with Śakuntalā, in discussing the fascination he felt for her with the Vidūṣaka, and in the scene of Śakuntalā's repudiation, we get vivid glimpses of Duṣyanta's thoughtful mind, his readiness to discuss, his sense of balance and justice. The change in Duṣyanta is partly due to such a process of thinking. He must have realised at some stage in his life that pleasure cannot be the end of a man's life; the hunger of sex, if it is there, is not satisfied by the enjoyment of many women. But, in addition to this thoughtful trait, Kālidāsa has filled a different colour in his portrait of Duṣyanta. Duṣyanta has no child. It is a recurring motif in Kālidāsa's writing; King Dilipa and Daśaratha in the Raghu family, Purūravsa and Duṣyanta are shown by the poet to be without children till some observance of piety or boon blesses their life. A man does not show the pain of his childlessness openly, like a woman who feels her life blighted by the lack of a child. But sometimes something happens, and the misery of the man comes to the surface, shaking him completely. The hermits in Kaṇva's āśram are aware that Duṣyanta has no child, even though they are living far away from him<sup>46</sup>. Duṣyanta's old mother is going through religious vows and observances hoping to get a successor to the family<sup>47</sup>. I am not suggesting that Duṣyanta was attracted to Śakuntalā solely with the hope that she might give him a son. Kālidāsa is not a shallow and vulgar artist. And yet, when Duṣyanta describes Śakuntalā as the *pratiṣṭhā*, stability and glory, of his family,<sup>48</sup> the listeners cannot escape the double meaning of the word. May be, Duṣyanta's sub-conscious mind prompted this word which indirectly speaks of his hidden pain. It comes out in the open in the sixth act when the case papers of Dhanamitra are brought over to Duṣyanta. Duṣyanta's reaction at this time reveals the shocking depth of his personal misery. One is therefore tempted to think that in being attracted to Śakuntalā Duṣyanta was not merely a prey to her heavenly beauty; there was also a hope of another fulfilment in his sub-conscious mind. Kālidāsa's picture would suggest this; for, the question of the child and successor to the family runs through the whole play. And it is also the answer to the apparent neglect of Hamsapadikā. The truth, as revealed by Kālidāsa's own picture, is that that Hamsapadikā certainly held out a promise; that is why, Duṣyanta was very much in love with her at one time; but unfortunately Hamsapadikā remained only a

mañjarī; the expected development did not come; she too failed, like Vasumatī, to give Duṣyanta a son. So, Duṣyanta turned his back on sensual pleasures and sought some peace of mind and consolation in the mature company of his elder queen. It must be remembered that at the juncture in the play when the song of Hamsapadikā is presented, Duṣyanta has no memory of Śakuntalā. Kālidāsa's picture of Duṣyanta at this stage is, therefore, of a hero 'whose heart conceals a profound agony'<sup>49</sup>. This is the poet's own answer to the supposed lustful character of Duṣyanta and the so-called transformation-sublimation interpretation raised on it.

(8) what then is the significance of the torture of separation through which the heroes of Kālidāsa go? Once it is seen that the poet did not intend the suffering as a punishment for physical attachment, which the poet regards as natural, and a means, as it were, for sublimating the physical love, which the poet nowhere condemns, the significance of the suffering appears to be quite plain. In the polygamous society which gave man not only a power over woman but also a sort of license for free sex behaviour, the sufferings of heroes are an assurance and guarantee to the heroines that their husbands' love for them is constant, steady and abiding. This is art rendering poetic justice to the woman who was unfairly treated by the social and religious laws. What Kālidāsa could not, or did not, do in the social sphere he endeavoured to achieve in the sphere of art.

The pain and sorrow of Aja at the sudden death of Indumatī terminated only at his own death. Aja was quite wise and intelligent. He was capable of understanding the philosophy of life and death which Vasiṣṭha preached him in weighty and convincing words. And yet, Aja's love for Indumatī was so deep and intense that he could not live without her. He waited with fortitude till his little son Daśartha came of age; but he was not prepared to wait for natural death; he ended his life by committing suicide<sup>50</sup>. This may be an exceptional example in Sanskrit literature; but Kālidāsa seems to have noted it deliberately to illustrate the profound attachment of love between husband and wife. Urvaśī's sudden disappearance is such a terrible mental shock to Purūravas that it snaps the balance of his mind and takes away his sanity. The ravings and the sufferings of the mad Purūravas wandering through the woodland searching for his lost beloved, like Rāma wandering in the Daṇḍakā forest in search of Sītā, are, fortunately, 'visible to the heart' of Urvaśī who was transformed into a creeper;<sup>51</sup> they are an eloquent testimony to the intense and unchangeable love of Purūravas for Urvaśī. Kālidāsa contrives to reunite them on the background of this mad but moving demonstration of love. Śakuntalā is not so lucky. The dramatic design of the play does not provide her the opportunity to eye-witness the sufferings of Duṣyanta and the fact that he still clings to the memory of that love, although he sees no possibility of getting Śakuntalā back. But her mother's friend Sānumatī sees all this, hears the actual words of Duṣyanta, remaining invisible but close at his back; the poet arranges this in his dramatic construction. Śakuntalā can take the report of Sānumatī on fullest trust and feel assured of Duṣyanta's love for

her. Yet, the information is indirect, received on trust; Śakuntalā has not been able to see things for herself, with her own eyes. As if to remove this artistic lacuna in his dramatic design Kālidāsa builds the re-union with special touches. Kālidāsa shows Duṣyanta, the emperor of the ocean-bounded earth, a personal friend of the Gods, an incomparable hero who has just achieved an uncommon victory and has been specially honoured by Indra, falling at the feet of Śakuntalā and begging her pardon. Duṣyanta had not knowingly or deliberately rejected Śakuntalā; in fact, he was not personally responsible for her repudiation; the dramatic design makes it abundantly clear. And yet Duṣyanta is pained by the agony he inflicted unconsciously on his beloved wife; he wipes the tear with his own fingers from the eye of overwhelmed Śakuntalā and asks for her forgiveness once again<sup>52</sup>. I think it is a scene of which the gods would be proud. That the husband should beg one's pardon with a repentant and full heart, and wipe one's tears with his own hand, is a moment of such great happiness in a woman's life that she would be prepared to suffer any amount of agony, even stand on the threshold of death, to capture it. What does a woman want in her life except the deep and abiding love of her husband, which nothing can change and which sufferings can only intensify? It is a triumph of Kālidāsa's art that he captured this rare moment and left it for all times.

The re-union of the loving husband and wife after a long agonising separation is in a sense heavenly, though not in the sense that the first union is physical, on animal level, and badly needing a sublimation, as a class of critics have assumed. Separation, whatever its cause may be, is a test of mutual love; it intensifies love; it brings about a better and deeper understanding between the husband and wife or the two lovers; and the understanding binds them closer together, in an abiding bond of affection. The closeness they feel for each other is not limited to the physical pleasure, though it will continue in the nature of things as long as the couple is healthy and their bodies respond; but it now gets the wider basis and perspective of the total life. They become real partners in life sharing joys and sorrows and achieve a unique unity of hearts.

Let us not make the mistake of imagining that in this wider and broad-based understanding the physical pleasure evaporates into nothingness and the couple lead the life of spiritual candidates. What happens is that the love ripens into profound and total affection.<sup>53</sup> Bhavabhūti's Rāma, who has been fortunate to have achieved the unique oneness of love with Sītā, experiences a physical thrill at the casual touch of Sītā and his body tingles with the horripilation of joy. And Sītā assures him that there is nothing surprising about it; it only proves that his love has remained steady and constant.<sup>54</sup> Overcome with the ecstasy of love Rāma offers his arm as a pillow to the sleepy Sītā and she clings to him closely and goes to sleep on his arm.<sup>55</sup> The significance of love between man and woman and the agony of separation they are prepared to endure is, thus, the enlargement of the horizon of mutual understanding, in which the intensity of love and its unchangeable constancy are fully tested.

If this were the connotation of 'spiritual love' so called there would be no ground for any dispute or discussion. But the advocates of the 'transformation' thesis insist on treating the first love and union as simply physical, that is to say, as something low and condemnable, and bring in the Vedānta principle of purifying man and woman of the gross physical urge and lift them to the impersonal level of spirituality so that they may be united in Brahman. I have endeavoured to show that this philosophy, undisputed as a philosophy of life, is not the philosophy of love. It is not applicable at all in the context of art, and Kālidāsa does not countenance it in his poetic design or dramatic construction even by a veiled suggestion. The philosophy of the Spirit shuns love of man and woman as an obstacle in the way of individual emancipation; but it is an essence of art presentation. An important trend in the general Sanskrit literature is of other-worldliness, which teaches renunciation of physical and material pleasures so that the path to individual salvation (*mokṣa*) becomes clear. The literature of art, poetry and drama, as well as the arts like sculpture and painting, did not neglect the spiritual trend of thought. But they did not neglect life also. They stood for faith in life, and the realisation of all the four aims of human existence (*puruṣārtha*), so that while life could be fully lived and enjoyed the soul's graduated and terminal progress towards spiritual liberation could also be achieved. This is the philosophy that art teaches and Kālidāsa too holds up.

Is it surprising that a poet and a philosopher like Goethe understood this message correctly ? He says that Heaven and Earth are combined in *Śākuntala*. It is not the rejection of earth or its 'transformation' into heaven; it is the union of earth and heaven. Are we to understand that the significance of Kālidāsa's art presentation, which a German poet could grasp precisely, went over the heads of the Indian way of spiritualizing each and every thing with the pretence of raising it to the higher level of life ? But what can one say of such critical attempts at falsifying a poet, particularly a poet of the calibre of Kālidāsa ?

(5)

The picture of love between man and woman on the contemporary social background became disputable in the literary criticism of the present times, Kālidāsa's treatment and philosophy of love came to be distorted; and so, a complete reassessment of the ideas was felt to be necessary for a better and a correct understanding of Kālidāsa's art, if not for anything else. One must now try to see that the romantic love between man and woman is not the only subject of Kālidāsa's treatment and that it is not the only aspect of married love that the poet visualises.

Love is as all-embracing as life and reflects the multi-coloured variety of life. The affection of a father and the love of a mother for her child are a part of this love. The love for the child is, in fact, an experience which bestows a sense of fulfilment on human life. It is for this reason that Kālidāsa has given a moving expre-

ssion to the deep pathos in the life of his heroes who were not yet blessed with a child. Dilīpa and Sudakṣiṇā bear an intense agony in their hearts; and with the birth of Raghu their happiness knows no bounds. The child Raghu repeating the words of the nurse with muted and indistinct sounds, holding her finger and rambling through the palace apartments, bending his head before the elders in salutation as taught, becomes the treasure of joy to Dilīpa; and, what wonder, if taking the child on his lap Dilīpa feels that his entire body is bathed in ambrosial waters!<sup>56</sup> Duṣyanta, deprived of a son so far, goes through a similar experience when he meets Sarvadamana in the hermitage of Mārīca. Laughing for no reason and showing in the process his tiny sparkling teeth resembling *Kunda* buds, continuously prattling nonsense in indistinct words whose sweetness is beyond measure, trying to jump into the lap of the parent unaware of his dust-soiled limbs: this is the picture that Duṣyanta's imagination builds; and he feels that blessed are the parents who have children to give them such incomparable joy!<sup>57</sup> Like Duṣyanta who was lost in watching the childlike and childish pranks of Sarvadamana, Purūravas too must have been moved watching the Vidyādhara girl absorbed in her childlike play on the river beach. The measure of a father's love for his son is found in Kālidāsa's pictures of Aja who postpones suicide only to let his son grow up and of Daśaratha who dies by the shock of separation from his beloved Rāma. The love for the child softens a confirmed ascetic like Kaṇva so that he speaks and acts, not like a controlled sage but, like a loving father. And Kaṇva admits the enormity of tender feelings the householders must have for their children born of their flesh and blood.<sup>58</sup> A mother's joy about her child is beyond description; looking after the interest and happiness of her daughter is a never-ending commitment of a mother's life; and a son's achievement is her personal pride. So, we find Dhārīṇī rejoicing at the victory of her son in the battle and distributing presents with both hands; Umā's austere penance touches her mother with serious concern; and Menakā who had to abandon her child rushes from heaven to the earth when she finds her in a terrible plight after being rejected by her husband Duṣyanta. Love for the offspring must be in the blood of a woman. Urvaśī is a celestial nymph and beyond the pale of mortal weakness; but the sight of Āyus overwhelms her and her breasts become wet with oozing milk.<sup>59</sup> Śakuntalā is a true daughter of nature. Nature teaches one to love every thing. Śakuntalā nourishes the Vanajyotsnā creeper as her own daughter and gets her married to Sahakāra tree at the proper time. Watching this couple of the tree and the creeper with the eyes of a mother Śakuntalā gets herself lost. When the moment of her departure to her husband's house comes, Śakuntalā asks her companions to take care of her Vanajyotsnā. The young one of a deer ate *darbha* blades mistaking them to be common grass; the little deer's mouth was all bruised and bleeding; Śakuntalā took him in her lap and applied the oil of *ingudī* to the inside of his mouth to heal the wounds. This young one of the deer returns the love of Śakuntalā in equal measure. He holds the skirt-end of her garment in his mouth and tries to pull her back when she is leaving the hermitage for good.<sup>60</sup> This love between Śaku-

ntalā and nature's kids will not fail to moisten the eyes of any spectator. Śakuntalā is similarly concerned with the pregnant doe; she insists on being informed after the doe has delivered safely. The picture of a loving mother is also an important part of Kālidāsa's treatment of love.

Kālidāsa has not described the love between friends elaborately. But the few suggestive touches found in his writing are sufficient to indicate the span of such unselfish love. The cheerful companions of Śakuntalā, Anasūyā and Priyamvadā, ready to make fun of her at times but looking after her like a mother-creeper after her flower, breaking down into tears at the moment of separation from her, and prepared to sacrifice anything to safeguard her interests; Citralekhā, the loving and understanding companion of Urvaśī; Bakulāvalikā, the companion-maid of Mālavikā; and the Vidūṣaka, particularly Gautama, serving his royal friend faithfully in spite of occasional blunders and foolishness : these pictures are likely to be sharply etched on our memory. An unexpected context reveals Kālidāsa's concept of friendship: Rati mourning for her Madana says, 'Men's love for their women may be unsteady; but it is not so in the case of their friends'.<sup>61</sup> Rati appeals that Madana should return to life if not for her at least for the sake of his friend Vasanta. For, a man's love for a friend is unchangeable. What truer description of friendly affection can be given than this ?

The love of man and woman is, however, the favourite theme of literature. The complexity of this aspect of love is very engaging and offers a perpetual challenge to art presentation. Kālidāsa's treatment of this love reveals its many facets. The first love which leads to marriage and union is a romantic and thrilling experience. A lover's mind passes through a whole range of emotions like doubt, despair, jealousy, anxiety and anguish, till the moment of fulfilment arrives. The plays of Kālidāsa and his picture of Pārvatī in the *Kumārasambhava* show this rainbow of transitory mental states. This picture of love before it is crowned with marriage is always poetic, alluring and delightful in literary presentation.

Like the romantic love, married love or the love of husband and wife has also engaged the attention of Kālidāsa. An impressive picture of the married love is to be found in the lives of Dilipa and Sujakṣiṇā, Aja and Indumatī, Rāma and Sītā, Rati and Madana. Aja's love is a measure of the solidarity and depth of a husband's love for his wife. An understanding couple is a picture of two bodies in which one soul is residing. The wife is not merely the mistress of the house; she is the truest companion and friend, a wise counsellor who steers the ship of the couple's life through the stormy sea of worldly existence<sup>62</sup>. In social life a woman's position may well be secondary to man; but in the domain of family life the woman, as a wife, rules the household and her husband. And as a true companion she is on the footing of equality with the man; for, friendship is not founded on inequality and difference. This is the answer of art to the social inequality between man and woman. The social life



in those days was governed by ideas of high and low order; the political life was ruled by monarchical form of government; but in the life of true love, Kālidāsa seems to suggest, there will always be real democracy, where each individual, man or woman, possesses a status of equality and human dignity.

Another facet of the love of husband and wife is seen in Kālidāsa's theme of the re-union of separated lovers. For some reason the husband and the wife are separated; the terrible anguish of separation they bear with patience and fortitude; and then the day of reunion dawns, and the temporarily broken lives are bound together in an assurance of abiding mutual love. The Yakṣa and his wife, Purūravas and Urvaśī, Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā are such pairs of lovers separated and re-united in love. The reunion of Yakṣa with his wife is withheld for touching artistic effect; but the suggestion is too obvious to be missed. Duṣyanta and Purūravas enjoy this moment of great happiness, and Kālidāsa's art rises to the skill of making it unforgettable.

Kālidāsa's treatment of love has the associated advantage of revealing the nature of man and woman with equal variety and charm. There is a grandeur about the Raghu kings. Duṣyanta too is a grand figure; but the picture of his mind softens him and brings him nearer to us. Duṣyanta is grave but prone to the influence of beauty and emotion by nature. Purūravas is inclined to love with terrible intensity and madness; his emotions are strong and gushing. Yakṣa in the Meghadūta and Daśartaha in the Raghuvamśa are other examples of passionate lovers. Aja is in the same category; but he is a man of few words; his suicide cannot be explained without assuming the intensity of his love. Agnimitra is a picture of common longing and yearning for love.

The heroines of Kālidāsa present a similar variety of portraits. Mālavikā is a fresh, innocent girl; she only knows to love, and love with all her mind and heart. Śakuntalā has the disarming innocence of a girl brought up in the environment of nature; but nature has been her worthy preceptor also. She has acquired the 'untaught cleverness' necessary for woman, a fearlessness, and a tremendous capacity to endure the shocks and sorrows of life. Sītā is the daughter of mother Earth, from whom she has inherited the generosity of heart and the capacity of endurance. Indumati's unerring grasp of life is revealed in her choice of Aja as her husband and life-partner. Umā reveals in her life the uncommon courage and strength that love can lend to it. Urvaśī is an image of intense, clinging and rebellious love; her unchecked and impetuous passion draws her, of her own accord, towards Purūravas, and in the process she loses herself so completely as to forget the laws of heaven and the prohibition of god Kārtikeya, as she forgets the rules of dramaturgy in playing her role. It is probable that Rati shared such intoxicating love; how else could she have been ready to throw herself on the burning pyre of Madana?

The over-all picture of love that Kālidāsa presents in his writing contains rivalries and jealousies of a royal harem, its frettings and fumings, charges and counter-char-

ges; but it also shows the pleasing glow and affection of family life and the assurance of the love of husband and wife. There is a dreamy charm, in this picture, of the magic city of Alakā; the grandeur and holiness of the Himalayan precincts; the pious, innocent and fearless peace of an ascetic's hermitage; also the exciting thrill and wonder as heaven and earth seem to come together; and the bliss of ecstasy that follows the gushing union of the two worlds.

(6.)

What then does Kālidāsa aim at conveying through his pictures of love ?

Kālidāsa is certainly aware of the different facets of love. His treatment distinctly shows that the love of man and woman has an important and significant place in the life of the universe. He has never looked upon, therefore, the physical attraction between the two sexes as anything that is low, sinful and condemnable. The physical basis of love is determined by nature and biology; and it is not confined to human relations. Nature and the entire worldly creation of life is enveloped in this relation and bound by the silken thread of this love. Kālidāsa does not stop with the discovery of emotional similarity and correlation between nature and man. In his artistic creation there are couples like creeper and tree, deer and doe, the male and the female bee, the male and female swans, river and ocean, river and cloud, cloud and lightning, couples who like the human husband and wife are passionately attached to each other and love one another with an intensity of love. The characters created by the poet are fully conscious of the emotional attachment existing in the universe. So, the Yakṣa sincerely wishes that the cloud may not be separated from the lightning even for a moment.<sup>63</sup> Yakṣa and Purūravas discover several loving couples in nature; Śakuntalā arranges the marriage of her Vanajyotsnā creeper with the Sahakāra tree, and celebrates the first blossoming of the creepers like the festivity of child-birth.<sup>64</sup>

Nature too comes into youth. The signs of physical changes that appear in a girl with the advent of youth are visible in Vernal Beauty (Personified as a girl),<sup>65</sup> Vernal Beauty adorns herself like a young maiden;<sup>66</sup> and wind is tempted to make overtures of love to the youthful creepers, because wind had fallen in love once with Añjanā.<sup>67</sup>

The animals and birds are not able to escape the appeal of love when nature is stepping into the spring of life. The doe goes near the black antelope and scratches her itching left eye on the tip of his horn with complete trust and without fear.<sup>68</sup> When the antelope is scratching the doe with his horn she closes her eyes in the bliss of physical pleasure.<sup>69</sup> When the male and the female bee are perched on a single flower, the male lets the female bee sip the flowery juice first and takes his drink only after her.<sup>70</sup> But as separated lovers the female bee, though thirsty, does not touch the flower; she waits like a devoted wife for her companion's arrival and their reunion.<sup>71</sup>

Kālidāsa is not hankering after poetic beauty and allure merely in these pictures. His words and their suggestive sense drip with his own philosophy of love. The love of Prakṛti and Puruṣa is the law of Universe. It is the impulse and inspiration for creation of new life. The entire creation including the world of man is wrapped up in this emotion of love. *Rati* or love is the *sthāyī bhāva* or the basic stable emotion of life; and the physical union is the grace and gesture of nature; it is, in a way, a compulsive act for creation and continuity. The fruit of this loving union is '*kumāra-sambhava*', the off-shoot of new life. That is why, Śiva who had been practising penance 'for some reason' in the solitude of Kailāsa comes down to stand before Umā and declares himself to be her servant in love. Kālidāsa, thus, gives a comprehensive and deep meaning to the love of man and woman, understanding it as universal urge and impulse of new creation and the most tender tie that holds the living world together. To regard the emotion of love, nay, the passion of love, as something low and needing purification (at the hands of literary critics?) is going against the laws of nature and of universe, and is irrelevant to the purpose of art whose stuff is life.

The love of man and woman is not merely a gratification of physical craving or urge. It is an impulse which, as it leads to creation, bestows strength on the partners. There is no emotion like love which envelopes the totality of life, agitates it from the very bottom, and brings an awareness of the depth and the height of life. It is love which establishes equality between man and woman, makes her superior to man; enables her to acquire the large-heartedness and the all-enduring quality of mother Earth. It is this love which is the inspiration for the valour of the heroes. Kālidāsa illustrates this from the example of Aja. Aja is returning from the *svayamvara* with his bride Indumatī; the disappointed kings unite to attack him with the intention of taking Indumatī away from his hands; Aja defeats them single handed and throws them into sleep by using the *saimohana* missile; and shows the spectacle to Indumatī;<sup>72</sup> the gesture and the words cannot conceal his just pride and her great delight; they are a witness to Aja's valour and to Indumatī's confidence in and respect for her husband. It is love that has the strength to lead one from the narrow selfish interests to the larger and impersonal interests of humanity, from duality to oneness. On the walls of the temples in India are carved some beautiful sculptures which depict the conjugal love of couples, human, semi-divine and divine. The ignorant and those who reject the joy of life may put any interpretation on them, or be surprised or shocked by them. But what they mean in the context of art is plain. Love is a process of alchemy which makes a person lose himself; it ends separateness, the sense of difference or duality. What is *bhakti* or religious devotion after all? The poets define *bhakti* as 'love for gods and the divine'.<sup>73</sup> Art does not see, therefore, any opposition between *rati* or love and *bhakti* or devotion. The joy of both takes away selfconsciousness and transports one.

It appears from Kālidāsa's writings that this is what he means by love; this is the high significance he bestows on love which basically may be only a biological

urge. Kālidāsa shows the intensity and the intoxication of love. But let it be remembered that nowhere does he preach or support an excessive indulgence of love. A child is the fruit of the love of the parents; the child divides the love of the father and mother, and yet enhances it, intensifies it.<sup>74</sup> A child is the fulfilment of family life. Kālidāsa seems to suggest that the physical attachment of man and woman must necessarily pave the way for the love for a child. And a poised, balanced enjoyment of life is the foundation of his life's philosophy. Naturally, youth, its demands and pleasures have a legitimate place in human life. Lord Śrī-Kṛṣṇa, describing His divine manifestations in the Gītā, states that He is 'Kāma among the creatures that is unopposed to religious piety', as 'Kandarpa (God of love), the Procreator'.<sup>75</sup> Kālidāsa's philosophy of love is raised on this faith and foundation of the Gītā.

Kālidāsa painted a pupil like Kautsa, completely devoted to his preceptor and desiring nothing for himself; and Śaṅgarava who had the courage and fearlessness to tell a sovereign emperor to his face what he thought of him and his actions; the poet drew the picture of domestic life with its accent on the love of husband and wife and their love for their child in deep colours; and with the same intensity he presented the picture of ascetics, devoted to their penance and defying heavenly pleasures and enjoyments. He offered a sincere prayer himself for his own salvation, but when the moment of life's fulfilment had arrived for him. A full enjoyment, in accordance with the principles of religion, of all the stages of life and a joyful, happy outlook on life, that is the form and the keynote of Kālidāsa's literature.

In this attitude there is no denial of life in spite of its shortcomings and sorrows; there is neither rejection nor condemnation of the impulses of life like love. What Kālidāsa stands for is a poised and full enjoyment of life and what it offers to man. The philosophers who reject the experiences of material life may be able to build a system of higher spiritual values. But it is only an artist who accepts with open arms and a smile what little joys life can offer who can create art; and he alone can let higher values blossom through it.

The literature and art of Kālidāsa hold out this promise for us.

## NOTES

1 Cf. साकृतमधुरकोकिलविलासिनो कण्ठकूजितप्राये ।  
शिक्षासमयेऽपि मुदे रतलीला-कालिदासोक्ती ॥

Govardhanācārya, *Aryāsaptasatī*, introductory v. 36. and,

एकोऽपि जीयते हन्त कालिदासो न केनचित् ।

शृङ्गारे ललितोद्गारे कालिदासत्रयी किमु ॥

Rājasekhara, quoted in *Sūktimuktāvali*.

- 2 *Dhvanyāloka*, Uddyota III. This is preceded by the observation : द्विविधो हि दोषः कवेः अव्युत्पत्तिकृतो अशक्तिकृतश्च । तत्र अव्युत्पत्तिकृतो दोषः शक्तिरिस्कृतत्वात् कदाचिन्न लक्ष्यते । यस्तु अशक्तिकृतो दोषः स झटिति प्रतीयते ।
- 3 Cf. अनौचित्यादृते नान्यद् रसभङ्गस्य कारणम् ।  
प्रसिद्धौचित्यबन्धस्तु रसस्थोपनिषत् परा ॥  
*Dhvanyāloka*, III.
- 4 *Dhvanyāloka*, III.
- 5 *Raghuvamśa* IV. 51-52.  
स निर्विद्वय यथाकामं तटेष्वालोनचन्दनौ ।  
स्तनाविव दिशस्तस्याः शैलौ मलयदुर्दुरौ ॥  
असह्यविक्रमः सद्यः दूरान्मुक्तमुदन्वता ।  
नितम्बमिव मेदिन्याः सस्तांशुकमलङ्घयत् ॥
- 6 *Ibid*, XI. 20 :  
राममन्मथशरेण ताडिता दुःसहेन हृदये निशाचरी ।  
गन्धवद्गुधिरचन्दनोक्षिता जीवितेशवसति जगाम सा ॥
- 7 I do not know who originated this approach. But vide Rabindranath Tagore's essay on *Śakuntala*, and Dr Belevalkar, Prof. A. B. Gajendragadkar and others who follow it enthusiastically.
- 8 Cf. *Śakuntala*, I 24. 18-19 : किं नु खलु इमं प्रेक्ष्य तपोवनविरोधिनो विकारस्य गमनीयास्मि संवृत्ता ।
- 9 *Ibid*. I-24. <sup>5</sup> : अपि तपो वर्धते ।
- 10 Cf. the *Vidūṣaka*'s remark, act II : कृतं त्वया उपवनं तपोवनम् इति पदयामि ।
- 11 Cf. the example of *Vāsavadattā* and *Udayana*.
- 12 'परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्' in the words of the *Gītā*.
- 13 Cf. *Śakuntala*, act IV, *Priyamvadā* reporting : तावदेनां लज्जावनतमुखीं परिष्वज्य तातकाश्रयेण एवम् अभिनन्दितम् । दिष्टया धूमाकुलितदृष्टेरपि यजमानस्य पावके एव आहुतिः पतिता । वत्से, सुशिष्यपरिदत्तेव विद्या अशोचनीयासि संवृत्ता ।  
The reference to *Duśyanta* comes in V. 15 :  
त्वमर्हतां प्राग्रसरः स्मृतोऽसि नः शकुन्तला मूर्तिमती च सत्क्रिया ।  
समानयंस्तुल्यगुणं बधूवरं चिरस्य वाच्यं न गतः प्रजापतिः ॥  
The whole verse deserves to be noted for *Kaṇva*'s, and, of course, *Kālidāsa*'s opinion about the love marriage of *Duśyanta* and *Śakuntalā*.
- 14 For the details mentioned after the statement, see *Śakuntala* : शिष्यः—वेलोपलक्षणार्थमादिष्टोऽस्मि तत्रभवता .... काश्यपेन । प्रकाशं निर्गतस्तावद्वलोकयामि कियदवशिष्टं रज्ज्या इति ।.....  
यावद् उपस्थितां होमवेलां मुखे निवेदयामि । act IV; वैखानसः—राजन् समिदाहरणाय प्रस्थिता वयम् ।  
act I; अनमूया—हला शकुन्तले, त्वत्तोऽपि तातकाश्रयपस्य आश्रमवृक्षकाः प्रियतरा इति तर्कयामि ।  
यदनेन नलमालिका कुसुमपेलवा त्वमपि एतेषां आलवालपूरणे नियुक्ता । act I; I. 14d etc.
- 15 Cf. *Śakuntala*, act IV, interlude; *Priyamvadā*'s words : अद्य स राजर्षिः इष्टिं परिसमाप्य ऋषि-  
भिर्विसर्जितः आत्मनो नगरं प्रविश्य ..... The arrival of *Durvāsas* is announced a few moments after in the same scene.

- 16 *Ibid.* Priyamvadā draws attention to Śakuntalā : अनसूये पश्य तावत् । वामहस्तोपेहितवदना आलिखितेव प्रियसखी । भर्तृगतया चिन्तया आत्मानमपि नैषा विभावयति, किं पुनः आगन्तुकम् ।
- 17 *Ibid.* Anasūyā's words : एष दुर्वासाः सुलभकोपो महर्षिः । तथा शपचा नदुलोत्फुल्लदुर्वारया गत्या प्रतिनिवृत्तः । ...सखि, प्रकृतिकः सः कस्य अनुनयं प्रतिगृह्णाति ।
- 18 *Ibid.* Anasūyā's plea to Durvāsas : यदा अनुनीतो निवर्तितुं नेच्छति तदा विज्ञापितो मया । भगवन् प्रथममिति प्रेक्ष्य अविज्ञाततपःप्रभावस्य दुहितृजनस्य भगवता एकोऽपराधो मर्पितव्यः ।
- 19 *Ibid.* Priyamvadā's comment ; कोऽन्यो हुतवहाद् दग्धं प्रभवति ।
- 20 *Ibid.* Priyamvadā's remark when the two friends decide to keep the curse to themselves : को नाम उष्णोदकेन नवमालिकां सिञ्चति ।
- 21 To Duśyanta's query about Kapṛa the Vaikhānasa replies : इदानीमेव दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथि-सत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः । act I.
- 22 See Śakuntalā's admission after Duśyanta's apology to her, *Śakuntala*, VII 24. ff. : उत्तिष्ठतु उत्तिष्ठतु भार्यपुत्रः । नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं पुराकृतं तेषु दिवसेषु परिणाममुखम् आसीद् येन सानु-क्रोशोऽपि आर्यपुत्रः मयि विरसः संवृत्तः ।
- Also follow the dialogue when Mātali brings Duśyanta and Śakuntalā in the presence of Mārīca, act VII. 30. ff. Duśyanta's apologetic confession to Mārīca about how he came to reject Śakuntalā, how he recollected and recovered her, Mārīca's explanation of the whole happening, and Śakuntalā's own private thoughts—the entire piece is Kālidāsa's own explanation of the curse and the character of Duśyanta. And it shows how the purification or sublimation idea is a mis-construction and a perversion of the poet's own intent.
- 23 *Vikramorvaiśya*, III. 15. \*
- 24 *Ibid.* III. 15. <sup>9</sup> : सखे नारायणोरुसंभवा सेयं वरोरुः ।
- 25 *Ibid.* This is confirmed by Purūravas' statement in III. 16. He guessed it was Urvaśi from the pleasure her touch produced in him.
- 26 *Ibid.* I. 10 : अस्याः सर्गविधौ प्रजापतिरभूच्चन्द्रो नु कान्तिप्रदः  
शृङ्गारैकरसः स्वयं नु मदनो मासो नु पुष्पाकरः ।
- 27 *Śakuntala*, II. 9 : चित्रे निवेश्य परिकल्पितसत्त्वयोगा  
रूपोच्चयेन मनसा विधिना कृता नु ।  
स्त्रीरत्नसृष्टिरपरा प्रतिभाति सा मे  
धातुर्विभुवमनुचिन्त्य वपुश्च तस्याः ॥
- 28 *Vikramorvaiśya*, III. 16. <sup>10</sup> : कथम् इहैव युवयोः अस्तमितः सूर्यः ।
- 29 *Śakuntala*, II. 7. <sup>9</sup> : भो वयस्य, ते तापसकन्यका अभ्यर्थनीया दृश्यते ।
- 30 *Ibid.* II. 8. <sup>1-2</sup> : (विहस्य) यथा कस्यापि पिण्डखजूरैरुद्वेजितस्य तिन्तिण्याम् अभिलाषो भवेत्, तथा स्त्रीरत्नपरिभोगिणो भवतः इयम् अभ्यर्थना ।
- 31 *Ibid.* II. 12. <sup>1-2</sup> : तेन हि गृहीतपाथेयो भव । कृतं त्वया उपवनं तपोवनमिति पश्यामि ।
- 32 *Ibid.* III. 21. <sup>2-3</sup> : पौरव रक्ष विनयम् । मदनसंतप्ताऽपि न खलु आत्मनः प्रभवामि ।
- 33 *Ibid.* III. 17. <sup>17-18</sup> : (प्रियंवदामवलोक्य) हला, किं अन्तःपुरविरहपर्युत्सुकस्य राजर्षेः उपरोधेन ।

- 34 *Ibid.*, III. 18 : इदमनन्यपरायणमन्यथा हृदयसंनिहिते हृदये मम ।  
यदि समर्थयसे मदिरेक्षणे मदनबाणहतोऽस्मि हतः पुनः ॥
- 35 *Ibid.*, III. 19 : परिग्रहबहुत्वेऽपि द्वे प्रतिष्ठे कुलस्य मे ।  
समुद्रवसना चोर्वी सखी च युवयोरियम् ॥
- 36 *Mālavikāgnimitra*, III. 15 :  
अनातुरोत्कण्ठितयोः प्रसिध्यता समागमेनापि रतिर्न मां प्रति ।  
परस्परप्राप्तिनिराशयोर्वरं शरीरनाशोऽपि समानुरागयोः ॥
- 37 Cf. *Śākuntala*, VII. 4 :  
सिध्यन्ति कर्मसु महत्त्वपि यन्नियोज्याः  
संभावनागुणमवेहि तमोश्चराणाम् ।  
किं वाऽभविष्यदरुणस्तमसां विमेत्ता  
तं चेत् सहस्रकिरणो धुरि नाकरिष्यत् ॥
- 38 *Ibid.*, IV. 18 ; 'कुरु प्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने' etc.
- 39 *Śākuntala*, act V. Read :  
प्रतिहारी-...ननु दर्शनीया पुनरस्या आकृतिर्लक्ष्यते ।  
राजा-भवतु । अनिर्वर्णनीयं परकलत्रम् ।  
And after V. 19, प्रतिहारी- (स्वगतम्) अहो धर्मापेक्षिता भर्तुः । ईदृशं नाम सुखोपनतं रूपं दृष्ट्वा  
कोऽन्यो विचारयति ।
- 40 Cf. *Vikramorvaiśya*, IV. Praveśaka : असहना खलु सा । दूराच्छ्रद्धास्याः प्रणयः ।
- 41 Cf. *Śākuntala*, II. 18, and the prose speech preceding it. Read : परिहासविजल्पितं सखे परमार्थेन  
न गृह्यतां वचः ॥
- 42 *Ibid.* VI. 5 cd. : दाक्षिण्येन ददाति वाचमुचितामन्तःपुरेभ्यो यदा  
गोत्रेषु स्खलितस्तदा भवति च वीडाविलक्षश्चिरम् ॥
- 43 cf. Citralekhā's assurance to Urvaśi, *Vikramorvaiśya*, act III ; अथि मुग्धे, अन्यसंक्रान्तप्रेमाणा  
नागरिका अधिकं दक्षिणा भवन्ति ।
- 44 *Śākuntala* V.1. the song, rendered in Sanskrit, is as follows ;  
अभिनवमधुलोलुपस्त्वं तथा परिचुम्ब्य चूतमञ्जरोम् ।  
कमलवसतिमात्रनिर्वृतो मधुकर विस्मृतोऽस्येनां कथम् ॥
- 45 *Ibid.* V 1.4 : सकृत्कृतप्रणयोऽयं जनः ।
- 46 *Ibid.*, I. 12 : The blessing 'पुत्रमेवंगुणोपेतं चक्रवर्तिनमाप्नुहि ।' is meaningless if Duṣyanta had  
a son and the fact was known in his kingdom.
- 47 *Ibid.* II. the reference to 'पुत्रपिण्डपालन उपवास' is brought through the special messenger,  
Karabhaka, coming from Duṣyanta's mother.
- 48 *Ibid.*, III. 10. See note (35).
- 49 The phrase is Bhavabhūti's, *Uttara-rāma-carita*, III. 1 ; अनिर्भिन्नो गभीरत्वाद् अन्तर्गूढधनव्ययः ।  
पुष्टपाकप्रतीकाशः.....
- 50 See *Raghuvamśa*, VIII, 76-95.

- 51 Cf. *Vikramorvaiśya*, IV, 71<sup>3</sup>. 3 : Urvāśi's statement; 'अन्तःकरणप्रत्यक्षीकृतवृत्तान्तो महाराजः ।'  
 52 See *Śākuntala*, VII. 22, 23, 24 (and the stage direction 'पादयोः पतति'), 25.  
 53 Cf. Bhavabhūti's famous pronouncement, *Uttara-rāma-carita*, I. 39 :

अद्वैतं सुखदुःखयोरनुगतं सर्वास्ववस्थासु यद्  
 विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र जरसा यस्मिन्नहार्यो रसः ।  
 कालेनावरणात्ययात् परिणते यत् स्नेहसारे स्थितं  
 भद्रं तस्य सुमानुषस्य कथमप्येकं हि तत् प्राप्यते ॥

- 54 *Uttara-rāma-carita*, I. 34 ff. रामः—प्रिये किमेतत् । ... सीता—स्थिरप्रसादा यूयमित इदानीं\*  
 किमपरम् । See verses I. 35, 36.

55 *Ibid.*, I. 36, 37, 38.

56 *Raghuvamśa*, III. 25-26 :

उवाच धात्र्या प्रथमोदितं वचो ययौ तदोयामवलम्ब्य चाङ्गुलिम् ।  
 अभूच्च नम्रः प्रणिपातशिक्षया पितुर्मुदं तेन ततान सोऽर्भकः ॥  
 तमङ्कमारोप्य शरीरयोगजैः सुखैर्निषिञ्चन्तमिवामृतं त्वचि ।  
 उपान्तसंमिलितलोचनो नृपश्चिरात् सुतस्पर्शरसज्ञतां ययौ ॥

57 *Śākuntala*, VII. 17 ;

आलक्ष्यदन्तमुकुलाननिमित्तहासैः  
 अव्यक्तवर्णरमणीयवचःप्रवृत्तीन् ।  
 अङ्काश्रयप्रणयिनस्तनयान् वहन्तो  
 धन्यास्तदङ्गरजसा मलिनीभवन्ति ॥

cf. also. VIII. 16, 19.

58 *Ibid.*, IV. 6 ; यास्यत्यय शकुन्तलेति etc., especially,

वैवल्यं मम तावदीदृशमहो स्नेहादरण्यौकसः  
 पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं नु तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः ॥

59 Cf. *Vikramorvaiśya*, V. 12 ;

इयं ते जननी प्राप्ता त्वदालोकनतत्परा ।  
 स्नेहप्रस्तवनिर्भिन्नमुद्वहन्ती स्तनांशुकम् ॥

60 *Śākuntala*, IV. 14.

61 *Kumārāsambhava*, IV. 28 ;

अयि संप्रति देहि दर्शनं स्मर पर्युत्सुक एष माधवः ।  
 दयितास्वनवस्थितं नृणां न खलु प्रेम चलं सुहृज्जने ॥

62 Cf. *Raghuvamśa*, VIII. 67. Aja says, mourning about Indumati :

गृहिणो सचिवः सखी मिथः प्रियशिष्या ललिते कलाविधौ ।  
 करुणाविमुखेन मृत्युना हरता त्वां वद किं न मे हतम् ॥

63 *Uttara-megha*, v. 55 ; 'मा भूदेवं क्षणमपि च ते वियुता विप्रयोगः ।'

64 Cf. *Śākuntala*, IV. 9c ; 'आद्ये वः कुसुमप्रसूतिसमये यस्या भवत्युत्सवः ।'



65 Cf. *Vikramorvaśīya*, II. 7 ;

अग्रे स्त्रीनखपाटलं कुरवकं श्यामं द्वयोर्भागयोर  
बालाशकमुपोढरागसुभगं भेदोन्मुखं तिष्ठति ।  
ईषद्वद्धरजःकणाग्रकपिशा चूते नवा मञ्जरी  
मुग्धत्वस्य च यौवनस्य च सखे मध्ये मधुश्रीः स्थिता ॥

66 Cf. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, III. 5 ;

रक्ताशोकरुचा विशेषितगुणो विम्बाधरालक्तकः  
प्रत्याख्यातविशेषकं कुरवकं श्यामावदाताक्षम् ।  
आकान्ता तिलकक्रियाऽपि तिलकैर्लग्नद्विरेफाञ्जनैः  
सावज्ञेयं मुखप्रसाधनविधौ श्रीमाधवी योषिताम् ॥

67 Cf. *Vikramorvaśīya*, II. 4 ;

निषिञ्चन् माधवीमेतां लतां कौन्दीं च लासयन् ।  
स्नेहदाक्षिण्ययोर्योगात् कामीव प्रतिभाति मे ॥

And II. 20cd. : जानीते ...कामार्तं जनम्, अञ्जनां प्रति भवान् आलक्षितप्रार्थनः ।

68 Cf. *Śākuntala*, VI 17d : 'शृङ्गे कृष्णमृगस्य वामनयनं कण्डूयमानां मृगीम् ।'

69 *Kumārāsambhava*, III. 36b : शृङ्गेण स्पर्शनिमीलिताक्षीं मृगीमकण्डूयत कृष्णसारः ।

70 *Ibid.*, III. 36a : मधु द्विरेकः कुसुमैकपात्रे पयौ प्रियां स्वामनुवर्तमानः ।

The bee seems to know the posh etiquette, 'Ladies first' !

71 *Śākuntala*, VI. 19 :

एषा कुसुमनिषण्णा तृषितापि सती भवन्तमनुरक्ता ।  
प्रतिपालयति मधुकरी न खलु मधु विना त्वया पिबति ॥

72 Cf. *Raghuvamśa*, VII. 31-39.

73 Cf. *Mamata, Kāvya prakāśa*, IV. 35 ; रतिर्देवादिविषया व्यभिचारी तथाञ्जितः । भावः प्रोक्तः...

Viśvanātha, *Sāhitayadarpaṇa*, III. 260b-261a : सञ्चारिणः प्रधानानि देवादिविषया रतिः ॥ उद्बुद्ध-  
मात्रः स्थायी च भाव इत्यभिधीयते ।

74 cf. *Raghuvamśa*, III. 24 :

रथाङ्गनाम्नोरिव भाववन्धनं बभूव यत्प्रेम परस्पराश्रयम् ।  
विभक्तमप्येकमुतेन तत्तयोः परस्परस्योपरि पर्यचीयत ॥

75 'यर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।' *Gītā*, VII. 11; 'प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः', *Gītā*, X. 28.

Note : For the convenience of the general reader, titles of works are cited in full, without using abbreviations.

Prakrit passages and verses from the plays are quoted in Sanskrit translation.

॥ Śivam astu Kālyāṇam astu ॥

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## CORRECTIONS

Page	Line	For	Read
1	6	Cions	Coins
1	21	together,	together;
3	8	Balhika	Bālhika
8	7	Quated	Quoted
8	15	<i>Culturc</i>	<i>Culture</i>
9	22	construction	constructions
10	10	lost is	lost in
18	5	brial	bridal
21	20	Reghu	Raghu
25	13	uachallenged	unchallenged
25	last	Eerth	Earth
27	24	good	god
27	27	veriety	variety
29	3	blossmed	blossomed
29	10	while	While
30	13 and 26	Gautma	Gautama
30	14	favourabla	favourable
31	26	royl	royal
32	2	low-lavel	low-level
32	11	davelopment	development
32	17	rescal	rascal
33	16	responese	response
33	33	took name	took the name
34	20	effectively	effectively
34	26	my be	may be
35	6	however:	however,
35	7	brid	bird
35	8	on it,	on it;
35	34	harmany	harmony
37	5	<i>pratisṭhā</i>	<i>pratiṣṭhā</i>
37	11	arrived	arrives
38	20	fisherman	a fisherman
38	30	come	comes
40	10	imortal	immortal
40	22	praver	prayer
40	26	admiress	admires

42	11	quality the mole-hill-which	quality—the mole-hill which
45	21	varification	verification
49	4	goṣṭhis	goṣṭhis
53	19	different	a different
54	29	Śukuntalā	Śakuntalā
54	38	Rām	Rāma
55	7	picture	pictures
55	25	Pururava's	Pururavas'
56	15	of situation	of a situation
56	37	His the Majesty	His Majesty
57	3	me calling	me, calling
58	2	dear	deer
	(from bottom)		
63	7	शभप्रधानेषु	शभप्रधानेषु
65	20	cent	cent.,
65	32	Kālidāsa	Kālidāsa
65	last	valldity	validity
66	21	lilerature	literature
71	19	for him,	for him;
73	24	by way taxes	by way of taxes
74	(from bottom)5	ruled	ruled
80	Page Heading	Appointmet	Appointment
81	19	self confidence	self-confidence
82	(from bottom) 11	Gaṇḍāsa	Gaṇadāsa
82	(from bottom) 4	also my	also may
83	Page Heading	Thaught	Thought
84	(from bottom) 10	Gaṇḍāsa	Gaṇadāsa
87	9	(footnote no.)79	97
87	15	world or heaven	world of heaven
88	Page Heading	Appointmet	Appointment
88	Note 29	मनोवर्त्मनः	मनोवर्त्मनः
92	23	raligious	religious
93	10	lurk	lurks
94	4 (Sanskrit quotation)	viṣāya	viṣaya
94	10 (from bottom/ Sanskrit quotation)	viṣayena	viṣaye na
95	15	describisng	describing
96	9	pleasureseek —	pleasure-seek—
96	6 (from bottom)	yogis	yogins

98	26	couple	couple
99	3	is only	is the only
99	4	(Vaikhānasa	(Vaikhānasa
102	18	to lips	to his lips
103	20	dusy	dusty
104	24	compositioa	composition
106	10	dramas.	dramas ?
108	4	clowncompanion	clown-companion
108	5	Vidūṣaka	Vidūṣaka
108	9 (from bottom)	is a form	is seeking a form
109	9 (from bottom)	terminate	terminated
109	6 (from bottom)	state Rulers	State Rulers
109	5 (from bottom)	causal	casual
110	21	rests	rest
111	14	peep	deep
113	4 (from bottom)	feeling	feelings
114	8	woman	women
114	2 (from bottom)	examined	examined it
115	3 (from bottom)	prefered	preferred
116	4	word of	words of
116	5	Vidūṣaka'	Vidūṣaka,
116	5	reveals	reveals
116	20	Purūravasa	Purūravas
116	22	ont	out
116	25	āśram	āśrama
116	7 (from bottom)	pray	prey
117	4	Hamsapadikā	Hamsapadikā
117	9	(8) what	(8) What
117	9	and a	and not a
117	24	Daśartha	Daśaratha
117	9 (from bottom)	testimoney	testimony
117	6 (from bottom)	paly	play
119	10 (from bottom)	times,	times;
121	21	challange	challenge
122	19	Daśartaha	Daśaratha
123	13 (from bottom)	(Personified	(personified
124	10 (from bottom)	devine	divine
126	17	Belevalkar	Belwalker
126	4 (from bottom)	नवमालिका कुसुमपेलवा	नवमालिकाकुसुमपेलवा
127	23	statemnent	statement

