

**An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory**  
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**Lecture- 07**  
**Sanskrit Literary Theoreticians--Medieval Period A**

This is a continuation of the previous lecture on major literary critics in Sanskrit poetics and their works. In this lecture, we are going to see literary critics from the medieval phase. The first critic that we are going to see today is Hemacandra.

**Hemacandra**

Hemacandra was a Jain scholar who lived in the 12th century. It is believed that he lived in today's Gujarat. Other than his magnum opus Kāvyañuśāsana, he has written many other works.

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His Siddha hemacandra, Śabdānuśāsana, Liṅgānu-śāsana, and Dhātupārāyaṇa are treatises on grammar. His Cchandānu śāsana is a work on poetic meter. Apart from these, he has also written a few dictionaries, namely Abhidhāna- cintāmaṇi, Anekārthasamgraha, Nikhaṇḍuśeṣa and Deśināma--māla. Hemacandra's Kāvyañuśāsana primarily covers almost all the important aspects in the works of his predecessors, such as kāvyahetu or the result of poetry, kāvyaprayojana or the uses of poetry, kāvyasvarūpa or the ontology of kāvya, guṇa or poetic merit, doṣa or the poetic blemish, rasa or aesthetic emotion, alaṅkāra or the figures of speech, dhvani or

poetic suggestion, etc. It is generally believed that Hemacandra's Kāvyañuśāsana is very much modelled on Mammaṭa's Kāvyaṭprakāśa.

### **Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra**

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra are the disciples of Hemacandra. Guṇacandra was a playwright, as well. The duo is best known for their magnum opus Nāṭyadarpaṇa or the Mirror of Drama which gives the readers a good glimpse into the art of dramaturgy. Nāṭyadarpaṇa is divided into four chapters and each chapter is called a darpaṇa or mirror. It is often believed that Nāṭyadarpaṇa is the first such text composed by a working playwright. In Nāṭyadarpaṇa, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandras see rasa not just as a pleasurable experience but as a sorrowful experience as well. This can definitely be considered an innovative approach to the question of rasa. We will discuss this aspect in detail when we discuss the idea of rasa in the forthcoming lectures. It is generally believed that it was the influence of Jain philosophy which inspired them to see rasa from a new angle.

It is significant that this important and innovative treatise on dramaturgy that they wrote is extant in only four manuscripts. Even more surprising is the fact that not a single commentary on it has been identified. One literary scholar upon whom this text exerted a tremendous influence is Rudra Bhaṭṭa. As for the influence of other critics upon Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, the impact of their guru Hemacandra is quite apparent, although they do not hesitate to criticize their preceptor on a variety of matters. The same is their approach to Abhinavagupta, who they critique and appreciate. Another theoretician who had exercised a tremendous influence upon them is Mammata. It is very clear from the text that they had thoroughly studied Mammaṭa's Kāvyaṭprakāśa.

### **Vāgbhaṭa I**

Vagbhaṭa lived in the 12th century. In the field of literary theory, he is best known for his work Vagbhaṭālaṅkāra. Neminirmāṇa is a mahākāvya he has authored. Like Hemacandra, Rāmacandra and Gunacandra, who we saw earlier, Vāgbhaṭa was also a Jain. Vagbhaṭa's magnum opus Vāgbhaṭālaṅkāra consists of 5 chapters and around 260 kārīkās. In this work, Vāgbhaṭa has reflected systematically upon almost all the aspects related to kāvyasāstra, except for the divisions of the alaṅkāra named rupaka or metaphor. All the example-verses that Vāgbhaṭa cites in this text to explicate his concepts are solely created by him. The first chapter of the text deals with the ontology of kāvyā, the merits of reading and composing a

kāvya, and finally, the purpose of composing a poem. In the second chapter, he classifies kāvya into different categories and explains poetic faults. The third chapter is a very detailed engagement with the poetic merits. The two areas which the fourth chapter deals with include alaṅkāras or figures of speech and rīti or poetic style. The fourth chapter, which deals with the alaṅkāras consists of around three hundred and fifty-three kārikas. From this, it could be inferred that Vāgbhaṭa gave a lot of importance to the idea of alaṅkara or figures of speech. And finally, the fifth chapter deals with the ontology of rasa and its importance.

## **Vagbhata II**

There is one more Vagbhata. This Vagbhata lived in the 14th century, and his major work is Kāvyaṅuśāsana. Like the Vāgbhatālaṅkāra of Vagbhata I, Kāvyaṅuśāsana of Vagbhata II also does not talk in extension about rūpaka. Vagbhata II had also written a commentary on Kāvyaṅuśāsana, which is titled Alaṅkāratilaka. Remember, there are two Kāvyaṅuśāsanas—one is written by Hemacandra and the other is written by Vagbhata II. Compared to Hemacandra's Kāvyaṅuśāsana, Kāvyaṅuśāsana of Vagbhata II is small in size. It consists of five chapters and covers almost all the topics related to Kāvyaśāstra. Other than Kāvyaṅuśāsana, Vagbhata II had written two other works, namely Ṛṣabha—deva-- carita and Chhanda-nuśāsana

## **Śāradātanaya**

Śāradātanaya lived in the thirteenth century, and he is best known for his work Bhāvaprakāśa. Bhāvaprakāśa primarily deals with nāṭyaśāstra or dramaturgy. More than an original treatise on dramaturgy, Bhāvaprakāśa is primarily a textbook that collates information from other works. The chapters in Bhāvaprakāśa are titled adhikaraṇas. The first three adhikaraṇas deal with bhāvas. The fourth adhikaraṇa or chapter deals with the manners of the heroes and heroines in the context of śṛṅgāra-rasa's ālambana vibhāva or the personal and human object, which functions as the stimulant of aesthetic emotions. The first chapter deals with the different moods of the hero and his different emotional states according to different moods. The sixth chapter is a very detailed deliberation of the different aspects of śabda and artha, or sound and sense. The topic of the seventh chapter is ten kinds of dramatic performances such as nāṭaka, prakaraṇa, bhāṇa, prahasana, etc. The eighth-chapter deals with

different kinds of dances, and the ninth chapter deals with the difference in the performance of different kinds of drama.

### **Jayadeva**

Jayadeva is another important critic who deserves a special mention. Jayadeva is also known as Piyūṣavardhana. Although he is best known for his work *Candrāloka*, he has also authored a drama called *Prasannarāghava*. A close comparison of Jayadeva's *Candrāloka* and Appaya Dikṣita's *Kuvalayānanda* will reveal that Dikṣita had heavily borrowed, either verbatim or with slight modifications, the verses that Jayadeva cites as the examples of different *alaṅkāras*. This shows the importance of Jayadeva as a literary theoretician. Jayadeva is also known for Mammaṭa's debate with him about the ontology of *kāvya*. In *Kāvya-prakāśa*, Mammaṭa criticizes Jayadeva for considering a piece of writing without an *alaṅkara* as a *kāvya*.

Jayadeva's *Candrāloka* is divided into ten *mayukhas* or chapters. The first chapter is titled *Vāgvicāraṇa*, and it deals with *kāvya-lakṣaṇas* or the characteristics of a poem. The second chapter deals with poetic faults or *doṣas*. The fourth chapter deals with *lakṣnas* based on *sāmudrikaśāstra*. The fourth one is a detailed exploration of poetic merits or *guṇas*. *Śabdālaṅkaras*, or the ornaments of sound and *arthālaṅkāras* or the ornaments of sense, are the major topics covered under the fifth chapter. The primary focus of the sixth chapter is *rasa*, or aesthetic emotion. *Dhvani*, or poetic suggestion and its subdivisions, are covered in the seventh chapter. The eighth, ninth and tenth chapters respectively deal with *guṇībhūta vyangya kāvya*, *lakṣaṇa* and *abhidhā*. We will discuss these aspects in detail in our chapter on *dhvani*.

### **Vidyadhara**

Vidyadhara is known for his work *Ekāvali*. He lived in south India in the 13th century. The demonstrative *ślokas* that Vidyadhara cites in *Ekāvali* are in the form of *cāṭuślokas* about a king named *Narasimhadeva*. The chapters in Vidyadhara's *Ekāvali* are titled *unmeṣas*. There are eight *unmeṣas* in *Ekāvali*. The first *unmeṣa* deals with the ontology and the purpose of *kāvya*. The second one deals with topics such as *vācaka* or sentence, *lakṣaka* or the indicator, *vyajñaka*

or the manifestor, abhidha or the primary meaning, lakṣaṇa or the secondary meaning and so on. The third unmeṣa deals with dhvani and its divisions. The fourth one deals with the variety of kāvya called guṇibhūta- vyangyākāvya. Poetic merits and rītis are discussed in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter focuses on poetic blemishes. The seventh chapter deals with śabdālankāras, or the ornaments of sound, and the fifth chapter deals with arthālankāras or the ornament of sense.

### **Viśvanātha**

Viśvanātha is the son of the poet Candraśekhara. He lived in the fourteenth century. It is interesting to note that in his magnum opus Sāhityadarpaṇa, Viśvanātha talks about his grandfather Nārāyaṇapaṇḍita who, in fact, proposed the theory that there is only one rasa called atbhuta. Apart from Sāhityadarpaṇa, Viśvanātha had authored many other works, such as Rāghavavilāsa, Kuvalyāśvacarita, Prabhāvatī pariṇaya, Candrakala, Narasimhakāvya and Kāvya prakāśadarpaṇa.

### **Bhānudatta**

Bhanudatta was from Videha, which is in today's northern Bihar. He was the member of a highly learned Maithili brahmin community, and he was the son of a poet named Ganéshvara or Gaṇapati. It is believed that he lived in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Bhānudatta is the author of two crucial texts in the history of Sanskrit poetics, namely Rasamañjarī and Rasataraṅgiṇī. Pollock opines that Bhanudatta's Rasataraṅgiṇī is the first extensive text dealing exclusively with the question of rasa. There are eight chapters in Rasataraṅgiṇī, and these chapters are titled taraṅgiṇis or waves. The first chapter of the text deals with sthāyībhāva or the basic emotions, the second chapter deals with vibhāva, the third one with anubhāva, the fourth with sātvikabhāva. The subjects of the fifth and the sixth chapters are respectively vyabhicāribhāva and śṛṅgāra rasa. The seventh chapter deals with other rasas and the final eighth chapter focuses on the three kinds of rasa-generation with respect to Sthāyībhāva. His Rasamañjarī deals with topics such as the qualities of a hero and heroine, the two stages of śṛṅgāra rasa, the ten stages of vipralambha śṛṅgāra or the love in separation, etc.

It is believed that other than Rasataraṅgiṇi and Rasamañjarī, Bhānu had also authored a treatise on rhetoric called Alaṅkāratilaka. Kumāra-bhārgavīya campū, is a mixed prose-verse work, narrating the story of the deity Kartikéya. Bhānudatta had also written a kāvya titled Gītagaurīśaṃ in ten sargās. This text is modelled on Jayadeva's Gītagovinda. He is also believed to have composed an anthology of his own, and his father's poetry called the Rasapārijāta or the Heavenly Tree of Rasa. Several other works attributed to him have not survived yet.