

Kalidasa and his Times



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KALIDASA AND HIS TIMES



శ్రీ వాగర్థానివ సంపృక్తో వాగర్థ ప్రతిపత్తయే ।
జగతః పితరో వందే పార్వతి పరమేశ్వరౌ ॥

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FORWARD BY THE AUTHOR

By Nandury Rama Krishnamacharyulu

I will be completing eighty years of age by 29-4-2001.

History and Geography are the two eyes of literature.

My life's ambition has been to discover the period of Kalidasa. I had been working on this topic for over half a century. But the solution had evaded me many a time. I was deeply disappointed to the point of frustration. At long last I have discovered the period of Kalidasa. My theory is that Kalidasa flourished in the first century B.C. This is the traditional view as well. The newest bottle contains the oldest wine.

Now I have the unique pleasure and job satisfaction that I have discovered the period of Kalidasa. I know it is a tall claim. I am placing my theory before the professional historians as well as the lay public through this book for review and criticism.



Dr. Nanduri Rama Krishnamacharya

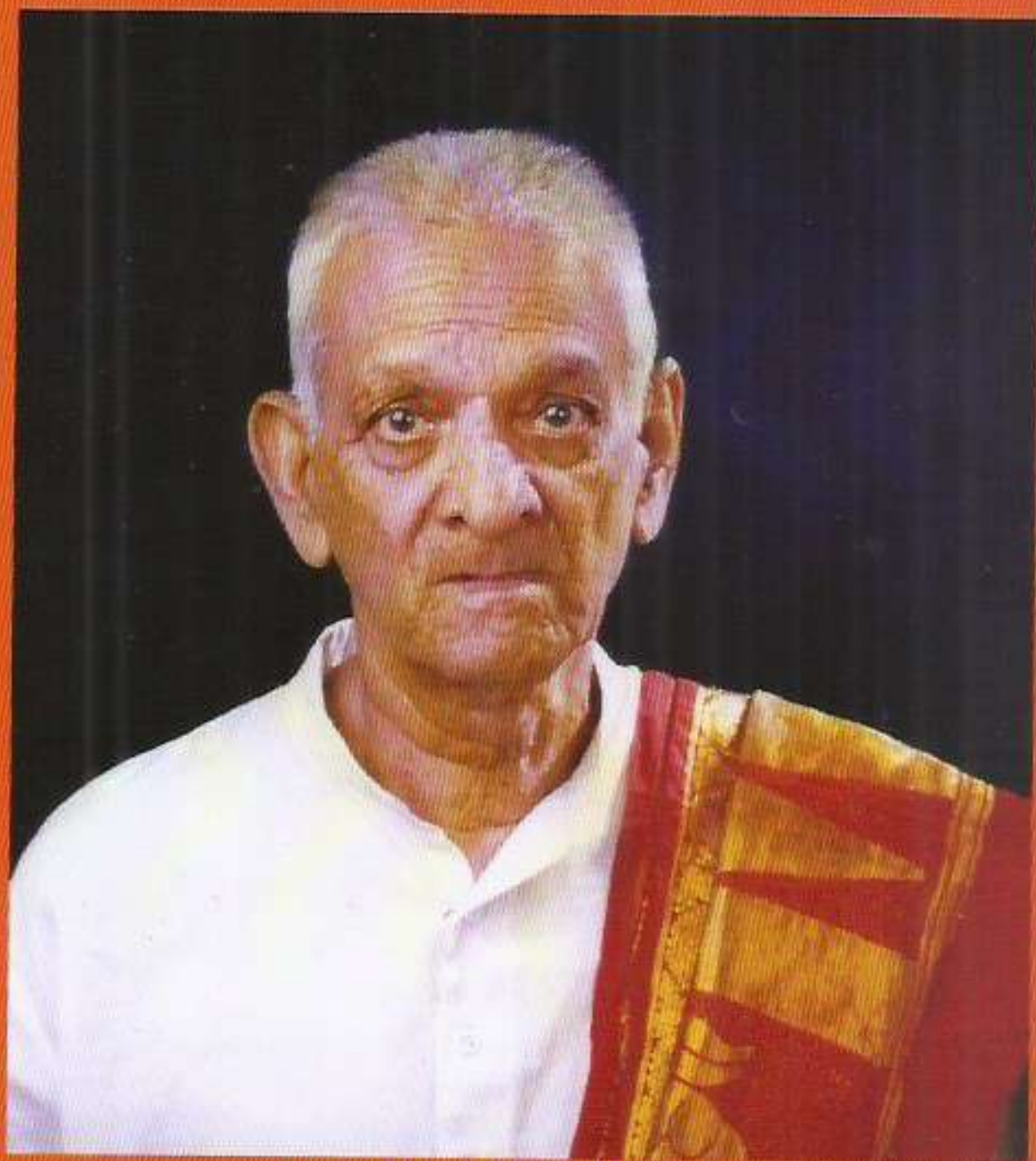
DR. NANDURI RAMAKRISHNAMACHARYA



M/S. SUBHADRAGURU

* This foreword was written by Dr. Nanduri Rama Krishnamacharya before the completion of his 80th year of his birthday. He survived two years after writing this foreword.

Dr. N.V.R Krishnamacharyulu M.A.Ph.D
Author of Kalidasa And His Times



(1921-2003)

**Dr. N.V.R Krishnamacharyulu Published
More Than 40 Books Including Tara Toranam,
Aalochanam, The Mahabharat, Vikramorvaseeyam,
Ancient South Indian History, Andhra Samskruti
Vikasam, Kavithrayam, The Gandhian Era Etc.,**

KALIDASA AND HIS TIMES

**Dedicated to Sri R.Ekambaracharyulu
By Dr.N.V.R. Krishnamacharyulu**



Sri Rapaka Ekambaracharyulu

**President Andhra Padya Kavita Sadas (Twin Cities)
General Secretary - Archaeological Society of India**

Sri R.Ekambaracharyulu

Honoured By Navya Sahiti Samithi



Sri R.Ekambaracharyulu honoured under the auspices Navya Sahiti Samithi Hyderabad on the Occasion of his deliverance of a Lecture on Emient Litterateur Late Sri Veturi Prabhakara Sastry on April 29th 2003 (L to R) Sri K.V.Ramanachary I.A.S Commissioner A.P.Housing Board, and Sri Vemaraju Narasimharao, Sri Kami Setty Srinivasulu and Dr.N.V.R Krishnamacharyulu a great poet and Litterateur.

**Dr. N.V.R Krishnamacharyulu M.A.Ph.D
(Honoured)**



**Navya Sahiti Samithi - Hyderabad Honoured
Dr. N.V.R Krishnamacharyulu on His 82nd Birthday
In Y.M.C.A Hall Narayanaguda, Hyderabad.
on April 29th 2003. (L to R) Sri K.V.Ramanachary I.A.S
Commissioner A.P.Housing Board,Sri R.Ekambara
charyulu (Rtd) Joint Registrar of C.S. and
Sri Vemaraju Narasimharao President Navya
Sahiti Samithi**

DEDICATED TO MY FRIEND
SRI RAPAKA EKAMBARACHARYULU, M.A.
(The personification of Historical Research
and love of Poetry)

I was searching for a kindred soul with a poetic heart and historical head. I could not find a satisfactory personality. At Long last, I found the kindred soul for whom I was searching for over half a century. I found the kindred soul in SRI. R. EKAMBARACHARYULU and I have dedicated this book to him with immense satisfaction.

SRI EKAMBARACHARYULU is the living confluence of poetry and historical research, par excellence.



* Sri Ramakrishnamacharya wishes to dedicate the book KALIDASA AND HIS TIMES to Sri Rapaka Ekambara charyulu but due to his sudden demise he could not do it but his worthy sons dedicated it to him now.

Prof. I.V. CHALAPATI RAO

Editor 'TRIVENI'

Registrar CIEFL (Retd.)



FOREWORD

'Kalidas and his Times' is a scholarly treatise and a research-based critique on the various aspects of the poet. Kalidas is our national poet. He has been regarded as "the brightest star on the firmament of Indian poetry". He produced great poetry, depicted natural scenes which are like candid camera-shots, sketched characters which bear close resemblance to life and convey an over-all message inculcating the love of truth, goodness and beauty-**SATYAM, SIVAM AND SUNDARAM**. Bana Bhatta, the great scholar, in his HARSHA CHARITA compared the sweet utterances of Kalidas to fresh blossoms dripping with honey.

It was Sir William Jones, the British scholar, who first translated 'Abhijnana Saakuntalam' into English and fixed the period of Kalidas as 1st Century B.C. This Play, which is the magnum opus of Kalidas, ran into 81 translations and over 21 editions by the turn of the 20th Century. Whatever the evils of the British rule in India be, it was through the indefatigable labours and impartial investigations of a few British scholars like Sir William Jones, Colebrook, Wilson, Watkins and Prinsep that India's ancient wisdom and cultural heritage were brought not only to the appreciation of the wide world but also to the notice of the Indians themselves. They discovered and propagated that India's Kalidas was as great as Shakespeare, that Sanskrit was superior to Greek and Latin, that the Indian philosophy could rival the best of Greek Philosophy and that India could boast of an advanced system of Astronomy. As Dr. Rama Krishnamachary has pointed out, Goethe, the German scholar was so impressed

by 'Saakuntalam' that he himself wrote a poem 'SAKUNTALAM'.

'Ramakrishnamacharya had a desire to fix the period of Kalidas as the Chronology was indeterminate on account of the prevalence of conflicting theories. It was indeed a challenging task. It was as much a historical job as it was a literary task. He examined all the available evidence, and the theories advanced by the various scholars, carefully surveyed the internal and external factors including numismatics, the Bheeta Medallion, Aswaghosha's work etc and finally concluded that Kalidas belonged to the 1st century B.C. His findings tallied with the theory of Sir William Jones.

On the basis of his deep study of Kalidasa's plays ABHIJNANASAKUNTALAM, MALAVIKAGNI MITRAM, VIKRAMOR VASEEYAM and his poems MEGHADUTAM, KUMARA SAMBHAVAM and RAGHUVAMSAM and the slim volume RITU SAMHARA, the author explained the beauty of Kalidasa's descriptions, the nuances of his poetic style and his psychological portrayal of his characters. He explained the significance of the oft-used expressions like 'Deepa Sikha' and 'Upama Kalidasasya'. Kalidasa was a landscape painter in nature description and a portrait painter in characterisation. He had absorbing interest in nature and human nature as well. His characters are not mere abstractions but individualised. Moreover, as Ramakrishna macharya has suggested, he has established intimate relationship between man and nature. Above all India's ancient culture and civilisation are reflected in his plays and poems as in a mirror.

As the author has pointed out Kalidas had a remarkable knowledge of India's geography as revealed in MEGHDUT and other works. It is possible to construct a geographical picture of India of his times from a study of his works. The reader finds the journey of the cloud

from Malwa to the Kailas peak, the journey of Rama from Lanka to Ayodhya, Raghu's Digvijaya, Indumati's Swayamvara to give pen pictures of the cities, rivers and the mountains of the country. They stand before our eyes in a colourful pageant. The snow-clad Himalayas in their unrivalled grandeur appealed to Kalidas.

As Ramakrishnamachary rightly said, Kalidas was imbued with high ideals which he placed before the reader for emulation. For example the kings of Raghuvamsa "amassed riches for giving charity, spoke measured words to utter the truth, desired victory for the sake of glory and became house holders for the sake of progeny".

As the author believes, we may regard Kalidas as essentially a poet, without denying him the power as a play-wright. 'Dhwani' or suggested sense is the soul of his poetry. As the author says, he is a visionary with a difference, because we find in him a pleasing synthesis of idealism and realism.

Towards the end, the author compares Kalidas with Shakespeare on the basis of parallelism in bits and pieces of a few scenes. The author is equally familiar with a few plays of Shakespeare and Shakespearean criticism. In the ultimate analysis, he expresses his considered opinion that "Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist of the world and Abhijnana Sakuntalam is the greatest drama in the world" This judgement shows that the author is impartial and objective in his assessment. Let me venture to put forth my own view that Kalidas and Shakespeare are "Co-rivals and twin incomparables" (to use Max Beerbohm's expression).

It is pre-eminently proper that this book is dedicated to my friend Sri Rapaka Ekambaracharyulu who is equally proficient in history and literature.

I.V. CHALAPATI RAO

RAPAKA EKAMBARACHARYULU M.A. H.D.C.
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PREFACE

I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Nanduri Rama Krishnamacharya in P.R. Govt College, when he came to deliver a lecture in the sixties of the 20th Century in the annual cultural function of the college. Sri Karyampudi Rajamannar was the Principal of that college then. Even today it is green in my memory that while he was delivering a lecture, he quoted an interesting Gadha from Gadha Sapta Sati of the 17th Satavahana Ruler - King Hala.

Subsequently while I was working in Bhimavaram as Divisional Coop Officer, Dr. Rama Krishnamacharya visited Bhimavaram to deliver a lecture. It is a pet town to him as he worked there for more than a decade as Head of the Dept. of Telugu in The West Godavari Bhimavaram College along with many intellectual luminaries including Sri I.V. Chalapati Rao garu. In the meeting he presented me his books Viz - Taaraatoranam, Pragati Geeta and Kavita Prabhasa.

After serving the Govt of A.P. in different places, in different capacities atlast I came to Hyderabad in 1993 from Sangareddy the head quarters of Medak Dist. My preceptor and Head of the Dept. of History of the Y.N.College Narasapur W.G.Dist, Sri M. Jagannadha Rao garu, whom I met in Hyderabad advised me to meet Dr. Krishnamacharya in P.G. Road - Secunderabad. Immediately I met him in 1993. Since then I was under his magic

spell. Sri M. Jagannadharaogaru was Rama Krishna macharya's student in Bhimavaram College. I was Sri Jagannadharao's student in Narsapur College between 1956 and 1960. Thus I became the intellectual grand child of Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya.

In the first meeting with Sri Acharya I have gone into his fold. His scholarship, and his rare qualities attracted me soon. Since then I used to meet him atleast once in a month. My meetings with him were for hours together, forgetting time sense. He used to tell me about many issues and matters related to his person, Telugu literature and English literature and a host of other related matters. Generally a scholar in Telugu literature will be poor at English, but Rama Krishna macharya was an exception to it. He was proficient both in English and Telugu literatures. He obtained University First in English in Hons Degree examination. More over he wrote many books in English along with Telugu treatises including the Mahabharat in English. Sri P.V.R.K. Prasad, the then the Executive officer T.T.D. Tirupati was responsible for publishing "The Mahabharat", by T.T.D. written by Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya. The latest one is on "Kalidasa and his times" which is dedicated to me by his sons posthumously.

I went closer to him when he and Sri Sistla Venkata Rao, General Secretary of the State Andhra Padya Kavita Sadas selected me as President of the Twin cities branch of Andhra Padya Kavita Sadas. It was my good fortune to actively participate in the third and fourth state level meetings of Andhra Padya Kavita Sadas held in Hyderabad and Tuni (E.G.Dist.) respectively besides local meetings held in Hyderabad since 1995.

Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya and myself participated

jointly in many a meeting held in Vuyyur, Avanigadda, Machilipatnam, Bhimavaram, Hyderabad, Tuni etc.

Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya was a great poet, scholar, dramatist, critic and eloquent speaker. His Taaraatoranam is a classic by itself. The Seernamekhala a piece of poetry in Taratoranam is a master piece of 20th century Telugu poetry. This piece made him the brightest star in Telugu literary firmament. Though Taaraatoranam is in different vrutta metres, gradually Dr. Acharya switched on to Aataveladi metre with a view to making his poetry intelligible to the common man like Vemana's poetry. In that direction he wrote, "Aalochanamulu", his Magnum opus in poetry. He was a versatile scholar who produced works in prose, drama, essay, novel, criticism etc. Just less than two months before his suddan demise, we both were honored by the president of Navya Sahiti Samithi Sri Vemarja Narasimha Rao at Narayanaguda - Rama Krishnamacharya on his 82nd Birth day occasion and me for delivering a lecture on Late Veturi Prabhakara Sastry a great litterateur who enriched Telugu language and literature by his continuous and incessant deep original research.

In the evening of his life one day Dr. Rama Krishnamacharya invited me to his house and informed me about the dedication of his last work "Kalidasa and his times" to me. My joy knew no bounds when I heard about his intention to dedicate his book for two reasons. One is that so great a scholar and poet as Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya took a decision to dedicate his most valuable treatise treating me as his disciple and the second reason is that the book is about Kalidasa a great Sanskrit Poet, who was next to Valmiki, the author of Sanskrit Ramayana. I readily accepted it but alas! he breathed his last without dedicating it to me, but all his

sons are unanimous in thought and deed and they kept up the promise of his father and dedicated the book to me now. All the sons of Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya are the worthy sons of a worthy father.

Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya, in his book "Kalidasa and his times" opined that Kalidasa belonged to the first century B.C. To support his theory, he gave a number of both literary and archaeological evidences and in particular Kunteleswara Dowtya and the Bheeta Medallion. His opinion had the support of Sri William Jones and others. Moreover Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya in his book described the Eras in History and the literary flavour and fragrance of Kalidasa's poetry and dramas was also exhibited for tasting by the scholarly readers.

Dr. Rama Krishnamacharya was catholic in religion and he was above caste. He loved people of all castes in the society and furthered the cause of the people of all castes and educated even panchamas by keeping them in his house providing them food and shelter. He was a true Viswanarudu (Universal man)

Dr. Rama Krishnamacharya's wife Smt Subhadra garu was equally great in her own way and she reminds us of the wife of Pravaraakhya in Manucharitra in feeding the people that came to their house. The sons of Ramakrishna macharya are gems and they are well educated and settled in good positions. They are the worthy sons of a worthy father.

At the end I thank all the sons and daughter of Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya for dedicating me the book "Kalidasa and his times" and I shall remain grateful to the family of Dr. Rama Krishnamacharyulu throughout my life.

R. EKAMBARACHARYULU

ATMAKURI GANDHI

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**MY WORD**

My father Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya, whom the Telugu speaking people know him as an educationist, a popular poet and scholar, was endowed with great qualities of head and heart. Besides his poetry, he was known for his research in Telugu and Sanskrit literatures. His research on Tikkana, the great Telugu poet was acclaimed as a master piece Telugu literary research. He was working on the period of Kalidasa, the great sanskrit poet and dramatist for over five decades before his suddan demise in 2003. While he was principal of Dr V.S. Krishna Govt College in Visakhapatnam he delivered lectures in public and through All India Radio on Kalidasa's period. He wrote a number of articles on Kalidasa and his period in Bharati, the Telugu monthly journal and Andhra Patrika, the popular Telugu daily news paper & Ugadi Sanchikas.

The material collected by my father over a period of 50 years was shaped in the form of this book in the evening of his life and breathed his last even without bringing it to light.

My father delivered a speech on Kalidasa's period in the A.P. History Congress held in Chirara during 1978 presided by Dr. Raviprolu Subrahmanyam an eminent Archaeologist and historian. The theory postulated by my father was appreciated and accepted by Dr. Subrahmanyam.

Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya's Sahityapeetham was established in 2003 soon after the demise of Sri Rama Krishnamacharya and it was inaugurated by Bruhat Dwi Sahasra vadhani Sri Madugula Nagaphani Sarma. Sri Manthana Suryanarayana Raju, Sri K. Sagara Rao and Sri Acharya Fanceendra were the President, working president and secretary of the peetham respectively.

So far two "Jayanti" functions were held. In the first meeting Dr. Asavadi Prakasarao, the famous Ashtavadhani, Retd. principal of A.P. Educational Service and the pet student of Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya was hooured with the award.

In 2005 on the Jayanthi day of Dr. Ramakrishnamachary, Sri Sistla Venkata Rao, the General Secretary and the Editor Sahitee Kaumudi of A.P. Andhra Padyakavita sadas was presented Dr. Ramakrishnamacharya's award.

I congratulate Sri K. Sagar Rao and Sri Acharya Fanceendra, the working President and the Secretary of the Sahitya Peetham

respectively for conducting Sri Ramakrishnamacharya's Jayanti Celebrations regularly.

We, all the brothers of Nanduri family feel proud of ourselves to dedicate this book on April 29th 2006 to Sri Rapaka Ekambaracharyulu a renowned scholar in Telugu literature and a famous Historian.

I am grateful to Prof I.V. Chalapatirao garu, Editor Triveni for providing his valuable foreword to this book.

My heartfelt thanks are due to Sri D. Rama Krishna I.A.S. Secretary G.A.D.(G.P.M.& A.R.) for kindly accepting to release the book "Kalidasa and his times" this year.

I thank all by brothers and in particular Dr. N. Vidyaranya swamy, Principal S.V.V.V.S. College, T.T.D., Secunderabad. But for his continuous efforts this book could not have seen the light of the day so soon. I specially thank my dear brother swamy for his continuous incessant hard work in bringing out this book in this beautiful way.

I thank Sri K. Sagara Rao & Sri K. Rama Rao for providing necessary funds to publish this book on behalf of Sri Kallepu Purushothama Rao Educational society.

I profusely thank Sri Vemaraju Narasimharao, the President of Navya Sahiti Samithi Hyderabad and his noble son Sri Vemaraju Vijaya Kumar for taking pains in organising the inaugural function of Dr. Nanduri Ramakrishnamacharya's Sahitya Peetham in 2003 and subsequent meetings arranged in connection with the presentation of Sahiti Puraskaram to Sistla Venkata Rao, Kavi sammelanam etc. in Y.M.C.A. Hall.

I thank Sri P. Chandrasekhara Reddy, the proprietor of SASI Digital Naryanaguda for his excellent preparation of the title page of this book.

I thank Smt. S. Kavitha, the proprietor of Ruthwik Graphics for her good D.T.P. Work. My thanks are due to the A.P. Coop Press for the printing this book in a neat and tidy manner.

I wish to conclude "MY WORDS" with two self written Aataveladi poems in Telugu Metre.

భౌతికముగ లేరు బ్రతుకంత వెచ్చించె
కాళిదాస సుకవి కాల మరయ
చరిత పులకరించు సత్యంబు పెకలించె
నాడు కృతిని వ్రాసె నాన్నగారు

ఇచ్చె కృతిని నాడె ఏకాంబరాచార్య
దివ్యహృదికి తెలుగు తేజమునకు
జగతికంత హితులు సాగర్ సహోదరుల్
పుస్తక ప్రచురణము పూర్తి చేసె

-- ATMAKURI GANDHI
23-04-2006.

INTRODUCTION

I consider Kalidasa as the poet par excellence in the annals of world literature.

Why?

Literature of the world can be divided into four sub-headings.

- i. THE EPIC OR THE NARRATIVE STYLE
- ii. THE DESCRIPTIVE STYLE
- iii. THE DRAMATIC STYLE and
- iv. THE LYRICAL STYLE

Kalidasa has exhaustively written four books representing the four varieties.

- i. "**RAGHU VAMSA**" is an epic, - master piece.
- ii. "**KUMARASAMBHAVA**" is a marvel of the descriptive type of literature.
- iii. "**ABHIJNANA SAKUNTALA**" is perhaps the best drama in the whole range of world literature.
- iv. "**THE MEGHA DUTA**" is the greatest lyric.

Many a crisp expression of Kalidasa has attained the status of a proverb in due course.

The oft repeated quotation from Keats, a famous English Poet is :

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"

It is a superb and sublime statement but one is tempted to ask the question, "what about sounds of melody"?

Kalidasa clubs, "things of beauty with sounds of melody"

The fourteen slokas which are in English letters are given in Telugu script at page _____ of this book.

1. **Ramyāni vīkshya madhurāmscha nisamya sabdañ
Paryutsukō bhavati yatsukhitōpi jantuh i
Tachchetasā smarati nūna mabōdha pūrvam,
Bhāvasthirāni jananāntara sowhrudāni**

Abhijnāna Sākuntalam 5th Act 100th sloka Page 180

Things of beauty as well as sounds of melody inculcate inexplicable sensation in the minds of all living beings though they are normally happy – an experience of bliss and beatitude beyond the frontiers of joy and sadness with the recollections of unconscious vibrations of dynamism and kindred feelings pertaining to past lives.

Thus Kalidasa's poetry is a confluence of aesthetical ardour of Shelly and the voluptuous opulence of Keats with his underlying stream of originality.

Here, the experience of the reader is not exactly joy. It is beyond the compass of comprehension. Modern psychologists refer to and stop with the unconscious sphere. Kalidasa says that the experience can reflect feelings belonging to past births and lives. Rebirth is a remarkable feature of ancient Indian thought.

Kalidasa loves to take snap-shots rather than stills in his photographic literary descriptions. Abhignana Sakuntalam begins with the vivid description of the flight of the antelope.

2. **“Grīvābangābhirāmam muhuranupatati syandanē
Badhadrushtih !
paschārdhēna pravishtah Sarapatanabhiyā
bhūyasā pūrvakāyam
Darbhairardhāvalīdaiah sramavivruta
Mukhabhramsībhih Kīrnavarthmyā**

Pasyodagra plutatwadwiyati bahutaram**Stōkamurvyam Prayāti**

Abhijnāna Saakuntalam 1 Act 7th Sloka - Page 8

“His glance fixed on the chariot ever and anon he leaps up gracefully bending his neck; through fear of the arrow’ fall he draws ever his hinder part into the front of his body; he strews his path with the grass, half-chewed, which drops from his mouth opened in weariness; so much aloft he bounds that he runs rather in the air than on earth”

Kalidasa says, in all humility, “I am aspiring to the status of a poet just as a pigmy (Vamana) wishes to catch the fruit at the top of a high tree”. Here there is concealed self-confidence as well. The Vamana of the Puranic lore becomes a Trivikrama engulfing the three worlds. Kalidasa means – “today you think that I am a pigmy (Vamana) in the literary world but very soon I may develop into a Trivikrama, occupying the three worlds. Kalidasa was no doubt quite conscious of his innate superiority.

Kalidasa says in the opening passage of Malavikagnimitram

3. Purāna mityéva na Sādhu Sarvam
Nachāpi kāvyam navamitya Vadyam
Santah Parīkshyānyatararbhajanté
Mūdhah Parapratya néya buddhih.

-Maalavikagnimitram 1st Act 2nd sloka - Page 3

“Not everything deserves commendation simply because it is old, nor does a poem merit condemnation because it is new. The wise choose one of the two after weighing the merits of both: the witless, having no judgement of their own, are guided by the convictions of others.”

Kalidasa strikes a balance between apparent contradictions.

The kings of the Raghu race were pure from birth, ruled over extensive domains stretching from earth to the ocean ASAMUDRA-KSHITISANAM. They amassed riches for charity, spoke measured words for the sake of truth, were eager for victory for the sake of glory and were householders for the sake of off-spring. They gained knowledge in childhood, enjoyed the pleasures of life in youth, adopted the ascetic life in old age and in the end cast away their bodies by yoga or meditation.

**4. Tyāgāya Sambhrutārthanām satyāyāmitabhāshinām
Yasasē vijigīshūnām, Prajāyai Gruhamedhinām!**

Raghuvamsamu 1st Chapter 7 sloka - Page

Kalidasa was an ardent AASTIKA and a believer in the existence of GOD. The prayers he wrote as prologues to his three plays MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM, VIKRAM ORVASEEYAM, ABHIJNANA SAKUNTALAM can be cited. For example, the prayer at the commencement of Abhijnana Sakuntalam is as follows :

5. Yāsrustih Srashturādyā vahati vidhihutam

yāhaviryāca hōtri !

Ye dvé kālam vidhattah sruti vishaya guna

yashtita vyapya viswam

Yāmāhuh sarva bijaprakrutiriti yayā Prāninah

prānavantah

Pratyakshābhih Prapanna stanubhiravatu

Vastābhi rastābhirīśah

Abhijnāna Saakuntalam- Epilogue sloka page 1

“May the Supreme Lord endowed with eight visible forms, water, the first creation of the Creator, (fire) which carries the oblation offered according to rule, (the priest) who is the offerer of the oblation, (those) two (visible forms, the sun and the moon) which regulate time, (that AKASA) which perpetually pervades the universe, having the quality (sound) perceptible by the ear, (the earth) which they call the source of all created things, (air) by which living creations (become) possessed of life, (may he) preserve you.”

DEEPA SIKHA :

Sunanda taking Princess Indumati around the kings attending the Swayamvara is described. Sunanda describes in glowing terms the ancestry, the personal qualities, feats of valour, the pomp as splendor, the outstanding features of the country ruled by the Princes. Indumati moved from prince to prince. The effect on each prince is beautifully described by Kalidasa in one verse, -

6. **Sanchārinī Dīpasikhēva Rāthrau**

Yam Yam Vyatīyāya Pathim varā sa !

Narēndra Mārgātta iva Prapédé

Vivarna Bhāvam sa sa bhūmipālah

Raghuvamsam 6th Chapter 67th sloka - page 99

Like a flaming torch carried along a row of palatial buildings at night, as she passed by the line of kings in the assembly hall, each king, looking bright before, turned pale with disappointment when she left him behind like a building on the main street, which, being flooded with light for one moment, sinks into darkness the next moment as the torch moves beyond it."

This beautiful description gave the poet the epithet DEEPA SIKHA-KALIDASA.

A current epigram, - "UPAMA KALIDASASYA," attests the excellence of the similies of Kalidasa.

The Sage Kanva, a personification of sacred lore, after learning Sakuntala's secret marriage with Dushyanta during his absence says to her.

"The oblation of a sacrificer, my child, has fortunately fallen straight into the fire, though his sight was obscured by smoke. Like learning imparted to a worthy disciple, thou art not to be deplored."

There was in it, chiding and approval as well.

Who is the ideal personality - a learned man or the wealthy man according to Kalidasa? According to Indian tradition, the Goddess of wealth - Lakshmi is the mother-in-law of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning. The

antagonism between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law is natural and very well known in any society. Kalidasa says in the Bharata Vakya (epilogue) in VIKRAMORVASEEYAM, "let Lakshmi and Saraswati be united in the houses of good people".

Raghu, after installing Aja on the throne, retires to the forest, takes to a life of meditation and attains that which is beyond darkness:

7. **Aathakaschi dajavya pékshayā**
Gamayitwā samadarsanah samāh
Tamasah Paramāpadavyayam
Purusham Yōga samādhinā Raghuh

Raghuvamsam 8th Chapter 24th Sloka page 122

CONSCIENCE

Kalidasa gives utmost importance to "conscience" of good people as the supreme arbiter.

Kalidasa tells us that in matters of doubt about one's duty, the arbiter is the voice of conscience (= wisdom of the conscience:

8. **Asamasayam Kshatra parigrahakshamā**
Yadārya masyā mabhilāshimé manah !
Satāmhi sandéha padéshu vastushu
Pramāna mantalkarana pravrutstayah !!

-Abhijnana Sakuntalam 1st act 21st Sloka, Page 29

Kalidasa mentions Bhasa as a dramatist of great repute before him. Kalidasa has imitated Bhasa at a few places. Kalidasa copiously copied from Valmiki Ramayana.

When Dileepa succeeded Raghu, Kalidasa says, "it was like the tender fruit replacing the flower."

In VIKRAMORVASEEYAM, the character of Urvasi perhaps represents the city of Ujjayini. After the departure of Raama to his permanent abode in heaven, Kusa transferred his capital to Kusavati. One day as he was sleeping he was suddenly awakened at mid-night by the rustle of garments near his bed. He saw a beautiful woman looking at him sadly. She told him that she was the presiding deity of the city of AYODHYA. The abduction of Urvasi in Vikramorvaseeyam signifies the conquest of Ujjayini by the Sakas.

Kalidasa described the Raghu kings as, "IKSHVAKUS" of his solar race. The rulers after the Satavahanas, proclaimed themselves as the descendants of the IKSHVAKUS praised by Kalidasa (who was acclaimed as great poet during the Satavahana period).

Kalidasa extolled the institution of marriage and proclaimed that marriage is for getting progeny only and not for mere lust.

THE PERIOD OF KALIDASA

THE PERIOD OF KALIDASA – The National Poet of India – is still "a riddle inside a puzzle wrapped up in an enigma. The whole world is eager to know where and when the great poet lived. Commendable research has been done by scholars – Eastern as well as Western, to determine the date of Kalidasa. Still no conclusive evidence which can be accepted by the modern historian, has emerged. Practically nothing is known about Kalidasa excepting the persistent tradition that

- i) Kalidasa was the contemporary of Emperor Viramaditya.
- ii) Vikramaditya was the king of Ujjayini
- iii) Vikramaditya was slain by the Satavahana.

There were many Vikramadityas in Indian History. Likewise there were many Kalidasas. The question is - who was the Vikramaditya that patronized the great poet - KALIDASA?? The second question is - who was the Kalidasa patronized by the king of Ujjayini? This question is not as complex as is imagined. Many books have been attributed to the great poet Kalidasa. However, there is no controversy about the following books written by Kalidasa - the supreme poet.

NATAKATRAYA OR THE THREE DRAMAS

1. Malavikagnimitram
2. Vikramorvaseeyam
3. Abhignana Sakuntalam

Kavya Trayam - Three poems

1. Meghadutam
2. Kumara Sambhavam
3. Raghu Vamsam

The seventh book is RITU SAMHARA.

The scholars are unanimous in the opinion that the six books NATAKA TRAYAM and KAVYA TRAYAM were written by the same person. Some scholars think that RITU SAMHARAM was not written by Kalidasa - the author of NATAKA TRAYAM AND KAVYA TRAYAM. In my opinion

all the seven books were written by one and the same Kalidasa. The problem is the identification of that Vikramaditya who was the contemporary of the poet Kalidasa.

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

Persistent tradition holds that Vikramaditya was the patron of Kalidasa, the author of Nataka Traya and Kavya Traya. Vikramaditya started the VIKRAM ERA in 58 B.C. So, Kalidasa must have lived in the court of Vikramaditya about 58 B.C.

Of course, this is an over-simplification of a complex problem – the date of Kalidasa. The following are the perplexing problems.

1. Vikramaditya obviously is a title and not a name.
2. V.V. Mirashi and N.R. Navlekar, joint authors of "Kalidasa – a date, life and works" say – there is no conclusive proof of the existence of any Vikramaditya in the first century B.C. The Era now associated with the name of Vikramaditya was known originally as KRITA.

"Vikramaditya's name became connected with it in the 10th Century A.D."

A verse in GADHA SAPTHA SATI refers to Vikramaditya.

Apparently there lived a popular king by name Vikramaditya according to GADHA SAPTHA SATI composed by Hala – the Satavahana King. According to many historians Hala lived in First Century A.D. But Gadha Sapta Sati is supposed to contain some spurious verses.

So, it can not be taken as a conclusive evidence that there was a reputed king - Vikramaditya before Ist Century A.D.

While fixing the date of Kalidasa two historic limits can be fixed. Kalidasa has written the drama Malavikagnimitram. Agnimitra was the son of Pushyamitra Sunga, and the father of Vasumitra.

Pushyamitra was the Commander-in-Chief of the Mouryan Army. He killed the last Mouryan King Brihadradha at a military parade and usurped the throne of Pataliputra. The regicide was acclaimed as a national emancipator. Pushyamitra hated the Buddhism, the prime cause of national degradation. Pushyamitra created the Hindu revival and glorified the Yagna cult which was very popular before the Buddha and the spread of Buddhism. As Pushyamitra died in the year 155 B.C. Agnimitra belongs to the second Century B.C. As Agnimitra was the hero of Kalidasa's drama MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM, - Kalidasa must have flourished some time after Agnimitra of the Second Century B.C. The Aihole inscription of King Pulakesin II the western (Badami) Chalukyan King explicitly mentioned Kalidasa and it is dated A.D. 634. Kalidasa must have lived before A.D. 647.

The Mandasor inscription is dated A.D. 473 and there are many verses resembling Kalidasa's verses. The similarity is glaring. Some scholars hold that the author of Mandasor inscription clearly imitated Kalidasa. It can not be held that Kalidasa imitated the author of the Mandasor inscription.

There is another point. The time of Aswaghosha is

accepted as first century A.D. Many scholars hold that Aswaghosha imitated the renowned Kalidasa in many places in his writings. If that postulate is accepted, the time of Kalidasa comes down to before the first century of Christian Era i.e. first century B.C.

A GENERAL REVIEW

The history of ancient India should be reviewed to determine the time of Kalidasa.

The Vedic and the Upanishadic ages were followed by the Buddha and the Buddhistic age. Hinduism lived in a state of hybernation during the prolonged Buddhistic Ages. Buddhism reached its zenith at the time of the Mouryan Emperor Ashoka. Bravery was at a discount and the kings after Ashoka were votaries of AHIMSA. They neglected the army. Foreign invasions often enfeebled India. Finally there is a reaction against Buddhism and its cardinal principle AHIMSA. Pushyamitra the then Commander-in-Chief killed the last Mouryan King.

Patanjali, the author of the MAHABHASHYA (commentary written on the grammer of PANINI) refers to Pushyamitra a number of times in his book.

Pushyamitra regenerated Hinduism and revived the cult of Yagnas. He performed two ASWAMEDHA YAGAS. It is said that he gave 10,000 Karshpanas to anybody who brought the skull of a Buddhist monk. That was the period of renaissance for Hinduism and revival of the Sanskrit language and literature. Perhaps the MANUSMRITI, the RAMAYANA and the MAHABHARATA as we now know them, emerged after the time of Pushyamitra. Perhaps some of the Sanskrit Puranas emerged during those days.

That was the golden age of Sanskrits revival. It was right time for the advent of the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa. Kalida's date - 58 B.C. is in tune with the spirit of Indian history and the revival of Sanskrit culture.

A Greek traveller in first century A.D. proclaims, "there is in India a HOMER - who composed one lakh verses in Sanskrit. Obviously the greek traveller referred to the version of Mahabharata as is in vogue today. Kalidasa is in touch with Greek culture which has come to India a few centuries earlier along with Alexander.

Many theories - regarding the actual date of Kalidasa between these two dates have been postulated by many scholars.

A Poet by name BALLALA wrote a book called BHOJA PRABANDHA, on the life of King Bhoja who ruled at Dhaaranagara in 11th Century A.D.

He says that Kalidasa lived in the court of Bhoja amongst the Nine literary Gems including Bhavabhuti, Bana, Dandin, Sriharsha, etal., Modern research has shown that Bhavabhuti, bana, etc., were separated from each other by hundreds of years.

Bhoja Prabandha has no historical value and Bhoja Kalidasa is quite different from Kalidasa of Vikramaditya and the autor of Kavya Thraya and Nataka Thraya (Bhoja Kalidasa is a different personality quite distinct from Kalidasa of Vikramaditya and Vikramaditya cannot be separated from the poet Kalidasa who wrote the Nataka Thraya and Kavya Thraya).

If the Sanskrit literature as a whole has to be epitomized in three words only, one has to say "Vyasa,

Valmiki and Kalidasa". Sanskrit language is the oldest in the world with the vast classical literature. The Vedas including the Upanishads are supposed to be sacred revelations and the Sages who composed them were seers - (Drastas). Likewise VYASA the author of the MAHABHARTA and VALMIKI the author of RAMAYANA are reckoned as seers and all that literature is called ARSHA written by realized Sages. The rest of literature is called Kavya Literature composed by temporal poets and it is called Laukika Vangmaya, the secular literature. Perhaps it is a distinction without any difference. Literary critics of ancient India considered the poet to be a "KRANTA DARSI" endowed with a penetrating perception". There is a Telugu Proverb - "the poet sees where the Sun cannot perceive -". (Ravi Ganchani so Kavi Ganchune Kadaa).

Kalidasa has been a visionary with a difference. He is blessed with an integral vision inside and his perception of truth is always stranger than fiction and is a confluence of idealism and reality, theory and practice, tradition and innovation, old and new - in short heaven and earth.

Indian poets belonging to successive generations have paid glowing tributes to Kalidasa's poetic genius.

According to ancient Indian thoughts, art is not an imitation of nature. It is recreation. In fact the poet is superior to the creator and often corrects the imperfections found in nature. In nature the lightening flashes are fleeting but the poet can visualize constant lightnings or eternal springs.

THEORY OF SECOND CENTURY B.C.

Some postulate that Kalidasa lived in the second

century B.C. This theory is based on the BHARATA VAKYA (EPILOGUE OF THE DRAMA MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM).

“O! angry lady, may you always have a lovely face, being favourably disposed towards me. I ask for this much only from you for the sake of your co-wife (Malavika). As for other things to be desired such as freedom of the subjects from calamities, they are sure to be accomplished so long as Agnimitra is ruling”.

As the Bharata Vakya of the drama Malavikagnimitram mentions explicitly the name of the Sunga King Agnimitra, it is supposed that Kalidasa was his contemporary Circa 150 B.C. There are many circumstantial evidences to support this theory in MEGHADUTA (verse 24) – Kalidasa mentions VIDISHA as a far-famed imperial capital (SRI VISALIM RAJADHANIM = VIDISHA).

Vidisha was the second imperial capital (first capital being Pataliputra – East during the time of Sunga King Agnimitra. Kalidasa described the horse sacrifice of Dileepa and the fight of young Raghu for the rescue of the sacrificial horse in Raghuvamsa. Perhaps it was the reflection of the horse sacrifice performed by Pushyamitra and the conquest of the Yavanas (Greeks) by Vasumitra. In Raghuvamsa – Raghu encountered the Yavanas in the Paraseeka Country. At the time of Agnimitra the Greeks were ruling in Persia.

The arguments advanced against this theory are as follows

:

1. The last stanza of Malavikagnimitram cannot be taken as a Bharata Vakya.

2. Meghaduta mentions Vidisha as the capital of Dasaarna Country. The city continued to enjoy this status long after the time of Agnimitra. In Circa 113 B.C. the Greek King Antialcidas of Taxila sent an ambassador named Heliodorus to the court of the Sunga King Bhagabhadra at Vidisa where he erected a Garuda Dwaja (a column with an eagle capital) in honour of God Vaasudeva. This is now called Kambadevara and is there still in Vidisa.
3. There is no evidence at all that any Sunga King including Agnimitra received the title of Vikramaditya.
4. Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra fought against the Yavanas (Greeks) and not against the Sakas. The tradition that Vikramaditya who destroyed the Sakas was a contemporary of Kalidasa and that he destroyed the Sakas cannot be brushed aside.

BIMBIKA

A Dialogue -

'Daakshinyaam Nama bimbosti

Binbikaanam Kulavratham' - occurs in the playlet MALAVIKAGNI MITRAM. It means that compassion is the hereditary quality of the Bimbikas. Obviously Bimbika was the famous ancestor of Bimbikas i.e. the family of Agnimitra. Bimbika is a name, unknown to history or the Puranas. It is known to Kalidasa. So, Kalidasa must be very close to the details connected with the Agnimitra's family.

Pushyamitra bears the title SENAAPATI even after he had overthrown the last Mourya King, usurped his throne and instituted a horse sacrifice according to MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM. This appears to be strange but that

it is historically true is now known from a Sunga inscription from Ayodhya.

Further VEERASENA the brother of Queen Dharini was an VARNAVARA i.e. he belonged to an inferior caste. These minor details are not necessary for the action of the play and are known to the poet because Chronologically he was nearer to Agnimitra.

KAUSIKI

KAUSIKI is one of the characters of the drama MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM and she was an adorable Buddhistic Nun. A drama is expected to be, "Loka Vrittanta Darshakam" and reflect contemporary society. Malavikagnimitram reflects the society containing respectable Buddhistic Nuns. Malavikagnimitram does not reflect the decadent Buddhism associated with the later centuries of Christian Era. Malavikagnimitram is a historical and a social drama. Perhaps the date of Kalidasa cannot be far away from that of Agnimitra as Kalidasa portrays many a detail which can be known by contemporaries or near contemporaries.

FIRST CENTURY B.C. THEORY

I. This theory is accepted by many scholars today. Tradition supports this theory. Tradition says that Kalidasa flourished at the court of Vikramaditya who started the Vikram Era in 58 B.C.

II. KAALAKACHAARYA KADHANAKA a Jain work of unknown date supports the tradition. It states that the Jain teacher Kaalaka whose sister was abducted by the GARDHABILLA, king of Ujjayini, the Sakas invaded India marched on Ujjayini and made Gardhabilla prisoner. But,

later they were conquered by Vikramaditya.

III. KATHAA SARITSAAGARA and BRIHAD KATHAA MANJARI two Sanskrit Books written according to the Brihad Kathaa of GUNAADHYA (A book written in Paisachi Language lost long ago) refers to Vikramaditya, son of Mahendraditya.

IV. A GAADHA from the "GAADHA SAPTA SATI" compiled by Satavahana King the HAALA refers to Vikramaditya and it describes his munificence.

V. In one of the dramas written by Kalidasa - VIKRAMORVASEEYAM, the hero is PUROORAVA. The title of the play refers to VIKRAMA. It may be surmised that the hero of the play was referred to as Vikrama is a title. The sentence is - "ANUTH SEKAHAKHALU VIKRAAMAA-LANKAARAH". = This is worthy of the hero Vikrama. Another sentence in the same book refers to Vikrama "DISHTHYA MAHENDROAPAKARA PARYAAPTHE VIKRAMA MAHIMNA VARDHATHE BHAVAN". Your valour is such that it is of a great use to Mahendra.

It is clear that the tradition holding Kalidasa as a contemporary of the patron king Vikramaditya is corroborated by the internal evidence found in the books of Kalidasa.

VI. JYOTHIR VIDHABHARANA

The author of JYOTHIR VIDHABHARANA says that his name of Kalidasa and he composed RAGHUVAMSA etc., and ABHIGNANA SAKUNTALAM etc. He explicitly gives the date of JYOTHIR VIDHABHARANA.

9. Varshé sindhura darshanāmbara gunaih
 yāthe kalow summité
 māsé mādharma sangni tétra
 vihithō grantha kriyāpakramah

SINDHURA	=	8
DARSHANA	=	6
AMBARA	=	0
GUNA	=	3

“ANKAANAAM VAAMATH GATIHI” - Numbers have to be reversed. So, the year is 3068 of KALI YUGA i.e. the book was written in 34 B.C. However, scholars have established that the author of JYOTHIR VIDHAABHARANA was a forgerer. Kalidasa’s literary style is quite different. However, forgery has a vital value. The forgerer is supposed to belong to the 10th Century A.D. In the opinion of an astronomer with considerable knowledge of Mathematics Kalidasa belonged to 34 A.D.

Immemorial tradition holds that Vikramaditya of Ujjayini was conquered by a Sathavahana King.

VII. Numismatic evidence - the coins of the Satavahanas bear the Ujjayini symbol. It is clear that the Satavahanas ruled over Ujjayini for some time.

Then who is the Satavahana King that conquered Vikramaditya, the King of Ujjayini.

Vaatsyayana Kaama Sutra tells us that MALAYAVATI, the queen died in an embrace of her husband king KUNTALA SATAKARNI.

In the KATHAA SARIT SAAGARA the name of the

queen of Vikramaditya is MALAYAVATI. From this, it can be seen that Vikramaditya was the same as Kuntala Satakarni.

The name of the father of Kuntala Satakarni was Mahendra according to MATSYA PURAANA. VIKRAMORVASEEYAM and the Jain work KAALA KAACHAARYA KADHAANIKA refer to Mahendra.

VIII. Kshemendra in his book AUCHITHYA VICHARA CHARCHA quotes from the book written by KALIDASA entitled as - "KUNTALESWARA DOWTYA".

IX. Another book SRINGAARA PRAKAASIKA OF Bhojadeva refers to the book KUNTALESWARADOWTYA written by Kalidasa.

X. The capital of the Kingdom of Satavahanas was "PRATISTAANA". Kalidasaa says explicitly that the capital of Vikramaditya of the Hero was Pratistana.

XI. The two books AUCHITHYA VICHARA CHARCHA as well as Bhoja Deva's "SRINAGARA PRAKASKA" refer to Kuntaleswara as the emperor and the King of Ujjayini as the vassal of Kuntaleswara.

XII. THE BHEETA MEDALLION

Terracotta Medallion was discovered in the excavations at Bheeta in Allahabad in 1910. It is supposed to depict a scene from Kalidasa's ABHIJNANA SAKUNTALAM. On one side, there is a picture of a king in a Chariot and a hermit before the Chariot. On the other side there is a picture of a girl watering the plants assisted by her two girl friends. These two scenes clearly refer to Sakuntala. Kalidasa has created story of Antelope, the hermit and the hunter Dushyanta.

The discoverer of the medallion says - that the characters of the medallion resembled the Sunga style. Undoubtedly paleographically the medallion belongs to the time of the Sungas.

The medallion is said to resemble in style, the relief work on the gate ways at SANCHI which refers to about the latter half of a first century B.C. In my opinion this is a nearest approximation to a clinching evidence that Kalidasa belongs to the first century B.C. Unfortunately the medallion is not exactly dated. In paleography, the margin of error is about century or less. The Bheeta medallion does not belong to centuries after Christ.

The Bheeta medallion is not accepted as a conclusive proof for the first century B.C. theory. The following are the arguments against this theory.

Perhaps the pictures may represent an incident in the early life of Gowtama Buddha when he was being taken in a chariot to a garden outside the city of Kapilavastu for the diversion of his mind or it may be a scene from any Jataka Story.

However, the following points may be noted :

a) In Bheeta Medallion, in my opinion, it depicts the story of the first scene in Sakuntala.

b) Paleographically the Bheeta Medallion belongs to the first century B.C.

c) Rapson has published a replica of the Bheeta Medallion in his book. Now I wish that further research is to be done about Bheeta Medallion. I feel that the Bheeta Medallion can fix the date of Kalidasa beyond any shadow of doubt as FIRST Century B.C.

XIII. The celebrated grammarian PATANJALI wrote his famous MAHABHASHYA during the time of Pushyamitra. From the Mahabhashya we learn that the Yavanas recently invaded the cities of SAAKETA and MADHYAVIKA. He refers to the horse sacrifice of Pushyamitra as well.

Idam Pushyamitram yāja yāma

Bhandarkar has conclusively proved that Patanjali lived about 150 B.C. There was great turmoil – foreigners were invading the country as the times were ripe for the rebellion master minded by Pushyamitra.

XIV. PARALLELISMS IN ASWAGHOSHA AND KALIDASA

The survey of the works of Kalidasa and Aswaghosha reveal many parallelisms, ideas as well as expressions. Who is indebted to whom is the question? Kalidasa has written a whole chapter entitled "RATI VILAPAM". In SOUNDARANANDAM, Sundari lamenting for her husband who had decided to renounce the world. In my opinion, Rati's lamentation is justified because her husband died. Sundari's lamentation is modelled on "RATI VILAPAM" and it is a clear imitation. Some parallelisms are strikingly similar.

Let us review one typical example :

Kalidasa uses the expression, "NA YAYAU NA TASTHAU". Parvati was indulging in severe penance to secure Lord Siva as her husband. Siva comes to Parvathi disguised as a bachelor criticizing Siva. Parvati chides him and proclaims her deep love for Siva. The bachelor reveals – is true identity as Siva and holds the hands of Parvati. Then Parvati could neither go back nor go forward just as a river obstructed by a mountain. Aswaghosha

imitated Kalidasa by creating similar situation using the same words. A close resemblance of the situation as well as the expression leaves little room for doubt that one of them must have been the borrower. Then who is the borrower?

Kalidasa is a great poet adored by successive generations. Aswaghosha is an ordinary poet. The stamp of Kalidasa can be seen on such innovations. He has created many such original situations. Sanskrit has been the language of the Vedic and Santana Dharma. Kalidasa need not offer any apology for writing in Sanskrit. Aswaghosha was a Buddhist and apologized for writing in Sanskrit, saying that his Sanskrit writing was a sugar coated medicine. I think the medicine belongs to Kalidasa and the sugar to Aswaghosha. Another instance can be taken in RAGHUVAMSA. Ladies throng to the windows of their mansions to look at Aja as he enters Kundinapura. In KUMARA SAMBHAVA, again, ladies throng to the windows when Siva enters Oshadhiprashta, the capital of Himalaya. The same situation is described by Aswaghosha as and when Gowtama enters Kapilavastu. The repetition of ideas and situations is common to Kalidasa. In my opinion, Aswaghosha was charmed by Kalidasa and took to Sanskrit and imitation.

There are striking similarities in the verses of Mandasore inscription of A.D. 473 and Kalidasa's poems. Even a lay student of Sanskrit language and literature can easily say that VATSABHATTA, the author of the Mandasore inscriptional verses, imitated Kalidasa.

It is ridiculous to hold that Kalidasa was indebted to the author of the mandasore inscription. Imitation of

Kalidasa has been a growing fervour across generations upto date. I say with all the humility and earnestness at my command that Aswaghosha was the imitator of Kalidasa. So, I hold that Kalidasa was earlier to Aswaghosha and belonged to the first century B.C.

XV. If one studies Kalidasa's writings and history of the Gupta period, one comes across so many discrepancies. For example Kalidasa describes king Puroorava has been surrounded by Yavana women as servants in Vikramorvaseeyam. Yavanika is a term for the curtain in the Sanskrit language. Many Greek families remained in India since Alexander's Invasion. They served later as curtain holdes and regal royal servants. There is no evidence of Greeks serving in the royal household during Chandragupta-II's time. Vikramorvaseeyam prescribed death penalty for theft. Similarly in ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALAM as well. The capital punishment for theft was not meted out during the Gupta period.

XVI. THE CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE

The conclusive evidence seems to be the KUNTALESWARA DOWTYAM written by Kallidasa. The whole book is not in existence now. Two quotations are available from two books.

- i) THE AUCHITYA VICHARA CHARCHA of Kshemendra
AND
- ii) SRINGARAPRAKASA of king Bhoja of Dharanagara. Of course the king of Ujjayini was called Vikramaditya. Traditionally, the conqueror assumes the titles of the vanquished. The quotation from Kuntaleswara Dowtya as given by Kshemendra is as follows:

10. Iha nivasati méruh! sékharaha kshmādhārānā
 Miva vinihitha bhārāh sāgarāh saptachanyé
 Ida mahipathirbhoga sthamba vibhrajāmānam
 Dharanitala mihaiva Sthāna masmadwidhānām

- Auchityavicharacharcha-Kshemendrudu

'On this (earth) lies Meru, the crest-jewel of mountaines and here, moreover, the seven seas also have laid their heavy weight. This surface of the earth is supported by the pillar like hoods of the lord of serpents (Sesha)". This is (therefore) the proper seat for people like us.

Kalidasa goes to the court of the king of Ujjayini as an ambassador of the emperor, but prefers to sit on the floor. Kshemendra cites this verse as ADHIKARANA AUCHITYA (propriety of place).

Kshemendra has thus explained the propriety of place in this verse: The ambassador of a great king, not getting a seat worthy of the greatness of and honour due to his lord in the assembly hall of his feudatory, sits on the ground and (when asked why he did so) says with eloquence and serenity: "This is the (only) proper seat for us - (the seat) which is rendered immovable by the numerous pillar - like hoods of the lord of serpents (Sesha); since it is here that Maru, the lord of mountains, and also the seven seas are seated. And I am (in no way) inferior to them."

To comprehend the connotation of this verse completely the historical back ground may be of use.

Kalidasa was the citizen of Ujjayini originally. MALAVIKAGNIMITRAM was composed by Kalidasa when he was an young man (please refer to the verse PURANA MITHYEVA NA SAADHU SARVAM).

Kuntaleswara conquered Ujjayini and assumed the title of Vikramaditya. The budding poet Kalidasa obviously blossomed as a fulfilled poet by that time. Kuntaleswara patronized Kalidasa and took him to Prathistanapura, his capital in the South on the banks of River Gowthami.

Kalidasa separated from Ujjayini and had practically lived as an exile in the court of the Sovereign, Vikramaditya alias Kuntaleswara. Then he composed the great lyric Meghadutam. Best poetry is supposed to be autobiographical. The sentiments expressed in MEGHADUTAM are superb and autobiographical in nature. The hero of the poem MEGHADUTAM the Yaksha can be identified with Kalidasa the exile. The cloud messenger (THE MEGHA) starts from Sriramagiri on the banks of the Godavari. Some scholars try to identify the location of Sriramagiri. Some identified it with Ramtek, though Kalidasa explicitly mentioned place as Sriramagiri. Kalidasa says that it was the bathing place of Sita. Even today there are Vushna Gundams (hot water ponds) at Sriramagiri. The cloud messenger starts from Sriramagiri and Kalidasa has vividly portrayed the journey route giving full geographical details. If we suppose that the messenger has started from Ramtek all the geographical details do not suit the description given by Kalidasa. But, if we take Sriramagiri all the geographical details suit the route. The cloud messenger does not cross the Krishna or the Godavari but he crosses the Tapi, the Narmada, the Vindhya etc. One peculiar feature is - the Yaksha asks

the cloud to go to Ujjayini though it means taking the curved path. If a straight line is drawn to the Himalayan abode of the Yaksha from Sriramagiri, Ujjayini has to be located due west – a long distance. (refer to the Sloka VAKRAHA PANTHA YADAPI).

The verse from SRINGAARA PRAKAASAKA of Bhoja lends support to this theory. This passage tells us that when Vikramaditya asked Kalidasa how the lord of Kuntala was governing his kingdom, the poet gave the following answer.

11. Kālidāsah kim Kuntalésvarah Karōtīti

vikramādityéna prushta uktavān

Sakala hasitwāt Kshālitānīva Kāntyā

Mukulita nayana twādwyakta karnōtpalāni

pibati madhu sugandhī nyānanāni priyānām

twayi vinihita bhāvah kuntalāmadhisah

Sringara Prakasa of Bhoja

“The lord of Kuntala entrusting the responsibility (of governing his kingdom) to you, engages himself in kissing the faces of his beloved’s fragrant with wine – (the faces) which appear resplendent, as it were, by incomplete smiles and the lotuses on the ears of which appear prominent as the eyes are closed.” We are further told that there upon Vikramaditya gave his reply in the same verse, making only slight changes in it, which conveyed that the lord of Kuntala might continue to enjoy pleasures in that manner, leaving the responsibility of governing the kingdom to him.

It is clear from this passage that Kuntaleswara was the paramount sovereign and Vikramaditya, the king of Ujjayini was his subordinate vassal. Let there be no confusion in identifying two Vikramadityas. The king of Ujjayini was of course the king Vikramaditya. Kunthaleswara was also the Vikramaditya who got the title by right of conquest of Ujjayini.

XVII. THE ERAS (SAKA = CHRONOLOGICAL COUNT)

It is a pity that ancient India did not evolve a standard chronological count .i.e. a common Era unlike China. So, ancient Indian history is full of chornological controversies. There are two ancient Eras – The Vikram Era and the Salivahana Saka. Who started the Vikram Era ? The problem has not yet been settled. One Saka King who conquered Ujjayini and assumed the title of Vikramaditya might have started it in 58 B.C. Perhaps, here a Saka king by name KADPHISES. It was the practice of Sakas who have a standard chronological reckoning.

Then who started the Salivahana Saka Era? The word "SAKA" is strikingly incongruous here in this context. A Foreigner has started the Vikramaditya Saka. Therefore, the word Saka was quite relevant and it signified the standard reckoning from a fixed date.

The most renowned king of Satavahana Dynasty is – "GOWTHAMI PUTRA SATAKARNI". He conquered Ujjayini and bore the title "SAKAANTAKA" – the destroyer of the Sakas. The famous historian JAYASWAL identified him with Vikramaditya (of course there are many conquerors who bore the title Vikramaditya). Gowthami Putra Satakarni used regnal years in his inscriptions. The 18th year of Gowthami Putra Satakarni's rule was very

important as it registered many victories. I feel that Gowthami Putra Satakarni started the Salivahana Era in the 18th year of his reign. Even today people use the incongruous word "SAKA" with the Salivahana Era because the Sakas were the first to start a standard Era called "VIRAM ERA". Ultimately, the word SAKA signified the standard Era in language and literature ever since.

XVIII. THE MATSYA PURANA

The Matsya Purana is supposed to be the first amongst the several Puranas ever written. The prominent among them are eighteen in number. The Puranas dealt with many prominent historical figures. The Matsya Purana gives the list of Satavahana Kings - 30 in number together with regnal years. Many historians including PROFESSOR GURTHI VENKATA RAO are of the opinion that the author of Matsya Puraana could secure the authentic list of Satavahana rulers. Till now the veracity of the list is above suspicion. As per the list the 18th Year of Gowthami Putra Satakarni falls on the first year of the Satavahana Saka Era. Accordingly, Kuntala Satakarni ruled from 47 B.C. that means he conquered the king of Ujjaini. So, there is no incongruity at all in supposing that Kalidasa lived in first century B.C. The date given in "JYOTHIRVIDHA BHARANAM" - 34 B.C. also tallies with this theory.

XIX. In Abhignana Sakuntalam there is an instance of DHANAMITRA who died childless. The law of inheritance, allowing the widow or the posthumous child to inherit the vast property of Dhanamitra points to an earlier period than the Gupta period.

XX. The ornate style of HARISENA - author of the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Guptha using the Champu method is a later evolution than the simple

Sanskrit style of Kalidasa.

XXI. The Guptas were Vaishnavites. Kalidasa was an ardent Saivite. Vikramaditya was described as the incarnation of MALAYAVAN one of the attendants of SIVA – in “KATHAA SARITHSAAGARA”.

XXII. Kalidasa describes that the flag of Dushyanta’s chariot comprised of ‘CHINAMSUKA = (CHINI SILK)’, HATHI-GUMPHA inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga too refers to Chini Silk robes. (Kharavela was the contemporary of Pushyamitra). During the first and second centuries B.C. trading was prevalent between India and China.

XXIII. Kalidasa asks the cloud messenger to go to “DASARNA COUNTRY” which is full of old people knowing the stories about UDAYANA. This is a clear reference to BRIHADKATHA written by Gunadhya belonging to the Satavahana times particularly king Kuntala. KATHA SARITHSAGARA says that Gunadhya was a contemporary of king Kuntala. From this it can be surmised that Kalidasa was contemporary of king Kuntala.

XXIV. THE CLOUD MESSENGER

The cloud as a messenger is an old, pre-Christian, literary motif in China. We find it in Kiu Yuan (or Chu yuan), the Chinese poet who died about 274 B.C. Cf. this echo of meghaduta in Hsukan :

O floating clouds that swim in the heaven above
Bear on your wings these words to him I love.

Kalidasa must have received the idea of cloud messenger from China along with the Chinese silken cloth.

Sir William Jones places "Kalidasa in the first century B.C. Dr. Peterson says –"Kalidasa stands near the beginning of the Christian era, if indeed, he does not over top it". There are many other theories but they are surmises.

V.V. MIRASHI and N.R. NAVLEKAR in their book on KALIDASA say, Kalidasa lived in A.D.400 in the court of the well known Gupta King Chandra Gupta the Second, Vikramaditya.

True - Chandra Gupta the second assumed the title Vikramaditya. They say "We know, of course, of one Kalidasa who is mentioned in a copper-plate grant of the Vakataka King Pravarasena II, but he was a mere scribe and cannot, therefore, be identified with the illustrious Sanskrit poet".

THE YEARS OF RULE OF SATAVAHANA KINGS

The following is the list of Satavahana kings given by the MATSYA PURAANA together with the years of their rule.

S.No.	Name of the King	Years of rule
1.	Simuka	22
2.	Krishna	18
3.	Satakarni I	10
4.	Poornothsanga	18
5.	Skandasthanbhi	18
6.	Pratakarni I	56
7.	Lambodara	18
8.	Apeelaka	12
9.	Meghaswathi	18

10.	Swathi	18
11.	Skandaswathi	7
12.	Mrugendra	3
13.	Kuntalaswathi	8
14.	Swathikarna	1
15.	Puloamaavi I	36
16.	Gowrikrishna	25
17.	Haala	5
18.	Mandulaka	5
19.	Pureendrasena	5
20.	Sundaraswathikarni	1
21.	Chakoraswathikarni	1/3
22.	Sivaswathi	28
23.	Gowthameeputra Sathakarni	21
24.	Pulomaavi	28
25.	Sivasri	7
26.	Sivaskanda	7
27.	Yagnasri	29
28.	Vijaya	6
29.	Chandrasri	10
30.	Pulomaavi III	7

According to my theory the chronological order of the Satavahana kings will be as follows :

S.No.	Name of the King	Years of Rule
1.	Simuka	271-248 B.C.
2.	Krishna	248-230 B.C.
3.	Sathakarni I	230-220 B.C.
4.	Poornothsanga	220-202 B.C.

5.	Skandasthambhi	202-184 B.C.
6.	Sathakarni II	184-128 B.C.
7.	Lambodhara	128-110 B.C.
8.	Apeelaka	110-98 B.C.
9.	Meghaswathi	98-80 B.C.
10.	Swathi	80-62 B.C.
11.	Skandhaswathi	62-55 B.C.
12.	Mrugendra	55-52 B.C.
13.	Kuntalaswathi	52-44 B.C.
14.	Swathikarna	44-43 B.C.
15.	Puloamaavi	I 43-7 B.C.
16.	Gowrikrishna	7 B.C. - A.D. 18
17.	Haala	A.D. 18-23
18.	Mandulaka	A.D. 23-28
19.	Purindasena	A.D. 28-33
20.	Sundara Swathikarni	A.D. 33-34
21.	Chakora Swathikarni	A.D. 34-34
22.	Sivaswathi	A.D. 34-62
23.	Gowthameeputra	
	Sathakarni-I	A.D. 62-83
24.	Puloamaavi II	A.D. 83-111
25.	Sivasri	A.D. 111-118
26.	Sivaskanda	A.D. 118-125
27.	Yagnasri	A.D. 125-154
28.	Vijaya	A.D. 154-160
29.	Chandrasri	A.D.160-170
30.	Puloamaavi	A.D.170-177

** The Puranaas say unanimously that Gowthamiputra/Satakarni ruled for 21 years. Gowthami Balasri's inscription in the 24th regnal year of her son is found. Is it a discrepancy? No. this is a gift which Balasri had given earlier as a "JEEVASUTHA". After the death of her son, Gowthamiputra Sathakarni, she revived the gift.

THE DIGVIJAYA YAATHRA (CONQUESTS) OF RAGHU

Kalidasa has given a detailed account of the conquests of four corners of Raghu. Raghu was a Puranic character in the text. But some people think that Raghu's conquests were modelled on the conquests of Vikramaditya, the patron of Kalidasa. Kalidasa might have been influenced inadvertently by the conquests of Vikramaditya. The protagonists of the theory - Gupta Age for the date of Kalidasa maintained that the conquests of Samudra Gupta formed the basis for Kalidasa's description of Raghu's conquests. This is a point which can be examined.

If we take PATALIPUTRA of Samudra Gupta as the center place there are many discrepancies to be encountered. But if we take PRATISTANA, the capital of Kuntaleswara, the description will be alright. What are the rivers he has crossed - THE GANGA, THE KAVERI, THE NARMADA etc.? The SINDHU is placed in the North. Coming to the South, Raghu has crossed the KAVERI and goes to conquer the PANDYA kings. On the western front he crossed the MURAZA river and a reference was made to women of Kerala. No where it was said that Raghu crossed the Krishna or the Godavari. In other words Raghu did not conquer the Andhra Country. It is clear that he went to conquer VANGA DESA (Bengal) going in the East of the direction. So, the country which was not conquered

and the rivers he did not cross belong to the Andhra. So, it can be said that Raghu's kingdom was actually ANDHRA DESA.

Unconsciously Kalidasa identified Raghu with Vikramaditya = Kuntala Satakarni in whose original domains the Krishna and Godavari flow.

RELIGION

The Hindu revival inaugurated by Pushyamitra in or around 188 B.C. reached its zenith in Kalidasa. Pushyamitra opposed Buddhism tooth and nail and gave a philip to Hinduism. Ujjayini was the seat of Sanskrit learning and Hinduism. Even foreigners who ruled over Ujjayini converted themselves into Hinduism and encouraged the Sanskrit language and literature.

Kalidasa was an ardent Saivite though he paid due tributes to Brahma and Vishnu. (the trinity of Hinduism). The name Kalidasa should be KAALEEDAASA according to the Sanskrit grammar. Perhaps it is a title and not a proper name. Ujjayini is famous for the temple dedicated to, "MAHAKAALA". (The original name of Kalidasa was perhaps MAHAKAALADAASA and was reduced to Kalidasa (in popular parlance).

Kalidasa championed the cause of Hindu culture as opposed to the Buddhistic way of life.

Sex is not a sin according to Hinduism as opposed to Buddhism. If there is any defect which can be pinpointed in Kalidasa, it is his love of the, "erotic fervour" (Sringara Rasa). In depicting erotic or amorous feelings Kalidasa goes to the border of obscenity, crossing the frontiers of decency.

His heroes are polygamous. Kalidasa, it is alleged,

is at peace with monarchy. The fact is that monarchy as well as polygamy were there in the society of his days and his literature reflected them. It is true that he depicted Manmatha as all powerful. Devendra receives his subordinate. Manmatha with extraordinary respect as he wanted a son to be born to Parvati and Parameswara to be the commander-in-chief. Manmatha (cupid) indulges in boasting. Kalidasa exclaims that the rulers show undue respect to their subordinates when they want to exploit them. This is an instance of sense of humour of Kalidasa. As for the boasting of Manmatha, there are many people who accept his power and prowess. It is Buddhism that has developed the Nelson's eye to the Proportion of sex. One should understand Kalidasa's antagonism against Buddhism. Buddhism adores Sanyasa Ashramam (renunciation as the goal of life). Kalidasa's philosophy is quite different.

12. **Saisavébhyaṣṭa Vidyanām**
yauvané vīshayaishinām
vārdhaké munivruthinām
yōgénānte tanutyajām.

Raghuvamsam 1st Chapter 8th sloka - page 2

The boyhood should be spent in acquiring education, youth in amorous pursuits, the old age in renunciation and one should end his life as a recluse. Thus sexual indulgence is not a sin at all during the youthful days.

Kalidasa holds that the householders life is the best. The Mahabharata says explicitly that the house-holders life is the most excellent period. In Hinduism renunciation is reserved for the evening of one's life. No doubt Kalidasa accepts the legitimacy of sex and love life but he is very

particular about the restraints that should be used. For instance, Lord Siva did not marry the virgin Parvati who was serving him instead, Manmatha (cupid) was burnt to ashes. The moral of this episode is, (the pure and powerful amorous instinct should be burnt before marriage i.e. Kalidasa advocates love without lust. Sakuntala's was a love marriage but the carnal love was purified and the couple remet when they were fairly old. The same is the case with the story of Urvashi who was made to endure separation from the hero for a pretty long time. Thus, it can be seen that Kalidasa was not a votary of unbridled love and lust.

THE PRAKRIT POEM SETU BANDHA

The Prakrit Kavya SETU BANDHA has been highly praised by poets and rhetoricians. There is a tradition that SETU BANDHA KAVYA was written by the poet Kalidasa. Dr. V.V. Mirashi and N.R. Navlekar say in the book on Kalidasa, - "From the colophons of its cantos as well as from Bana's account, its author is known to be Pravarasena. According to some scholars, he was Pravarasena II of Kashmir and that Kavya was composed to commemorate the bridge of boats which he constructed across the river Vitasta. This theory is, however, untenable; for the RAJATARANGINI, which mentions the construction of the bridge, makes no reference to this KAVYA. Ramadasa, a commentator of this work, has on the other hand, recorded that the KAVYA was actually composed by Kalidasa, who ascribed it to Pravarasena by the order of Vikramaditya. This tradition can be satisfactorily explained only if this Pravarasena is identified with Pravarasena II of the main branch of the Vakataka dynasty; for, as already stated, the latter was

the daughter's son of Chandragupta II-Vikramaditya. This Gupta King appears to have sent some high officers and statesmen of his court to help his daughter Prabhavati gupta, who was acting as regent for her minor son YUVARAJA Divakarasena. Kalidasa seems to have been one of them. While in Vidarbha, Kalidasa must have visited Ramagiri (modern Ramtek, 28 miles from Nagpur), which was situated near the Vakataka capital Nandivardhana, modern Nandardhan. There he appears to have composed HIS MEGHADUTA. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Kalidasa helped Divamkarasena's successor Pravarasena II to compose the SETUBANDHA as directed by his patron Chandragupta II-Vikramaditya. From canto I, verse 0, of this work we learn that Pravarasena began to compose it soon after he came to the throne and that at times he found it difficult to carry it on. "On such occasions Kalidasa appears to have rendered him the necessary help. As Pravarasena II was a junior contemporary of Chandragupta II-Vikramaditya, Kalidasa must have lived Circa A.D. 400".

I agree with the above views with one reservation. The Kalidasa who helped Pravarasena the second was not the Kalidasa who was the author of NATAKATRAYA AND KAVYATRAYA. Perhaps, even the name sake of Kalidasa, referred to by the Copper plate grant of the Vakataka king Pravarasena II (E.I. XXIII PP.81)

THE ANONYMOUS ESTIMATE

13.

**Kāv́yeshu naatakam ramyam natakéshu sakuntala
tatrāpica Chaturdhōnkah tatra slōka chatusthayam**

- Chatu Sloka

This is an anonymous stanza which is very popular throughout the length and bredth of India. It postulates

that the drama is the best form of literature. Even in the west the drama is considered to be the best form of literature. Aristotle, the ancient Greek Analyst has proclaimed that the tragedy is the best form of literature. The whole world appreciates the dramas written by Shakespeare. So far so good. The author of this anonymous verse says that ABHIJNANA SAAKUNTALAM written by Kalidasa is the best drama. Perhaps, he limits the remarks to the frontiers of Sanskrit literature. Thirdly, he picks up the FOURTH ACT as the best and picks up four stanzas as typical examples. With all regard and reverence for the anonymous author of the poem I should like to move some amendments. I accept this statement that drama is the best form of literature. Also, I accept that ABHIJNANA SAAKUNTALAM is the best drama that means the anonymous author has put emphasis on - drama. That is good. But there is no drama in the fourth Act of ABHIJNANA SAAKUNTALAM.

It contains the outpourings of the Sage Kanva the noble Sage sheds tears at the thought of Sakuntala leaving the hermitage. It is very good poetry. Sakuntala was the foster daughter of the Saint Kanva. Kalidasa, I feel, is a poet first and a dramatist next. People like poetry. Intuitively the fourth ACT containing purest poetry and noblest sentiments was preferred (even the great dramatist Shakespheare bursts into poetic sentiments occasionally in the midst of dramatic situations - for example the quality of mercy - poems etc.)

But drama is the quick movement action. In the dramatic sense the fifth ACT of the ABHIJNANA SAAKUNTALAM is full of drama. So, it should be said, - SAAKUNTALE PANCHAMANKAHA and four stanzas full of

dramatic effect should be chosen.

The fifth ACT begins with melodious tune - A queen sings, "O BEE you are fond of a different honey. You are trying to suck honey from the KAMALA FLOWER now, forgetting the good old mango bunch."

The king is moved and says:

Things of beauty and sounds of melody move the hearts of human beings.

This is one of the best poems I have ever read and it epitomizes all theories of literary criticism and aesthetics. In my opinion, this should be the first of the four stanzas written by Kalidasa.

In the fourth ACT of ABHIJNANA SAAKUNTALA, Kalidasa indulges in tangential deviation from the story of MAHABHARATA. In the original Mahabharata, Sakuntala gives birth to a son in the hermitage of Kanva. Kalidasa's Kanva sends away Sakuntala from the Ashramam. Why should Kanva send away pregnant Sakuntala, his dearest daughter so abruptly from the hermitage.

The hermitage has its own rules and regulations. Sakuntala was entitled to marry a man of her choice. But, the minute Sakuntala succumbed to the carnal temptation and voluntarily subjected herself to the ecstatic embrace of manly Dushyanta, she forfeited her right to live in the hermitage. In a way Kanva banished her from the hermitage inspite of his deepest affection for her. A married woman's first live is her husband.

Sakuntala was despatched to the court of king

Dushyantha with an escort Gowthami, the aged lady warden of the hermitage and two disciples of the Sage Kanva.

The fifth ACT is the abode of King Dushyanta. One disciple Saradwata by name praises the architectural beauty of the king's garden and the other statues there in.

Sarangarava the other disciple of the Sage proclaims, that "the king's palace seems to be a furnace for him".

Dushyanta rejects Sakuntala outright. Here is a most piquant situation. She turns to the old warden Gowtami but Sarangerava sternly says - (stanza YADI YADHA VADATI), If what the king says is true you have no place in the Ashramam. If what the king says is true you better serve your husband here and now the envoice of Kanva depart leaving Sakuntala to her fate. What does this mean? Why can't they take Sakuntala back to Kanva's hermitage? Sarangarava the disciple of Kanva is well aware of his preceptor's mind. Sakuntala has absolutely no place in the hermitage. This is a most tragic situation, too deep for tears. Abhijnana Saakuntalam is a great tragedy though it does not end in death.

The four exemplary verses I select in the fifth ACT are as follows :

- i) ABHINAVA MADHULOALUPASTHAM
- ii) RAMYANI VEEKSHYA
- iii) STHEENAAM ASIKSHITA
- iv) YADI YADAVADATI

The anonymous stanza I feel must be modified as follows :

14.

Kāvyaśhu nātakam ramyam nātakēshu sakuntalā**Tatrāpica panchamānkah tatra slōka chatusthayam**

- Modified sloka by Dr.Rama Krishnamacharya

GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

Kalidasa exhibits extraordinary correct knowledge of geography of India in his writings. The route to be taken by the cloud messenger is vividly described. Again in RAGHUVAMSA various kingdoms in India were vividly described. Thirdly while describing Raghu's conquest the rivers, the hills etc. are described quite correctly. There is a tradition that Kalidasa served as the governor of Kashmir. It is interesting to note that many famous places in Kashmir like "Sache Thirtha" are mentioned in Abhijnana Saakuntalam. Kalidasa was acquainted with the Deccan and the Southern peninsula.

In "KUMARA SAMBHAVAM" - Kalidasa was the author of the first eight cantos only. ARUNAGIRINADHA AND MALLINADHA wrote commentaries on the first eight cantos only. Arunagirinadha refers to the current legend that KUMARA SAMBHAVAM remained unfinished work because of the curse of Parvati (it seems Parvati was offended at the excessive erotic description of her).

APPENDIX

The chronological table :

236 B.C.	Death of Ashoka
236 B.C.	Kunala on the throne
228 B.C.	Dasaradhudu
220 B.C.	Samprathi

211 B.C.	Saleesuka
195 B.C.	Brihadhradha
188 B.C.	The assassination of Brihadhradha by Pushyamitra

Abhijnana Saakuntalam has been translated into many languages in the world. Sir William Jones was the first European Scholar to translate it into English with the help of an Indian Pandit in 1789. Though the translation was inaccurate in some places it brought out the beauty of the original fairly well and it captivated the hearts of the west.

The French orientalist DECHEZY by name was transported to an ecstasy of delight when he read about king Dushyanta's yearning for a child,

"with its face beaming with fruitless smiles for which no ostensible cause can be assigned, with its budding teeth partially visible through lips parted in unaccountable glee, with its charming prattle uttered in sweet, though indistinct accents".

On reading a translation of this play the German poet, Goethe, was so pleased that his appreciation broke out into a song of praise :-

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms
and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is charmed,
enraptured, feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth, and heaven itself

in one sole name combine
I name thee, O Sakuntala !
and all at once is said

THE TRIBUTE PAID TO KALIDASA BY RAVINDRANATH TAGORE (THE NOBLE LAUREATE FOR LITERATURE)

Lord of poets, Kalidasa, in the bower of the heavenly magic tree

You are sitting alone with your beloved

On the throne of the heir-apparent of youth.

To bear your emerald foot-stool

The whole world is here; the whole sky

Holds the golden royal umbrella

Over your heads alone; six handmaidens,

The six seasons, pass round and round dancing;

They pour in ever-new goblets

The stream of new—coloured wines

On your thirsty youth; all creation

Is an inner apartment, a bridal chamber.

There is no sorrow, no misery, not a living soul;

Only you are the King, and there is your Queen.

II

Today you are only a poet, no one else;

Where is your king's assembly, where is your home?

Where is Ujjaini? Where is today

Your lord, Kalidasa, the great King?

There is no trace of any one. Today one thinks

You were for all time a citizen

Of Alaka, the city of perpetual joy. In the evening
 On the cloud-capped mountain, after his meditation
 When the Lord Siva danced in ecstatic joy,
 The rain-laden cloud thundered as a drum,
 And the flashing lightning kept time to the
 measure.

You sang the song of praise; at the end,
 Taking the peacock feather from her ear,
 Gaur, with a kind smile, placed it on your head

III

When you chanted, poet, to the God and Goddess,
 Siva and Parvati, the song of the birth of Kartika,
 All round stood the ghostly attendants; on
 the mountain crest

Descended slow the peaceful evening clouds.

The lightning did not play, the thunder was mute
 Kartika's peacock lowering its tail
 Stood quietly by the side of Parvati,
 Curving its lifted neck; sometimes in a gentle smile
 Trembled the lips of the Goddess; anon a long sigh
 Was breathed unnoticed; again, the swelling tears
 Appeared at the corner of the eyes; when at length
 Confused shame descended silently

On her lowered eyelids, you, poet, glancing at the Goddess
 Suddenly stopped your unfinished song

IV

By the Manasa lake on the peak of Kailasa

In a solitary world you were in the courtyard
 Of Siva's mansion his own poet-poet Kalidasa;
 Like the blue sheen on Siva's throat, the cool blue light
 In the ever-still thick clouds of June
 Under the bright prayer-world of the Seven Rishis,
 You still live in the paradise of the mind
 And will dwell there for ever, O Master-poet,
 Filling the world with the song of the life of Siva.
 In the midst of it appeared the dream-lightning
 Of the King's palace at Ujjayini,
 King Vikramaditya, the assembly of nine gems.
 That dream disappeared the great picture vanished,
 You remain for ever the poet in the mind's
 Heaven.

V

Did you not have joy and sorrow
 Hope and despair, even like ourselves,
 O immortal poet? Were not there always
 The intrigues of a royal court, the stabbing in the back?
 Did you never suffer humiliation,
 Affront, distrust, injustice,
 Want, hard and pitiless? Did you never pass
 A sleepless night of poignant agony?
 Yet above them all, unconcerned pure,
 Has flowered your poem – a lotus of beauty
 Opening to the sun of joy – Nowhere
 Does it show any sign of sorrow, affliction, evil times

Churning the sea of life you drank the poison,
The nectar that arose you gave away!

KALIDASA AND SHAKESPEARE

A comparative study of Kalidasa and Shakespeare is a sensitive subject. However, it is a topic of international importance and a risk worth undertaking. Kalidasa has been described as the Shakespeare of India during the British Period of Indian History.

The most remarkable event in the modern history of the world – in my opinion – is the confluence of the East and the West on the proverbially hospitable soil of India.

Rudyard Kipling is very often quoted as having said

“The East is East and the West is West and the twain shall never meet”. But that is an incomplete quotation. Rudyard Kipling added, “there is neither East nor West, boarder nor breed nor worth and two strong men stand face to face though they come from the ends of the earth”

Biology has made us familiar with cross fertilization and its importance. In the same way cross fertilization of cultures is the cordinal principle of progress in the annals of mankind. In this context the confluence of the East and the West will have salutary or revolution of global culture. In this context a comparative study of Kalidasa and Shakespeare is sure to be a rewarding exercise.

It is the irony of history that poets are destined to posthumous recognition at the hands of fate. The famous couplet,

**“Seven Cities claimed HOMER dead
where the living HOMER begged for food”**

needs no elaboration. And history repeated itself many a time. Poets are proverbially poor.

Shakespeare – now enjoying world-wide recognition was not a celebrity in his days. In fact famous literary personalities of those days derided him as the “OPSTRAT CROW” knowing “Little LATIN and less GREEK”.

Kalidasa too, in his early youth, struggled hard for recognition. In his drama, - MAALAVIKAAGNIMITRAM - he pleads vehemently, -

“All that is old need not necessarily be good.

Every new writing should not be derided as mere trash.

The wise should appreciate the good in both.”

Kalidasa according to hoary Indian tradition was the court poet of Emperor Vikramaditya – obviously after the lapse of some time. It is clear that Kalidasa and Shakespeare struggled hard for recognition early in their life. Kalidasa undoubtedly achieved contemporary recognition. Shakespeare was recognised by the world at large posthumously.

Kalidasa according to classical tradition was the contemporary of Vikramaditya. The identification of Vikramaditya is a controversial matter in Indian History. One famous Vikramaditya started the VIKRAMA ERA IN 58 B.C. Shakespeare dedicated his work “Venus to the Earl of Southampton and enjoyed his patronage”. Southampton was the ruler of a small Kingdom. Vikramaditya was a powerful emperor. Paradoxically enough, the poets Kalidasa and Shakespeare continue to exercise immortal influence over mankind, long after their

patrons – Vikramaditya and the Earl of Southampton ceased to yield any authority and departed from this world.

Kalidasa and Shakespeare are renowned as poets as well as dramatists. Shakespeare's dramas are full of poetic exuberance. However, drama is not poetry. Drama is not even the dialogue however powerful it may be. Drama is not the story. Drama is the combination of powerful living characters. Poetry and characterization should be combined in a drama in the most relevant ratio. The dramatist Shakespeare could find, "TONGUES IN TREES BOOKS IN RUNNING BROOKS AND SERMONS IN STONES". It is poetry pure and simple dialogue of supplying a variety. Some pertinent disclosures can be culled out of the dialogues out of context as independent poems.

Let us take the example from the drama "The Merchant of Venice"

"The quality of mercy is not strained. It dropeth as gentle rain from heaven. It is twice blessed him that takes and gives him. It is an attribute of God and EARTHLY POWER DOTH than show likest God's when mercy ceasons Justice".

Kalidasa's description of the spring, - in his "KUMAARA SAMBHAVAM"- can be cited as a typical example of his poetic genius.

"Karnikara Flower blossomed forth, in all multi-coloured magnificence, - but it lacked fragrance. Perhaps universal architecture is averse to perfection".

Prof. Bradley in his thesis on 'SUBLIMITY' (Oxford lectures on poetry has postulated that, "It is not possible to imagine a sublime flower or a sublime insect as grandeur

and greatness are the essential ingredients of sublimity". True, but in the hands of a master artist like Kalidasa, the little flower has attained sublimity.

The Sanskrit Rhetoricians placed the "Drama" and the zenith of literary composition - 'NATAKANTAM HI SAHITYAM = NATAKAM IS THE GOAL OF LITERATURE'. The Sanskrit couplet postulates that Drama is the best form of literature and Sakuntala is the best drama. The great German Poet - Goethe has gone into raptures over "ABHIJNANA SAKUNTALAM" written by Kalidasa and composed a memorable poem in its praise.

Kalidasa has drawn the story of Abhijnana Saakuntalam from Vedavyasa's Mahabharata and converted into a drama, making some important alterations. Modern research has shown that Shakespeare was indebted to Plutarch, in his drama JULIUS CAESAR for the story. Both Kalidasa and Shakespeare appear to be Master sculptors whose strokes of chisel would convert the stone into a statue.

The opening verse of RAGHU VAMSA written by Kalidasa is apparently a prayer -

15. Vāgarthaviva sampruktow vāgartha pratipattayé

Jagatah pitarow vandé pārvatī paramésvarow

- Raghuvamsam 1st chapter 1st sloka page 1

I bow to Parvati and Paramesvara confluence of sound and sense, the word and meaning, the parents of creation who are united preserving their identities. Poetry is a harmonious blending of sound and sense, word and meaning. Some poems have a prediction for the word rather pedantic. Some others care only for the meaning.

In some words the word dominates the meaning. Very few poets like Kalidasa can keep a balance between the word and the meaning. Kalidasa and Shakespeare have equal respect for the word and the meaning and effect a harmonious concord and concomitance.

Shakespeare ridicules, "Sound and fury signifying nothing." This is a common feature of Kalidasa and Shakespeare in evolving synthetic style.

A surprising similarity in Kalidasa and Shakespeare is the introduction of the, "ring episodes in Abijnana Saakuntalam and the Merchant of Venice respectively."

The ring episode finds no mention in the original Sanskrit Mahabharata. The ring episode is an innovation coined by Kalidasa for the sake of the dramatic effect. Shakespeare introduced the ring episode in the "Merchant of Venice" for the sake of dramatic effect.

Sakuntala obviously forgotten and forsaken by her husband King Dushyanta, went to the Royal Court escorted by the aged Nun Gowtami. Melodious memories of their sacred, though secret marriage at the holy hermitage of Kanva narrated by Sakuntala failed to move the king.

At the last resort, Sakuntala made a candid announcement that she possessed the Nuptial Ring – the Royal insignia – presented to her by the King. But, alas, she cut a sorry figure when she beheld her empty finger, bereft of the Royal ring. The so called conclusive evidence eluded her at the nick of the minute. Evidently, Sakuntala lost the ring during the long journey. In this tense situation, too tragic for tears and too sorrowful for sighs, sheer silence enveloped and Sakuntala hanged down her head in sheer shame.

Kalidasa's Sakuntala does not burst out into any soliloquy.

Grevous grief is born dumb and any soliloquy is antithetical to silence. Usually Shakespeare uses a device of soliloquy in such situations but Kalidasa preferred dumb silence instead in the original Mahabharata, AKASAVANI the celestial voice was introduced to vindicate the veracity of Sakuntala. Sakuntala was standing mute as the personification of baffled innocence.

The clever king Dushyanta exploits the situation to his advantage most dramatically :-

He proclaims -

"The bird Kokilas (Cuckoos) get their off-spring reared by the Crows. The female species in general apart, from the (homo sapiens) from the human kind are endowed by nature with instinctive intelligence. Then what about the educated and experienced woman? Sakuntala was dumb founded".

It is an outrage on innocent chastity which is placed on the dark going to a curious conspiracy of circumstances. Aristotle has said that CATHORSIS IS THE SOUL OF TRAGEDY. If so, Abhijnana Saakuntalam of Kalidasa is a tragedy par excellence in the annals of world literature.

Abhijnana Saakuntalam is full of calamities, though the story does not end with death. However the sentiments expressed by Dushyanta should not be identified with the views of Kalidasa on woman-hood. Let us not forget that Kalidasa depicted Sakuntala as innocent and presented Dushyanta as the culprit. In the case of Shakespeare as well, a similar mistake is perpetrated by many critics

who quote from HAMLET the well known exclamation:

“FRAILITY, THY NAME IS WOMAN”

But this is certainly not the opinion of Shakespeare at all. On the other hand it is the desperate utterance of a panicky Prince who has lost his mental equilibrium at the thought of his mother who connived with the murder of royal husband and stooped to marry his brother, the murderer who usurped the throne.

Similarly, the platitudes of the old POLONIUS who had a miserable end in Hamlet should not be confounded with the philosophy, personality and views of Shakespeare.

Kalidasa as well as Shakespeare do not identify themselves with the characters they have created in their dramas. There is a saying in Telugu that the creator stands apart from the created though HE can be seen in all the creation. One has to wonder whether HE exists at all. The best author is one who stands above all characters.

The ring episode introduced by Shakespeare in the Merchant of Venice is on a different footing from that of Kalidasa. In Kalidasa the ring has become the center of gravity. In Shakespeare the ring episode has become the barometer of humour. Portio the beloved wife of Bassanio comes to the Dukes court in the guise of a lawyer and saves Antonio the friend of her husband from the fatal clutches of the notorious Jew.

Bassanio requests the psuedo lawyer to accept any gift as a token of his gratitude. The lawyer choses the Nuptial Ring on the client's finger.

But Bassanio implores the lawyer to choose some

other gift as he does not wish to displease his wife. (the Nuptial Ring should be preserved as the dearest gift according to tradition)

The lawyer pretends righteous indignation and says, "Sir, you taught me first to beg and now you teach me how a beggar should be answered". Finally Bassanio parts with the ring rather unwillingly and his joy knows no bounds when he learns that it is his wife who saved the life of his friend, donning the robes of a lawyer. Shakespeare and Kalidasa are shrewd psychologists.

Delineation of the "Roman mob" by Shakespeare is too well known to need any special exposition. Antony carries the mob by his oratorical skills. The character of the police man in Saakuntalam portrayed by Kalidasa can be cited as an example of his insight into human nature. The police man arrests the fisherman and brings him to the royal court expecting capital punishment for the latter. After the release of the fisherman, the policeman tries to make friendship with the fisherman and expects a rewarding bribe from him.

Another interesting example - full of humour and insight into human nature can be cited.

King Dushyanta goes on a hunting expedition into the forest near the hermitage of Kanva and falls in love with Sakuntala, a foster daughter of Kanva. His interest in hunting wanes. Commander-in-Chief does not know it and praises - hunting - saying that it improves the art of archery and is a good exercise for the king. When he observes the apathy of the king towards hunting he changes his theme and dubs hunting as vicious.

Kalidasa has created certain animal characters apart from human beings. The character of the deer - Deerghabanga - is a typical example. Once Deerghabanga was the object of Dushyanta's hunting. It was the pet of Sakuntala and it refuses water at the hands of Dushyanta who tried to hunt it. Obviously the fear psychosis persists in the deer.

Shakespeare is no doubt a master of human psychology. Let me add, Kalidasa is a master of animal psychology as well.

In diction and dialogue, humour and irony and characterization there are many points common to the two great dramatists.

Kalidasa and Shakespeare have portrayed the eternal drama of human existence with all its ironies and intricacies, dilemmas and doldrums, subtleties and susceptibilities, mysteries and melodies, psychological heights and emotional depths.

In conclusion I should like to venture a remark pertaining to the hypothetical question. If somebody puts me the question,

"Who is the **Greatest Dramatist** in the annals of world literature?" - I would unhesitatingly answer - **Shakespeare.**

However, if somebody questions me again, "**Which is the greatest drama in the world?**"

My answer will be "**ABHIJNANA SAKUNTALAM**" of Kalidasa.

SLOKAS IN TELUGU SCRIPT QUOTED IN ENGLISH LETTERS IN THIS BOOK

1. రమ్యాణీ వీక్ష్వ మధురాంశ్చ నిశమ్య శబ్దాన్,
పర్యుత్సుకో భవతి యత్సుఖితోఽపి జన్తుః ।
తచ్ఛేతసా స్మరతి నూన మబోధ పూర్వం,
భావస్థిరాణి జననాన్తర సౌహృదాని ॥
(అభిజ్ఞాన శాకుంతలము - 5వ అంకం - 100వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 180
2. గ్రీవాభంగాభిరామం ముహురనుపతతి స్యందనే బద్ధదృష్టిః,
పశ్చార్ధేన ప్రవిష్టః శరపతనభియా భూయసా పూర్వకాయమ్ ।
దర్శైరర్థావలీఢైః శ్రమ వివృత ముఖభ్రంశిభిః కీర్ణ వర్షా,
పశ్యేదగ్ర ప్లతత్వాద్వియతి బహుతరం స్తోక ముర్వాం ప్రయాతి ॥
(అభిజ్ఞాన శాకుంతలము - 1వ అంకం - 7వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 8
3. పురాణ మిత్యేవ న సాధుసర్వం,
నచాపి కావ్యం నవ మిత్య వద్యమ్ ।
సంతః పరీక్ష్యా న్యతర దృజంతే,
మూఢః పరప్రత్యయనేయబుద్ధిః ॥
(మాళవికాగ్నిమిత్రం - 1వ అంకం - 2వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 3
4. త్యాగాయ సంభృతార్థానాం సత్యాయ మితభాషిణామ్ ।
యశసే విజిగీషూణాం ప్రజా యై గృహమేధినామ్ ॥
(రఘువంశము - 1వ సర్గ - 7వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 2

5. యాస్పృష్టిః స్రష్టు రాద్యా వహతి విధిహుతం యా హవి ర్యాచ హోత్రీ,
యే ద్వే కాలం విధత్తః శ్రుతి విషయగుణా యా స్థితా వ్యాప్య విశ్వమ్ ।
యామాహుః సర్వబీజ ప్రకృతిరితి యయాప్రాణినః ప్రాణవంతః .
ప్రత్యక్షాభిః ప్రపన్న స్తసుభిరవతు వస్తాభిరష్టాభిరీశః ॥

(అభిజ్ఞాన శాకుంతలం నాందీ శ్లోకము) పేజి 1

6. సంచారిణీ దీప శిఖేవ రాత్రౌ
యం యం వ్యతీయాయ పతిం వరా సా ।
నరేంద్ర మార్గాట్ట ఇవ ప్రపేదే
వివర్ణ భావం సస భూమి పాలః ॥

(రఘువంశం 6వ సర్గ - 67వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 99

7. అథకాశ్చి దజవ్యపేక్షయా,
గమయిత్వా సమదర్శనః సమాః ।
తమసః పర మాప దవ్యయం,
పురుషం యోగసమాధినా రఘుః ॥

(రఘు - 8వ సర్గ - 24వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 122

8. అసంశయం క్షత్ర పరిగ్రహక్షమా,
యదార్య మస్యా మభిలాషి మే మనః ।
సతాం హి సందేహ పదేషు వస్తుషు,
ప్రమాణ మంతఃకరణ ప్రవృత్తయః ॥

(అభిజ్ఞాన శాకుంతలము - ప్రథమాంకే 21వ శ్లోకం) పేజి 29

9. వర్షే సింధుర దర్శనాంబర గుణైః,
యాతే కలౌ సుమ్మితే ।
మాసే మాధవ సంజ్ఞి తేత్ర
విహితో గ్రంథ క్రియోపక్రమః ॥

ఇదమ్ పుష్యమిత్రం యాజయామ

10. ఇహ నివసతి మేరుః | శేఖరః క్షౌధరాణా |

మిహ వినిహిత భారాః సాగరాః సప్తచాన్యే |

ఇద మహిపతిర్భృగస్తంభ విభ్రాజమానం

ధరణితల మిహైవ స్థాన మస్మద్విధానామ్ ||

- ఔచిత్య విచార చర్చ - క్షేమేంద్రుడు

11. కాళిదాసః కిం కుంతలేశ్వరః కరోతీతి విక్రమాదిత్యేన పృష్టఉక్తవాన్

అసకలహసిత్వాత్ క్షాళితా నీవ కాంత్యా

ముకుళిత నయన త్వాద్వృక్త కర్ణో త్పలాని |

పిబతి మధు సుగంధీ న్యాయనాని ప్రియాణాం

త్వయి వినిహితభావః కుంతలానామధీశః ||

12. శైశవే2 భృస్త విద్యానాం యోవనే విషయైషిణామ్ |

వార్ధకే మునివృత్తీనాం యోగే నాన్తే తనుత్యజామ్ ||

(రఘువంశము, 1వ సర్గ - 8 శ్లోకం) పేజి 2

13. కావ్యేషు నాటకం రమ్యం నాటకేషు శకుంతలా |

తత్రాపిచ చతుర్థోంకః తత్రశ్లోక చతుష్టయమ్ ||

చాటు శ్లోకము

14. కావ్యేషు నాటకం రమ్యం నాటకేషు శకుంతలా |

తత్రాపిచ పంచమాంకః తత్రశ్లోక చతుష్టయమ్ ||

డా రామకృష్ణమాచార్యులు మార్చిన చాటు శ్లోకము

15. వాగర్థావివ సంపుక్తౌ వాగర్థ ప్రతిపత్తయే |

జగతః పితరౌ వందే పార్వతీ పరమేశ్వరౌ ||

(రఘువంశము - 1వ సర్గ - 1 శ్లోకం) పేజి 1

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7. Works in English: 1. The Mahabharata (T. T. D. Publication) 2. The

Gandhian Era 3. Wisdom of the World 4. Kailasa and His Times

8. Awards: Received many awards and rewards including **Kavi ganda**

Pendaram

