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Paper III

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Origin and Development

Some important dramatists and
drama : Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Śūdraka,
Viśākhadatta, Harṣa, Bhavabhūti

History of Sanskrit Drama

Origin and Development Sanskrit Drama

- ▶ The earliest form of Indian drama
- ▶ Main source of Indian theatre with culture, customs and ethnicity.
- ▶ Difficult to trace the origin with exact date of its commencement.
- ▶ Emerged between 2nd century B.C. to 1st century B.C. and flourished between the 1st century to 10th century
- ▶ Playwrights like Bhāsa, Kālidāsa, Śūdraka, Viśākhadatta, Harṣa, Bhavabhūti
- ▶ Exponents of dramatic art like Bharata, Abhinavagupta, Dhananjaya, etc.

Bharata

- ▶ ‘Natya Shastra’, a theoretical treatise on ancient Indian dramaturgy and histrionics dated between roughly 400 B.C. and 200 B.C.
- ▶ Written in Sanskrit consisting 6000 sutras or verse stanzas incorporated in 36 chapters.
- ▶ It can be loosely translated as ‘A Compendium of theatre or a manual of Dramatic art’.

Bhāsa

- ▶ Between 500 B.C. to 50 B.C
- ▶ 13 plays are in recorded by Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapati Sastri
- ▶ More than 100 writings
- ▶ The *ūrubhangam* and *Karṇabhāram* are the only known tragic Sanskrit plays in ancient India

plays

▶ Plays based on *Ramayana*

- *Pratimā-nāṭaka*
- *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka*

• Others

- ▶ *Avimāraka* is a fairy tale, it is not epic based
- ▶ *chārudatta*
- ▶ *Pratijnā Yaugandharāyaṇam*
- ▶ *Swapnavāsavadattam*

• Plays based on Mahabharata

- *Pañcha-rātra*
- *Madhyama-vyāyoga*
- *Dūta-Ghaṭotkacha*
- *Dūta-Vākya*
- *Ūrubhangam*
- *Karṇabhāram*
- *Harivamśa or Bāla-charita*

Kālidāsa

- ▶ lived in the period 370-450AD.
- ▶ ‘Abhijñānaśākuntalam’
- ▶ ‘Vikramorvasiyam’
- ▶ Malovikāgnimitram

Śūdraka

- ▶ 'Mṛcchakaṭikam' (The Little Clay Cart).
- ▶ 2nd century B.C.
- ▶ In ten Acts based on the story of the love of Charudatta, a prominent but poor inhabitant of Ujjayini, and Vasantasena, an exquisitely beautiful but pure-minded courtesan of the city

Viśākhadatta

- ▶ Only two of his plays, the *Mudrārākṣasa* and the *Devichandraguptam* are known to us
- ▶ after the 6th century CE.

Harṣa

- ▶ **Harsha** (c. 590–647 CE), also known as Harshavardhana
- ▶ Indian emperor who ruled North India from 606 to 647 CE. He was a member of the Vardhana dynasty
- ▶ Three Sanskrit plays *Ratnāvalī*, *Nāgananda*, *Priyadarśika*.

Bhavabhūti

- ▶ 8th century scholar
- ▶ '*Mahāvīracharita*' (The story of highly courageous), depicting the early life of Rama.
- ▶ '*Uttararāmacharita*' (The story of Rama's later life), depicts Rama's coronation, the abandonment of Sita, and their reunion
- ▶ '*Mālatimādhava*' - Malati is in love with Madhava, After numerous travails, all ends well, with the two couples uniting.

Books

- ▶ Suggested
- ▶ *History of classical Sanskrit Literature*,
Krinshnamacharian, MLBD, Delhi
- ▶ *Sanskrita sahityer itihasa*, Dhirendranath
Bandyopadhyay, Sanskrit
- ▶ *Sanskrita sahityer ruparekha*, Biman Bihari
Bhattacharya, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Kolkata