

A SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

A CRITICAL STUDY AND TEXT OF RASIKAVINODA AND SVĀNUBHŪTINĀTAKA:

ALLEGORICAL PLAYS PRESERVED IN MANUSCRIPTS

STATEMENT NO. 1HOW THE PRESENT WORK TENDS TO THE GENERAL ADVANCEMENT  
OF KNOWLEDGEIntroduction :

Allegorical plays have an unique place in the galaxy of Sanskrit Literature. While on the one hand they generally display peculiar dramatic traits and techniques, they also contain to a large extent striking literary excellences couched with recondite philosophical discussions and explanations.

As it is rightly pointed out by S.K.De and S.N.Dasgupta "it is difficult to turn a dogma into a drama". (History of Sanskrit Literature, Vol.I, p.480). We however find some allegorical Sanskrit plays in which the playwright instead of dramatising a particular dogma or doctrine of a school, refers and alludes tacitly to a school of thought or incorporates some of the most significant metaphysical concepts and views in the dialogue or conversation, creating thereby genuine interest and curiosity to know more about them in the mind of the readers or spectators.

Viewed from this point of view these allegorical plays have multiple points of importance. To enumerate a few :

- 1) They help in preserving ancient Indian heritage in the field of religion and philosophy.
- 2) By adopting some philosophical tenets and ideas for the dramatic denouement they serve to propagate and popularise the philosophical, ethical and moral teachings of the great thinkers of the past.
- 3) They also contribute towards the better understanding of the abstruse philosophical problems and precepts, when these are discussed in conversation or presented in delightful verses.
- 4) By doing this they make the discussions of some of the metaphysical concepts more lively, interesting and appealing.
- 5) As the ancient Indian authoritative texts have accepted the achievement of merits as one of the aims of dramatic literature (cf. *Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.115, *Agnipurāṇa* 338.7) these allegorical plays serve this purpose by enunciating and promulgating ethical and moral values of life.
- 6) Just as according to the principle of Upabrāmhana laid down in the *Mahābhārata* (1.1.204), the historical, legendary and purāṇic literature facilitates the interpretation of the veda in the same way these allegorical plays make for achieving upabrāmhana of the profound metaphysical doctrines and discussions. By comparing and

correlating the original philosophical text on the one hand and the play on the other, a reader or a spectator arrives at a more accurate, facile, comprehensive and critical understanding and insight into the problems tackled by the two i.e. ancient original text and the play written in a later period.

- 7) Although these plays have less values from the visual and representational points of view, their contribution in preserving, imparting and instructing noble values serving as the hallmarks in the moral and spiritual uplift of the people in the society cannot be minimized.

Svānubhūtināṭaka and Rasikavinoda : The two allegorical plays under study :

These two plays taken up for the study here provide interesting and rich data from the points of view outlined above.

Moreover both these plays are not yet published. They are found in the manuscripts preserved in the Oriental Institute, Baroda.

Time and again the scholars have emphasized the need and significance of the study of ancient manuscripts which preserve the treasure of Indian heritage that remains unfolded and unrevealed to the society at large.

While there is only one manuscript of the Rasikavinoda preserved at the Oriental Institute, Baroda, there are two manuscripts of the Svānubhūtinātaka - one at Oriental Institute, Baroda and another at Jaipur.

On the basis of the manuscripts mentioned above the critical texts of both the plays are prepared for the first time in this present study.

The Svānubhūtinātaka by Ananta Paṇḍita is a drama in five acts. Throughout the play, the playwright has tried to extol and explain some of the tenets of Advaita Vedānta and some statements from the Prasthānatraya, viz. the Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtra and the Bhagavadgītā.

Occasionally there are references to other works also like Vasiṣṭha-Rāmāyaṇa, Saṃkṣepe-Śārīraka etc. Some charming and pithy subhāṣitas are skilfully interspersed by the author which make the dry and insipid philosophical deliberations very much delightful and interesting. Though the diction of the author is somewhat pedantic and pompous, fine versification, ardent philosophical fervour and easy, lucid style of expression make the play quite appealing and attractive.

The Rasikavinoda by Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa is named as trotaka.

In five acts the poet has represented the mockery of Adātr̥gūṇa (skinflint)

The central theme of the play is to depict a glaring contrast of the character pertaining to Rasikadāsa and his ancestors (most of whom were the pious devotees of Gokulanāthajī - a great Vaisnava teacher flourished in 1552 to 1641 A.D.) on the one hand and to Purusottama, a veritable rake born in the family of Rasikadāsa. While Rasikadāsa and the band of his ancestors are described as the paragon of excellent merits, Purusottama - a repository of all possible vices is presented as a befitting refuge for Adātrguna and his comrades who have no other shelter or support on the earth.

Both these plays being mainly the literary plays their stageability is constrained and restricted to a large extent but their contribution to the field of Sanskrit literature cannot be ignored.

These and such other allegorical plays are the products of the new epoch in the history of Sanskrit literature. Herein the poets venture to dramatise and popularise the concepts of human life which are at once noble and ideal. Since this dramatic approach was newly conceived, the whole thing could not be fitted in the dramaturgical rules and norms mentioned in the ancient texts.

Naturally therefore we find some deviations and peculiarities found mostly in this genre of the plays with regard to dramatical techniques and devices, literary trends and vocabulary as well as the delineation of characters and sentiments.

The present study attempts to put forth the critical text and to examine and evaluate critically these plays for the first time.

It is both comprehensive and critical and hence tends to contribute towards general enhancement of knowledge.

STATEMENT NO. II

SOURCES, INDEBTEDNESS AND ORIGINALITY

In the preparation of the present work, I have fully drawn upon all the available literature that is published, unpublished as well as that which is still preserved in the manuscripts. An acknowledgement has been made in proper places.

I have studied the texts and the relevant literature and have tried to express my own views after critically evaluating the texts.

SYNOPSISPART I : CRITICAL TEXT OF THE PLAY

In this section the detailed description of the manuscripts is given followed by the texts of the two plays critically edited for the first time.

Description of Manuscripts :

- A. (i) Description of the manuscripts of the Svānubhūtinātaka.  
(ii) Description of the manuscript of the Rasikavinoda.
- B. The Principles adopted in constituting the critical texts of the plays Svānubhūtinātaka and Rasikavinoda.
- C. Critical texts of the two plays i.e. Svānubhūtinātaka and Rasikavinoda.

PART II : CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PLAYSA. Critical Study of the Svānubhūtinātaka :Chapter I : The Author :

In this Chapter Ananta Pandita's personal life, his date and the works attributed to him are discussed in details.

Chapter II : The Title of the Play :

- (i) The name of the play Svānubhūtinātaka is here discussed mainly from the following points of view :



- (a) How far the criteria and the characteristics of a nāṭaka laid down in the dramaturgical texts can be applied to the present play;
- (b) The significance of the vocable "Svānubhūti" occurring in the title and its role in the dramatic development of the play.

### Chapter III : Summary of the Plot :

In this section an actwise summary of the whole play is given.

### Chapter IV : Literary Appreciation :

Here an attempt is made to evaluate the text of the play from the literary point of view particularly with reference to language and style, versification and diction as well as vocabulary and expressions found in the play.

### Chapter V : Dramatical Appreciation :

The factors which are significant from dramaturgical point of view are here taken up for discussion and evaluation, e.g. art of characterization, the prevailing sentiments, the five śādhis, the dramatic devices, the stageability of the play and deviations from the accepted norms of the Dramaturgy etc.

### Chapter VI : Philosophical Trends and Thoughts :

In this Chapter the philosophical trends and thoughts recurring in the dialogues and descriptions in the play are

discussed. The principle of upabrahmana is also applied in the evaluation of the philosophical data given in this present play.

#### Chapter VII : Social and Historical Data :

In this section information regarding social, cultural and historical conditions reflected in the play is analysed.

#### B. Critical study of the Rasikavinoda :

The critical study of this play is presented in the following chapters :

Chapter I : The Author.

Chapter II : The Title of the Play.

Chapter III: Summary of the Plot.

Chapter IV : Literary Appreciation.

Chapter V : Dramatical Appreciation.

Chapter VI : Philosophical Trends and Thoughts.

Chapter VII: Social and Historical Data.

(The details of the above chapters would be on the lines of the chapters of the Svanubhūtinātaka)

#### C. Epilogue :

This concludes the whole study with the final observations on the plays and the contribution of the plays to the Sanskrit literature in general and Sanskrit dramatic literature in particular.