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Prabodhacandrodaya in the Light of Some Major Dramaturgical Techniques

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Introduction

Drama is an art of life. Art is free yet not disorderly. Its movement is controlled, nature is disciplined and life is harmonious. So, Sanskrit drama has been bounded by rules from the very ancient time. Its beauty and elegance have bloomed much more than to be restrained. Rules are not against the creation of art. But art never becomes completely flawless, perfect and beautiful. Artistic creation is made possible only by the conjugation of genius and discipline. But to the person who lacks genius, pursuance of rules is nothing but dependence on them. Therefore, it can be perceived, in the period of decadence of Sanskrit drama, the more increased the dependence on rules the more decreased the creative faculty. At that time most of the plays were nothing but blind endeavour of copying. The most popular allegorical drama *Prabodhacandrodaya* authored by Kṛṣṇamiśra is exception to that. Despite having individual creativity, Kṛṣṇamiśra could not become totally free from the rules. In *Prabodhacandrodaya*, dramaturgy is exposed line to line. Hence some dramatic technicalities of this play are being discussed as the following discourse goes.

It is to be mentioned in the content of the dramaturgical analysis of this Sanskrit play is that before the presentation of the subject matter of a drama one (or two) śloka (ślokas) is chanted by the actor designated as 'Sūtradhāra' in order to remove possible obstacles that may stand on the way of smooth ending of the drama. This is the term of Sanskrit dramaturgy which is called 'Pūrbaranga'. Again, 'Nāndī' is one of the best parts of 'Pūrbaranga'. A good many dramaturgists has defined 'Nāndī' in their works. But the definitions mark no distinguished differences. Hence, according to *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 'Nāndī' is –

“आशीर्वचनसंयुक्ता स्तुतिर्यस्मात् प्रयुज्यते।
देवद्विजनृपादीनां तस्मान्नान्दीति संज्ञिता॥” (सा.द. ६/२४)¹

At the very beginning of the play 'Nāndī' is chanted in two ślokas –

“मध्याह्नार्कमरीचिकास्त्रिव पयःपुरो यदज्ञानतः
खं वायुर्ज्वलनो जलं क्षितिरिति त्रैलोक्यमुन्मीलति।
यत्तत्त्वं विदुषां निमीलति पुनः स्रग्भोगिभोगोपमं
सान्द्रानन्दमुपास्महे तदमलं स्वात्मावबोधं महः॥” (P.C. 1/1)²
“अन्तर्नाडीनियमितमरुल्लङ्घितव्रक्षमरुन्धं
स्वान्ते शान्ति प्रणयिनि समुन्मीलदानन्दसान्द्रम्।
प्रत्यग्ज्योतिर्जयति यमिनः स्पष्टलालाटनेत्र-
व्याजव्यक्तीकृतमिव जगद्व्यापि चन्दार्धमौलेः॥” (P.C. 1/2)

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¹ सा. द. = साहित्यदर्पणः.

² P.C. = Prabodhacandrodaya.

Though ‘Pūrvaranga’ consists twenty-one parts, all parts may not be staged. But ‘Nāndī’ is essentially performed to remove the obstacles. Presentable matters like benediction, applause of a twice-born, conch-shell, moon, lotus, cakrabāka and the lily are mentioned in ‘Nāndī’. Four types of ‘Nāndī’ can be found: 1) namaskṛtiha 2) māṅgalikī 3) āśīha 4) patrāvalī.

The ‘Nāndī’ consists of eight Padas. So Maheśvaranyāyālankāra in his commentary on Prabodhacandrodaya has said-

“एतदष्टपदान्दीपठनान्ते सूत्रधारः.....”³

However, ‘pada’ here denotes one line or ¼ th of śloka. This does not follow the definition of ‘pada’ from the view of grammar. Lastly, short sentence or irrelevant sentences are expressed by pada. So ‘Nāndī’ has been regarded as ‘aṣṭapadā Nāndī’ because of its eight relevant sentences. Hence a portion of ‘Prakāśaṭīkā’ of Rāmadāsa Dīkṣita is quoted here to make the expression comprehensive-

“अत्र पदशब्देन सुसिद्धन्तरूपं पदं श्लोकचतुर्थांशरूपम्, अवान्तरवाक्यार्थरूपञ्च गृह्यते, तदुक्तं नाट्यप्रदीपे – ‘श्लोकपादं पदं केचित् सुसिद्धन्तमथापरे। पदेऽवान्तरवाक्यैकस्वरूपं पदमूचिरे’ इति विद्यानाथस्तु ‘कैश्चिन्नान्द्यां पदनियमो नाभ्युपगम्यते’ अतोऽत्र नान्द्यां पदनियमानादरेऽपि न क्षतिः।’‘चन्द्रार्धमौलेः’ इति चन्द्रपदोपादानेन नान्द्याश्चन्द्रशंसिता बोध्या। चन्द्रपदोपादानेन नाम्द्यां काव्यगता रसस्फीतताहऽशंस्यते – यथोक्तम् – चन्द्रनामाङ्किता कार्या रसानां स यते निधिः। प्राते चन्द्रमसि स्फीता रसश्रीरिति वालुकिः”⁴

Again ‘Prastāvanā’ is an interesting feature of Sanskrit drama. This is a part of the play where ‘sutrādhāra’ along with the help of ‘naṭanaṭī’ hints at the subject-matter of the play by discussing his own business. The definition of ‘prastāvanā’ in Sāhityadarpaṇa of Viśvanātha is-

“नटी विदूषको वापि पारिपाश्विक एव वा।
सूत्रधारेण सहिताः संलापं यत्र कुर्वते।
चित्रैर्वाक्यैः स्वकार्योत्थैः प्रस्तुताक्षेपिभिर्मिथः।
आमुखं तत्तु विज्ञेयं नाम्ना प्रस्तावनापि सा॥”(सा. द. ६/३१-३२)

Now a day’s though ‘Prastāvanā’ remains absent in most of the modern plays, its role is present in the forms of programmes, pamphlets, newspaper, radio, television, mike, etc. ‘Prastāvanā’ can be called in other words ‘Sihāpanā’ or ‘Amukha’. ‘Prastāvanā’ aims at to reveal the names of the play and the playwright’s brief introduction of the players, beginning of the main plot to the audience or reader. Five different types of ‘Prastāvanā’ can be found in drama which are called- 1)

Udghātyaka 2) kathodghāta 3) Prayogāṭīśaya 4) pravartaka 5) Abalagita.

‘Prastāvanā’ can be seen more or less in all Sanskrit dramas except ‘Mahānāṭaka’. It is not an exception in the case of Prabodhacandrodaya. ‘Prastāvanā’ in the drama has been initiated in the 1st Act of the play by the conversation between ‘Sutrādhāra’ and ‘Naṭī’. In this ‘Prastāvanā’, Sutrādhāra has related the story of victory of ‘Kīrttivarmā’ against his enemies-

“विवेकनैव निर्जित्य कर्णं मोहमिवोर्जितम्।
श्रीकीर्तिवर्मनृपतेर्वोधस्येवोदयः कृतः॥”(P.C.1/9)

Here in this play, it is seen that the entrance of personages like ‘Kāma’ and ‘Rati’ happens just following the dialogue of ‘Sutrādhāra’. ‘Sutrādhāra’, in his conversation, says that Gopāladeva has been able to establish the supremacy of the king ‘Kīrttivarmādeva’ by defeating ‘Karna’ the king of the kingdom ‘Cedi’. So also, with the echo of Sutrādhāra’s version, ‘Kāma’ and ‘Rati’ enter into the stage by saying –

कथमस्मासु जीवत्सु स्वामिनो महामोहस्य विवेकसकासात्
पराजयमुदाहरसि”

(P.C.1st Act.) (Who dares say the defeat of ‘Mahāmoha’ at the hand of ‘Viveka’ even when they are alive). Hence, the ‘Kathodghāta’ ‘Prastāvanā’ is known to be applied here because of the fact that it is ‘Kathodghāta’ when there happens the entrance of the actors (or actresses) following the meaning of the dialogue of the ‘Sutrādhāra’.

The play writer Kṛṣṇamiśra has shown his mastery in the application of ‘Arthapakṣepaka’. He has applied it in different acts according to its need. But the use of ‘Viṣkamvaka’ and ‘Prabeśaka’ among the five parts is noticeable.

Amidst Act-1, the ‘Viṣkamvaka’ is created by ‘Rati’ and ‘kāma’ which is ‘Sankīrṇa’ in nature. ‘Kāma’ is ‘madhyamapātra’ and ‘Rati’ is ‘adhamapātra’. Maheśvara in his commentary has defined ‘Biṣkamvaka’ as-

“कुतोऽपि स्वेच्छया प्राप्ताः संलापं यत्तु कुर्वन्तिविष्कम्भकः स विज्ञेयः
कथामात्रस्य सूचकः”⁵

It is also seen in the middle part of the 2nd Act where both ‘Dambha’ and ‘Ahamkāra’ enter. It is interesting to note that they two, in spite by being ‘nīcapātra’, are heard to say words in Sanskrit. Regarding this commentator Rāmadāsa has opined-

“यद्यपि दम्भाहङ्कारयोः सर्वदूषकत्वान्नीचपात्रतया प्राकृतभाषाप्रयोगः
प्राप्तः, तथापि ‘कार्यतश्चोत्तमादीनां कार्यो भाषाविपर्ययः’ इति वचनात्

³ Prabodhacandrodayaṭīkā. (F-2A /L- 7)

⁴ Prakāśaṭīkā. (F-2 / L-4)

⁵ Prabodhacandrodayaṭīkā. (F-8/L- 3)

संस्कृतभाषाश्रयणं तयोर्दूषकतास्वभाववत्तयैव नीचत्वं न तु जात्येति हृदि निधाय कृतं बोध्यम्” ।

But commentator Maheśvara clearly said-

“वटुसाहित्येन प्रयोज्यत्वान्नायं प्रवेशकः”।⁶

Again from the beginning of the 4th Act “मैत्री- सुदं मए मुदिताए सआसादो जधा.....” to “श्रद्धा- एवं भवतु” is an example of ‘*Prabeśaka*’. ‘*Prabeśaka*’ has been described in *Sāhityadarpaṇa* as follows-

“प्रवेशकोऽनुदात्तोक्त्या नीचपात्रप्रयोजितः।
अंकद्वयान्तर्विज्ञेयः शेषां विष्कम्भके यथा॥ (सा.द.६/५७)”

According to dramaturgical rule, a ‘*nīcapātra*’ (a low born person) is expected to speak in ‘*Prākṛta*’. So also ‘*Maitrī*’ is ‘*nīcapātra*’ and she speaks in ‘*Prākṛta*’. This is presented in between two acts except beginning. The definition proves its appropriateness when through ‘*prabeśaka*’ the untold incident of the union between ‘*Viveka*’ and ‘*Upaniṣada*’ in future day can be guessed from the conversation between ‘*Śradhhā*’ and ‘*Maitrī*’. According to commentator Maheśvara-

“प्रवेशक इति श्रद्धामैत्रीद्वयप्रयोज्यत्वात्”।⁷

From the onset of 5th act “श्रद्धा- (विचिन्त्य) प्रसिद्धः खल्वयं पन्थाः। यतः....” to “विष्णुभक्तिः - तद् भवतु। अस्य वैराग्योत्पत्तये वैयासिकीं सरस्वतीं प्रेषयामः”।” presents ‘*Viṣkamvaka*’.

However, here the ‘*Viṣkamvaka*’ is ‘*śudhha*’. Because, ‘*Śradhhā*’, ‘*Śānti*’ and ‘*Biṣṇubhakti*’ are ‘*madhyamapātra*’ who are present in the scene.

‘*Arthaprakṛti*’ is the purpose for arrangement of subject-matter of a play. ‘*Artha*’ means subject-matter and ‘*prakṛti*’ means constituents. So ‘*Arthaprakṛti*’ signifies the dramatic composition. Five types of ‘*Arthaprakṛti*’ can be found in Sanskrit dramaturgy: 1) *Bīja* 2) *Bindu* 3) *Patākā* 4) *Prakarī* 5) *kārya*.

Kṛṣṇamiśra in his *Prabodhacandradaya* excels in his craftsmanship to present those five types of ‘*Arthaprakṛti*’:

According to the dramaturgists ‘*Bīja*’ is a component of ‘*Arthaprakṛti*’ which in spite of being delineated in a small span of space, is expanded to various ways. It is indeed the first cause of result of a drama. So also in the *Prabodhacandrodāya* the ‘*Bīja*’ of the drama is seen in the first Act which is also the cause of fruit (*Fala*) of the last Act of the drama. Here it is clear that a prophecy –

“अत्रास्माकं कुले कालरात्रिकल्पा विद्यानाम राक्षसी समुत्पत्स्यत इति”

(P.C.–1st Act) is heard to inspire the audience. Hence ‘*Bīja*’ prepares the attitude of the audience to enjoy the aesthetic experience. So by means of ‘*Bīja*’ the audience of the *Prabodhacandrodāya* can understand what is going to be presented on the stage.

‘*Bindu*’, as has been told by the dramaturgists, achieves the main purpose of the drama. Because, ‘*Bindu*’ unites different stories with the main stream of the story. ‘*Bindu*’, in facts, in order to avoid continuous exaggeration, joins the story after a break and then leads the same to the end of the drama. In the *Prabodhacandrodāya* Act II ‘*Ahankāra*’ says that –

“वत्स, मया महामोहस्य विवेकसकाशादत्याहितं श्रुतम् तेन तद्दृत्तान्तं प्रत्येतुमागतोऽस्मि”

It is ‘*Bindu*’ because of the fact that it joins the main story when it is broken by the long continuation of the dialogues between ‘*Ahankāra*’ and ‘*Dambha*’. Then it slowly moves to the end of the story.

‘*Patākā*’ in a drama is the big episode. It is a significant part which goes to a long way and helps the hero to achieve his final goal. In the *Prabodhacandrodāya* the appearance of ‘*Viṣṇubhakti*’ is the ‘*Patākā*’. This is the ‘*Patākā*’ through which ‘*Viveka*’, the hero defeats worldliness and attains ‘*Prabodha*’ the final goal.

‘*Prakarī*’ is a dramatic strategy which is applied when the hero of the drama is unable to achieve his final goal. In the *Prabodhacandrodāya* the appearance of ‘*Sarasvatī*’ in the 5th Act indicates the application of ‘*Prakarī*’. She suddenly appears before ‘*Viveka*’ and helps him in attaining ‘*Prabodha*’ by defeating ‘*Lokāyata*’, ‘*Baudhha*’, ‘*Digambara*’ and ‘*Kāpālika*’.

‘*Kārya*’ is the fruit of a drama. It occurs at the end. As a fruit is originated from ‘*Bīja*’, the ‘*Kārya*’ is also originated from the ‘*Bīja*’ (first Act of the drama) which leads to the end. Hence ‘*Kārya*’ is considered to be the final goal that is the attainment of the hero of the drama. In the *Prabodhacandrodāya* ‘*Kārya*’ occurs where the union of ‘*Viveka*’ with ‘*Upaniṣada*’ happens.

Again the ‘*Kārya*’ is developed through five dramatic stages which are technically called ‘*Kāryāvasthā*’. The five-fold *kāryāvasthās* are as follows: 1) *Ārambha* 2) *Prajanta* 3) *Prāptyāśā* 4) *Niyatāpti* 5) *Falāgama*.

In *Prabodhacandrodāya* ‘*Ārambha*’ occurs with the appearance of ‘*Kāma*’ and ‘*Mati*’ in the first Act. Then ‘*Prajanta*’ occurs where ‘*Viveka*’’s mental condition has been placed. The struggle between two rival groups i.e. ‘*Mahāmoha*’ and ‘*Viveka*’ for the salvation of ‘*Puruṣa*’ is regarded as ‘*Prāptyāśā*’ of the drama. Again when the mental state is illustrated in absence of risk and obstacle there occurs ‘*Niyatāpti*’. At last the attainment of liberation by ‘*Mana*’ in the drama indicates ‘*Falāgama*’.

Now it is clear that five stages of action (*kāryāvasthā*) are important in a drama. But, again, these require a dramatic way to connect the main action of the drama with its subordinate parts. This dramatic technique is called ‘*Sandhi*’ or Juncture. Five types of ‘*Sandhi*’ are found in a full-fledged drama. They are chronologically

⁶ Prabodhacandrodāyaṭīkā. (F- 15A /L- 3)

⁷ Prabodhacandrodāyaṭīkā. (F- 32 /L- 2)

called 1) *Mukha-sandhi* 2) *Pratimukha-sandhi* 3) *Garbha-sandhi* 4) *Avamarśa-sandhi* 5) *Nirvahana-sandhi*.

'*Mukhasandhi*' lies in the combination of 'Bīja' and 'Ārambha'. The first Act of *Prabodhacandradaya* is an example of 'Mukha' as it combines 'Bīja' with 'Ārambha'. The second Act and third Act of *Prabodhacandrodāya* appear to be the example of 'Pratimukha' as it is the combination of 'Bindu' and 'Prajanta'. Then again the 'Garbha' occurs in the *Prabodhacandrodāya* where we find the last sloka of the third Act-

“मूलं देवी सिद्धये विष्णुभक्ति-
स्तां च श्रद्धानुव्रता सत्त्वकन्या।
कामान्मुक्तस्तत्र धर्मोऽप्यभूच्चैत्
सिद्धं मन्ये तद्विवेकस्य कृत्यम्॥” (P.C. 3/26)

Even 'Avamarśa' is found in the drama where the attainment of 'Prabodha' is seen as free from all shadows and doubts. In actual sense 'Avamarśa' is the combination of 'Prakarī' and 'Niyatāpti' which is found from the verse no: 4 of the fifth Act till the end of the drama. 'Nirvahana' is the combination of 'Kārya' and 'Falāgama'. In the *Prabodhacandrodāya* 'Nirvahana' finds place from the beginning of the forth Act till the end of the sixth Act.

To conclude, it is to be said that Kṛṣṇamiśra's *Prabodhacandrodāya* is full of dramaturgical techniques. Yet, the dramatic flavor of the drama is not at all affected. Hence it is to be admitted that technique cannot always destroy the essence of art. *Prabodhacandradāya* is such an art which declares the dexterity of creation of its playwright.

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