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## The Interpretation Of Rasasūtra – A Study On The Utpattivāda Of Bhaṭṭalollaṭa

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the rasa theory as presented in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and its interpretations by Lollaṭa, one of the earliest commentators on the *Rasasūtra*, active around the eighth century CE. Though his original works are lost, Lollaṭa's views are preserved through references in texts such as *Abhinavabhāratī*, *Dhvanyālokalocana*, and *Kāvyaprakāśa*. The study contrasts Bharata's analogy of rasa with food composed of spices and condiments, with Lollaṭa's analytical approach influenced by Mīmāṃsā philosophy. Lollaṭa's theory of *dīrghavyāpāravāda* rejects the independent role of *lakṣaṇā* and *vyañjanā*, affirming *abhidhā* as the primary mode of realization. Rasa is viewed as an intensified *sthāyibhāva* brought forth through the interaction of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *vyabhicāribhāva*. These elements are related through the concepts of *janya janaka*, *poṣya poṣaka*, and *gamya gamaka*, which together form the basis of *upacayopacāyaka* synthesis. The paper further explores Lollaṭa's ideas of *āropa* and *anusandhāna*, explaining how the actor becomes identified with the character and how rasa is thereby experienced and enjoyed. Lollaṭa's theories, summarised as *utpattivāda*, *āropavāda*, and *upacitivāda*, mark a significant stage in the historical development of rasa thought.

**Index Terms** - Lollaṭa, Rasasūtra, Nāṭyaśāstra, Abhinavabhāratī, rasa theory, dīrghavyāpāravāda, utpattivāda, āropavāda, upacitivāda, vibhāva, anubhāva, vyabhicāribhāva, sthāyibhāva, Mīmāṃsā, anusandhāna, āropa, Bharata

### I. INTRODUCTION

Lollaṭa, a remarkable figure among the interpreters of the *Rasasūtra*, is said to have flourished around the 8th century C.E. Abhinavagupta refers to him frequently, notably in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, where Lollaṭa's theories receive detailed discussion. Though Lollaṭa's original writings on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are lost, his views are preserved in works like '*Abhinavabhāratī*', '*Dhvanyālokalocana*', and '*Kāvyaprakāśa*'. These references establish him as an authority in the field.

He disagreed with Udbhaṭa on *vṛtti*, asserting that sentiments are innumerable despite only eight or nine being commonly recognized. Abhinava's references across multiple contexts suggest that Lollaṭa likely authored a complete commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, similar to Udbhaṭa, and both are generally believed to be contemporaries.

Lollaṭa also introduced the theory of '*dīrghavyāpāravāda*', rejecting the independent roles of *lakṣaṇa*, *vyañjana*, etc., stating they are realized through *abhidhā*. His approach reflects the influence of Mīmāṃsaka thought in literary theory.

### Commentary of Bharata on the Rasasūtra

Bharata interprets the *Rasasūtra* using mundane examples drawn from ancestral tradition, passed down through the teacher-student lineage. He clarifies this in the *ānuvamśya* śloka that follows the *Rasasūtra* commentary. Bharata does not attempt a full analysis of *rasa*, which later led to various streams of *rasa* criticism.

According to Bharata, *rasa* arises from the combination of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *vyabhicāribhāva*, akin to how taste in food results from blending spices, herbs, and liquids like ghee and water. These components—sweetness, acidity, salinity, pungency, astringency, and bitterness—along with ingredients like wheat, lentils, turmeric, tamarind, and jaggery, form *ṣāḍāvādirasa*. Similarly, *sthāyibhāvas* give rise to *rasas* such as *ṣṛṅgāra*.

The discussion is presented as a dialogue:

Opponent: What is the purport or the stimulus of the *rasa* such as *ṣṛṅgāra*?

Answer: The *rasa* such as *ṣṛṅgāra* is called so because they are enjoyable and are capable of generating various sentiments in the mind.

Opponent: How is this *rasa* enjoyed?

Answer: A happy man, who eats cooked rice which is prepared with various spices along with dishes, enjoys the taste of the rice and becomes cheerful. Like this, a spectator who enjoys the *sthāyibhāvas*, which are replenished with various *bhāvas* of the acting and connected with the verbal-gestural- *sāttvika* elements, becomes cheerful. One can become happy through the enjoyment of this *nāṭya* that is why it is called the *nāṭyarasa*.<sup>1</sup> To corroborate this, Bharata quotes two predominant *ānuvamśya* verses.

1. The food that is prepared along with various delicious spices and other seasoning condiments is very tasteful with proper dishes. The man who realizes the proper taste of this food will relish each and every element in this combination and will become joyful.
2. Thus, a learned and good-hearted spectator will apprehend and enjoy all the *sthāyibhāvas* which are accompanied by the acting in the form of *anubhāva*, and *bhāvas* such as *vibhāva*, *vyabhicāri*, etc. This is why it is reckoned as the *nāṭyarasa*.  
 “yathā bahudravayayutairvyañjnairbahubhiryyutam  
 Āsvādayanti bhuñjāna bhaktaṁ bhaktavido janāḥ  
 Bhāvābhinaya sambaddhān sthāyibhāvānstathā budhāḥ  
 Āsvādayanti manasā tasmānnāṭyarasāḥ smṛtāḥ”<sup>2</sup>

The analogy of Bharata can be contrasted like shown below.

In Temporal Arena		In Nāṭya
i.	The condiments like water, etc.	Vibhāva
ii.	The herbs like tamarind, turmeric, etc.	Anubhāva
iii.	Flavouring elements like jaggery	Vyabhicāribhāva
iv.	Rice	Sthāyibhāva
v. Combination		Upagati, Samyagyoga
Samyoga		
Niṣpatti		

- vi. The flavours like *śāḍava*, etc., are generated
- vii. The sensible people enjoy the flavours and tastes in the food  
The rasas like *śṛṅgāra*, etc., are generated  
The good-hearted spectators enjoy the subjects such as *Nāṭyarasas* in the play

### An Analysis of Bharata's Theory

The word *saṃyoga* signifies synthesis, combination, and approach. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, its derivation implies 'to make' and 'to generate', from the root *pad* with prefix *nis* and suffix *ktin*: [*nis* + *pad* (*gatau*) + *ktin* – *niśeṣarūpeṇa sthitiḥprāptikaraṇam*, *sthiṭi prāpti bhāvaḥ*, *stīva prāptiḥ siddhiḥ*]. Bharata uses the expressions '*rasaṇiṣṭhāriti*', '*rasānirvarttyante*', and '*rasaṃ āpnuvanti*' to indicate the processes by which *rasa* is realized. The first two relate to *laukikarasa*, while the third applies to *nāṭyarasa*, showing that *nāṭyarasa* is not derived or consummated, but 'obtained'.

As spices and condiments create the *rasa* of *śāḍavādibhojya* with rice, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *vyabhicāri* obtain the *rasa* with the *sthāyibhāva*. The *nāṭyarasa* is distinct from *sthāyi*, just as *śāḍāvādirasa* is from rice. The *sthāyi* acts as the *rasa*'s locus, transformed through synthesis with other elements. No new element is created; rather, *rasa* emerges as a transformation through impressions, actions, *vyāñjana*, etc.

Bharata's school demonstrates *nāṭyarasa* obtainment similar to how *śāḍāvādirasa* is produced. The audience's enjoyment of *rasa* mirrors that of *annarasa*. Bharata does not treat this experience as *supramundane* but ties it to content and theme. Abhinavagupta, however, internalized this, replacing '*āsvādyata*' with '*āsvāda*'.

Divergences in the *rasa* theory arise from differences in the tenor and vehicle of the similes. While *śāḍava* in the vehicle refers to a form of *rasa*, in the tenor, it marks the consummation of *rasa* from *sthāyibhāva* with other *bhāvas*. Such interpretive difficulty in Bharata's concept led to variations in theories of synthesis and derivation.

### Lollaṭa's Theory in Abhinavabhāratī

Abhinavabhāratī gives a succinct account of Lollaṭa's theory on the *Rasasūtra*. According to this, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyabhicāris* combine with the *sthāyi* to generate *rasa*. The *vibhāva* initiates the mental modification forming the *sthāyi*, and the *anubhāvas* are not effects of *rasa* ('*anupaścāt bhavantiyanubhāvāḥ*'), but causes generated by *sthāyibhāvas*. Though *vibhāva* and *anubhāva* are not mental states, they possess creativity akin to *sthāyis*.

In *kāvya*, the *vibhāva* and *anubhāva* are conceptualised by the poet, not the real *Duṣyanta* and *Śakuntala*, nor their actual expressions, but rather those imagined in poetic form. Some elements, as Bharata explains, are creative like *sthāyis*, others are transient like *vyabhicāris*. Thus, *rasa* is essentially the *sthāyi* accompanied by *vibhāva* and *anubhāva*, etc.

The unmanifested *sthāyi* is termed *bhāva*, distinguishing it from *rasa*. This *rasa* primarily acts on the *anukārya* (like *Rāma*) and secondarily on the actor portraying the role<sup>3</sup>. Lollaṭa supports his view with Daṇḍī's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, asserting that '*rasa is the preponderant sthāyi*'. For example, '*Ratiḥ śṛṅgāratām gatā rūpabāhulyayogena*'<sup>4</sup> shows how *rati* transforms into *śṛṅgāra* *rasa*, while '*Adhiruhya parām koṭim koporaudratmatām gataḥ*'<sup>5</sup> illustrates *krodha* culminating in *raudra* *rasa*.

### An Analysis of the School of Lollaṭa

Lollaṭa, originally a *Mīmāṃsaka*, interpreted the *Rasasūtra* using the *apūrva* theory of *Mīmāṃsā*.<sup>6</sup> Just as *punya*—the *apūrva* generated by sacrifices—is rewarded to the sacrificer, *rasa* arises from the proper execution of *vibhāva*, etc., in *nāṭya* as designed in the *Nāṭyaveda*. The intelligent spectator is the enjoyer of this *rasa*, which is produced from the effective enactment of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *vyabhicāribhāvas*. In this view, *rasa* is the enhanced *sthāyi*, generated through the influence of these elements.

*Vibhāvas* cause the origin of *sthāyi*, *vyabhicāribhāvas* enhance it, and *anubhāvas* manifest it. These relationships are structured as *janya-janaka* (produced-producer), *poṣya-poṣaka* (enhanced-enhancer), and *gamya-gamaka* (manifested-manifester)<sup>7</sup>, collectively forming the *upacayopacāyaka* relation. Thus, *rasa* is said to emerge from this synthesis.

The main character like *Rāma* serves as the locus of *rasa* formation; assisting characters provide its manifestation, and the sensible spectator is its enjoyer. The process of *anusandhāna*—interpreted as attribution, pride, and unity—explains the merging of actor and character through *tādātmya*. The performer moves from knowing he is an actor to identifying fully with the role, a shift from impure to pure *anusandhāna*. Spectators similarly attribute *Rāmatva* to the actor, experiencing *rasa* while still aware he is performing. The actor becomes *Rāma* in the spectator's perception due to skillful staging, leading to the unity of pure *anusandhāna*<sup>8</sup>. Hence, *āropa* or attribution best describes this process. As stated: '*Tadrūpatānusandhānāt*

nartake api pratīyamānoraśaḥ’—when Rāma’s form is attributed to the actor, *rasa* is manifested in him. Yet this experience is internal, not mere external embellishment.

*Rasa* primarily resides in the actor, revealed through acting, gestures, and attribution. The spectator enjoys the culmination of *rasa* by identifying the actor with Rāma. Due to the emphasis on attribution, Lollaṭa’s theory is called ‘āropavāda’, while ‘upacitivāda’ denotes its view of *rasa* as an enhanced *sthāyi*, and ‘utpattivāda’ reflects the causal role of *vibhāvas*. This is summarized in: ‘vibhāvānubhāva vyabhicāri saṃyogāt saṃbandhāt rasasya niṣpattiḥ - rasasya utpattirīti’.

## II. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- Nāṭyaśāstram, p. 677-80.
- Nāṭyaśāstram, VI, 32-33.
- Abhinavabhāratī, Nāṭyaśāstra, p. 621-623.
- Rūpaṃ bhāvaḥ, bahulasya bhāvaḥ bāhulyaṃ - through the preponderance and synthesis of of bhava the sthāyibhāva rati becomes śṛṅgāra. Here Daṇḍi implies the synthesis of vibhāva, etc. Kāvyaḍarśam , II, 281.
- Kāvyaḍarśam , II, 283.
- Rasasiddhant ke Analocit Paksh, p. 22-23.
- Rasasiddhāntaḥ, p, 131-132, Kāvyaṭattvasamīkṣa, p, 173-174.
- Dr. Nagendra has made an elaborate study on the anusandhāna.

## REFERENCES

1. Kāvyaḍarśam, Dandi, Acharya Ramachandra Misra (ed), The Chaukamba Vidya Bhavan, Varanasi, 1972.
2. Nāṭyaśāstram, Bharatan, Madhusudanasastri (ed), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Vol, I, 1971, Vol II, 1975, Vol III, 1981.
3. Abhinavabhārai Vivṛti, Abhinavagupta, Madhusudanasastri (ed), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Vol, I, 1971, Vol II, 1975, Vol III, 1981.

