

Language in Theatre, Language of Theatre
Dramatic Text versus Performance Text
In the context of
Bhasa Nataka Chakra
An Analytical and Comparative Study

Ref. No. IAS/ARS/MTEF/2014 dated 16th October 2015

Basic Details

1. This monograph is the Fellow's report on the work he has done in IAS during the first year of his fellowship in 1914-15. The Fellow has attempted an analytical and comparative study of *Dramatic Text Versus Performance Text in the Context of Bhasanatakacakra*.

Bhasa is, perhaps, the earliest dramatist in India. Thirteen plays are ascribed to him. Study during first year focuses on the seven Mahabharata plays. The other plays ascribed to Bhasa, the Fellow intends to take up in the second year of his fellowship.

This monograph, in three parts, thus relates to the Mahabharata plays of Bhasa. The first part analyses the texts of the plays – their content, deviations from the root-text etc. The second part deals with their presentation on stage both in the classical theatre of Kutiyattam and on contemporary stage. The last part contains a brief analysis of the staging of Bhasa plays in its various phases.

The monograph, thus, presents a comprehensive study of the topic the Fellow has chosen for detailed study.

2. The Mahabharata plays are – Dutavakyam, Dutaghatotkacham, Madhyamvyayoga, Karnabharam, Urubhangam, Pancharatram and Balacharitam. Analysis of the text beginning from the benedictory verse to the concluding verse with all the subtle details of the plot and its development is given. Then the author tries to point out the deviation from the original Mahabharata story and the dramatic significance of such changes. This part the Fellow has done absolutely well.
3. The second part deals with the pattern of performance. First, he takes the Natyasastra tradition, i.e. tradition of Kutiyattam. All the plays were put on Kutiyattam stage and some of them have elaborate stage manuals also. The treatment in this part is somewhat weak. One expects the author to explain how the text is transformed to stage and the techniques the actors adopt by way of elaboration, expansion, addition of new elements etc. This can be done when the final thesis is prepared.

There are many productions of Bhasa plays on contemporary stage in different languages. The author has selected some of the most important among them. Director's notes on these productions, given here, help one to understand the nature of each new presentation. A comparative note by the Fellow himself regarding the interpretative methods of different directors would have been more rewarding. This can also be included in the final presentation.

Evaluation of the work

- i. The Fellow has done good work during the first year of his tenure. Apart from this monograph he has presented papers related to this topic on several seminars details of which are appended to this report. He has also presented papers on this topic in established journals. All these go to prove that he has spent his time of fellowship concentrating on his subject of study.
- ii. He has appended the proposed scheme of his work in the latter half of his fellowship period. His plan is to complete this research by extending the study to the remaining six plays of Bhasa. Ideally it is a good proposal. The plays in the first part, except one, are small one act plays; but those remaining are full-fledged dramas with six/seven Acts. It will be an ambitious target, yet it makes the theme complete.

Along with a general survey of all the plays, the candidate is advised to focus at least on one text and its transformation to performance bringing out in detail the changes brought out on stage and the interpretations to contemporarise the text. The treatment now is descriptive, it should be made interpretative too. This will emphasize the role of directors on contemporary stage.

Recommendation

On the basis of the facts given above, I am fully satisfied that the Fellow has made good progress in the first year of his fellowship. I gladly recommend the continuation of his Fellowship to the second year for completing his well-conceived project.

Prof. K.G. Paulose