

Sources of the Concept of Dhvani in Sanskrit poetics with special reference to Sphota

(Synopsis)

Anandavardhana (9 c. CE) expounded the doctrine of Dhvani in his *Dhvnyaloka* and Abhinavagupta (11 c. CE) elaborated the same in his commentary *Lochana*. Eversince Dhvani has become the central point in the aesthetics of Sanskrit literary criticism. The principle of dhvani has a history of evolution from the vedic age.

1. Bharata (2 c. BCE) has formulated all the aesthetic thoughts of his predecessors in his encyclopedic work *Natyasastra*. He was primarily concerned with theatre and focused his attention on Rasa. The earlier poetics like Bhamaha (6 c. CE), Dandin (7 c. CE) and Vamana (8 c. CE) sought the beauty of poetry in *alankara*, *guna* and *riti* respectively. They were aware of the implied sense, but failed to formulate it in clear terms. It was left to Anandavardhana to establish the theory after examining the various streams of thought of his predecessors. In the introductory verse itself he has gone deep into five views expressed by his contemporaries - three *abhavavadins*, *bhaktavadins* and *anirvachaniyavadins*.
2. Different systems of philosophy in ancient India had analysed the complicated process of understanding the meaning from an uttered word. The Mimamsakas, Naiyayikas and the Buddhists had their own concepts related to the word, sense and their mutual relations. They were founded on the philosophic perceptions of each system and were contradictory to one another. They too had accepted something beyond the referential meaning to express the real intend of the speaker.
3. Anandavardhana had acquainted himself well with all these concepts. But he considered the linguists first to prove the authority of the new doctrine. The Vaiyakaranas recognise what is known as *Sphota*, the eternal and imperceptible element of sounds and words as a real vehicle of the idea which flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered. In their opinion, *Varnas* uttered cannot be responsible for the sense being conveyed. Since *varnas* severally or conjointly cannot be responsible for

the Arthapratiti, they accept what is called Sphota from which the sense shines forth. The word Sphota is derived *Sphutatyasmadartha Iti Sphotah*. This Sphota is made manifest by the varnas that finally strike our ears in the process of hearing. When a sound is uttered, it is believed that there are several sounds produced one after another in the course of its transmission to the hearers' ears. The last sound which is received is supposed to be the *vyanjaka* of the Sphota. This Sabda which is suggestive of Sphota is called Dhvani by the Vaiyakaranas. The same name Dhvani was borrowed by Dhvanyacaryas to denote a Kavya having the power to suggest a pre-eminent sense. Dhvani is the vyanjaka of the all-important Sphota. Similarly Dhvanikavya is the Vyanjaka of the all-important sense.

Abhinavagupta quoting the authority of Vakyapadiya points out that the term Dhvani is employed by the Vaiyakaranas to denote Sphota which is suggested, *Sabdajasabda* which is suggestive of Sphota and the Vyapara in the form of druta, vilambita etc. resorted to over and above usual effort called forth in pronouncing sounds or words. Corresponding to the import with which the word is employed by the Vaiyakaranas, the Dhvanyacaryas also make use of the word to signify *Vyangya*, *Vyanjaka* and *Vyanjanavyapara*. Of these, Vyanjaka may be either a word or sense. Thus these four individually have been styled Dhvani. Dhvanitvavyavahara with regard to a Kavya is also made in view of the fact that the Kavya is a *Samudayarupa* of the four Dhvanis mentioned.

4. The search for beauty of earlier poeticians, divergent views expressed by the various philosophic thoughts and the concept of *sphota* of the linguists paved the way for the emergence of Dhvani in poetry. Anandavardhana draws the aesthetic part of dhvani from the Bharata's concept of *rasa*. Of the three types of dhvani enumerated by him he gives prominence to *rasadhvani* over *vastudhvani* and *alankaradhvani*. The latter two are added only to enhance the charm of the *rasa* portrayed by the vibhavas, anubhavas etc.
5. The roots of dhvani have to be searched in the poetic, philosophic, linguistic and aesthetic thoughts of ancient India. The success of Anandavardhana rests on the fact that he could accommodate all these streams in his new concept of a *soul* to poetry.

When there is an *angi* as *atma* there need be many many *angas* to promote it. Poetry therefore is a harmonious blend of the *anga* and the *angis*, ie. *rasa* and the various types of embellishments. Anandavardhana is great in the history of poetics because he could provide space for all elements in his new aesthetics and invent a new scale for appreciation from the folk ballads to the grand *itihisas*.

The object of this study is to find out the methods he used to achieve this harmony to inspire the generations. Such a study embracing all the elements in poetics has not been attempted, though parts of it have been taken up by earlier researches in this field.

6. The study is proposed to be completed in five sections.
 - i. The evolution of poetic thoughts in Sanskrit beginning from the vedic period.
 - ii. Linguistic deliberations of different systems of Philosophy – Nyaya, Mimamsa and the Buddhism.
 - iii. Linguistic traditions – Nirukta, Munitraya and Bhartruhari
 - iv. Sphota and Dhvani
 - v. Dhvani as the central point harmonising the philosophic, linguistic and aesthetic traditions of ancient India.

The study concludes with a summary of the critical analysis and the findings of the research project.