

## **An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory**

**Dr. Sreenath VS**

**Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Indian Institute of Science Education and Research - Bhopal**

**Lecture- 21**

**Rasa Theory and Bhatta Lollata**

Hello everyone, in this lecture we are going to take a look at Bhaṭṭ Lollaṭa.

Lollaṭa is a Kashmiri scholar and a mimāṃsaka philosopher. The general conception about the time of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa is that he lived later than Udbhaṭa, since Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhāratī* clearly states that Lollaṭa opposed the views of Udbhaṭa on rasa theory. So, we can undoubtedly place him later than 800. Since Lollaṭa is the direct object of critique by Shri Shankuka, whom we can reasonably place around 850, putting Bhatta Lollata early in the first half of the ninth century would make sense of all our data.

One of the major impediments to a scholar who is interested in understanding the intellectual history of rasa is the sheer absence of many texts that are irrecoverably lost. One such text that is lost forever is Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa's commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Today, we know about the theory of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa primarily through three sources namely Abhinavagupta's commentary on Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* and Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* and, Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaaprakāśa*. Before Udbhaṭa, Bhāmaha had also written a commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. But that too is unfortunately lost. Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa marks an important position in the intellectual history of rasa as one of the oldest commentators on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Pollock in his *Rasa Reader* highlights the importance of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa in the intellectual history of rasa through the following words. Pollock says, "With Bhatta Lollata we can perceive the true commencement of the extraordinarily intense investigation into literary emotion that would make the next three centuries in India the most fertile in the history of

aesthetics anywhere before European modernity. This commencement was no doubt the result of a rediscovery of, or at least reengagement with, Bharata's *Treatise on Drama* in Kashmir in the early ninth century, a work that raised, in a productive way, as many questions about rasa as it answered".

Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa in general conforms to the view of Bharata about *rasa* propounded in Nāṭyaśāstra. According to Lollaṭa *rasa* is produced by the conjunction of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāvas* in conjunction with the *sthāyibhavas*. For him, the cause of *rasa* is *vibhāvas*. They stimulate the stable emotions or *sthāyibhāvas* dormant in the character. Once the *sthāyibhāva* in the character is aroused by the *vibhāvas*, the *vyabhicāribhāvas* or transitory mental states further accentuate and nourish *sthāyibhāvas*. The impact of experiencing these transitory emotions will certainly be manifest through certain physical reactions on the part of the characters called *anubhavas*. The *anubhāvas* function as the means of knowledge about the *sthāyibhavas* in the character. Lollaṭa opines that *anubhāvas* are the characters' response to the stable emotions which are caused by *vibhāvas* and nourished by the *vyabhicāribhāvas*. Lollaṭa holds that if not properly strengthened by aesthetic elements, stable emotions cannot be transformed into aesthetic emotions. Lollaṭa also reminds us that a *vyabhicāribhāva* or transitory emotion, although it is a mental state, cannot develop into *rasas*. Only stable emotions are capable of being strengthened and qualified to become a *rasa*. It is just as in Bharata's analogy of the mixed drink: among the various condiments, spices, and substances 'a certain one' acts as the dominant "perfuming" element, and hence is like the stable emotion, whereas other ingredients appear intermittently, and hence are like transitory emotions.

For Lollaṭa, the locus or the site of rasa is the character, although we can figuratively say that it also lies in the actor by the power of his or her identification with the characters they enact. The spectator figures nowhere in Lollaṭa's theory of rasa.

According to Lollaṭa, the sthāyibhāva, and vibhāva are connected by a object and means of production relationship or utpādyā-utpādaka- bhāva-bandha. In other words, the vibhāvas function as the means of production for the object called sthāyibhāva. The relation between sthāyibhāva and anubhāva are connected by a relation of object and means of knowledge or *gamya-gamaka-bhāva-bandha*. That is to say, the anubhāvas function as the means of knowledge to understand that the object called sthāyibhāvas exists in the character. Finally, the relation between the sthāyibhāva and vyabhicāribhāva is a relation of object and means of enhancement or poṣya-poṣaka-bhāva-bandha. That is to say, the vyabhicāribhāvas enhance and strengthen the object called sthāyibhāvas to become rasas. Lollaṭa believed that rasa inheres originally in the character as a readily available product. So, his theory is known as utpatti vāda, and is more or less consonant with that of Bharata's. Its focus was on the intensified state of the sthāyibhāva in the character or the actor, but it could not explain how this was transferred to the spectator who experienced rasa. For example, what made the spectator feel the agony of Othello who is forced to kill Desdemona? Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa's theory failed to explain this. Lollaṭa also makes some observations about the number of rasas. According to Lollaṭa although rasas were potentially infinite in number, only those listed by Bharata in Nāṭyaśāstra are capable of portrayal on the stage.

Before we wind up this class, let us discuss all the major points that we discussed in this class once again. We saw that Udbhaṭa considers rasa as the sthayibhāva intensified. He believes that the relation between the sthayibhāva and vibhava is object and means of production. In

other words, Udbhata believes that vibhava is the means by which sthayibhāva is produced. Then he proceeded to say that the relation between sthayibhāva and anubhāva is object and means of knowledge. That is to say, it is the presence of anubhava that informs us about the existence of a particular sthayibhāva in a character. Finally the relation between sthayibhāva and vyabhicārībhava is that of object and means of enhancement. To put it differently, sthāyibhāva is nourished and intensified by vyabhicārībhāva. These are the major points that we need to keep in our mind with respect to Bhatta Lollata's theory. I hope you have understood all these major points. In the next video, we will see the criticism of Bhatta Lollaṭa's views by Śaṅkuka.