

**AN INVESTIGATION
OF SOME OF
KALIDASA'S VIEWS**

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An Investigation of Some of Kalidasa's Views by Charles Harris

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CHARLES HARRIS

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KALIDASA'S VIEWS**

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OF SOME OF

KĀLIDĀSA'S VIEWS.

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF LEIPZIG, TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF
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BY

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INTRODUCTION.

The relations of any great writer to the world of opinions about him, are always an interesting study. The influence of such a man upon his contemporaries is often so great, that a knowledge of his character and ideas becomes a necessary element in any real comprehension of his times. Nevertheless, this dissertation can make no claims to show how Kalidasa influenced the world in which he lived. The details of his life being totally unknown, his very date being under discussion, and historical knowledge of the opinions which preceded and which followed him being more or less undetermined and subject of controversy, it is to a great degree impossible to do any more than to imagine the extent of the influence which he must have had. There remains, however, a much humbler task which gives rise to this investigation. This is to gather from the works of Kalidasa his utterances upon some particular subjects, and to show, however imperfectly it may be, what he thought and said concerning them. Although the work undertaken here is thus very restricted in scope, it is hoped that it will nevertheless not be altogether useless. Kalidasa occupies so prominent a place in Sanskrit literature, that any investigation which deals with him and his thoughts and literary creations wins on that very account an importance to which it in itself might not be able to lay claim. This dissertation has therefore been written in the hope that it may prove to be some slight contribution to a fuller understanding of Kalidasa. Of course, such an investigation can in one sense offer nothing new. It has necessarily to deal with beliefs and practices already well known. Its sole claim to newness and to consideration must therefore be in its attempt to show how these familiar things appear in the writings of the great dramatist. It is likewise to be remarked that in these pages there will be no attempt to compare the views of Kalidasa with those of others who also gave themselves to literature as such. There will, however, be found here and there some statements of the agreement or disagreement of Kalidasa's views with the instructions of the codes of Manu, Vishnu, Apastamba, and Gautama.

References to these codes will be according to Jibananda Vidyasagra's *Manusanhita*, Bühler's *Apastambiya Dharma-sūtram*, Jolly's *Institutes of Vishnu*, and Stenzler's *Institutes of Gautama*. The aim of this dissertation is, then, to gather together Kalidasa's thoughts upon some of the more prominent topics which are mentioned in his works, and to group them into some kind of system. It is hoped that what Kalidasa really thought upon these topics will in this manner be made more readily apparent. Inasmuch as his dramas deal more particularly with actual life, and therefore give more occasion for the expression of ideas touching most of the topics introduced here, they furnish the greater part of the materials used in this investigation. The passages which are quoted below are therefore mostly taken from the dramatic works. Two of the poems, the *Kumārasambhava* and the *Raghuvaṅṇa*, have, however, been quite freely used with reference to one or two of the topics. The passages actually quoted below, as well as all citation of pages, are to be referred to the following editions: *Çakuntala*, Böhtlingk; *Malaviakgnimitra*, Bollensen; *Vikramorvaçī*, Shankar P. Pandit; *Raghuvaṅṇa* and *Kumārasambhava*, Stenzler. The edition of the *Çakuntala* by Fischel, that of the *Malavikā* by Shankar P. Pandit, and that of the *Urvaçī* by Bollensen have also been carefully consulted. Although there are frequent differences of reading between the two sets of editions, it is thought that they in no way change any conclusion advanced below, and all references, except in a few cases, are therefore made solely to the first named editions. The authenticity of those works of Kalidasa which are here used is assumed to be proved. The grounds for this assumption of the genuineness of these writings are to be found in Weber's introduction to his translation of the *Malavikā*; Shankar P. Pandit's introduction to his edition of the *Malavikā*; the same author's "Who wrote the *Raghuvamsa* and *When*," as found in the "Transactions of the second session of the International Congress of Orientalists;" Jacobi's "Die Epen Kalidasa's," as found in the "Abhandlungen des fünften Internationalen Orientalisten-Congresses;" Cappeler's "Observationes ad Kalidasae *Malavikagnimitram*." The conclusions of these writings are considered sufficient to permit the unquestioned acceptance of the genuineness of those works of Kalidasa which are introduced here. It is hoped that the arrangement of the topics which are treated below will explain itself.

I. THE SUPREME BEING.

It will therefore first be attempted to discover in some measure Kalidāsa's views concerning the Supreme Being, and to ascertain how far it is possible to place him among the members of some particular sect. The absence of a record of his life and of direct assertions of his belief make it necessary to base any conclusions solely upon that which may seem to be legitimately inferred from passages in his works. The problem is to ascertain, as far as possible, the relations in which Çiva, Vishnu, and Brahma stood to one another, and from these relations to determine, however indefinitely it may be, Kalidāsa's sect. The following quotation from Shankar P. Pandit's edition of the *Urvaçi*¹ gives some idea of the nature of the problem and affords a convenient starting point for this investigation; but the conclusions which are to be expressed here will differ somewhat from those which are implied, at least, in the statements made by that editor. The passage is as follows: "This (that is, the opening prayer in the *Urvaçi*) is a benediction that Siva may bless the audience. All the known works of Kalidāsa open with a verse that invokes the blessing of that God or contains a salutation to him, with the single exception of the *Setukāvya* which invokes Vishnu in its introduction. That poem, however, was begun by King Pravarasena who might have had his own reasons for preferring the aid of Vishnu to that of Siva. From the fact, however, that Kalidāsa invariably invokes Siva at the com-

¹ Notes p. 1.

mencement of his works, it would be wrong to infer that he was a strict Saiva. His veneration for Vishnu appears to have been even greater than that for Siva. For his works abound with passages extolling the attributes of the former God, whom he seems to consider the head of the Hindu pantheon. In language used by Vaishnava works he describes Vishnu as the Deity of whom all the other Gods, including Siva, are but so many different manifestations. See Raghuvamsa X. 16, 17 fgg. The second canto of the Kumārasmbhava, on the other hand, assigns to Brahmadeva the same high attributes as are assigned to Vishnu in the tenth canto of the Raghuvamsa, which would show that Kālidāsa was no more a Saiva than he was Vaishnava or a worshipper of Brahmadeva. In one place he says 'all the Three are one.' See Kumārasmbhava VII. 44." In the sense that he denied the existence of Vishnu and Brahma or that he was at all hostile to them, Kālidāsa was certainly not a strict Ćaiva; but to the statement that he seemed to regard Vishnu as the head of the Hindoo pantheon, or that he was nomore a Ćaiva than a Vishnava or a worshipper of Brahmadeva, exception must be taken. In attempting to show why exception is to be taken to these statements it is perhaps best to quote the most important of the passages which have reference to any one of the three Gods, commencing with those which refer to Ćiva.

The opening prayer of the Mālavikā is as follows: "May he who is alone ruler, who possesses much fruit which bends over¹ (on account of its weight), and who has nevertheless only a hide as clothing; may he who is united in body with his wife, and who is nevertheless far superior to those penitents who disregard objects of sense; may he who supports the world by means of his eight forms, and is nevertheless without pride; may he the Lord remove your mental darkness that you may see the good way."

1. Not to be taken literally but probably having reference to the fullness of all things which he possesses.