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Sakuntalā.

Monier Williams.
ŚAKUNTALĀ

A SANSKRĪT DRAMA, IN SEVEN ACTS,

BY

KĀLIDĀSA.

THE DEVA-NĀGARĪ RECEPTION OF THE TEXT,
EDITED WITH LITERAL ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF ALL THE METRICAL PASSAGES, SCHEMES OF THE METRES, AND

NOTES, CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,

BY

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SECOND EDITION.

Oxford:
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS.
M.DCCC.LXXVI.

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PREFACE.

The following pages are the result of an endeavour to furnish English students of Sanskrit with a correct edition of the most celebrated drama of India's greatest dramatist. About a century has elapsed since Sir W. Jones discovered that there existed in India a number of Nāṭakas or Sanskrit dramas, many of them of great antiquity; some abounding in poetry of undoubted merit, and all of them containing valuable pictures of Hindu life and manners. Eager to apply the means thus gained of filling what was before an empty niche in the Temple of Sanskrit Literature, Sir W. Jones addressed himself at once to translate into English the Śakuntalā, which he was told was the most admired of all the extant plays.

This work is by the illustrious Kālidāsa, who is supposed by some native authorities (though on insufficient grounds) to have lived in Ujjayini, the capital of king Vikramāditya, whose reign is the starting-point of the Hindu era called Śamvat, beginning 57 years B.C. Kālidāsa is described as one of the 'nine gems' of that monarch's splendid court. It seems, however, more probable that Kālidāsa flourished in the third century of the Christian era (see p. 474 of Indian Wisdom, published by W. H. Allen & Co., 13, Waterloo Place, London). The Śakuntalā is acknowledged on all hands to be the masterpiece of the great Indian poet. Indeed, no composition of Kālidāsa displays more the richness and fertility of his poetical genius, the exuberance of his imagination, the warmth and play of his fancy, his profound knowledge of the human heart, his delicate appreciation of its most refined and tender emotions, his familiarity with the workings and counter-workings of its conflicting feelings,—in short, more entitles him to rank as 'the Shakespeare of India.' On the Continent such men as Goethe,
Schlegel, and Humboldt have all expressed their admiration of the Hindu poet's greatest work. Goethe's four well-known lines, written in 1792, are—

'Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres, Willst du was reizt und entzückt, willst du was sättigt und nährt, Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit einem Namen begreifen: Nenn' ich Śakuntalā dich, und so ist Alles gesagt.'

Unfortunately the Pāṇḍits omitted to inform Sir W. Jones that the multiplication of manuscripts of this play, consequent upon its popularity, had led to a perplexing result,—not, however, unexampled, as has since been proved by what has happened to the Rāmāyaṇa,—namely, that the numerous manuscripts separated themselves into two classes: the one, embracing all those in Devānāgari writing; which, without being uniform, had still a community of character; the other, all those in Bengāli.

These two classes of MSS. are usually distinguished by the names 'Deva-nāgari recension' and 'Bengāli recension,' which terms may conveniently be adopted. The Deva-nāgari recension

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1 Thus translated by Mr. E. B. Eastwick:—

'Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth, and heaven itself in one sole name combine?
I name thee, O Śakuntalā! and all at once is said.'

Augustus William von Schlegel, in his first Lecture on Dramatic Literature, says: 'Among the Indians, the people from whom perhaps all the cultivation of the human race has been derived, plays were known long before they could have experienced any foreign influence. It has lately been made known in Europe that they have a rich dramatic literature, which ascends back for more than two thousand years. The only specimen of their plays (Nāṭaks) hitherto known to us is the delightful Śakuntalā, which, notwithstanding the colouring of a foreign climate, bears in its general structure a striking resemblance to our romantic drama.'

Alexander von Humboldt, in treating of Indian poetry, observes: 'The name of Kālidāsa has been frequently and early celebrated among the western nations. This great poet flourished at the splendid court of Vikramāditya, and was, therefore, contemporary with Virgil and Horace. The English and German translations of the Śakuntalā have excited the feeling of admiration which has been so amply bestowed upon Kālidāsa. Tenderness in the expression of feelings, and richness of creative fancy, have assigned to him his lofty place among the poets of all nations.' In another place he says: 'Kālidāsa is a masterly describer of the influence which Nature exercises upon the minds of lovers. The scene in the forest, which he introduced in the drama of Vikrama and Urvāśī, is one of the most beautiful and poetical productions which has appeared in any time.'
is thought by most scholars to be the older and purer. Many of the readings of the Bengāli, however, have been defended by Dr. R. Pischel and others; and this recension has been followed by the Sāhitya-darpana, one MS. of which bears the date 1504 of our era. The MSS. of the Deva-nāgarī class are chiefly found in the Upper Provinces of India, where the great demand has produced copyists without scholarship, who have faithfully transcribed what they did not understand, and, therefore, could not designedly alter. On the other hand, the copyists in Bengal have been Paṇḍits whose cacoethes for amplifying and interpolating has led to much repetition and amplification. Many examples might here be adduced; but I will only refer to the third Act of the Bengāli recension, where the love-scene between the King and Śakuntalā has been expanded to four or five times the length it occupies in the MSS. of the Deva-nāgarī recension. Even the names of the dramatis personae have been altered: Dushyanta is changed into Dushmanta; Anasūyā into Anusūyā; Vātāyana into Pārvatāyana; Sānumatī into Misrakesi; Taralikā into Pingalikā; Dhanamitra into Dhanavṛiddhi; Märkaṇḍeya into Sankočana.

Unhappily it was a MS. of this recension, and not a very good specimen of its class, that Sir W. Jones used for his translation. From him, therefore, was gained, about a century ago, the earliest incorrect knowledge of this, the first Sanskrit play known to Europeans. No edition of the text appeared till about forty years afterwards, when one was produced in 1830, after immense labour, at Paris, by M. Chézy. He deserved great credit for the difficulties he surmounted; but his edition was also from a MS. of the Bengāli recension. It abounded also in typographical and other more serious errors. An edition of the Śakuntalā was subsequently printed in Calcutta, also from Bengāli MSS. and in Bengāli character, by Prema-ḍandra, dated Śaka 1761 (A.D. 1839). Several editions of the Bengāli recension have been printed at Calcutta in the Deva-nāgarī character; one in 1860 by Prema-ḍandra (under the superintendence of Professor E. B. Cowell), for European scholars; others in 1864 and 1870.

It was reserved for Dr. Boehtlingk to be the first to edit the Deva-nāgarī recension of this play at Bonn in the year 1842. No other edition of the text of this recension was published until my first edition in 1853. An edition of the same recension was published at Bombay in 1861, and one at Breslau in 1872 by
Dr. Burkhard, Professor in the University of Bonn, to which is added a glossary.

The translations which have been published since that of Sir W. Jones and the German version of his translation by Forster, in 1791, are—first, the French of M. Chézy; subsequently the German of Hirzel, Rückert, and Boehltingk; a Danish translation by Hammerich; and more recently, another German translation in prose and verse by Meier; not to speak of Danish and Italian versions of Sir W. Jones' English; and my own English translation, the fourth edition of which was published (by W. H. Allen & Co., 13, Waterloo Place, London) in 1872.

The great Indian dramatist only wrote two other dramas. Of the Vikramorvasi, the twin play of the Śakuntalā, two editions have appeared on the Continent; one at Bonn, by Lenz, and a more perfect one at St. Petersburg, by Bollensen: an edition of this play was also printed at the Education press in Calcutta in 1830, and one by myself in 1849, and another at Calcutta in 1869. Translations by Hoefer and Hirzel have been published in Germany, and in England by Wilson in prose and verse, and a literal translation in English prose by Professor Cowell. The third play, called Mālavikāgnimitra, was edited at Bonn, by Tullberg; and a more correct edition, with English notes, by Shankar P. Paṇḍit, was published at Bombay in 1869. This drama has been ably translated into German by Professor Weber.

I am bound to acknowledge that I made free use of Dr. Boehltingk's edition of the text of the Śakuntalā in preparing the first edition for the press. The merit of his work can hardly be overrated; but I may, without presumption, say that I discovered many better readings, corrected a few errors, and introduced much original matter in the shape of annotations. It is no disparagement of Dr. Boehltingk's labours to say that his edition does not adapt itself to the exigencies of an English student. The notes are in German; they are printed at the end of the volume—a practical obstacle to their utility; and they frequently contain corrections of the text. My experience has led me to prefer a system of synopsis, both in respect of the notes and metres.

In regard to the text of the present volume, if I have succeeded in producing a more correct edition of the Deva-nāgārī recension, than those of Dr. Boehltingk and Dr. Burkhard, the merit is due to the more ample materials which have been placed at my com-
mand. In preparing the first edition I took care to avail myself of Dr. Boehningk's corrections of himself, and his after-thoughts at the end of his work, as well as of such critical remarks as coincided with my own views. Often working independently of him, I arrived at similar results, because I had access to all the materials whence his Apparatus Criticus was composed. Dr. Boehningk's edition was not prepared (as he has himself explained) from original MSS. Professors Brockhaus and Westergaard, having more or less carefully collated certain MSS. in the East India House Library and in the Bodleian at Oxford, and made partial extracts from three native Commentaries, handed over the results of their labours to him. All these MSS. and Commentaries were placed at my disposal, and most of them left in my possession until the completion of my work. Not a passage was printed without a careful collation of all of them, and the three Commentaries were consulted from beginning to end.

The MSS. which I principally used, were—

1. A MS. from the Colebrooke Collection, and therefore from the Eastern side of India, numbered 1718.

2. A MS. from the Mackenzie Collection, and therefore from Southern India, numbered 2696.

3. A MS. from the Taylor Collection, and therefore from Western India, numbered 1858, dated Śaka 1734.

All these belong to the India Office Library, and represent the three Indian Presidencies respectively.

4. A copy of a very good MS. at Bombay, presented to me by Mr. Shaw of the Bombay Civil Service.

5. An old Bengali MS. belonging to the India Office Library, numbered 1060.


I consulted other Bengali MSS., but rarely admitted readings from them, unless supported by some one of the Deva-nāgari. Thus the verses which I inserted at the beginning of the third Act are supported throughout by my own and the Taylor MS., and partially by that of the Mackenzie Collection.

The following are the three Indian Commentators—

1. Kāṭavēma, whose commentary, from the Mackenzie Collection at the India Office, is the only one in the Nāgari character. He was the son of Kāṭa Bhūpa, minister of Vasanta (himself the author
of a dramatic work called Vasanta-rājiya), king of Kumāra-giri, a place on the frontiers of the Nizām's dominions. He must have lived after the commencement of the sixteenth century, as he quotes Halāyudha, the author of the Kavi-rahasya (see Westergaard's preface to the Radices Linguæ Sanskritæ). This commentary is very corrupt, but where it is intelligible, is of great use in throwing light on the more difficult passages of this play.

2. Śankara, whose commentary, from the Wilson Collection in the Bodleian Library, is on the Bengāli recension, and written in the Bengāli character. In many places it agrees with the readings of the Deva-nāgarī recension, or at least notices them.

3. Čandra-śekhara, whose commentary, belonging to the India Office, is also on the Bengāli recension, and generally only repeats the words of Śankara. If this Čandra-śekhara is the same person as the father of Viśva-nātha,—author of the Sāhitya-darpaṇa,—he probably lived in the fifteenth century.

I never failed to consult the three commentaries before deciding on the reading of my text, and made their interpretations the basis of the literal translations of the metrical part of the play given in the notes.

In this second edition, I have constantly consulted Dr. Burkhard's text and glossary, and where better readings have been discovered, they are generally mentioned in my notes.

On comparing the present edition with the previous one, it will be observed that the red type has been dispensed with, and the Sanskrit interpretation of the Prākṛit passages has been given in small type below.

In the Hindū drama, as is well known, the women and inferior characters speak in Prākṛit—the name given to the colloquial Sanskrit, prevalent throughout a great part of India in early times. This spoken form of Sanskrit, which was really the precursor of the present vernacular tongues, must have varied greatly, and particular dialects must have belonged to particular districts and classes of men. There is, however, but one principal Prākṛit, peculiar to the plays, viz. the Mahārāṣṭrī, although specimens of some varieties occasionally occur, and two of them may be found in the interlude between the fifth and sixth Acts of this play (see p. 217, note 2, and see Indian Wisdom, p. xxix, note 2).