

Ayurveda in Heroines Classification in Indian Treatise on Drama- Natya Shastra

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Opinion

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Bharata, in Natyashastra, has given a unique classification of the Nayikas or heroines based on their age, basic character, personality, and relationship with lover and various stages of love. His theory implies the innate understanding of the fundamental bodily humors, the alchemic Tri-Doshas of VATA, KAPHA and PITTA types of bodies in us which is also the basis for the medicinal field of Ayurveda. All matter is composed of five basic elements- panchamahabhutas, which inhere the properties of earth (prithvi), water (jala), fire (tejas), wind (vayu) and space (akasha), subtlest being space and grossest being earth, having every perceptive sense of touch, smell, sight and sound and taste. The structure is made up of five elements, but the functional aspect is governed by three biological humors. Ether and air together constitute VATA; fire and water, PITTA and water and earth, KAPHA. Within each person the doshas are continually interacting with one another and with nature.

This is why people can have much in common but also a variety of differences in behavior and response to environment. They bring about psycho- physic changes too. In every person they differ in permutations and combinations. Vata, pita and kappa are distinctly present in every individual and express in each human according to predominance of their different qualities (gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). Sattva, characterized by consciousness and clarity, is pure, free from disease and calm. It is responsible for the perception of knowledge. Rajas, the most active of the gunas, has motion, stimulation and desires; ambitions and fickle-mindedness are a result. Tamas is characterized by disturbances in perception and activities of the mind;

delusion, false knowledge, laziness, apathy and indolence are due to it.

Sattva, the predominant emotion of character represented, is something invisible; but it gives support to psychological states and sentiments by means of horriification, tears and similar other signs displayed in proper places and in harmony with the sentiments. The histrionic representation with an exuberant sattva is superior, the one with the level sattva is middling, and that with no sattva is inferior.

In the chapter HARMONIOUS REPRESENTATION-XXIV, EIGHT KINDS OF HEROINES are described in NATYA SHASTRA.

[Shlokas 210-219] Heroines (nayika) are of eight kinds such as, "one dressed up for union" (vasakasajja) "one distressed by separation" (virahotkanthita) "one having her husband in subjection" (svadhina-bhatrka) "one separated {from her lover} by a quarrel" (kalahantarita) "one enraged with her lover" (khandita) "one deceived by her lover" (vipralabdha) "one with the sojourning husband" (proshitabhatrka) and "one who moves (to her lover)" (abhisarika).

A Heroine Dressed Up For Union- A woman who in eager anticipation of lover decorates herself joyfully, when the conjugal union is soon to happen.

A Heroine Distressed By Separation- A woman whose beloved one does not turn up on account of his preoccupation with other engagements, making her afflicted with sorrow.

A Heroine Having Her Husband In Subjection- A woman whose husband is captivated by her charm as well as by intense pleasure of love (surata) with her would stay by her side.

A Heroine Separated By Quarrel- A woman who is impatient for her lover who has gone away due to a quarrel or jealousy and not returning.

An Enraged Heroine- A woman, whose beloved one, due to attachment for another lady, does not turn up for the conjugal union, overdue.

Deceived Heroine- When the lover does not visit an irate woman (i.e. khandita) giving a certain reason, even after he has met her and made a tryst.

A Heroine With A Sojourning Husband -A woman whose husband (the beloved one) is living abroad on account of work and who has kept the ends of her hair scattered.

Heroine Moving To Her Lover - A woman who due to intense love gives up modesty for going out to meet him, daring nature around and the world.

Classification

Classification of heroines (Nayika) is given always relating to her hero (Nayaka).

Classifications of Nayika-s (heroines)

The Nayikas' categorization by birth, character and behavior are all stated in the Natyasastra. In terms of behavior, they can also be classified into Sweeya, Parakiya and Samanya.

By experience: Mughdha – inexperienced in love, Madhya – partly experienced, Pragalbha – mature in the art of love.

By attitude: Sweeya – married and faithful to her husband, like Sita and other caste women like Rukmini, etc. Parakiya – married to one but in illicit love with another. Traditionally the Gopis are considered as Parakiya. Meera is another example. In the Pushti Bhakti philosophy, all souls are married to the world and long for God as Parakiyas. Samanya – a freely available woman, who belongs to any man, but for a price.

The Ashta Nayikas, when categorized by birth, can be segregated into origins; divine, human or a combination of both.

By birth-

Divya – divine origin like Indrani.

Maanava –human origin like Kannagi.

Mishra – mix of both categories above, such as divine beings who had taken human form, like Seetha or Andal. Nrpatni –royal lineage like Mandodhari.

Kulastri –respectable families.

Ganika – These are heroines who are courtesans.

They can be respectively classified into Uttama, Madhyama and Adhama.

By psychological aspect or temperament- Uttama – self-controlled, Madhyama – literary the middle type, who gives as she gets and Adhama – literary, the low, who has no self-restraint and can become abusive.

The various types of women [Shlokas 99-100 of NS] are those known to possess the nature of Devas, Asuras, Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Nagas, Pishachas, and Yakshas