

Interpretation of *Rasas* in *Rasa* Theory of Classical Indian Poetics

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Poetics is one of the three main branches of knowledge including grammar and philosophy in which Indian scholarship has presented valuable and relevant findings during ancient and medieval periods. Indian Poetics especially classical Sanskrit poetics holds an old and rich tradition starting from Bharata's *Natyashastra* (almost 2nd century C.E.) and extended up to Panditraja Jagan Natha's *Rasgangadhara* (17th century C.E.). It continued about thousands of years, presenting various logical, philosophical, linguistic and semantic approaches to study the literary texts. As a result, a number of great works have been produced in the concerned field and six main schools of Sanskrit poetics namely *Rasa* School, *Alamkara* School, *Dhvani* School, *Riti* School, *Vakrokti* School and *Auchitya* School came into existence.

The main issues discussed in these schools are; themes of literature, forms of literature, purpose of literature, basic elements of literature, its characteristics, types and the creative process as a whole. *Rasa* theory occupies the pride of place among all these schools of Indian Poetics. Bharata Muni is acknowledged to be the first exponent of the doctrine, which he has systematically set forth in his celebrated treatise on dramaturgy, called *Natyashastra*. In *Natyashastra* Bharata has interpreted every aspect of literature in terms of '*Rasa*', a mental state or pleasure aesthetically enjoyed or capable of being tested or relished. Further he has described eight *Rasas* linked with unique *Sthayi Bhawas* or permanent moods of human mind. Even though, his main concern was for the dramatic art form, but now *Rasa* theory has been applied to study all forms of literature including other forms of art and aesthetic creations also.

This paper is based on a discussion of *Rasa* theory and specially focusing on interpretation of eight *Rasas*. Overall contribution and relevance of *Rasa* theory will also be discussed in this paper.

Key Words: *Indian Poetics, Rasa theory, Bharata Muni*