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A Comprehensive Analysis of *Auchitya* Theory from Indian Poetics

Dr. Boni D. Joshi

Assistant Professor,

L.D. College of Engineering, Ahmedabad

Abstract:

The idea of *auchitya* propriety is fundamental to Indian poetry because it provides a framework that ensures all parts of a piece of literature may live coherently. From Bharata Muni's early clues in *Natyashastra* to the formalization of *auchitya* theory by later scholars like Rudrata, Anandavardhana, and Abhinavagupta, this comprehensive investigation follows the evolution of *auchitya* theory. The study emphasizes Kshemendra's significant contribution, which was to systematize *auchitya* into 28 distinct categories, so establishing it as a central notion in literary criticism. Through an analysis of historical tendencies, significant theoretical positions, and practical applications, this dissertation demonstrates the continued relevance of *auchitya* in guiding the creation and evaluation of literary works. By preserving the appropriateness and balance of various poetic components, *Auchitya* ensures the successful evocation of *rasa* (aesthetic experience), thereby establishing its important role in the Indian literary heritage.

Keywords: Auchitya, Indian Poetics, Kshemendra, Sanskrit Literature, Aesthetic Theory

Introduction

The eleventh-century Kashmiri polymath Kshemendra was a hilarious, historian, poet, and rhetorician who made significant contributions to Sanskrit literature. Historians think he was born sometime between 1028 and 1063 AD, during King Anantaraja's reign, while their best estimates put his birthday even farther off. The literary prowess of Kshemendra was on display in a wide range of works, from narrative literature and poetry to didactic and humorous writings as well as treatises on rhetoric and prosody.

Scholars and the aristocracy spoke Sanskrit during Kshemendra's reign. Among his instructors were illustrious thinkers like as Gangaka, Abhinavagupta, and Somapada. It is notable that Abhinavagupta was a famous Shaiva philosopher. Despite his father Prakashendra's devotion to Shiva, Kshemendra associated with Vaishnavism, demonstrating the theological pluralism of the age.

His versatility was on full display throughout Kshemendra's vast and diverse collection of work. *Desh Updesha*, *Narmala*, and *Loka Prakasha* are just a few of his didactic works that offer guidance on right and wrong. He also experimented with satire in *Samay Matrika*, challenging societal norms with humor and irony. The acronyms that Kshemendra used for epic stories were famous. *Brihadkatha Manjri* condensed 700,000 lines of Gunadhya's *Brihadkatha* into 7,500 lines, and *Mahabharata Manjri* condensed the long Mahabharata into 10,655 verses, both of which are examples of such works. Additionally, he reduced the *Ramayana's* length from 24,000 to 6,391 lines. In 1052 AD, Kshemendra completed his treatise *Bodhisattvavadanakalpalata*, which added to the canon of Buddhist thought. His interest in philosophical and spiritual issues was evident in this work. Some of his creations, including *Rajavali* and *Nripavali*, have unfortunately been claimed by time. The loss of *Rajavali* is particularly felt by scholars like Dr. A.B. Keith, who consider it a significant setback for Sanskrit literature.

***Auchitya*: Kshemendra's Unique Contribution**

Of all of Kshemendra's critical works, his most significant contribution to literary theory is *Auchitya vicharcharch*. Along with Kavikanthabharana, Kavikarnika, and Suvritta tilaka, this text forms his literary critique quartet. Finished before 1080 AD during King Anantaraja's reign, *Auchitya vicharcharch* introduces and develops the concept of *auchitya* propriety or aptness.

His analytical insight shines through even if Kshemendra isn't considered a poet of the finest level. A unique perspective is offered by the *auchitya* school of thought in Indian poetry. For *Auchitya vicharcharch* literary work, Kshemendra lays up 28 aspects of appropriateness.

The Evolution of *Auchitya* in Indian Poetics

Understanding Kshemendra's influence on Indian literary philosophy requires tracking *auchitya*'s propriety's historical evolution. The earliest written works on the topic are from the second century CE, when Bharata Muni mentions appropriateness in his examination of *anukrti* imitation in theatre. Thought leaders from the 7th century CE, such as Bhamaha and Dandin, developed the concept of appropriateness by mentioning it briefly in their writings. Rudrata was one of the first to employ the term *auchitya* in a literary setting in the ninth century, emphasizing its importance in *alamkaras* and *vritis*. This is when the notion of *auchitya* originally emerged. As described by Kshemendra, the greatest exponent of this theory,

Ucitam rpahurācāryāh sadrṣam kila yasya yau/

Uchitasya ca Yo bhavastadaucityom pracaksyate!! (Kshemendra, kārika 7)

Anandavardhana, a poet from the ninth century who wrote in a variety of styles, introduced the concept of *rasochitya* and investigated the connection between *rasa* aesthetic taste and appropriateness. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Kuntaka and Kshemendra's teacher Abhinavagupta both placed an emphasis on the interconnected nature of *auchitya* and *rasa*; Kuntaka also considered *auchitya* to be the foundation of *vakrokti*, an oblique expression, and the universal poetic quality *guna*. Kshemendra synthesized these ideas, expanding upon those of his predecessors, and established *auchitya* as a cornerstone of his literary philosophy. With

28 distinct types of propriety, he laid up the plan and gave it a complete framework. Many subsequent theorists and critics have traced their methods of literary analysis back to Kshemendra's groundbreaking work on *auchitya*. In modern discussions of aesthetic judgment and poetic talent within Indian literary traditions, the idea remains relevant.

Propriety Before Kshemendra:

An important figure in Indian poetry from the second century, Bharata Muni is largely responsible for popularizing the concept of appropriateness. It is commonly known that Bharata Muni wrote the enormous treatise on performance and theatre known as the *Natyashastra*. He explores the idea of appropriateness in depth in this work, highlighting that every kind of adaptation or imitation *anukrti* must be based on the principle of *anukoolata* suitability or appropriateness. Because accurate and appropriate portrayal is crucial to a performance's capacity to transmit feelings, personalities, and actions, this concept takes on further significance in the realm of dramatic arts.

Bharata Muni popularized the concept of *treilokyanukrti natyam*, which highlights the interconnectedness of the earthly, heavenly, and heavenly-afterlife realms via the medium of theater. This harmony ensures that the depiction of events, characters, and emotions is in harmony with the greater cosmic order, reflecting the idea that theater should be in harmony with the universal principles regulating different spheres. Academics and critics in India would build upon Bharata Muni's work to provide a framework for understanding *auchitya* propriety in artistic expression, paving the way for subsequent developments in Indian poetics. His work ensures that art will forever portray universal truths by highlighting the importance of appropriateness to the structural components of drama and its deeper moral and philosophical implications.

Early Scholarly Perspectives:

Even though their views are less extensively recorded, several notable people throughout the early phases of academic study added to the growing controversy about *auchitya* propriety in Indian poetry. Although the precise nature of their discussions on appropriateness is unknown, two illustrious intellectuals, Bhamaha and Dandin, engaged in such discourse. But they did a lot of important work that paved the way for further innovations. The importance

of voice, spirit, and story in play was highlighted by another renowned scholar, Yashovarma, who stated that these elements are crucial for literary works to achieve complete appropriateness. The primary early proponent of the concept of *auchitya* was Rudratta (c. 825-850 CE). His work *Kavyalamkāra* Ornamentation of Poetry was the first to expressly utilize the term *auchitya*, and he argued that poetry is flawed due to its lack of appropriateness. A watershed moment in the development of Indian literary theory came with Rudratta's emphasis on *auchitya*; subsequent centuries saw more systematic examinations of appropriateness.

Anandavardhana's Contribution:

As a prominent character in Indian poetry, Anandavardhana made significant contributions to the concept of appropriateness through the introduction of *Rasochitya*. This concept is based on the premise that *rasa*, which may be defined as an aesthetic emotion or taste, and the many parts of writing should work together properly. In addition to poetry, Anandavardhana expanded the use of appropriateness to prose.

Propriety was defined for him in his research using the term *hetus*, which means the basic reasons or justifications for include it in a literary work. This is how Anandavardhana emphasized that there are underlying reasons, not chance, that determine the correct arrangement of emotions, thoughts, and creative elements. As a result, the concept of *Rasochitya* serves as a guide for authors, ensuring that all parts of a work of literature enhance the overall aesthetic experience by contributing harmoniously to the evocation of *rasa*. The work of Anandavardhana laid a crucial foundation for other scholars who would expand and improve upon the idea of appropriateness in Indian literary theory.

Later Developments:

The concept of *auchitya* propriety was refined and solidified as an essential element of poetic genius in subsequent phases of Indian literary theory. An influential figure from this time, Kuntaka, held the view that *auchitya* was an essential and fundamental quality for all forms of poetry. He differentiated between *auchitya*'s immutable nature, which he saw as crucial for maintaining the power and purity of poetic expression, and attributes that are malleable and may change in response to external factors. A notable scholar who emphasized the

importance of *auchitya* in preserving the quality and relevance of literature was Mahimabhatt, who argued persuasively that even a slight deviation from propriety *anaauchitya* might damage poetry. One further thing Udbhata added to the conversation was his definition of appropriateness in terms of the figure of speech's spirit. He emphasized *dassitya* as crucial to maintaining the essence of a literary work, which is necessary for maintaining its meaning and aesthetic impact. All of these developments thereafter solidified *auchitya*'s status as an essential principle in the Indian literary tradition's framework for evaluating and creating poetry.

Propriety in Pre-Kshemendrian Literature:

In pre-Kshemendrian writing, propriety was a crucial, though sometimes unspoken, element. Several literary aspects were affected by it, including the portrayal of characters (*persona*), the flow of ideas, the use of suitable language, and the general organization of the work. The concept of appropriateness was often brought up in passing, interwoven into the broader discourse surrounding poetics and literary aesthetics, even if more seasoned scholars and poets were aware of the significance of maintaining a proper appearance in their works.

Even while literary theorists had acknowledged *auchitya* propriety before Kshemendra, it had not been officially established as a distinct or essential foundation of poetry. Bharata Muni, Bhamaha, and Dandin were among the writers who argued that a well-crafted work of theater or poetry must adhere to specific traditions and conventions in order to achieve its intended effect in their discussions of appropriateness. However, Kshemendra was the one who laid the groundwork for propriety as an essential component of poetry, developing a logical theory that highlighted its critical function in ensuring the effectiveness and coherence of literary works.

The Theory of Propriety:

If a piece of literature wants to be successful, its *auchitya* theory says, its topics, ideas, language, and stylistic approaches must all be well-chosen and in harmony. If this theory is to be believed, then the arrangement and selection of all literary elements must be such that they contribute most effectively to the achievement of the work's stated purpose. Both literary propriety and Longinus's idea of the sublime encourage a balanced and harmonious method

of creative expression, making sure that every part contributes to the work's grandeur and emotional impact.

The relationship between propriety and the *Rasa* principle, the fundamental emotion that an artistic work seeks to evoke in its audience, has been the subject of much research by Indian literary scholars such as Anandavardhana and Kuntaka. The emphasis on propriety in Kuntaka's work and the concept of *Rasochitya* in Anandavardhana's work both show how the appropriate use of language, imagery, and structure may enhance the aesthetic appeal and emotional resonance of a piece of literature. An essential part of understanding how literary works achieve their aesthetic and emotional goals is grasping the concept of propriety, which guarantees that all parts are suitable and contribute to the overall impact and harmony of the work.

Kshemendra's Theory:

One of the most prominent advocates of the concept of appropriateness in Indian poetry was the illustrious scholar Kshemendra, who had studied under Abhinavagupta. His seminal book, *Auchitya vicharcharcha*, which established propriety as a necessary condition for poetry, is an enduring landmark in the field of literary ethics. Kshemendra argues that in order for poetry expression to be effective, one must follow to propriety criteria in order to realize *Rasa*, the emotional core of a literary work.

"If the girdle were to be worn on the neck, or the brilliant necklace on hips, the anklet on the arm or the bracelet on the foot: on if might were shown on those subjugated or compassion on enemies, who will not be the object of ridicule? In the same way, neither *alamkāra* nor *guna* imparts any beauty without propriety. (Kshemendra Kārika 4-6)

According to Kshemendra, the many elements of poetry, such *gunas* character traits and *alamkāras* figures of speech, are only effective when employed correctly. The poem's overall quality might be diminished if these elements are misused and become defects. Thus, Kshemendra's theory emphasizes the importance of appropriateness in ensuring that all parts of a poetic work harmonize with one other, thereby heightening the intended aesthetic and

emotional effect. Through his work, it becomes evident that literary methods are only meaningful when used correctly inside a work, rather than merely existing.

Detailed Analysis in *Auchitya vicharcharcha*:

The thorough and accurate analysis of poetic appropriateness that Kshemendra presents in *Auchitya vicharcharcha* demonstrates his superior understanding of artistic principles. His studies provide light on the ways in which propriety impacts the impact and attractiveness of literature by meticulously examining the appropriateness of certain poetic elements.

Impressive in its empirical precision, Kshemendra's approach analyzes several poetic techniques, including figures of speech, thematic components, and stylistic judgments. Kshemendra provides an insightful study that highlights the crucial function of appropriateness in literary development by examining both famous works and his personal writings. His research demonstrates how inappropriate conduct can disrupt the natural progression of a poem's theme and emotional impact.

Propriety and Rasa:

Kshemendra shows a deep understanding of the connection between the form of poetry and the portrayal of emotions by focusing on propriety as crucial to Rasa's evocation. Rasa, the emotional essence of a literary work, cannot be realized by emotional expression alone, according to Kshemendra. He says that one cannot be indiscreetly using the word *auchitya* by itself; he further defines *auchitya* as “a relation and that to which things me or should be in that relation must be first grasped.” (Locanā 44) On the contrary, it requires the accurate and suitable use of poetic devices, figures, and thematic elements. The indispensability of *auchitya* for proper evocation of *rasa* is emphatically stated as follows:

Anaucityadrte nanyad rasabhangasya karanam.

Prasiddhaucitya - bandhastu rasasvopanisat parā. (*Dhvanyaloka* 330)

The emotional substance of a poem must strike a genuine chord with the reader for it to be considered appropriate, according to Kshemendra's paradigm. It acts as a filter, making sure that the poetic elements used fit well with the piece's general premise and emotional tone. By following the norms of propriety, a poet may better convey the intended *Rasa* and provide the

reader a more meaningful and engaging experience. Hence, according to Abhinavagupta, *auchitya* is understandable without something else to which things are 'uchit' i.e. appropriate. So, he says, “*auchitya* necessarily relates to *rasa*, and *rasa* alone” (Locanā 45)

Classification of Literary Propriety in Indian Poetics

In his major book, Kshemendra defines 28 separate aspects of propriety *auchitya* that promote the effectiveness of literary output. These factors are referred to as. These can be classified into a wide variety of literary, theatrical, grammatical, and poetic categories:

1. Literary Composition:

- **Pada:** The appropriateness of individual poetic lines.
- **Vakya:** The suitability of sentences in context.
- **Prabandha:** The coherence of narrative or thematic structure.
- **Guna:** The quality or virtue of poetic elements.
- **Alankara:** The use of figures of speech.
- **Rasa:** The evocation of emotional states.
- **Chhanda:** The rhythmic structure.

2. Grammatical Composition:

- **Kriyapada:** The appropriateness of verbal forms.
- **Karaka:** The suitability of case relations.
- **Linga:** The harmony of gender in grammatical constructs.
- **Vachana:** The appropriateness of grammatical numbers.
- **Visheshana:** The suitability of adjectives.
- **Upasarga:** The appropriateness of prefixes.
- **Nipata:** The fitting use of particles.

- **Kalagata:** The relevance of temporal expressions.

3. Dramatic Personae:

- **Desh:** The appropriateness of the setting.
- **Kula:** The suitability of social class representations.
- **Awastha:** The appropriateness of situational contexts.
- **Abhinaya:** The fittingness of dramatic representation.
- **Svabhava:** The naturalness of character behavior.
- **Vrata:** The appropriateness of vows or promises.
- **Stavasata:** The suitability of praise or commendations.

4. Poetical Genius:

- **Tatwa:** The understanding of fundamental principles.
- **Sarasangraha:** The grasp of subtle and refined meanings.
- **Pratibha:** The inherent poetic talent.
- **Vichar:** The depth of thought or reflection.
- **Nama:** The appropriateness of names.
- **Ashirwada:** The fittingness of blessings or auspices.

Conclusion:

Kshemendra and his ancestors made a great contribution to the field of Indian poetics with their *Auchitya* theory. This theory, which demonstrates a thorough understanding of the connection between form, substance, and emotional expression in literature, is a significant advancement. When it comes to ensuring that all of the components of a literary production, from poetic approaches to thematic aspects, are appropriately in line with the primary concept

and emotional tone of the piece, this theory places a strong emphasis on the significance of appropriateness.

During the ninth and tenth centuries, people such as Bharatmuni, Bhamaha, and Dandin conducted early research, which led to the development of more intricate debates on the subject of inappropriate behavior. Both Rudratta's emphasis on the word *Auchitya* and Anandavardhana's adoption of the term *Rasochitya* contributed to the idea's further development and made it possible for it to be used to a wider range of literary forms than only poetry.

The contributions made by Kshemendra, particularly in *Auchitya vicharcharcha*, serve as the culmination of these earlier advancements. Through his exhaustive empirical research and theoretical insights, he argues that the successful presentation of *Rasa* requires the right use of literary techniques. He positions propriety as the cornerstone of effective poetry, establishing it as the foundation of effective poetry. Kshemendra demonstrated a profound sense of aesthetic judgment by providing feedback on well-known works as well as his own. He brought attention to the concept that adherence to proper conduct is not only a need but also a requirement for the production of poetry of the greatest possible quality.

Despite the fact that Kshemendra is no longer alive, his theory continues to have an impact on the approaches to literary analysis that are utilized by critics and theorists that come after him. A comprehension of the aesthetic judgment and poetic talent of Indian literary traditions requires an understanding of *Auchitya*, which is still an essential concept. The relevance of this topic continues to be discussed in discussions on the most effective methods by which writing might achieve its artistic and emotive goals, hence underscoring the everlasting value of appropriateness in poetry.

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