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Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library edition and translation of Bhanu datta’s Bouquet of Rasa and River of Rasa.

Bhanu datta is probably the most famous Sanskrit poet that no one today has ever heard of. His Bouquet of Rasa and River of Rasa, both composed in the early sixteenth century, probably under the patronage of the Nizam of Ahmadnagar in western India, attracted the attention of the most celebrated commentators in early modern India. Some of the greatest painters of Mewar and Basohli vied to turn his subtle poems into pictures. And his verses were prized by poets everywhere: Abu al-Fazl, the preeminent scholar at Akbar’s court, translated them into Persian, and, Kshetráyya, the great Andhra poet of the next century, adapted them into Telugu.

Many writers have described the types of heroines and heroes of Sanskrit literature (the subject of the Bouquet of Rasa) or explained the nature of aesthetic emotion (that of the River of Rasa), but none did so in verse of such exquisite and subtle artistry.
“BOUQUET OF RASA”
&
“RIVER OF RASA”
by BHĀNUDATTA

TRANSLATED BY
Sheldon Pollock

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THE FOURTH WAVE
DESCRIPTION OF THE INVOLUNTARY PHYSICAL REACTIONS
ATHA SÄTTVIKA|BHÄVÄ nirūpyante. tatra Bharataḥ:

«stambhaḥ, svedo, ’tha rom’|âńcaḥ,
svara|bheda, ’tha vepathuḥ,
vaivarṇyam, āṣru, pralaya
ity aṣṭau sāttvikā matāḥ.»

nanv asya sāttvikatvam kathaṁ, vyabhicāritvam na kutaḥ, sakala|rasa|sādhārayād iti cet. atra ke cit: sattvaṁ nāma para|gata|duḥkha|bhāvanāyām atyan’|ānukūlatvam. tena sattvena dhṛtāḥ sāttvika iti vyabhicāritvam an|ādṛtya sāttvika|vyapadesa iti. tan na, nirveda|smṛti|dhṛtīnām api sāttvikatva|vyapades’| āpatteḥ. na ca para|gata|duḥkha|bhāvanāyām aṣṭāv eva† samutpadyanta ity anukula|śabd’|ārthaḥ. ata eva sāttvikatvam apy eṣām iti vācyam. nirved’|āder api para|duḥkha|bhāvanāyām utpatter iti. atra’ ōdaṃ pratibhāti sattva|śabdasya prāṇi|vācakatvāt. atra sattvaṁ jīvac|charīraṃ, tasya dharmāḥ sāttvikāḥ. tathā ca sārīra bhāvāḥ stambḥ’|ādayaḥ sāttvika bhāvā ity abhidhiyante. sthāyino vyabhicāriṇaś ca bhāvā āntaratayā te sārīra|dharmā iti.

4.3  eva V : ete J Ś
Next, the involuntary physical reactions will be described. With reference to them, Bhárata says:

“Paralysis, sweating, horripilation, a breaking voice, trembling, pallor, weeping, and absorption are held to be the eight involuntary reactions.”

It could be asked why these are reckoned as involuntary reactions (sáttvika) rather than transitory feelings, given that they are likewise common to all the rasas. Some have answered that the word sattva refers to a feeling of deep sympathy for the experience of sorrow on the part of others, and this produces the involuntary physical reactions; that is why the designation sáttvika is used for them without regard to their transitory character. But that answer cannot be correct, since the designation sáttvika would then have to be applied to such transitory feelings as despair, remembrance, and fortitude.* Nor does the meaning of the word “sympathy” refer to the fact that only the eight reactions arise in response to the experience of sorrow on the part of others, since despair and so on also arise in response to another’s sorrow. What seems to be at issue here is this: The word sattva refers to a living being, sattva in this context being the enlivened body. The properties of a sattva, or being, are called sáttvika, and accordingly bodily reactions are called sáttvika reactions. Because the stable emotions and the transitory feelings are internal they are not properties of the body.
śarīra | dharmatve sati gati | nirodhaḥ stambhaḥ. na ca nidr”|āpasmār’|ādāv ativyāptiḥ, śarīra|dharma|padena teṣām vyāvartanāt. pralaya | bhāve tu ceṣṭā | nirodho na tu gati | nirodhaḥ. tasya vibhāvā harṣa|rāga|bhaya|duḥkha|viṣāda| vismaya|krodhaḥ. yathā:

4.5  «śroṇi pīnatarā, tanuḥ kṛśatarā, 
bhūmī|dharāt pīvarā 
vakṣoajasya τατί. kathaṃ njai|kuṭī, 
mātar, mayā gamyate?» 
ity udbhāvya, kadamba|kuñja|nīkaṭe 
nirviśya manda|smitam 
Govindaṃ samudikṣya pakṣmala|ḍrśā 
stambhas tiro|dhīyate. [1]

vapuṣi salil’|ōdgamaḥ svedaḥ. asya vibhāvā manas|tāpa| harṣa|lajjā|krodha|bhaya|śrama|piḍā|ghāta|mūrch”|ādayaḥ. 
yathā:

kānte, tava kuca|prānte rājante sveda|bindavaḥ 
ḥṛṣyatā Madanen’ ēva kṛtāḥ kusuma|vrṣṭayaḥ. [2]

---

i A term of affection here, addressed to her girlfriend   ii Krishna
Paralysis, being a property of the body, is the obstruction of ambulatory movement. This definition is not so wide as to include transitory feelings such as sleep or possession, since those are excluded by the words “property of the body.”* Paralysis is distinguished from absorption, where all motion is obstructed. Its factors are joy, passion, fear, sorrow, depression, wonder, and anger. An example:

“My hips are so wide, and my waist so thin, and heavier than a mountain are my breasts. How then, dear mother, i am I supposed to go back to my own hut?”
So the lovely woman confessed, but when Govínda ii entered the kadámba grove slyly smiling, she looked up and saw him—and at once her paralysis vanished.

Sweating is the arising of perspiration on the body. Its factors are remorse, joy, shame, anger, fear, fatigue, pain, distress, fainting, etc. An example:

My beloved, drops of sweat are glistening on your breasts like a rain of flowers showered down by the joyful God of love.
vikāra | samuttha | rom’ | ōtthānam | rom’ | âṅcaḥ. asya vibhāvāḥ sīt’āliṅgana|harṣa|bhaya|krodhāḥ. yathā:

bakula|mukula|kośa|roṣa|niryan|
madhukara|kūjita|bhāji kuṇja|bhūmau
pulakayati kapola|pāli|māli
smita|subhagāḥ katham adya Nanda|sūnḥ? [3]

4.10 gadgadatva | prayojakībhūta | svara | bhāva | vailakṣaṇyaṃ
svara|bhaṅgaḥ. asya vibhāvāḥ krodha|bhaya|harṣa|madāḥ.
yathā:

«vyaktiḥ syāt svara|bhedasya
kopād, ukṭiḥ kriyeta cet.»
iti patyuḥ puro Rādhā
maunam ādhāya tiṣṭhati. [4]

bhāvatve sati śarīra|nispando vepathuḥ. bhāvatve sat’ īti viśeṣaṅ’|ōpādānāt sūcaka|spand’|ādau n’ ātivyāptih. śarīra|
padam ceṣṭ”|āśraya|mātra|paraṃ, tena śarīr’|āvayava|kampe
n’ ā|vyāptih. asya vibhāvā āliṅgana|harṣa|bhīty|ādayaḥ.
yathā:

kathaya, katham uroja|dāma|hetor
Yadu|patir esa cinoti campakāṇi,
bhavati kara|tale yad asya kampaḥ?
priya|sakhi, mat|smṛtir eva mat|sapatnī. [5]

---

i Krishna ii Krishna’s principal mistress, angry here at his unfaithfulness iii One of Krishna’s mistresses speaks. iv Krishna; the Yadus are his clan.
Horripilation is the bristling of hair in consequence of some transformation. Its factors are cold, an embrace, joy, fear, and anger. An example:

In the grove filled with the buzz of bees darting in anger from the bākula buds why is Nanda’s son smiling today, and why is the fuzz stiffening on his cheek?

A breaking voice is a deformation in the nature of the voice that occasions stammering. Its factors are anger, fear, joy, and intoxication. An example:

“If I spoke, my voice would clearly break in anger.”

So Radha simply stood in silence before her husband.

Trembling, in the discourse on aesthetic feeling, is a quivering of the body. The qualification “aesthetic feeling” is used to exclude gesturing toward something or twitching. The word “body” refers merely to the locus of the action, and thus the definition is not so narrow as to exclude the shaking of a body part. Its factors are an embrace, joy, fear, etc. An example:

Tell me, how can the Yadu lord gather chāmpakas for my garland when his hand is shaking so? Dear friend, his thinking of me is my undoing!
vikāra|prabhava|prakṛta|varṇ'|ânyathā|bhāvo vaivarṇ-
yam. asya vibhāvā mohā|bhaya|krodha|śīta|tāpa|śramāḥ. yathā:

4.15

kukkuṭe kurvati kvāṇam ānanaṃ śliṣṭayos tayoh
divākara|kar’|âkrānta|śaśijkāntim iv’ ādadhaun. [6]

vikāra|janitam akṣi|salilam āṣru. asya vibhāvā harṣ’|ā|
marṣa|dhūma|bhaya|śoka|ṛmbhā|śīta|nirnimesa|prek-
slaṇāni. yathā:

«visṭja, visṭja, citta, duḥkhā|dhārām,
ayam upakaṇṭham upāgato Murāriḥ.»
iti kathayitum āṣru|bindur akṣṇor
nipatati vakṣasi pakṣmal’|āyat’|ākṣyāḥ. [7]

śārīratve sati ceṣṭā|nirodhaḥ pralayaḥ. śārīratve sat’ īti
viṣeṣaṇān nidr”|ādau n’ ātivyāptiḥ. stambh’|ādayaḥ śārīra|
dharmās teṣāṃ sāhacarya|kathanena pralayo ’pi śārīra|
dharmā eva. ten’ ātra ceṣṭā|padena śārīra|ceṣṭ’ āiv’ ābhi-
matā. manasas tu karma bhavati na tu ceṣṭā. ata eva ceṣṭ”|
āśrayaḥ śārīram iti śaśtriyaṃ lākṣaṇam. asya vibhāvā rāg’|
āutkaṇṭhy’|ādayaḥ. yathā:

i Krishna
Pallor is a change in one’s natural coloring as a result of some transformation. Its factors are confusion, fear, anger, cold, heat, and exhaustion. An example:

As the cock began to crow
their faces, lying cheek by cheek,
took on the pale glow of the moon
flooded by the rays of the sun.

Tears are water in the eyes produced by some transformation. Its factors are joy, vindictiveness, smoke, fear, grief, yawning, cold, and unblinking staring. An example:

“Give up, poor heart, give up this sorrow,
here is Murári\(^1\) headed this way,”
the stream of tears proclaimed as it fell
upon the large-eyed woman’s breast.

Absorption, being a bodily property, is the obstruction of all motion. By the qualification “being a bodily property” the definition is not so wide as to include transitory feelings such as sleep. Paralysis and the rest are properties of the body, and by being mentioned along with them, absorption too must be considered a property of the body. And thereby the word “motion” here must be taken as referring solely to the motion of the body. The mind has actions but not motions—thus the scientific definition of “body,” namely, that it is the locus of motion. The factors of absorption are passion, longing, etc. An example:
Her eyes are red with passion.
She did not lower her face, shake her head, turn her body aside, catch her garment slipping down, or utter a single simple “No,” nor even turn toward him a reddened eye. All Radha did was focus her mind, so bashful in the arts of love, upon Murári’s face.

Yawning would appear to be a ninth involuntary physical reaction. An example:

With mouth gaping, a pair of breasts heaving, cheeks beaded with sweat, drooping lashes, slipping dress, and navel showing, eyebrows playing, arms in a circle clasped by her small fingers, hips turned and inclined, with bodice bursting and armpits peeking through the young girl stands there yawning.

In such poems as the above, and in the “Forehead Ornament of the Erotic”* and similar works, we find that yawning is referred to in parallel with other involuntary physical reactions. As for the argument that this should be reversed—that this yawning is an effect of an involuntary physical reaction—there is no force to it. So long as it is an effect there is nothing contradictory about its being a reaction, given that this is precisely what we see in such things as horripilation. Nor does this mean that things such
tasya lakṣaṇaḥ. Kādambaryāṁ Mahāśvet’ādīnāṁ sāttvika|bhāva|varṇane tad|anulekhāc ca.† aṅ’ākṛṣṭyādayo hi na vikārāḥ kin tu śarīra|ceṣṭāḥ. pratyakṣa|siddham etad aṅ’|ākṛṣṭir akṣi|mardanaḥ ca puruṣair iṣṭatayā vidhīyate parityajyate ca. jṛmbhā ca vikārād eva bhavati tan|nivṛttau ni-vartate c’ eti. yathā:

ādhāya mānaṁ rahasi sthitāyāḥ
sambhāvyā jṛmbhāṁ Acal’ātmajāyāḥ
cuṭat†|kṛtiṁ smera|mukho Maheśāḥ
kar’āṅgulībhiḥ kalayāṁ cakāra. [10]

iti śrī|Bhānudatta|viracitāyāṁ Rasataraṅgiṇyāṁ
sāttvika|bhāva|nirūpaṇaṁ nāma carturthas taraṅgaḥ.

4.22 kādambaryāṁ mahāśvetādīnāṁ sāttvikabhāvavarṇane tadanulekhaḥ ca. add J 4.23 cuṭat- J : caṭur- Š N

† In RT 1.5 ii A Sanskrit prose poem iii Shiva and Pārvati have quarreled.
as stretching or batting the eyes would thereby also become involuntary physical reactions, for the simple reason that they do not share the definition of a reaction (which has been defined as a “transformation conducive to rasa”), and because we find references to that effect in the description of the involuntary physical reactions of Mahášveta and others in the “Kadámbari.” Things like stretching are not transformations but motions of the body. And it is furthermore empirically known that stretching or batting the eyes is something people do or do not do at will, whereas yawning arises from some transformation and ends when that ends.* An example:

As the daughter of the Mountain
nursed her love-anger in private
the Great Lord saw her yawn,* and smiling
started snapping his fingers.iii

The end of the Description of the Involuntary Physical Reactions,
the Fourth Wave of Bhanu-datta’s “River of Rasa.”
Bhanu-datta’s twin sixteenth-century masterpieces, his Bouquet of Rasa (on types of female and male characters in poetry) and River of Rasa (on aesthetics), together summarized beautifully the thousand-year-long tradition of Sanskrit literary theory, and did so in illustrative verses of far higher literary caliber than anyone had offered before.

Many writers have described the types of heroines and heroes of Sanskrit literature (the subject of the Bouquet of Rasa) or explained the nature of aesthetic emotion (that of the River of Rasa), but none did so in verse of such exquisite and subtle artistry.