

# Some Notes on the Dhvanyāloka

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## Introduction

One of the principal achievements of Indian aesthetics (*alanikāra*) is its analysis of the nature of the poetic experience. According to its two foremost theorists, poetry consists in the power of suggestion (*dhvani*), and, conversely, produces in the audience an experience of relishing (*rasa*) that is not emotional but transcendental (*alaukika*). The crucial texts of these theorists, however, do not lend themselves to a straightforward study. Ānandavardhana wrote verses (*kārikā*), upon which he composed a commentary (*vṛtti*), the *Dhvanyāloka*. Abhinavagupta subsequently composed a commentary on both the verses and commentary of Ānandavardhana, called the *Locana*. Given the length, complexity, and seeming randomness of topics taken up in these works, a simplifying approach seems in order. To provide a roadmap, as it were, of the *rasa*-theory, a chapter from A. B. Keith's *The Sanskrit Drama*, "The Sentiments", is first provided. Select passages from Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, from the excellent translation of Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, are then presented; these selections contain the most direct, if not exhaustive, formulations or discussions of *dhvani* and *rasa*.

Please note that the scholarly footnotes to the selections are supplied for completeness' sake only: they are not crucial to understanding the texts. The complete translation will be on reserve in the library.

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## Abbreviations Used

- K** *Kārikā* (verse) of the *Dhvanyāloka* ('Light on Suggestion'), by Rājānaka Ānandavardhana, Kashmiri [9th AD] (also referred to as 'Ānanda')
- A** Ānandavardhana's *vṛtti* (commentary) on the *Kārikā* of their *Dhvanyāloka*. NB: The *vṛtti* (commentary) following each *Kārikā* was not originally broken into sections. The a, b, c, etc. lettering was done by the translators Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan (IMP).
- L** *Locana* ('The Eye'), commentary by Abhinavagupta, Kashmiri [10th AD] (also referred to as 'Abhinava')

## Some Authors Mentioned

**Bhāmaha** author of works on literary criticism, largely concerned with the figures of speech [8th AD]

**Bharata** (legendary) author of the Nāṭyaśāstra (*BhNS*), an ancient manual on dramaturgy, source of first eight sthāyibhāva and *rasa* noted above.

**Bhaṭṭanāyaka** critic of Ānandavardhana, apparently a Mīmāṃsaka, answered by Abhinavagupta

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\*Available at: <https://github.com/julowe/st-johns/blob/main/dhvanyAloka/dhvanyAloka-terms-additional.tex>

## Expanded List of Terms

Translation of Sanskrit terms in “quotes” are from IMP translation, unless otherwise noted. I have attempted to provide the reference from where each term is first encountered. Notation follows section numbering in IMP translation. Page numbers are given when translation of K. Kris. is used. Alternate translations are separated by a comma (whether from a subsequent section of IMP text, or from K. Kris.). Significantly differing definitions or usages are separated by a semicolon. Footnotes are marked by a dot, e.g. “1.1 L.1” is footnote 1 for the Locana of 1.1. “(M.W. p.#)” refers to a page from Monier-Williams Sanskrit—English Dictionary, 1899 printing.

	sthāyī- bhāva	abiding emotion	rasa	flavor, sentiment
1	rati	sexual desire	śṛṅgāra	erotic
2	hāsa	laughter	hāsyā	comic
3	śoka	grief	karuṇa	tragic, compassion
4	krodha	anger	raudra	furious, cruel
5	utsāha	heroic energy	vīra	heroic
6	bhaya	fear	bhayānaka	fearsome, timorous
7	jugupsā	disgust	bībhatsā	gruesome, loathsome
8	vismaya	wonder, amaze- ment	adbhuta	wondrous
9			śānta	peace

**NB:** The introduction to the IMP translation of the Dhvanyāloka provides that the first 8 sthāyībhāva and rasa are given by BhNS 6.17 and “To these Ānanda adds a ninth, the rasa of peace (*śānta*).” (p.16)

1. **dhvani** “suggestion” (1.1 K, 1.1 A) Also “suggested meaning” (1.4g A). The three types of *dhvani* per 1.4a A are:

- (a) **vastudhvani** “the suggestion of a fact” (first seen 1.4a A, defined 1.1e L) of the “sequential variety” of *dhvani* (2.3 L.11). From:

- **vastumātra** “a simple thing” (1.4a A)

- (b) **alaṅkāradhvani** “the suggestion of a figure of speech” (1.1e L); “second variety of suggested meaning” (1.4g A). From:

- **alaṅkāra** “figures of speech” (1.1 L, 1.1a A, 1.4g L), “ornaments of sound” (2.4 A)

- (c) **rasadhvani** “suggested *rasa*” (1.5 L), it is the “soul of poetry” (1.5 K). From: “not only *rasa*, but *bhāva*, *rasābhāsa*, *bhāvābhāsa*, *bhāvodaya*, *bhāvasandhi*, *bhāvaśabala*, *bhāvaprasāma*. For definitions see 1.4g and for examples 2.3 L” and 2.3 K. This is also referred to by:

- **rasādi** rendered as “*rasa*, etc.” in several places in the IMP translation. Explained as: “The term refers to all elements that belong to *rasadhvani*” (1.4a A, defined 2.5 L) NB: *ādi*: “etc.” (2.3 L)

2. **rasa** “flavor”, “sentiment” (TODO REF) — based on the sthāyībhāvas respectively, as shown in the table above.

3. **dhvanana** “hinting” (2.4 L)

4. **vyañjana** “suggesting” (2.4 L)

5. **bhāva** “emotion” (1.4g L, 2.3 K) [K. Kris. Also B. Perry’s translation, from IMP’s Introduction]; “realization” (1.1e L, quote from *BhNS*)

6. **sthāyībhāva** “abiding emotion” (TODO REF), “basic emotion” (1.5 L, 1.18 L)

7. **anubhāva** “consequent” (TODO REF)

8. **vibhāva** “determinant” (TODO REF); “object” (1.1e L, quote from *BhNS*)

- (a) **ālambanavibhāva** “objective determinant”

- (b) **uddīpanavibhāva** “stimulative determinant”

9. **vyabhicāribhāva** “transitory state” (1.5 L), “transient state of mind” (2.3 L), “transient emotion” (1.18 L, 2.3 L)

10. **vyabhicārin** See *vyabhicāribhāva*, # 9

11. **bhākta** “associated meaning” (1.1 K), “associated sense” (1.1 L), “regularly fed by another, a dependent” (M.W. p.751)

- **bhākti** “associated meaning” (1.18 A), “associated usage” (1.18 L)

12. —1 “outside the scope of speech”? (1.1 K) TODO: a term, or just often used phrase?

13. **guṇa** the “qualities” (1.1 L, 1.1a A, 2.7 K & A), “virtues” (EC p. 145?)

- (a) **mādhurya** “sweetness” (2.7 K.1)

- (b) **ojas** “force” (2.7 K.1)

- (c) **prasāda** “clarity” (2.7 K.1), “perspicuity” [K. Kris. 2.10 K?]

- (d) “...these are the *śabdaguṇas* mentioned by Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, and Vāmana. Ānandavardhana completely altered the older teaching by bringing them under the system of *rasas*. For him the *guṇas* are the properties of the *rasas*; see 2.7 below. Instead of the ten *guṇas* mentioned by older writers, Ānanda accepts only the three mentioned here.” (2.4 L.35)

14. **vṛtti** 1. “commentary” used by Abhinavagupta to refer to Ānandavardhana commentary {vs. Ānandavardhana’s Kārikā}; 2. “simple alliteration” — “The word vṛtti ... bears two different technical meanings in this book, one derived from Udbhaṭa the other from BhNS. The word is here used in Udbhaṭa’s sense, who applies this term to the three varieties of simple alliteration, that is, what later writers call *vṛtṭyanuprāsa*. He calls the three types *paruṣā* (harsh), *upanāgarikā* (polite), and *grāmyā* (rustic or vulgar). He calls the third type also *komalā* (soft).” (1.1a A.4)
15. **rīti** “style” (1.1a A, 1.1a L)
16. **sahrdayāṇām** “of sensitive reader” (1.1e A, 1.1e L, also 1.1 L.1)
17. **sahrdaya** “having their hearts *with* it” (1.1e L)
18. **sahrdayatva** “literary sensitivity” (1.1e L.8)
19. **prasiddha** 1. “well known to all” and “ornamented” (1.4 L) {used in 1.4 K: “well-known elements [of poetry]” & in 1.4 A: “known, ornamented, elements [of poetry]”}, “external constituents” [K. Kris. p.8]
20. **lakṣa** “that by which something is recognized” (1.1e L)
21. **lakṣaṇa** “definition” (1.1e L)
22. **guṇavṛtti** “secondary usage” (1.18 K), “indication” [K. Kris. p.35], but K. Kris.: *lakṣaṇayā* “secondary usage” (2.9 A, p51) which in IMP is “metonymy”?? TODO see where metonymy used before in IMP. “secondary or associated meaning” by Ānanda (1.1 K.2) Also see term # 13 and # 14
  - Ānanda’s two types of “secondary/associated meaning” (1.1 K.2)
    - (a) **upacāra** “metaphorical”
    - (b) **lakṣaṇā** “relational”
  - Abhinava’s two types of “secondary/associated meaning” (1.1 K.2)
    - (a) **gauṇa** “metaphorical”, “qualitative” (1.18 L)
    - (b) **lakṣaṇika** “relational”
23. **bhāsa** true or proper correlate (4.5 A, assumed from term # 24), “impression made on the mind” (M.W. p.756)
24. **ābhāsa** “false or improper correlate” (4.5 A), “semblance” (from usage in compounds, e.g. term # 25, 26), “imitation” (2.3 L)
25. **rasābhāsa** “semblance of sentiment” [K. Kris.] (2.3 K) Also see term # 2 & # 24
26. **bhāvābhāsa** “improper emotion” (1.4g L); “semblance of mood” [K. Kris.] (2.3 K) Also see term # 5 & # 24
27. **bhāvaprasānti** “(rise and) cessation” of mood/emotion [*bhāva*, term # 5] (2.3 K) Also see ninth rasa, *śānta* (‘peace’)
28. **bhāvaprasāma** “termination” of mood/emotion (1.5 L) {Seemingly used interchangeably with *bhāvaprasānti* term # 27}
29. **rasavadalaṅkāra** “figurative sentiment” [K. Kris. p.41] (?) See term # 30
30. **rasavat** a “figure of speech” different from *rasadhvani* (2.4 Intro. A), “that which contains rasa in a subordinated position” (2.3 L), “Daṇḍin says merely that it was a figure charming with *rasa* (2.275). Bhāmaha says little more: ‘The figure *rasavat* is where the rise of a *rasa* as śṛṅgāra is clearly exhibited. It is a locus of *rasa*, *sthāyibhāva*, *sañcārin* (= *vyabhicārin*), *vibhāva*, and dramatic portrayal’” (2.4 A.1)
31. ——— “non-sequential type” of *dhvani* (2.3 K), “undiscerned sequentiality” [K. Kris. p.41, 2.3 K], “without apparent sequence [from literal meaning to suggested meaning]” (2.4 Intro. A) [same translation, K. Kris. p.41 last paragraph]
32. —4 “pleasing to the ear” (2.7 A), “sound-harmony” [K. Kris. p.51], Note: “found alike in force [and sweetness]” WHERE FROM?
33. **dīpti** “excitement” (2.9 K, A, L), “fiery” (1.1a L)
34. **racanā** “structures”? (2.10 A)
35. **śabdaḥ** (a): “a word which gives rise to suggestion” (1.13 L)
36. **arthaḥ** (b) “a meaning which gives rise to a suggestion” (1.13 L)
37. **vyāpāraḥ** (c) “operation” (1.5 L), “the operation, the suggestion of the implicit meaning” (1.13 L)
38. **vyāṅgyam** (d) “the suggested meaning itself” (1.13 L)
39. **samudāyaḥ** (e) “the group; or a poem which embodies all the above factors” (a–d) (1.13 L) Note: (a–e) given by Abhinavagupta (1.1 K.1, EC p.76)
40. **samaya** “conventions by which words transmit meaning” (1.1 L) {Note: this is an alternative idea to *dhvani*, argued against in the *Dhvanyāloka*}
41. **anubandha** “pertinent point” (1.1 L.1, EC p.79)
  - (a) **abhidheya** “the subject to be treated”
  - (b) **prayojana** “purpose”
  - (c) **sambandha** “suppose that sambandha refers to the connection between the subject and the purpose”
  - (d) **adhikāra** “the qualification required of the reader”

42. **lakṣayatām** those “who are noticing” (1.1e A); “describing it by means of a definition” (1.1e L). Possibly used differently by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, see 1.1e A.2.
43. **ānanda** “bliss” (1.1e L), “delight”? (1.1 K), also name of the author {Ānandavardhana}
44. **saṅghaṭanā** “arrangement” (1.1a L), “texture” (1.1a L), “certain degrees of compounding” (1.1a A.3)
45. **carvaṇā** “tasting” (2.4 L)
46. **rasacarvaṇā** “relishing of *rasa*” (1.1e L), described as “it is the relishing of *rasa* that gives [poetry] its life” (1.1e L)
47. **rasanā** “relishing (*rasanā*) is a special kind of perception” (2.4 L)
48. **anurāga** “stimulation” (1.4a L)
49. **abhidhā** “designation” (1.4a L), “denotation” (1.5 L); “name, appellation” or “the literal power or sense of a word” or “a word, sound” (M.W. p.63)
50. **bhāvanā** “aesthetic efficacy” (1.4a L) “i.e., the ability to create *rasa*” (2.4 L); same translation for *bhāvakatva* “efficacy” (2.4 L)
51. **vastu** “situation” (1.4g L)
52. **āsvāda** “relish” (1.5 L.2), “relishing” (2.4 L)
53. **āsvādyamāna** “(the process of) being relished” (1.4g L)
54. **hr̥dayasaṃvāda** “sympathetic response” (1.5 L.2, 2.4 L)
55. **druti** “melting of the mind”? {a kind of relishing/aesthetic enjoyment} (1.5 L.3, 2.4 L)
56. **vistara** “expansion” {a kind of relishing/aesthetic enjoyment} (1.5 L.3, 2.4 L)
57. **vikāsa** “radiance” {a kind of relishing/aesthetic enjoyment} (1.5 L.3, 2.4 L)
58. **bhoga** “enjoyment” (2.4 L), “aesthetic pleasure” (2.4 L)
59. **bhogakṛttva** “efficacy of aesthetic enjoyment” or “the power of aesthetic enjoyment” (2.4 L)
60. **bhogīkaraṇa** “causing aesthetic enjoyment” (2.4 L)
61. **cittavṛtti** “stable state of mind” (1.4g L), “thought-trend” (1.5 L), NB: the *sthāyibhāvas* are a type of ‘state of mind’ (2.3 L)
62. **parisphurati** “it makes itself felt”? (1.4g L)
63. **sphurati** “makes itself felt” (1.4g L) TODO: diff from 62??
64. **vāsanā** “latent impressions” (1.4g L) {text has note: ‘see 2.4 L.6’}, “minds are characterized by a great variety of latent impressions (*vāsanā*).” (2.4 L)
65. **sāmarthya** “force”: “When the suggestion of *rasa* is ascribed to a word, the force (*sāmarthya*), that is, the cooperating force, viz., the *vibhāvas*, etc., is the directly denoted meaning.” (1.4g L)
66. **śakti** “force”? “When the suggestion of *rasa* is ascribed to the directly denoted meaning ... then the force (*sāmarthya*, *śakti*) of this meaning is the totality of denotative words arranged in their particular way.” (1.4g L)
67. **saṃsarga** “syntax” (1.4g L)
68. — “memory elements” (1.5 L)
69. **alaukika** “super-normal” (1.18 L)
70. **rasatā** “aesthetic relish” (1.18 L)
71. **rasapratīti** “apprehension of *rasa*” (1.18 L)
72. **vijñā** “(give) understanding”? (1.18 L)
73. **anubhāvayati** “experience” (1.18 L)
74. **anubhavana** “experiencing” (1.18 L)
75. **saṃskāra** “memory bank” (1.18 L)
76. **rasyamāṇatā** “a being tasted, a gustation, of beauty” (1.18 L)
77. **svabhāvavacana** “one’s own nature’ (2.3 L)
78. **prakāra** “variety” (2.3 L)
79. **bhāvapraśama** “the cessation of an emotion” (2.3 L)
80. **pratipatti** “apprehension” (2.4 L)
81. **pratipattuḥ** “audience’s” {pratipattṛ is the root noun} (2.3 L)
82. **asaṃlakṣyakramavyaṅgya** “——”? (2.3 L)
83. **pratīyate** “perceived” (2.4 L)
84. **gocara** “direct object” delete?? (2.4 L)
85. **avabhāsa** “appearance (or semblance, *avabhāsa*) of a stable emotion in the actor” (2.4 L)
86. **vyutpādana** “educative effect” (2.4 L)

## Sections of text included in EC Reading

Introduction (15–17); 1.1 K, A, L (47–49 partial); –*skipping*–; 1.1 L (partial 51–52 partial); 1.1a A & L (54–58); –*skipping*–; 1.1e A & L (partial 67–73); –*skipping*–; 1.4 K, A, L, 1.4a A & L, 1.4b A & L partial text (78–84); 1.4b L partial text & footnotes (92); 1.4c A & L (98–99); –*skipping*–; 1.4g A & L, 1.5 K, A, L (105–119); –*skipping*–; 1.18 K, A, L (188–196); –*skipping*–; 2.3–2.5 K, A, L {for all in this range} (214–233); –*skipping*–; 2.7–2.10 K, A, L {for all in this range} (251–260); –*skipping*–; 4.5 K, A, L (690–696)