BA English Honours (BAEGH)
Understanding Drama
BEGE -142

Course Code: BEGE-142/2026-27

Max. Marks: 100

Answer the following questions

Section A

1. Write short notes on the following in about 200 words each: 2x5 = 10

   a. Classical Sanskrit theatre
   b. Epic theatre

Section B

2. Answer the following reference to the context in about 300 words each: 3x10= 30

   a. Critically evaluate the character of Chris Keller.
   b. Critically analyze the character of Mahendranath.
   c. Discuss the character portrayal of Dedan Kimathi.

Section C

3. Answer the following question in about 800 words each 3x20= 60

   a. Discuss the ending of *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*.
   b. How is patriarchy reflected in *Halfway House*?
   c. Discuss father son relationship in *All My Sons*.

1. Write short notes on the following in about 200 words each: 2x5 = 10

a. Classical Sanskrit theatre

Answer

Classical Sanskrit theatre is one of the oldest and most sophisticated traditions of dramatic performance in India. It developed through an interaction of poetry, dance, music, dialogue and ritual, and its principles are discussed in Bharata's Natyashastra. This treatise explains dramatic composition, acting, stage arrangements, gestures and the emotional experience of spectators. Sanskrit theatre did not regard a play simply as a realistic imitation of everyday events. It tried to transform experience into an aesthetically satisfying performance.

The idea of rasa is central to this tradition. The emotions represented by characters, such as love, courage, anger and sorrow, are communicated through the actor's words, bodily movements, facial expressions and costume. These forms of expression are collectively associated with abhinaya. The spectator experiences a refined aesthetic emotion rather than merely sharing the personal suffering of a fictional person. Music and dance therefore have an important dramatic function, not just a decorative one.

Sanskrit plays often draw their stories from epics, legends, royal life and familiar cultural traditions. Kalidasa's Abhijnanashakuntalam and Shudraka's Mrichchhakatika show the tradition's variety: the former explores love, memory and recognition, while the latter presents social life and political complications. The sutradhara may introduce a performance, and the prologue establishes a relationship between stage and audience. Characters can also speak different languages or dialects according to dramatic convention and social position.

The stage also joined entertainment with social and ethical questions. Dramatic situations could reveal conflict between love and duty, personal desire and public responsibility, or appearance and reality. The experience of rasa helps the audience reflect on such conflicts without reducing the performance to a lecture. This balance of enjoyment and reflection explains the continuing relevance of Sanskrit drama.

Many classical plays move towards reconciliation or an auspicious resolution, although they can portray serious conflict on the way. Their combination of structured conventions and imaginative freedom makes them distinctive. Classical Sanskrit theatre should therefore be understood as an integrated art in