

Kalidasa's Dushyantha and Shakuntala: A Behaviour Study

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Abstract :

Abhinjanasakunthala is a world famous kavya in Sanskrit literature. In this paper, I make an observation of the character of Dushyantha and Sakuntala, who are described as rich in virtue in this kavya, and set an example to the best couples all over the world. Here we can see the the genius of Kalidasa and the male-dominated society of that time, using his characters to adapt the needs of a society.

Keywords - Abhinjanasakunthala, Kalidasa, Dushyantha, Sakunthala, Gandarva marriage, Mahabharata

Introduction :

Kalidasa is one of the most outstanding Sanskrit playwrights. The Abhijnanasakunthala is the most famous work of Kalidasa and one of the most captivating of all his works. The saying "Kalidasasya Sarvasvamabhijnanasakunthalam" has been discussed famous. Although scholars have suggested that the plot of the Abhijnanasakuntala may be the Shakuntalopakhyaana of the Mahabharata or the Shakuntalopakhyaana described in the Swargakhanda of the Padmapurana, the theme of the drama in the Mahabharata predates the chronology.

According to the Mahabharata, Shakuntala, the daughter of Vishwamitra and Menaka, was brought up by Kanva Maharshi and married to Dushyanta who arrived at the Kanvashrama, as per the Gandharva system of marriage. Later, Dushyantha, forgetting Sakunthala returns to his capital on his own. Pregnant Sakunthala gives birth to a son and the sage sends them to the royal palace. But Dhushyanta, who is not ready to accept Sakuntala, hears an asariri at that time and accepts her.

This type of story from the Mahabharata is handled by Kalidasa by using his genius to adapt the plot of it in such a way as to embellish the male dominance or to gratify the ruling class in a way that suits to his society.

In the story, which begins with Dushyanta's hunting in the Abhijnanasakuntala, Sakuntala and Dushyantha fall in love at first sight and marry as per the Gandharva system

with the help of their friends. Dushyantha bids farewell by telling Sakunthala that he will return to his capital as soon as possible. At this time, the poet narrates a scene in which Durvasa Maharshi arrives at the ashram and curses Sakuntala in a way that conforms to the story. The King wears sakunthala his seal-ring on his departure from her. Kanva Maharshi, accompanied by the asramam dwellers, companions the pregnant Sakuntala to the palace of Dushyanta. On the way, she loses his seal-ring; and he refuses to accept the pregnant Sakuntala. Sakuntala calls the mother Earth and disappears from the palace. Sometime later, in the Abhijnanasakuntala, it is mentioned that King Dushyanta accepts Sakuntala.

The core difference between the two stories is that the arrival of Durvasa Maharshi is also and his curse. In the Mahabharata, Sakuntala is accepted in the royal court, while Sakuntala in the Abhijnanasakuntala is rejected in the court and accepted at another place. This too can be considered as the genius of the poet or the creation of society at that time.

The most important thing to note here is that Kalidasa actually saves King Dushyanta from various exceptions by including the story of the ring and the curse of Durvasa. Dushyantha, who has several wives, approaches Sakuntala at Kanvasrama. The character of Dushyantha is portrayed in such a way as to use Sakunthala to serve her longing as just a woman who wishes to achieve her dream as soon as he sees Sakuntala. Kalidasa introduces his protagonist, as one who refuses to accept a married woman for saying so, and is made rich by adding various elements such as the knowledge of the ring and the curse of Durvasa in order to tarnish the character's reputation. Kalidasa, realizing that the sight of Dushyantha publicly rejecting Sakunthala would lead to the portray of the King in a very bad light, must have used his genius to add such elements to the plot so that such an infamy would not come to him. Kalidasa depicts Dushyantha's character as that of a righteous and punctual king. That is why it can be seen that he saves the hero own in many occasions.

The King, who arrives at the Ashram premises, should not have fallen in love with the woman there at first sight if he is a pious. His things high by about himself as soon as he sees Sakunthala. Moreover, as a king he could have visited the monastery directly. Instead, he hides and tries to listen to the secret conversations of the strange women. This is never the case with a good king. It is clear from Kalidasa's lines that Sakuntala's dress and body structure are of more importance to his mind. (Abhinjanasakuntala. 1. 19)

The King makes it very clear to his comrades that his mind desires for her. (Abhinjanasakunthala. 1. 22). Here is Kalidasa is trying to idealize the King's character. Kalidasa records that, despite being very ambitious for Sakuntala, the King wants to own her through marriage. He portrays this by attaching a characteristic majesty to his character.

Dushyanta, before expressing his love and desire to Sakuntala, that she is suitable for him. If the love he had at first sight was the one most genuine one has praised by the poets, he would have openly expressed his love without inquiring into her caste or creed. Here, Kalidasa unknowingly reveals the true nature of the King. The King realizes that she was born into a race that suits to him and says that she is a woman, whom he can approach. ((Abhinjanasakunthala. 1. 27)

Here Kalidasa depicts the king's love affair. Kalidasa tries to convince us that his character is not a subject matter and that he truly loves Shakuntala. Kalidasa is trying to prove that his character is not that of a lecher who robs Sakuntala of his history and runs away from there.

Dushyantha ruthlessly rejects Sakuntala, who later arrives in his capital. She is received very harshly with sharp words. But Kalidasa tries to prove that all such conversations are due to the curse he had received. He tries to establish the nobility of the King in the minds of his comrades when he says that it is not his fault that he forgot his wife; and that it happens through a curse. According to the poet, the reason for Dushyanta's rejection of Sakuntala is only a matter of casual dementia. Another characteristic of the king is his fear of his wives. While looking at Sakuntala's picture, he hides it behind his fear on his Pattamahishi (his consort) who arrives there. Moreover, in many private scenes and moments, we see the King being ashamed when he unknowingly mentions the name, Sakuntala.

From this it can be seen that Dushyanta is not a very bad King but he is at the forefront of many virtues. But he does not deserve the title of the King who is the very embodiment of virtues. Looking at it in this way, even if the protagonist of a play is not omnipotent, we may have doubt on how he becomes world famous. Repentance is the solution to any mistake. It can be said that the protagonist of this play is bestowed with the same feeling

that comes naturally to a person, especially when he regrets the mistake he makes when he became, a King. The ultimate success of the play is that at the end of the story, the comrades are ready to accept the character whole heartedly.

As regards Sakuntala, Kalidasa portrays her as an ordinary woman in about half of the play. In the first scenes, the friends enjoy the fickleness and mischiefs of Shakuntala. Her care and love for her companions, comrades and father are examples of this. Yet she sees particles of first love in the man whom she meets for the first time. Kalidasa describes the emotional feelings and shyness of an ordinary girl in a very beautiful way. He portrays the heroine as a spring full of joys and mental annoyances of a young, married girl. But in later episodes we can see the strong character who shows how strong she is as a woman, leaving behind the gentle look she had until then as a girl. Sakuntala, who by now becomes a very adorable girl and a young woman, is shocked when she hears that her first adopted lover rudely rejects her. Kalidasa makes Sakuntala a very strong and vigorous character.

Sakuntala's love is intense, uncontrollable and powerful. She believes in her love and presents herself as an immaculate woman. When the King publicly rejects her, she fully upholds her personality. Sakuntala, dressed as a village girl, arrives at Dushyanta's court, and when she realizes that the King rejects her, she addresses him as 'Aryaputra', at first and corrects herself and calls herself 'Anarya'. Here one can see the whole anger and hatred of a cheated woman rising out of her mind. The evil one loses even the ability to face her face that burns with rage. Sakuntala, who has been angry for so long, soon realizes that she is being orphaned when she hears the opinion of the fellow monks in the Asram that her love has brought shame to her entire race. The priest's words that if she sees the face of the baby that she delivers with the look of an emperor, she should question her self-esteem. Sakuntala later escapes, telling him to give her a refuge on this Earth. She had believed a lot in her own love at first. But she since then relinquishes that romantic expression and upholds her personality as a woman. Later, her motherly expression and love for her son show all this.

Conclusion :

Kalidasa does not portray Dushyantha and Sakuntala as characters with completely virtuous character traits.

Shakuntala, who falls in love with an unacquainted evil man without thinking of her family and race, and marries him as per the Gandharva style, degenerates into an ashram maiden. Similarly, a wicked man who marries a stranger cannot be seen as a virtuous fellow, either. There is trays of tragic element in both of them.

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