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The Immortality of Love in Kalidasa's Abhijanashakuntalam: A Brief Study'

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ABSTRACT: The enthralling tale of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala, a young woman of great beauty and morality, is told in Kalidasa's immortal Sanskrit play Abhijnakuntalam. With themes of fate, memory, and the strength of real love, the drama crafts a story of love, separation, and ultimately reunion. Abhijnakuntalam, a book about a secret marriage between Dushyanta and Shakuntala and the difficulties that followed, is set in the historic Hastinapura kingdom in ancient India. The play delves into the complexity of human emotions and the transformative power of love through the renowned character of Shakuntala. Abhijnakuntalam continues to enthrall audiences across nations and is a tribute to Kalidasa's literary genius thanks to its rich poetic language, dynamic characters, and profound philosophical concepts.

KEYWORDS: Sanskrit Drama, Classical Indian Literature, Love in Romance, Hindu mythology and epics, Love, desire, duty, fate, loyalty, forgiveness, Cultural and social context of Ancient India.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 4th–5th century CE author of Classical Sanskrit, Kalidas, is widely cited as the greatest poet and playwright of ancient India. His plays and poems are mostly inspired by his philosophy and the Hindu Puranas. The only works of his that have survived are three plays, two epic poems, and two shorter poems. There isn't much information about his life other of what can be learned from his plays and poetry. His writings were most likely composed before the fifth century CE, while the exact date is unknown.

Kalidas may have lived in Kalinga, close to Ujjain and the Himalayas, according to scholarly conjecture.

This theory is supported by Kalidasa's in-depth descriptions of the Himalayas in Kumrasambhava, Meghadat, and Raghuvaa (sixth sarga), as well as by his ardent eulogies of the Kalingan emperor Hemngada.

The Birthplace of Kalidasa, written in 1926 by Kashmiri Pandit and Sanskrit scholar Lakshmi Dhar Kalla (1891–1953), attempts to identify Kalidasa's birthplace using his works. He came to the conclusion that Kalidas was born in Kashmir, migrated south, and sought the support of local kings to succeed. He referenced Kalidasa's articles as supporting evidence for the following points:

The saffron plant, deodar trees, musk deer, etc. are examples of flora and fauna that are present in Kashmir but not in Ujjain or Kalinga.

Describe the tarns and glades, as well as other topographical features, that are typical of Kashmir.

Mention of a few less significant locations that, according to Kalla, are comparable to those in Kashmir. These locations are not particularly well-known outside of Kashmir; hence, nobody who is not closely connected to Kashmir could have known about them.

It makes mention of some myths with Kashmiri roots, including the Nikumbha legend (which is described in the Kashmiri classic Nlamata Pura) and the myth that Kashmir was formed from a lake (which is mentioned in Shakuntala). This tale claims that a tribal chief by the name of Ananta emptied a lake to exterminate a monster. It is mentioned in the Nlamata Pura. The location of the former lake (now land) was given the name "Kashmir" by Ananta in honour of his father, Kayapa.

According to Kalla, the Pratyabhijna school of philosophy (a subset of Kashmir Shaivism) is dramatised in Akuntal in an allegorical manner. Further supporting his claim, Kalla says that at the time, this branch was unknown outside of Kashmir.

Another antiquated myth claims that Kalidas visited Lanka's monarch, Kumradsa, and was assassinated there due to treachery. According to legend, Kalidas was born at Kaviltha, a village on the banks of the Mandakini River, three kilometres from Shakteepeeth Kalimath Rudraprayag district. The annual Arpund June 17 Fair is conducted to commemorate Kalidas' birth.

II. EARLY LIFE

According to both ancient and mediaeval accounts, Kalidasa served as the court poet for the monarch Vikramaditya. It is believed that a mythical king by the name of Vikramaditya ruled from Ujjain in the first century BCE. According to some academics, the legendary Vikramaditya is not at all historically accurate. Chandragupta II (r. 380 CE-415 CE) and Yaodharman (r. 6th century CE) are the two most notable kings to have ruled from Ujjain and used the title Vikramaditya. There were other rulers who did the same.

The theory that Kalidasa flourished under Chandragupta II's authority is the one that is most largely accepted, placing his lifespan around the fourth or fifth century CE. This theory has gotten support from some Western scholars ever since William Jones and A. B. Keith's time. Academics and indologists from the modern west, like Stanley Wolpert, also provide support to this notion. Kalidas is also included in this era by several Indian scholars, including Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi and Ram Gupta. This theory postulates that his career might have continued during the reigns of Kumragupta I (414–455 CE) and Skandagupta (r. 455–467 CE).

Some scholars, notably M. Srinivasachariar and T. S. Narayana Sastri, believe that the writings attributed to "Kalidas" may not be the work of a single author. According to Srinivasachariar, texts from the eighth and ninth centuries make references to three well-known writers by the name of Kalidas. Among them are Devendra, Rjaekhara, and Abhinanda. The author of Kavi-Kalpa-Lat is Devendra. Sastri lists the works of the three Kalidasas in the following chronological order:

Setu-Bandha and the three dramas Abhijnakuntalam, Mlavikgnimitram, and Vikramrvayam are written by Kalidas, also known as Mtgupta.

Kalidas, also known as Medharudra, is the author of the Kumrasambhava, Meghadta, and Raghuvaa. Sastri goes on to mention six other literary figures known by the name "Kalidasa": Parimala Kalidasa alias Padmagupta (author of Navashaska Carita), Kalidasa alias Yamakakavi (author of Nalodaya), Nava Kalidasa (author of Champu Bhagavata), Akbariya Kalidasa (author of several samasyas or riddles), Kalidasa VIII (author of Lambodara Prahasana), and Abhinava Kalidasa alias Madhava (author of Sakepa-kara-Vijayam).

According to K. Krishnamoorthy, the common names "Vikramaditya" and "Kalidas" were used to refer to several patron rulers and court poets, respectively.

III. WORKS

Two mahkvyas of Kalidasa are titled Kumrasambhava, where Kumra is short for Kartikeya and sambhava denotes the potential for an event—in this case, a birth—to take place. The Raghuvaa (the Raghu Dynasty) is what was implied by this phrase, and as a result, the birth of Kartikeya is known as Kumrasambhava.

The book Kumrasambhava, written by the goddess Prvat, details Kumra's birth, adolescence, union with Iva, and the birth of their son Kumra (Kartikeya).

The epic poem Raghuvaa is about the monarchs of the Raghu dynasty. Minor Poetry

The Meghadta (The Cloud Messenger), a khaakvya (minor poetry), was also written by Kalidas. It tells the tale of a Yaka who attempted to get in touch with his beloved through a cloud. This poem was written in the well-known Mandkrnt metre of Kalidasa, which is renowned for its exquisite poetry. It is one of Kalidasa's best-known poems and has been the subject of several analyses.

One of Kalidasa's innumerable writings, The Shyammala Dandakam, praises Goddess Matangi's beauty.

There are three plays by Kalidas. Most people consider Abhijnakuntalam, which means "Of the recognition of "akuntal," to be one of them. It was one of the earliest Sanskrit compositions to be translated into English, and many other languages followed.

The first work of Indian literature to be widely read in Europe was Klidsa's Abhijnakuntalam. Many famous poets, like Herder and Goethe, responded to the translation by first translating it into English and then from English into German with wonder and delight.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw many European painters drawing inspiration from Klidsa's works, as demonstrated by Camille Claudel's sculpture Shakuntala.

IV. THE PLAY

The title of Kalidasa's play Abhijnanashakuntala, which was written around the fifth century CE and is frequently cited as the greatest work of Indian literature ever, is "The Recognition of Shakuntala" in Sanskrit.

- The expression "beauty finds its ornaments anywhere (Kalidas 20)

Sakuntala is so gorgeous that King claims she doesn't need to wear elaborate clothing.

The piece's narrative, which is based on a legend, tells the account of King Dushyanta, who seduced the nymph Shakuntala, abandoned her and his offspring, and later brought them together in heaven. The newborn is Bharata, the subcontinent of Bharata (Bharatavarsha, "Subcontinent of Bharata") that bears the name of the country of India. Kalidasa retells the story as a romantic idyll with characters that personify the ideal aristocratic ideal: the girl, sentimental, selfless, and alive to little else than the pleasures of nature; and the king, the first servant of the dharma (religious and social law and duties), a resolute hero yet tender and suffering from agonies over his lost love.

The plot and characters are realistic thanks to a change made by Kalidasa: Dushyanta is not to blame for the breakup of the couple; he is merely acting as a result of a sage's curse. All of Kalidasa's works depict the beauty of nature with an unequalled sophistication of metaphor. Love's Eternal Life in Kalidasa's Abhijana The Indian belief that "true love is immortal" is reflected in the topic of Shakuntalam. The drama chronicles the romance between

Shakuntala and Dushyanta, whose relationship is shattered by a curse that renders Dushyanta forgetful of his wife and their secret marriage. Nevertheless, the curse only puts their bond to the test rather than destroying it. Shakuntala and Dushyanta were reunited thanks to a ring that Dushyanta had given to her as a token of appreciation and proof of their relationship. With poetic elegance and analogies, Kalidasa captures the beauty of nature and the feelings of lovers.

He also demonstrates how the gods reward goodness and morality by assisting the lovers in overcoming challenges and regaining their bliss. The play has been translated into other languages and is regarded as the best piece of Indian literature ever written.

- Though I long to see my husband, I am filled with sorrow as I start to leave the hermitage (Kalidas 37).

Sakuntala is expressing that as she bows and walks, she imagines that they are truly and legally wed. She uses her entire body and directs her gaze to her feet, whereas in western theatre, the attention is on the face.

In his drama Abhijana Shakuntalam, Kalidasa relates the tale of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala, a young woman who lives in seclusion with the sage Kanva. During a hunting trip, Dushyanta falls in love with Shakuntala and secretly weds her. He pledges to come back for her and presents her with a ring as a symbol of their marriage. Shakuntala, however, is cursed by a guru by the name of Durvasa to be forgotten by Dushyanta since she is too preoccupied with him to properly greet him. The ring must be seen by Dushyanta one more time in order to break the curse. In order to visit Dushyanta at his palace, Shakuntala departs from the hermitage, but while travelling, she loses the ring in a river. "Father, will I ever see the grove again?" (kalidas 64)

When it comes to Chuang Chong, nothing remains the same. Saktunala must leave the grove like a young person departing for college. When they return, it has changed (their bedroom is now a workout space, for example).

Dushyanta rejects her when she enters the palace because he does not recognise her. Shakuntala is whisked away by Menaka, a celestial nymph who is truly Shakuntala's mother. In the forest, she gives birth to a son she names Bharata. In the meantime, Dushyanta discovers the ring in a fish's gut and reclaims his memory of Shakuntala. As a result of his regret, he seeks her out. When he sees Bharata, he is impressed by his bravery and regal traits. After Shakuntala is brought back by Menaka, he rejoins her. The play concludes with the joyful family visiting the castle and receiving divine blessings.

The Immortality of Love in Abhijana Shakuntalam

King was wondering how he could constantly make mistakes while leading people. If your dharma is to be a leader, it will physically tax your body.

In his play Abhijana Shakuntalam, Kalidasa examines the idea of love's immortality. The play depicts the tale of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala, a young woman who lives with the sage Kanva in a hermitage. A curse puts their relationship to the test by making Dushyanta forget Shakuntala, but heavenly intervention reunites them finally, and their son Bharata becomes the ancestor of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The play demonstrates several ways in which their love endures forever. First, because it is unforced and unplanned, their love is eternal. When Dushyanta stops by the hermitage on a hunting trip, they instantly click. Their physical attractiveness and their moral characteristics draw them to one another. They both have a love of the outdoors and animals in general. The forest, which is teeming with flowers, fruits, birds, and deer, is in perfect harmony.

The heavenly influence of Menaka, Shakuntala's mother and a celestial

nymph, inspires their love as well. She sets up their encounter and later brings them back together.

The second reason their love endures is that it is admirable and virtuous. They exchange vows and rings—a signet ring for Dushyanta and a ring for Shakuntala—as symbols of their marriage. They vouch for each other's loyalty and adherence to their respective obligations. Dushyanta is a king who has a responsibility to defend his realm and uphold dharma, or moral law. Shakuntala, a sage's daughter, is required to abide by the hermitage's laws and obey her foster father. Additionally, they ask the gods and their elders for their blessing before being married. To appease the gods and obtain their benefits, they offer sacrifices and execute ceremonies.

Thirdly, because of how strong and enduring their love is, it is eternal. Durvasa, a sage who becomes enraged with Shakuntala for not greeting him properly when she is preoccupied with thoughts of Dushyanta, casts a curse on them, but their love endures. He curses Dushyanta to forget her unless he finds the ring again. In addition, their love endures the loss of the ring, which Shakuntala misplaces in a river on her way from the hermitage to Dushyanta's palace. A fisherman finds the ring after it has been devoured by a fish and delivers it to Dushyanta. Additionally, their love endures the years of separation, during which they grieve and crave for one another while raising their son Bharata in the forest. With the help of Indra, the king of the gods, who shows Dushyanta their son and returns Shakuntala to him, their love is ultimately rekindled.

Fourthly, their love lives forever because it is treasured and remembered. They are immortalised through their son Bharata, the founder of the Bharata dynasty and progenitor of the Pandavas and Kauravas, the heroes of the Mahabharata story. When they reconcile, the gods also display their love for them by lavishing them with gifts and praise. While being enthralled and inspired by their story, the audience is also reminded of their love.

"I bow down before you with my son" (Kalidas 116)

Sakuntala makes this cliched and sexist remark at the end of the performance while virtually kneeling over.

The immortality of love is a concept that is explored in the play Abhijana Shakuntalam. In numerous ways, the play demonstrates how Dushyanta and Shakuntala's love is eternal: it is unforced and unplanned, honourable and virtue, strong and enduring, cherished and

remembered. They are connected to the cosmic order through their love, which transcends human bounds.

IV. CONCLUSION

The classic work of Indian literature, Abhijana Shakuntalam, by Kalidasa depicts the universal topic of pure love triumphing over all challenges. The drama tells the love story of Shakuntala, a woodland girl, and King Dushyanta, a sage's daughter. A curse that causes Dushyanta to forget his wife and son interferes with their secret marriage. The curse is lifted, and the lovers are reunited by the intervention of divine forces after many struggles and tribulations.

Kalidasa expertly combines imagination and realism, human emotions, and the beauty of nature to produce a gripping drama that engages the mind and the heart. He demonstrates how true love is built on inner purity and dedication rather than on outward appearances or material success. He also demonstrates the immortality of pure love, which is



unaffected by the constraints of place, time, and destiny. The drama comes to a joyful conclusion with Dushyanta and Shakuntala receiving divine favour and their son Bharata becoming the founder of a powerful dynasty.

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