

SHAKUNTALAM

India's classical drama refers to the drama written in ancient period in India. India has a rich heritage of Sanskrit drama and theatre. The earlier literature Pannu and Pantanjali is the first form of dramatic writing. But ~~Plata~~ Natyashastra is considered to be the origin of Sanskrit drama. Sanskrit drama is a combination of music, dialogue, gesticulation and imitation.

India drama was developed on its own, it was without any influence. H. Wilson says, 'whatever may be the merits or defects of the Hindu dramas, they were definitely its own.'

Kalidasa is a prominent dramatist of Sanskrit literature. He is considered to be the Shakespeare of Indian classical drama. As Shakespeare was for the world, so was Kalidasa for the Sanskrit literature and literary world. He was gifted with unsurpassed genius of dramas and lyrics. His works are the reflection of ancient Indian culture and civilization. He had been called as 'Mahakavi', 'Kavisirama', 'Kavikulaguru'. Kalidasa belongs to 2nd century B.C. To his contribution lies three dramas, two epics and two poems. *Abhijnanasakuntalam*, *Vikramorvasiya* and *Malavikagnimitra* are plays. *Raghuvansam* and *Kumarasambhavam* are epics and *Meghadutam* and *Ritusamharam* are poems. Among all his creations 'Shakuntalam' is the essence of his literary creations. The story is about love and marriage. King Dushyanta falls in love with hermit girl Shakuntala, later of they have secret marriage but the couple had to face a curse from the rishi Durvasa. Shakuntala is forgotten by the King. But at the end the reunion takes place in Kasyapa's hermitage. The play proves that true love is immortal. *Shakuntalam* has highest form of love, tranquility and controlled. After marriage Shakuntala remains in the hermitage and Dushyant returns back to palace. Shakuntala gives birth to a boy child and

and takes the boy child to Dushyant's palace, where Dushyant fails to recognise Shakuntala. But later with the appearance of Fisherman with the signet ring, the memory of Dushyant is recovered.

The hermitages places ^{are} of union and are holy places. Kanva's place is the place of physical union and Kasyapa's hermitage is a place of spiritual union. The lovers and love idenates from physical beauty to moral beauty. Shakuntala faces the destiny and suffering due to curse of Puruit Durvasa. Faith plays a important role

The play Shakuntala has several worlds. The first world is the great world of nature. 'Shakuntala' is portrayed as the 'Lady of nature'. She is the child of nature. Right from birth she abandoned by Meeka. She grows in the lap of nature and there is also a bird named 'Shakuntal' 'Sakuntal', and therefore she was named 'Shakuntala'. Shakuntala's world is a world of love, of external beauty. We find physical union of lovers. At first it is the union of souls.

The drama has a combination of romance and fairytale. Shakuntala was born from the womb of fairy and therefore she is like a fairy. The significant thing to be noted

in the play is that it is not only Shakuntala who is associated with nature, the complete play is staged in the nature and has nothing to do with courts place. Dushyanta is a brave king and a warrior. He marries Shakuntala but due to the curse of Durvasa he forgets Shakuntala residing within the nature and ~~is~~ not the Kingly or palacial comfort. He lost the ring that was associated with the memory of Shakuntala. He could not recollect the surroundings of Rama's ashram and not Shakuntala.

As ~~was~~ Dushyant was ^{a brave King} invited by India to fight against demons. But despite of all this, drama is not about Dushyant but of Shakuntala's spiritual growth.

~~The~~ In the drama Kalidasa has put the signet ring as a ~~central~~ ^{important} role. It is ~~not~~ on this ring that the ^{theme} recognition of depends. The signet ring is the only proof of Shakuntala's wedding with Dushyant. Unfortunately, the ring slips off from Shakuntala's finger in Sachi's pool. This led the King Dushyant forget Shakuntala. The ~~signet~~ ring is a ~~important~~ ^{important} character in the drama. It is an inanimate thing. As the ring loses so the memory of King Dushyant. It is

not the King Dusyant responsible for re-
pudiating Shakuntala but it is the
king.

The play is in 5 acts. The
first act is about King Dusyant
or his hunting trying to kill the
deer but could not do as he was
stopped by the ascetics from Kanva
ashram, where Dusyant realises his
mistake. Here, Dusyant meets Shakun-
tala and praises her beauty. Sha-
kuntala also experiences psychological
fulfilment and creates in her heart
It also shows Dusyant's fascinating
towards the feminine beauty of Shakun-
tala.

The Act II is a conversation
between the King Dusyant and his
companion Madhava. He feels for
Shakuntala so he gets deep and he
orders to encamp near her village. His
desire to meet Shakuntala seems to
materialise when two hermits from
Kanva's ashram come requesting for
help to guard them from demons.
Dusyant gets ready to protect them.
But to his companion Madhava
he does not reveal about his love
for Shakuntala, whereas he says
that it is a tale, which he cov-
ered for the little diversion from lov-

sensitive duties. He does say so just to conceal his affair from the ladies of the Royal palace. Dushyant goes on to speak about the growing love for Shakuntala and her beauty.

Act III is all about the deep feeling of love that Shakuntala has developed for King Dushyant. She suffers from pining because of longing for him as the side is Dushyant's love for Shakuntala. Where he says;

False is the statement - - -
- - - and your arrows are tripped with
hardest adamaat"

Dushyant is wounded by the arrow of Shakuntala's beauty. He keeps on admiring the beauty of Shakuntala by peering behind the bush. They get married by Gandharva tradition.

In the blooming of their love Priyamvada and Anusuya plays an important role. The signet ring gifted to Shakuntala by Dushyant becomes a token of love. He leaves Shakuntala with a promise to return back as soon as possible.

Act IV is a tragedy. When Durvase enters the cottage, Shakuntala lost in the dream of Dushyant fails to notice his presence. The irate sage could not control the neglect and

by Shakuntala made a curse that when
she was thinking of would no more
recognise her. But the friends of
Shakuntala^{are} consoled her saying that she
bearing the signet ring, the curse
would have no impact. This
curse had made Shakuntala to face a
life filled with sorrow. Shakuntala
was unaware of the curse, as it
was only heard by her friends.

Act V. After sometime Shakuntala
brought the hermitage to the palace of
Dushyant. But the curse of Sage
Durvasa works and King Dushyant
fails to recognise her, as she had
lost the signet ring. He refuses to
accept her as his wife. The ~~to~~ ring
had slipped off her finger while she
was taking bath in Suci pool.
Shakuntala tries her best to convince
the King but could not and rebukes
Dushyant for faithlessness and returns
to the hermitage.

Act VI ^{of} is the justice
of Shakuntala and realisation of Dus-
hyant. Fisherman who had found the
signet ring comes to the palace.
Seeing the ring Dushyant recalls
the first memory of Shakuntala and
recollects all the promises he had
made Shakuntala. He Now it is turn

of Dushyant to suffer. He forgets all the joys of life. He curses for the murder towards Shakuntala.

"Rudely awakened by persistent grief. ---
--- to rouse it from sleep, is now painfully awake."

On the other hand ~~the~~ the mother of Shakuntala invites the grief strikes King.

On the other hand ~~the~~ the King invites Dushyant to fight against the demons, where Dushyant accepts the invitation.

Act VII is a world of spiritual beauty. It is a place of Kamra's ashram, Here Dushyant comes across ~~the~~ a boy playing with a cub. He is unlike other children. The hermit ladies call him Jarna-Darana. Dushyant is curious to know about the child. He develops a fatherly affection for the boy. He comes to know that the boy is a son of a apsara. Further, he is aware that the mother of the child is ~~at~~ Shakuntala. And he learns that the child is the descendant of Puru dynasty. Shakuntala appears before Dushyant. She has lost her physical charm. But good fortune returns to them. Dushyant takes Shakuntala to Hastinapur. ~~the~~ There

Shakuntala and Dushyant have united, the son is named 'Bharata'. He takes over the throne of Dushyant. Dushyant recognises the value of love.

The last line of the play are invocation of Lord Shiva 'the dark and light' is the 'Nila-Labita' in Sanskrit. The word 'Nila' (dark) suggests the dark blue colour developed in Lord Shiva's throat due to swallowing poison. To save the world he had consumed poison at Samudra Manthan. 'Labita' is 'the brightness of lower or shakti'. This combination of dark and light is symbolic of human mind that has to see several polarities in life.

The play 'Abhayaasakuntalam' is the last work of Kalidasa. The play is successful both in story as well as with the stage techniques. Kalidasa uses aesthetic beauty to enhance the play. He uses rasa element to ~~ex~~ decorate the play. The play is still liked for all the elements.

The term rasa is related to the sentiments that is, aroused in the minds. The sentiments may be sringara (love), veera (heroic), karuna (pathos).

The rasa is the total transference of the personal emotions of the spectator to the emotions created by art. Rasa is the depth of delightful experience springing out of a work of art. The followers of the rasa-school call rasa as the atma (soul) of poetry. The play (Shakuntala) explains how rasa is relished. The love of Yashodhara and Shakuntala creeps through rasa of love.