

ABHIGYAN SHAKUNTALAM: A BRIEF STUDY

Introduction: Abhigyan Shakuntalam is an excellent drama by Mahakavi Kalidas. It has acclaimed international acclaim. It consists of seven acts that deal with well known love story of King Dushyant and the maiden Shakuntala. This love story has been presented artistically. It is the pictorial presentation of human feelings. Its every word is the music as created by the Veena.

Title:

This marvelous play has been named after its heroine. Here Shakuntala has played a significant role. Her lover King Dushyant is the hero of this play. If Shakuntala is a beautiful picture of womanhood, Dushyant is the sublime hero. The heroine of the play is a youthful maiden between fifteen and eighteen. The hero of the play appears to be young between thirty and thirty five. Shakuntala had heavenly beauty. It was inherited from her mother, Menaka. Dushyant was also youthful, handsome, and majestic and of sweet address. Being a paragon of beauty, Shakuntala fascinated the heart of king Dushyant.

Shakuntala and Dushyant:

Shakuntala by heart is very beautiful. There is nothing artificial in her beauty. It is essentially natural. It free completely from coquettish trapping. She had womanly modesty and purity of mind. Dushyanta, on the other hand, has extreme nobility. As a man of honour he wishes to know whether Shakuntala is married or even betrothed. He shows his utmost respect for the sages. Like Dushyanta, Shakuntala also shows a full sense of female honour. Her words prove her lively sense of feminine dignity and her respect for elders.

Plot:

The plot of this play is very interesting. It is a fine example of plot construction. In course of hunting, King Dushyant falls in love with Shakuntala. He comes to know that Shakuntala is Kanva's adopted daughter. Hse too is attracted towards the grace and charm of the king. This love affair turns into marriage. Dushyant marries Shakuntala by the Gandharva form of marriage. Before the departure for the capital, Dushyanta promises to return very soon.

Curse:

In the hermitage of Shakuntala, once the hot tempered sage Durvasa arrives. At that time Shakuntala is thinking about her absent husband. Thus she fails to offer proper hospitality to him. Being angry, Durvasa curses her: 'He of whom thou are thinking, neglecting to receive me properly as a guest, he won't remember you even when reminded (of you).'

King's Refusal:

After returning, Dushyant becomes busy in the affairs of the state. He completely forgets his forest bride. Shakuntala is pregnant now. Thus she is sent to the royal palace. When she reaches there, Dushyant refuses to recognize her. She wants to show him his wedding ring, but was not in her finger.

King's Acceptance:

Eventually king Dushyanta gets his wedding ring by a fisherman. Dushyanta remembers the whole story of his own marriage with Shakuntala. He starts leading a life of grief. In the

meantime Indra suggests him to destroy troublesome demons. The king succeeds in his expedition. In the returning journey he gets a chance to see his own son and Shakuntala in the hermitage of Kashyap. Mutual explanations follow and the pair is reconciled. The king along with Shakuntala and Bharat returns to his capital and the play ends here.

Conclusion:

In this play nature plays a vital role. In the lap of nature the entire story takes place. Kalidas, a devotee of nature, has beautifully described the charms of nature. In fact, compounding of internal and external nature is the specialty of the art of Kalidas. In short, Abhigyan Shakuntalam is an excellent presentation of human love and natural love.