

## Role of Child Characters in the Plays of Kālidāsa

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### ABSTRACT

All the heroes, heroines and minor characters portrayed by Kālidāsa are impressive and the same can be said about his child characters. Though there is very little information about Kālidāsa's personal life yet it seems that he has drawn the child characters from his personal experiences. He has portrayed the child with heartfelt genuine child affection and like an affectionate father the poet also feels unending happiness by touching a child.

So, we curiously notice that the love between the hero and the heroine in each plays of Kālidāsa becomes fruitful when a baby was born to them. His immortal child characters are Sarvadamanain Abhijñānaśkuntala, Ayu in Vikramorvaśī, Raghu in Raghuvaṅśa and Kumar in Kumārsambhavaetc.

### 1. Introduction

Mahakavi Kālidāsa plays are marked with exquisite characterisation. In spite of being particularly classified, all the characters portrayed by him are radiant with own features. Kālidāsa is incomparable in ascertaining human characters. His incomparable writings are evidence of the concourse of his power of introspection and genius.

All the heroes, heroines and minor characters portrayed by Kālidāsa are impressive and the same can be said about his child characters. Though there is very little information about Kālidāsa's personal life yet it seems that he has drawn the child characters from his personal experiences. He has portrayed the child with heartfelt genuine child affection and like an affectionate father the poet also feels unending happiness by touching a child.

So, we curiously notice that the love between the hero and the heroine in each plays of Kālidāsa becomes fruitful when a baby was born to them. His immortal child characters are Sarvadamanain Abhijñānaśkuntala, Ayu in Vikramorvaśī, Raghu in Raghuvaṅśa and Kumar in Kumārsambhavaetc.

Kālidāsa has shown his extra-ordinary skill in portraying the child characters. Every child character is characterised by a little bit child-like liveliness, impudence, curiosity, love for imitation and preoccupation.

'Abhijñānaśkuntala' is the best play in Sanskrit literature. In the 7<sup>th</sup> act of the play we meet 'Sarvadamana' the son of Duṣanta and Śakuntalā, on the top of Hemkut Mountain at Tapavana of Maharshi Marich. The infant Sarvadamana enters with two lady attendants, at the back stage some warnings like - "माखलुचापलंकुरु" <sup>1</sup> and "कथं गतः एव आत्मनः प्रकृतिम्?" <sup>2</sup> are heard.

The child Sarvadamana is very unquiet as well as stubborn. It seems that he is unfit in the environment of the Ashrama but this is natural or intended for a child. A child is a child whether the environment is favourable or unfavourable. A child loses its characteristic beauty and charm if its childhood instincts are destroyed by making it strict and disciplined like a

saint. Kālidāsa materializes here all that is natural and devoid of artificiality. He has never given up naturalism in depicting the child characters. Though the King is surprised to see a human child Sarvadamana attracting a cub forcefully to play with him, but such behaviour for a child is not unnatural at all.

The nearest one to a child is its mother. He learns to the word 'mother' first. His safest place is the lap of his mother. A child feels infinite yearning, furore to see her, and extreme restlessness for mother and Sarvadamanais no exception. Fearless Sarvadamana also feels limitless thirst for his mother and this thirst proves that he is not an exception from a natural known child. Getting a hint ("शकुन्तलावप्यप्रेक्षस्वा" <sup>3</sup>) of the name of his mother he asks - "कुत्र वामममाता" <sup>4</sup> ('where is my mother?') To a child his mother is all and Sarvadamana is also not an exception.

The dramatist has tried to portray the lustful and vicious king Duṣanta as a unique great and unblemished King shielding the curse of Durvasa muni. As a result there happens separation between the hero and the heroine. When their minds get purified by the severe fire of separation, the dramatist again has tried to get them united. The child Sarvadamana is a medium to make the effort union fulfilled.

King Duṣanta is attracted by the delightful behaviour of Sarvadamana. He feels affection for the child. Such delightful behaviour of the child was necessary to bring the change in the heart of Duṣanta. The activities of Sarvadamana like to express his strong wish for a toy, to remember his mother Śakuntalā after hearing 'शकुन्तलावप्य', to ask his mother childishly about Duṣanta all these are essential for the climax of the play. The speech, work, emotion and stance of child Sarvadamana are for the fulfillment of the play.

Or, let us discuss about Vikramorvaśī. In spite of the union between the hero and heroine after many strokes and counter-strokes, it lasted for a short time. They might face separation at any time. It was so because god Indra said "Whenever Puruṣa sees his son's face, Urvaśī must go to heaven leaving Puruṣa." But Urvaśī did not intend to do so.

So, she kept her son in the *Ashrama* of saint chain to keep her son away from her husband.

It is said that the ultimate aim of a marriage is get a child. Both the husband and the wife expect and wait for a child. It is said that a child is the catalyst of family -happiness, But in this play the child is adversative catalyst to happiness. This is not desired of a playwright. The playwright wants a final union of the hero, the heroine and their son. For this purpose he has served various events like '*Sangamanio*' jewel which

centered around the child character *Ayu* and which (the jewel) was snatched away by a vulture, following such strokes and counter. Strokes the son appears before the hero and heroine, appearance of *Nārada*, and at last the consolation words come from God *Indra* that *Urvaśī* can live on this earth with her husband and son.

So, it can be said that the presence of a child character like *Ayu* helps the hero and the heroine to be united and also makes their relationship ever lasting.

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