

Fine Arts in *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Śūdraka

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ABSTRACT

*Fine art is art developed for aesthetics or beauty. It distinguishes from decorative art or applied art, which also has to serve some practical functions such as pottery. Painting, sculpture, clay-modelling, architecture, music and poetry with performing arts like theatre and dance are the main fine arts. The definition of fine art is "a visual art considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic and intellectual purposes and judged for beauty and meaningfulness, especially in painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolour, graphics and architecture". The word "fine" denotes the purity of the discipline according to traditional canons. Sometimes the "fine arts" are also called the major arts with minor arts equating to the decorative arts. It would be for medieval and ancient art. Besides, the influence of fine arts has seen in various works of Sanskrit literature like *Mṛcchakaṭika*.*

Introduction

Dr̥śyakāvya and Śravyakāvya are the two categories of Kāvya is in Sanskrit literature. Dr̥śyakāvya fascinates jumble of visual and audible perfections. The ten rūpakas like Nāṭaka, Prakaraṇa, Bhāṇa, Vyāyoga, Samavakāra, Dīma, Īhāmṛga, Aṅka, Vīthī and Prahasana and the eighteen uparūpakas like Nāṭika, Troṭaka, Goṣṭhi, Saṭṭaka, Nāṭyarāsaka, Prasthāna, Ullāpya, Kāvya, Preṅkhaṇa, Rāsaka, Samlāpaka, Śrīgadita, Śilpaka, Vilasikā, Durmallikā, Prakaraṇī, Halliśa and Bhāṇika are included in the category of Dr̥śyakāvya. But Śravyakāvya enjoy the art forms through hearing or reading only. Gadya, padya and miśra are the three divisions of Śravyakāvya.

Life of Śūdraka

Śūdraka is the author of *Mṛcchakaṭika*. He was the king with powerful and chivalry. He was well versed in *R̥gveda*,

Sāmaveda, *Jyotiṣa* and *Hastīśāstra*. He had done the Aśvamedha yajña and coronated to son as king. He mentioned these details in *Mṛcchakaṭika*. Any more evidence is not available regarding the life of Śūdraka.

Mṛcchakaṭika

Mṛcchakaṭika is the famous prakaraṇa in Sanskrit literature. It is considered as the complete form of the work *Cārudatta* attributed to Bhāsa. *Mṛcchakaṭika* contains ten chapters as aṅkas. The poor Brāhmin Cārudatta and the courtesan Vasantasenā are the hero and heroine in this prakaraṇa. The author provides appropriate names to each and every chapter based on the theme in chapters.

The author, Śūdraka begins this work to praise the favorite deity, Lord Śiva. It mentions in *Mṛcchakaṭika* through the first verse;

पर्यङ्कग्रन्थिबन्धद्विगुणितभुजगाश्लेषसंवीतजानो-
रन्तः प्राणावरोधव्युपरतसकलज्ञानरुद्धेन्द्रियस्य ।
आत्मान्यात्मानमेव व्यपगतकरणं पश्यतस्तत्त्वदृष्ट्या

शम्भोर्वः पातु शून्येक्षणघटितलयब्रह्मलग्नः समाधिः
॥¹

Besides, Śūdraka mentions some details regarding his life through some verses.

Fine Arts in *Mṛcchakaṭīka*

1. Dress-designing

The author points his talents in various fields, especially in fine arts through *Mṛcchakaṭīka*. Alaṅkāraṇyāsa is the first aṅka of *Mṛcchakaṭīka*. In this chapter, author mentions the skill of dress-designing through the description regarding the bath-towel of Cārudatta. That bath-towel contains the smell of jasmine flower. Cārudatta never knows the arrival of Vasantasenā into his house. Cārudatta misunderstands to Vasantasenā as his wife, Radanikā and ordered to inside the house with son, Rohasena and gave that his towel to wear Rohasena. She accepted that towel and smelled its jasmine smell and compared that smell to the youth of Cārudatta.

2. Music

Sandhiccheda is the name of third aṅka in *Mṛcchakaṭīka*. Author mentions the musical knowledge of Rebhila through the conversations of Cārudatta and Maitreya. They remarked their opinion regarding the music of Rebhila.

3. Sculpture

In this chapter, the author also proves his knowledge on Coraśāstra and talent on art of sculpture in beautifully through the thief, Śarvilaka. He created the shape of Pūrṇakumbha to break the wall on the house of

Cārudatta at the time of larceny. It mentions in this verse, i.e.

पद्मव्याकोशं भास्करं बालचन्द्रं
वापीविस्तीर्णं स्वस्तिकं पूर्णकुम्भम् ।
तत् कस्मिन् देशे दर्शयाम्यात्मशिल्पं
दृष्ट्वा श्वो यं यद्विस्मयं यान्ति पौराः ॥²

When Cārudatta wake-up from sleep at the time of morning, he has very much enjoyed to see the creation of Pūrṇakumbha on wall by thief. It also mentions in this verse, i.e.

उपरितलनिपातितेष्टकोऽयं
शिरसि तनुर्विपुलश्च मध्यदेशे ।
असदृशजनसम्प्रयोगभीरो-
हृदयमिव स्फुटितं महागृहस्य ॥³

4. Painting

Madanikā-Śarvilaka is the name of fourth aṅka in *Mṛcchakaṭīka*. In this chapter, author exhibits his talent on painting through the drawing of Vasantasenā. She painted the picture of Cārudatta and narrates his merits to Madanikā with seeing that picture. She wants Madanikā to lay that picture of Cārudatta on her bed and return with a fan.

5. Clay-Modelling

Pravahaṇaviparyaya is the name of sixth aṅka in *Mṛcchakaṭīka*. In this chapter, the author exhibits his talent on making the vehicle with using clay through Radanikā, wife of Cārudatta. When Vasantasenā enters into the house of Cārudatta, he saw the crying boy and enquires regarding that boy and reason of his cry. At that time, Radanikā told her that the boy is Rohasena, son of Cārudatta. The reason of his crying is that when he plays with the child of neighbor using golden vehicle, the child went back to house with that golden vehicle.

¹ *Mṛcchakaṭīka* of Śūdraka with *Vimalā* commentary, Dr. Jagdish Chandra Mishra (Comm.), Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, 2014, c.1, p.1

² *Ibid.* p.153

³ *Ibid.* p.166

Then Rohasena requests Radanikā to give that golden vehicle. At that time, Radanikā gave the vehicle made with clay; but Rohasena ignored it and cries to request that golden vehicle again and again. The creation of vehicle with clay by Radanikā is the important part in *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

Conclusion

Thus the author exhibits his talents and knowledge in various fields through the occasions in *Mṛcchakaṭika* in clearly. Author mentions most of the facts in society through this prakaraṇa. It enlightens the story in social life with more aesthetic beauty. The plot of *Mṛcchakaṭika* connects with society. So it consider as the part of society.

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