

CHAPTER-I

KĀLIDĀSA AND HIS *VIKRAMORVAŚĪYAM*

CHAPTER-I

KĀLIDĀSA AND HIS *VIKRAMORVAŚĪYAM*

KĀLIDĀSA

- A. Kālidāsa (K) is the greatest poet of India. Also he is one of the five or seven greatest poets of the world. As the Sanskrit verse goes

pūrā kavīnām gaṇanāprasaṅge kaniṣṭhikā' dhiṣṭhitakālidāsā /

adyāpi tattulyakaver abhāvād anāmikā sārthavatī babhūva//

[Once upon a time, when poets were being counted, K was placed on the smallest finger. Now there being no other poet greater than K, the name of the finger *anāmikā* became meaningful.]

- B. (i) However, it is a pity that we do not get any authentic information about his life and times. The reason is: he does not give any personal details in any of his works; also he hardly refers to any contemporary events or details of his times. All his works as if belong to the dateless expanse of time of this nation.

(ii) As a result of this, popular imagination has given rise to a number of legends in the case of K. However, we are not concerned with such imaginary legends. Many scholars have tried to assign some date to K on the bases of internal and external evidences. The various views of such scholars range from 8th century B.C. to 11th century A.D. But mainly two views merit serious consideration: that of 1st century B.C. and of 4th-5th century A.D. The second view is accepted by a larger number of scholars.

(iii) Yet the view of scholars assigning K to 1st century B.C. is of special interest to us. “According to a tradition recorded in the book *Jyotirvidābharāṇa*, there were nine distinguished poets, writers and scholars at the court of Vikramāditya, who were collectively called “*Navaratna*” (Nine Gems). The verse, which enumerates them, is given below.

dhanvantari-kṣapaṇakāmarasimha-śaṅku-
vetālabhaṭṭa-ghaṭakarpara-kālidāsaḥ /
khyāto varāhamihira nṛpateḥ sabhāyām
ratnāni vai vararuciḥ nava vikramasya //XXII. 10.

[In the court of the king Vikramāditya there were nine gems (1) Dhanvantari, (2) Kṣapaṇaka, (3) Amarasimha, (4) Śaṅku, (5) Vetālabhaṭṭa, (6) Ghaṭakarpara, (7) Kālidāsa, (8) famous Varāhamihira and (9) Vararuci.]”¹

According to this tradition, therefore, K was one of the brightest gems in the galaxy of the distinguished poets and scholars who adorned the court of Vikramāditya. As regards his proper age and the probability of his association with Vikramāditya of the 1st century B.C., we know from the *Kathāsaritsāgara* that “Vikramāditya was a belated child of king Mahendrāditya.”² It is important to note that the word *Vikrama* is employed at least three times and the word *Mahendra* at least twice in the play all in significant contexts.

- (1) The title of the play itself has the word *Vikrama* in it. It implies: *vikrameṇa jitā urvaśī- tām adhikṛtya kṛtam nāṭakam vikramorvaśīyam.*

Vikramā here means *parākrama*.

- (2) In Act I, the two words 'Mahendra' and 'Vikrama' appear in a significant context. Purūravas has saved Urvaśī, the glory of Indra's assembly, from the demon Keśin. Nārada comes to Purūravas and conveys to him Indra's greetings in these words: *diṣṭyā mahendropakāraparyāptena vikramamahimnā vardhate bhavān*. K perhaps refers here to some contemporary context which could be that Vikramāditya has saved the royal glory of King Mahendra from Śakas.
- (3) That is why the literary records say that Vikramāditya defeated Śakas, was coroneted because the king was rather old and the young king had shown great prowess and maturity in the battle with Śakas, and had assumed the title Śakāri and started the Vikrama Samvat.
- (4) That is why the name 'Mahendra' once again occurs in the context of the coronation in the last Act. *svayam mahendreṇa sambhṛtaḥ kumārasyāyuso yauvarājyābhīṣekaḥ*. The *sāmagrī* of *yauvarājyābhīṣeka* is born i.e. brought or sent by lord 'Mahendra' himself. The context is rather too clear to need any emphasis.
- (5) The third mention of 'Vikrama' is rather of the nature of a general poetic statement of praise: *anutsekaḥ khalu vikramālaṅkāraḥ*.

It is, therefore, very probable that the play was written for being presented at the time of the coronation of King Vikramāditya in 56 B.C. when he defeated Śakas, assumed royal signia and started the era.

This will also imply that the King Vikramāditya belonged to the

1st century B.C. and not to the 4th century A.D.

C. We can deduce some facts about his personality from his works.

- (i) He must have been a Brahmin by caste. He upholds Brahminical system of society and Brahminical ideals.
- (ii) He must have been a devout worshipper of Lord Shiva. He invokes God Shiva in the benedictory verses of all his works.
- (iii) His name 'Kāli-dāsa' further makes it possible that he may be a worshipper of the Goddess Kālī.
- (iv) He was closely acquainted with many sciences. He demonstrates the principles of Upaniṣadic Vedānta³ in many places of his works. The sage Kanva's advice to Śākuntalā, when she was leaving for her husband's house shows a sagacious worldly wisdom, ordained by *Smṛtis*.⁴ He also had a knowledge of legal matters discussed in the *Arthasāstra*.⁵ He says in *Śākuntalam* that the embryo deserves paternal property. His knowledge of the technical rules of Sanskrit grammar⁶ is witnessed in such similes as like substitute placed in the place of the original root.
- (v) He is familiar with the geography and natural sciences of the entire India. He had traveled extensively through all the corners of this vast subcontinent. In *Meghadūtam* and in three places in *Raghuvamśam*, he reveals a close knowledge and intimate details of nature of almost all the parts of this vast country.
- (vi) He must have been a man of polite nature and refined taste. His

eyes did not miss even smallest detail of beauty in nature. Nature to him was a living personality, a throbbing being which always reacted, reflected and expressed sympathy with human moods and emotions.

- (vii) He was always conscious of his noble personality. He never stooped down to cheap popularity. He seems to be the poet supreme, a poet of highest sensitivity, a great connoisseur of personal and natural beauties.

WORKS OF KĀLIDĀSA

The scholars generally agree that the following seven works are written by K. They are as follows:

1. *Abhijñāna-sākuntalam*
2. *Vikramorvaśīyam*
3. *Mālavikāgnimitram*
4. *Raghuvamśam*
5. *Kumāra-sambhavam*
6. *Meghadūtam*
7. *Ṛtusamhāram*

They reveal close similarities of descriptive style, language and poetic characteristics. Of these seven works, first three are dramas, 4 & 5 are epics, 6th is a lyrical *Khaṇḍakāvya* and the 7th is a *Ṛtukāvya*. Scholars generally believe that *Mālavikāgnimitram* and *Ṛtusamhāram* are the creations of the poet in his young age.

The *Abhijñāna-sākuntalam*, the *Meghadūtam* and the *Raghuvamśam*

belong to the mature period of his creative life.

A. Short Description of His Works:

- 1) *Mālavikāgnimitram* : This is the first of the three dramas of K. This five-Act drama with some historical background is a pleasing picture of love between Agnimitra, the king of Śuṅga dynasty and Mālavikā the Vidarbha princess taking shelter in his palace as his queen's maid.

Act I : The king has been infatuated by seeing the picture of Mālavikā and seeks to meet her. His court jester has made a plan leading to a classical dance competition only with a view to give the king a view of Mālavikā.

Act II : Mālavikā becomes the best dancer in the competition. The king and few other dignitaries are present at the competition.

Act III : Mālavikā comes to pramadavana in order to kick the *Aśoka* tree for *dohada* in the place of the eldest queen Dhāriṇī. On the other hand, the king also comes to pramadavana at the invitation of Irāvati to swing ceremonially on the central day of the *Vasantotsava*. The lovers meet and exchange love-talk but they are caught by the second queen Irāvati.

Act IV : The queen Dhāriṇī has concealed Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā in the cave house but Viduṣaka frees them by his cleverness and the lovers meet but are again caught by Irāvati red-handed.

Act V : Mālavikā is recognised as a sister of the Vidarbha prince

Mādhavasena by two Vaidarbhi maid servants. The queen Dhārinī realises her mistake and marries Mālavikā to Agnimitra.

- 2) *Vikramorvaśīyam* : This is the second love-drama of K which consists of five Acts. The terrestrial king Purūravas and the celestial nymph Urvaśī's love affair is the main plot of this drama.
- 3) *Abhijñāna-sākuntalam* : This is the best drama of K. The king Duṣyanta and the hermit girl Śakuntalā's love is the theme of this drama of seven Acts.

Act I : The king following a deer, enters the hermitage of sage Kanva and in his absence , meets his foster daughter Śakuntalā and is attracted to her. He comes to know that Śakuntalā is not his real daughter and is suitable for marriage with him. Śakuntalā also became attracted to Duṣyanta.

Act II : The king tries to share with Vidūṣaka his encounter with Śakuntalā. He gets a message that he has to return back to his capital city Hastināpura. But he must stay in the hermitage to protect it from the demons and sends Vidūṣaka in his place to the capital.

Act III : The lovers meet in a tryst in the bowers on the bank of the river Mālinī.

Act IV : The lovers have secretly married. The king has returned to the capital today only. Śakuntalā is suffering the fresh separation of

love. She is not in a mental condition to extend proper hospitality to the sage Durvāśā, as she is lost in thoughts of the king. So Durvāśā curses her. Śākuntalā's friend Priyamvadā beseeches him. The sage Durvāśā then relieves the curse. "The curse will be removed at the sight of some token of love." Then after returning from the pilgrimage the sage Kanva comes to know about their love marriage and decides to send Śākuntalā to her husband's house. The parting scene of Śākuntalā is very emotional. After giving due advices as to how to behave in her husband's house, the sage Kanva farewells her.

Act V : Śākuntalā is presented in front of Duṣyanta but the king does not recognise her due to the curse. She is looking for the finger-ring given by Duṣyanta but in vain. The king refuses and rebukes her. The accompanying sages leave her with the king who would not accept her. She is taken away by her mother to heaven. The king goes on thinking about her- his memory still barred by the curse.

Act VI : The ring is found by a fisherman from the inside of a fish. The royal ring is brought to the king. At its sight the king remembers Śākuntalā and is distressed. He is called to the heaven to help Indra.

Act VII : After returning from the heaven, Duṣyanta goes to the hermitage of the great sage Mārica on the mountain Gandhamādana. He finds his son there and also Śākuntalā. The play ends in a happy family reunion.

(4) *Raghuvamśam* : *Raghuvamśa* is the best poem of K. It is an epic poem of nineteen cantos. It praises the kings of the solar race.

Canto I - It starts with the description of the glory of the kings and the childlessness of king Dilīpa.

Cantos II . III - Dilīpa and his wife Sudakṣiṇā serve sincerely the divine cow Nandinī and get a boon for a son. Raghu is born to them.

IV - Raghu's Digvijaya victory over the entire Indian subcontinent.

V - Raghu's son Aja goes to Indumatī's *svayamvara*.

VI - The *svayamvara* of Indumatī. She chooses Aja as her husband.

VII - Aja wins over his rivals at the *svayamvara*.

VIII - Daśaratha born to Indumatī. Her death due to the garland of Nārada's lute falling on her breast, and Aja's mourning.

IX - Daśaratha's killing Śravana by mistake. Curse of his parents.

X-XI - Daśaratha's four sons. Viśvāmitra trains them, marries them to the four princesses. Paraśurāma defeated.

XII - The entire Rāmāyaṇa story. Rāma's journey from Ayodhyā to Pañchavatī to Janasthāna to Laṅkā upto Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation.

XIII - Rāma's aerial journey in puṣpaka plane back from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā.

XIV - Rāma's coronation. His renouncement of Sītā.

XV - Śambukavadha, Rāma's sons recite Vālmīki's epic at Rāma's sacrifice. Sītā's return to mother earth.

XVI - Kuśa's story.

XVII- XVIII- Many kings after Kuśa.

XIX- Agnivarṇa's over-eroticism and succumbing to consumption.

(5) *Kumāra-sambhavam* : An epic poem of which by general consent probably seven (or eight) cantos are by K. The remaining nine are most probably by some Subrahmanya Kavi.

Canto I - Himālaya the mountain and Himālaya the lord, father of Pārvatī. Pārvatī's birth and coming of age. She waits upon Śiva performing penance.

II - Gods oppressed by demon Tārakā are advised by Brahmā. Only the son of Śiva and Umā will lead the Gods and win over Tārakā.

III - At Indra's behest, Kāmadeva tries to create untimely spring in the penance grove and attract Shiva to Pārvatī but Śiva burns him to ashes with the fire from his third eye.

IV - Laments of Rati, Kāmadeva's wife. She would lie on her husband's funeral pyre but is prevented by a divine voice.

V - Pārvatī's penance for and test by lord Śiva.

VI - The Saptarṣis' request to Himālaya for his daughter's hand in

marriage for Śiva.

VII - The divine marriage and their nuptial happiness.

VIII - The erotic pleasures of the divine couple on the Gandhamādana.

In the remaining cantos, the supplementing poet has actually described Kumāra's birth, his leadership of the divine army, his battle with the demon and victory. This fulfils the promise of the title.

(6) *Meghadūtam* : *Meghadūtam* is a small poem of exquisite beauty in about 120 verses in *Mandākrāntā* metre. It is perhaps the best lyric of the world. The background to the poem is that a Yakṣa committed some mistake in his duties in the service of his master lord Kubera, who punished him with an exile of one year causing separation from his beloved. He passed eight months in great difficulty and disturbed strongly at the sight of the rainy cloud, decided to send a message of comfort for his beloved through the same cloud. The poem actually describes the message (hence the name *Meghadūtam*), first the path from his place of exile, Rāmtēk in Mahārashtra, to the city of Alakā in *Pūrvamegha*, then the city of Alakā, Yakṣa's home, his beloved, her painful condition and his message to her. The structure of the poem is simple but straight and appealing. It is one of the gems of world literature.

(7) *Ṛtusamhāram* : *Ṛtusamhāram* is the first creation of K. The descriptive poem is divided into six cantos delineating six Indian Seasons from the summer to the spring with their natural beauties from the eyes of a lover. Some scholars are of the opinion that it is not written by K but a

large group of scholars believe it to be of K, because many of the ideas and images from this poem find better expressions in the other and more famous works of K.

B. *Vikramorvaṣīyam* :

Vik is very interesting for a number of reasons.

1. Its plot structure is loose but its vision is more mature than that of *Mālavikāgnimitram*.
2. Some scholars believe that there are covert references to a contemporary event of the coronation of the king Vikramāditya.
3. The fourth Act of the play in which the demented king Purūravas roams about the nature of kumāravana and asks various elements of nature about his lost beloved. The Act is unique in the entire Sanskrit literature for its great dramatic emotional or rather lyrical qualities.
4. There are two recensions of the play. One is northern and the other is southern and the main difference between them is of the Prakrit *dhruvā* verses interspersed within the Sanskrit utterances of the demented king. Dramatically, these *dhruvā* verses add to the highly emotional, lyrical and musical qualities of this particular unique Act.
5. The northern recension is represented by Bengali and Devanagari MSS. and the play is called a *Troṭoka* which is defined as a dramatic composition relating to incidents partly celestial and partly terrestrial, and consists of five Acts, with the Vidūṣaka present in almost every Act.

According to Viśvanātha Kavirāja:

saptāṣṭānavapañcāṅkaṁ divyamānuṣaśrayam/

troṭakaṁ nāma tatprāhuḥ pratyāṅkaṁ savidūṣakaṁ//

praty'āṅkaṁ savidūṣakatvād atra śṅgāro'ṅgī/

saptā'ṅkaṁ stambhitārambhaṁ, pañcāṅkaṁ vikramorvaśīyam iti//

Though it does not fulfil its condition, as Vidūṣaka is not present in the 1st and 4th Act, its composer K himself called it as *Troṭaka*. “*ahamasyām kālīdāsa grathita vastunā navena troṭakena upasthāsyē.*” We have proposed to study the remarks of the Sanskrit commentaries on this interesting play, particularly on this interesting aspect of its construction.

Before, however, we look in to the commentaries themselves, it will be proper to have a close and detailed acquaintance with the original play itself.

C. The Summary of the Play In Critical Analysis:

Prologue:

After reciting the benedictory verse Sūtradhāra declares to the audience that he is going to stage the play *Vik* before them and requests them to listen to it attentively out of their polite and respectful response their high regard for the famous story and their curiosity for the great famous story and their curiosity for the great poet K. A loud crying sound for help is suddenly heard from the behind of the curtain and the Sūtradhāra informs the audience that this is the cry of the heavenly nymphs for helping their friend Urvaśī being carried away by a demon when they were returning from Kubera's palace.

First Act : Enter the nymphs crying for help and king Purūravas also who is returning from the worship of the Sun; he consoles them and asks them what help they need. With this scene the Act opens dramatically. The king is informed by the nymphs that their friend Urvaśī and her companion Citralekhā are carried away by a demon named Keśin. The king goes to their rescue and returns with Citralekhā and the unconscious Urvaśī who is terribly frightened and lies supported by Citralekhā in his chariot. After a while Urvaśī comes back to consciousness. Citralekhā tells her that they have been rescued by the king and now she is safe. She is attracted by his personality. The king also is attracted by her beauties and praises her. He feels an enjoyable sensation as his shoulder touches that of Urvaśī. Then Citraratha, the king of the Gandharvas, enters and conveys Indra's congratulation to the king for his victory against the demon and requests him to pay a visit to the heaven. The king expresses his inability to visit Indra at that time. Citraratha goes away with the nymphs. At departure Urvaśī pretends that her necklace is entangled into a creeper to delay and have a last look at the king. The king also is unhappy. The scenes are located partly in the mid air region and partly on the romantic peak of the Hemakūṭa mountain. The time is mentioned as morning as the king was returning from the worship of the sun and it must be the season of spring as there are number of references to the spring in the first three Acts.

The opening scene of this first Act is highly dramatic. It attracts the attention of the audience. The principal characters of this Act i.e. King Purūravas and Urvaśī and the main object of

the drama are presented at once. In fact K has drawn the picture of love at first sight between the two lovers perfectly. Step by step they come nearer to each other and gather experience of sensational feeling when their shoulders touch each other. At last, they leave each other in spite of their unwillingness. Another interesting thing is all the characters of this Act are present in their real forms. King Purūravas is a valiant, dignified and high-spirited man who is always ready to sacrifice himself for the sake of the innocent and the distressed. He is humble and averse to self-flattery. He likes the beauties in life and appreciates them. He falls in love with Urvaśī immediately. Hence Urvaśī is presented as a coy beloved like an earthly young girl though she is a heavenly damsel. She also is deeply in love with the king as she expresses it at the time departure. Citralekhā is a charming figure full of fun and jollity. When Urvaśī asks her to move a little in the chariot, Citralekhā jokes that there is not enough space to move and remarks mischievously at her friend when she is extricating her of her entanglement. From the dramatic viewpoint the Act is highly successful. The piteous crying of the nymphs, fast entry of the king and his instant departure after the demon, the romantic atmosphere of the Hemakuṭa, the king's landing with the two friends from the sky compared to the moon with the two Viśākhās and finally the charming Ekāvalī scene by their flight into the sky. These are very effective scenes of the first Act.

Second Act: In the interlude (*praveśaka*) the Vidūṣaka meets one of the maids of Auśīnarī , the queen of king Purūravas, who cleverly extracts from him the secret of the king's new love .

Then in the Act proper, Purūravas walks with the Vidūṣaka in a park, discussing what can be done in the matter of his love-affair. Urvaśī arrives with Citralekhā and conceals herself near them by remaining invisible. She hopes to hear how strong his feelings are towards her. She is satisfied by what she hears: Purūravas passes this test. Yet Urvaśī is unable to reveal herself out of shyness; she, however, quickly writes a love letter in the form of a poem and throws it near him. She writes: She is also in love with him and now even the breeze in the Nandana gardens seems unbearably hot to her. The Vidūṣaka sees the letter and gives it to the king, who reads it to him and then gives it to him for safe keeping. Urvaśī is still too shy to reveal herself, but after hearing Purūravas' wishful fantasy asks Citralekhā to go first and greet him for her. Citralekhā does so. Finally Urvaśī follows her, very shyly. The king welcomes her with suitable words, takes her hand and makes her sit down. At this very moment, a voice from heaven is heard. It says: Urvaśī must return at once as Indra wants to see performance of a play in which she is one of the actresses. Purūravas has to let her go, but he asks of her to remember him. After her departure, the king wants to comfort himself with her letter but the Vidūṣaka has lost it. Then the queen arrives on the scene with her maid and finds the letter, which blown in her path by the wind clings to

her anklet. She confronts Pūrūravas with it. He makes a feeble attempt to cover the matter but she turns away scornfully. He begs her to forgive him, saying he is her slave but she goes off in anger without forgiving him. The king decides to stay apart till she comes round.

The incidents of the second Act seem to be very close in time to the events of the first Act. The small interlude takes place in the morning as the Vidūṣaka says he is waiting for the king to rise from his chamber. This short interlude bears two purposes. The maid extracts the information from Vidūṣaka that the king has developed intense longing for Urvaśī. Secondly, the interlude prepares the ground for conflict in the central theme, the obstacle in the lovers' path from the king's side. After the interlude the scene is laid in the palace garden on *Bhagirathī*. The Vidūṣaka joins the king who now has a leisure hour. The king goes to the pramadavana which is in a pre-full-grown state of spring time and where he might alleviate his pangs of separation from Urvaśī.

In this Act, the action is not as fast as in the first. The tempo is slowed down and the mood is pensively romantic. The plot construction is seen to develop a two-fold conflict which is inherent in the situation of the characters. On the king's side, it is seen in the form of the queen's anger, when she gets the love letter of Urvaśī. On Urvaśī's side, it is her position as subservient and dependent upon the whims and desires of her master lord Indra.

In this Act, three new characters are introduced. One is the fraudulent Nipunīkā, the maid of the queen. True to her name she is clever in extracting royal secrets and protecting the interests of her queen. Her cleverness breaks through the royal secret and contributes to the development of the plot. The Vidūṣaka is the standard comic character of Sanskrit drama who is very fond of sweets, talkative, stupid and foolish, making mistakes and errors everywhere, often at the cost of his royal friend, the king. Due to his stupidity, the king is caught red handed by the queen. Auśīnarī is the queen, dignified, sensible and sensitive. It is natural for her to lose control over her temper yet she is sensitive to the inherent limitations of her subordinate position.

Act I has shown the king as a valorous fighter and a lover. This act shows a new aspect of his character. In spite of his intense love of Urvaśī: he maintains a sincere respect for his queen Auśīnarī. Yet when she rejects his apologies, he chooses to wait till she realises her position and respects and comes back. Yet the fact of his being caught in his love affair by the queen and her anger, his prostration etc. put his character in a somewhat compromising position.

The character of Urvaśī reveals twofold characteristics. Outwardly she is a heavenly nymph and shows some divine traits: She can remain invisible, can create birch-barch from air etc. but inwardly she is like any other human female in love. She is shy of approaching her lover, apprehensive of his response, happy at the sight of lover's grief of love etc.

Though the action is slower, the arrangement of events sustains the interest of the audience. Vidūṣaka has divulged royal secret to the queen's maid. Therefore, even when the love-sequence is in progress, the apprehension of the queen's reaction is constantly present in the background. This shows the good dramatic sense of K.

The love situation in this Act is very poetic. The lovelorn condition of the king, the advent of spring season, the coyness of the heroine, the romantic reverie of the lover hero, the supernatural element, the meeting and almost immediate separation of the lovers (thus actually intensifying the love longings) are all richly poetic and deftly depicted. Poetry in this Act, as in the entire play, is a very important positive aspect of the drama.

Third Act: In the interlude we know from dialogues between the two disciples of Bharata that the play "*Lakṣmīsvayamvara*" composed by Sarasvatī was staged successfully except one mistake of Urvaśī wherein she, acting as Lakṣmī, uttered 'Pururavas' in place of 'Puruṣottama.' The angry sage Bharata cursed her to go to earth, but lord Indra asked her to stay while on earth with his friend-king Purūravas till he saw the face of his son born in her. This actually turns the curse into a boon. The obstacle on the part of Urvaśī is thus removed. The action possibly is on the day next to that of Act II. The lovers met in Act II in the forenoon, Urvaśī was called and must have performed on that very day and the pupils are conversing in the

morning of the next day. This sets the background for the main scene of Act III.

Around the same evening the main scene is laid on the terrace of the royal palace. At the queen's request, the king goes to the terrace at the time of moon-rise to remain present at the time of observance of her *vrata*. At that very time Urvaśī descends on the spot in the attire of an *abhisārikā*. Immediately the queen is announced, Urvaśī remains invisible, the queen appears and under the pretext of *vrata* announces her resolve to live peacefully and in a friendly manner with any of the beloved of the king if their love is mutual. The queen then leaves and Urvaśī reveals herself. The lovers retire to the bedchamber.

The queen's resolve removes the second obstacle also. The love of the king and the nymph can now develop more freely. The queen's situation was difficult from the beginning and she knows she would have to compromise. She acts wisely under the pretext of a vow. Again the king's high regard for the majestic queen is obvious once again. Also the king, maybe as Citralekha says, his love turned towards Urvaśī, is more courteous to the queen.

The descriptions of the evening activities in the royal palace and the moon-rise are very poetic. Prof. Jhala has drawn attention to the scenic beauty of the scene in these words: "the king is shown to arrive with a multitude of lighted torches held by maid-servants around him- the beauty of this scene can well be imagined. Next come the moon-rise and the worship of the

moon-rays by the queen. What a striking 'scenic, contrast is presented here by Urvaśī dressed in black silk like an Abhisārikā and the queen clad auspiciously in spotless white?"⁷

It is noteworthy that the fulfillment of the love of the king and the nymph does not require, actually it does proceed, without any formalities of marriage ceremony. In fact their marriage, because of Urvaśī's divine nature, is not possible at all. Prof. Nanavati has discussed the problem of Urvaśī's marital status. He has shown that "Marriage is a sacrament ordained for human females and it can not be applied in the case of a divine damsel like Urvaśī. She must remain the consort of her lover without marriage."⁸

Fourth Act: The interlude brings forth sad news. King Purūravas and Urvaśī had gone to the gandhamādana forest, an ideal place for lovers, to enjoy their honeymoon. Once the king's attention was attracted there by a Vidyādhara girl sporting on the sandy bank of the Mandākinī. At this Urvaśī felt jealous and dismissing all the apologies of the king, she walked away into the forest of God Kārtikeya, prohibited for women. Immediately she was transformed into a creeper. Since then the king is madly searching for his beloved in that forest and Citralekhā fears, his condition will worsen as the rainy season has almost arrived. The friends are conversing in some higher region. They provide us the proper background for the main scene of Act IV.

In the main scene, King Purūravas is wandering in the

forest in a demented condition in search of his beloved. It is the beginning of the rainy season. He imagines the dark cloud as a demon carrying off his beloved, then immediately he realises his error. He wanders in the forest from place to place in search of some trace of his beloved and asks the peacock, the cuckoo, the swan, the cakravāka, the bee, the elephant and other elements of nature about his beloved. Finally, he sees a jewel called *saṅgamanīya* (which is the remedy of the mistake), takes it up and with it embraces a creeper appearing very similar to his beloved and at once the creeper transforms into Urvaśī. She repents for her mistake, apologises and they fly back to the capital.

This particular Act is unique in the history of Sanskrit drama. Most of the dialogue is in a highly lyrical tone, more or less a soliloquy and richly poetic. There is almost no action but the lyrical exuberance of the king sustains the interest of the audience. It is due to its intensely lyrical quality that the Act was subjected to the interweaving of *dhruvās* into the Act at a very early stage in its textual history. It is also considered as a prelude to K's *Meghadūtam*.

Fifth Act : We are informed in the interlude that the king has returned from his pleasure trip and is now happily ruling the subjects, only he is childless. The precious *saṅgamanīya* gem is mistaken by a vulture for a piece of mutton and carried away. Soon the police follows the vulture and brings the bird pierced with an arrow that says it belongs to Āyuṣ, the son of Purūravas and Urvaśī.

Soon an old hermit woman brings the boy Āyus, and returns him to Urvaśī, since he has violated the hermit rules by killing a bird and he can not continue in the hermitage. All round there is a happy festive atmosphere, but Urvaśī is unhappy. She tells the king of the curse and its remedy. She loved the king, so she hid the signs of her pregnancy and deposited the son as soon as he was born in the hermitage of sage Cyavana. Now they must separate. The king decides to take *sannyāsa* and to coronate the prince Āyus. But soon Nārada appears with the message that Indra needs the king's help in the forthcoming battle with demons. He can not let him take *sannyāsa*. So Urvaśī can stay with him for his lifetime. The play thus ends happily.

The scene is laid in the royal palace. The time is the morning and soon after that of Act IV. There are swings of joy and sorrow as the prince returns and the lovers must separate and again they can stay happily together forever. The *saṅgamanīya* gem once again remains true to its name. It unites not only the lovers but also their son. It is the valour of the king which proves a boon for his love. The action in the Act is rather quick but it is not as poetic or appealing as in the other four Acts. K's vision of love is depicted here, the intense love crowned with the glory of parenthood. The play ends happily.

REFERENCES

1. Pandey Rajbali, *Vikramāditya of Ujjayini*, Banaras, 1951, p.203.

2. *ibid.* p.83

3. *Kumārasambhavam*, II. 12

उद्धातः प्रणवो यासां न्यायैस्त्रिभिरुदीरणम् ।

कर्म यज्ञः फलं स्वर्गस्तासां त्वं प्रभवो गिराम् ॥

4. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, IV. 18.

शुश्रूषस्व गुरुन् कुरु प्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने

भर्तुर्विप्रकृतापि रोषणतया मा स्म प्रतीपं गमः ।

भूयिष्ठं भव दक्षिणा परिजने भाग्येष्वनुत्सेकिनी

यान्त्येवं गृहिणीपदं युवतयो दामाः कुलस्याधयः ॥

5. *ibid.* Act-VI, p. 159

ननु गर्भः पित्र्यं रिक्थमर्हति ।

6. *Raghuvamśam*, XII. 58

स हत्या वालिनं वीरस्तत्पदे चिरकांक्षिते ।

धातोः स्थान इवादेशं सुग्रीवं संन्यवेशयत् ॥

7. Jhala, G.C., *Kālidāsa-A study*, 1949, Bombay, 2nd edn., p.130.

8. Nanavati, Rajendra, "Marital Status of the Nymph Urvaśī in Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīyam*" in *Silpasamvit*, ed. Vyas R.T. (Dr.), pub. Oriental Institute, Vadodara, 1995, p. 329.