

Dhuta : An Ideal Indian female character in *Mrcchakatika* of Sudraka

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In the history of of Sanskrit theatre the name of Kalidasa as a dramatist is well celebrated. However, the name of Śūdraka, as a playwright has been left ignored and unexplored for a long time. His *Mrcchakatika* a play of ten acts, would be in the same rank of the noted plays of the world. Śūdraka's well drawn characters are the result of his inimitable genius as a playwright. In the presentation of his characters, there are perfect balance and homogeneity of humanity in one hand and flow of incidence on the other. His powerful voice and strength in words which made the characters unique and identifiable among the authors of his time.

It is true that Vasantasenā is the prime female character in the play *Mrcchakatika*, but the importance of Dhūtā, wife of Cārudatta, is in no way less important. In the entire story her little presence can be felt. She excels as an ideal wife. Such a gem like her is certainly rare in a family. Being a wife of a poor Brahmin she remained without any jewellery. She was always in a mundane and ordinary lifestyle. Generally, a woman doesn't approve of the relationship between her husband with another woman, but Dhūtā is an exceptional female character here. For the sake of happiness of her husband she has sacrificed everything. She has considered her husband's happiness as her own. She remained silent in spite of knowing her husband Cārudatta's love for Vasantasenā. No reaction was found on the part of Dhūtā even when she came to know that her husband spent night with Vasantasenā at the house of Cārudatta. She was of the belief that happiness in her husband's life was the only motto of her life. Maid servant Radanika has rightly commented:

ब न केवलं अभ्यन्तरचतुःशालं सर्वजनस्य हृदयं प्रविष्टा । ब

In the true sense of the term, Dhūtā was a follower of her husband. Dhūtā got senseless soon after knowing the news that the jewellery box of Vasantasenā, a harlot, kept in the custody of her husband was stolen. She was more anxious with the thought that the Ratnahar character of her husband will be contaminated.

दृढ दरिद्रतया आर्यपुत्रेणैव ईदृशमकार्यमनुष्ठितम् । दृढ

To protect her husband from social stigma, she sacrificed her precious *Ratnahar* "Ratnasasthi" . Cārudatta has admitted wholeheartedly the dedication of her wife :

दृढ विभवानुगता भार्या सुखदुःखसुहृद्भवान् ।

सत्यञ्च न परिभ्रष्टं यदरिद्रेषु दुर्लभम् । दृढ

In VI the act when Vasantasenā returned that *Ratnahar* to Dhūtā 's reply made us spellbound:

दृढ आर्यपुत्रेण युष्माकम् प्रसादीकृता नयुक्तं ममैतां ग्रहीतुम् ।

आर्यपुत्र एव ममाभरण विशेष इति जानतु भवती । दृढ

It was in the 10th act, Cārudatta was brought to the killing ground accusing falsely for the murder of Vasantasenā. Then Dhūtā was about to sacrifice her life throwing herself in the fire. She was unwavering even to do sinful acts in exchange of listening to ill words against her husband. Rather she considered plunging into death would be better for her.

दृढ वरं पापाचरणं न पुनः आर्यपुत्रस्य अमङ्गलाकर्णनम् । दृढ

She was extraordinary not only as a wife but also as a mother. She had extreme love for her son, Rohasena. She was too much worried in search of the right person to keep her son before plunging into the fire. Dhūtā could not imagine to kill herself accompanying her son. Because soon after leaving this world, it would none but the son's performance in the ritual of *Pindidaan* which could appease her soul in the other world. This belief was firmly cemented in her mind. That's why she said to her son :

दृढ जात ऋ त्वमेव पर्यबस्थापय आत्मानम् अस्माकं तिलोदकदानाय ।दृढ^म

However in the end, Cārūdatta didn't get death punishment and Dhūtā too didn't sacrifice her life plunging into fire. So, at the end of the play, Maitrayea rightly said that Charudutta got his life back only because of Dhūta's virtues.

दृढ अहोक्त अस्याः प्रभव्यः यतो ज्वलनप्रवेश ब्यबसायेनैव प्रियसमागमं प्रापिता ।दृढ^म

It was the recognition of her dedication to her husband. This is the way dramatist *Śūdraka* portrayed the role of Dhūtā in an extraordinary manner and made himself famous.

1. *Mṛcchakaṭīka*- edited by U.C. Bandyapadhyā & A. Bandyapadhyā, - 6th act, p-296
2. *ibid* - 3rd act, p-173
3. *ibid* - 3rd act, p-177
4. *ibid* -3rd act
5. *ibid* -10th act, p-539
6. *ibid* -10th act, p-540
7. *ibid* -10th act, p -539



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