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KALIDĀSA

The Man & The Mind

PRABHĀKAR NĀRĀYAṆA KAWTHEKAR



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THE PREFACE—FACE TO FACE

The study of Kālidāsa has been a long but pleasant journey like that of a cloud in the *Meghadūta*. I had attended one or two of the earlier *Kālidāsa Samārohas* privately, organised at the court-yard of the Mahākāla temple in Ujjain. But for the first time I spoke on Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* at the University of Jabalpur (M.P.) as the *Kālidāsa Samāroha* was organised by the University of Jabalpur. There, I spoke on the route of *Meghadūta* and told amusingly that the cloud had passed the city of Jabalpur. I also virtually pointed out how Kālidāsa had described the river *Narmada* of the Mandla District seen at the feet of *Vindhya* mountains. It was appreciated by the audience.

Then I was the Professor of Sanskrit in the jurisdiction of the Vikram University of Ujjain, which used to organise the *Kālidāsa Samāroha* in Ujjain in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Being invited to read my research papers on Kālidāsa, I got the opportunity to have live discussion on certain problems with scholars attending from all over India. I did some fieldwork also. Later, I had a privilege to become the Vice-Chancellor, Vikram University of Ujjain, in 1978. The friends and scholars regarded me as *Hamlet in Denmark*. These are the *Samskārs* behind writing this book on Kālidāsa.

Then I used to differ with some of the great scholars on certain points on the platform, but they were the *honest* differences. These scholars helped me to go into the

KĀLIDĀSA AT A GLANCE

The man who has been ruling the poetic Kingdom is Kālidāsa. Although his words were swords but his main means was the *meaning in his poetry*. Even after he left this world so many rivals have been defeated by his ever lasting expression. He must have enjoyed life itself and then with his genius he could conquer his rivals, although like *Bhavabhūti* he did not mention any such rival.

The world knows him as a great poet, unfortunately we do not know his life, the birth place, the patron if any, his family as he did not think it proper to disclose all this for his loving readers.

Only the rich literature fortunately remains with us and on the basis of this, scholars have been trying to trace the events through which he might have gone. From his play the *Mālavikāgnimitra* we learn that he was closely associated with some of the events pertaining to Agnimitra, the King of *Vidiśā*.

From the *Raghuvamśa*, which is a tragedy in itself we learn how the down fall of the last King Agnivarṇa has been painfully described by Kālidāsa. Two words Agnimitra and Agnivarṇa have retained Agni and it gives us clue that Kālidāsa had seen the down fall of *Shunga Kings*. However the play *Mālavikāgnimitra* does not show any such down fall. In my humble opinion Agnimitra was a friend of Kālidāsa and he actually travelled with him in the expedition lead by Agnimitra's father. It can be

The Date of Kālidāsa :

With an Archaeological Evidence

Since Kālidāsa, the great poet of Sanskrit, is silent on his own life and his time, the scholars have been trying their best to trace the date of his flourishing. There has been the controversy amongst the scholars. Barring all the conjectures on the date of Kālidāsa, mainly two opinions can be taken into consideration: one is, the date of Candraguta II, i.e. 4th century A.D. and the second is, the date of the *Vikramāditya* I, i.e. 57 B.C. Some of the early Western and Indian scholars like E.B. Cowell, C.V. Vaidya, Rajbali Pandey, Mirashi, Keith, Pathak, etc. have discussed the problem.

Here I would like to point out some salient features regarding the date 57 B.C. The main objection against it is that Kālidāsa mentioned the *Hūnas* of the Oxus Valley who are dated 390-395 A.D. We can trace the earlier history of the famous Hiung-nus who have been mentioned by Chinese historians. After the construction of the Chinese wall, they migrated Westwards. Before they were pushed towards India, they existed in the Oxus Valley in the 1st century B.C. In the later period we find the *Hūnas* have been referred to in the *Mṛcchakaṭikā* (Act VI. P. 345) and the *Caturbhāṇī*, (pp. 181). These *Hūnas* of the fourth or fifth century A.D. had already established in India, these were unknown to Kālidāsa (K.C. Jain: *Kālidāsa and his Times*, pp. 49-50). Moreover, the entire tribe known as the *Hūnas* could not have migrated in India. Raghu had defeated them in *Bactria* at



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