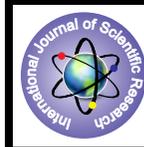


## Portrayal of Dharini as a Perfect Package of Power, Possession, Punishment and Politeness in the Light of Kalidasa's Play the Malavikagnimitram



### Sanskrit

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### ABSTRACT

*The study of women in literature is going to become very eye-catching subject now a day. Researchers, in all most all the genres of literature, from ancient to modern, keep their eyes centering on the study of female characters and feminine sensibility. Present paper throws light on the portrayal of Dharini by Kalidasa in the light of The Malavikagnimitram. Being a chief queen, she is formulated as a perfect package of power, possession, punishment and politeness. All these distinguishing competences make her personality eye contagious in the play. Kalidasa, an expert of depicting female characters, has provided plenty of personalities as a blend in one.*

Kalidasa, by his excellent literary creation, has bestowed many numbers of memorable female characters to the world. Dharini in *The Malavikagnimitram* is one among them. The name Dharini itself has been well-chosen. Self-control and capaciousness of soul are her chief traits. She is full of graciousness and dignity. The Parivrajika refers in Act I, verse 15, to her being forgiving as the earth 'Bhoot Dharini.'

May the lord be, for a hundred years, the husband of the queen Dharini who has given birth to a heroic son and is possessed of great forgiveness as well as the earth which yields abundant crops owing to plenty of showers and is equally forgiving.(I.15)

In India, a woman is considered as a symbol of **power**, the SHAKTI. Dharini, the crowned queen, is an elderly lady having a son in Vasumitra able to command an army. She is **possessed**, depicted as a typical Aryan woman subordinating all her comforts to the wishes of her lord. Her love for the king is deep-rooted and her age does not allow her to be greatly ruffled by jealousy or envy. Nevertheless, she knows her husband well and tries her best to screen the newly arrived and beautiful maid Malavika from his sight. With this purpose she tries to avoid the contest between Ganadasa and Haradatta, but fails on account of the sagacity of Vidushaka. Even after the performance of dance. A German philosopher **Arthur Schopenhauer** points out in this manner;

Men are by nature merely indifferent to one another; but men are by nature enemies.

She takes all possible care to see that Agnimitra does not get an opportunity to see Malavika. She compels **punishment** of imprisonment to Malavika. It is true that she puts Malavika in manacles mainly for respecting the feeling of Iravati. But the punishment meted out to Malavika must be considered as too cruel especially in view of the fact that Malavika could hardly be blamed in the matter. In other words, Dharini could have demeaned of Dharini throughout the play befits her dignity in the harem. Her behaviour with Iravati who had been her rival is an eloquent testimony to this pleasing aspect of her character. Although she herself had reached a stage not easily ruffled by jealousy, she punishes Malavika and respects Iravati's feelings. On having come to know that Iravati committed, she sends her a courteous message expressing her willingness to intercede with him on her behalf. Finally before presenting Malavika to the king in Act V, she fails not to take the consent of Iravati by requesting her that 'you should not cause me to deviate from truth promise.' No wonder, therefore, that she was respected by Iravati and others and her joy in her son's victory is shared by all of them. She is **polite** at heart. It is her innate dignity and generosity of her heart makes her give a promise of Ichhapurti to Malavika and later to keep it up at the cost of her happiness. This is evident from Vidushaka's remark that:

I am favoured is by this duty. But the poor girl is being more carefully guarded by the queen like treasure by a cobra, and therefore, cannot be approached easily. Yet I will do my best. (Act- III.p.35)

Her nobility is also displayed by her frank admission consequent on knowing the truth about Malavika that she was guilty of defiling sandal by using it like foot ware in act V. She uttered, "I have soiled the sandalwood by using for the wooden shoes."(Act-V.p.95)

Concluding this paper, she is a keen lover and promoter of art. She rules her royal household wisely and well. The king shows the highest regard to her and the tender consideration to her feelings and makes pleasing her one of his prime cares in life. It can preferably be attributed to the want of skill on the part of the author in correlating character with events. Dr. Keith has remarked that:

The most effective characterization however is reserved for the two queens, Dharini and Iravati; the grace and dignity, and finally the former, despite just cause for anger, are set off effectively, against the passionate impetuosity of the latter, which leads her to constant eaves-dropping and to an outbreak against the king, forgetful of his rank and rights.

In the language of Indian aestheticians, she is *pragalbha* and *Dhira*. Her dignified quality goes hand in hand with love. She is attached to her lord, to her children and to her dependents. She is well called by Kaushiki as *Veerapatni* (the wife of a hero) and *Virasunu* (the mother of a hero). She is a keen lover and promoter of art. She rules her royal household wisely and well. The king shows the highest regard to her and the tender consideration to her feelings and makes pleasing her one of his prime cares in life. She is as shrewd as she is forging. She easily sees through the king's movement in Act I to have a sight of Malavika and tells him that if he showed as much skill in stage affairs as in his affairs of the heart it would redound to his honour and glory. She is loyal to her word. After promising to Malavika that she would fulfill her wish if the Ashoka tree blossomed after the *dohada* ceremony, she faithfully carries out her plighted promise. For the sake of her son's success she offers up prayers and gives gifts of piety. When she learns about her son's victory from her attendant, she loads the latter with jewels so much so that the latter gratefully exclaims that she has become a peripatetic box of jewels. She is thus full of dignity and generosity and other loveable qualities despite her shrewdness and caustic humor.

Portrayal of Dharini, according to the moral standard of the present times, perhaps may be considered too tame and submissive and wanting in self-respect as she readily panders to the lewdness of the king in consenting to his marriage with Malavika. Dharini is very plainly personified as a perfect package of power, possession, punishment and politeness.

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