

# The Effect of Legend in Abhigyaan Shakuntalam

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## Abstract

*Legend is an existing history said by the people which may be to some extent akin to a true incident. Legend may be of many types, such as history based, half history based, based on sages-saints, stories of love & tragedy, fairies, ghosts & spirits, memorable true or half true incident based, epic based, based on religion, folktale, and stories of heroes admired by common people. In the writings of the great poet Kalidasa, we get to know about many legends. Knowingly or unknowingly, he gave us a clear picture of the contemporary society, economy, culture, which has a great value. In the second part of the drama 'Abhigyan Shakuntalam', we see that on hearing about the two duties, the king said that what to do then. The royal jester said that he should remain in the middle of the situations, just like the King 'Trishanku'. The phrase "agnigarbhag shamimiba" of this sloka has been mentioned in the anushasan parba of the great epic Mahabharata. It is believed that Agni, the god of fire, remains inside the shami tree. Being unable to hold the teja of Lord Shiva, Agnideva, in order to hide himself from being slammed by other gods, hid himself inside a shami tree. For this reason, shami tree is known as the 'womb of the Agni.' As it is based on the great epic Mahabharata, so it is an epic-based legend. In the fourth part of this drama, after Shakuntala took the blessings of Maharshi Kanwa, he said, "Vatsha, may you get the love and affection of your husband like Sharmishtha and as she was blessed with a son like Puru, may the Almighty bless you with a brave and noble son."*

*Different types of legends that were popular at that time are popular now as well and will be the same popular in future. Present is the effect of the past. Present appears after the past. Again, future is the effect of the present. So, the legends that we have are our rich heritage. Depending upon these legends, we get to know about that age in a much detailed manner. After all these, it can be said that folklore, which is the collection of many things, is a type of educational subject. Quite naturally, it should have a major or minor relationship with other educational subject. And Sanskrit literature without which folklore can't be thought of, so in the creations of Kalidasa there is absence of the components of folklore, it is not possible.*

**Keywords:** Folktale, Channel Catfish, Shami Tree, Hymns, and Legend.

## Introduction

People call legend in different names which are used in different aspects in various ways, such as local tradition, popular antiquities etc. In his book entitled 'FOLKLEGEND OF JAPAN', Dr. Richard M. Dorson stated that legend is a type of folktale that appears in the minds of people for many years just like twinkling of stars at night. Common people think that folktales are stories but they believe in legends. Anything which is believable to a nation or tribe may be a superstition to the people of another geographic atmosphere. The religion, custom, thinking, food-habit, clothing, etc. of the people of a particular nation will definitely represent the heritage of a nation. In other words, it may be said that legend is an existing history said by the people who may be to some extent akin to a true incident.

<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Legend may be of many types, such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• history based</li> <li>• half history based</li> <li>• based on sages-saints</li> <li>• based on stories of love &amp; tragedy</li> <li>• based on fairies</li> <li>• based on ghosts &amp; spirits</li> <li>• memorable true or half true incident based</li> <li>• epic based</li> <li>• based on religion</li> <li>• based on folktale</li> <li>• based on stories of heroes admired by common people</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>The general objective of the study is to go into the in-depth study of the Works of Kalidasa specially his literature and drama which were written long back ago. The search for the study of the reflection of the Society, culture, socio-economic condition of the then society reflected in the works of the great poet.</p> <p>The special objective of the study is to explore the various folk elements used in the works of the Kalidasa particularly the use of legend or myth.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>We come across many legends in the writings of the great poet Kalidasa. Knowingly or unknowingly, he gave us a clear picture of the contemporary society, economy, culture, which has a great value. For example, in the second part of the drama 'Abhigyaan Shakuntalam', we see that on one side the king saves the saints from the fearsome demons and on the other side news came that the royal mother ordered the king to be present on her fast-breaking day. On hearing about the two duties, the king said that what to do then. The royal jester said that he should remain in the middle of the situations, just like the King 'Trishanku'.</p> <p>Royal jester: 'Trishankuriba antara tistha.' This Trishanku-related story is widely popular legend. King Trishanku was the king of Ayodhya, son of King Prithu and father of King Harishchandra.</p> <p>He had committed three sins, so he got this name. He wanted to do a yagya and wanted to go to the heaven while he was alive. He requested Vashishtha rishi to perform his yagya, but he became angry at this and said that the king would become a chandal. At last, Biswamitra rishi took the king to the heaven. But Devaraj Indra did not allow the king to enter into the heaven, rather told him to go back to the earth. From that onwards, Trishanku remained neither in heaven nor in earth, he remained within these two places. In the fourth sloka of the fourth part of the drama, we see that Anasua and Priyambada, while talking with each other, Anasua asked who informed Maharshi Kanwa about the marriage of Shakuntala. Priyambada said that a heavenly rhythmic saying informed him and that saying said, "O Brahman, for the sake of making a better world, your daughter will be the mother of a brave and praiseworthy son of King Dushyanta."</p>

*“Dushyantatihang tejo dadhanang bhutaye bhuba.  
Abehi tanayang brahmannagnigarbhang shamimiba.”*

The phrase “agnigarbhang shamimiba” of this sloka has been mentioned in the anushasan parba of the great epic Mahabharata. It is believed that Agni, the god of fire, remains inside the shami tree. Complying with the requests of the gods, Agnideva agreed to hold the teja of Lord Shiva. But unable to do so, he went down into the water. When a frog told this to the gods, Agnideva hid himself inside a peepul tree. Again an elephant told this to the gods, and again he hid himself inside the shami tree. Then a bird told this to the gods, and they found Agnideva inside the shami tree. For this reason, shami tree is known as the ‘womb of the Agni.’ In the fourth part of this drama, after Shakuntala took the blessings of Maharshi Kanwa, he said, “Vatsha, may you get the love and affection of your husband like Sharmishtha and as she was blessed with a son like Puru, may the Almighty bless you with a brave and noble son.”

*“Jajaterib Sharmishtha bhartturbahumata bhava.  
Sutang twamapi samrajang seba purumabapnuhi.”*

Here, the legend which is obtained is history based. The king of lunar descent Jajati married the master of the demons Shukracharya’s daughter Debjani and demon king Brishaparba’s daughter Sharmishtha. Owing to her noble virtues, Jajati loved Sharmishtha the most. The other wife of Jajati, Debjani went to her father’s house and owing to the envy about Sharmishtha, she informed Shukracharya about all the matters. Shukracharya cursed King Jajati that he would suffer from leprosy, due to his biasness about loving Sharmishtha more than Debjani. After that, on Jajati’s request, he told that if one of his sons would take his leprosy in lieu of his youth, then King Jajati would be completely cured. Out of his sons, only Puru agreed to take his father’s leprosy in lieu of his youth. Being pleased at this, Jajati gave him his whole kingdom and afterwards, Puru became the king after his father. In the sixth part of this drama, we see that the man, who was captured by the royal guards of King Dushyanta, had the ring of King Dushyanta. When he went to sell the ring, he was captured by the guards. That man told King Dushyanta that he was a fisherman and he got the ring from the stomach of a channel catfish.

*“Ekasmin dibase khandasho rohitmatshyo maya kalpito jabat tasso udarabhyantare prekshe tabat idang ratnabhasurmanguliyakang drishtam. Paschat ahang asso bikrayay darshayan grihito bhabmishrai. Marayata ba munchata ba. Ayamasya agambrittanta.”*

Here, based on the story of the fish written above, it is said that the scar on the stomach of the channel catfish is due to the cutting of the stomach for bringing Shakuntala’s ring out. We can say that this story is a legend. Because it is said by people for many years and it is widely popular.

**Conclusion**

Different types of legends that were popular at that time are popular now as well and will be the same popular in future. Present is the effect of the past. Present appears after the past. Again, future is the effect of the present. So, the legends that we have are our rich heritage. Depending upon these legends, we get to know about that age in a much detailed manner. But the legends are not preserved as well as the folktales, proverbs, rhymes, songs, hymns etc. are preserved. After all these, it can be said that folklore, which is the collection of many things, is a type of educational subject. Quite naturally, it should have a major or minor relationship with other educational subject. For example, it has a relationship with the anthropology, geography, history, environmental science, mathematics, Sanskrit literature etc. and Sanskrit literature without which folklore can't be thought of, so in the creations of Kalidasa, the absence of the folk-components, it is not possible.

**References**

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