Introduction

The Epic Rāmāyaṇa is a classic Sanskrit work, which closely interrelated with some ecological values. The epic developed from a single verse that created from the sorrow about the separation of a snipe bird couple. Those cupid bird couple compared to the Rāma and Sītā. The third chapter of Rāmāyaṇa is Aranyakāṇḍa because of it deals with the exile of Rāma and Sītā with Lākṣmaṇa. The development of the Rāmāyaṇa story, throughout keeps a symphony with the nature. The battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, and its final and cruel effect the abandonment of Sītā were the after effect of the abduction of Sītā, in the Aranyakāṇḍa. According to the Rāmacaritamānasā of Tulasidāsa, the first meeting of Rāma and Sītā was also taking place in a lovely garden. So then, Sītā the female protagonist of the story herself is the ‘daughter of the Earth’ is obviously not a matter of amazement.

Sītā: The Daughter of Earth

A character like this cannot be seen anywhere in the world literature. The birth of Sītā was in a unique way. When Śrīdhwaja Janaka, the king of Mithilā ploughed the land just after immolation, a newborn baby girl appeared from the earth. He named the baby as Sītā for the reason that of her appearance from ‘sita’ which means the plowshare.

क्षेत्रं शोधयता लब्धा नामं सीतेतत्तिश्रुता।
भूतलादुतथात्ता तु व्यक्ति मातामुख।

Sītā’s different names such as Avanijā, Avanibālā, Bhaumī, Bhūmijā, Bhūmiputrī, Dharāṇīsūta, Dharitṛsūta, Kṣitijā, Medinīsūta, Medinīputri and Vasudhatmajā are remembering her birth from the Earth. This uniqueness in her birth point toward that Sītā was an agricultural deity among ancient Indian society. Finally, the image of that specific deity transformed into an epic heroine and an ideal woman.

The end of her life journey also related to the earth. When Rāma asked her to prove her purity of chastity in front of the crowd, she exhorted her mother Earth to provide her a shelter. She asked to give a shelter in the lap of the Earth if she is entirely pure with her mind and body.

यिाहं राघिादन्यं मनसाति न तिन्तये।
तिा मे माधिी देिी तििरं दातुमहधत।

When Sītā repeated her truthful words three times, a big excavation appeared in the earth and Bhūmidevī appeared on a golden throne that decorated with many ethereal gemstones supported by serpents. She rapidly disappeared from there with her daughter Sītā within a split second.
Obviously, nobody can find any other sublime emotional moments in the world literature, which is equal to this scene depicted in the Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa. Finally the daughter of Earth found her permanent shelter in the lap of her own mother.

Sitā in Exile

When Rāma decided to respect Kaikeyi’s boons from Daśaratha and lead life in the forest, he asked Sitā to be in Ayodhya. However, she did not agree to stay in Ayodhya without her husband, Rāma tried to stay back her by pointing out the difficulties in the forest life, whereas, Sitā had a clear viewpoint about the characteristics of forest life. After all, she is Bhūmiputrī by birth and grown into an agricultural society.

When the journey to the forest began and it comes to cross the river Ganga, Sitā praised to the river goddess and the elements in the universe significantly attached with the environment expres.

Sita cried with gloomy faces. Fairies became very sad due to their best friend’s helpless condition.

Animals such as lions, tigers etc. quickly and angrily followed the shadow of Puspakavimāna with Sitā. Mountain peaks seems to like the raised hands requesting do not cry by seeing Sitā’s grief. Streams are like the tears of the mountain.

Rāvana abducted Rāma’s Vaidehī. There is no virtue, no truth, no candour and no compassion. The entire universe cried that, all destroyed by this misery. Frightened deer babies cried with gloomy faces. Fairies became very fearful by seeing Rāvana and cried at the helpless Sitā (1). In response to Rāma’s question about Sitā (2), animals got up and sauntered towards the South.

Sitā requested with tears to all her surroundings to inform Rāma that Rāvana abducted her.

When Sitā abducted by Rāvana, the entire world suffered darkness, there not even a breeze, the sun became diminished.

Elements in the universe significantly attached with the environment expres.

Sitā's grief. Streams are like the tears of the mountain.

While reaching at Laṅka, Rāvana offered all the royal prosperities and his entire wealth to Sitā. Nevertheless, she did not give any attention to his assurance. She sat under a particular tree (śīvaliśpa) in the Aśokavanikā (3) with sorrowful heart.

Agni and Sitā

The Agni played an important role in the life of Sitā. When Rāma hesitated to accept Sitā after the war due to his suspect on her chastity, she purified herself in the Agni. Agni did not cause any injury on her body conversely became cool for her. Agni himself appeared with Sitā in front of Rāma, and stated about the purity of Sitā. He asked Rāma to accept her without any doubt about her chastity and dedication towards her husband. In addition, while Hanuman to set fire in the whole Laṅka the fire became cool to him due to the prayer of Sitā to God Agni.

Conclusion

Sitā, the daughter of the Earth can be considering as a seraphic exemplar of ecological aspects in the Rāmāyaṇa. The existence and cessation of the epic heroine Sitā is greatly unified with the Earth. There is no other character like Sitā in the worldwide literature that is much closer to soil and nature. The five Elements in the universe significantly attached with the characterization of Sitā. In other words, Sitā is the apt example for the positively connected humanism to the environment.

References

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