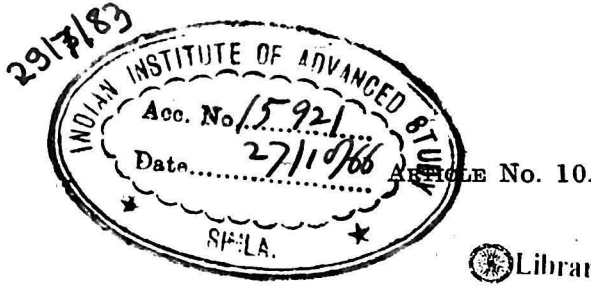


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Two Notes on Bhavabhūti.

By C. W. GURNER.

The following notes do not deal with any new point of scholarship, and may interest the reader generally acquainted with Sanscrit more than the technical scholar. The first is an attempt to put literary criticism of the plays of Bhavabhūti on a fair basis, especially for the Western critic. The second draws attention to the phenomenon of verses repeated from one play to another which is so distinctive a feature of Bhavabhūti's text.

I

My starting point might be remarks such as the following in Dr. Berriedale Keith's History of Sanscrit Drama. "The Mahāvīracharita lacks the novelty of the Mālatīmādhava, but Bhavabhūti's effort to give some unity to the plot is commendable though it is unsuccessful. The fatal error is of course in the narration of events in long speeches in lieu of action" or "The Uttararāmacharita reaches no higher level as drama; he has a period of twelve years to cover as he had fourteen years in the Mahāvīracharita; and to produce effective unity would be hard for any author; Bhavabhūti has made no serious effort to the end; he has contented himself with imagining a series of striking pictures" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 193/194).

Now Bhavabhūti was in many ways a self-conscious and academic writer; and he wrote at a time when Sanscrit literary criticism already had a long history behind it. Throughout that history the theory of the drama, as distinct from questions of ornament and style, had been the emotional theory that of Rasa, first authoritatively enunciated in the Nāṭyasāstra. Without touching on the thousand subtleties associated with this theory, which are discussed at some length in Dr. Berriedale Keith's work, one may summarise it as follows. The function of the drama is to create in the spectator a pleasurable feeling through aesthetic appreciation of certain cardinal emotions. Rasa, "taste" means something entirely different from the refined intellectual judgment for which the word stands in English. It is the taste as it were on the spectator's mental palate of the emotions enacted on the stage. That is what drama exists to afford. There were originally eight of these cardinal emotions, each emotion on the stage pairing off with the feeling created in the spectator, and we may call them Love, Laughter, Pity, Awe, Prowess, Fear, Disgust, and Wonder.

Bhavabhūti probably would have included a ninth, Peace. All this is familiar enough, but must be recalled for the proper appreciation of Bhavabhūti.

That Bhavabhūti knew this theory need hardly be stated. He was in fact wholly imbued with it till it becomes part of his literary personality; and the object of the drama was to him essentially the engendering of this "taste" by expression of the cardinal emotions heightened by exhibitions of style. With quite unnecessary anxiety to remind his cultured audience, familiar themselves with the theory of the drama, what his object was, the poet is constantly alluding to the fare which he is providing for them. At the beginning of the Mahāvīracharita the Sūtradhāra calls for a play "of heroic enterprise with depth and fear" and in which "the taste of prowess is shared by noble characters in distinct subtle shades." (Mc. I. 2 and 3.) A few verses further on the Mahāvīracharita itself is described as a play in which "prowess, courage and wonder" are combined (*not*, as a play that covers fourteen years). (Mc. I. 6.) "Is it the emotion of prowess or pride?" asks Rama, in the Uttarāma-charita about his own son still unknown. U. VI 19. So again in the Uttarāmācharita, Bhavabhūti points almost ostentatiously to his own subtleties in expressing the shades of "karuṇā rasa" the emotion of Pity. "The single taste of pity assumes separate forms from difference of occasion, just as water assumes the shape of the bubbling eddies, and yet all is water." (U. III. 47.) Valmiki's play within the play is first described as "Full of emotion" (*rasavān*) and then introduced by its Sūtradhāra as a combination of Pity and Wonder, which of course is just what it is. (U. IV. 22/23 and U. VII. 1/2.) "Something still more wonderful" (*adbhutataram kimapi*) remarks later on Rāma the spectator, echoing no doubt the whispers among Bhavabhūti's own audience, or acting as "claqueur." (U. VII. 8/9.) "Subtle action abounding in emotions, the charm of friendship in adventures, and loftiness allied to the science of love" are among the qualities of a play as defined in the Mālatimādhava (Mm. I. 6). In this play the poet is particularly conscious of his efforts at working up the emotion of horror; and the stage direction "with horror" to indicate how the hero declaims, is a significant little touch (M. III. 17).

This brief summary only bears on one aspect of Bhavabhūti's views on dramatic criticism. More might be said about his conception of language and style as an integral part of the dramatic entertainment, and of liveliness of plot as essential to a Prakaraṇa, (though not necessarily to other forms of drama). It serves however to illustrate his radical conception of the emotional function of the drama, with which at present I am concerned.

Now obviously it is as an expression of this conception that

the critic should approach Bhavabhūti's dramas. The poet must be appreciated from the view-point of the school of aesthetic thought of which he presents himself as an interpreter. And the moment one regards the two chronicle or episodic plays, the *Uttarāmacharita* and the *Mahāvīracharita* in this light a great deal of the criticism of the type of Dr. Berriedale Keith's becomes totally irrelevant. Both these are narrative plays based on the epic, the former a retrospective narrative, and the latter an unfinished summary of the epic story. (For I dismiss from consideration everything in the *Mahāvīracharita* after the middle of the fifth Act Mc. V. 46.) Their *raison d'être* however is not the narrative, but simply the study in emotions which the extracts from the epic story serve to afford. In the *Mahāvīracharita* what interests the poet is the more commonplace theme of *Vīra Rasa*, heroism or personal prowess, with the special feature of the contrast of the warrior and the Brahmanical ascetic. It is a contrast heightened by fusion of the two aspects in the same personality. I cannot pause to dwell on this feature beyond pointing out how it is emphasised in the characters of Parasurāma, and echoed in those of Visvāmītra, Rāma himself, and Lava (in the *Uttarāmacharita*). One feels that there must have been some local reason for developing this theme; but it may only imply that Bhavabhūti definitely recognised *Sama*, Peace, as a ninth dramatic emotion, and, in his characteristic way, is exhibiting it in contrast with its opposite.

The *Uttarāmacharita* is not without a similar episode in *Vīra Rasa*, the study of martial prowess with its refinement of legitimate pride. But the more essential motif of this play lies, under the conception probably of *Karuṇā Rasa*, the taste of the emotion of Pity, in a much more subtle emotional essay. This is the analysis of the various phases of the state of emotional consciousness known as "Recognition." Herein lies the real unity of the play, which, as Dr. Berriedale Keith points out in his negative criticism, is not to be found in the episodic narrative. Bhavabhūti focusses the whole of his epic reminiscences on to the theme of the emotions excited by recognition. At first he presents through the medium of the picture shown by Lakṣmaṇa, the recognition in happiness of the scenes of past adventures in company and in bereavement. On this follows the recognition in loneliness of the scenes of past companionship. Again there is the actual recognition by Rāma of Sītā in some form of spirit contact—the physical recognition in the sense of her touch. A new phase comes with the introduction of the aged parents—recognition in old age and changed circumstances of one another and of the younger generation. And so the play passes on to the study, manifold in itself, of the recognition of the unknown child, by the bystander, by the grandparents, and by the father. While finally the play within the play works up the king's feelings to the last degree by enact-

ment of the tragedy of his own past life, and ends in the final recognition and reunion of Rāma and Sītā. And incidentally this closing episode affords a very good dose of "the wonderful" a *sine qua non* in a good play as much as any other cardinal emotion.

It would be out of place in a brief sketch such as this to dwell on the individual subtleties with which Bhavabhūti develops each facet of his central theme. He works into it all the poetry of family affection and human friendship which is his own peculiar contribution to Sanscrit literature. All that I do want to establish is that in this profound and subtle study of an aspect of emotional consciousness lies the whole justification and artistic unity of the play. Bhavabhūti succeeds or fails, not so far as he compresses the epic story into unity of dramatic action, a purpose which never entered into his conception of drama at all; but in so far as he extracts and develops the maximum emotional experience out of his epic episodes. The bare fact that the epic story is so familiar to the hearts of his audience predisposes them to accept the emotional impressions in the fullest degree.

In the Mālatīmādhava this same objective of creating emotional experience, or affording emotional taste, is far more obvious, and the method of achievement more conventional. The play is in fact constructed round the three cardinal emotions of Love, Horror, and Surprise. (Śringāra, Bībhatsa, and Adbhuta.) It hardly needs pointing out how the first two of these in close juxtaposition gain in dramatic value through enhancing each other's effect. Other emotions of course play their part. Where there is Love there will generally be Pity, and where there is Horror there will generally be Prowess; but Pity and Prowess are in this play both subsidiary to the central theme of Love and Horror. What matter coincidences and improbabilities of action, Bhavabhūti, and indeed the whole Indian school of drama, would ask, provided that the audience or reader derive the taste of experiencing these emotions in artistic relation and in abundance? And so we have in a combination of neat Sanscrit verse and elaborate Prakrit speeches the study of a love intrigue, not so much for the comedy of action as for the expression of the emotion engendered at every stage, incipient and consummate, as experienced by the lovers and instigated by the confidante. It is a conventional and academic study, following, just as Bhavabhūti says a good play should, the standard text-book of the *Ars Amoris*, the *Kāmasūtra*. But for the literary criticism of the Mālatīmādhava the first question is not "How does the play hang together?" but how far does it succeed in expressing the emotions of which it sets out to give aesthetic appreciation to the audience.

II.

On the subject of the repeated verses I will be very brief, but I have not seen the problem tackled, and it needs stating to be tackled. At least six verses of the Uttararāmacharita coincide wholly, and five partially, with verses in the Mālatīmādhava. And again five verses in the Uttararāmacharita, (including one of those common also to the Mālatīmādhava) together with one or two lines, and scraps of Sanscrit dialogue from this play, occur also in the Mahāvīracharita. In particular the scenery of waterfalls and mountain caves in the Uttararāmacharita reappears *en bloc* in the Mahāvīracharita. On the other hand there is at the most only an occasional line common only to the Mālatīmādhava and the Mahāvīracharita. *e.g.* U. I. 31. Mm. IX. 14, U. III. 31=Mm. IX. 12, U. VI. 12=Mm. I. 27, U. IV. 29=Mc. III. 29, U. III. 21 =Mc. V. 41=Mm. IX. 6, U. IV. 4=Mm. X. 2, U. II. 20=Mc. V. 40, U. IV. 20=Mc. I. 18, U. VI. 9=Mc. II. 41.

Now these verses and lines common to the Uttararāmacharita and one or other of the two plays are instances not of a mere general verbal resemblance, but of actual verbal identity, subject to slight textual variations. It will be seen therefore what a curious feature the correspondence of the Uttararāmacharita with one play on either side, as it were, presents. It is conceivable that a poet of an academic turn of mind should harp on his own ideas in similar language. Kālidāsa frequently does so, quite apart from the repetition of lines in the Raghuvamśa and Kumārasambhava, which presents a small problem not dissimilar from this of Bhavabhūti's. Bhavabhūti himself often goes over his own tracks, noticeably in the mannerism of emotional Utprekshās and massed similies (the Vastusanchāra of Rājasekhara).¹ Such for instance are verses on holiness U. VI. 10 and Mc. I. 10 or on feminine attraction U. III. 46 and M. V. 10. But this is a very different matter from the verbatim reproduction of complete verses or even complete lines. After all our satisfaction with the Uttararāmacharita is materially spoilt if we assume that ten verses at least were imported ready made from elsewhere; or the Mahāvīracharita becomes still more of a fragment if four complete verses and occasional lines were similarly borrowed.

There is always, of course, the explanation of textual interpolation. But for the most part the verses in question read as they stand in both plays in which they occur as so integral a part of their context that it is difficult to accept this explanation as at all general. And once any of these repetitions remain

¹ Rājasekhara in the Kāvya-mīmāṃsā cites Mm. III. 16. As an instance of this figure, a type of verse particularly characteristic of Bhavabhūti.

as part of the authentic text, that explanation is weakened for the rest.

Or did Bhavabhūti keep a note-book of his own verses, or an anthology of quotations apposite to the various emotions and types of scenery, from which he borrowed as occasion required. The method is quite possible in dramas written under the influence of the Rasa theory. Mādhava in distress and Rāma in distress are not particularly distinguishable as exhibitions of Karuṇā Rasa. Remarks appropriate to one in the epic play are equally in place for the other in the Prakaraṇa comedy. After all the material for both derives largely from the old Kāvya theme of Separation in the Rains which dates back at least to the Rāmāyana (Kanda IV). The same phrases suit the same situation. The difficulty about this explanation is that it does not account for the fact that the verbal coincidences from the two other plays both converge on the Uttara-rāma.

I should incline myself to the idea that this fact, taken with the tradition that the Mahāvīracharita was unfinished, (to say nothing of the text of that play from the latter half of the fifth Act) goes a long way to establish the order in which the three plays were written. It seems to me quite conceivable that this academically-minded poet carried on from his Prakaraṇa, the Mālatīmādhava, to his first essay in drama from the epic, the Uttararāmacharita, a verse here and there expressive of common feelings or situations in both; and similarly carried on a few favourite verses again from the Uttararāmacharita to the Mahāvīracharita. It is a suggestion which needs to be tested both by detailed scrutiny of the repetitions, and by all other criteria for priority between the plays, which is far from settled. I make no attempt in this note to push the question to a conclusion, but the problem of these repetitions does seem to be one worth intensive examination.

MYMENSINGH,

24.12.1928.

Date of the *nīti* Section of the Garuḍa-Purāṇa.

By CHINTAĀHARAN CHAKRAVARTI.

The Garuḍa-Purāṇa is one of the most important of the Hindu Purāṇas and is included in the group of eighteen Mahā-Purāṇas or Great Purāṇas. It is of an encyclopædic character, giving an account of almost all branches of Sanskrit learning. It is, of course, not always possible to identify the work or works on which the author of the Garuḍa-Purāṇa based his summary of a particular branch of learning. Neither is it possible to determine exactly when these summaries, and hence the Purāṇa as a whole incorporating them, were compiled. It, however, seems that the summaries are works of different periods some of them belonging to a fairly old date and others to a comparatively later time. Thus the grammatical section which gives a summary of the Kātantra system and contains no reference to Pāṇini is believed by Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasad Shastri to belong to a period anterior to the time when the school of Pāṇini was revived by Bhartr̥hari in the 7th century of the Christian era after a long period of neglect. He, therefore, places this section in *circa* 3rd or 4th century.¹

But the *nīti* section which comprises chapters 108-15 and is termed *nīti-sāra* does not seem to be so old. This represents a collection of *nīti ślokas* (verses dealing with moral maxims) of the type of the *Chānakya ślokas* and is attributed to the sage Śaunaka, 'a name which approximates as closely as possible to that of the worldly Chānakya.'² This collection shows a close agreement with that of Bhojarāja, probably identical with the great royal patron of Sanskrit learning who ruled at Dhārā in the 11th century and also with the Tibetan version in the Tanjur which was compared by Mr. Johan van Manen. All these versions may go back to a common original which is lost. There are verses in these collections which are found in various old works like the *Mahābhārata*, *Manusamhitā*, etc. One verse, however,

¹ *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*—Vol. XIV, pp. 331-2; *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in the Government collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*—Vol. IV, (Purāṇas) Preface p. lxxxii.

² Johan van Manen—Foreword to *Chānakya-rāja-nīti-śāstram* (Calcutta Oriental Series—No. 2) p. XIV. It is at the suggestion of Mr. van Manen—who is making a special study of the *nīti* literature of India and has already gathered together much valuable material for that purpose—that I compared the *nīti* section of the Garuḍa Purāṇa with the *Chānakya-Rāja-nīti-śāstram* which represents Bhojarāja's collection.

is found to occur in these collections which has been taken from a comparatively late work. The verse as it is found in the *Garuḍa-Purāna* (112, 16—Venkateswar Press edition of Bombay) runs as follows:—

अकारणाविष्कृतकोपधारिणः

खलाद्भयं कस्य न नाम जायते ।

विषं मच्चाहेर्विषमस्य दुर्वचः

सदुःसहं सन्निपतेत् सदा सुखे ॥

This very verse with slight variants occurs in the *Chāṅakya-Rāja-nīti-bāstra* (V. 21). Oscar Kressler in his *Stimmen indischer Lebensklugheit* (Indica—Heft 4—Leipzig—1907) also notes this verse as occurring in Bhojarāja's recension of *Chāṅakya* (V. 22). It is thus quite clear that the verse had entered into *nīti* collections at least from the time of Bhoja if not earlier. As, however, it is found in the *nīti* section of the *Garuḍa Purāna* it seems reasonable to suppose that the verse had already found a place in the *Chāṅakya* collection when it was incorporated in the *Nītisāra* of the *Garuḍa Purāna*. But it is well known that this verse—at least, the prototype of it—is the composition of Bāṇa of the court of King Harṣavardhana (7th century) and that it is found, with slight changes here and there, as No. 5 of the introductory verses of his *Kādambarī*. A verse can ordinarily enter into popular anthological works only when a considerable period of time has elapsed after its composition. It requires more time to become attributed to a sage. We may therefore suppose that at least two or three centuries had passed after the time of Bāṇa before a verse of his was taken into some anthological work and given currency to by the author of the *Garuḍa-Purāna* as the production of the vedic sage Śaunaka.¹ Hence, the *nītisāra*—if not the whole of the *Garuḍa Purāna* at least in the form in which we find it now—cannot be earlier than the 9th or 10th century. It may even be later if it was based on Bhojarāja's collection.

¹ It is of course not reasonable to argue that Bāṇa in writing a big romantic work borrowed a verse from some earlier work and incorporated it into his introduction.

