

Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series No. XXIII

EPIC SOURCES OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE

By
JUTHIKA GHOSH, M.A., D. Phil., Kāvya-tīrtha
*Assistant Professor of Sanskrit and Head of the
Department, Bethune College, Calcutta*



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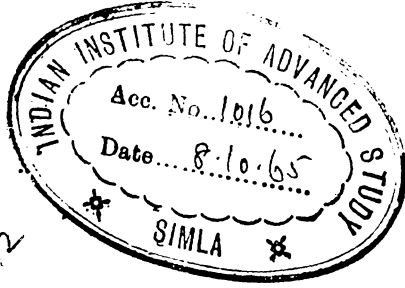
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TO MY VENERABLE TEACHER
DR GAURINATH SASTRI, M.A., D.Litt.

FOREWORD

The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, the two great epics of Indian literature, are highly remarkable contributions. The Indian mind believes that of these two, the Rāmāyaṇa is an earlier composition, but modern scholars have taken great pains to find out that neither of these poems is the work of a single poet, and that additions have been made from time to time to the original kernels, and that the kernel of the Mahābhārata is in all probability older than that of the Rāmāyaṇa. Whatever may be the truth regarding their relative chronology, it can never be denied that the literature of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata as a whole has been a perennial source of inspiration to later poets. It is difficult to find a poet of a later age who has not been influenced by the two great epics in one form or other. It may not be an exaggeration to state that later poets thought it desirable to exhibit their poetic skill by writing on one or other topics or episodes of the great poems. In short, the entire classical poetry is indebted to the two great epics.

It is, therefore, quite in the fitness of things that Dr. Srimati Ghosh has rendered a very useful service by collecting various informations related to the influence of the great epics on subsequent Sanskrit literature. I am also very happy that she worked under my guidance and obtained her degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Calcutta in 1958. The present work contains a substantial portion of her original thesis as also some new matter which she later chose to incorporate. It is now for the academic world to judge the merit of this work as a useful contribution to a comprehensive and critical study of the great epics.

Sanskrit College
Calcutta
March, 1963

GAURINATH SASTRI

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PREFACE

Every reader of Indian literature has some broad conception about the value and importance of the two great Indian epics—the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* and their varied influence on later literature. In the present work, an attempt has been made to explain the nature of influence which the epics have exerted on the different forms and patterns of subsequent literary compositions in Sanskrit in respect of the theme in particular.

The *Mahābhārata*, as a vast storehouse of legends and myths of different types and a repository of Indian culture, has been a perennial source of inspiration to later Indian writers in different fields of literary activities. Not only the kernel, namely the fight between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, but also other legends of the epic have offered ample scope to talented writers for unlimited literary adventure. Free borrowing of the central theme from ancient lore is nothing unusual with notable writers of the world. Even Shakespeare never missed the opportunity of collecting interesting materials from foreign literatures for enriching and enlarging the literature of his own land. He borrowed freely from ballads, verse-romance, ancient chronicles, Italian tales and changed them fully to suit his own purpose. In most cases, dramatic considerations led him to modify or recast the borrowed themes and his distinctive greatness lies in his ability to mould and adapt them to his own literary purpose. Borrowing of plots or materials from available sources does not in any way undermine the reputation of a poet, and his success is measured by the mode of adaptation and refashioning. A successful adaptation earns unstinted praise for the writer, and it is not rare that in the hand of a successful writer, the adapted form has become so unique that it has completely overshadowed the original. A few works based on the legends of the *Mahābhārata* are instances in point. The great epic touches practically on all subjects and out of its confused abundance, many a talented poet wrought an artistic unity.

Like the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* too, from time immemorial, has been the mainspring of inspiration and encouragement to all readers and listeners of the recital of the epic. Rāma's loyalty to his father, Sītā's forbearance, Lakṣmaṇa's devotion to his elder brother, Bharata's adherence to justice and Hanumat's deep reverence for the master enchant the minds of people familiar with the story of the

Rāmāyaṇa. The story for its unity of plot and action arrested the attention of writers of later age, and they did not hesitate to imitate Vālmiki's poetic fancy and charming imageries to enrich their own compositions. Literary compositions based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* mainly centre round the Rāma story, the number of legends and myths being very few therein, whereas diverse elements of the *Mahābhārata* have provided enormous facilities to writers to compose a greater number of works with necessary changes and innovations for making the theme interesting.

Mahākāvya, dramas, citra-kāvya, campū-kāvya, didactic tales have been composed with their subject-matter derived from the stories of the two epics. A detailed discussion of the wide influence of the two epics on later compositions from the point of subject matter will be made here in several chapters. Points of deviation and originality will also be dealt with as far as possible. Transmutation of the original episodes of the *Mahābhārata* will be systematically dealt with in five chapters in book I, and the handling of Rāma story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* will be an object of discussion in book II consisting of three chapters. In the case of the *Mahābhārata*, some writers preferred to take up the main story of the epic, some remained content with a part of the main story, some turned their attention to more important legends, some showed their interest in myths, while others did not forget to utilise the little didactic stories for conveying moral lessons to readers by inserting them with slight modifications in books already well known for their didactic value. Compositions dealing with the main story will be taken up first. Some of the writers belonging to this group have clung to the *Mahābhārata* division, that is *parvan*, thereby narrating as many of the side stories as possible along with the main story; while others are chiefly concerned with the principal story dealing with the warlike activities of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.

I acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to my venerable teacher Dr. Gaurinath Sastri, M.A., P.R.S., D.Litt., Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, under whose valuable guidance I completed my work, and whose ready assistance and constant encouragement have made it possible for me to publish this work. Despite his multifarious activities, he did not hesitate to take the trouble of making necessary proof corrections for rendering the work free from defects as far as practicable. With great respect, I express my sincere gratitude also to Dr. S. K. De, M.A., D. Litt., (London), the eminent Indologist of international reputation and Honorary Fellow, Royal Asiatic Society, who gave me

valuable suggestions to draw an outline of the work and allowed me to use his personal library for my research work.

My thanks are due to Professor Adhir Chakravarti, M.A., of the department of Ancient Indian and World History of Sanskrit College for having gone through some portion of the work through the press.

Let me also express my thanks to Pandits Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya Sastri Tarka-Vedāntatīrtha and Nanigopal Chakravarti, Kāvya-Vyākaraṇa-Tarkatīrtha of the Publication Department of the Sanskrit College and to the authorities of the Oriental Press Private Limited for their valuable assistance in expediting the publication.

Calcutta
March, 1963

JUTHIKA GHOSH

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	...	Aitareya-brāhmaṇa
AbN	...	Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka
AD	...	Adbhuta-darpaṇa
AR	...	Anargha-rāghava
AS	...	Abhijñāna-śakuntala
BB	...	Bāla bhārata (drama)
BBh	...	Bāla-bhārata (kāvyā)
BCm	...	Bhārata-campū
Bibl. Ind.	...	Bibliotheca Indica Series
BK	...	Bhaṭṭi-kāvyā
BM	...	Bhārata-mañjarī
BR	...	Bāla-rāmāyaṇa
BSS	...	Bombay Sanskrit Series
CSS	...	Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series
DAn	...	Dūtāṅgada
DG	...	Dūta-ghaṭotkaca
DhV	...	Dhanañjaya-vijaya
DP	...	Draupadī-pariṇaya
DS	...	Draupadī-svayaṃvara
DV	...	Dūta-vākya
GOS	...	Gaekwad's Orient Series
HC	...	Harṣa carita
HIL	...	History of Indian Literature
IS	...	Introductory Stanza
JP	...	Jānakī-pariṇaya
KAr	...	Kirātārjunīya
KArV	...	Kirātārjunīya-vyāyoga
KB	...	Karṇa-bhāra
KD	...	Kāvyādarśa
KM	...	Kundamālā
KP	...	Kavi-praśasti
KSS	...	Kathā-sarit-sāgara
KSkS	...	Kashi Sanskrit Series
KV	...	Kīcaka-vadha
MBH	...	Mahābhārata
MN	...	Mahānāṭaka
NB	...	Nirbhaya-bhīma

NCN	...	Nala-caritra-nāṭaka
NN	...	Nara-nārāyaṇānanda
NSP	...	Nirnaya Sagara Press
PC	...	Pāṇḍava-carita
PN	...	Pratimā-nāṭaka
POS	...	Poona Oriental Series
PP	...	Pārtha-parākrama
PRg	...	Prasanna-rāghava
PR	...	Pañcarātra
Ram	...	Rāmāyaṇa
RAr	...	Rāvaṇārjunīya
RC	...	Rāma-carita (Sandhyākara Nandin)
RCm	...	Rāmāyaṇa-campū
RM	..	Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī
RN	...	Rāghava-naiṣadhiya
RP	...	Rāghava-pāṇḍaviya
RV	...	Raghu-vaṃśa
SB	...	Setu-bandha
SD	...	Sāhitya-darpaṇa
SgH	...	Saugandhikā-haraṇa
SHA	...	Sahṛdayānanda
SP	...	Subhadrā-pariṇayana
SV	...	Śiśupāla-vadha
TS	...	Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa
TSS	...	Trivandrum Sanskrit Series
UB	...	Ūru-bhaṅga
UR(B)	...	Unmatta-rāghava (Bhāskara)
UR(V)	...	Unmatta-rāghava (Virūpākṣadeva)
URC	...	Uttara-rāma-carita
VBC	...	Vema-bhūpāla-carita
VS	...	Veṇī-saṃhāra
YV	...	Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya

INTRODUCTION

Human civilisation in this scientific age has indeed made marvellous progress in different directions. Rapid strides of science to open new amenities of life for present as well as future generations have caused tremendous surprise to common people. This overall progress has, however, opened a new chapter in the history of human civilisation. At the root of this wonderful development lies the indomitable desire of mankind to know the unknown, to see the unseen, to realise the unrealised and above all to conquer the invincible. Their main desire is to harness the power of nature for the general welfare of humanity. Scientific development has considerably helped mankind to exert their supremacy over the vast expanse of the sky, the unfathomable blue ocean, the insurmountable ranges of mountains, impenetrable forests and other unconquerable parts of nature. The awe-inspiring look of the angry ocean, thundering of clouds, flashes of lightning and even the vast limitless space beyond the orbit of the earth no more frighten them as they did their forefathers. Modern scientific development bespeaks man's untiring effort and indescribable zeal to unravel the complicated mysteries of this world and other neighbouring planets. Mysteries surround the whole world and scientists labour day and night to explain those mysteries. A new invention urges them to invent something new again for the welfare of mankind. In this atomic age, both the constructive and destructive sides of science have become too much prominent to us. This scientific progress brings to our view only one aspect of modern civilisation. That is not the sole thing to be taken into consideration while judging the wonders of recent human achievements. Literary progress, the more glorious side of human civilisation, has assumed great importance in these days of struggle against ignorance. Philosophers, writers, essayists, dramatists and poets flourished from time to time to make their due contribution to world literature. Their intelligence, perception and well-conceived judgment are sure to guide the common people for years to come. Well-known libraries of the world have been adorned by the compositions of the greatest thinkers of different ages. Governments of all countries with the available financial resources in their hands have been making sincere attempts to spread education and remove illiteracy. Literary progress is the backbone of national prosperity, the stepping stone to the general welfare of the people and the pillar of a country's success

in all spheres. Educational progress arouses political consciousness, develops a sense of morality, teaches the values of disciplined life, and above all, gives a man ample opportunities to develop his mental faculties to the highest degree of efficiency; so efforts are being made everywhere on a large scale to fight ignorance and illiteracy.

Thinkers, writers, philosophers and poets of later periods of all lands are greatly influenced by the old literature of their respective countries. In olden days Greece, Rome, India and Babylon reached the highest pinnacle of glory in all spheres. Of course, in pursuance of the truth of the maxim "The old order changeth yielding place to new," the all-round progress of the aforesaid countries dwindled in course of time; but the literary progress in India as well as in Greece was so impressive and marvellous, that the remarkable influence of the oldest compositions on later writers must be taken for granted. Homer wielded immense influence on subsequent writers of Europe as a whole. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are perused with deep interest either in the original or in translation by the students of Europe. As the father of European poetry, he has received the unstinted veneration of modern Europe. There are of course other classical poets of eminence of other countries, such as Virgil, Dante, Tasso, Chaucer etc., but Homer, surely because of his interesting subject-matter, wonderful presentation, simple language and excellent imageries, far surpassed them in excellence. India's two well known epics—the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*—also really formed a solid groundwork for the growth and development of the bulky literature of later ages.

An attempt to enter into a full discussion of the oldest literature of India will turn the attention of every student to the Vedic *Samhitās*—the earliest examples of India's literary efforts. The Vedic hymns bear testimony to the simplicity and sincerity of the Aryan mind. The sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas were taken for granted. Indians, specially in earlier days, never wanted to question their validity. The *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, the *Upaniṣads* constitute the earliest part of Indian literature. The many-sided influence of these literary works on Indian minds cannot be denied. The sublime hymns of the *Samhitās*, the higher thoughts of the *Upaniṣads* could satisfy the highly learned people; for these sacred compositions offered good scope for their speculative thoughts and often inspired them to write long explanatory notes, or elaborate commentaries for the advantage of others eager to have a peep into the sacred literature of their own country. But the general mass, in spite of their interest in sacrifices and different

religious functions, did not find pleasure in participating in higher religious discourses often held by erudites noted for their brilliant scholarship. They were rather greatly interested in hearing the narration of folk tales, wonderful legends and myths. The common people frequently gathered in open spaces to hear the recitation of verses composed in honour of favourite gods and goddesses and some powerful kings. This is the reason why the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*—the vast storehouses of legends full of supernatural elements and human exploits—made a strong appeal to the minds of the common people. These epics attained their full-fledged shape at a date far later than the Vedic literature, but traces of epic poetry are discernible in the dialogue hymns of the *R̥gveda* as well as in the *Ākhyānas* and *Itihāsas* of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Such narrative poems could easily arrest the attention and imagination of common listeners in social and religious functions. The influence of these two vast epics on Indian minds has been tremendous indeed till today. That the common people, scholars and writers of different compositions were deeply influenced by these epics proves conclusively their popularity and the sublimity of their varied subject-matter. Later writers often borrowed thoughts, ideas, imageries and subject-matter from these epics to put them in a new garb and in a novel way. In this thesis, I propose to discuss the epic sources of Sanskrit literature.

The voluminous size of the *Mahābhārata* is a stumbling block to the gateway of its study by oriental as well as European scholars. The gigantic shape of the heroic epic—the *Mahābhārata* often inspires one to distinguish the spurious elements from the original, but the mixture is so very intricate, that any attempt in this direction will surely prove useless. Heterogeneous elements were inserted in this poem by clever rhapsodists from time to time. From internal evidences gathered from the present shape of the book, scholars have arrived at definite conclusions regarding the stages of development of the epic. The great epic is primarily concerned with the great war in which all the warlike races of northern India participated with indomitable energy and great enthusiasm. This heroic war forms the nucleus of the *Mahābhārata*. A meagre portion of the great epic chiefly deals with the bloody battle of Kurukṣetra, but numerous legends, myths, songs, and poems were added to the main story through a long period by wandering bards and court minstrels habituated to singing musical verses in honour of kings, who lavished liberal gifts on them, in such a manner that the distinction between the original and interpolated portions is highly difficult even to a scholar of versatile genius. This

heroic poem is so interesting and attractive that story-tellers, in order to win popularity for their own tales and fables, did not hesitate to make continual additions to the portion describing the bloody warfare of the *Mahābhārata*. Similar is the case with Charlemagne and Arthur who were made the centres of legends in Medieval Europe. Homer's *Iliad* also deals with the warfare between the Trojans and the Greeks, and therefore, can be appropriately compared with the *Mahābhārata*; but so far as the size of the *Mahābhārata* is concerned, Homer's *Iliad* is a much shorter narrative poem. The other Indian epic the *Rāmāyaṇa* has also made a strong appeal to Indian minds from time immemorial for the wonderful exploits of Rāma—the adorable god in human form to millions of Indians, and the commendable forbearance and chastity of the heroine Sītā, who also won the admiration and reverence of the Indians before the date of the final composition of the epic. This epic, however, contains spurious elements in a lesser degree; therefore, it has failed to attain a form as huge as the *Mahābhārata*. Homer's *Odyssey* can be successfully compared with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, for the former mainly relates the martial activities of Ulysses who wanders through different parts of Europe and Asia. According to Ramesh Chandra Dutta, whose well known composition on the two epics of India has made him famous to European scholars intent on gathering information about epic poetry for comparative study and research work, the great epic *Mahābhārata* is seven times the size of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together.¹

The authorship of the *Mahābhārata* is attributed to the wonderfully talented mythical author Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa and that of the *Rāmāyaṇa* to Vālmīki. The *Mahābhārata* took about full one thousand years for completion. So the deep-rooted belief of the Indians regarding the date and authorship of this great epic has suffered a rude shock after the historical investigation made by learned scholars. It is not possible for a mortal being to live on the surface of this earth for one thousand years. Considerable disputes too have often been raised about the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Whether Homer is a mythical figure, or a wandering minstrel singing songs in praise of famous warriors from country to country is a doubtful point. It is also argued that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are mere collections of songs emanating from different sources, but that view has been strongly contradicted by many scholars. The poetic and artistic unity of the two

¹ R. C. Dutta, *The Ramayana and the Mahabharata condensed into English verse*, p. 371.

epics clearly denotes that each is the composition of some famous original genius, although interpolations in both the epics cannot be totally done away with. Collections of different categories of legends, myths, parables, fables, moral narrations, didactic poems have totally negatived the idea that the *Mahābhārata* has come from the pen of a single talented author. The diverse elements only strongly prove additions, interpolations and alterations from time to time. Professional story-tellers in olden days were particularly expert in building up a huge storehouse of prose and verse narratives known as *Ākhyānas*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and *Gāthās*. The glorious deeds and heroic exploits of well known warriors received their attention best, as people showed in those days great enthusiasm to hear heroic songs. Cycles of heroic songs grew up gradually and helped considerably the growth of epic poems. It is true that we find only fragmentary portions of ancient epic poetry in the two well known epics. The less interesting portions have been lost to us because of the apathy and negligence of the bards to keep some records of them. Of course in those days, oral transmission was the only means of preserving the poems intact, so the unpopular portions of the epic poetry died a natural death.

The great epic *Mahābhārata*, wherein we find the last remnants of a long period of epic poetry, is really an encyclopaedia of various branches of knowledge. Winternitz remarks "It is only in a very restricted sense that we may speak of the *Mahābhārata* as an "epic" and a "poem". Indeed, in a certain sense, the *Mahābhārata* is not one poetic production at all, but rather a whole literature."¹ A similar remark has also been passed by Mr. Gladstone with regard to the poems of Homer. 'The poems of Homer,' says Mr. Gladstone, "differ from all other known poetry in this that they constitute in themselves an encyclopaedia of life and knowledge when knowledge indeed such as lies beyond the bounds of actual experience was extremely limited and when life was singularly fresh, vivid and expansive." This remark holds good with greater weight in the case of our great epic—the *Mahābhārata*. This epic is universally regarded as the storehouse of early Indian history, genealogy and antiquity. It is an all-embracing repository of legendary lore. It brings to our view clearly the model and standard of literary taste of that old period, which might have drifted to the land of oblivion but for the two popular epics of India. As we penetrate into the depth of this epic poetry, an ancient and forgotten world with a proud and noble civilisation

1 HIL., I, p. 316.

slowly and distinctly emerges before our view. India's ancient culture and heritage have found proper expression through these two epics. In olden days in India, no importance was attached to historical records. Due to the indifference and negligence of the Indians to the proper recording of facts, incidents of many a bright and brilliant day are enveloped in a thick shroud of mystery. We must be highly grateful to the great compiler of these heroic songs, myths, legends of warriors, fables, moral narratives and didactic poems into a conglomerated *Maḥākāvya* (epic) which passes by the name of the *Mahābhārata*, for, in this novel manner he had taken the great trouble of supplying us with useful information about the social customs, economic conditions, literary progress, political situation and other socio-religious environments of that forgotten period. An analysis of the nature of stories, imparting to us the knowledge of different aspects of early Indian civilisation, will be of great help to understand the many-sided character of the great epic. It has been already pointed out that the bloody battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas occupies the most prominent position in the epic, and all other stories of variegated nature have developed gradually and uninterruptedly centering round that main heroic song.

The first book of the *Mahābhārata* deals with the genealogy of heroes (*Sambhava-parvan*) whose origin can be traced back to the gods. Stories relating to the warlike deeds of *Duṣyanta*, *Yayāti*, *Nahūṣa*, *Nala* and others have been duly inserted in the poem, although they have nothing to do at all with the main warfare. These heroic songs within a short time attained so much popularity that the *Brāhmaṇas* and the priests, who controlled the literary activity in ancient India, were very much alarmed at the thought of losing their firm hold on the simple-minded men. A popular book, wherein the glories and greatness of the *Kṣatriyas* were described in laudable terms, would surely minimise their longstanding influence; so some measures must be adopted at an early date for finding a way out of this difficulty. They were highly clever at chalking out a new policy—the policy of adding stories glorifying the position and power of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Many Brahmanical myths such as the story of *Cyavana*, *Indra-vṛtra* myth, tales of *Agastya*, *Durvāsas* etc., were put into this epic poem to establish the high authority of the *Brāhmaṇas* and lay a great stress on their superhuman and divine powers. The *Brāhmaṇas* were the higher caste of the society, and as such, they unscrupulously claimed the respect and loyalty of other lower castes to them. Due to the addition of poems full of theological and priestly wisdom,

the great epic gradually lost its secular character. Noticing the narrowness of idea and onesided approach of the Brāhmaṇas to morality, the ascetics, forest hermits and mendicants, in order to propagate the true nature of religion and morality, started composing stories of a quite different type. The ascetics, interested in improving the general tone of morality of mankind, wanted to inculcate in them a sense of duty and a desire for paying due respect to the Almighty God. In the meantime they did not forget to preach the idea of universal brotherhood and the doctrine of renunciation. Fables, parables, tales full of moral lessons are found in Books XII and XIII and in other didactic parts of the *Mahābhārata*. So far as the didactic section of the epic is concerned, the Bhagavad-gītā has attained nationwide prominence for its higher philosophical ideas guiding man to the path he likes best. Speeches on moral law, political science and philosophical truths are found in the Bhīṣma-parvan and the Anuśāsana-parvan, The latter is a manual of law with ample quotations from Manu's code. Political discourses, discussions on morality and piety have been inserted in the Śānti-parvan. On account of its being a vehicle of moral and religious instructions, the *Mahābhārata* is always regarded as a Smṛti and Dharma-śāstra.¹

Facts and myths have been so much interwoven in this great epic that it is well-nigh impossible to draw a line of demarcation between them. It is the epic of the great Bhārata nation and therefore called the *Mahābhārata*.² In the *Rgveda*, mention has been made of the Bhāratas as a warlike tribe. Kuru, belonging to this tribe, was a king of wide repute and his descendants engaged themselves in a dreadful conflict with their relatives. The place of the battle has of course attained historical significance, and from Kurukṣetra, we come to the conclusion that the land of the Bhāratas was in the country of upper Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The real facts of the war have been effaced by time. Mythical figures acted principal parts in the war, and above all, according to the tradition of India, the thread of a high moral purpose—the conquest of virtue and discomfiture of vice—was woven into the fabric of the great epic. The expanding volume of the epic made broad passage for myths, legends, fables, parables and traditions without seeking their

1 Artha-śāstram idaṃ puṇyaṃ dharma-śāstram idaṃ param/
Mokṣa-śāstram idaṃ proktaṃ Vyāsenāmita-buddhiṇā//
MBH., I, LVI, 21.

2 Bhāratānāṃ mahaj janma Mahābhāratam ucyate/
Niruktam asya yo veda sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate//
MBH., I, LVI, 31.

historical truths. In Homeric poems too, any effort to separate the fabulous from the real, or to find out the severe outlines of history from the rich colouring of romance will surely be foiled. We cannot exactly determine whether there was actually a Greek expedition and a real siege of Troy or not. In the *Iliad* also we find an allegorical significance. Paris and the Trojans represent evil or darkness. Beautiful twilight (Helen) is carried away by them from the western sky (Greece). The ten years of the war refer to the hours of night. Achilles is the ever blazing sun, who dispels the forces of darkness and puts them to rout and confusion.

A general view of the stories of the *Mahābhārata* will thus enable a reader to realise fully why this great epic has spread wide influence on subsequent literature. A popular epic with diverse elements can easily provide a writer with necessary subject-matter for composing good *kāvya*s. He can easily insert in his own work various arguments through different characters taking necessary help from the *Mahābhārata*. It is also said in the great epic itself.¹

Dharme cārthe ca kāme ca mokṣe ca Bharatarṣabha/
Yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan nehāsti na tat kvacit.//

Whatever is found in the epic itself is met with in other compositions too, and what is not found in the epic cannot be seen elsewhere. From these two lines, we can easily understand that the stories, didactic portions, political laws and religious sayings of the epic are amply used by later writers for the growth and development of classical Sanskrit literature.

Despite different additions and interpolations, the *Mahābhārata* is regarded as one of the best epic poems of the world. An epic poem treats of one great complex action in a grand style and with fulness of details.² According to Arnold, an epic poem must fulfil the following conditions—'The subject of the epic poem must be some one great complex action. The principal personages must belong to the high places of society and must be grand and elevated in their ideas. The

¹ MBH., I. LVI. 33.

² "It is the nature of epic poetry to be at ease in regard to its subject-matter, to be free from the strain and excitement of weaker and more abstract forms of poetry in dealing with heroic subjects. The heroic ideal of epic is not attained by a process of abstraction and separation from the meanness of familiar things. The magnificence and aristocratic dignity of epic is conformable to the practical and ethical standards of the heroic age; that is to say, it tolerates a number of things that may be found mean and trivial by academicians."

W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance*, p. 16.

measure must be of a sonorous dignity befitting the subject. The epic is developed by a mixture of dialogues, soliloquy and narration.' Aristotle has also laid down similar conditions for an epic poem. All the characteristics of an epic poem are distinctly prevalent in the *Mahābhārata* with the single exception of soliloquy. Too much importance has never been attached to soliloquy in Sanskrit compositions. In the opinion of some western scholars, two types of epics have been so long composed in different countries. They are epics of growth and epics of art.¹ The nature and characteristics of these two types of epics must first be clarified, and then it will be shown to what class belongs our great epic *Mahābhārata*, and how far this epic has helped the growth of other imitative epics in a later age. The names of these two types of epics are highly significant. From its very name, we can understand that the epic of growth attains a bulky dimension by additions and interpolations throughout a long period. The principal feature of such epic poetry is that it is more concerned with external action than internal feelings. Giant-like actions, wonderful warlike activities, bloody warfares, display of martial spirits, exchange of hot words and stories full of supernatural elements enchanted listeners, young and old alike, in bygone ages. Bards and minstrels in this heroic age engaged themselves in composing heroic songs describing the

1 "Epic of growth is not in its entirety the work of a single author, but to some extent the result of a process of evolution and consolidation, and that a large amount of pre-existing material, in the shape of floating legends and earlier folk-poems and sagas, is gathered up into its composition. All primitive epics deal, broadly speaking, with the same kind of subject-matter. Their themes are furnished by deeds of heroes, generally the great legendary heroes of a race; and vast bodies of immemorial traditions provide the basis of their structure. As these traditions are almost invariably bound up with a people's mythology, the supernatural element is also more or less prominent. In the Homeric epics, it is distinctly religious in character and is everywhere interfused with the human interest of the action.....The subject-matter of the epic of art is of the old heroic and mythical kind; it makes free use of the supernatural, it follows the same structural plan and reproduces many traditional details of composition, while, greatly as it necessarily differs in style, it often adopts the formulas, fixed epithets and stereotyped phrases and locutions, which are among the marked features of the early type. But examination discloses, beneath all superficial likeness, a radical dissimilarity. The heroic and legendary material is no longer living material; it is invented by the poet or disinterred by scholarly research; and it is handled with laborious care in accordance with abstract rules and principles which have become part of an accepted literary tradition where, therefore, the epic of growth is fresh, spontaneous, racy, the epic of art is learned, antiquarian, bookish, imitative."

W. H. Hudson, *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*, pp. 105-7

valour, prowess and strong determination of heroes wandering in their world of imagination. Elements of truth, in most cases, were completely overshadowed by their love for imagination. Strictly speaking, literature, religion, and philosophy loosely originated from myths. The fears, hopes, despairs and curiosity of the early days of humanity are preserved through myths, which have come down to us as valuable traditions. In a period when thought and reasoning were undeveloped, impulse and emotion could not be restrained. Thus bards got the golden opportunity of letting loose the reins of their imagination. The vivid description of external actions in the epics, however, helps the writer to draw a true picture of early national life. The healthy situations, pleasant surroundings, light atmosphere and simplicity of our ancient forefathers favoured the development of epic poetry, specially the epic of growth. Homeric poems—the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* are all recognised as epics of growth. A short discussion of Homeric society and Indian society of the epic age will help us to realise why epics of growth flourished uninterruptedly in early ages.

All the aforesaid epics were composed in the heroic age, when great love and respect for the heroes were the prominent features of society.¹ Both Indian epics narrate elaborately the military activities of great heroes. Homeric poems too are replete with similar descriptions. The heroism of Rāma, Rāvaṇa and his followers, the Kauravas, the Pāṇḍavas, Ajax, Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses, Hector, Diomed, Nestor, etc. has been described in glowing terms in these epics. In the delineation of human character these epics are marvellous.² Each hero

¹ "Heroic poetry implies an heroic age, an age of pride and courage, in which there is not any extreme organisation of politics to hinder the individual talent and its achievements, nor on the other hand too much isolation of the hero through the absence of any national or popular consciousness."

W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance*, pp. 20-21.

² Mr. Gladstone emphasises human element of Homeric poems in these lines:—

"We may reckon it among the chief distinctions of Homer that he has been able to make of the individual man the broad basis of the most heroic among epic songs... Events are made for man and not man for events; and we can scarcely doubt that the transition from the older epic which gathered all its interests around the human soul as centre, to the newer which exhibits the human soul itself in a subordinate relation to external history or fortune has been a transition downwards."

W.E. Gladstone, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, p. 539.

has a distinct personality of his own. Each is noted for an excellent development of his special faculties which can be perfectly distinguished from those of other heroes. The virtuous Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma of gigantic stature and tremendous power, valorous Arjuna can be rightly compared with Agamemnon, Ajax and Achilles of the Iliad. The tournament of princes, in which Arjuna and Karṇa—the Achilles and Hector of the Indian epic, take part with bitter hostility raging furiously in their minds, was the notable feature of the day. Councils of war were often held in private on the eve of a furious battle for chalking out strategic policies for ousting the enemy anyhow. Long speeches of Homeric heroes and Indian warriors make a strong impression on the minds of readers for their love of the motherland and strong desire to inflict due punishment to their wrongdoers. National prestige must be preserved at any cost. Any menace to the honour of the native country must not be casually done away with, but all possible arrangements must be done on a large scale to fight out that menace as early as possible. The charming lady Helen is carried away by treacherous Paris and the whole Greek nation rises in arms to measure their strength with the Trojans in no time. In India too often beautiful ladies were made captives and enjoyed by captors. Heroes noted for their chivalrous spirit showed great eagerness to protect the captive lady. Many did not hesitate to risk their lives for delivering their lady-love. The great hero Achilles is told by his goddess mother that a twofold destiny lies ahead of him. He may lead a life of wealth, peace and happiness for a long time, or court a warrior's death by attaining undying glory in a foreign warfare. His is a hero's choice as he is moved by the sublime idea expressed in the lines:—

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Arjuna is similarly instructed by Lord Śrīkrṣṇa in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra:—¹

Hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ jītvā vā bhokṣyase malīm/
Tasmād uttiṣṭha Kaunteya yuddhāya kṛta-niścayaḥ//

'Killed thou shalt go to heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy the earth; so O son of Kuntī, get up with a determination to fight.'

In this heroic age the position of bards² and heralds was enviable. Learned princes or educated men belonging to the upper class with

1 Gitā, II, 37.

2. "We learn from the poems that even before the war of Troy, the profession of the minstrel had become an object of general interest and had

great enthusiasm took to the profession of messengers. In Greece, they were believed to have been protected by Zeus—the god of oaths and oracles. In India due respect was shown to them by heroes belonging to the enemy camp, and all possible precautions were taken to protect their lives and avoid undesirable happenings on account of their free movement in the country of the opposite party. Fraternal feelings run high in Homer's heroes. Hector and his brothers, Agamemnon and Menalaus are closely attached to one another just as the Pāṇḍavas all along walk and work together for their own good. In complete obedience to the orders of their eldest brother, they sacrifice their personal happiness and embrace sorrows and sufferings with smiling countenances for a long period. The part played by the divinities in those epics supplies the supernatural element. In the Indian epic Lord Śrīkrṣṇa is the charioteer of the great hero Arjuna, who is all along assisted and highly favoured by his noble and valuable advices. Strictly speaking, Śrīkrṣṇa's actual presence in the battle-field changes the course of the battle which is ultimately decided in favour of the Pāṇḍavas. Śrīkrṣṇa's admonitions to Arjuna are embodied in the Gītā—the sacred religious book of the Hindus containing philosophical doctrines. But stories where divinities spare no pains to harass their victim are also not rare in the *Mahābhārata*. The great religious king Nala passes through severe vicissitudes of fortune as he incurs the displeasure of Kali through his ignorance. Similarly, the divinities of the Olympus play a great part in the battle between the Greeks and the Trojans. Human destiny is fully controlled by the gods and goddesses of Olympus. In case of mishaps, attempts are made to propitiate the wrathful gods and goddesses. Homer conceives of two parties as existing in Olympus—one group favouring the Greeks and the other group taking the side of the Trojans. Therefore, like human beings they often quarrel with one another without any regard for dignity and sense of decorum. The fault is not with Homer, because whenever gods are represented as assuming human shapes or sharing human sentiments, the representation is bound to degenerate into something abnormal. The strife of the Olympic gods proves conclusively that their passions are meaner than those of human beings. Both Achilles

thus early taken its place in the public competitions, which were of high national importance among the later Greeks, The bard was an essential member of the courts of princes, a trusted friend and counsellor of their families. His person had even a kind of sacredness attaching to it, apparently beyond that of the seer or prophet."

W. E. Gladstone, Homer, pp. 8-9.

and Juno are wrathful, but the anger of Achilles is rather dignified, whereas Juno's anger is full of malice and spite. Both Jupiter and Ulysses are cunning, but Ulysses uses his cunning for the good of his country, whereas Jupiter's devices are intended to save himself from awkward complications with his wife, ministers and favourites. Homer's other epic the *Odyssey* is a tale of voyage and discovery. Ulysses incurs the displeasure of the great sea-god and is not allowed to reach home after the Trojan war and compelled to travel from coast to coast, but at the same time he is protected by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. To decide the fate of great warriors, gods and goddesses often meet in council. Comic scenes have thus been provided by the poet by peculiar happenings on the top of Olympus.

Such grotesque conception of ancient minds about gods, love for heroism and warfare, desire to save their country's honour, a thrilling sensation at the wonderful aspects of nature, strong zeal to listen to imaginative stories paved the path for the development of early epic poetry which is recognised as the epic of growth, but with the appearance of reasoning and judgment and development of the power of understanding, the epic of growth changed its complexion thoroughly, specially in the matter of technique through imitative epics. Centuries of trial turned the minds of nations inwards and men began to speculate, to argue, to elaborate language and cultivate science. These changed circumstances gave a great impetus to the composition of refined poetry. The spontaneous production of the epic of growth was thus hampered with the change of social atmosphere. Composition of refined poetry thus made a good start. Literary epics or epics of art saw their happy dawn in a later age.

Homeric poems gradually spread a wide influence throughout the whole of Europe. In Europe Homer is the sole representative of the heroic age. He is regarded by entire Hellas as the greatest poet, the father of tragedy, the pattern for oratory, the source of theology, the leader in all civilising pursuits, so that Plato calls him "the poet wise in all things." At each recurring Pan-athenaic festival, the poems of Homer were recited and people always came in large numbers to listen to this recitation with rapt attention, as a result of which Homeric poetry was kept ever fresh in public memory. They never got tired of hearing verses from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; frequent repetition, on the contrary, evoked their keen interest in those stories. Europeans belonging to different classes found strong inspiration from him. Poets, philosophers, writers, dramatists deemed it a great credit to quote from

memory the verses from original Homer. Alexander the Great, during his conquest of foreign lands, carried with him a copy of the *Iliad*. So, in those days, a knowledge of Homer was considered indispensable to a man of culture.

The literary influence of Homeric poems must be discussed here with a view to showing that epics of growth can throw their manifold influence on subsequent literature. Roman Italy was greatly influenced by Homeric poems through the *Aeneid* of Virgil. Virgil has repeated Homeric scenes, imitated Homer profusely, but his *Aeneid* bears a stamp of his outstanding genius for which he occupies an exalted position in European literature.¹ Horace and Ovid quote or refer to him with a familiarity like that of Plato and Aristotle and seem to consider him the poet of their own land. Homer has exerted his influence on Dante, as the latter has chosen Virgil for his guide in that famous journey to the region inhabited by the dead in his *Divina Commedia*. Homer and Virgil are alike regarded as furnishing the norm of epic poetry. The possible invasion of Europe by the advancing Turks in the 16th century inspired Tasso to compose a poem which, like the *Iliad*, should describe a victorious attack on Asia by the forces of Europe in the manner of Homer. Before composing "*Jerusalem Liberated*," he studied Homer thoroughly and wrote a series of discourses on heroic epic poetry. The knowledge of Homer came to England through Italy. Spenser's '*Faerie Queene*' is a poem full of Homeric mythology. Chapman's translation of Homer was read with deep interest by Shakespeare who got valuable assistance from Homer in his story of *Troilus and Cressida*. The real spirit of Homer has been transmitted in English literature by Milton due to his constant companionship with Homer. *Comus* is a Homeric poem in plan and setting. Milton is highly indebted to Homer for some of his most artistic and beautiful passages. Achilles' invocation to his

1 Mr. Gladstone, however, endorses the opinion that Virgil's work does not possess the vivacity and forcefulness of Homeric poems:—

"It was the proud distinction of the Homeric epic that it had a living centre, it hung upon a man, there was enough of vital power in Homer for this end; his Achilles and his Ulysses were each an Atlas, that sustained the world in which they also moved, Virgil made his poem an *Aeneid* instead of following the example of the cyclic poets; he thus pledged himself to his readers that Aeneas should be its centre, its pole, its inward light and life. But he did not keep his word; he had drawn the bow of Homer without Homer's force. He marks perhaps the final transition from the old epic of the first class to the new. After him we have the epics of facts, the *Pharsalia*, the *Thebaid* and so forth."

W. E. Gladstone, *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*, p. 509.

mother has inspired Milton to use it as a basis for his exquisite invocation to Sabrina. Milton's *Paradise Lost* displays the poet's keen liking for Homeric poems. Despite its imitative character, it has been recognised as one of the beautiful epic poems of the world. The difference between Homer and Milton lies in the fact that Milton is all along guided by a theological purpose to justify the ways of god to man, so he goes on arguing, but Homer simply narrates a story. In the beginning of the 18th century Homer's popularity was the highest in England, for Voltaire said—"Few cultured English of his day were unfamiliar with Greek". A knowledge of Greek always refers to a knowledge of Homer. All the writers of the day—Temple, Swift, Addison were great lovers of Homer. The general reader too evinced keen interest in the discussion of Homer. Pope in his '*Rape of the Lock*' shows his great indebtedness to Homer. Byron says in his *Don Juan* that his poem would be an epic one after the style of Homer and Virgil. Wordsworth had an early love for Homer, so little traces of Homeric influence are to be found in some of his poems. A Homeric enthusiast was Shelley who thoroughly read Homer and regarded him as 'King of Melody.' Keats also wrote two sonnets, '*To Homer*' and '*On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*'. The great poet of the Victorian age Tennyson always carried a copy of Homer in his travels. Tennyson had special aptitude for rehandling subjects derived from the classical source i. e. the lays and legends of ancient Greece and Rome. '*Dream of Fair women*' is one of the most characteristically beautiful examples of Tennyson's earlier work. In this poem he tells us about some of the most famous heroines of old and modern days with special reference to their misfortune in life. So far as the Iphigenia story is concerned, he makes an excellent use of the Homeric story and thereby displays his poetic workmanship profusely. His '*Ulysses*' brings for him unstinted praise from all readers. To Arnold and Ruskin, Homer is a standard of literary excellence. It is needless to mention poets and authors in this fashion to prove Homeric influence, for that task is not an easy one and cannot be successfully completed in this work, which is intended for showing the influence of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* on later literature from the point of subject-matter.

It is therefore clear that the epic of growth has something unique in it for which it can, without any obstacle, influence the common people and the educated alike for all time to come. The greatness of Homer lies in the fact that he saw things and people exactly as they are, and described them in so simple a language that

readers of all places and times can see them too as clearly as he did.¹ This is the reason why a child can easily comprehend Homer like the wisest. The ability to describe great ideas and give expression to universal truths in simple language accounts for the continued influence of Homer. He is held in high esteem by the general public of Europe, and gradually translations of Homeric poems in different languages have made him familiar in countries beyond Europe.

The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, beings epics of growth, have wielded immense influence on the general mass and literary figures for a long time. They are the national property of the Indians. The two popular epics of India have considerably influenced the mass in giving moral lessons. A similar purpose has been served by the *Bible* only in Christian lands. The simple language in which all the stories of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are narrated, or philosophical truths and moral lessons are given expression to, distinguishes them particularly from later Sanskrit compositions ornamented with artificial graces. The plain and unpolished narration devoid of laboured figures of speech, so common in later poems, easily attracts the minds of readers. The recital of narrative poems in sacrifices and domestic festivals was an unavoidable part of religious ceremonies. For the advantage of listeners, verses were explained in spoken language elaborately by the expert reciters. It was an old custom to recite the epics after a funeral, so that the survivors and the departed soul might be benefited from a religious point of view by the recitation of these sacred heroic songs. During the ancient period, the influence of the two epics worked on the mass fully. Later on when the administration of the country changed hands i.e. under the Muslim regime, the cause of popular education did not receive proper attention. In order to secure jobs in the court of Muslim rulers, many with great eagerness learnt Urdu and Persian, in consequence of which the knowledge of the *Vedas* and other religious treatises came to be confined to a small section of the Indians. But it is a matter of great satisfaction that the stories of the *Purāṇas* and the epics were widely circulated among the mass as days rolled on. Brahmanical culture suffered a great set-back, literary progress was considerably hampered, but these two epics continued to exert their wonderful influence on the mass without any impedi-

¹ Matthew Arnold states the appealing characteristics of Homeric epics in these lines:—

“Homer’s poetry is at once rapid in movement, plain in words and style, simple and direct in ideas and noble in manner.”

Matthew Arnold, On Translating Homer, p. 174.

ment. In course of time, spoken and written languages of the epic period underwent complete transformation, for which it became impossible for the general reader to follow the epic language. So learned people interested in keeping up the popularity of the epics left no stone unturned to translate them in all provincial languages. People having no free access to the original epics have thus secured good opportunities to relish the sweetness of the epic poems in their own language. These two epics on account of their unpolished narration of facts have been translated in European languages too. So great is the hold of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the mass, that in villages men ignorant of the 3 Rs. may not have seen copies of the epics, but they are good enough to quote from their memory verse after verse from the original. Their memorising capacity is so strong that they can remember verses after hearing the recitation of some portion of the epics in a festival. By the study of these epics or by listening to their recitals they can acquire religious merits—this is their deep-rooted belief; so simple-minded villagers, old and young, men and women alike, do not hesitate to take the trouble of covering long distances to hear the recitals of these narrative poems in a religious function held by different organisations or rich persons. The illiterate oil manufacturer or a confectioner of Bengal is habituated to keeping copies of the epics in his shop. The shop-keeper, who can read, does so to while away his leisure hour and sometimes requests his customer to hear his recitation. He is also often found to carry on discussions on the stories of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and does not forget to support or disapprove his or his neighbour's action with reference to the stories of the epics. The literate as well as the illiterate masses of India look upon these books with great veneration. The farmer in the field, the weaver at the loom, the goldsmith at his anvil, the cobbler with his shoes may not know anything about the current world affairs, or what is exactly happening in his own country; but he can easily entertain you by telling some amusing stories from the epics. A visitor is sure to be surprised to hear long long stories from his lips. If he is interrupted by frequent questions which may be put to him regarding the truth of the supernatural elements of those stories, he gets exasperated and will severely drive you from his shop. Any attempt to change his belief is sure to be frustrated. He holds these books in great respect. How can he bear such encroachment upon his belief? Such is the tremendous influence of the epics on the mass. Epics which have influenced mass minds through long years should be studied carefully for a discussion of the epic sources of Sanskrit literature.

The general influence of the *Mahābhārata* is wonderful indeed, but its literary influence on later literature is all the more astonishing. "The *Mahābhārata* is the safest refuge for poets of all ages"¹—this is the proud remark of Sauti in the beginning of the epic. It is an overflowing stream where a poet can sink deep to gather materials for his work. Bāṇabhaṭṭa in the introductory portion of his *Harṣa-carita* and Daṇḍin in his *Avantisundari-kathā* have corroborated this remark of Sauti by paying glorious tribute to Vyāsa² and emphasising the literary prominence of the *Mahābhārata*. The other epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa* too, is another springhead of inspiration to poets of India. One cannot but agree with Winternitz³ when he says that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a true popular epic, just like the *Mahābhārata*, because, like the latter, it has become the property of the whole Indian people and, as scarcely any other poem in the entire literature of the world, has influenced the thought and poetry of nation for centuries. Some later poets of great renown, while using Rāma story for their noted compositions, have acknowledged their deep debt of gratitude to Vālmiki either in the very beginning or at the end of their works.⁴ Just as the Homeric poems exerted wide influence on the intelligentsia, so also these epics of India helped to a considerable extent the development of literature in later period. A thorough discussion of the epic sources of Sanskrit literature is no doubt a difficult task, but I must try to the best of my ability to present a picture as distinct as possible before the interested readers.

1 Ācakhyuḥ kavayaḥ kecit sampraty ācakṣate pare/
Ākhyāsyanti tathāivānye itihāsam imaṃ bhuvī// MBH., I. 1. 24.

2 Namaḥ sarvavide tasmai Vyāsāya kavī-vedhase/
Cakre puṇyaṃ Sarasvatyā yo varṣam iva Bhāratam// HC., IS. 4.
Martya-yantreṣu caitanyaṃ Mahābhārata-vidyayā/
Arpayāmāsa tat-pūrvaṃ yas tasmai munaye namaḥ//
Avantisundari-kathā IS. 3

3 HIL., I. p. 476.

4 Aho, sakala-kavi-sārtha-sādhāraṇī khalv iyaṃ Vālmikiyā subhāṣita-nibī.
AR., Prastāvanā.

Sa vaḥ punātu Vālmikeḥ sūktāmṛta-mahodadhiḥ/
Oṅkāra iva varṇānāṃ kavīnāṃ prathamō muniḥ// RM.

Kṣemendra, while giving some information about his father and himself just at the end of his work, composed this verse in honour of Vālmiki.

Madhumaya-phanitīnāṃ mārgadarśī maharṣiḥ// Rcm., I. 8.

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Works based on the entire story of the Mahābhārata

I: KĀVYA

The *Bhārata-mañjarī* of Kṣemendra, the *Pāṇḍava-carita* of Śrīmala Devaprabha Sūri and the *Bāla-bhārata* of Amaraçandra Sūri are the chief noteworthy compositions dealing with the entire story of the *Mahābhārata*, and as such they call for special treatment in this portion.

Bhārata-mañjarī

The Kashmirian polymath Kṣemendra, following the Kashmiri version of the great epic, made a successful abridgement of the same under the title *Bhārata-mañjarī* probably in 1037 A. D. In an eulogy of the poet (*Kavi-praśasti*) at the end of the work, there are some verses in which we are told that Kṣemendra was asked to make an abridgement of the great epic.¹ From the colophon at the end of the work, we come to know that he was the son of Prakāśendra and was also known as Vyāsadāsa.² The aptitude of shortening larger poetical compositions was so strong in Kṣemendra that he made two other well known abridgements—*Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī* and *Bṛhatkathā-mañjarī*. Urged by a strong desire to make an epitome of an extensive work, he was inclined to make necessary omissions and alterations for the logical arrangement of the narrative of the great epic. Like the *Mahābhārata*, the divisions of the narrative in the *Bhārata-mañjarī* have been made in parvans, and they are eighteen in number. The supplement *Hari-vaṃśa* too has been drastically abbreviated.

1 Kadācid brāhmaṇenaitya sa Rāma-yaśasārthitaḥ/
Saṃkṣiptāṃ Bhārata-kathāṃ kuruṣvety ārya-cetasā//
Sa tam ūce karomy evaṃ prāg etac caritaṃ mama//

BM., KP. 10—11(½)

2 Samāpteyaṃ Mahābhārata-mañjarī kṛtiḥ kaver Vyāsadāsāpara-nāmaḥ
Prakāśendra-sūnoḥ Kṣemendrasya.....BM., Colophon

A thorough study of the contents of the first parvan of the *Bhārata-mañjarī* will enable one to form an idea about the general manner of the handling of the narrative throughout the whole work. The poet has mostly touched upon all the sub-parvans with unique brevity and precision. The poet has tried to the best of his ability to turn the original epic, so full of heterogeneous and repetitious elements, into a unified poem marked by artistic grace and charm. Taking into consideration the bulk of the legends of the epic to be dealt with in his work, he has checked descriptive tendency as well as the use of ornate language so common among poets of his age. Due credit must be given to him for his skill in reproducing such a long epic within so short a compass. Besides brevity, the simple language and the mode of narration are appealing too. Conversations have been drastically shortened; and some which can be left out without prejudice to his own narration have been omitted. This can be exemplified from the Śakuntalā story, where the repudiated Śakuntalā in the court of Duṣyanta makes a short speech to prove her fidelity to the king, but the original character of the speech is not marred by its shortening.¹

- 1 Aho svam ātmajaṃ rājan nābhijānāsi sannibham/
 Hina-dṛṣṭir ivātmānaṃ darpaṇe prativimvitam//,
 Nārhasy apahnavaṃ kartuṃ jānann api mahāmatih/
 Asatya-rajasaḥ saṅgād rājā rājan na rājate//
 Satyam uttama-sattvānāṃ dākṣiṇyaṃ kirtisālīnām/
 Adrohaḥ sādhu-vṛttānāṃ vilāsa-sadanaṃ śriyaḥ//,
 Sahajasyābhijātasya guṇānāṃ yaśasāṃ tathā/
 Naitat tavoditaṃ rājan yan māṃ vadasi saṃsadi//
 Snehasyāyatanam pūrvaṃ paścād dākṣiṇya-bhājanam/
 Naivārhanti parityāgaṃ mānaniyā hi yoṣitaḥ//
 Suhr̥d bandhur bhiṣag dāso gurur mantri samāśrayaḥ/
 Bhāryā sarvāsv avasthāsu viśrānti-jananaṃ nṛṇām//,
 Dipād dipam ivotpannaṃ para-loke prakāśakam/
 Kaḥ putraṃ nayanānandaṃ ṛte tvām avamanyate//,
 Hṛdayād abhijātena svarga-piyūṣavarṣiṇā/
 Sukṛtenaiva putreṇa ko nāma na sukhī bhavet//,
 Sākṣiṇo'ntaḥsarirasthā yasya pañca sahāparaiḥ/
 Haṣantypahnavaṃ rambhe tataḥ ko'nyo gata-trapaḥ//,

It is not necessary to note the incidents of the Ādi-parvan of the *Bhārata-mañjarī* one by one, as the poet has touched mostly upon all the incidents. The course of the narrative flows in the usual manner in the Sabhā-parvan. The description of the court, the arrangement for Rājasūya sacrifice, the death of Jarāsandha, the conquest of different countries, the killing of Śiśupāla, the completion of the sacrifice and the game of dice—all are briefly but appropriately related. All the incidents and legends of the original are found in the Aranya-parvan, but the episodes not mentioned in the Kashmiri version of the *Mahābhārata* in the 11th century are lacking in the *Bhārata-mañjarī*. Accounts of the temptation of Arjuna by Urvaśī, Karṇa's conquest of different countries and the visit of Durvāsas to Yudhiṣṭhira are conspicuous by their absence in the work of Kṣemendra. The Virāṭa-parvan gives a short account of the Pāṇḍavas living incognito, and narrates the main incidents connected with their residence in Virāṭa's capital. In the Udyoga-parvan, the philosophical episode of the Sanatsujāta is so highly condensed that it is quite impossible to form a true idea of the original from this short section. In other matters Kṣemendra has faithfully followed the original without altering the substance. The story of the cat and the mice which is a vulgate insertion is not found here. Some proper names have undergone slight variations, e. g. Vidurā in place of Vidulā. Karṇa's dream of Duryodhana proceeding towards the south seated on a donkey is nothing but a figment of Kṣemendra's imagination.¹ In view of the extreme abbreviation of the narrative, the portion dealing with the description of the assembly house of the Kauravas (Kaurava-sabhā-varṇana) is rather lengthy. The whole Bhīṣma-parvan has been completed in 497 verses only. All the chapters of the Bhagavad-gītā have been exceedingly compressed; only a gist of each chapter is to be found.² We find there all the eighteen

1 Sānugaḥ Kaurava-patiḥ śoṇa-mālyānulepanaḥ/
Dakṣiṇāśāṃ brajan dṛṣṭo mayā gardabha-vāhanaḥ // B.M., V. 494

2 The 10th chapter of the Gītā as found in the *Bhārata-mañjarī* consists of three verses only.

Bhūyo'pi me śṛṇu sakhe prītyā yat pratibodhyase/
Na tattvenāmara-gaṇā munayo vā vidanti mām//

chapters; but it is peculiar that he has omitted the original of the 17th chapter of the Gītā (Śraddhā-traya-bibhāga-yoga) and construed the same by giving a brief summary of the first few verses of the Gītā's 18th chapter. The description of the bloody warfare and death of great warriors has been given briefly in Bhīṣma-parvan, Karṇa-parvan and Śalya-parvan. The incident of club fight is included in the Śalya-parvan in the original *Mahābhārata*, but Kṣemendra has separated it totally from the Śalya-parvan and gives a different section dealing with the club duel of Bhīma and Duryodhana under the name of Gadā-parvan. So far as this division is concerned, another change should be noted. Kṣemendra

Carācare' smin pravaraṃ yad yat paśyasi bhūtimat/
 Tad ahaṃ sarva-bhūtātmā na hi kiñcin mayā vinā//
 Ahaṃ Viṣṇur ahaṃ Sūryaś Candro' haṃ Maghavān aham/
 Śaṅkaro' haṃ dhaneśaś ca vahni sura-gurus tathā//
 Akṣaro' haṃ ahaṃ kālo jayo' haṃ bhūtir apy aham/

BM., VI, 122-24

In the original Śrīkṛṣṇa enumerates fully his *vibhūti*s in forty-two verses, so the contraction of forty-two verses into three stanzas only does not at all reveal the particularly attractive character of the Vibhūti-yoga. The gist of the 9th chapter consisting of six verses, however, gives the idea of the original Rājaguhyā-yoga in a form somewhat better than the gist of the 10th chapter. The omnipresence and omnipotence of God and the characteristics of persons, who are sure to attain him, are clearly stated in the gist of this chapter. The 9th chapter is thus shortened—

Rājaguhyam idaṃ cānyat-pavitraṃ śṛṇu Falguna/
 Aśradda lhāno nāpnoti mām saṃsāra-vaśīkṛtaḥ//
 Sarva-kartari bhūtāni mayi santi na teṣv aham/
 Lokāḥ sthitā na sthitāś ca mayi vyomnīva vāyavaḥ//
 Adhiṣṭhitaiśā prakṛtir mayā sūte carācaram/
 Asaktaṃ mām na jānanti malināmogha-darśinaḥ//
 Sarvaṃ sarva-gataṃ yajñaṃ vedyam vijam bhavābhavanam/
 Vidanti mām sukṛtinaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam//
 Trayī-dharma-juṣaḥ svarga-bhoga-lābha-kṣayākulāḥ/
 Na prāpnuvanti mām śuśka-kriyā-pāśa-vaśīkṛtaḥ//
 Madeka-śaraṇā nityam kṛtino' nanyayājinaḥ/
 Apy anya-yoni-sambhūtāḥ svayam āyānti yat padam//

BM., VI, 116-21.

has maintained the number of parvans intact, and in order to make good the loss created by the differentiation of Gadā-parvan, he has omitted the Anuśāsana-parvan and included its episodes and descriptive matters in the Śānti-parvan. After Gadā-parvan is found a short account of the incidents of Sauptika-parvan and Strī-parvan. Episodes, legends, and fables, sections on Rāja-dharma, Āpad-dharma, Mokṣa-dharma, and Śrāddha-vidhis, different Gītās etc. have all been summarised in the Śānti-parvan, which includes, as already stated, the contents of the Anuśāsana-parvan as well. The remaining five parvans too have been subjected to drastic reduction quite in keeping with the general tenor of the work. The book closes with a bird's eye view of the *Hari-vaṃśa*.

Pāṇḍava-carita

It is quite interesting to note that not only orthodox Hindu scholars, but Jaina writers also have attempted to reproduce the principal story of the *Mahābhārata* in a poetical garb. Thus Śrīmala Devaprabha Sūri deals with the main story of the *Mahābhārata* with some modifications in eighteen cantos. The date of Śrīmala Devaprabha Sūri cannot be properly ascertained. His priority to Jaina Rājaśekhara is, however, certain, as the latter in his commentary on the *Nyāya-kandalī* of Śrīdhara gives some valuable information about Śrīmala the writer.¹

In this work the poet has not given us a faithful reproduction of the main story. He has left out many portions of the original at his own discretion without considering whether or not such omissions will enhance the literary value of the work. Even the course of events has been described in an order quite different from that of the *Mahābhārata*. In the beginning of his poem, the life history of only Śāntanu, Vicitravīrya and Bhīṣma—the common ancestors of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, has been touched upon. The second

1 Tat-kramiko Devaprabha-sūriḥ kila Pāṇḍavāyana-caritram/
Śrī-dharma-sāra-śāstraṃ ca nirmame su-kavi-kula-tilakaḥ//

This verse is attributed to Jaina Rājaśekhara in the introduction to the PC., ed. NSP.

canto is devoted to the story of Kṛṣṇa's birth, his wonderful power displayed in the destruction of numerous mischievous Rākṣasas and his installation on the throne at Dvārakā. No such detailed information regarding Kṛṣṇa is available in the *Mahābhārata*, that being the subject-matter of the *Hari-vaṃśa* which is regarded as a supplement to the *Mahābhārata*. At the end of the same canto, a short account of Yudhiṣṭhira's birth is given.

After the birth of other sons of Pāṇḍu as well as of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the poet turns his attention to the eagerness of the princes to acquire proficiency in archery and the use of different weapons from Droṇa, their preceptor. Adequate importance has been accorded to the creditable achievement of Arjuna and Karṇa in this direction. Draupadī's wedding ceremony also has received due attention of the poet. The poet describes how for violation of the rule that a brother must not enter the room when Draupadī is there with one of her husbands, Arjuna voluntarily exiles himself and travels in many sacred places for a long time. On his return, Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation takes place according to the wish of Pāṇḍu. In order to point out the evil effects of the game of dice, the poet brings in the Nala episode in the sixth canto. But it may be mentioned here that though the poet could not omit the Nala story, yet he did not insert it in the order in which it is found in the original epic. The Nala story was told to Yudhiṣṭhira in the Vana-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* with a view to mitigating his sorrows during his residence in the forest of Kāmyaka. The Nala story in this poetical composition is, however, followed by a description of the burning of the house of lac (*jatu-gr̥ha-dāha*), the killing of Hiḍimba by Bhīma, Arjuna's fight with Mahādeva dressed as a Kirāta, and Bhīma's effort to bring fragrant flowers for Draupadī. The incidents of *jatu-gr̥ha-dāha* and destruction of Hiḍimba are found in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*. In the ninth canto Yudhiṣṭhira's magnanimity and noble spirit are expressed by his fervent appeal to his mighty brothers to rescue their arch enemy Duryodhana from the hands of Vidyādharas. The tenth canto is devoted to the forcible seizure of Virāṭa's cows by Duryodhana and the ultimate recovery of them by Arjuna. Now emissaries are

sent in an attempt to patch up the conflict between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, but all in vain. The two hostile parties stand face to face, and war actually breaks out. In the fourteenth canto Jarā-sandha, king of Magadha, meets his tragic end. This episode finds its place in the *Mahābhārata* far earlier, in the Sabhā-parvan. In the next canto, Bhīṣma lying on his bed of arrows gives salutary advices to Yudhiṣṭhira and ultimately passes away. In the last three cantos (16-18), the apathy to worldly pleasures of Nemi-kumāra, the rescue of Draupadī from her captivity, the destruction of Dvārakā and the passing away of Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva, Śrī Neminātha and Pāṇḍavas have been narrated. We hear of the death of Pāṇḍu in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*, but here Pāṇḍu's longevity is to be noted. Due to his inability to rule the kingdom in old age, he permits his son's coronation.

It is worthy of notice in this connection, that it was not poetic urge alone that prompted Devaprabha Sūri to compose this poem; but like other devout brothers of his faith, he was tempted to write it for the purpose of propagating the doctrines of his religion. The ethical aspect of the *Pāṇḍava-carita* is very distinct. While the spirit and form of the Mahākāvya have been kept in view in presenting the story of the *Mahābhārata*, the work is still composed with a Jaina background. The monkish outlook is prominent in several cantos, in some of which the method of maintaining direct connection with the *Mahābhārata* narrative has been completely ignored. Thus a full canto, namely the sixteenth, is devoted to the description of Neminātha's indifference to family life and ardent enthusiasm to acquire knowledge.¹ In the last canto again Neminātha and the

1 Śrīman Nemi-kumāras tu guṇair viśva-vilakṣaṇaḥ/
 Sānta-cetāḥ kvacin naiva ramate' nya-kumāravat//
 Aloukikaṃ tam ālokyā viśayebhyaḥ parānmukham/
 Khedād ūce Śivā-devī Samudra-vijayaṃ tataḥ// PC., XVI. 7-8
 Nemiḥ pūrvam Jino hy eva saṃsadi pratyapīpatat/
 Nemiś tīrthaṅkaro bhāvī dvāviṃśo' traiva Bhārate//
 Samastam api sa straiṇaṃ tṛṇavac cintayīṣyati/
 Rājyam prājya-bhujosmāpi nirīho na grahīṣyati// PC., XVI. 68-9

Pāṇḍavas become claimants to eternal felicity by the attainment of emancipation. Further, the Jaina idea that people can enjoy happiness and overcome difficulties by their strong devotion to Lord Jina has been preached through some characters of the poem.¹ The Pāṇḍavas' adherence to Jaina doctrines and devotion to Tīrthaṅkara Neminātha are shown up to the end of the poem,

Such lengthy treatment of the subject-matter with religious and ethical discussion at places really puts to test the patience of ordinary readers. The literary merit of the work, in spite of its adherence to the form and spirit of the Mahākāvya, is not of an outstanding order; still it must be admitted that its freedom from over-embellishment, so far as the use of figures of speech and long compounds is concerned, may encourage patient readers to go through the book.

Bāla-bhārata

The Jaina writer Amaraçandra Sūri², who is also known as Amara-panḍita and Amaraçati and is the pupil of Jinadatta Sūri, has given the entire story of the *Mahābhārata* in his work *Bāla-bhārata*.³ The title of the poem indicates that the intention of the poet is to shorten the story as far as possible. The work was composed during the reign of king Viśāladeva of Anhilvād (1247-1261 A.D.).

The structure of the work bears close resemblance to that of the *Mahābhārata*. Like Kṣemendra, he has divided his work in eighteen parvans, and each parvan consists of several cantos. A short summary of the contents of each parvan will make clear what portions the

1 Ity abhiṣṭutya sāṣṭāṅgam ānandāśrukaṇān kiran /,
Śrīman Nemi-jinādhiśaṃ namati sma yudhiṣṭhiraḥ // PC. XVII. 51
Prabhor vacana-pīyūṣa-rasa-niryāsa-varṣiṇaḥ /
Ānandaikamayān ninyur vāsarān Pāṇḍu-sūnavah // PC., XVII. 82

2 The author composed some seven works, of which the Padmānanda, a comm. on his friend Arisīṃha's Kāvya-kalpalatā and the Chandoratnāvalī, a work on Prosody, deserve special mention.

3 The following colophon is found at the end of each canto:—

Śrī-Jinadatta-sūri-śiṣya-śrīmad-Amaraçandra-viracite Śrī-Bālabhārata-
nāmni mahākāvye.....

poet has touched upon, and what has been omitted by him. In the Ādi-parvan which consists of twelve cantos, the genealogy of kings like Puru, Purūravas and Bharata, birth of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, and Draupadī's *svayaṃvara* ceremony have been dealt with in the first five cantos. To maintain the character of a Mahākāvya as described in texts on alaṃkāra, some cantos have been devoted to the description of such topics as the spring season, sports in water, and the rise of the moon.¹ This parvan closes with the burning of Khāṇḍava forest by Arjuna who receives weapons from the fire-god. The assassination of Jarāsandha, conquest of different countries by the Pāṇḍavas, performance of Rājasūya sacrifice, Duryodhana's jealousy at the prosperity of the Pāṇḍavas and their ultimate departure for the forest after a defeat in the game of dice form the subject-matter of the Sabhā-parvan divided in five cantos. The Vana-parvan gives an account of Arjuna's penance for gaining divine weapons, Bhīma's valorous efforts to bring Saugandhikā flowers for Draupadī, the emancipation of Nahuṣa, the kidnapping of Draupadī and her recovery. The Pāṇḍavas' living incognito in the capital of Virāṭa, the killing of Kīcaka, the seizure of Virāṭa's cattle and Abhimanyu's marriage with Uttarā are the events dealt with in the Virāṭa-parvan. The Udyoga-parvan deals with the preparations for the coming war in five cantos. A short description of the battle and discomfiture of Bhīṣma is found in the Bhīṣma-parvan in two cantos. Its departure from the original is easily found in the absence of the didactic portions. The death of Abhimanyu, Jayadratha and Droṇa is the subject-matter of the Droṇa-parvan; similarly the Karṇa-parvan is concerned with the passing away of the great hero Karṇa in the

1 Āvāti paśya śanakair malayānilo' yam
 Yal lūna-nūtana-vilola-vana-prasūnaḥ/,
 Asmīn viyukta-vanitā-jana-tāpakāri
 Tad vāṇa-vṛṣṭi-rasiko vilasaty anaṅgaḥ//,
 Taṃ vikramaṃ vitanute malayānilo' yam
 Kāmasya vīra iva māni-patākinīṣu/,
 Yena dvirepha-mukharās taravaḥ śīrāṃsi
 Prīty eva kāṣṭha-vapuṣo' pi vikampayanti//, BBh., 1. VII, 21-2.

battle-field. A short summary of the original narrative is to be found in the following three parvans—Salya-parvan, Sauptika-parvan and Strī-parvan. The Āpad-dharma, Rāja-dharma and Mokṣa-dharma have been dealt with in brief in the Śānti-parvan. After uttering some words of wisdom Bhīṣma passes away in the Anuśāsana-parvan. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's departure for the forest in Āśrama-vāsika-parvan, destruction of Dvārakā in the Mauṣala-parvan, Yudhiṣṭhira's journey towards heaven with all his brothers in the Mahāprasthānika-parvan and the ultimate ascent of Yudhiṣṭhira to heaven after relinquishment of his physical body in the Svargārohaṇa-parvan, have all been narrated faithfully in simple language.

Amaracandra's mode of recounting the main story of the *Mahābhārata* by omitting unnecessary elements is to be commended highly. From the very beginning, an inclination on his part to leave aside various episodes, legends and myths comes to our notice. The poet has left out the moral tales in order to avoid the bulkiness of his poem. The original character of the two parvans—Śānti and Anuśāsana—also has not been kept intact. The episode of the *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā* is conspicuous by its absence. It must be remembered that all along he wants to give a connected account of the story, and from the point of view of story-telling he has achieved remarkable success. Moreover, being himself a Jaina, it is quite natural on his part to hold discussions on Jaina doctrines at places, but the tendency towards religious edification has not overshadowed his poetic sense. Thus the long narrative is allowed to have a smooth flow without any disturbing interruptions.

2. DRAMA

Of dramatic compositions, the *Veṅī-saṃhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and the *Bāla-bhārata* of Rājaśekhara deserve consideration here.

Veṅī-saṃhāra

Numerous citations from the *Veṅī-saṃhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa by Vāmana and Ānandavardhana lead us to believe that the dramatist must have flourished before the eighth century

A.D.¹ The exact date of the composition of the drama cannot be inferred from internal evidence. The title of the poet Mṛgarājalakṣman found in the prelude of the drama is of doubtful significance and is not, therefore, helpful in determining the exact age of the poet.² Similarly, the hearsay connecting the Brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa with the fabulous king Ādiśūra of Bengal is after all not worth credence, and it does not enable us to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the age of the work. Śāradātanaya mentions the work in his *Bhāva-prakāśa*,³ but nothing is stated there regarding the date of its composition.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's *Veṇī-saṃhāra*, a drama in six acts, concerns itself with an ignominious occurrence narrated in the Sabhā-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*. Duryodhana at Śakuni's instigation makes arrangement for a game of dice to be played at Hastināpura with Yudhiṣṭhira. This he does with the motive of appropriating the wealth of the Pāṇḍavas. Yudhiṣṭhira has a love for the game of dice, and as soon as he consents to this play, certain conditions for this gambling are promptly settled. Then starts the ominous game of dice in which Yudhiṣṭhira ultimately loses his all—loses himself, his four brothers and even his wife Draupadī who is dragged into the court room, where Duṣṣāsana pulls her by the hair, and insults her in the presence of all. Duṣṣāsana does not hesitate to take off her clothes, but is unsuccessful in his attempt. Bhīma, highly mortified at this sad turn of events, promises to drink the blood of Duṣṣāsana and dress up the hair of Draupadī with a hand besmeared with his blood.

This memorable incident has been dramatised by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa with some additions and alterations. Practically, the drama, while narrating the episode, recounts the whole story of the *Mahā-*

1 *Veṇī-saṃhāra*—V. 26 is quoted in the *Kāvya-lamkāra*—sūtra, IV, III, 28.

” ” —Verses I. 21 and III. 31 are quoted in the *Dhvanyāloka*, II. 9.

2 *Yad idaṃ kaver Mṛgarājalakṣmaṇo Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇasya abhinava-kṛtiṃ Veṇī-saṃhāra-nāmakam nātakam prayuktum udyatā vayam, VS., Prastāvanā.*

3 *Tathā ca Veṇī-saṃhāraḥ ṣaṭ-triṃśad-bhūṣaṇojjvalah/*

Bhāva-prakāśa, VIII, 23½

bhārata. The title has been rightly chosen, as Bhīma successfully retaliates the wrong done to Draupadī by combing her hair with blood-stained hands at the end of the drama. As a drama the work is not of much poetic value, because too many details connected with the sub-plots have greatly hampered its dramatic interest. Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa has deviated from the original in certain places; but it must be admitted that his originality has not substantially contributed to the excellence of his drama. The first act portrays the revengeful attitude of angry Bhīma, the resentment of insulted Draupadī and disappointment of Kṛṣṇa on his failure as an emissary. The love episode of Duryodhana and Bhānumatī, with which opens the second act, is untimely and useless in consideration of the impending warfare, and as such is deprecated even by the Sanskrit theorists.¹ Bhānumatī's ominous dream in the second act and its far-reaching implication, and the description of the sudden storm which is symbolical of the coming turmoil, are additions of the poet. In the third act, the episode of Rākṣasī and her husband wandering in the battle-field in search of human heads, bones and blood, enhances the horror of the terrible scene. Here we find a fine scene of sudden quarrel between the two Kaurava warriors Aśvatthāman and Karṇa, with frequent interruptions from Bhīma standing behind the scene, but a further development of the dramatic possibilities of the situation would have produced a better effect. In act IV we learn of the death of Duṣṣāsana and the fall of Duryodhana. The boring recital of Karṇa's death by the Kaurava messenger retards the progress of the drama to some extent. Minor deviations are to be noted in the description of the great battle. In act VI the entrance of the Rākṣasa Cārvāka, giving an account of the death of Bhīma and Arjuna at the hand of Duryodhana, arouses temporarily an interest in the whole plot; but his bad motive is rapidly detected with the result that the Rākṣasa courts death at the hand of Nakula. The dreadful Bhīma with his whole body reddened with blood enters the stage, and fulfils the

1 [Tathā ca yad Venyāṃ Duryodhanasya Bhānumatyā saha vipralambho tādṛśe' vasare atyantam anucitam. SD., VI. 141.

promise made by him long ago. The portion depicting Bhīma's brutal joy at the fulfilment of his promise is rather ghastly, and makes his character unpleasant¹. Similarly, Bhīma's insulting attitude in act V to the bereaved Dhṛtarāṣṭra may reveal his revengeful temperament, but at the same time it shows a deplorable lack of all sense of decorum and etiquette.

Characterisation in the drama is on the whole satisfactory. Duryodhana, Karṇa, Bhīma, Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira are all painted in their traditional form. Yudhiṣṭhira's sober and peaceful attitude has nowhere been sacrificed, but the roughness and haughtiness of his brothers, specially of Bhīma and Arjuna have been over-emphasised. Draupadi's feminine tenderness is suppressed by her crude desire for revenge. The heroic sentiment mingled with fury and violence prevails prominently in the drama; scenes of horror and pathos are not rare. The author's strict adherence to the laws of dramaturgy has, however, evoked strong criticism. Like Bhavabhūti, his fondness for long compounds and difficult words has spoiled the intrinsic value of the drama. In spite of all this, the play is highly popular to rhetoricians, as they find here ample examples to illustrate the rules of dramaturgy.¹ Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, the author of the *Daśarūpaka* and others appreciated this drama for its being the store-house of illustrations of canons of dramaturgy.²

Bāla-bhārata

Rājaśekhara of the 10th century A. D. occupies an important position in Sanskrit literature for his versatile genius, which found its expression through various forms of literature. Of his dramas, the *Bāla-rāmāyaṇa* is concerned with the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in

1 Yenākṣṭāsi rājñam sadasi nṛpaśunā tena Duḥśāsanena
Styānāny etāni tasya spr̥śa mama karayoḥ pīta-śeṣāny asr̥ñji/
Kānte! rājñah Kurūṇām api rudhiram idaṃ mad gadā-cūrṇitoror
Aṅgeṣv aṅgeṣu saktam tava paribhavajasyānalasyopaśāntyai//

VS., VI. 41

2 Daśarūpaka—I. 21, 22, 24, 28; II. 2; VI. 1, 20 etc.

Sāhitya-darpaṇa—VI. 19, 30, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74; VII. 27; IX. 7 etc.

ten acts, and the *Bāla-bhārata* relates the story of the *Mahābhārata*. The former is a complete drama containing a lengthy account of the whole story, and as such, his deviation from the original in several points displays his dramatic genius; but the latter, being an incomplete work consisting of two acts only, does not bear the full marks of his genius. The *viṣkambhaka* before the first act opens with a short conversation between Vālmiki and Vyāsa. Through Vyāsa, the author pays glorious tribute to the poetic talent of Lord Vālmiki¹ and with great politeness expresses his desire to begin the drama with the incident narrating the entrance of the Pāṇḍavas in the city of Drupada for the *svayamvara* ceremony. Here we find in the first act, a graphic description of the *svayamvara* of Draupadī and in the second act Yudhiṣṭhira's loss of kingdom at the game of dice, Draupadī's insult at the court and the departure of the Pāṇḍavas to the forest. The work is also known as *Pracaṇḍa-pāṇḍava*,² but its unfinished character does not at all bear out the significance of the title.

3. CAMPŪKĀVYA

Campūkāvya³ refers to a type of poetic composition wherein the writer employs both prose and verse. There is, however, no hard and fast rule regarding the proportionate use of prose and verse; rather it is left to the discretion of the author to employ them. The mingled application of both prose and verse does not entitle it to be included within the range of either real prose, or real poetry, as it stands midway and can never attain a high literary standard.

1 Yogīndras chandasām draṣṭā Rāmāyaṇa-mahākaviḥ/.

Valmika-janmā jayati prācyah prācetaso muniḥ// BB., I. 15

2 Iḍam hi tad Bāla-bhāratam yasya hi pracaṇḍa-pāṇḍavam iti nāmāntaram. BB., Prastāvanā.

The colophon too runs thus:—

Iti mahākavi-śri-Rājaśekhara-kṛte pracaṇḍa-pāṇḍavāpara-nāmni Bāla-bhārate nāṭake

3 Gadya-padyamayī kācic campūr ity abhidhīyate. KD., I. 31.

Gadya-padyamayam kāvyam campūr ity abhidhīyate. SD., VI. 312.

Bhārata-campū

The Campū-kāvya has been composed on the main story of the *Mahābhārata*; and of such Campū-kāvya, the *Bhārata-campū* of Ananta Bhaṭṭa is the most well known. He has not given us a detailed account of the main story, and is highly careful to touch upon those side stories as are necessary to maintain the smooth flow of his narrative. The poem seeks to relate in twelve Stavakas the entire story of the *Mahābhārata*. The first Stavaka gives an account of Pāṇḍu's hunting, his death, birth of the Pāṇḍavas and their childhood. The next Stavaka is concerned with Kauravas' hot jealousy at the overall progress of the Pāṇḍavas, and their attempt to kill Bhīma by throwing him into the Gaṅgā. The Jatu-gṛha-dāha, Hiḍimba-vadha, Baka-vadha, Pāṇḍavas' arrival at the *svayaṃvara* ceremony of Draupadī are also the topics of this portion. The Jatu-gṛha-dāha and Baka-vadha are side stories; but the former has been put here to convey the feelings of the Kauravas in their true spirit, and the latter demonstrates the tremendous power of Bhīma to cope with ferocious demons alone. Such episodes are dealt with for a vivid depiction of the character of the heroes. At places the author is skilful enough in dealing with unimportant episodes in one or two verses only, and thus he tries to avoid unnecessary bulkiness. In the third Stavaka we find Arjuna's attempt to rescue the cows of a Brāhmaṇa, his tour of sacred places, his meeting with Ulūpī, Citrāṅgadā and Babhruvāhana, his marriage with Subhadrā, his sport in the water of the Kālindī and the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest. Thus, the poet has devoted three Stavakas to a description of the incidents of the Ādi-parvan. Stavaka IV deals with the assassination of Jarāsandha, the performance of Rājasūya, the death of Śiśupāla, the game of dice, the Pāṇḍavas' departure for the forest and Arjuna's encounter with Mahādeva in the disguise of a Kirāta. The next Stavaka gives us a description of some of the remaining incidents of the Vana-parvan, namely, the curse of Urvaśī, the battle with Nibātakavacas, the rescue of Draupadī from the hands of Jayadratha, Indra's begging of the ear-rings of Karṇa, and Yakṣa's attempt to test Yudhiṣṭhira. All these are nothing but dry accounts for want of appreciable poetic charm and warmth of narra-

tion. The author is not able to escape from the influence of writers of Campū poetry who preceded him, and the prose portion in his work is marked by the use of long sentences loaded with compounds and difficult words; yet there are some passages which may be noted for their easy flow of words. The author has not, of course, followed everywhere the rule, that prose characterised by Ojas is to be used only for the depiction of the Heroic sentiment. Stavaka VI is devoted to the description of the incidents of the Virāṭa-parvan; but the actual battle involving the rescue of the cattle of king Virāṭa forms the theme of the following Stavaka, where the Pāṇḍavas' identity is gradually disclosed to the king. Stavaka VIII presents Kṛṣṇa before the readers in the rôle of a peace-maker. Herein we find a mother's affectionate reluctance to see her valorous son Karṇa fighting against her other sons.¹ Kṛṣṇa and Kuntī both fail to achieve their respective mission.² The incidents of the rest of the parvans of the *Mahābhārata* have been summarised in the remaining four Stavakas. The actual warfare and the death of the great warriors occupy the attention of the poet in all these Stavakas. In the last Stavaka Yudhiṣṭhira is shown as performing the Rājasūya sacrifice, and ruling over the kingdom in a perfect manner. Thus the conclusion of the *Bhārata-campū* does not agree with the story of the *Mahābhārata*. The subject-matter of the Mahāprasthānika and Svargārohaṇa-parvan has been excluded from this work.

It is worthy of notice that moral, ethical and legendary sections of the *Mahābhārata* have not at all been touched upon in this work. This is due to the fact, that the great epic has accepted ungrudgingly within its fold the contributions of different writers of different ages; but the writers of works based on the *Mahābhārata*, in later

1. Jahihi Rādhā-tanayatva-buddhiṃ sahaiva Duryodhana-sauhṛdena//
Gṛhṇā vāṇyā saha dharmyayā me sahodarān dharmā-tanuja-mukhyān//
BCm, VIII. 75.
2. Itivādino Ravi-sutasya mānaśam
Na nivartate sma Dhṛtarāṣṭra-nandanāt/
Api tu svakiya-tanayān mahābhujād
Anavāpya kāmam iyam eva kevalam// BCm., VIII. 80

ages, omitted and altered the accounts to their own advantages in order to present a compact account to the readers. This is also the case with the writer of the *Bhārata-campū*. This work, however, does not appeal to us in as much as it lacks the vigour and grace of a forceful composition. It does not evince sound literary taste because, in accordance with the accepted ideal of such composition, the frequent use of unwieldy compounds, elaborate puns, alliterations and other rhetorical devices stand in the way of successful handling of the plot. Deficiency of constructive power, lack of originality and want of felicity of expression have made the work uninteresting; but these defects are common enough in the literary works of the age. In those days such mode of presentation, literary mannerism, extravagance of diction are glaringly visible mostly in all the Campū-kāvya.

4. YAMAKA AND ŚLEṢA KĀVYA

Many Sanskrit writers displayed their wide command over words by freely playing with the language. Their tendency to use the figures of speech, Śleṣa and Yamaka, has been carried so far in some places that the idea, instead of being lucid, has become all the more complicated. Their sacrifice of sense to word-plays has diminished the value of many poetic compositions; but it must nevertheless be admitted that not a few among them have really shown special aptitude in this direction.

Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya

The *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya* is a Yamaka-kāvya by the Kerala poet Vāsudeva—a contemporary of Kulaśekhara Varman, whose date is uncertain, but who probably lived between the first half of the 10th and the first half of the 12th century. The main story of the *Mahābhārata*, beginning from the hunting expedition of king Pāṇḍu up to Yudhiṣṭhira's victory over the Kauravas, has been narrated in Āryā metre in eight Āśvāsas; and the title of the Yamaka-kāvya has been chosen to suit the theme. The poet has freely used Yamaka in every line, but no laborious effort on his part is noticeable in this

direction. It is true that he is eager to exemplify the Yamakas along with the narration of the story of the *Mahābhārata*, but his Yamakas, being easily intelligible and distinct, have not made his work tiresome to readers. Rājānaka Ratnakaṇṭha has written a commentary on this poem.

The birth of the Pāṇḍavas, Jatu-gr̥ha-dāha, the death of Hiḍimba and Baka demon and the Svayaṃvara ceremony of Draupadī form the subject-matter of the first Āśvāsa. The capture of Subhadrā by Arjuna is the incident of the second Āśvāsa, but to give his work the character of a Mahākāvya, the poet incidentally brings in descriptions of the six seasons, sport in water, sunset, moonrise, drinking of wine and sunrise. The eagerness to finish those descriptions one by one in a single Āśvāsa shows the poet's desire for adherence to rules laid down in works on theories of Poetry for the composition of a Mahākāvya; but this, the poet, has done at the cost of checking the smooth flow of the narrative. The development of the story is thus a little obstructed; but this is also intended to afford some relief to the readers kept so long confined to the *Mahābhārata* story. Some incidents of the Ādi-parvan, some of the Sabhā-parvan and the Vana-parvan, namely, the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, Arjuna's attainment of celestial weapons from the fire-god, the performance of Rājasūya sacrifice, the game of dice and the Pāṇḍava's journey to the forest are found in the third Āśvāsa of the work. Laudatory verses in praise of Kṛṣṇa in this part are really noteworthy. Quotation of one such verse to show the poet's commendable ability to manipulate difficult schemes of Yamakas in simple language will not be out of place here. No special effort on the part of the reader is necessary to understand the meaning of such verses, although adorned with Yamakas.¹

Jaya jagadāmoda-rate caraṇau śaraṇaṃ gato'smi Dāmodara te//
tyaja ruṣam aripuṃ jagatāṃ prāpnuhi caiva prasādam aripuñjagatām//

‘O Dāmodara, O you interested in the merriment of the world,
I have taken refuge at your feet. Please give up anger for your

¹ YV., iii, 107.

enemies and thus receive the felicitation of your (Sudarśana) cakra, all people and worlds.'

Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sadness on the departure of the Pāṇḍavas to the forest, the inspiring words of Bhīma and Draupadī to Yudhiṣṭhira to fight with the enemies, and Arjuna's acquisition of weapons after his fight with Mahādeva disguised as a Kirāta, have been dealt with in the fourth Āśvāsa. The fifth Āśvāsa helps the development of the main story, and side by side gives an account of many episodic stories of the Vana-parvan. Some portions of the Virāṭa-parvan too have been covered by this fifth Āśvāsa. Bhīma's heroic effort to bring Saugandhikā flowers for Draupadī, Bhīma's distressing plight in the grip of a venomous serpent, the rescue of Duryodhana from the hands of the Gandharvas, Dharma's role in the guise of a Yakṣa, the Pāṇḍavas' residence in the city of Virāṭa and the death of Kīcaka—all those incidents have been briefly gone through in the fifth Āśvāsa. The rest of the incidents of the Virāṭa-parvan, that is, the seizure of cattle and their rescue by Arjuna, and Abhimanyu's marriage with Uttarā are found in the Sixth Āśvāsa. Of course, from this very part we come to know that the clouds of imminent war hang fearfully in the horizon. The next two Āśvāsas are concerned with the description of the battle, in which the god of death takes away the lives of the main warriors one by one. The concluding verse of the poem clearly explains the title of this work, and refers to Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation on the throne of Hastināpura.¹

Sukhena nāga-sāhvaye pure vasan sabhā-rataḥ/
rarakṣa gāṃ Purūravāḥ pureva san sa bhārataḥ//

'Yudhiṣṭhira, the descendant of Bharata, lived happily in the city of Hastināpura and seated in his assembly-hall, protected the world like Purūravas of olden days'

To establish the appropriateness of the title, the poet depicts Yudhiṣṭhira as an administrator intent on securing the welfare of his subjects. In the concluding portion the poet has not followed the

1 YV., viii, 105.

original, as he has not mentioned anything about Yudhiṣṭhira's departure for heaven after making Parīkṣit the king.

The contents of the Āśvāsas given above show that the poet has left out many legends, moral stories and dry-as-dust discussions on law and politics, which, strictly speaking, have nothing to do with the narrative of the main story. Like Amaraçandra Sūri of the *Bāla-bhārata*, here too the poet has not made any attempt to touch upon the heterogeneous elements of the Great Epic.

Rāghava-pāṇḍavīya

In the *Rāghava-pāṇḍavīya*, Kavirāja whose real name was Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, and who flourished under Kadamba Kāmadeva of Jayantapurī (1182—87 A.D.), narrates the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* at the same time with the help of Śleṣa. Such a narration is a difficult task indeed, but the poet with great patience and cleverness has achieved notable success in this sphere. Such double narration is possible owing to different meanings of Sanskrit words and diverse ways of breaking up the members of compounds. Kavirāja was certain that the innate excellence of Sanskrit vocabulary would help him to express his imageries in brief punning phrases. Kavirāja's other work—the *Pārijāta-haraṇa*, though fine, has not attained a celebrity as wide as his *Rāghava-pāṇḍavīya*, for he is best known to us as the author of the *Rāghava-pāṇḍavīya*. He has simply narrated the story of the Pāṇḍavas with his eyes fixed specially upon the use of double *entendre*. This deliberate motive, of course, has not allowed him to maintain all along the lucidity and melody of verses; still his wonderful success among those, who tried their genius in this direction, has led many to place him on the same footing with Bāṇa and Subandhu. Kavirāja himself holds a similar opinion and does not hesitate to express it emphatically in canto 1 of his work.¹

In the selection of subject-matter, the work bears closer affinity to the *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya* of Vāsudeva. It opens with the hunting

1 Subandhur Bāṇabhṭaś ca Kavirāja iti trayah/
Vak rokti-mārga-nipunāś caturtho vidyate na vā// RP., I. 41.

expedition of king Pāṇḍu, and closes with the coronation of Yudhiṣṭhira as the legitimate king of Hastināpura. In the first canto the poet gives a short account of Pāṇḍu's hunting, the birth of the Pāṇḍavas and their education, the assassination of Hiḍimba and Baka demons by Bhīma. Draupadī's marriage with the Pāṇḍavas and Arjuna's attainment of Subhadrā as wife are described in Canto II. The next Canto is concerned chiefly with the incidents of the Sabhāparvan—the performance of Rājasūya sacrifice, the death of Śiśupāla, the game of dice, Yudhiṣṭhira's defeat, the Pāṇḍavas' departure from Hastināpura and the slaying of Kirmīra. In Canto IV we find a description of Arjuna's acquisition of divine weapons and his fight with the Nibātakavacas. Canto V relates the rescue of Bhīma from the grip of the serpent Nahuṣa, Draupadī's deliverance from the cruel clutches of Jayadratha, Yudhiṣṭhira's conversation with Yakṣa, the Pāṇḍavas' arrival in the capital of Virāṭa and the death of Kīcaka. This canto concludes with a short description of the autumn and rainy seasons. The following Canto narrates Arjuna's fight with the Kauravas for the rescue of Virāṭa's cattle and Abhimanyu's marriage with Uttarā. With the failure of Kṛṣṇa's embassy described in the 7th Canto, the frightful war that takes toll of precious human lives, mainly occupies the attention of the poet in the succeeding five cantos (8-12). Military activities are brought to an end with the death of Duryodhana in canto XIII. The work then concludes with the crowning of Yudhiṣṭhira on the throne of Hastināpura.

Several illustrations demonstrating his skill in the application of the figure Śleṣa are being shown here. The assassination of Tāḍakā and Hiḍimba is described thus¹:—

Viṣameṣu-prahārātām tām kṛtvā patato drutam/,
sa Hiḍimbasya sakalair apuṣṇāt piśitāśinaḥ//;

‘By striking her quickly with fierce arrows Rāma surely fed the birds living on flesh with the pieces of her body.’ (*Rāmāyana*).

‘By making her (Hiḍimbā) lovesick, Bhīma fed the creatures living

on flesh with the pieces of Hiḍimba who arrived there quickly, and was killed. (*Mahābhārata*).

The following verse depicts Sītā and Draupadī shining in full glory after the termination of the period of their affliction.¹

Patyuh pratijñārṇava-laṅghanena sakañcukā sañcita-cāru-veṇī/
analpa-santāpa-hutāśa-madhyād viniḥṣṭā rājavadhūr vireje//

‘Sītā, the daughter-in-law of the royal dynasty, came out of fire burning brightly with her full dress and lovely braid of hair, and looked charming, as her husband was able to cross the ocean of promise.’ (*Rāmāyaṇa*).

‘Draupadī, the daughter-in-law of the royal dynasty, as she came out of the fire of extreme affliction, shone highly with her dress and lovely braid of hair, for her husband Bhīma was able to cross the ocean of promise.’ (*Mahābhārata*).

In spite of his best efforts to maintain clearness of diction, the poet has failed to achieve the object on account of his strong fascination for laboured artificiality in the use of the figure of speech Śleṣa. It is highly difficult to understand the meaning of verses in some places without the help of a commentary. Such restricted motive must have obviously cramped the poet’s ability. The same theme has, however, been better treated in the *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya*, although there the poet has freely employed Yamakas throughout the poem.

A similar attempt was made by Dhanañjaya in his poem *Rāghava-pāṇḍavīya*. Such works of twofold application are descriptively called Dvisandhāna-kāvya. Dhanañjaya, also known as Śrutakīrti Traividya, is the son of Vāsudeva and Śrīdevī. The probable date of composition of the poem is between 1123 and 1140 A.D. With homage to Vyāsa, Vālmīki and Daṇḍin he begins telling the stories of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* in 18 cantos with a free and fluent use of double *entendre*. The use of treble-*entendre* is to be found in Cidambara’s *Rāghava-pāṇḍava-yādavīya*² or Kathātrayī, wherein in three cantos the

1 RP., xiii. 24

2 Descriptive cat. Madras Govt. Orient. MSS Library, xx, P. 7829 f; also P. P. S. Sastri, Tanjore Catalogue, VI, P. 2700.

tales of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* have been described in the same strain. Many other books of this type were also composed, but due in all probability to their literary worthlessness, they have not been printed.

The story of the *Mahābhārata* was also utilised by Divākara in his *Lakṣaṇādarśa* for illustrating the rules of Pāṇini's grammar.

CHAPTER II

Works on the Episodes of the Mahābhārata

I. KĀVYA

Later Sanskrit poets wrote Mahākāvya in strict conformity with the rules laid down in books on theories of Poetry. The rhetoricians were very particular in framing rules regarding the composition of Mahākāvya, Rūpakas, prose romances and other types of poetic works. So far as the conception of the Mahākāvya is concerned, we find the earliest definition in Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaadarśa*.¹ It is stated in this definition that the plot of a metrical composition, deserving the title of a Mahākāvya, must be chosen from the stories of Itihāsas (viz, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata), or from some real occurrence. Poets generally tried to observe all the conditions laid down in standard works on poetics, but some went so far as to sacrifice naturalness to a strict pursuit of the rules. Let us now refer to such compositions which have relation to the story of the Mahābhārata.

Kirātārjunīya

In a discussion of epic poems based on some portions of the main story of the *Mahābhārata*, the name of the *Kirātārjunīya* stands foremost. The *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi belongs to the group of Bṛhatrayī;

- 1 Sarga-bandho mahākāvyaṃ ucyate tasya lakṣaṇam /
Āsīr namaskriyā vastu-nirdeśo vāpi tan mukham //
Itihāsa-kathodbhūtam itarad vā sadāśrayam /
Caturvarga-phalopetaṃ caturodātta-nāyakam //
Nagarārṇava-śailartu-candrārkodaya-varṇanaiḥ /
Udyāna-salila-kriḍā-madhu-pāna-ratotsavaiḥ //
Vipralambhair vivāhaiś ca kumārodaya-varṇanaiḥ /
Mantra-dūta-prayāñjī-nāyakābhyudayair api //
Alaṃkṛtam asaṃkṣiptaṃ rasa-bhāva-nirantaram //
Sargair anati-vistīrṇaiḥ śravya-vṛttaiḥ susandhibhiḥ //
Sarvatra bhinna-vṛttāntair upetaṃ loka-rañjakam /
Kāvyaṃ kalpāntara-sthāyi jāyeta sadalaṃkṛti // KD., I. 14-9

the other two being *Śiśupāla-vadha* and *Naiṣadha-carita*. In all these three famous works are narrated elaborately the stories of the *Mahābhārata*, whereas *Laghutrayī*, which refers to *Raghu-vaṃśa*, *Kumārasambhava* and *Megha-dūta*, has no obvious connection with the Great Epic of India. Only the *Kumārasambhava* refers to the Mahiṣāsura myth of the Vana-parvan.

On account of excessive shyness and desire to remain obscure, Sanskrit writers in most cases did not give much information regarding their personal history. Such is the case with Bhāravi, the author of the *Kirātārjunīya*. The Aihole Inscription of Pulakeśin II of 634 A.D., in which Bhāravi has been mentioned along with Kālidāsa, gives us the lower terminus to his date.¹ From this source which bears eloquent testimony to Bhāravi's fame, we can draw the conclusion that he flourished in the sixth century A.D.

The very name *Kirātārjunīya* accords well with the plot of the work, namely, the struggle between Śiva in the disguise of a Kirāta and Arjuna. The poet found ample materials in the *Mahābhārata* for writing his epic. The original story narrated in the Vana-parvan runs thus.² Defeated in the game of dice, Yudhiṣṭhira with his brothers and wife comes to Dvaitavana for passing the period of twelve years' exile there. They are thus prevented from enjoying the pleasures of royal life. Instead they have to pass their days in awful misery in that lonely forest. Bhīma and Draupadī often manifest their annoyance at this distressing turn of event. With a view to removing indifference of Yudhiṣṭhira and rousing him to activity against his adversaries, they make fiery speeches. In the opinion of Draupadī, they should, as Kṣatriyas, spare no pains to take up arms against the wicked sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra for the recovery of their lost kingdom and removal of miseries that beset their life. Unperturbed by reverses of fortune Yudhiṣṭhira judges the whole situation with utter sobriety and coolness, and dissuades Bhīma from taking a wrong step that may endanger their life all

1 Yenāyoji nave'sma-sthiram artha-vidhau vivekinā jinaveśma/
Sa vijayatām Rabi-kīrtiḥ kavitāśrita-kālidāsa-bhāravi-kīrtiḥ//

2 MBH., III. 25-42

the more. With their present resources, a strong enemy like Duryodhana cannot be conquered, on the contrary the chance of recovering their lost position will recede further. So at this critical juncture nothing should be done precipitately. Just at the time when they have been discussing the issue, the great sage Vyāsa appears on the scene with the intention of initiating Yudhiṣṭhira into the mysteries of a Mantra known as Pratismṛti. He expresses satisfaction at the appropriate decision of Yudhiṣṭhira not to fight his enemies without large-scale preparations. He duly instructs Yudhiṣṭhira to impart this powerful knowledge known as Pratismṛti to Arjuna, who after acquiring divine power will surely win victory for them. This knowledge of Pratismṛti will highly strengthen the mental faculties of Arjuna, who will soon attain the special favour of Indra by practising severe austerities. Gradually Arjuna will be instructed by Indra to propitiate Śiva, through whose grace he will acquire celestial weapons, and thereby bring about the downfall of the enemies. Yudhiṣṭhira is further advised to remove himself to some other forest for safety. In the Kāmyaka forest Arjuna learns from Yudhiṣṭhira that mysterious knowledge, and according to the advice of his elder brother he, swift as thought, proceeds to Indrakīla mountain for practising penance. There he finds an old Brāhmaṇa standing at the foot of a tree. In spite of the Brāhmaṇa's repeated attempts to deter him from the path of penance by mentioning the possible dangers on that mountain, Arjuna expresses his strong determination to carry on his purpose undaunted. Highly pleased at the resolute stand of Arjuna, the Brāhmaṇa throws off his disguise and reveals his form to Arjuna. He is no other than Indra, the lord of the gods. Arjuna's strong devotion to him actuates Indra to disclose to him the real path of success, and the necessity of Śiva-worship is pointed out to him. Then Arjuna starts practising severe austerities for acquiring the favour of Śiva. Other ascetics living on that mountain for a long time are greatly perturbed at this bold determination of Arjuna and communicate this matter to Śiva. Thereupon Śiva in the disguise of a Kirāta, accompanied by goddess Umā dressed as a Kirāta woman, goes to Indrakīla mountain to test Arjuna's sincerity. At that time a demon, Mūka by name, is about to attack Arjuna in the form of a boar.

The latter noticing the intention of the ferocious animal strikes him with an arrow. The boar is, however, at the same time pierced with another arrow thrown by Śiva. Thus doubly attacked the boar lies lifeless on the ground. Both Śiva and Arjuna want to take full credit for putting an end to the life of the boar and reproach each other for unnecessary intervention. An altercation follows, and after an exchange of words they begin throwing powerful missiles against each other. With great devotion Arjuna remembers his desired deity, and places wreaths on the Śivaliṅga which was nearby. To his utter surprise he finds that the garlands placed on the Liṅga are on the neck of the Kīrāta. At the realisation of his blunder he is overwhelmed with emotion as well as devotion, and lies prostrate at the feet of Mahādeva. Highly satisfied at the intense devotion of Arjuna, Mahādeva gives him the knowledge of the use of a divine weapon known as Pāśupata and vanishes. Indra then taking Arjuna to heaven gives him countless celestial weapons. There he is also favoured by other gods with powerful weapons. Then Arjuna goes back to his brothers and wife after a long absence of five years. On the Gandhamādana hill he is accorded a cordial reception by his brothers and wife.

This main story of the *Mahābhārata* with slight modifications is dealt with in ornate language in Bhāravi's well-knit poetic composition, the *Kīrātārjunīya*, in eighteen cantos. The main deviations are of minor character and the original story, therefore, has not been too much distorted, but the method of presentation is unique indeed. A variation from the original has been introduced in the very beginning of the poem. For collecting valuable information relating to the administrative policies of his enemy and general condition of the subjects, the banished prince Yudhiṣṭhira asks a clever forester to act as a spy for him. Contrary to the epic, Bhāravi does not take his hero to the Kāmyaka forest from Dvaitavana, perhaps with the idea that no useful purpose will be served by a change of forest residence. Unnecessary intervention of superhuman beings in human affairs has been done away with as far as possible in this poem. The natural resentment of Bhīma and Draupadī at the miserable plight of

the princes driven out of their legitimate dominion gives the poet opportunity for introducing and discussing various subtle policies of statecraft. Although made in difficult language and in the mode of conversation of Yudhiṣṭhira with Bhīma and Draupadī in canto II, Bhāravi's discussions on statecraft bespeak his wonderful power of writing in a style full of vigour.¹

Mostly all the characters of Bhāravi act and speak like human beings. Yudhiṣṭhira possesses the cool brain, rational judgment and farsightedness of a statesman. As such he prevents Bhīma from yielding to emotions and following a line of action that will endanger their position in the near future. Here the great sage Vyāsa himself imparts the great Mantra to Arjuna, and at his instance a Yakṣa carries Arjuna to the Indrakīla mountain in canto III. Bhāravi's detailed descriptions of the surrounding regions of the Himalayas, the Indrakīla mountain and the autumn season in the following two cantos, though of a digressive nature, have added to the literary value of the poem on account of rich pictorial effects.² Bhāravi's deep love for nature is obviously reflected in all these descriptive accounts. Heavenly nymphs have been brought to the scene of penance to deter Arjuna from his goal with their amorous devices, but they go back unsuccessful and astonished at the extra-ordinarily firm demeanour of the hero. The last part of the story too has been slightly changed. Perturbed by the severe austerities of Arjuna, Śiva with a large number of followers comes to test him. In the battle that ensues after an exchange of hot words between Arjuna and Śiva's messenger regarding the arrow, that cuts short the life of the demon

1 Kṣaya-yuktam api svabhāvajaṃ dadhataṃ dhāma śivaṃ sanṛddhaye/
Prāṇamanty anapāyam utthitaṃ pratipac candram iva prajā nṛpam//
Prabhavaḥ khalu koṣa-daṇḍayoḥ kṛta-pañcāṅga-vinirṇayo nayaḥ/
Sa vidheya-padeṣu dakṣatām niyatim loka ivānurudhyate//
Abhimānavato manasvinaḥ priyam uccaiḥ padam ārurukṣataḥ/
Vinipāta-nivartana-kṣamaṃ matam ālamvanam ātmapauruṣam//

KAr., II. 11-3.

2 Bhujaga-rājasitena nabhaḥ-śritā kanaka-rāji-virājita-sānunā/
Samuditaṃ nicayena taḍitvatim laghayatā śarad-ambuda-saṃhatim//

KAr., V. 4.

Mūka, all the followers of Śiva suffer a terrible defeat at Arjuna's hand. Then in a direct fight between Śiva and Arjuna, the latter is about to throw the god on the ground when Śiva throws off his disguise, and in delighted mood favours him with the special gift of a divine weapon.

Bhāravi has acquired renown for his vigorous thought couched in a difficult language, and for lofty eloquence in expression rarely met with in Sanskrit Literature. '*Bhāraver artha-gauravam*' has become a by-word. The great commentator Mallinātha compares Bhāravi's composition to a cocoanut fruit having a soft kernel within a hard exterior.¹ On account of his acquaintance with the chief requisites of a perfect style of composition, the poet delineated the heroic sentiment with the subordinate sentiment of anger in a style, displaying the special characteristics of the so called Gauḍī Rīti. A large number of maxims full of moral and general lessons has enriched his work. The influence of Kālidāsa on Bhāravi can be traced in the graphic description of the Himalayas; but the poet's individual mode of picturing scenes of nature does not permit a reader to attach too much importance to that influence. His cultivated expression, polished phrases, touching and elegant verses enhance the literary value of the poem. Critics speak highly of the composition of Bhāravi for its forcefulness wherein lies the real appeal of his poetry. It is true that we do not find in him the lyric touch and superb grace of Kālidāsa's poetry, still he has received wide recognition for his refined ideas and thoughtful expressions.

In determining Bhāravi's place in Sanskrit poetry we cannot overlook the blemishes of his composition. Owing to unending use of figures and other verbal complexities, specially in canto XV describing a battle, where the play on words has been unnecessarily carried to an absurd excess, the merciless torturing of language makes us prone to underrate the value of his work.² But it must be re-

1 Nārikela-phala-sammitaṃ vaco Bhāraveḥ sapadi tad vibhajyate/
Svādayantu rasa-garbha-nirbharaṃ saram asya rasikā yathepsitam//
(Comm. Ghaṇṭāpātha, IS. 6)

2 Devākānīnikāvāde vāhikāsvasvakāhivā/
Kākārebhabhārekākā nīsvabhavyavyabhasvani//, KAr., XV. 25

membered that it was difficult, if not impossible for him, to escape from the influence of his age when undue importance was attached to rhetorical embellishment and verbal jugglery. Such verbal artificialities involving the sacrifice of sense to sound found favour with the writers of the day; and as such this literary tendency is responsible for the laboured diction of the *Kirātārjunīya* in some places. The influence of Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* is clearly discernible in the poetry of Māgha who used his talent with greater interest in verbal tricks.

Śiśupāla-vadha

The quotations from Māgha by Vāmana and Ānandavardhana¹ during the 8th and 9th century A.D. lead us to believe that the poet must have flourished some time before the 8th century A. D. Māgha has thrown some light on his personal life through five verses just at the end of his work *Śiśupāla-vadha*. The name of his father is Dattaka Sarvāśraya and his grandfather Suprabha deva was a minister of a king. Urged by a strong desire to acquire reputation as a poet,² he composed this work with great care, and a critical analysis of the work shows that his attempt to display his poetic ability turned fruitful.

The *Śiśupāla-vadha* of Māgha is based on an episode of the Sabhā-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.³ In order to celebrate the victory over king Jarāsandha of Magadha and win recognition as the sovereign ruler of the country, Yudhiṣṭhira makes arrangements for the

1 Dhvanyāloka, ed. KSS, 1940, 2nd Uddyota, p. 272=SV., V. 26 and III. 53.
Kāvya-lamkāra, V. I. 10, V. 2. 10=SV., I. 12, 15; V. I. 13=X. 21;
IV. 3. 8=XIV. 14.

Mukulabhaṭṭa in his *Abhidhā-vṛtti-mātrkā* (ed. NSP. Bombay 1916, p. 11) similarly quotes SV. III. 33 anonymously.

2 Śrī-śabda-ramya-kṛta-sarga-samāpti-lakṣma
Lakṣmī-pateś carita-kīrtana-cāru Māghaḥ/
Tasyātmajaḥ sukavi-kīrti-durāśayādaḥ
Kāvyaṃ vyadhata Śiśupāla-vadhābhidhānam//
SV., XX. 84.

3 MBH., II. 30-42

performance of a Rājasūya sacrifice. At the end of the sacrifice, the invited guests are requested to receive gifts of honour. Yudhiṣṭhira is advised by Bhīṣma to offer the first gift to Kṛṣṇa, but Śiśupāla, king of Cedi, cannot tolerate the idea that Kṛṣṇa will win the distinction of receiving this first gift. He bitterly objects to this proposal, and at once starts denouncing Kṛṣṇa and Bhīṣma. He narrates the past activities of Kṛṣṇa as highly questionable, and asks all the kings present there to offer strong resistance to the carrying out of Bhīṣma's proposal. At last with other kings he decides to create serious disturbance in that sacrificial place. On account of his insolent behaviour, he incurs the displeasure of Kṛṣṇa who has bitter hatred for Śiśupāla. Now this exchange of words adds fuel to the flame. Kṛṣṇa's anger reaches its climax, and without the slightest hesitation he makes up his mind to put an end to the life of Śiśupāla. The haughty Śiśupāla falls a victim to death in no time.

With this theme Māgha composed in twenty cantos a poem which gained wide popularity among his successors. Māgha introduces no major changes in his poetic composition. Instead he wants to embellish his work by lengthy description of the erotic sentiment at places. The simple story of the epic has been made the theme of an extensive Mahākāvya because of the descriptive power of the poet, who emulates Bhāravi in as many ways as possible. An adequate comparison between the *Śiśupāla-vadha* and the *Kirātārjunīya* exhibits distinctly the points of imitation. Here in the first canto, a departure from the original is reflected in Nārada's arrival at the house of Vāsudeva for delivering the message of Indra relating to the destruction of Śiśupāla; and the incident bears close resemblance to forester's visit to Yudhiṣṭhira with which commences Bhāravi's poem. A desire for discussing policies of statecraft is too strong for Māgha to resist; so in the second canto, in the council of war an elaborate attempt is made for political discussions, in which Balarāma and Uddhava take part.¹ A similar discourse takes place in canto

1 Guṇānām āyathātathyād arthaṃ viplāvayanti ye/
Amātya-vyañjanā rājñāṃ dūṣyās te śatru-saṃjñitāḥ//

second of the *Kirātārjunīya* where Bhīma requests Yudhiṣṭhira to take up arms against his enemies. The importance of the story element is now dropped aside, and the poet to his utmost satisfaction indulges in digression, like Bhāravi, practically over nine cantos (IV-XII). In the third canto he brings in a full description of the ocean, in the vicinity of which is visible the affluent city of Dvārakā; and for proving his metrical ingenuity, he completes the description of the mountain Raivataka in canto IV by employing twenty-four different metres. The lovely graces of the six seasons, the amorous sport of the Yādavas with beautiful women, the calm and quiet atmosphere of the evening, the sunrise, the spectacular Jamunā with her ever glistening water have all received their due share of description in this work of the poet. The plot proceeds slowly because of the poet's strong desire to use his power of description whenever he gets a chance for it. The motive of narrating the journey of Kṛṣṇa to Indraprastha in these cantos is treated as lightly as possible, as the attention of the poet centres round elaborate descriptions. Śiva is the favourite deity of Bhāravi who, of course, has not written verses in his eulogy; but Māgha does not miss a chance of adding laudatory verses composed in honour of Kṛṣṇa in canto fourteen.¹ These verses are noteworthy for the dignified charm they convey. The last three cantos are devoted to the description of the dreadful battle that occurs between Śiśupāla and Kṛṣṇa. For want of actual experience, the poet's description of battle is not as vivid as it ought to be.

Māgha's deliberate intention to emulate Bhāravi has prevented

Sva-śakty upacaye kecit parasya vvasane' pare/,

Yānam āhus tad āsīnam tvām utthāpayati dvayam //

ŚV., II. 56-57

1 Martya-mātram avadīdharad bhavān mainam ānamita-daitya-dānavam/,

Aṃśa eṣa janatātivartino vedhasaḥ prati-janam kṛta-sthiteḥ //

Dhyeyam ekam apathe sthitaṃ dhiyaḥ stutyam uttamam atīta-vāk-

patham/,

Āmananti yam upāsyam ādarād dūra-vartinam ativa yoginaḥ //

SV., XIV. 59-60

Someśvara and other poets and this is confirmed by his own verse in the sixteenth canto.¹ The colophon too at the end of each canto bears this poetic name.²

In the *Nara-nārāyaṇānanda*, the poet touches upon the intimate friendship of Arjuna with Kṛṣṇa and the abduction of Subhadrā by Arjuna. The subject-matter is very small, yet the work has attained big dimension by charming poetic descriptions. The first nine cantos mainly give lengthy descriptions of kings, assembly-hall, the union of Nara with Nārāyaṇa, seasons, the rise of the sun and the moon, drinking of wine, palaces and the plucking of flowers. The story proceeds at snail's pace through such ornamental descriptions and in the tenth canto Arjuna is given the opportunity of seeing Subhadrā. Twelfth canto describes the abduction of Subhadrā and in the fifteenth canto their wedding ceremony is celebrated with due formalities. The mode of narration characterised by imaginative touches and graceful style would indeed elicit praise from all readers. Māgha's influence is obviously traceable in this composition in many points. Descriptive imageries, easy flow of language and melodious verses have mainly enhanced the literary value of this poem. The poet is fortunate enough to win recognition as the godson of Sarasvatī and he himself has used this title in his work with great pride.³

II. DRAMA

Sanskrit literature is highly rich in dramatic compositions. Due arrangements were frequently made on different occasions for the staging of Sanskrit dramas. Learned people derived great satisfaction not only from recitals of notable poems, but also from different dra-

1 Khyātaṃ prāpa Vasantapāla iti yo namādvitīyaṃ mudā/
Vidvadbhiḥ parikalpitaṃ Harihara-śrī-somaśarmādibhiḥ//NN.,XVI. 38

2 Iti śrī-gurjareśvara-mahāmātya-śrī-vasantapāla-
viracite Nara-nārāyaṇānanda-nāmnī mahākāvye
pura nṛpa-varṇano nāma prathamāḥ sargaḥ. NN., Colophon, I

3 Nara-nārāyaṇānando nāma kando mudāmidam/
Tene tena mahākāvyaṃ Vāgdevī-dharma-sūnūnā//NN., XVI. 40

The work appears to have been composed between 1220 and 1230 A.D.

matic performances. The stage manager, the assistant of the stage manager, actors, actresses spared no pains to make the staging of a drama successful by all means. They considered their efforts fruitful only when a dramatic performance won the appreciation of the learned audience.¹

While writing dramas, dramatists were particularly careful about selection of plots, art of presentation, characterisation and delineation of sentiment. While defining Nāṭaka, Viśvanātha has stated 'Nāṭakam khyāta-vṛttam syāt'.² The subject-matter of the drama must be well known; although provision for invented plots too has been made for other types of the Rūpakas. Without the slightest hesitation the dramatists, therefore, borrowed freely the themes of their composition from the two epics, the Purāṇas and the Br̥hatkathā of Guṇādhyā. Here we discuss the influence of the *Mahābhārata* on Sanskrit Literature from the point of subject-matter, and concentrate our attention on the dramas connected either with the main story of the *Mahābhārata*, or with the subsidiary legends which, through the clever handling of rhapsodists, gradually crept into the heroic epic of India.

*Dramas ascribed to Bhāsa*³

The discovery of the thirteen plays ascribed to Bhāsa has greatly enhanced the value of Sanskrit dramatic literature. Of course, there is a difference of opinion with regard to the authorship of these plays, but we need not enter into those controversies here. We

- 1 Ā paritoṣād viduṣāṃ na sādhu manye prayoga-vijñānam/
Balavad api śikṣitānām ātmany apratyayaṃ cetaḥ/ AS., I. 2
- 2 SD., VI. 6.

3 All the dramas are ed. in TSS. 1912-15 by T. Ganapati Sastri. These plays are available together in *Bhāsa-nāṭaka-cakra* or *Plays ascribed to Bhāsa*, published by C.R. Devadhar, Poona 1937. Translation into English in two volumes by W. C. Woolner and L. Sarup, Oxford University Press. 1930-31. A. D. Pusalker has made a critical analysis of all these plays in his book "Bhāsa, a Study." For a bibliographical note see S. K. De, *Hist. of Skt. Lit.*, p. 102, vol. I, ed. 1947.

must discuss only those plays which are directly concerned with the *Mahābhārata*. In the dramas, *Dūta-vākya*, *Ūru-bhaṅga*, *Karṇa-bhāra*, *Dūta-ghaṭotkaca*, *Madhyama-vyāyoga* and *Pañcarātra*, the author has drawn his plot from the *Mahābhārata*. All these works are, however, good illustrations of different types of dramatic compositions and therefore create an impression that they were written at an age when scholarly taste favoured the composition of different forms of dramas.

Dūta-vākya

The Drama *Dūta-vākya* mainly deals with the part played by Kṛṣṇa in the Udyoga-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* as a messenger of the Pāṇḍavas to king Duryodhana.¹ When all arrangements for warfare are ready, Duryodhana holds a council of war for the purpose of selecting a general to lead the Kaurava forces in the battle-field; and the decision of the council is in favour of the veteran Bhīṣma. At that time the arrival of a messenger from the Pāṇḍavas is reported in that council chamber. Duryodhana, on learning of Kṛṣṇa's arrival as an emissary, is greatly displeased and expresses his unwillingness to see him. When Kṛṣṇa enters the room, all the notable persons present there rise up to pay their due respect, but Duryodhana in utter confusion falls from the throne. Requested by Kṛṣṇa to give back the legitimate share of the Pāṇḍavas, he laughs at the idea and utters insulting words to Kṛṣṇa. In the midst of a wordy duel, Duryodhana orders the arrest of Kṛṣṇa on the spot, but that is not carried out by his followers. Highly enraged at this Duryodhana himself tries to enchain him, but his efforts are of little avail, as Kṛṣṇa assumes a world-wide form. Losing his balance of mind at that critical juncture, Kṛṣṇa urges his chief missile Sudarśana to annihilate the whole Kaurava race; but he is immediately reminded of his great purpose of killing all the sinners for lessening the burden of the earth. All his missiles led by Sudarśana gradually disappear and Kṛṣṇa, whose anger subsides fully, makes up his mind to leave the place as early as possible. Dhṛtarāṣṭra appears on the scene and duly honours Kṛṣṇa.

1 MBH-, V. 122-9

The dramatist has made successfully some deviation from the original. The whole assembly in the drama consists of the main heroes of the Kauravas; no mention is made of other heroes of different tribes that take part in the warfare. The whole Kuru assembly consisting of astute statesmen is fully dominated by the main actor Duryodhana, who steps to and fro haughtily, and expresses his determination to extirpate the Pāṇḍavas. In the epic Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Vidura and even spirited Gāndhārī try in vain repeatedly to induce Duryodhana to agree to Kṛṣṇa's proposal; but in the play Duryodhana does all the talking in an imperious tone, and all present hear him spell-bound without uttering a single word. The method adopted by the dramatist to exhibit Duryodhana's disregard for Kṛṣṇa has some novelty in it. Duryodhana's single-minded attention to the picture, wherein is painted vividly the insulting position of Draupadī in the court, is made prominent for the purpose of dishonouring Kṛṣṇa on his arrival. With the picture in his hand Duryodhana utters joyfully :¹

Eṣā khalu Draupadī

Duḥśāsana-parāmṛṣṭā sambhramotfulla-locanā/
Rāhu-vaktrāntara-gatā candra-lekheva śobhate./.

'Here stands Draupadī who, touched by Duḥśāsana with her eyes expanded due to fear, looks like the digit of the moon in the jaws of Rāhu.'

The dialogue in the epic is lengthy and monotonous, but in the drama it is interesting and at the same time reveals the special traits of the character of Kṛṣṇa and Duryodhana. It has given the dramatist a good chance for characterisation. Duryodhana's wickedness is depicted in glaring terms in the epic, but in the drama he is represented as an astute statesman, a brave warrior and a king conscious of his duties.² The whole burden of administration has devolved

1 DV., I. 7

2 Duryodhanaḥ—Bho dūta ! na jānāti bhavān rājya-vyavahāram—
Rājyaṃ nāma nṛpātmajaiḥ sahr̥dayair jivā ripūn bhujyate
(Tal loka na tu yācyate na tu punar dināya vā diyate/

upon him, as no importance has been given to Dhṛtarāṣṭra as a king in the drama. Duryodhana's instruction to his followers not to honour Kṛṣṇa and his subsequent reproach to his chamberlain for describing Kṛṣṇa as Puruṣottama by such words as:—“*Kiṃ kiṃ Kaṃsa-bhṛtyaḥ Dāmodaras tava Puruṣottamaḥ, sa Gopālas tava Puruṣottamaḥ.*”¹ “What is it? Do you regard Dāmodara, the servant of Kaṃsa as best of men? Is that cowherd your best of men?”—bring his animosity for Kṛṣṇa to the full view of readers. The divinity of Kṛṣṇa has been fully emphasised, as he has been all along identified with Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu and Tridaśādhyakṣa. Duryodhana's haughty and contemptible remarks retard the prospect of an amicable settlement and actuate Kṛṣṇa to appear in his universal form. The author's originality in bringing the weapons of Kṛṣṇa has no charm in it, as no useful dramatic purpose is served by the introduction of different weapons. The speedy arrival of Sudarśana and its disappearance with all other missiles without appreciable development of the plot can hardly be harmonised with the situation, where both Duryodhana and Kṛṣṇa strongly wish for each other's destruction. After Duryodhana's exit, Kṛṣṇa converses with the discus, and when he is about to leave the place, the old king appears there to stop him. We would have got here a better dramatic finish, had Vāsudeva uttered after Duryodhana's departure from the stage—“I too must go back to the Pāṇḍavas' camp,” and the old king's feeble voice entreating Vāsudeva not to leave the stage was heard behind the scenes.

This one-act drama which is a Vyāyoga, would have been more attractive and better completed if the poet did not seek to compress the episode too much. A dramatic composition must be full of action; mere speeches are not enough. The theme is short, still it has dramatic possibilities which, if properly developed, must have enabled the dramatist to bring his genius into full play.

Kāṅkṣā cen nrpatitvam āptum acirāt kurvantu te sāhasam /
svairam vā praviśantu śānta-matibhir juṣṭam śamāyāśramam //

DV., I. 24

Ūru-bhaṅga

The *Ūru-bhaṅga*, which is an instance of *Utsṛṣṭikāṅka*, is a fine dramatic composition. The notable incident of the club-fight¹ between Duryodhana and Bhīma, resulting in the smashing of the thigh of the former, has been cleverly dealt with in this drama. The whole battle-field of Kurukṣetra is a scene of scattered corpses and copious bloodshed. Jackals and vultures move about in great glee, for they do not always get an occasion like this when food and drink are available in such abundant measure. On one side of the battle-field, Bhīma and Duryodhana struggle long to gain supremacy over each other in the presence of Vyāsa, Vidura, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. Though bulky and of superior physical strength, Bhīma is first overpowered by Duryodhana to the utter consternation of the supporters of the Pāṇḍavas in that club-fight. Duryodhana, however, expresses his desire to spare the life of Bhīma, who is now encouraged by Kṛṣṇa to adopt some secret trick. Taking heart again, Bhīma with a thundering sound engages himself in fighting against Duryodhana, and in a few moments he hurls his mace at the thigh of the enemy, thereby striking him fatally. With his broken thigh Duryodhana falls on the ground, helpless and dejected. Bhīma then, elated at his success, leaves the spot on the advice of Vyāsa who readily proceeds to heaven. Greatly enraged at the unexpected fall of his disciple, Balarāma expresses his desire to kill Bhīma, but it is Duryodhana, his beloved pupil, who requests him not to translate his thought into action by pointing out that this fateful incident has occurred according to the will of Kṛṣṇa; and that he is deceived not by Bhīma but by Kṛṣṇa, and as such, no fruitful purpose will be served by killing Bhīma. Then Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and Duryodhana's son Durjaya are introduced to the audience. The parents' lamentations at the passing away of their last son are touching and heart-rending. Duryodhana's conversation with his little son bespeaks his paternal affection. The hero on death-bed forbids all present to shed tears for him, for all along he has fought undaunted to keep up the dignity and

1 MBH., IX

prestige of his own dynasty. Aśvathāman now makes a vow to kill the Pāṇḍavas at an early date and crown Durjaya as an emperor.

Some comments must be made on the construction of the play which contains sixty-six verses in one act alone. In the very beginning of the drama, the dramatist, by a full description of the battle-field on the eighteenth day of the great war, has not done justice to the real theme of the play, as that really hinders the commencement of the main plot. For his strict adherence to the dramatic convention forbidding direct presentation of a fight on the stage, the poet favours an indirect mode of narration in the first part of the play. The whole description of battle, battle-field and club-fight is given in the introductory scene (*Viṣkambhaka*) by three soldiers who recite verses in turn. A direct description of the club-fight would have produced a better dramatic effect. Several innovations of the poet have heightened the value of this dramatic composition. Perfect delineation of the heroic sentiment coupled with the sentiment of pathos has paved the path for the unique success of this drama. Strictly speaking, this drama is a tragedy wherein Duryodhana's death has been treated differently from the epic. A vivid picture of the change of mind of Duryodhana bears eloquent testimony to the excellence of the human element in the great hero. With a pious resignation Duryodhana dissuades all his well-wishers from avenging the wrong done to him by Bhīma. In the epic revengeful Duryodhana, exceedingly satisfied at the news of night-raid on the Pāṇḍava camp, breathes his last; but in the drama, Duryodhana becomes too much accommodating, for he seeks to pacify angry Balarāma:¹

Pratijñāvasite Bhīme gate bhrātr-śate divam/
mayi caivaṃ gate Rāma! vighrahaḥ kiṃ kariṣyati//.

‘O Balarāma, Bhīma has fulfilled his promise, my hundred brothers have gone to heaven and I too have fallen thus, so what purpose will be served now by war?’

In order to make the tragic scene all the more poignant, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī, queens of Duryodhana and Durjaya are brought on

1 ŪB., I. 33

the battle-field. In the epic, however, they hear the news of his defeat and death in the far-off capital of Hastināpura. The poet has narrated the conversation of Duryodhana with his parents and dear son in a highly touching language. With his thighs broken, Duryodhana at the sight of his son intent on sitting on his lap utters in intense grief:¹

Hṛdaya-prīti-janano yo me netrotsavaḥ svayam/
so'yaṃ kāla-viparyāsāc candro vahnitvam āgataḥ//

‘This crescent moon, who was a source of pleasure to my heart and the very festival to my eyes, has turned into a blazing fire by change of circumstances.’

The poet has brought Balarāma on the scene to have some scope for describing his wrath as well as to bring out some inner traits of Duryodhana’s character. Bhīma is encouraged by Arjuna to strike Duryodhana on the thigh in the epic, but here that is done by Kṛṣṇa. The reference to Durjaya’s coronation is an invention of the poet.²

Karṇa-bhāra

In this one-act play *Karṇa-bhāra* which is a Vyāyoga, generosity and magnanimity of Karṇa are shown in glowing terms. The dramatist foreshadows the coming danger through the words of a royal officer just before the entrance of Karṇa and Śalya on the stage. Then spectators are introduced to Karṇa, who entrusted with the sole responsibility of leading the Kaurava forces in the warfield prepares himself for the dreadful fight ahead, and proceeds with Śalya to the battle-field. He grows dejected thinking that he will be compelled to use his weapons against the Pāṇḍavas who are his brothers. While proceeding with Śalya, he tells him the story³ of acquiring proficiency in the use of arms from Paraśurāma without disclosing his identity to the sage. Once the cold blood flowing from his wound made by a

1 ŪB., I. 43

2 Piṭṭ-vikrama-dāyādye rājye bhuja-balārjite/
Vinābhiṣekaṃ rājā tvaṃ viproktair vacanair bhava//

3 MBH., XII. 3

ŪB., I. 65

worm in the forest disturbed the sleep of his preceptor fast asleep on his lap. When his preceptor got up and came to know of his real identity, he cursed him with the words that Karṇa's knowledge of weapons would not stand him in good stead in times of danger. This thought mortifies him greatly. On his way to the battle-field he is encountered by a Brāhmaṇa arriving there with the motive of asking for the natural armour of Karṇa. In spite of the warning note of Śalya, Karṇa is kind enough to fulfil the desire of the Brāhmaṇa who is no other than Indra in disguise. Indra, however, confers on him a weapon named Vimalā through an angel. Then Karṇa hastens to the battle-field with Śalya. This well-known incident is found in the Vana-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.¹

The epic story has been here much simplified in a dramatic form. In the epic, Indra comes in the disguise of a Brāhmaṇa to have Karṇa's armour as a gift for facilitating his destruction in the hand of Arjuna when the Pāṇḍavas have been living in the forest. To make his destruction more pathetic the dramatist has, however, brought Indra for the same purpose on Karṇa's way to the battle-field. Noble traits of Karṇa's character have been distinctly brought to light, as the dramatist has made Śalya less interfering in the matter of making a gift to a Brāhmaṇa. Karṇa himself expresses the desire of giving everything he possesses to a Brāhmaṇa including his ear-ring and armour, and that gives the suppliant a good opportunity to have the desired things without disclosing his real motive. A true idea of Karṇa's glorious character can be formed from the following verse²

Śikṣā kṣayaṃ gacchati kāla-paryayāt
 Subaddha-mūlā nipatanti pādapāḥ/
 jalaṃ jalasthāna-gataṃ ca śuṣyati
 hutam ca dattam ca tathaiva tiṣṭhati//

‘Learning diminishes in course of time, trees with roots struck deep in the ground fall down, even water in reservoirs dries up; but what is given as oblation to fire and as charity lasts forever.’

1 MBH., III. 284-94

2 KB., I. 22

In the epic the sun-god, appearing in a dream before Karṇa, forbids him not to give his armour and ear-ring to Indra if he comes in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa. Finding Karṇa's reluctance to tarnish his renown as a charitable man, he advises him to demand from Indra the unfailing lance in return. In the play Karṇa forgets to demand it from Indra, and when an angel sent by Indra makes his appearance before him to give the invincible spear to him, he accepts it unwillingly. Karṇa of the play is all along more pious and noble than the Karṇa of the epic.

Dūta-ghaṭotkaca

In the *Dūta-ghaṭotkaca*, Bhīma's son Ghaṭotkaca is sent to king Dhṛtarāṣṭra with the message of Kṛṣṇa. When Arjuna is heavily engaged in fight with the Saṃsaptakas, his son Abhimanyu is brutally murdered by Jayadratha and others. Highly distressed at the news of Abhimanyu's death, Dhṛtarāṣṭra requests Gāndhārī to go to the bank of the Gaṅgā for offering funeral oblations to their sons, who, he anticipates, would soon fall victim to death for their gross misconduct and cruel persecution of the innocent. Duryodhana, Śakuni and Duḥśāsana, overjoyed at the death of Abhimanyu, go to pay respect to their father who, however, cannot bless them whole-heartedly. In the meantime Ghaṭotkaca enters, and informs Dhṛtarāṣṭra of the dreadful message of Kṛṣṇa which intimates to him the imminent death of his sons. Dhṛtarāṣṭra shows great restraint even when Kṛṣṇa's message is reported to him, and his words bespeak his respect to Kṛṣṇa; but others present there laugh at the messenger and use insulting language about Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana wants to spare Ghaṭotkaca as he is an envoy,¹ but Ghaṭotkaca expresses his desire of fighting them single-handed. Timely intervention of Dhṛtarāṣṭra avoids an undesirable situation. On being asked by the envoy for a reply, Duryodhana says that he will give an appropriate reply with his arrows in the battle-field. Ghaṭotkaca too, reminding them of the dreadful vow of Arjuna, leaves the place in hot haste.

1 Dūtaḥ khalu bhavān prāpto na tvaṃ yuddhārtham āgataḥ/
Gṛhītvā gaccha sandeśaṃ na vyaṃ dūta-ghātakāḥ// DG., I. 48

The dramatist's desire to maintain the epic mood and status of all characters is clearly discernible. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's respectful attitude to Kṛṣṇa, Duryodhana's insolent stand in all situations and disregard for Kṛṣṇa, Śakuni's proneness for flattering Duryodhana have all been touched upon; but the incident dwelt upon in this one-act drama is not serious enough for perfect characterisation. Ghaṭotkaca's outspoken remarks¹ as a messenger in some verses reveal the frankness of his character. The idea of Ghaṭotkaca's embassy, totally unknown in the epic, is an original one; but the incident lacking in dramatic action and vigour has not afforded the dramatist a good chance for successful dramatisation. The poet's natural fondness for tragic death and sarcastic remarks² has been satisfied by the situation he wants to develop with the help of this incident; but strictly speaking, the confinement of a dramatic situation to some taunting remarks only does not make it at all appealing to spectators, whose interest can be kept up solely by a harmonious blending of words and action. Ingenuity in the manipulation of the plot and invention of the incident counts much in estimating a playwright's greatness, but in this literary composition Ghaṭotkaca's embassy, though original, has no noteworthy dramatic value in it.

Madhyama-vyāyoga

In the *Madhyama-vyāyoga* the poet has dramatised a story of his own invention and brought in several epic characters. While roaming in the forest, a Brāhmaṇa with his wife and three sons is greatly frightened by the hot pursuit of the demon-faced Ghaṭotkaca, accustomed to taking a man everyday for the meal of his hungry

1 Na tu jatu-gr̥he suptān bhrātr̥n dahanti niśācarāḥ
 Śirasī na tathā bhrātuḥ patnīm spṛśanti niśācarāḥ/
 Na ca suta-vadhaṃ saṅkhye kartuṃ smaranti niśācarāḥ
 Vikṛta-vapuṣo'py ugrācārā ghr̥ṇā na tu varjitā// DG., I. 47

2 Dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ—Aho hāsyah khalu tapasvī Karṇah
 Śakuniḥ —Yadi syād vākya-mātreṇa nirjiteyaṃ vasundharā/
 Vākye vākye yadi bhavet sarva-kṣatra-vadhaḥ kṛtaḥ//

mother. At that time the Pāṇḍavas have been living in that forest, but on that very day they had gone elsewhere; only Bhīma is taking exercise in the midst of the forest. At that critical hour the Brāhmaṇa is engrossed with the thought of speedy deliverance from the cruel clutches of the demon Ghaṭotkaca who, in spite of his general respect for Brāhmaṇas, is compelled to request one of the Brāhmaṇas to follow him for his mother's meal, as no other man is available on that day. At last it is decided that the second son (*Madhyama*) would follow the night-ranger. Ghaṭotkaca, however, allows *Madhyama* to drink from a nearby lake, but growing impatient at his delay calls him at the top of his voice as "*Madhyama*", "*Madhyama*." Thereupon Bhīma, thinking that he is being called by the name of "*Madhyama*", approaches Ghaṭotkaca. On his arrival the Brāhmaṇa entreats Bhīma to save the life of his son. Bhīma, full of compassion, promises to protect his son. On Ghaṭotkaca's refusal to set free the boy, Bhīma agrees to follow him for the meal of his mother. Ghaṭotkaca first tries his best to carry Bhīma by force, but he fails miserably in his attempt to do so. Then Bhīma follows him of his own accord, and the highly satisfied Brāhmaṇa leaves the place. Hiḍimbā, recognising her husband, orders her son to show due respect to his father. The title 'Madhyama-vyāyoga' is an appropriate one as it clarifies the story element and at the same time explains the nature of this dramatic composition.

In the epic Bhīma is said to have married the female demon Hiḍimbā, and Ghaṭotkaca is the issue of that union. In the drama Bhīma fights with Ghaṭotkaca without knowing that he is his own son, but this motif of a father meeting and fighting his own son unawares is not an original one. The story of the Brāhmaṇa and three sons is not connected in the epic with Bhīma and Hiḍimbā legend. Śunaḥśepa Ākhyāna of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹ must have considerably influenced our poet in adjusting this Brāhmaṇa story with the epic tale. With a little more extension at least over another act, the situation could have been developed more perfectly. The

1 AB., XXXIII. 1-6.

dramatist's originality lies in the proper selection of the situation for inserting this well-known story in the midst of an epic tale, but his tendency to confine *Mahābhārata* plays to the narrow limit of a single act curbs his dramatic power and hinders the spontaneous development of the subject-matter.

Pañcarātra

The Rāmāyaṇa plays ascribed to Bhāsa are much bigger in extent, but of the *Mahābhārata* plays, only the *Pañcarātra* extends to three acts. In it the poet seeks to dramatise the battle of the exiled Pāṇḍavas with the Kurus in connection with the cattle-raid—an incident selected from the Virāṭa-parvan.¹ It illustrates some important characteristics of *Samavakāra*.

The drama *Pañcarātra* is so called because the preceptor Droṇa has to bring to light the whereabouts of the Pāṇḍavas within five nights, so that they may get their legitimate share of the kingdom. This condition² is made by Śakuni and supported by Duryodhana himself in the presence of Droṇa who insists on his returning the due share of the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. This ingenious title, therefore, throws a flood of light on the actual theme of the play as well as refers to the original conception of the dramatist. A summary of the play will clarify how he seeks to introduce notable new elements on a large scale.

After successful completion of a sacrifice Duryodhana pays respect to his superiors who bless him in their turn. When the kings invited in the sacrifice are being introduced to Duryodhana one by one, Abhimanyu too is brought before him, but the malicious Śakuni places in front Sahadeva, the son of Jarāsandha; so the latter receives Duryodhana's blessings. Casting his glance on that vast assemblage of kings, Duryodhana does not find king Virāṭa there, so he suspects some duplicity on the king's part. Finding tears in the eyes of his preceptor at the time of paying dakṣiṇā, Duryodhana promises to pay

1 MBH., IV. 24-62

2 Yadi pañcarātreṇa Pāṇḍavānāṃ pravṛttiḥ upanetavyā, rājyasyārdham pradāsyati kila. PR., p. 386

any thing his preceptor wants, whereupon Droṇa gets a golden opportunity to ask for the legitimate share of the kingdom for the Pāṇḍavas. Duryodhana is prevented from fulfilling his promise by Śakuni, who suggests, that Duryodhana will agree to part with half of his kingdom provided the preceptor Droṇa is able to bring the news of the Pāṇḍavas within five nights. After accepting this challenge Droṇa consults Bhīṣma for bringing to light the whereabouts of the Pāṇḍavas as early as possible. A message sent by king Virāṭa explaining his inability to attend the sacrifice due to the destruction of one hundred Kīcakas by some unknown person gives Droṇa some clue in regard to the secret activities of the Pāṇḍavas. Bhīṣma with Droṇa and other leading Kauravas marches towards the Virāṭa capital for a cattle-raid. King Virāṭa, feeling uneasy at this sudden invasion, confers with several persons, but meanwhile the prince with Bṛhannalā—Arjuna in disguise, sets out to resist the Kauravas. King Virāṭa is highly jubilant on learning of the grand success of his sons in repulsing the fierce attack of the Kauravas. Abhimanyu, fighting on side of the Kauravas, is defeated and brought in front of king Virāṭa who does not hesitate to honour the hero properly. Prince Uttara then discloses the identity of the Pāṇḍavas. Being requested by Virāṭa to accept Uttarā, Arjuna agrees to accept her as the bride for his son. Then an invitation to all the Kauravas to attend the wedding ceremony through Uttara is immediately sent. The Kauravas, however, are then making arrangements for the release of Abhimanyu. That the Pāṇḍavas have surely assisted Virāṭa in routing the Kaurava forces becomes gradually obvious, and this fact is further corroborated by an arrow marked with the name of Arjuna. The arrival of Uttara clarifies the whole position. Droṇa, who approaches Duryodhana for the fulfilment of his promise, is highly happy as the latter agrees to give the Pāṇḍavas their due share of the kingdom.

In the epic, the chief motive of the cattle-raid is to divulge the secret existence of the Pāṇḍavas in the capital of Virāṭa, so that their whole plan of living incognito at the end of the thirteenth year may be foiled. Duryodhana's evil motive and hostility for Virāṭa find full expression through his large-scale arrangement for the warfare. The

character of Duryodhana as depicted in the epic does never permit us to come to the conclusion that he would promise to give the Pāṇḍavas half the kingdom. In the drama, the incident of the cattle-raid has been simplified and described in a quite different setting. It gives Droṇa an opportunity to gather information about the Pāṇḍavas within five nights. In all his plays based on the story of the *Mahābhārata* except *Dūta-ghaṭotkaca*, the poet is all along making a persistent effort to delineate the character of Duryodhana in a manner quite different from that of the epic. In the drama *Dūta-vākya*, however, Duryodhana's disregard for Kṛṣṇa is fully shown, but the author has brought to light other commendable traits of his character at the same time. The dramatist has really succeeded in emphasising the magnanimity of Duryodhana's character in the *Pañcarātra*. Duryodhana is not depicted as wicked and malicious, but he is soft-hearted, considerate and respectful.¹ His sympathetic behaviour to Abhimanyu cannot escape our attention. Karṇa's highmindedness and Śakuni's villainy too have been portrayed in true colours. The sacrifice performed by Duryodhana, Abhimanyu taking the side of the Kauravas and his capture by Bhīma, Duryodhana's promise to give back half kingdom to Droṇa, the simple rustic life of shepherds, the conversation of Bhīma, Abhimanyu and Bṛhannalā, the very idea of Droṇa's promise—these are the new elements added to the kernel of the epic story. The title of the play is well selected as it refers to Droṇa's promise to bring the news of the Pāṇḍavas within five nights. No such intention on Droṇa's part is found in the epic. By a happy conclusion with the utterance of Duryodhana at the end of the play;²

Vādaṃ dattaṃ rājyaṃ Pāṇḍavebhyo yathā-puram'//
mṛte' pi hi narāḥ sarve satye tiṣṭhanti tiṣṭhati'//

‘Yes, I have given the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas as it existed previously
Persons clinging to truth are remembered even after their death.’

1 Teṣāṃ rājya-pradānārtham anṛtaṃ kathyate yadi/
Rājyasyārdham pradāsyāmi yāvad drṣṭe Yudhiṣṭhire'//

PR., III. 21

2 PR., iii. 25.

the dramatist removes the possibility of the terrible battle which is the central point of the *Mahābhārata*. The poet has displayed his dexterity in composing one-character play like the *Karṇa-bhāra*, but here he has touched upon many characters with the same efficiency.

Subhadrā-dhanañjaya

For discussion of other plays suitable for this section, we now have to turn our eyes centuries forward. Attempt similar to that ascribed to Bhāsa was made at a far later age by Kulaśekhara Varman, the Kerala prince, who is believed to have lived between the first half of the 10th and first half of the 12th century. He was inspired to write the drama *Subhadrā-dhanañjaya* dealing with the elopement of Subhadrā with Arjuna. This love-theme of course is the mainspring of inspiration to other writers too. Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, in his *Subhadrā-haraṇa*, has skilfully handled the same plot in one act without sentimental descriptions, and without any attempt to sacrifice the interest of the theme to an exaggerated love of diction. Kulaśekhara Varman, however, in five lengthy acts has complicated the main issue by the introduction of the marvellous elements at every step. So far as the handling of the plot is concerned, this drama shares the same defects with the *Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa*, the other known work of the same playwright. The original story, as narrated in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*,¹ will be recounted in our discussion on Mādhava Bhaṭṭa's *Subhadrā-haraṇa*; Kulaśekhara Varman's innovations and deviations are treated here briefly.

In the first act, Subhadrā's rescue by Arjuna from the cruel clutches of the demon Alambuṣa, appointed by Duryodhana to bring the beautiful lady to him, gives the dramatist a good chance of evoking erotic sentiment in the hero and the heroine. A similar incident of Urvaśī's deliverance from the wicked demon Keśin at the hand of king Purūravas flashes before our mind's eye, as we read the first act of the *Subhadrā-dhanañjaya*. Kālidāsa's influence in both the dramas of Kulaśekhara Varman is clearly noticeable on such points. In the

1 MBH., I. 210-3

Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa, the ear-ring found on a slab of stone by the clown makes the king Saṃvaraṇa think of the owner and its marvellous effects are shown frequently to enhance the supernatural atmosphere of the drama. Here a similar purpose is served by the valuable wrapper of Subhadrā set with jewels.

Arjuna on his arrival as a traveller in the city of Dvārakā is cordially received by Saṅkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva. Subhadrā too pays her due reverence to this traveller but fails to recognise him as Arjuna. The dramatist with a view to increasing the dramatic interest of the plot, has created confusion in Subhadrā's mind regarding her passionate love for three persons—Arjuna, her saviour from the hands of Alambuṣa and the traveller. Her mental uneasiness reaches its climax just prior to her decision to court death to ward off sins resulting from her love for three persons—the inevitable moment which the Sanskrit dramatist seeks to make the hero appear before his disappointed lady-love. Arjuna's appearance on the scene removes the mental confusion of the heroine, who, without the consent of Vāsudeva, expresses her refusal to consent to the Gāndharva form of marriage. Mahendra and Mādhava remembered by Arjuna in that critical situation at once arrive there, and make all arrangements for the celebration of their wedding ceremony. Balarāma's natural outburst of anger at the abduction of Subhadrā has its inevitable culmination in his encounter with Arjuna, but it subsides after the intervention of Vāsudeva. Balarāma's calm and quiet attitude to prevent his followers from following a hasty step to punish Arjuna, as found in the original, is conspicuous by its absence in the drama. In the last act, the dramatist's inclination to complicate the final union by showing the attempt of the hero to commit suicide after hearing a rumour about the death of his beloved, is manifest in this drama. In the *Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa*, Mohinikā's appearance in disguise before Rambhā and the king satisfies the dramatist's tendency to create an intricate situation; but in the *Subhadrā-dhanañjaya*, that role has been played by goddess Kātyāyanī, of course with a different motive. The goddess, delivering Subhadrā from the hands of the Rākṣasa Alambuṣa trying again to capture her, appears before Arjuna in the disguise of Draupadī receiving the new

bride, and Arjuna's confusion runs high. The environment regains its natural warmth only when the goddess explains clearly the part played by her in this affair.

Kulaśekhara Varman uses amply in both the dramas conventional devices without appreciable dramatic success. Such conventional constructions without the flash of true dramatic imagination can never satisfy a sahr̥daya. At places difficult prose runs side by side with similar verses. No attempt is made to produce a fine sound effect by a delicate adjustment of word and sense, with the inevitable result that the artificiality and tediousness of Sanskrit plays have here become too much prominent. The dramatist's delineation of the heroic and erotic sentiments is also uninteresting to a degree. The framework of the story is very simple, but the dull and uninteresting lengthening of the plot has diminished the warmth and dramatic interest of the work.

Nirbhaya-bhīma

The *Nirbhaya-bhīma*, a Vyāyoga in one act, gives a short account of Bhīma's heroic encounter with the Baka demon. The Jaina Ācārya Hemacandra's pupil Rāmacandra Sūri¹, who lived in the time of Kumārapāla and Ajayapāla (1143-75 A. D.), and is believed to have been the writer of one hundred works, takes into account the dramatic possibilities of the plot and recounts it in simple language in this work. Dhanañjaya's heroic exploits have been dwelt upon in several works ; here the author gets a chance of bringing Bhīma's valour to the forefront.

The incident of Baka's annihilation at the hands of Bhīma is narrated in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.² During the Pāṇḍavas' stay with Kuntī in the house of a Brāhmaṇa as guests in the city of Ekacakrā, they come to learn that the citizens pass their days in anxiety as Baka, a demon, demands one human being from among

1 Rāmacandra in the prologue speaks of himself—*Śrīmad ācārya-śrī-Hemacandra-śiṣyasya prabandha-śata-kartur mahākaveḥ Rāmacandrasya bhūyāmsaḥ prabandāḥ.....*.....'

2 MBH., I. 145—52

them as his daily food. Now when the turn of the Brāhmaṇa comes, he makes up his mind to sacrifice his own life and not to send any other member of the family, but he is prevented from doing so by his wife and young daughter. When Kuntī listens to their conversation, she proposes to send one of her sons to the wicked demon in spite of the opposition of the Brāhmaṇa. Coming to know of his mother's good intention, Yudhiṣṭhira too supports her proposal. Then Bhīma with a huge quantity of food goes to the abode of the demon, who seeing Bhīma eating the food meant for him in his very presence, gets infuriated and makes several unsuccessful attempts to strike Bhīma with uprooted trees. Bhīma ultimately kills the demon and this brings great relief to the inhabitants of the city.

There is a slight difference from the original in the handling of the plot. Kuntī, so prominent in the original, has been left out of this dramatic composition. Draupadī instead has been brought, although her wedding ceremony is mentioned to have taken place sometime after the slaying of Baka in the original. In the very beginning of this work, Bhīma enters the stage with Draupadī showing her the charming regions of the forest. From an attendant of the Baka demon, Bhīma comes to know of his nefarious activities and utters with extreme sadness—*'āsaraṇo' yaṃ jīva-lokaḥ*. 'There is nobody to help the people of this region.' Piteous lamentations of the aged mother and wife of the wretched man ready to offer himself to the Baka demon cause strong agitation in Bhīma's mind, and force him to make the following declaration worthy of a hero:¹

Trastāṃ trātuṃ sudati: na saho yady ahaṃ gāḍabandhaḥ
 Skandhasthāṃ grahila-lalītau dhik tad etau bhujau me/
 Rakṣovākṣaḥ sapadi gadayā cen na saṃcūrṇayāmi
 Vyaktaṃ viśva-tritaya-vijayī nāsti Bhīmas tadānīm//

•Oh young lady, physically strong that I am, if I am not able to protect your frightened self placed on my shoulder, fie upon these energetic and sturdy hands of mine. If I cannot break into pieces

1 NB., 1. 9

the chest of the demon at once with my mace, it is then clear that Bhīma, the conqueror of the three worlds, is no more alive.'

Bhīma does not pay any heed to the words of Draupadī who is intent on preventing him from slaying the Baka demon, and expresses his strong determination to protect the unfortunate victim from the cruel clutches of the demon. Bhīma's actual struggle with the demon has not been directly dealt with; the author only gives an idea of Bhīma's uncommon power through the statements of Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, which were made to console the highly upset Draupadī. The stubborn fight with that awe-inspiring demon has been mentioned in one verse only at the end of the work.¹

The writer's acquaintance with the laws of dramaturgy, as is evident from his treatise *Nāṭya-darpaṇa*, should have enabled him to produce a better Vyāyoga. The interesting theme has offered the author good scope for displaying his dramatic genius, but it is a pity that he has failed to utilise it, and judged in the light of his own statement in the prologue, it proves shocking indeed.²

Kirātārjunīya-vyāyoga

An attempt to illustrate six recognised types of Sanskrit drama, namely, Vyāyoga, Bhāṇa, Ihāmṛga, Dima, Prahāsana and Samavakāra has been made by Vatsarāja. From his own statement in the prelude to the *Karpūra-carita* Bhāṇa,³ he is believed to have been the minister

1 Bāhur lokaika-rāhuḥ prathamam apahrto dakṣiṇa-skandha-bandhād
Andhibhūtaṃ vyathābhir mukham akhilam atho cūrṇitaṃ pārṣṇi-
ghātailh/

Bhūyo bhūyaḥ prahrtyorasi rasita-mahākikasair muṣṭi-daṇḍaiḥ
Sadyaḥ kināśa-dāsaḥ samara-bhuvi mayā kalpito yātudhānaḥ//

NB., I. 24

2 Sūktayo Rāmacandrasya pūrṇenduḥ kala-gīṭayaḥ/
Śvātantryam iṣṭayogaś ca pañcāitā harṣa-vṛṣṭayaḥ// NB., I.

3 Kālāñjara-pater mahārāja-śrī-Paramardidevasya amātyena kavinā Vatsarājena viracitaṃ Karpūra-caritābhīdhānaṃ Bhāṇaṃ abhinetum ādiṣṭo'smi.
Karpūra-carita, Praṣṭāvanā

of Paramardideva of Kālañjara (1163-1203 A.D.). In strict adherence to dramaturgic canons, he produced several mythological and two erotic and comic plays. The treatment of plots in all these works is highly conventional. The *Kirātārjunīya* was enacted on the stage under the order of king Trailokyavarmadeva and other works at the order of his father Paramardideva.

The story of Vatsarāja's *Kirātārjunīya*, an one-act Vyāyoga, narrating the combat between Arjuna and Mahādeva disguised as a Kirāta, has been dealt with elaborately by Bhāravi in his *Kirātārjunīya*. In Bhāravi's hand the work has attained remarkable literary excellence. Vatsarāja's treatment of the plot shows that his work is based on Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*. The plot, as treated in the work, is briefly as follows. After the prelude Arjuna appears on the stage with his attendant Siddhādeśa. Arjuna has been practising severe austerities in the Himalayas for gaining some invincible weapons from Mahādeva. Celestial nymphs' efforts to deter him from his strong determination are frustrated. Mahendra, dressed as an ascetic, comes to Arjuna and advises him to give up penance which will emaciate his body. No amount of arguments in this direction makes any impression on Arjuna's mind. Arjuna's strong sense of duty and ardent desire to annihilate his enemies astonish Indra who, highly pleased with his own son and throwing off his disguise, instructs Arjuna to worship Śiva with intense devotion for speedy achievement of his objective. Sometime after, a quarrel involving hot exchange of words ensues between Arjuna and Mahādeva dressed as a Kirāta. Arjuna cannot tolerate the idea that a Kṣatriya of his type will need protection from a Kirāta against a terrible boar angrily rushing towards him. In order to enrage Arjuna Mahādeva assumes the form of Duryodhana. Arjuna's suppressed feelings and spirit of revenge at the sight of Duryodhana take a new turn culminating in a fierce struggle between the two. The drama is brought to a conclusion with the fulfilment of Arjuna's aim—the attainment of divine weapons from Mahādeva.

Owing to the absence of long compounds and difficult words, readers would find some interest in reading the drama. The picture

of Arjuna ready to throw arrows at Kirāta is really a charming one: ¹

Ekaḥ karaḥ kalayati sphaṭikākṣa-mālām
Ghoraṃ dhanus tad itaraś ca bibharti hastah/
Dharmaḥ kaṭhora-Kali-kāla-kadarthyamānaḥ
Sat-Kṣatriyasya śaraṇaṃ kim ivānuyātaḥ//

‘One hand counts the string of beads as white as crystal and another holds the terrible bow. Virtue oppressed by hard Kaliyuga appears to have taken shelter with an honest Kṣatriya.’

The style of the dramatist is on the whole easy and graceful. Vatsarāja does not deserve high praise, as he has not succeeded in showing originality in the construction of his plot. Only in the last part of the work, Mahādeva’s appearance as Duryodhana to irritate Arjuna is his own innovation, but that new addition, which has every possibility of creating an amusing situation, has not been fully developed. Lifeless adherence to dramaturgic rules regarding plot, diction, characterisation, sentiment may please the writers of treatises on poetics; but persons capable of appreciating the merits of a dramatic composition as well as a dramatic performance, to whom the term saḥḍaya can be applied, have a natural liking for works full of dramatic force and vividness. The literary value of the author’s other works too is not really of a high order.

Pārtha-parākrama

Yuvarāja Prahādāna, the author of the *Pārtha-parākrama*,² a Vyāyoga in one act, is the son of Yaśodhara and brother of Dhārāvarṣa of the Paramāra dynasty of Mt. Abu. He appears to have acquired renown for his composition as he has been praised in the *Kīrti-kaumudī*³

1 K Ar V., I. 39

2 The prince composed it in about 1208 A.D.

3 Śrī-Prahādāna-devo’ bhūd dvitayena prasiddhimān/
Putratvena Sarasvatyāḥ patitvena jayaśriyaḥ//
Śrī-Bhoja-Munja-duḥkhārtām ramyāṃ vartayatā kathām/
Prahādānena sāhlādā punaś cakre Sarasvati//

Kīrti-kaumudī, I. 14-5

and quoted in the *Sūkti-muktāvalī*. His drama *Pārtha-parākrama* was staged on the occasion of the festival held in order to celebrate the investiture of Acaleśvara, the tutelary deity of the Paramāra dynasty at Mt. Abu, with the sacred thread. The theme of the present drama is drawn from the Virāṭa-parvan¹ of the *Mahābhārata* where it is given thus:

On being informed of the theft of cows of king Virāṭa, Prince Uttara with Bṛhannalā as his charioteer sets out in an expedition against the mischief-makers immediately. At the sight of the vast Kaurava army, Prince Uttara who previously indulged in using vaunting remarks, and promised to overthrow the whole host of the Kaurava army including Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others with ease, is greatly frightened. Thinking that his encounter with so many veteran and well trained heroes will result in ignoble defeat, he requests Arjuna to retreat as early as possible; but Arjuna, fond of heroic exploits as he is, noticing this weakness in the prince, agrees to fight with the enemies and asks the prince to act as charioteer instead. Prince Uttara is then ordered to bring down fearful weapons kept so long concealed in the Śamī tree. His consternation subsides a little when he comes to know that Bṛhannalā is no other than the invincible Arjuna. At Arjuna's hand the army of Duryodhana tastes defeat. Arjuna thus goes back successful after rescuing the cows from the clutches of the enemy.

The story of the Go-graha-parvan has been dealt with very briefly in this dramatic composition. In order to present this subject-matter as distinctly as possible in one act and enhance the dramatic interest of the work, the lengthy conversations among the principal warriors of the original have been shortened. Keeping in view the short structure of a Vyāyoga, the dramatist does not indulge in unnecessarily prolonged elaboration. The only prominent departure from the original is noticeable in the appearance of a divine being before Arjuna to give him celestial bow, war-chariot and conch for attaining victory over his enemies. In the original, Uttara dismayed at the sight of

1 MBH., IV. 24-62.

the brave warriors of the hostile party leaves the battle-field hastily, but Arjuna, being disgusted at this effeminate conduct of the prince, brings him back holding him by the neck. As the author does not like to lower the position of the prince so much, he has not touched upon the ignominious conduct of Uttara in the battle-field. On hearing of the gallantry of main warriors of the opposite party from Arjuna disguised as Bṛhannalā, Uttara makes up his mind to run away from the battle-field; but it is Arjuna who inspires him to action with such encouraging words:¹—

Samparāyeṣu śūrāṇāṃ śobhā-mātram anīkinī/

Dorḍaṇḍaṃ cāpa-dāṇḍaṃ vā sahāyaṃ te hi vṛṇvate//

‘In battle, army is mere beauty to heroes. There they rely on the strength of their arms or on bow.’

Arjuna’s identity is disclosed to prince Uttara only when Arjuna is blessed by the divine being as ‘*svasti bhavate Bhīmānujāya.*’ In order to clarify the significance of the title of the work the writer has tried to portray the character of Arjuna in true colours. Arjuna’s martial spirit as well as his polite manners and respectful attitude to his superiors has been painted distinctly. Arjuna while speaking of Bhīṣma says:—

Svasti taṭinī-sutāya gurave’py eṣa praṇāmāñjaliḥ ‘welfare to the son of Taṭinī, this obeisance to my superior.’ Although he adopts a menacing attitude to his other stubborn enemies, he deliberately throws arrows at the feet of Droṇa and Bhīṣma. This considerate action of Arjuna forces his illustrious preceptor to utter:—*Tad vijayatām me priya-śiṣyaḥ*, ‘Victory to my favourite pupil’, and this blessing paves the path for his victory.

The writer’s narration of Arjuna’s encounter with his rivals is characterised by a flow of complicated construction of words which, however, is not forceful enough to produce a lively interest in the delineation of the heroic sentiment. Although Prahlādana claims that his verses possess the qualities of Samatā and Samādhi,² we cannot

1 PP., I. 31

2 Sandarbhaḥ sukaveḥ Samādhi-Samatā-garbhaḥ kumārasya ca/PP., I. 8½

fully agree with his view. For difficult construction of verses, as well as of prose passages full of long compounds, the subject-matter becomes dull and uninteresting at places. The author seems to be dominated by the idea that long compounds and high sounding words can alone lend force and vigour—the so-called Ojas—to a composition. Excessive employment of such unattractive diction points to the laboured efforts of the author with the result that it minimises considerably the dramatic effect of the work.

Dhanañjaya-vijaya

The story of Go-graha-parvan¹ has also been utilised for dramatic composition by another author Kāñcanācārya, the son of Nārāyaṇa. The plot here has also been put in the form of a Vyāyoga. Kāñcanācārya's poetic talent and power of composition enabled him to secure valuable support from king Jayadeva of Kanauj who reigned in the 12th century A. D. His patron king Jayadeva has been referred to with due respect in the prologue.² The writer's intention to compose a drama for delineating heroic sentiment—a pre-requisite of Vyāyoga, has been mentioned in the beginning—*Tad idānīm bhavatā Vira-rasā-dbhutaṃ rūpakam abhinīya Gadādhara-pramukhāsmat pariśadānandanī-yeti.* 'By staging a drama characterised by heroic sentiment, you should delight Gadādhara and other members of our assembly.'

Prahlādana in his *Pārtha-parākrama* and Kāñcanācārya in his *Dhanañjaya-vijaya* have dramatised the same plot, but their mode of presentation of the subject-matter, although put in the form of a Vyāyoga, has marked difference from each other. In Kāñcanācārya's *Dhanañjaya-vijaya*, the preceding portion dealing with prince Uttara's readiness to accept the challenge of Duryodhana on receipt of the news of the theft of cows, his desire to proceed against the enemy with

1 MBH., IV. 24-62

2 Asti praśasti-sahitaḥ śrīmān Jayadevaḥ—

Arthi-pratyarthi-lakṣeṣv apy aparāñmukha-cetasām /

Yaṃ parāñmukhatāṃ ninyuḥ kevalaṃ para-yoṣitaḥ //

Yasya cetasi nirvyājaṃ dvayaṃ tūlakañāyate /

Krodhe virodhināṃ sainyaṃ prasāde kanakocayaḥ // DhV., I. 7-8

Arjuna as charioteer, his subsequent consternation at the sight of the vast Kaurava army and encouragement by Arjuna, has not been at all touched upon. After the prologue, the situation is so created as to bring into importance Arjuna's unequalled bravery and strong determination to fight his enemies at any cost. The dramatist's all-absorbing attention to Arjuna is the main reason for completely overshadowing the minor character of prince Uttara. In view of the title of the drama, this is of course justifiable. Before the commencement of the battle Arjuna, with a view to satisfying the curiosity of prince Uttara, tells him briefly about the chief leaders of the opposite party. An account of the fierce warfare, in which missiles and counter missiles are hurled in abundance, has been given here in an indirect manner. In Prahlādana's *Pārtha-parākrama*, Arjuna's straight fight with his foes and his vigorous speeches at the sight of his opponents bring out Arjuna's character to a full view, but here the scene of the battle is narrated through a dialogue between Indra and his followers, and thus the hero has been thrown in the background. From reference by Indra and his attendants, an indirect knowledge and imperfect idea can be formed regarding the hero's mode of warfare. Arjuna's bold statement with regard to his own heroism :¹

Ekō Nivātakavacān saha Kālakeyair
 Bhasmīcakāra bhaginīm aharac ca Śaureḥ/
 Ekena Khāṇḍava-vanaṃ juhuve 'nale ca
 Pārthasya nābhinava eṣa raṇeṣu pantiḥ//

'This is no new device to Arjuna in battle as he alone routed the Nivātakavacas with the Kālakeyas, abducted the sister of Kṛṣṇa, and set fire to the Khāṇḍava forest'.

could have been better illustrated and would have carried more weight by a direct representation of the battle scene. Of course dramatic convention stands in the way. Indra and his attendants' retirement from the scene after Arjuna's decisive victory gives the hero a chance of coming to the forefront again. He is given a hearty

1 Dh V., I. 46.

reception on his victorious return, and a proposal to offer Uttarā as Arjuna's daughter-in-law is made by king Virāṭa in the end.

For the depiction of valour as its ruling sentiment, the poet has applied the Gaudī style—the abode of the so-called Ojas.¹ The language, though difficult at places, specially in narrating the conflict of Arjuna with his foes, has been given some laxity by frequent insertion of easily intelligible verses to the relief of readers.

Saugandhikā-haraṇa

Bhīma's endeavour to bring Saugandhikā flowers to please Draupadī from a lake well guarded by the followers of Kubera forms the subject-matter of this interesting one-act Vyāyoga of Viśvanātha, who flourished under the patronage of Kākatīya ruler Pratāparudra of Warrangal (about 1291-1322 A.D.). This is a dramatic composition with a human hero of the Dhīroddhata type who has to encounter numerous Yakṣas in a battle, the cause of which is not connected at all with the possibility of gaining the hands of a woman. Garbhā and Vimarṣa Sandhis have no scope here, and sentiments of wonder and heroism are predominant in this composition. All the conditions of Vyāyoga² being thus fulfilled, the work must be termed a Vyāyoga instead of *Prekṣanaka* although this description is given at the end of the composition.³

It is narrated in the Vana-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*⁴ that at the sight of a Saugandhikā flower carried by the wind in Badarikāśrama, Draupadī wants to have these flowers and requests Bhīma to collect

1 Ojaḥprakāśakair varṇair bandha ādamvaraḥ punaḥ
Samāsa-bahulā Gaudī. SD., IX. 4.

2 Khyātetivṛtto Vyāyogaḥ svalpa-stri-jana-samyutaḥ/
Hīno garbha-vimarṣābhyāṃ naraīr bahubhir āśritaḥ//
Ekāṅkaś ca bhaved astri nimitta-samarodayaḥ/
Kauśiki-vṛtti-rahitaḥ prakhyātas tatra nāyakaḥ//
Rājarṣir atha divyo vā bhaved dhīroddhataś ca saḥ/
Hāsyā-śṛṅgāra-śāntebhya itare' trāṅgino rasāḥ//

SD., VI. 256

3 Samāptam idaṃ saugandhikā-haraṇaṃ nāma prekṣanakaṃ.

4 MBH., III. 146-53.

them by any means from the mysterious lake of Kubera. After passing through terrible forests infested with wild animals, Bhīma reaches Gandhamādana mountain, the abode of Hanumat. With his heart overflowing with deep affection for his younger step-brother, and with a view to ward off the imminent danger that may befall Bhīma in case of conflict with the Yakṣas, Hanumat stretches his vast body on the ground obstructing Bhīma's passage. Hanumat's admonitions even by a display of his valour fail to make any impression on Bhīma intent on achieving his object. Bhīma looks upon him as an ordinary monkey, and only on his failure to move the monkey's tail, he becomes convinced of the latter's supernatural power. While disclosing his identity, Hanumat recounts the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in brief and mentions the duties of the four castes. At the request of Bhīmasena, Hanumat shows him the way to the lake and disappears. On reaching the lake, Bhīma without paying any heed to the repeated warnings of the Yakṣas engaged in guarding the lake makes up his mind to force his way through them, and succeeds in collecting as many of the fragrant flowers as possible. On being informed of Bhīma's heroic efforts, Lord Kubera without the least exasperation gives him permission to collect the flowers. Meanwhile various ominous signs all round the royal residence upset Yudhiṣṭhira who, apprehending danger, at once starts to find out his brother. At last to his utmost joy he finds Bhīma on the bank of the lake with his mace lifted high up in his hand. At the bidding of Kubera, the guards giving up their hostile attitude pay due respect to the illustrious persons.

The dramatist, except a few minor changes, follows the original faithfully, but the mode of presentation of the plot at places is highly commendable indeed. In the very beginning of the drama he has clarified his purpose in unequivocal terms:¹

Vṛttir girām ukti-viśeṣa-hṛdyā dhīroddhatam netṛ-viśeṣitam ca/
Vīrādbhutau yatra rasau ca dīptau pratyekam etāni haranti cetaḥ//

1 Sg H., I, 2

‘Appealing mode of expression, activities of a hero of the Dhīrodhata type, depiction of sentiments of heroism and wonder—each of these attracts the mind.’

The dramatist has taken special care in portraying the character of the hero from the very beginning. The hero’s strong determination to achieve his object for the satisfaction of his dear wife is manifest from his very entrance on the stage. The poet is admirable in his depiction of Bhīma’s meeting with Hanumat. The idea of a brother meeting and fighting his own brother unawares is not an original one. Here Hanumat knows everything, but Bhīma fights with him without a knowledge of his real identity. In the original Hanumat’s strong affection for his younger brother is glaring at every step, but in the drama Hanumat, although his heart is melting with affection at the sight of his younger brother, suppresses his feelings for the time being, and goes on testing his brother’s devotion in a manner that would earn unstinted praise even from a casual reader. Concealing his own identity he, as an ordinary monkey, commences deprecating the valorous activities of the reputed Hanumat. Bhīma cannot tolerate the idea that an ordinary monkey should not recognise the uncommon valour of his elder brother and denounce him by pointing out his faults. In spite of repeated attempts to establish the honesty and sincerity of his monkey brother, Bhīma fails to make Hanumat accept his viewpoint. Hanumat all along poses to be an ordinary monkey, but at last finding the patience of Bhīma on the point of exhaustion, he throws off his disguise and discloses his identity. Being too anxious for the safety of his brother, he teaches Bhīma some Vidyā to ward off future dangers. Encouraged and strengthened by what he has learnt from his elder brother, Bhīma fights with the Yakṣas to collect Saugandhikā flowers from the lake belonging to Kubera. The poet’s delineation of the heroic sentiment mostly in forceful verses and Bhīma’s exchange of hot words with the guards of the lake indicate his power of fine composition. Kubera’s appreciation of Bhīma’s heroic encounter with his guards produces a pleasing effect on our mind¹.

¹ Sg H., I. 131

Nanu māna-rucer ayaṃ guṇaḥ sahate'sau para-garjitam na yat/
Niśamayya ghanāghana-dhvaniṃ nibhṛtas tiṣṭhati kiṃ nu kesarī//

‘This is indeed the characteristic of a person full of prestige that he does not tolerate the haughty utterings of his enemy. Does a lion sit idle hearing the thundering of clouds?’

In the original, the lord of the Yakṣas gives a patient hearing to the argument of his followers regarding Bhīma's insolent behaviour and shows no reason why no action should be taken against him; but in the drama his heroism is appreciated and he is given a hero's welcome. When Yudhiṣṭhira with Draupadī and other brothers comes to the spot in quest of Bhīma, Kubera is so good as to order his chamberlain to bring a cluster of Saugandhikā flowers to be given to Draupadī by Bhīma.

The plot has been admirably handled with living characters and appealing situations in a style simple as well as forceful. The author has stuck to the story element exclusively, and there is no tendency on his part to bring in the unnecessary discourses of the original on various points. No attempt on the part of the poet to overembellish his well-knit composition is noticeable, but vigorous expressions,¹ exquisite verses, balanced sentences and genuine poetic inspiration are found at every page.

Kalyāṇa-Saugandhika

The *Kalyāṇa-saugandhika*, a Vyāyoga in one act of the Kerala author Nīlakaṇṭha,² embraces the same theme as that of the *Saugandhikā-haraṇa* of Viśvanātha. Here minor changes from the original without appreciable dramatic effect have been introduced. The very title of the drama refers to the incident of collecting Saugandhikā flowers from the mysterious lake of Kubera on the mountain Gandha-

1 Bhajati bhṛṣatām sattvaṃ dhattas tamorajasi kṣayam
Shpurati hṛdaye bodhaḥ ko'pī prasīdati cetanā/
Yad idam akhilaṃ prāg evonmilitam tvayi vikṣite
Niyatam adhunāpy eṣā vidyā dadāti tad eva me// Sg H., I. 94.

2 The author was probably a contemporary of Kulaśekhara Varman of Kerala.

mādana by Bhīma for fulfilling the desire of Draupadī. After a short prologue, an old Brāhmaṇa ascetic accompanied by his wife enters the stage to dissuade Bhīma from fetching those flowers in view of the fearful dangers that lie ahead of him. Without paying any heed to the advice of that noble-minded Brāhmaṇa, Bhīma ascends the mountain, and fights terribly with the Rākṣasa Krodhavāśa engaged in guarding the lake. Their fighting is brought to a close, when the spirit of the lake announces that Bhīma has been given permission to pluck flowers. Then with his wife Guṇamañjarī appears Vidyādhara Kalyāṇaka who is sent by Indra for averting an impending and undesirable quarrel between Bhīma and Hanumat—the two distinguished sons of the wind-god. On approaching the plantain grove of Hanumat, Bhīma incurs the displeasure of the ape-god by breaking the Mānaśṅga. Being ignorant of Hanumat's parentage, Bhīma takes him to be an ordinary monkey and does not hesitate to utter insulting words to him. Hanumat, in spite of his knowledge of the identity of Bhīma, decides to fight with the latter, when the Vidyādhara interrupts their conflict by stating that he has been sent by Indra to disclose their mutual relation, so that they may be united with each other through the bond of fraternity. The work is brought to a happy conclusion with the promise of Hanumat to help the Pāṇḍavas in their combat with the Kauravas.

Neither the high-souled Brāhmaṇa nor the Vidyādhara Kalyāṇaka is found in the original or in the *Saugandhikā-haraṇa* of Viśvanātha. Altercation of Hanumat with Bhīma has been described by Viśvanātha with greater liveliness and forceful expressions. Viśvanātha can undoubtedly claim superiority to Nīlakaṇṭha from the point of characterisation, plot, graceful expressions and lucid diction.

Another *Kalyāṇa-saugandhika* of Vāliya Tumburāma published in 1896 is mentioned in the introduction of Lakṣmaṇ Svarūp's edition of Nīlakaṇṭha's *Kalyāṇa-saugandhika*. To Lakṣmaṇ Svarūp's edition of Nīlakaṇṭha's *Kalyāṇa-saugandhika* has been added a supplement, where Draupadī is glad to meet Bhīma and Hanumat and to hear the prediction of Hanumat that the Kauravas will soon be killed, and the Pāṇḍavas will be able to establish peace in the country.

Subhadrā-barāṇa

It¹ is an uparūpaka of Śrīgadita² type composed by Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, the son of Maṇḍaleśvara and Indumatī. Such dramatic compositions, though they are mentioned and defined in books dealing with theories of poetry, are rarely met with in Sanskrit literature. This dramatic form consists of one act with a familiar theme connected with the activities of some famous hero and heroine. The frequent use of the word Śrī in this type of dramatic composition reveals the main reason of its being called 'Śrīgadita.' The widely known legend of Subhadrā's elopement with Arjuna, narrated in the Ādi-parvan³ of the *Mahābhārata*, is adopted for dramatisation in this work.

Arjuna, in his intense eagerness for protecting the cows of a Brāhmana from the hands of thieves, enters his elder brother's room for bringing weapons. Due to Yudhiṣṭhira's presence with Draupadī in the room at that time, Arjuna should not have entered it; so for violation of the standing rule, Arjuna as ascetic has to travel for twelve years in different parts of the country. In course of his wandering, Arjuna comes to holy Prabhāsa for meeting his intimate friend Kṛṣṇa. Here he is accorded a cordial reception by Kṛṣṇa's followers on the Raivataka mountain. On that very mountain, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis hold festivities in highly jubilant spirit for several days. Haladhara with his wife Revatī participates in the festival. While roaming with Vāsudeva, Arjuna happens to see Subhadrā and falls in love with her. He expresses his desire to Kṛṣṇa for marrying Subhadrā. Advised by Kṛṣṇa to take her away forcibly and obtaining permission in this matter from Yudhiṣṭhira through a messenger, he

1 The work is probably later than the Sāhitya-darpaṇa VI, as it follows the definition of Śrīgadita of the Sāhitya-darpaṇa.

2 Prakhyāta-vṛttam ekāṅkaṃ prakhyātodātta-nāyakam /
Prasiddha-nāyikaṃ garbha-vimarṣābhyaṃ vivarjitam //
Bhārati-vṛtti-bahulaṃ śrīti-śabdena saṅkulam //
Matam Śrī-gaditam nāma vidvadbhir uparūpakam //

SD., VI. 292

3 MBH., I 210—3.

successfully steals her away from the midst of soldiers. All persons present there including Ugrasena resolve angrily to start at once for fighting with Arjuna, but Balarāma's statement that nothing can be done without the consent of Kṛṣṇa prevents them from pursuing in the matter. Kṛṣṇa speaks highly of Arjuna who in his opinion is the suitable bridegroom for Subhadrā. With their anger pacified and minds softened by Kṛṣṇa's reasonable arguments regarding Arjuna's power and status, they themselves willingly bring Arjuna to Dvārakā, make great rejoicings and celebrate his marriage with Subhadrā.

Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, within the short compass of his work, has dealt with this portion of the *Mahābhārata's* main story in an ordinary manner. No important departure from the original is noticed, but the presentation of the theme in simple language is on the whole satisfactory. Arjuna's sudden abduction of Subhadrā in the original without giving her any chance of acquiring familiarity with the lover does not appear good in the eye of the dramatist. Such abduction may cause a shock to the heroine, and as such would be uninteresting for a dramatic situation. So the author introduces Arjuna as an ascetic begging alms from door to door. While begging alms in the house of Balarāma, Arjuna gets a chance of seeing the highly charming lady Subhadrā. Both of them feel strong attraction for each other, but various impediments stand in the way of their union. Subhadrā's passionate feelings are expressed through her conversation with her dear friend Sumatikā. Arjuna makes up his mind to carry Subhadrā away by force, and with this purpose in view he remembers Kṛṣṇa who would render him possible assistance in this direction. His strong devotion for Lord Vāsudeva at once inspires the God to send a chariot with the charioteer Dārūka. Thus here Kṛṣṇa is prevented from directly advising Arjuna to steal his own sister as we have it in the original. He is shown as occupying an exalted position. He is highly affectionate to his devotees and eagerly responds to their call, so that Arjuna on hearing the sound of the chariot utters in an ecstasy of joy: '*Bhakta-vatsalatayā sa bibbuḥ svam syandanam prahitavān saba yantrā.*' 'Out of love, God has sent his own chariot with a charioteer'. Subhadrā's participation in the festival held in honour

of the god of love gives Arjuna a good opportunity to abduct her ignoring the guards placed on all sides for the protection of ladies. Their attempt to rescue Subhadrā proves futile because of the strong resistance of Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa's approval of Arjuna's conduct stops all arrangements of warfare. In the end a messenger from Indra, who is highly anxious for his son's welfare, comes and thanks Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa for supporting Arjuna's action.

Mādhava Bhaṭṭa has simply narrated the abduction of Subhadrā in a dramatic form with minor modifications, but he has neither brought his imagination into full play nor adopted well-known dramatic devices to enhance the literary value of the work. There is, however, no attempt at overloading the composition by complicated and laboured expressions. The treatment of the same plot by Kulaśekhara Varman in his *Subhadrā-dhanañjaya* does not attain the same value for reasons explained in our discussion on the drama. In comparison with Kulaśekhara Varman, Mādhava Bhaṭṭa deserves higher praise for the smooth flow of the narrative and clear diction.

Subhadrā-pariṇayana

Rāmadeva Vyāsa, who flourished under the patronage of Haihaya princes of the Kalacuri branch of Rāyapura in the first half of the fifteenth century, wrote three epic dramas, the *Pāṇḍavābhyaudaya*, *Rāmābhyaudaya* and *Subhadrā-pariṇayana*. All these epic plays are mentioned as *Chāyā-nāṭakas*¹; but it is very difficult to explain this epithet as the dramatist has not given any reason for this special name. Really speaking, they do not possess special characteristics of shadow play and as such have no marked difference from ordinary dramatic compositions of the decadent period. Probably some dramatists were inclined to style their works as *Chāyā-nāṭakas* without considering the appropriateness of this title for their compositions. The *Dūtāṅgada* of Subhata too is mentioned as a *Chāyā-nāṭaka* in the prologue and in our discussion on this drama, we will show that this title can be

1 Yat kila sarasa-kavinā Vyāsa-śrī-rāmadevena viracitam abhinavaṃ Subhadrā-pariṇayanaṃ nāma Chāyā-nāṭakam. Samāptam idaṃ Subhadrā-pariṇayanaṃ nāma Chāyā-nāṭakam.

justified in the sense of borrowing only, as this work contains several verses of other dramas.

The *Subhadrā-pariṇayana* embraces a theme clearly expressed by the title and bears close resemblance to the *Subhadrā-haraṇa* of Mādhava Bhaṭṭa in this respect. Both the dramatists handle the same theme in their respective compositions, but Mādhava Bhaṭṭa's treatment of this epic theme in a simple language is decidedly better and more impressive. This is mainly due to the fact that Rāmadeva Vyāsa turns attention to descriptive stanzas ignoring dramatic action.

The drama begins with a Viṣkambhaka containing a conversation between Vasubhūti, the intimate friend of Arjuna and Puṣkarākṣa, the attendant of Śrīkrṣṇa. They disclose the reason of Arjuna's pilgrimage and describe the distressing condition of his mind after his return from the pleasure garden where he went with his female attendant Patralekhā. The act proper shows Arjuna in serious mental conflict. The earnest entreaties of his dear friends Vijayasena and Sunīti compel him to state the reason of his uneasiness. Meanwhile Patralekhā appears there with the news that Subhadrā is unwell and her relatives have arranged for her visit to the temple of Caṇḍikā for immediate relief. Thus the dramatist assures the hero of the love of his beloved through Patralekhā and arouses in him a desire to meet her near the temple. The hero moves accordingly and finds Subhadrā surrounded by her friends in an unbalanced condition. Subhadrā is instructed to enter the temple alone by a heavenly voice. All her friends then depart and this divine intervention gives a signal to Arjuna for her abduction. The Yādavas readily hinder Arjuna's attempt to carry her away ; but the timely intervention of Vāsudeva paves the path for a peaceful settlement and their wedding takes place there with due formalities in a congenial atmosphere.

Influence of Kālidāsa is seen in the incident of the bee disturbing repeatedly the heroine who makes unsuccessful attempt for preventing it from doing so. Arjuna's utterance¹ at the sight of the bee annoying his beloved reminds us of a similar verse in the *Śakuntalā*.

1 Re cañcarika! bhavatāticiraṃ sutaptam
Kīḍḍk tapaḥ kathaya keṣu ca kānaneṣu/

The plot is very simple and its treatment devoid of original approach by the author does not evoke interest. The high standard of dramatic technique so obviously followed by renowned dramatists and so widely elaborated in works on theories of poetry gradually lost its charm, and the descriptive tendencies of later dramatists favoured the growth of dramas of irregular types lacking in dramatic action and proper stage direction. The *Subhadrā-pariṇayana* is a drama belonging to this group and like other similar dramas of this period, its long, descriptive and sentimental verses minimise its dramatic worth.

One-act plays are not rare in Sanskrit literature. Different types of one-act plays and their characteristics have been mentioned in works containing discussion on laws of dramaturgy. An author of an one-act play must possess rare dramatic genius for achieving success within a short compass. His caution for the selection of plot, diction, dialogue, characterisation and depiction of sentiment is absolutely necessary from the very beginning, as his success depends on overall accuracy. A little flaw whatsoever makes his efforts futile. The *Subhadrā pariṇayana* is an one-act drama, but the dramatist's failure to maintain accuracy has made his work unimportant. Its importance stands as an example of a drama of the decadent period, but as a literary composition it has no definite worth.

Draupadī-svayaṃvara

The *Svayaṃvara* ceremony of Draupadī has been dramatised in two acts by Vijayapāla,¹ the son of Siddhapāla who lived during the reign of Kumārapāla, the Caulukya king of Gujrat. The drama was ordered to be enacted by Bhīmadeva in front of the god Tripuruṣa on the occasion of a spring festival.

The incident of Draupadī's *Svayaṃvara* has been recounted in the

Sītkārakāri paricumbya mukhāmbujaṃ yat
Vimbādharāmṛta-rasaṃ dhayasidamiyam//

SPr., I. 47 (cf. AS., I. 21)

1 Sūtradhāra in the prologue says—Asty eva śrī-kavirājātmaja mahākavi-Siddhapālasya sūnunā mahākavinā Vijayapālena nibaddhaṃ Draupadī-svayaṃ-varābhidhānaṃ Virādbhuta-rasa-pradhānaṃ nāṭakam.

Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ That story with a few touches of originality has been retold by the dramatist with some deviations. In the original the story runs thus: On coming to know that king Drupada has made arrangements for the *Svayamvara* ceremony of Pāñcālī, his daughter, the Pāñdavās arrive on the spot, and when the distinguished heroes that have assembled on the occasion fail to win the hands of Draupadī by hitting the mark fixed for the purpose, Arjuna disguised as a Brāhmaṇa steps in, and to the great surprise of all kings present there succeeds in his attempt.

The whole event has been described in the drama in simple language and graceful style. It must be said to the credit of our dramatist that he has been able to maintain the simplicity of the description of the original. Let us now proceed to discuss the points of departure and estimate their value and propriety. When Karṇa leaves his seat for hitting the mark, Draupadī frankly declares that she will not marry the son of a charioteer. This romantic passage,² which is found in the vulgate text of the Epic, has not been cleverly touched upon by the present writer in his work. In the drama Draupadī when brought before Karṇa whose munificence is praised by her friend³, refuses to hear his qualities and does not hesitate in the least to refer to his scandalous birth.⁴ In the first act one is impressed by the munificence of Karṇa, who unhesitatingly makes a gift of the two best arrows which he received from his preceptor Paraśurāma to Bhīma approaching him in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa. Arjuna's ability to hit the mark specially with the help of these two arrows truly undermines his greatness as a valiant warrior. Kṛṣṇa's strong inclination to help

1 MBH, I. 176—81

2 Dṛṣṭvā tu taṃ Draupadī vākyam uccair jagāda nāhaṃ varayāmi sūtam/
Sāmarṣa-hāsam prasamikṣya Sūryaṃ tatyāja Karṇaḥ sphuritaṃ
dhanus tat//

MBH., I clxxx. 23 (ed. Haridas Siddhantabagish)

3 Sakhi! Cintita-vastu-dāna-cintāmaṇiṃ pralokaya Campā-nātham,
DS., Act II

4 Sakhi! Jana-paramparā-piśunita-kānīnatā-vidāmbita-jananenālam anenāpi
Karṇena. DS., Act II

the Pāṇḍavas by fair or foul means from the very beginning has been distinctly shown with the result that the renown of the highest divinity suffers a set-back. Many brave warriors present in the *Svayamvara* ceremony have the capacity to hit the mark; but they have been prevented from doing so by Kṛṣṇa who is ready to bewilder them by all means. Kṛṣṇa on the eve of lifting up of the bow sends evil spirits to frighten Śakuni, creates dense darkness before Droṇa to blur his vision, holds before Karṇa the scene of Arjuna's marriage with Draupadī, and throws down Śiśupāla on the ground striking him with his hands after deluding the vision of all present there. In the original, Kṛṣṇa is not shown as harassing these heroes in such a manner. Within the short compass of the second act Draupadī is introduced to some kings, but she is actually found to place her wedding wreath round the neck of Arjuna. Thus nothing new is dwelt upon in the second act which had any possibility of further development. There is neither any distinctive stamp of dramatic genius nor of fertile inventiveness. The work does not contain any wealth of descriptions and vigorous narration; only some novelty in verse-composition comes to our notice. The work employs the device of metrical dialogue by breaking up a verse into different parts, and putting them in the mouths of different persons for creating interest from the point of form.

3. CAMPŪ-KĀVYA

Draupadī-pariṇaya

The *Draupadī-pariṇaya* is a Campū-kāvya in six Āśvāsas by Cakrakavi who gives some valuable information regarding his personal history at the end of each Āśvāsa. Lokanātha and Ambā are his parents and he is said to have been patronised by the kings of Pāṇḍya and Chera countries. He mentions in his works with due respect the great scholar Nilakaṇṭha Dīkṣita.¹ Nilakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, the

1 Āśvāsa khalu Nilakaṇṭha-makhinaḥ ślāghāspade pañcamah/

DP., V. 87½

Sargaḥ ṣaṣṭha ihājaniṣṭa madhuraḥ Śrī-nilakaṇṭhādhvari-/

Ślāghā-sīmani Jānakī-pariṇaye kāvyē tadiye nave// JP., vi. 76

renowned poet and prime-minister at the court of Tirumalai Nayaka of Madura, composed his *Nīlakaṇṭha-vijaya* in 1637 A. D., so we can safely draw the conclusion that our poet Cakrakavi flourished in the middle of 17th Century A. D. Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita is a poet of high erudition and striking originality, and the fact that Cakrakavi's works elicited his admiration as is evident in Cakrakavi's verse quoted before proves that Cakrakavi is a poet of no mean standard.

The author, as the title signifies, has selected a portion of the main story of the Mahābhārata for his work *Draupadī-pariṇaya*. It commences with the story of Baka demon who is subsequently assassinated by Bhīma, and this story is followed by a description of the marriage of the Pāṇḍavas with Draupadī and coronation at Indraprastha. Striking deviation from the original is not however discernible in this work. His simple method of narration, easy flow of language, charming verses in the midst of prose portion easily arrest the attention of readers. His tendency to popularise epic and pauranic stories through some other works like the *Jānakī-pariṇaya* and the *Pārvatī-pariṇaya* is commendable indeed. It should be mentioned in this connection that he has no tendency to ignore story element for the sake of form. His elegant verses are more attractive than the prose portion. His description of Draupadī's *Svayaṃvara* reminds us of that of Indumatī in the sixth canto of the *Raghu-vaṃśa*.

4. ŚLEṢA-KĀVYA

Kīcaka-vadha

The poet Nitivarman, who flourished earlier than the 11th century A. D. in the eastern part of India, composed this short poem of 177 verses in five cantos. The earliest specimen of a Yamaka-kāvya aiming at verbal embellishment without proper attention to the subject-matter is to be found in a lyric of twenty-two verses of Ghaṭakarpara where the poet has shown verbal ingenuity in end-chiming. Examples of Śleṣa-kāvyas like Kavirāja's *Rāghava-pāṇḍavīyā*, Vāsudeva's *Nalodaya*, *Tripura-dahana*¹ and *Yudhiṣṭhira-vijaya*, some of which we have al-

1 Vāsudeva's two Yamaka-kāvyas, the *Tripura-dahana* and *Śauri-kathodaya* have not yet been published. (MSS in Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Nos. 1852a and 1852b).

ready discussed, are not at all rare in Sanskrit literature. The pedantic and artificial style of later Kāvya involving use of words with double meaning in long composition undermines the literary excellence of the works. The play with words, if carried to excess, puts a tremendous strain on the poetic genius of the author and at the same time alienates the interest of even patient readers to go through the book. Taking into consideration the difficulty of such factitious compositions, Nīti-varman has with great caution employed both Śleṣa and Yamaka in his poem composed mostly in the Anuṣṭubh metre with the exclusion of the last canto where we find the Triṣṭubh class of metres. He is not truly a great poet in the strict sense of the term, but his talent so far as verbal embellishment is concerned is of no mean standard. To arrest the attention of the reader he has tried his best to make his Śleṣa and Yamaka as pleasing and comprehensible as possible.

The plot of the poem centres round the well known episode of the Virāṭa-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ The very name of the poem signifies the death of Kīcaka at the hand of Bhīma. The poet deliberately omits the descriptive elements of the original in order to avoid bulkiness of composition, and concentrates his attention chiefly on those parts as would help specially the application of Śleṣa and Yamaka. The whole of the first canto consisting of twenty seven verses is devoted to the eulogy of the poet's patron, but no mention of the name of the patron is made therein. The second canto opens with the story proper. Kīcaka, attracted by the sight of Draupadī living in Virāṭa's palace as a companion of his wife, tries his best to secure her by any means. Draupadī rescued through the agency of the Sun-god in her first danger from the hand of Kīcaka angrily enters the court of Virāṭa. The third canto commences with the spirited speech of Draupadī aimed at Virāṭa and Yudhiṣṭhira simultaneously with the help of the figure of speech Śleṣa. She does not spare other husbands too who are addressed in the similar mode of punning speech. Bhīma is agitated and expresses his strong determination to slay Kīcaka in the evening. Misled by false allurements to meet

1 MBH., IV. 13-23.

Draupadī in the evening, the jubilant Kīcaka meets Bhīma instead, disguised as a woman who succeeds in killing him without much trouble. The fourth canto opens with comments on statecraft, after which the poet takes Virāṭa out of his capital to fight the Kurus ready to invade his kingdom. Arjuna then, for the rescue of the cattle, comes to the battle-field to fight the enemies of Virāṭa; but he is recognised in spite of his disguise by Bhīṣma and Droṇa who express their fear to Duryodhana in punning speeches. Duryodhana's army is completely routed at the hand of Arjuna. In the last canto Arjuna politely addresses the heroes on the opposite side and the battle is brought to a close with nightfall.

This short summary of the poem will prove the poet's deviation from the original in many respects. The central incident of the poem—the slaying of Kīcaka by Bhīma—occupies one stanza only (III. 46).¹ The poet has not paid attention to the narration of Bhīma's terrible conflict with Kīcaka and his relatives and his ultimate deliverance of Draupadī from the hands of that evil-minded villain. The incident of the stealing of Virāṭa's cattle by the king of Trigarta has been omitted. So far as the struggle between the king of Matsyas and Duryodhana is concerned, the poet's treatment of the same totally lacks the narrative vigour of the original. Points of disagreement from the original in some details are also to be noted. Instead of being killed in the dancing hall, as in the original, Kīcaka is described as stepping in the death-trap during his flight from a room where he was to meet Draupadī in accordance with previous arrangement. The poet all along shows greater inclination to give more space to speeches wherein he would get an opportunity of playing with words. Draupadī's speech applicable at the same time to king Virāṭa and her husbands occupies three fourth of the third canto. This is the only canto in which Śleṣa has been used. The following verses will reveal that the employ-

1 Atha pathiṣu dhṛto rathena kṛcchrāt
Pṛthutara-gaurava-sannatārakeṇa/
Drutam akṛta bhujā-dvayena Bhīmaḥ
Kadanam arer abasanna-tārakeṇa //

KV., III. 46.

ment of Śleṣa in this context is appropriate and therefore adds charm to the composition. Draupadī piteously appeals to king Virāṭa and Yudhiṣṭhira to save her from the hands of Kīcaka;¹

Viśva-karmakṛtā rājñā jīvatā balinānyataḥ/
Tvayā kupatinā tyaktā śaraṇaṃ kaṃ vrajāmy aham//

‘O Virāṭa, deserted by you, the powerful lord of the earth, the administrator of the whole world and a Kṣatriya having full confidence in Kīcaka and others, whom shall I approach for shelter?’

‘O Yudhiṣṭhira, left by you—an unworthy husband who has lost his kingdom, who has been doing now all kinds of works and living on food given by others, whom else shall I approach for protection?’

Again she utters in a piteous voice to both king Virāṭa and Bhīma:²

Rakṣopāyeṣu nipuṇaḥ sthitāsu vyaśanodaye//
Madvidhāsūpakāritvaṃ tvādṛṇ nādyā kathamaṃ bhajet//

‘O Virāṭa, why should not a person of your type, capable of protecting others, help me to-day as I am thrown in the midst of troubles?’

‘O Bhīma, when my life is in danger, why should a person of your type, expert in killing the wicked, act as a cook now?’

The last canto composed in Yamaka contains Arjuna’s speech to the heroes of the opposite party. Arjuna pays his respect first to Droṇa³

Amī praṇāma-pravaṇena pūjitāḥ
Pareṇa sarva-kṣītipādareṇa vaḥ/
Guro cireṇādyā marudbhir īritāḥ
Patantu me mūrdhaṇi pāda-reṇavaḥ//

‘O preceptor, may the dust of your feet, worshipped with great reverence by all great kings at the time of making obeisance to you and carried by the wind, fall on my head to-day after a long time.’

1 KV., III. 19.

2 Ibid., III. 27.

3 Ibid., V. 2.

In fact, the reconstruction of this well known plot with some appropriate modifications, characterised by richness of fancy and poetic genius, is not our poet's aim; on the contrary he is more concerned with verbal embellishment of his poetic theme. Manipulation of language being his real motive, he has deliberately ignored characterisation, sentiment, style and lucid diction; but when compared with the *Nalodaya* or the *Rāghava-naiṣadhīya* of Haradatta Sūri, literary exercise of this type in the *Kīcaka-vadha* does not appear to be so much boring, as a little effort makes the verses intelligible to us. The *Kīcaka-vadha*, wherein both Śleṣa and Yamaka are used freely, should indeed occupy a high place in this class of factitious compositions which form a distinctive feature of later Sanskrit literature. It is true that no attention is paid to the poetic possibilities of this slender theme, still it must be said to the credit of our author that these defects are compensated by the luxuriance of verbal embellishment. By this alone the author claims merit and his work is one of the earliest authoritative examples of its kind.

CHAPTER III

Works on Legends of the Mahābhārata

1. DRAMA

Innumerable legends of the *Mahābhārata*, if properly utilised, would have resulted in countless literary compositions, but Sanskrit writers took up only a few of them for different types of works which deserve discussion one by one in this section. The legends of Duṣyanta - Śakuntalā, Purūravas - Urvaśī, Tapatī - Saṃvaraṇa, Nala-Damayantī inspired many writers,

Abhijñāna-śakuntala

Kālidāsa, the most renowned poet of Sanskrit literature, is the author of three dramas—*Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Vikramorvaśīya* and *Abhijñāna-śakuntala*. Of these, *Abhijñāna-śakuntala* is the production of Kālidāsa's mature hand. The theme of the play is based on the well known story of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā narrated in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ Successful deviations from the original have lent additional charm to the play of Kālidāsa. The story of the *Mahābhārata* may be briefly summarised here.

Once in course of hunting, king Duṣyanta of the lunar dynasty arrives in hot haste in the penance grove of Kaṇva in pursuit of a deer of the hermitage. In absence of Kaṇva his adopted daughter Śakuntalā renders due hospitality to the king who, highly captivated by Śakuntalā's beauty, feels inclined to gather some information about her identity, which however is disclosed to him by Śakuntalā herself. Being earnestly courted by the king for marriage, Śakuntalā agrees to the king's proposal only when the latter makes a promise to make her son his royal successor. They get married according to the Gāndharva

1 MBH., I. 62-9.

rites, but the king afraid of Kaṇva's anger leaves the hermitage as quickly as possible. On his return the sage comes to know everything, but instead of being disgusted at Śakuntalā's bold conduct congratulates her on her perfect choice. The king apprehending severe displeasure of the sage does not venture to send escorts to bring Śakuntalā to his own capital. After a short period Śakuntalā in the hermitage gives birth to a son, who is named Sarvadamana for his irresistible tendency to fight with the ferocious animals of the forest without the slightest fear since his childhood. The sage Kaṇva after sometime sends Śakuntalā to her husband's place with some of his disciples, but the king out of fear of public scandal does not want to accept Śakuntalā as his legal wife. Highly enraged at the king's denial she makes several statements, the truth of which is immediately confirmed by a divine voice. The king, then finding no other alternative, consents to declare her as his queen and also makes within a short time Sarvadamana his heir-apparent.

Kālidāsa has rightly modified this prosaic romantic story for his drama. He has changed the whole story in his own way for removing the drawbacks of the original. His innovations in this direction have earned for his work world-wide appreciation. These points of deviation will be discussed in brief one by one. In the *Mahābhārata* king Duṣyanta enters the hermitage of Kaṇva alone leaving his whole retinue outside till his return, but in the drama his entry into the forest has been made as natural as possible. King Duṣyanta bereft of his followers in hot pursuit of a deer enters the hermitage, and being highly charmed at the lovely surroundings of the penance grove proceeds further and further, and at last finds Śakuntalā with her two friends engaged in watering the plants. Bashful Śakuntalā, the adopted child of the hermitage, has her radiant beauty all the more brilliantly shining in that graceful environment. The king is greatly amazed to find such divine beauty in a mortal maiden. Kālidāsa has taken all possible pains for creating Śakuntalā's two friends suitable to her in all respects. Śakuntalā's birth and lineage the king must know, but how can Śakuntalā, his would-be bride, being an embodiment of bashfulness, unravel the mysteries connected with her birth? Her talkative com-

panion Priyaṃvadā does that task well. King Duṣyanta's conversation with her two friends and the shy behaviour of Śakuntalā have furthered the dramatic action of the first act. Śakuntalā's love for the king and her friends' detection of her changed feeling have been cleverly delineated by Kālidāsa. Śakuntalā's heartfelt desire to prolong her stay in the garden till the departure of the king has been given expression to by the poet in a befitting manner. The king's love for Śakuntalā too has found superb expression at every step. Unsophisticated Śakuntalā's sudden change of feeling at the sight of the distinguished stranger shows some inconsistency, as being an Āśrama girl she cannot be expected to enter into the realm of forbidden thoughts; but really speaking love knows no restrictions and the youthful impulses of the hero to get what he wants throw off her shackles of reason and lead her to an unavoidable path. A daughter of a divine nymph as she is, she cannot resist the sudden onrush of passionate love in her. Such a love will truly culminate in marriage; but sometime must lapse for the depth of that love to reveal itself.

So the poet, noticing the incongruity in Śakuntalā's marriage in the original, has modified his own plot in a different manner. Kaṇva's long absence from the hermitage prompts the ascetics to approach king Duṣyanta for due protection from evil spirits hovering around with the intention of hampering the daily rites. The king gets an opportunity of sending back all his followers to the capital, and in a love-sick condition he engages himself in warding off the evil spirits from the hermitage. The love-sick condition of the hero and the heroine has been nicely depicted in the second and third acts of the drama. Śakuntalā, on account of her sincere love for the king, readily agrees to accept him as her husband, but no string is attached to that marriage as we find it in the original. As a married woman should not stay for a long period in her father's house, so Kālidāsa's Kaṇva makes no delay in sending Śakuntalā to her husband's place before the birth of Sarvadamaṇa. Kālidāsa brings into display his faculty of imagination and power of description in the fourth act where Śakuntalā is to part with her associates including the trees, creepers, birds, beasts living in the surrounding places of the hermitage. In the original

king Duṣyanta, knowing fully well Śakuntalā as his own married wife, does not waver in the least to denounce her in his court. Thus the king is lowered in estimation, but Kālidāsa ingeniously brings in the episode of Durvāsas' curse. The king fails to remember Śakuntalā, because Durvāsas' curse that her husband would not remember her even when reminded of her without the ring of recognition has started functioning already. The king is not to blame. The sole cause of his forgetfulness lies in that curse. In the original, the king admits his marriage with Śakuntalā only when he hears the divine voice, but Duṣyanta's memory in Kālidāsa's drama is revived at the sight of the golden ring. Kālidāsa has full confidence in the union of souls, for mere physical union is fraught with various difficulties. The marriage of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā takes place because of a love brought about by mere impulse—the impetuous love, which can shatter at any moment with the result that the severest suffering may be brought upon the hero and the heroine after the passing away of the first phase of the emotion. Actually that happens too; so Kālidāsa wants to make it a steadfast sentiment. After public repudiation Śakuntalā goes to the hermitage of Mārīca, and there a life of hard austerities brings to her view the frailties of human nature and creates in her a hankering for a nobler love. The sight of the gold ring on the other hand overpowers the king, and makes him fully conscious of the wrong done to his wife. Then begins his repentance and purification, in consequence of which he attains moral excellence. His physical love for Śakuntalā is gradually transformed into spiritual love. Thus Kālidāsa's contention, that love which is not confined only to the physical beauty of human beings can afford unending bliss and happiness in this sordid world, has been exemplified in this drama. Herein too the difference from the original is obvious.

All these important deviations have changed the crude legend of the *Mahābhārata* into a powerful drama. Characterisation in Kālidāsa's drama is superb indeed. The hero and the heroine through the trials and tribulations of life have been slowly and steadily raised to a higher plane. The other characters of the drama

have been skilfully presented by the poet. The companions of the heroine—Priyaṃvadā and Anasūyā are extremely devoted to her. Their different modes of speaking and cheerful temperament further the plot of the drama in the very beginning. The jester Mādhavya who does not like the king's love for a hermitage girl has been made to look at the whole affair from a different angle; so no impediment to the rapid growth of love between the hero and the heroine comes from that direction. Some laughter-provoking remarks and conduct of the jester supply the comic element in the drama. The affectionate, kind-hearted ascetic Kaṇva has been depicted in sharp contrast to the highly irritable Durvāsas. Kaṇva, in spite of his being an ascetic, expresses deep affection for his adopted daughter at the parting scene. With great difficulty he checks the flow of tears and controls himself on the eve of her departure for her husband's place. Durvāsas' curse on the innocent Śakuntalā deeply engrossed in her husband's thought makes him appear terrible, although it should be borne in mind that such a curse is absolutely necessary for the purification of the hero and the heroine.

Nature plays an important part in the works of Kālidāsa. The varied beauties of nature do not escape his attention, and whenever he gets an opportunity to describe different aspects of nature, he uses it fully. The trees, the flowers, the animals, the rivers are full of animation in Kālidāsa's poetry. They are competent enough to share the weal and woe of human beings—this harmonising tone has been maintained all through his work. The calm and quiet atmosphere prevailing in Mārīca's hermitage adds special charm to the concluding portion of the drama. The poet's strong visualising faculty is a rare gift. Above all his touching simple language has assisted him greatly to win enviable success in the literary world. Unquestionable are the aptness and beauty of his skilful similes which are satisfactory vehicles for the expression of his thought. Kālidāsa's merits are so evident that it is needless to point them out one by one. Innumerable laudatory verses have been composed from time to time both by eastern and western critics to magnify his excellent qualities.

Vikramorvaśīya

The romantic story of love between the king Purūravas and the celestial nymph Urvaśī forms the main subject-matter of Kālidāsa's well known drama *Vikramorvaśīya*. This legend attained much popularity from olden days. Its frequent treatment in the *Ṛgveda*,¹ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,² *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*,³ *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*,⁴ *Matsya-purāṇa*,⁵ *Hari-vaṃśa*⁶ and *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*⁷ of Somadeva shows intense eagerness of these writers to give it a new shape in their works. The narration of this love-legend in the *Hari-vaṃśa*, an appendix to the *Mahābhārata*, and in an ordinary manner in the Sambhava-parvan of the epic itself provides us with an opportunity of discussing different versions of the story in different works. Love adventures of Purūravas with Urvaśī have, however, been recounted in an archaic manner in the *Hari-vaṃśa*. Similar treatment of the story is to be found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* too. Now we want to discuss the varied treatment of this story in the *Ṛgveda*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Vikramorvaśīya*.

The dialogue hymns of the *Ṛgveda* have acquired special importance for their unmistakable influence on the gradual growth of the epic and the drama. In the *Ṛgveda* X. 95 we find a most well known Saṃvāda hymn recording a dialogue between Purūravas and Urvaśī. In *Ṛg. I. 31. 4*. Purūravas is described for the first time as a kind-hearted king and intimate companion of the fire-god. This love-legend is, however, not stated in a clear language in *Ṛv. X. 95*. There the mortal king Purūravas implores the divine nymph repeatedly to make him happy again by her company. She turns a deaf ear to the pleadings of Purūravas, and advises him instead to go back to his own kingdom without bringing about the premature destruction

1 *Ṛgveda*, X. 95.

2 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V. 1-2.

3 *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, IV. 6.

4 *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, IX. 14.

5 *Matsya-purāṇa*, XXIV.

6 *Hari-vaṃśa*, X. 26.

7 *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*, III. III. 4-30

of his own body. She, an embodiment of unsteadiness and insincerity, replies cruelly to her lover: ¹⁻²

Purūravaḥ punar astaṃ parehi durāpanā vāta ivāham asmi.

‘Purūravas, go home again, I am like a boisterous wind.’

Parehy astaṃ nahi mūḍa māpaḥ.

‘Go home, O fool, you have not won me.’

On being informed of his wish of committing suicide in her absence, she does not hesitate to utter: ³

Na vai straiṇāni sakhyāni santi sālā-vṛkāṇāṃ hṛdayāny etā.

‘Lasting friendship with women is not possible, their hearts are like those of hyenas.’

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, some of the verses of the *Ṛgveda* have been quoted with some explanatory passages in prose. A perusal of this portion removes the obscurity of *Ṛgvedic* verses to some extent, and the reader can get a connected account of this love-legend. But nothing is mentioned about their final reunion in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In the Sambhava-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* the legend of Purūravas has been given in a different manner. Purūravas and Urvaśī have been frequently mentioned in different sections of the *Mahābhārata*, but their relation as husband and wife has been briefly dealt with in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.⁴ Ilā is said to be the father and mother of Purūravas. Purūravas extends his supremacy over thirteen islands; and power-mad as he is, he, in his conflict with the Brāhmaṇas, steals all their wealth without paying any heed to their piteous cries. Urvaśī gives birth to six sons, the eldest of whom is Āyus. Separation of Purūravas from Urvaśī and the love-lorn condition of the king have not been touched upon in the *Mahābhārata*. In this portion, however, some

1 *Ṛgveda*, X, XCV. 2

2 *Ibid.*, X, XCV, 13.

3 *Ibid.*, X, XCV. 15

4 MBH., I. LXX, 16—22.

light has been thrown on Purūravas' character, but it does not permit us to form an estimate of Urvaśi's character.¹

Kālidāsa's familiarity with the different versions of this popular legend can be clearly traced, but nothing can be stated definitely as to what particular version he utilised for the source of his drama. The remarkable construction of his plot has made this popular love-story all the more interesting to readers. In order to heighten the dramatic effect of the play the poet has spared no pains to introduce some notable changes. His conception of plot and characterisation show clear signs of departure from the versions of the *Ṛgveda*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Urvaśi's rescue from the cruel clutches of the demon Keśin has been narrated in the first act in a befitting manner. Charmed by the king's heroism and beauty, Urvaśi falls in love with the king and with the help of a birch-leaf letter she makes the king cognisant of her feelings. The presence of Auśīnarī, the first wife of Purūravas, has helped the poet to depict the sentiment of love from a comparative point of view. But for the presence of Auśīnarī the poet could have expressed the passionate love of Purūravas in an easy manner without meeting any obstacle from any quarter; but here the rivalry between Auśīnarī and Urvaśi paves the path for the rapid development of the plot. Auśīnarī is at first jealous of her rival, but after taking into consideration her husband's happiness performs as a Hindu lady the *Priya-prasādana vrata*, and expresses her view that no objection would be raised from her side in the case of the king's marriage with any other woman. The poet's marvellous depiction of the progress of love of the hero and the heroine with possible obstacles at every stage is highly commendable

¹ In the *Vana-parvan* the portion, dealing with the meeting of Urvaśi with Arjuna after his acquisition of divine weapons in heaven, gives us a true picture of this divine nymph. As an *Apsaras*, she is ready to allow the selected persons to enjoy her lovable company, but in case of failure to win over a person, she does not hesitate to pronounce a curse on the person. Insincerity of her character is glaring in the hymn of the *Ṛgveda* as in the 39th chapter of the *Vana-parvan* (MBH., III. xxxix. 66-7, Urvaśi's curse, ed. Haridas Siddhantavagish.) This passage of the *Vana-parvan* is, however, interpolated as it is omitted in the critical edition.

indeed. Bharata's curse depriving her of her envious position in heaven because of her sudden slip of tongue in the dramatic performance Lakṣmī-svayaṃvara, and the consequent favour of Indra allowing her to enjoy the company of Purūravas as a token of friendship with this mortal king, who often helped him to fight with the demons, facilitate the union of lovers. Their short union soon culminates in tragic separation. The whole fourth act of the drama is concerned with a pathetic presentation of the lamentations of the king at the sudden disappearance of his beloved. The king mad with grief approaches every object in ardent eagerness for gathering information of his beloved. No distinction is made between the animate and inanimate objects by the king in his pathetic plight. The spectators cannot but sympathise with the king in his poignant distress, and at the same time stand spell-bound at this wonderful depiction of the sentiment of pathos by the poet. The tragic separation of the lovers should have produced the highest stage effect as a dramatic finish, but the laws of dramaturgy force the poet to effect their union with the help of the jewel Saṅgamaṇīya in the fourth act, and make Indra alter his word by allowing the lovers to enjoy highest felicity on this earth in the fifth act. Urvaśī's son Āyus is secretly brought up by a female ascetic, because with the sight of the son's face will terminate the evil effects of the curse. The female ascetic after some time brings the son to Urvaśī, but Indra's continued favour stands in the way of their immediate separation. The laws of dramaturgy are therefore followed at the cost of dramatic interest; but elegant style, rich imageries, superb characterisation, novel situations, happy expressions, wonderful power to study human emotions put to our view distinctly the merits of the drama. The adamant Urvaśī of the *R̥gveda* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* has undergone a complete transformation in the hands of Kālidāsa. The poet has not strictly followed the materials of the *R̥gveda*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, but he has only taken the conception of Purūravas' deep love for his drama. In order to heighten the dramatic charm, Urvaśī has been made sincere and kind-hearted to the hero. The mixture of human and superhuman qualities is prominent in the character of this divine damsel.

Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa

The love-story of the Kuru king Saṃvaraṇa and Tapatī, the daughter of the Sun-god, is narrated to Arjuna in the Ādi-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* to give him some idea about his remote ancestors.¹ Taking into consideration the dramatic possibilities of the love-legend, Kulaśekhara Varman, the Kerala prince, felt inclined to dramatise it. The original story runs thus:

Tapatī, the highly beautiful and qualified daughter of the Sun-god, far surpasses all other maidens of heaven in all respects. Her father, anxious for the selection of a suitable husband, fixes his choice on the Kuru king Saṃvaraṇa. Saṃvaraṇa, an earnest devotee of the Sun-god, is popular among his subjects on account of his benevolent bent of mind. Once while roaming on the mountain in course of hunting, he is exceedingly charmed at the sight of an exquisitely beautiful girl. Eager to know her whereabouts he puts many questions to her, but she disappears without replying to his words. In order to console the mortified king, she appears again and advises the king to beg her of the Sun-god. The whole retinue of the king then comes in his search, but he allows one minister to stay by him and dismisses all other persons. Considering that his family preceptor Vaśiṣṭha can only render valuable assistance in this matter, he remembers him. On the twelfth day Vaśiṣṭha on his appearance there assures the king that he will act as an intermediary in this matter. When asked for Tapatī of the Sun-god, the latter readily consents to the marriage of his daughter with the Kuru king Saṃvaraṇa. King's excessive joy after getting Tapatī as his wife makes him forget his administrative duties. During his absence, disorder and misery due to famine prevail in his kingdom. Thereupon his well-wisher Vaśiṣṭha brings him back to his kingdom. His immediate steps to establish peace and order throughout the whole kingdom make his subjects happy and carefree again.

Several changes as are generally met with in Sanskrit dramas are also seen in the *Tapatī-saṃvaraṇa*. Childlessness of the king's

¹ MBH., I. 160-3

first wife, the daughter of the king Śālva, who is absent in the original, increases his unhappiness day by day. One night the Sun-god appears in his dream and tells him :¹

Dayitām tava tanvaṅgīm Śālva-rājasutām imām
Avehi prasavāpetām śarac cūta-latām iva.

‘Saṃvaraṇa! Know this slimfigured lady who is your wife and the daughter of king Śālva is issueless like the branch of a mango tree in autumn.’

The king’s unmindfulness and his conversation with the jester regarding the ear-ring, which is found dropped on a slab of stone and which has some words written on it, enable the queen to detect some wrong on the king’s part. At the end of the first act she angrily leaves the stage, but neither her aggrieved feeling nor her natural rivalry engages the attention of the dramatist. Only in the concluding portion of the drama we find a different picture of the queen; she is said to be eager to accord a fitting reception to the king and Tapatī with their son. In the second act the king, while hunting in Tapanavana, happens to have a close view of his lady-love Tapatī deeply engrossed in thought about him. The part her two companions, Menakā and Rambhā, play to facilitate her union with the king and console her in her love-sick condition reminds us of similar activities of Anasūyā and Priyamvadā in the drama *Abhijñāna-śakuntala*, but Kālidāsa’s characterisation of the two companions of the heroine is of a higher order. In the original the king is instructed by the heroine herself to propitiate the Sun-god, but here her dear friend Menakā stresses the importance of the worship of the Sun-god for his ultimate union with the heroine. The family preceptor Vaśiṣṭha’s effort for the king’s marriage with the heroine has not been elaborated in the drama ; it is mentioned in a few lines in the interlude. The dramatist has used amply supernatural elements in his drama. Tapatī gives birth to a son, but she is not given to understand anything about it by Rambhā, who has been previously instructed by the Sun-god to remove the

child for the well-being of the gods. The part played by the female night-ranger named Mohinikā creates some handicap in the final reunion of the hero and the heroine, as it is necessary in the Vimarṣa sandhi. This character is the poet's own creation. She had a hundred sons killed by king Saṃvaraṇa ; so her spirit of vengeance has been glaringly portrayed. Although unsuccessful in her first attempt to befool the king, she succeeds in the last act of the drama for a short time in misleading the hero, heroine and her two friends. In the fifth act Tapatī is cleverly called back in heaven by the Sun-god with the hope of diverting Saṃvaraṇa's attention to the administration of his kingdom. The sudden disappearance of the heroine makes the king restless and sorrowful ; his bitter lamentation and earnest desire to have his beloved back remind us of the similar longing of Purūravas for the divine nymph Urvaśī, of which it appears to be a weak imitation. Kālidāsa has the unique power of romanticising the natural as well as the mythological world ; but in Kulaśekhara's hand the introduction of the supernatural element has not received a dramatic touch with the result that some scenes have become really grotesque. In the fourth act Mohinikā's false statement with regard to the love of Gaganamālā, the daughter of the Gandharva king Citraratha, for Saṃvaraṇa, fails to impress the king on account of its absurdity ; and herein too dramatist's mode of presentation fails to keep up the interest of the readers. Too much emphasis on delineation of the erotic sentiment without keeping an eye on the general excellence of the drama reflects the culture and taste of the spectators of decadent days. In the last act of the drama, Tapatī, Saṃvaraṇa, Rambhā, Menakā—all of them misled by the female night-ranger decide to commit suicide ; and this is peculiar indeed and serves no useful dramatic purpose. According to the laws of dramaturgy a happy conclusion is desirable in a drama ; therefore the dramatist somehow creates interference in their mass suicide and effects their union in a manner that evokes no interest. The priest Vaśiṣṭha, so prominent in the original, is brought on the stage in the end before the king. In the original it is Vaśiṣṭha who supplying new inspiration to the mind of the king takes him back to the

capital; but in the drama the minister Vasumitra comes to take back the king to the kingdom in order to relieve the people from the terrible grip of famine. Saṃvaraṇa's merciful attitude is shown even to the mischief-monger Mohinikā who is released on his order.

Many defects are found in Kulaśekhara's play, specially poverty of dramatic invention and characterisation. Above all, an unpleasing diction both in prose and verse hinders his constructive ability. Similar remarks have already been made in our discussion on his *Subhadra-dhanañjaya*.

Rāma Legend (Rāmopākhyāna)

The Rāma episode necessitates a detailed discussion here for reasons to be stated below. Points of difference between the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata* and the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* require clarification for proving that the works concerned with the heroic activities of Rāma have their source mainly in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, although agreement with the *Mahābhārata* account of the Rāma story in some works, though rare, cannot be overlooked. Many such works were written at a later date; so the writers' familiarity with the stories of both the epics is not an impossibility. The insertion of this story has been made by some clever rhapsodist in an appropriate setting in the Vana-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ Occasional references to this story are met with in other parvans also of the *Mahābhārata*.²

This Rāma legend is narrated by the great sage Mārkaṇḍeya to Yudhiṣṭhira to give him consolation in his forest life. Defeated in

1 MBH., III. 258-75. Rāma story has been related very briefly to Bhīma by Hanumat in a previous chapter in the same parvan. (MBH., III, CXLVII. 28-38)

2 Rāma story is narrated in the Droṇa-parvan in the section entitled Ṣoḍaśa-rājopākhyāna in the vulgate edition, but this section has been entirely omitted in the Droṇa-parvan in the critical edition. It has been included in the Śānti-parvan where Rāma has been mentioned as a good administrator, under whose rule subjects lived very happily. (MBH., XII. XXIX. 46-54)

Rājā dāśarathim caiva mṛtaṃ śuśrūma sṛñjaya/

Yo' nvakampata vai nityaṃ prajāḥ putrānivourasān//

MBH., XII. XXIX. 46.

the game of dice, Yudhiṣṭhira has to spend his days in the calm and quiet regions of the forest with his wife and brothers. Pleasures of royal life are denied to them for full thirteen years. Moreover the sweet remembrances of past life at times dishearten him, not for his own miseries but for the unending sufferings of his wife and brothers. Whenever he thinks of the taunting ridicule of the members present in the court after his discomfiture in the game of dice, he fails to suppress his grief in the inmost depth of his heart. Draupadi's indescribable insult at the hands of Duṣśāsana and Jayadratha leads him to believe that no other person in this world suffered so terribly as he. Moved with pity the revered saint Mārkaṇḍeya gives a detailed description of Rāma's tragic life to the Pāṇḍavas. Sītā was abducted by the lord of the night-rangers, but Rāma's persistent efforts and indomitable energy enabled him to deliver Sītā from that great tyrant. Similarly Yudhiṣṭhira with the help of his valiant brother Arjuna, who has then gone to a distant place to practise penance for the acquisition of divine weapons, will doubtless recover his lost position in the near future.

In the Vana-parvan we get a complete glimpse of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna and Vibhīṣaṇa practise severe austerities for a long time, in consequence of which Brahman is highly pleased and grants the boon they ask for. Arrangement for Rāma's coronation, Mantharā's advice to Kaikeyī, Rāma's departure for the forest, Daśaratha's death after Rāma's departure, Sītā's abduction by Rāvaṇa, Rāma's friendship with Sugrīva, Hanumat's journey to Laṅkā to bring the news of Sītā, construction of a strong bridge by monkeys, fight between the monkeys and the night-rangers, Rāma's encounter with Rāvaṇa and the latter's death at the hand of Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation, Rāma's refusal to accept Sītā, a divine voice confirming the chastity of Sītā, Rāma's arrival in the city of Ayodhyā with Sītā, Rāma's coronation have all been mentioned in this portion of the *Mahābhārata*.

But there are also points of difference. The story centering round the birth of Rāvaṇa has been dealt with in detail in the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Kaikasī is the mother of Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna and

Vibhīṣaṇa, whereas in the Rāma story of the *Mahābhārata*, Puṣpotkaṭā is the mother of Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa and Mālinī of Vibhīṣaṇa. In the Rāma story of the *Mahābhārata* no mention is made of the sacrifice performed by king Daśaratha for getting sons. Sītā is the daughter of Janaka, but that she is found at the end of a plough is not referred to in the Rāma episode, nor do we find the names of Sītā's sisters there. At the instruction of Brahman, all the gods beget heroic sons in the forms of monkeys who will help Rāma considerably for the annihilation of the great demon Rāvaṇa. A female Gandharva Dundubhī by name is born on this earth as Mantharā. Kaikeyī is to get only one boon from king Daśaratha; and with the help of that boon she compels Rāma to repair to the forest, and gets her own son Bharata crowned as king in his place. So far as the Aranya-kāṇḍa is concerned, the Rāmopākhyāna does not follow faithfully the story of Vālmīki. Rāma's meeting with Virādha, Agastya and Sabarī is conspicuous by its absence. Rāma wants to establish friendship with Sugrīva, but the latter does not ask the former to prove his physical strength by a display of his bravery. During her miserable existence in the city of Laṅkā, Sītā is consoled frequently by a kind-hearted female night-ranger named Trijaṭā, who informs her of the speedy arrival of Rāma with Sugrīva for her deliverance. She however admits that she has gathered this information from Avindhya:¹

Avindhyo nāma medhāvī vṛddho rākṣasa-puṅgavaḥ/
Sa Rāmasya hitānveṣī.....

‘Avindhya who is old, intelligent and the best of the Rākṣasas is really Rāma's well-wisher.’

Sītā is assured when she learns from Trijaṭā that Rāvaṇa will not be able to do any harm to her on account of the curse of Nalakūbara. The Rāma episode, strictly speaking, is an abridged form of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is natural, therefore, for the writer of the Rāma episode to omit some matters at his own discretion. Rāvaṇa's holding of a war council on the eve of battle, his attempt to frighten Sītā by showing her the artificial severed head of Rāma, and the encounter

1 MBH., III. CCLXIV. 55

between Sugrīva and Rāvaṇa have not at all been mentioned in the Rāma episode. When preparation for the construction of a bridge over the ocean is going on in full swing, the ocean appears before Rāma in a dream and assures him of its full co-operation in the task he has undertaken. Here Rāma is not shown as making a passage for the bridge by throwing an arrow over the ocean. Kumbhakarṇa offers strong resistance to Lakṣmaṇa but later on is killed by the latter in the battle-field. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Indrajit destroys an artificial image of Sītā in front of Hanumat, and Rāma hearing of the death of Sītā falls into a swoon; but this incident has been left out in the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata*. Hanumat does not bring the mountain full of medicinal plants for bringing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa back to consciousness. By his magic power Rāvaṇa assumes the forms of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in order to deceive them and creates false demons for their destruction; but the sagacious Rāma suspecting a trick brings about his end by the application of Brahmāstra. The vital point of difference between the two stories is to be found in the non-mention of Sītā's ordeal of fire in the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ The wind-god there cannot bear the repudiation of Sītā in the presence of gods, monkeys and other respectable personages; so he himself testifies to the loyalty and chastity of Sītā. Rāma is repeatedly implored to accept Sītā by the wind-god and also by Daśaratha, who too becomes visible to Rāma at that very moment. Rāma complies with their requests, and returns to Ayodhyā with Sītā.

Scholars have discussed the question of the probable relationship between the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata*. Weber has placed the following logical alternatives:—(1) The Rāmopākhyāna is the source of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. (2) The Rāmopākhyāna is an epitome of the *Rāmāyaṇa* but of a *Rāmāyaṇa* more primitive than the epic in its present form. (3) The Rāmopākhyāna is an epitome of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with some noticeable modifications and

1 We cannot, however, put a great stress on this point of difference, as this incident of ordeal of fire is now known definitely to be a Southern interpolation into the text of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

changes. (4) The two poems might have been derived independently from a common source now lost to us. Sukthankar in his article entitled "*The Rāma episode and the Rāmāyaṇa*" has stated that the alternatives worked out by Weber may be admitted, but the logical possibilities unfortunately do not carry us very far in historical investigations. As Weber has arrived at no definite conclusion for the solution of this problem, no great importance can be attached to his findings. Hopkins has, however, advanced the view that the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata* has for its source some old Rāma legend known to the people of that age. The broad points of difference between the Rāmopākhyāna and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, he says, urge us to follow such a line of argument ; but a careful consideration of the two stories has led others to express quite a different view. Jacobi in his work "*Das Rāmāyaṇa*" attempted a correct solution of this problem. In the first place, he said that for the clarification of the allusions of the Rāma episode, a knowledge of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is inevitable. The writer of the episode must have been familiar with the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, otherwise he might not have inserted some allusions in his own story. Secondly, Jacobi has taken great pains to prove the verbal similarity of the two stories in many places. He has shown some glaring parallelisms to prove that the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata* is nothing but an abridged form of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Sukthankar has supported Jacobi whole-heartedly; and in order to give his conclusion greater weight, he has adduced eighty-six cases of verbal agreement in his article on the Rāma episode and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In some of these cases the lines of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have been quoted, and in other places the lines have been altered by the use of synonymous words. Change of words is also noticeable in some cases. Moreover, the name of Vālmīki and his epic have been mentioned in some places of the *Mahābhārata*.¹

The reference of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in some parvans proves conclu-

1 Bhrātā mama guṇa-ślāghyo buddhi-sattva-balānvitaḥ/
Rāmāyaṇe'ti-vikhyātaḥ śūro vānara-puṅgavaḥ//

sively that the writer of the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata* was particularly familiar with the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. So there should be no hesitation in accepting it as an abridged form of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Winternitz too holds a similar view. In his History of Indian Literature he says: "The Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata* is in all probability only a free abridged rendering of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and we may add of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in a very late form, fairly nearly approaching the present one. For to the author of the Rāmopākhyāna Rāma is already Viṣṇu become man,....."¹

Books I and VII of the *Rāmāyaṇa* for various reasons are regarded as later additions. In the rest of the book, that is, in books II to VI the main hero of the story has been pictured as a mortal warrior; his wonderful heroic exploits earn him unstinted admiration from his friends and well-wishers; but none of them lays any stress on his divinity. No attempt to hold him as the highest divinity is made in these portions. In later times Rāma was no longer looked upon as a mortal warrior but as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Writers of books I and VII which are later additions could not avoid the influence of such a religious idea and glorified Rāma in that light. Similar is the case with the writer of the Rāma episode of the *Mahābhārata*. Some instances will not be out of place here.²

Atha Dāśarathir vīro Rāmo mahābalaḥ/
Viṣṇur manuṣya-rūpeṇa cacāra vasudhām imām//

'The valiant and heroic Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, is Viṣṇu incarnate and roams over this earth in human form.'

Brahman, when approached by gods for protection from the persecution of the demons, consoled them by saying that according to his order Viṣṇu would soon be born as a human being for upholding the cause of religion.³

Tad arthanḥ avatīrṇo'sau man niyogāc caturbhujah//
Viṣṇuḥ praharatām śreṣṭhaḥ sa karmaitat kariṣyati//

1 HIL., I. p. 501

2 MBH., III. CXLVII. 28

3 Ibid., III. CCLX. 5

‘According to my direction the four-armed Viṣṇu, the best of warriors, is born as a man on earth for that cause; he will do this work.’

The Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata* after a few lines on Rāma’s birth describes elaborately Rāvaṇa’s austere penance, receipt of boon from Brahman, his influential position and thereby puts a distinct picture of Rāvaṇa before the readers from the very beginning of the story. This pattern of treatment is followed to a certain extent in Kṣemendra’s *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī* where a marked peculiarity cannot escape our notice. In the very beginning of the Uttara-kāṇḍa, he has given detailed information regarding the birth of Rāvaṇa and his penance. Mostly works on the Rāma story are concluded with the return of Rāma to Ayodhyā and his subsequent coronation, but the *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī* in imitation of book VII of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata* continues the story with the narration of Rāvaṇa’s birth and penance. In the *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka* in obedience to the orders of Rāma, the ocean willingly divides itself into two parts to make a passage for his army without giving him any scope for throwing arrows for this purpose. A similar account of the ocean making passage for monkeys is found in the Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata*, but here nothing definite can be stated regarding its influence on the author of the *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka*. Vāsudeva of the 17th century composed the *Rāma-kathā* on the six kāṇḍas of Vālmiki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*. The influence of the *Mahābhārata* is traceable here in the fact that a Gandharva woman Dundubhī by name was born as Mantharā. Rāma’s transformation into Viṣṇu pointed out already in the Rāmopākhyāna is also obviously noticeable in Bhāsa’s *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka*,¹ Kṣemendra’s *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī*² and Somadeva’s *Kathā-sarīt-sāgara*;³ but the authors

1 Mānuṣaṃ rūpam āsthāya cakra-śārṅga-gadādharah/
Svayaṃ kāraṇa-bhūtaḥ saṅ kāryārthī samupāgataḥ//
AbN., IV, 14

2 Devo Nārāyaṇaḥ śrīmān padma-nābho bibhur bhavān/
Svecchā-mātra-samunmeṣo yasyāyaṃ viśva-sambhramah//
Carācarasya sraṣṭāraṃ trātāraṃ jagatām api
Saṃhartāraṃ ca paryante tvām āhuḥ kāraṇaṃ tridhā//
RM., Uttara-kāṇḍa, 111.2

3 Viṣṇor avatatārāṃśo Rāvaṇocchedanāya yaḥ/ KSS., IX, 1. 60

of all these works might have been influenced by books I and VII of the *Rāmāyaṇa* where Rāma's divinity is repeatedly emphasised. It is not at all a matter of wonder that Kṣemendra, the author of the *Bhārata-mañjarī* and Somadeva who inserted, besides Rāma legend, other stories of the *Mahābhārata* in his *Kathā-sarit-sāgara* must have been familiar also with the divinity of Rāma of the Rāmopākhyāna. In the Alamkāravatī Lambaka of the *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*, an occasion similar to that of the Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata* is created for the narration of this story. There a Vidyādhara woman is found describing the story of Rāma for the purpose of consoling the love-sick Naravāhana.

2. KĀVYA

Naiṣadha-carita

Several interesting legends of the *Mahābhārata* have been re-narrated in a novel form in later literature. To this group belongs the story of Nala and Damayantī, which on account of its appealing characteristics has been amply utilised for the composition of dramas, Mahākāvya and Campū-kāvya. This story covering a large portion of the Vana-parvan of the *Mahābhārata* discusses in detail the tragic vicissitudes of Nala's fortune¹. As such later writers, taking into consideration its wide popularity and finding in it ample requisites for a literary composition, availed themselves of the opportunity of displaying their poetic talent by accepting it as their theme. Śrīharṣa, the author of the *Naiṣadha-carita*, won wide renown in his time just after the composition of his work on this legend. The *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādyā* is another work of the poet containing valuable discussion on the doctrines of Vedānta philosophy. His vast scholarship no doubt found an outlet through different works, but this *Naiṣadha-carita* made him a popular figure not only in literary circles of the day but also among the people fond of hearing the recitation of such Mahākāvya. From some verses appearing at the end of the poem, we come to know that Śrīharṣa was

¹ MBH., III. 50-78

the son of Śrīhīra and Māmalladevī¹, and he was honoured by the king of Kanyakubja². The genuineness of this statement is corroborated by Jaina Rājaśekhara Sūri's *Prabandha-kośa*,³ where he is stated to have flourished under Vijayachandra and Jayachandra of Kanauj in the second half of the 12th century.

During the exile of the Pāṇḍavas in the forest the great sage Vṛhadāśva comes to see them there. When Yudhiṣṭhira narrates to him their miserable life in the forest, he is moved and in order to give them consolation in their acute distress, relates the story of Nala and Damayantī. Nala, king of Niṣadha, while once roaming in his own garden, catches a swan gracefully wandering there. This swan plays an important part in the love-affairs of Nala and Damayantī. He informs Nala of Damayantī's charming beauty and her strong love for Nala, and he again describes the notable qualities of Nala to Damayantī, the beautiful daughter of Bhīma, the king of Vidarbha. After a short period king Bhīma makes arrangements for a *svayamvara* ceremony to give his daughter a chance for choosing a suitable husband. With the intention of winning Damayantī, some gods approach Nala to make him agree to act as their messenger. Nala is now on the horns of a dilemma, but his goodness prompts him to fulfil the wish of gods. Because of their previous knowledge of Damayantī's love for Nala, the gods assume the form of Nala in the hall set apart

- 1 Śrīharṣaṃ kavirāja-rāji-mukūṭālaṃkāra-hīraḥ sutam
Śrīhīraḥ suṣuve jitendriya-cayaṃ Māmalla-devī ca yam/
NC., I. 145
- 2 Tāmbūla-dvayam āsanañ ca labhate yaḥ Kānyakubjeśvarāt/
Yaḥ sāksāt kurute samādhiṣu paraṃ Brahma promodārṇavam//
Yat kāvyam madhu-varṣi dharṣita-parās tarkeṣu yasyoktayaḥ
Śrī-Śrī-harṣa-kaveḥ kṛtiḥ kṛtimude tasyābhyudiyād iyam//
NC., XXII. 155
- 3 Pūrvasyāṃ Vārāṇasyāṃ puri Govindacandro nāma rājā.
Tat putro Jayantacandraḥ. Tasya rājño bahavo vidvāṃsah.
Tatraiko Hīranāmā vipraḥ. Tasya nandanah prajñā-cakravartī
Śrīharṣa. Prabandha-kośa, XI. 152.

for the *svayamvara* ceremony, but highly satisfied to hear the laudatory verses recited by Damayantī in their honour, they appear in their own forms. The marriage of Damayantī with Nala is duly celebrated after she has placed her wedding garland on the neck of Nala ignoring completely the presence of other reputed kings. Kali, however, getting exasperated at this happy and blissful life of Nala wants to throw him in dire troubles. At a game of dice Nala is defeated by his brother Puṣkara who soon takes possession of the whole kingdom. Under the influence of Kali Nala loses the power of right thinking and judgment. One day when his faithful wife is fast asleep in the dreadful forest, he forsakes her there without thinking of her possible difficulties. Both the husband and wife separated from each other spend days in sufferings that baffle description. Damayantī, after a futile and frantic search for her husband, takes shelter in the capital of the country named Cedi. King Nala, with his appearance unrecognisable owing to the bite of the snake Karkoṭaka in course of his aimless wandering, comes to the capital of king Ṛtuparṇa, and there acts as his charioteer and cook. Damayantī somehow manages to come back to her father's capital, and at the end they are united.

This touchingly simple and popular story of the *Mahābhārata* has been dealt with in an ornate language in the *Naiṣadha-carita*. In this Mahākāvya consisting of twenty-two cantos, we do not get the whole account of Nala's life. The swan's effort to bring about the union of Nala and Damayantī, Nala's marriage with Damayantī, happy life of the lovers at the royal abode and appearance of Kali in the city of Niṣadha form the subject-matter of the poem. The tragic incidents of the couple's life, which generally arouse popular sympathy, have not been touched upon. This abrupt conclusion has been often commented upon ; and in the opinion of some scholars Śrīharṣa finished his poem, but the rest of it is lost to us along with other works mentioned in the epilogue stanzas. It must be frankly admitted that the available portion of the poem lacks the simple beauty of the original story of the *Mahābhārata* ; but judged by the standard of industrious metrical composition highly appreciated at

that age, the poet is remarkably successful in presenting a part of the Nala story in the most elaborate kāvya style full of decorative devices of different types. This simple story is recounted in the *Mahābhārata* in less than two hundred ślokaś, but Śrīharṣa's lengthy composition spreads over twenty-two cantos containing about two thousand and eight hundred verses. His descriptive tendency, discussion of philosophical doctrines including those of the Buddhists, Jainas, Cārvākas, and above all, the irresistible urge of displaying skill in the manipulation of language are the main reasons for the inordinate length of his poem. How peculiar it is that for describing in detail the beauty of Damayantī from head to foot by Nala, the author's imagination runs wild in canto VII, the whole of which is confined to this description. His inability to hold up the reins of imagination at the right moment has made his description in some places rather boring and monotonous. Damayantī's *svayaṃvara*, which is a matter of few verses in the epic, extends over five long cantos in the poem. Verses describing Nala and the dissembling gods simultaneously display the poet's capacity for using the figure of speech Śleṣa ; but without a commentary the meanings remain unintelligible. The whole of the seventeenth canto is devoted to a dry discussion of different philosophical doctrines. The poet is not at all interested in the smooth progress of the narrative ; on the contrary he seeks diversion in discussions which give him sufficient scope for displaying his technical skill or varied knowledge.

One significant departure from the original draws our notice. This is the depiction of Nala's character in a different light in the poem. In the *Mahābhārata* Nala accepts as his bounden duty the communication of the gods' intention to Damayantī, and gives it preference to his own interest, so he is satisfied by simply delivering the message ; but in the poetic composition, the failure of his mission causes serious mental conflict making him conscious that his honour is at stake. The poet has wide command over language, but his fondness for obsolete and uncommon words and the frequent use of Śleṣa rob his composition of lucidity

and sometimes tax the patience of readers. The delineation of the love-affairs of Nala and Damayantī in the eighteenth canto gives the poet an opportunity to illustrate the principles of *Kāma-śāstra*. Despite his demerits, some of which have been mentioned above, it cannot but be admitted that the poet is gifted with wide erudition, and his power of expression is vivid and vigorous. He excels in artificial forms and if we take into consideration the age and environs in which he was born and bred up, we may say without any hesitation that his place among the poets of the different times and climes is not altogether insignificant.

Nalodaya

The authorship of this work¹ was at one time wrongly attributed to Kālidāsa, but the treatment of the Nala story in this work does not warrant us to accept this view. A reader acquainted with Kālidāsa's outstanding poetic qualities will never admit it to be his creation. This is now definitely known to be the work of the Kerala poet Vāsudeva, son of Ravi and contemporary of Kulaśekhara Varman. The poet has taken up the Nala episode for illustrating the figure of speech Yamaka. The attempt to use figures concerned merely with a play on words never makes a literary composition graceful. Such poets are inspired to show their skill in the use of words and skilful construction of verses; but they do not take into consideration that such composition will not satisfy the requirements of true poetry.

The poet of *Nalodaya* has retold the Nala story of the *Mahābhārata* in his work in four cantos without any appreciable change. Nala's marriage with Damayantī is the subject-matter of the first canto. The next canto unnecessarily deals with the mode of love-affairs in accordance with the rules of *Kāma-śāstra*. The development of the story is brought to a standstill by such unnecessary description of love-affairs. The third canto again continues the story

¹ This was sometimes regarded as the work of Ravideva, the son of Nārāyaṇa and the author probably also of the *Rākṣasa-kāvya*.

beginning from Kali's intention to put Nala into trouble and ends with the narration of the couple's untold sufferings in the midst of the forest. The concluding canto tells of the final reunion. One thing can be said in favour of the poet that in order to illustrate his skill in the use of Yamakas, he has not followed the practice of unnecessary elaboration except in the second canto. The use of Yamakas at places without marring the poetic beauty of a poem makes it interesting, but when this verbal exercise is made cheaper by its continuous occurrence in every verse, the work is bound to be unpleasant. The following verse is a happy illustration of Yamaka:¹

Anuvratā samānanaṃ samānanaṃ Bhīmajā/
Tam Indunā samānanaṃ samāna-nandane vane//

'The daughter of Bhīma (Damayanti), united with respectable Nala having a face as beautiful as the Moon, enjoyed pleasures in the garden as lovely as Nandana-kānana.'

But here the poet makes a laborious effort to describe Nala's adverse fortune with quadruple Yamaka in a single verse²:

So' tha sadā roda-rataḥ Puṣkara-vijito Nalaḥ sadāro darataḥ/
Vyājād dārodarataḥ sva-purān niryātavān udārodarataḥ//

'Then Nala, conquered under some pretext by Puṣkara in the game of dice, went out of his own large city in great agony with his wife out of fear.'

Nalābhyudaya

The colophon *Vāmanabhaṭṭa-Bāṇa-kṛtau Nalābhyudaye* at the end of each canto makes it clear that the *Nalābhyudaya* is a work by Vāmana Bhaṭṭa Bāṇa, the author of *Sṛṅgāra-bhūṣaṇa*, the *Pārvatī-pariṇaya* and the *Vemabbūpāla-carita*. He is also known as Abhinava Bhaṭṭa Bāṇa as he spared no pains to imitate the prose style of Bhaṭṭa Bāṇa. In the beginning of his work *Vemabbūpāla-carita*³ he has stated

¹ NU., II. 23.

² NU., III. 7.

³ Bāṇa-kaviṇdrād anye kāṇāḥ khalu sarasa-gadya-saraṇiṣu/
Iti jagati rūḍam ayaśo Vatsakulo Vāmano' dhunā māṛṣṭi//

that it is the general opinion that Bāṇa only could write charming prose, but he himself is inclined to repudiate this false view.

The poet Abhinavabāṇa lived in the court of Vemabhūpāla, the learned ruler of Triliṅga country, who wrote the *Sṛṅgāra-dīpikā* and the *Saṅgīta-cintāmani*. A copper-plate, dated 1448 in the name of the son of Vema, enables us to come to the conclusion that his father lived in the first half of the fifteenth century, and on this basis the date of our poet is to be determined.

The only palm-leaf manuscript copy of the *Nalābhyudaya*, written in Malayalam characters, contains eight cantos and three ślokas of the 9th canto. Eight cantos have been published, but we do not get a complete picture of the Nala story from them. In the first canto the qualities and graceful appearances of both Nala and Damayantī have been described. Coming to know of each other's qualities they are attracted. The second canto refers to the role played by the swan in bringing about the union of the hero and the heroine. King Bhīma's decision to make arrangement for the *svayaṃvara* ceremony at the sight of his daughter's love-sick condition forms the subject-matter of the third canto. The next canto states Damayantī's strong intention to have Nala as her husband in spite of the earnest pleading for the gods by Nala, who has been selected by them to act as messenger. The following canto gives us an account of Damayantī's marriage, after she has passed the crucial test of differentiating Nala from other gods who come there assuming the shape of Nala; and the sixth canto contains a description of the lovers' dalliance. Nala's tragic turn of fortune after his crushing defeat in the game of dice, culminating in the pathetic desertion of Damayantī in a lonely forest infested with wild beasts, has been touched upon in the seventh canto. After a long and frantic search for her husband, she manages to find shelter in the palace of Subāhu, king of Cedi. In the last canto Nala, advised by the serpent Karkoṭaka who disfigures him by biting, accepts service under the name of Bāhuka in the palace of Ṛtuparṇa, king of Ayodhyā. Damayantī, on coming back to her father's palace, sends men in all directions in search of her husband. The existing eight cantos therefore do not give us the story of the final reunion.

This work of Vāmanabhaṭṭa demonstrates no ingenuity in the manipulation of the plot and invention of incidents. Still its polished style, clear diction and melodious verses make his composition highly appealing to the readers. Avoidance of unnecessary descriptions and non-application of ornate language for showing mere skill in play on words account for the directness and clearness of the plot of this work. The poet Śrīharṣa has written lengthy canto after canto over this Nala story, but Vāmanabhaṭṭa all along keeps his eye on brevity. He mentions some characteristics of a good composition in the very beginning of his *Vemabbhūpāla-carita*¹, and there is no doubt that the present work possesses those characteristics.

Sahṛdayānanda

The *Sahṛdayānanda* of Kṛṣṇānanda, a kāyastha of the Kapiñjala family and Mahāpātra to the king of Pūri, is a poetical work of fifteen cantos on the entire story of Nala and Damayantī. At the end of every canto the poet refers to himself as Sāndhivigrahika Mahāpātra.² His date cannot be later than the 14th century, as Viśvanātha in his *Sāhitya-darpaṇa* mentions a verse from this work and describes the poet as Sāndhivigrahika Mahāpātra. Charming, intelligible and elegant verses of Kṛṣṇānanda have made his composition more interesting to readers than the work of Śrīharṣa. The original story with slight deviation has been reproduced successfully in this work of Kṛṣṇānanda.

The first canto opens with the praise of Vīrasena and Nala, and ends with the departure of Nala's father for forest life after handing over the kingdom to his worthy son. The next three cantos are devoted to the role of the swan to facilitate the union of king Nala

1 Āpa iva jagati vimalā vāco rasanīyatam dadhati/
Kāvya-prapañca-sṛṣṭer yā mūlaṃ kavi-vidhātṛ-lokasya //,
Kāvyaṃ hi kavi-varāṇam kanakam iva ślāghya-varṇa-saṅkalitam/
Durjana-jihvā-jvalane taptam pravibhāti nirmalākāram //

VBC., I. 3-4.

2 Śrī-sāndhi-vigrahika-mahāpātra-śrī-kṛṣṇānanda-kṛtau
Sahṛdayānande mahākāvye Nalacarite.....

with the princess Damayantī. Damayantī's lovely appearance and countless qualities are described before king Nala and the swan does the same thing before Damayantī, who in her love-sick condition offers her necklace to the swan for giving it to Nala, whose passionate yearning for his lady-love increases day by day. In the fifth canto we find Nala's readiness to attend the *svayaṃvara* ceremony, but in the meantime he is requested to act as an emissary of the gods, and in the succeeding canto Damayantī is married to king Nala. In accordance with the rules of the Mahākāvya the seventh canto gives a description of the summer season. The following two cantos deal with the trials and tribulations of Nala, who falls an easy prey to the evil designs of his brother Puṣkara, and is ultimately compelled to wander with his dear wife in the midst of a dense forest inhabited by ferocious beasts. The separation of Damayantī from king Nala takes place under peculiar circumstances in this work. Points of agreement with the story found in the *Mahābhārata* are marked almost throughout, but in the matter of Damayantī's parting with Nala the poet has followed his own imagination. In order to draw the notice of Damayantī, Kali and Dvāpara assume the form of birds with golden wings. Nala in his attempt to get hold of them is carried to a distant region, and thus fails to be united with his dear wife, who in utter despair and distress rends the whole atmosphere by bitter lamentations in the eleventh canto. In the original story of the *Mahābhārata* Dvāpara is not shown as taking an active part in deceiving Nala and Damayantī. The remaining part of the story without any remarkable modification has been recounted in the last four cantos. Damayantī manages to reach the capital of Vidarbha and then king Bhīma sends men in all directions in search of Nala. Nala, on the advice of the serpent Karkoṭaka who disfigures him by biting, comes to the capital of king Ṛtuparṇa to serve him as a charioteer. The last part of the story is slightly modified. In the original Nala, on receipt of the news of Damayantī's *svayaṃvara* ceremony to be held again, is surprised greatly and reaches there within a short time with king Ṛtuparṇa; but in this work Nala comes to know of Damayantī's firm resolve to enter fire. Damayantī is

assured of her reunion with king Nala by a heavenly voice just before entering into the blazing fire. Being perturbed at this news, Nala arrives quickly at the capital of king Bhīma, and getting back his own previous form after wearing the cloth given to him by the serpent appears before Damayantī; and this paves the path for their ultimate reunion. The heroine's pangs of separation have become intolerable, she prefers death to lifelong agony; her fateful decision stirs up her lover who tries to reach her place as quickly as possible. Thus the strong love of the hero and the heroine has been expressed by the introduction of this touching scene at the end of this work.

The poet's unlaboured forceful composition characterised by clear diction, brevity and propriety makes a direct appeal.¹ Moreover, the poem is free from the intrusion of verbal embellishments. Critics, however, will not find poetic gift of a high order in his work, although he claims the power of instilling literary pleasure in them by his title *Sahṛdayānanda*.

Nala-vilāsa

Rāmacandra Sūri,² who is believed to be the writer of a hundred works, composed a drama *Nala-vilāsa* in seven acts on the popular story of Nala and Damayantī. He is not the dramatist to present the Nala episode in his drama in its original form; his work clearly reveals his inclination to reproduce the story with appreciable changes. An analysis of the *Nala-vilāsa* will show novel rehandling of the plot.

That king Nala will soon gain a charming lady as his wife has been cleverly hinted at in the first act through a dream dreamt by the king. The king to his utter surprise finds a jewel necklace on

1 Anati-prasṛte' bhītaḥ kṛśānau gaganāgraspr̥śi dhūma-cakravāle/
Nanṛtuḥ kṣaṇam unmadāḥ sakekaṃ nava-meghodaya-śaṅkino mayūrāḥ//
SHA., XIII. 4.

This verse describing a forest fire and its reaction on the peacocks proves Kṛṣṇānanda's power of writing in a language forceful and attractive at the same time.

2 The date of Rāmacandra Sūri has been mentioned in our discussion on his other drama "Nirbhaya-bhīma."

his hand, which suddenly falls on the ground, but after a while that necklace shines again round his neck. Nala's union, separation and reunion, that is, the entire plot of the drama has been tactfully denoted by this dream. The dramatist has made an attempt to make the situation complicated by the introduction of a k p lika secretly striving to unite Damayant  with Citrasena, the king of Cedi. The k p lika's evil design is detected with the result that he is immediately imprisoned by king Nala. The king, with his heart full of passionate love at the sight of a portrait of Damayant  seized from the k p lika, sends his intimate friend Kalahaṃsa and Makarik  to supply Damayant  with first-hand information about himself. This important part, however, is played by the swan in the *Mah bh rata*. The author has all along tried to introduce the human element in his drama as far as possible. In the second act we hear of the success of Kalahaṃsa and Makarik  in diverting the attention of Damayant  to Nala. They come back with Lambastan , the wife of k p lika Ghoraghoṇa, who will induce the king of Vidarbha to offer his daughter to Nala. The third and fourth acts develop the subject-matter in the traditional manner. On the eve of her *svayamvara* ceremony Damayant , while worshipping the god of love in the adjacent garden, happens to meet king Nala who has his camp pitched in a nearby place. This previous acquaintance makes it easy for Damayant  to place her wedding garland on the neck of king Nala in the court hall packed by notable kings of different provinces. In the original, Damayant  is much impressed at the sight of Nala approaching her as a messenger of gods. Being apprised of the bride's love for Nala, the gods appear in the form of Nala at the stately ceremonial of *svayamvara*, and assume their own shapes only on being appeased highly by Damayant . The dramatist employs, on the one hand, Kalahaṃsa and Makarik  to carry on matrimonial negotiations without bringing into prominence the part played by the swan, and on the other hand, he has totally done away with divine intervention in human affairs by not bringing the gods in the *svayamvara* hall. This tendency of the dramatist to eliminate superhuman intrusion is also manifest in the modification

of another circumstance. In the *Mahābhārata*, Kali's ill feeling to Nala is the main reason of his indescribable sufferings after his marriage with Damayantī ; but here the malicious activities of the kāpālika, the spy of Citrasena, cause his defeat in the game of dice with the prince Kūbara and throw him in the midst of unbounded miseries for a long period. Human beings in this world suffer under the influence of evil spirits—this is the deep-rooted belief of credulous people ; but a deep insight into worldly affairs makes it clear that for the fulfilment of evil motives and selfish ends, man does not waver to enter into an ignominious conspiracy to put his opponent into unlimited trouble anyhow. The fourth act gives usual description of renowned rulers present in the *svayamvara* hall. Damayantī's fateful decision to choose Nala as her husband has been highly acclaimed by all kings present there. Act V is devoted to the delineation of the sentiment of pathos. Providence smiles unnoticed in heaven, and the tremendous sufferings of the hero and the heroine commence. In the lonely forest king Nala is indirectly instructed to leave Damayantī, who is fast asleep, to her fate by an ascetic who is an ally of that mischievous kāpālika. That parting scene, echoing with Nala's remonstrances which indicate his excessive reluctance to desert his beloved, has been charmingly portrayed by the dramatist. From the sixth act we come to know that king Nala, with his figure deformed through the influence of his father, renders his humble service as cook in the kitchen of Dadhiparṇa, the king of Ayodhyā. In the *Mahābhārata*, Nala bit by the Karkoṭaka serpent loses his lovely form, and gradually repairs to the kingdom of Ṛtuparṇa to accept service as a trainer of horses. A dramatic performance dominated by the depiction of the sentiment of pathos, that is, the device of an inset play on Damayantī's miserable plight after her desertion in the forest, is arranged in the sixth act to arouse the feelings of Nala attending the performance with the king of Ayodhyā. The act closes with an announcement of Damayantī's *svayamvara* thus necessitating the speedy arrival of Nala in the royal palace of Vidarbha for the final reunion. In the beginning of the seventh act, we find Damayantī's strong determination to enter fire on hearing a false

news about the demise of Nala from an ally of the k p lika, who is always intent on misleading the main characters. Nala's timely arrival in the capital of Vidarbha and his recovery of the original form only by remembering his father obliterate all apprehensions smoothly, and pave the path for the union of the hero and the heroine.

Points of disagreement from the *Mah bh rata* story are to be noted in R macandra's work in many respects. Some of the names have been slightly changed. Nala's father has been named as Ni adha instead of V rasena and prince K bara is mentioned in place of the brother Pu kara. The charioteer of  tupar a is known as J vala, but in the drama a royal officer of Dadhipar a is so named. In the epic Kali specially assists Pu kara to defeat king Nala in the game of dice, but in the drama prince K bara acquires proficiency in the game because of training received from Ghoragho a. Nala seeks refuge in the kingdom of  tupar a and Damayant  in the palace of Sub hu, the king of Cedi ; but in the drama Nala is said to have taken shelter with Dadhipar a and Damayant  with  tupar a. Damayant , eating the flesh cooked by Nala disguised as B huka, comes to know of Nala's presence, but in the drama she learns the skill of the cook of Dadhipar a in S ryap ka. She sends Kalaha sa and Makarik  to study the mind of her husband who has come to see the dramatic performance. The dramatist's major innovation is demonstrated in the well-planned conspiracy laid against Nala by king Citrasena with the help of his spies Ghoragho a and Lambodara, the former being the preceptor of the latter, to prevent the union of Damayant  with any king other than Citrasena. An attempt is made to make this conspiracy successful even at the end of the drama. Besides these modifications, pathetic lamentation of Damayant  and her account of wanderings after her desertion by Nala have been greatly shortened to suit dramatic purpose.

R macandra S ri has thus displayed distinctive dramatic genius by treating the story in his own way. No other dramatist or poet has introduced so many significant changes to remodel the story. Such fertile inventiveness coupled with felicity of expression and gift of phrasing results in a notable production ; but here

although the dramatist has endeavoured to write in a Vaidarbhī style characterised by a language not too difficult, his diction is yet lacking in vigour and loveliness, and stands in the way of an elegant rendering of the legend.

Nala-caritra-nāṭaka

Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, a grandson of Appayya Dīkṣita's brother, was born in 1613 A. D. This great scholar of high erudition and outstanding ability served the Madura Nāyakas in such capacities as prime-minister, regent and adviser for thirty-five years; but at last being disgusted with the whimsical temperament of his sovereign, he retired from service. The sovereign, however, honoured the great scholar by a free gift of the village Palamadai on the left bank of the Tāmraparṇī, and here he spent the last part of his life in deep meditation.

Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita wrote two major Mahākāvya—*the Śivalilārṇava* in twenty-two cantos and *Gaṅgāvatarāṇa* in eight cantos. His *Nīlakaṇṭha-vijaya-campū* composed in 1637 A. D. won high appreciation in literary circle. His drama *Nala-caritra-nāṭaka*, as the name signifies, relates the story of Nala and Damayantī. It is evident that writers utilising the story of Nala and Damayantī as the theme of their compositions are not prone to major modifications, the original being followed almost faithfully in most cases; but as we have seen already in the case of the *Nala-vilāsa* of Rāmacandra Sūri that the dramatist has recast the whole story in a quite different way making it full of conflicts and counter conflicts. so also Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, while touching the outlines of the Nala story, has considerably changed it by free play of imagination. It is a drama in six acts, the sixth act being unfinished in all manuscripts. The dramatist has stated the reason for selecting this story for the plot of his drama in the prologue.¹

1 Kālaṃ jetum upāyau dvau kali-kalmaṣa-saṃplutam/
Kathā vā Niṣadheśasya Kāśī vā viśva-pāvanī//

In the first act king Nala draws a picture of a beautiful woman dreamt by him in front of Vidūṣaka. The astrologer Satyācārya is then called there for an interpretation of his dream. The astrologer after a good deal of calculation makes this prediction that this woman will be the wife of the king, but serious impediments stand in the way. Unexpectedly the swan appears there with a letter from Damayantī. The dream of the king is an innovation of the poet.

The second act makes the stage ready for dramatic conflict and the chance of union decreases temporarily. The dramatist does not bring four gods on the scene ; he brings Indra only as a rival suitor. Indra, while coming towards the earth with his charioteer Mātali to attend the *svayamvara* ceremony, learns from his attendant Viśvāvasu that Damayantī is strongly attached to Nala and at this he grows dejected. Damayantī too coming to know of Indra's fascination for her is greatly upset. Here we find a vivid depiction of serious mental conflict of Indra and Damayantī.

The dramatist in the third act makes a wide display of his originality by uniting the hero and heroine in a different surrounding. The two goddesses Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī are eager for their union, and as such make proper arrangement for their first meeting in the garden adjoining the temple of Gaurī. Damayantī's friends are instructed to take Damayantī to the temple of Gaurī for alleviating her mental agony, and king Nala also is advised to come there at a time fixed previously. Goddess Sarasvatī is happy to find both the hero and heroine in the temple of Gaurī and places the hand of Damayantī on that of Nala in the presence of the deity. Vidūṣaka then enters there with the news that Indra wants to meet Nala for acting as his messenger to Damayantī.

The fourth act shows the helpless condition of Nala struggling hard to arrive at a quick decision for Indra's proposal. It is impossible for him to give up Damayantī and at the same time his mind is not strong enough to reject Indra's proposal outright. His hasty commitment for acting as Indra's messenger incurs the displeasure of goddess Sāvitrī. Vidūṣaka comes to his rescue with the information that Bhīma, the king of Vidarbha, has expressed his desire

to give his daughter in marriage to Nala ignoring Indra. Nala welcomes this proposal, but dangers lie ahead of him. Indra suspects some duplicity in Nala's action and decides to punish him.

The role of two goddesses Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī reminds us of similar activities of goddesses Bhāgīrathī and Earth in the *uttara-rāma-carīta*. Influence of Bhavabhūti is distinct in fifth act too, where Damayantī's bad dream, signifying the possibility of separation, unnerves king Nala looking lovingly at the face of his beloved sleeping by his side. This makes us remember similar situation narrated in the first act of the *Uttara-rāma-carīta*. Thus the stage is set ready for their impending separation.

The sixth act displays hostile attitude of Indra whose friendship with Puṣkarākṣa does not augur well for Nala. Tense situation prevails in the entire kingdom and the reason thereof cannot be accurately detected. The play ends here abruptly.

The abrupt conclusion of the play is really a great handicap to its critical analysis. It is true that the dramatist has introduced modifications for presenting the story in a new garb, but some drawbacks in the narration of the story cannot escape our attention. The first part of the drama demonstrates dramatist's willingness to alter the story profusely, but in the second part the story is dealt with in a very casual manner. The author has not described the *svayamvara* ceremony, so the decision of king Bhīma for selecting Nala as the husband of his daughter without giving a description of the *svayamvara* ceremony, which occupies an important position in the original, is rather unusual. Indra's conspiracy with Puṣkarākṣa and Kali is not explicitly stated. Had the author been able to maintain the standard of his writing as seen in the first half in subsequent portion too, his work would have been highly impressive,

3. CAMPŪ

Nala-campū

The widely known Campū-kāvya associated with the story of Nala and Damayantī is *Nala-campū* or *Damayantī-kathā* of Trivikrama

Bhaṭṭa,¹ also nicknamed Yamunā Trivikrama. From the Nausari inscription of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Indra III of 915 A.D., some information can be gathered regarding his date, as the writer of this inscription is none but our poet Trivikrama.

In seven long ucchvāsas the poet attempts to narrate the Nala story, but being a staunch supporter of verbal embellishment, his attention is diverted from the main story with the inevitable result that his work betrays faulty features of a laboured composition. The narration of the story proceeds at snail's pace ; and at the end we find that the poet is able to narrate the story up to Nala's secret presence in the palace of Vidarbha princess to place before her the case of gods. In the very beginning of his work, the poet has emphasised the idea of making a composition valuable by a wide display of astonishing feats of verbal jugglery. Thus the poet has expressed a desire to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors Bāṇa and Subandhu who won wide recognition for their skill in the play on words. Rhetorical devices, precision and energy of phrasing, recondite vocabulary, volley of puns and inversions are fully utilised by them for expression of their thoughts ; but Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa has not the ability to maintain such array of verbal tricks in his composition, which is rather overloaded with difficult compounds and long sentences.

The first ucchvāsa opens with a short account of the poet himself. So far as the narration of the story is concerned, the main object of this ucchvāsa is to depict the attraction of the hero and the heroine for each other in glowing terms in a manner different from that of the epic. His imaginative touches side by side with word plays are obviously distinct in some portions of the work. The description of the Niṣadha country, king Nala and his minister Śrutaśīla unknown in the epic has become rather dull. To maintain a true poetic atmosphere, he brings in the description of rainy season, but that too

1 The poet is the son of Nemāditya and grandson of Śridhara. He has given some valuable information regarding his family in the beginning of his composition.

does not ward off monotony. In the epic the swan plays a vital role in effecting the union of Nala and Damayantī, but here some preliminary steps are taken for developing that situation. Urged by a desire to kill a boar engaged in destroying the forest, the king in course of hunting speedily arrives there, where a traveller from the Deccan gives him some information about Damayantī. The latter too gathers knowledge about Nala in a like manner. The swan, however, becomes the most important figure in the second ucchvāsa for his unusual eagerness to bring the two lovers closer and closer. The king happens to meet the swan in the forest where he comes attracted by the sweet music of a kinnara pair. The king then learns a full history of his beloved from the swan. That Damayantī was born through the grace of Lord Śiva is not mentioned in the epic; this novel idea regarding her birth is given perhaps to justify her innumerable divine virtues. In the succeeding ucchvāsa the story does not develop much, as the dream of king Bhīma and Priyaṅgumañjarī is dwelt upon in a lengthy manner. This section is brought to a close with a description of the birth of Damayantī. Similar divine grace responsible for the birth of Nala is also made known in the fourth ucchvāsa, which closes with the departure of Vīrasena to forest after handing over the kingdom to Nala. Points of disagreement from the epic show the poet's tendency to deviate from the original at will. The role of the swan is continued even in the fifth ucchvāsa, where Nala is put to difficulty on account of the request of the gods to plead their cases before the heroine. The prime minister Śrutaśīla's effort to pacify the king's uneasiness in critical hours is the poet's own innovation. In the sixth ucchvāsa, Damayantī's initiative in sending a letter by her messenger Puṣkarākṣa to king Nala for bringing him to Kuṇḍina has some novelty in it. That too is a figment of our poet's imagination. King Nala has undertaken a very difficult task, and in order to comply with the request of the gods, he first sends his attendant Parvataka in the seventh ucchvāsa to Damayantī. Delighted to hear the news that Damayantī is rather sad at the gods' interference in her marriage, king Nala approaches her and returns satisfied at her refusal to select

any of the gods as her husband. Herein the story is abruptly concluded.

4. SLEṢA-KĀVYA

Rāghava-naiṣadhīya

It is a poem of two cantos by Haradatta Sūri. The stories of Nala and Rāma have been recounted in this work simultaneously by the poet with the help of the figure of speech Śleṣa. From the concluding verses¹ of the poem, we come to know that Haradatta Sūri is the son of Jayaśaṅkara belonging to the race of Garga. Nothing can be gathered about his date and provenance from those verses; but from his own commentary where Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita is mentioned as Dikṣita, it appears that he could not have been earlier than the 17th century.

The poet has narrated the two stories briefly in the first canto consisting of one hundred twenty-four verses. The poet has shown ingenuity neither in the invention of the plot, nor in inserting imaginative touches to enhance the poetic value of the work. With his attention solely engrossed in composing verses referring to two stories by a play on words, the poet has completely ignored the qualities of a good composition. Such word-play, when displayed to absurd excesses, makes a composition highly boring to readers. Taking into consideration the deficiencies of such composition, the poet has finished his stories in one canto and described the six seasons in the second canto. The addition of the second canto, so far as the narration of the two stories is concerned, serves no useful purpose. The poet has all along given his commentary to make the different meanings of his verses intelligible to readers. This being his own composition, he is really the proper person to explain his

1 Gargaṣi-vaṃśa-tilako Jayaśaṅkarākhyo
 Jyotirvidāṃ praṇayakṛt sukavindra-mānyaḥ/
 Ādhyātmikāvagati-śānti-parāyaṇo'bhūd
 Dharmopadeśana-ṭaṭur naya-bodha āsīt//
 Tat sūnur Haradatta ity amala-dhīḥ.....RN., II, 21-2.

verses. One such verse showing his skill in the use of Śleṣa is cited here with his own explanation.¹

Ity uktaḥ kṛta-hūtim sa nata-sutaṃ taṃ niraikṣiṣṭa/
Ātmajayātata-harṣaḥ svāheya-dhṛteḥ svarūpa-sampattim//

‘Thus said by Mandodarī Rāvaṇa, who was delighted for his confidence in his own victory on account of his possession of powerful weapons, looked at his son who was called, who bowed down to him and maintained his natural dignity.’ (Rāmāyaṇa)

‘Thus said by Damayantī, Bhīma delighted by his daughter looked at Nala who was called, who paid respect to him and who got back his natural appearance after wearing the fine cloth given by the serpent.’ (Nala story).

Some other minor works on the same story deserve our passing notice here. In Vandārubhaṭṭa’s *Uttara-naiṣadha*, a poem of sixteen cantos, we find an interesting description of Nala’s later life. In the *Naiṣadha-carita*, Śrīharṣa has not touched upon the last part of the story, so this *Uttara-naiṣadha* must be regarded as a sequel to Śrīharṣa’s book. Vandārubhaṭṭa is unmistakably influenced by Śrīharṣa’s style, but he has succeeded in places in overshadowing the fame of his predecessor. The *Nalānanda-nāṭaka* by Jīvavivudha, *Nalavarṇana kāvya* by Lakṣmīdhara, *Nala-bhūmipāla-rūpaka*, *Nalavikrama-nāṭaka*, *Naladamayantīya*—all these works are mentioned in the introduction of the drama *Nala-vilāsa* published in Gaekwad’s Oriental Series. The *Naiṣadbānanda*, a drama in seven acts, is believed to have been written by Kṣemīśvara. Rājaśekhara of the 10th century did not miss the opportunity of utilising Nala story for composing his work *Nala-rāmāyaṇa*. There is another work *Nalayanī-carita* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. The poem *Nala-yādava-rāghava-pāṇḍavīya* shows how far Sanskrit language can be twisted to narrate four stories through the same verse.

1 R.N., I. 107.

CHAPTER IV

Works on Myths of the Mahābhārata

1. KĀVYA

Kumāra-sambhava

Innumerable myths describing the power of the gods, their benign attitude to devotees, their enmity and hard struggle with the demons are found in different portions of the *Mahābhārata*. One such myth recounting the birth of powerful Skanda and his success in killing Mahiṣāsura, the demon who struck terror in the minds of all gods, occurs in the Vana-parvan. The theme of Kālidāsa's *Kumāra-sambhava*, a poem of seventeen cantos, has much in common with this pauranic myth. Kālidāsa derives his plots from legendary and historical sources to reshape them by dint of his ever fertile fancy and poetic genius. In the case of the *Kumāra-sambhava*, remarkable changes from the original theme cannot escape our attention. This ancient myth is found in the different Purāṇas,¹ but here we shall keep ourselves confined to the *Mahābhārata* version. The seventeen cantos of the poem are known to exist, but it is almost universally regarded that the last nine cantos are not Kālidāsa's composition but later additions by some enthusiastic writer to complete the theme with a description of the birth of Skanda and the destruction of Tāraka at his hands. Inferiority in poetic composition, style and diction has led many to doubt the genuineness of these cantos. Some are unwilling to regard even the eighth canto as Kālidāsa's composition as the whole of it has been devoted to the description of the amorous sports of adorable deities. Kālidāsa, in their opinion, is not the poet to indulge in such inelegant description which has evoked strong criticism even from writers on poetics. But Kālidāsa's characteristic style and diction and Mallinātha's commentary up to the eighth canto

1 Our poet may have been influenced by the story narrated in the Śiva-purāṇa, Brahma-purāṇa and Kālikā-purāṇa.

confirm the idea that the poem is composed in eight cantos. And it may be further stated that the title *Kumāra-sambhava* can also be suitably applied to Kālidāsa's composition. The poem of the master artist perchance prompted some later writer to complete the story by the addition of the succeeding cantos. These cantos, however, give us the opportunity of a comparative analysis of the contents of the *Kumāra-sambhava* and the myth of the *Mahābhārata*. The availability of the present sequel, the authenticity of which has not yet been proved, makes it binding on us to discuss the myth of the *Mahābhārata* in this part.

In the *Mahābhārata*¹, Mahiṣāsura is said to have persecuted the gods for nothing. He receives a boon from Brahman on the strength of which he defies every one in the three worlds. When this demon is about to attack Lord Śiva, he at that crucial moment remembers his own son Skanda, who at once makes his appearance and immediately overpowers the great demon by an admirable display of his valiance. Lord Indra embraces him and praises him highly for his enterprises.

The story of Pārvatī's marriage with Śiva is found in the different Purāṇas, but it is very difficult to say what source is exactly used by the poet. To a poet of Kālidāsa's powers, the source of a work is of minor importance and his real genius consists in refashioning and altering the theme in a novel manner. The poet commences his composition with a graphic description of the snowclad mountain Himalayas. The sage Nārada informs the mountain that his daughter will be married to Śiva in future. At that time tyrannies of Tārakāsura in heaven embitter the minds of the gods who are ultimately compelled to approach Brahman for assistance. The son of Śiva only will alleviate their distress. Knowing this, the gods advise cupid to arouse passion in the ascetic Śiva. His attempt causes the intense wrath of Śiva with the result that he has to pay the extreme penalty for his disobedience to Lord Śiva whose wrath reduces him to ashes. Rati's heart-rending lamentation in the fourth canto stirs up deep sympathy of all readers in her agony that baffles descrip-

1 MBH., III, 220-1.

tion. Later on Śiva is highly pleased at the strong determination of Pārvatī to get him as her husband. Śiva tests her in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa and when she is able to stand the test, Lord Śiva throws off his mask and expresses his desire to marry her. Their marriage is duly celebrated with great pomp and splendour in Oṣadhiprastha. After a short period the birth of Skanda causes widespread rejoicing in heaven. The boy gradually grows up and at last fulfils the divine mission by putting an end to the life of Tāraka in a bitter fight against the demons.

Thus we find how Kālidāsa adds new colour and charm to this pauranic legend by changing it in a distinctive manner. His conception and execution of plot in all his works are marvellous. The fact that Pārvatī is the daughter of mountain Himalayas stirs up his imaginative power to describe vividly its beauty, grandeur and serene atmosphere in a language lucid as well as brief in the very beginning of his poem. Kālidāsa in this poem describes the activities of divine beings by investing them with human characteristics. Umā's severe penance without taking into consideration physical hardship reminds us of such strong determination also of well known mortal beings. The skilful description of the spring season and the earnest attempt of the god of love to arouse passion in Lord Śiva in canto III, with the ulterior motive of liberating the gods from the oppressive bondage of demon Tāraka by the birth of Skanda, is a fine example of Kālidāsa's poetic excellence. The simple fact that the gods approach Lord Brahman for the annihilation of the insolent demon gives him a chance of dwelling upon the doctrines of Hindu philosophy in canto II. Rati's bitter lamentation after the destruction of the god of love shows how adept Kālidāsa is in delineating sentiment of pathos too. The mode of conversation between Umā of strong determination and Śiva in the guise of a Brahmacārin has been well conceived to reveal that true love triumphs ultimately leading to the union of Śiva and Umā to the best satisfaction of all gods anxious for the speedy destruction of Tāraka. Kālidāsa's creative imagination admirably sets the ground ready for the union of lovers in a graceful language and polished style, but this grand standard of imagery and style is totally lacking in the later portions of the poem.

The field for the birth of Skanda is set after an elaborate description of the dalliance of lovers. Skanda's fight with demons leading to his victory over Tāraka is gone through in an unnecessarily lengthy language. It cannot be easily believed that a talented poet like Kālīdāsa, a votary of brief suggestive language, would deal with the rest of the story in an uninteresting manner. This is the reason which prompts a critic to question the genuineness of the last nine cantos.

2. DRAMA

Triṣura-dāha.

As compared with the legends we find paucity of myths in the *Mahābhārata*. Noteworthy compositions based on the myths of the *Mahābhārata* are again very few. The myth relating to the destruction of three cities of the demons by all powerful Lord Śiva gave impetus to some writers for a few literary compositions. Vatsarāja's *Triṣura-dāha* belongs to this group of composition. It has been already mentioned in our discussion on the *Kirātārjunīya-vyāyoga* that his excessive fondness for the rigid application of the laws of dramaturgy has made his works rather stereotyped and unimpressive. Moreover, the dramatist has not the ability to pour his fancy into a faultless mould. This work of feebler dramatic quality and character, therefore, does not evince sound literary taste. This peculiar mode of following the rules of dramaturgy is distinctly noticeable in the *Triṣura-dāha*, where the author has left no stone unturned to observe all the characteristics of that type of dramatic composition known as "*Dima*".¹ The dramatist is inclined to depart from the original only

1 Māyendrajāla saṃgrāma-krodhodbhrāntādi-ceṣṭitaiḥ/
 Uparāgaś ca bhūyiṣṭho Dimaḥ Khyātetivṛttakaḥ//,
 Aṅgī raudra-rasas tatra sarve 'ṅgāni rasāḥ punaḥ//,
 Catvāro 'ṅkā matā neha Viṣkambhaka-praveśakau//,
 Nāyaka deva-gandharva-yakṣa-rakṣo-mahoragāḥ/
 Bhūta-preta-piśācādyā ṣoḍaśātyantam uddhatāḥ//
 Vṛttayaḥ Kauśiki-hiṇā nirvimarṣās ca sandhayaḥ/
 Dīptāḥ syuḥ ṣaḍrasāḥ śānta-hāsyā-śṛṅgāra-varjitāḥ//,

when he has to create situations for showing the specialities of Dima. For his own purpose he has also omitted many details of the original as will be evident from a comparison of the treatment of the plot in the *Mahābhārata* and *Tripura-dāha*.

The story of the *Tripura-dāha* is narrated by Duryodhana to Śalya, the king of Madra, in the Karṇa-parvan of the *Mahābhārata*¹ for inducing the latter to act as charioteer of Karṇa in the impending battle of Kurukṣetra. The vivid narration of the story exerts influence on the mind of Śalya who ultimately agrees to be the charioteer of Karṇa. The story runs thus—Tārakākṣa, Kamalākṣa and Vidyunmālin, the three insolent sons of Tārakāsura, after pleasing Brahman by severe austerities demand a boon, through the influence of which they will be killed by that deity only who will be able to raze to the ground their three cities with one arrow after a period of one thousand years. They have three invincible cities of gold, silver and iron constructed by Mayadānava. Three brothers, being the rulers of three cities, show their eagerness to give refuge to thousands of demons who muster strong under their banner persecuting cruelly the dwellers of the three worlds. Through the grace of the creator, one of the demons Hari by name manages to get possession of a lake, the water of which has the potentiality of revitalising with greater strength the demons wounded by weapons. Frightened at the unbounded strength of the demons and disappointed at the same time at his inability to overthrow them with the help of his thunderbolt, Indra, followed by other depressed gods, approaches the creator with due reverence to make him specially conscious of this frightful danger. Indra is informed that the only remedy of this critical danger lies in the hand of Mahādeva. On hearing of the brutal atrocities of those mischief-makers, Lord Śiva accedes to the demands of the gods and urges them to construct a suitable chariot for him. The chariot is built with substantial materials collected from different sources. After the construction of such powerful chariot, the gods, at the request of Lord Śiva to select a charioteer stronger than him, implore creator Brahman to shoulder this responsibility. Lord Mahādeva fulfils the long cheri-

¹ MBH., VIII. 24.

shed desire of the gods by destroying the demons outright in a manner as previously demanded by them.

The *Tripura-dāha* of Vatsarāja seeks to relate this well known myth of the *Mahābhārata* in four acts. Nārada, the ardent devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, unknown in the original has been conceived to play an important role in this dramatic composition. The dramatist has taken all possible care to portray a true picture of this sage who is ever fond of picking a quarrel between two groups or two persons. The first act commences with an exchange of words between Nārada and Rāhu, thus giving the author a good chance to hold before the spectators the character of Nārada in its true colour. Deeply enraged at the arrogance of bodiless Rāhu, Nārada in a hurry enters the conference of the gods, where a vital attempt is being made by all the gods to induce Lord Śiva to render valuable assistance for the speedy annihilation of ferocious demons. A verse full of vigour, uttered by Nārada, is sufficient to evoke the wrath of Lord Śiva, in consequence of which he angrily expresses his desire to make heaven free from danger for the well-being of gods. By designing this meeting of the gods in the first act of his dramatic composition, the author gets an opportunity of bringing on the stage such gods as Indra, Agni, Yama, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Kubera, Bṛhaspati etc, all of whom support the move for taking necessary action against the demons urgently. The entrance of the goddess earth with the serpent Śeṣa for her deliverance from the tyranny of demons upsets Lord Śiva all the more. Dharma and Himālaya too come to attend the conference for formulating a plan for the destruction of demons. In order to observe the characteristic of Dima that there should be sixteen haughty characters, the author in the first act has brought as many characters as possible and demonstrated their wrathful attitude to demons. In the original prominence is shown to Indra, the leader of the deputation, but in the *Tripura-dāha*, Indra's prominence has been overshadowed by other characters present there. Another deviation is to be noted in the fact that in the drama the gods approached Śiva directly without first consulting the creator. At the close of the first act Nārada is instructed by Śiva to see the creator and Viṣṇu on whose approval the demons would be killed. In the second act, the dramatist seeks to create an intricate

situation by deceiving both Śiva and Brahman with the help of a demon assuming the shape of a false Nārada; but this device has been adopted by the dramatist not for enhancing the dramatic significance of the situation but rather for adhering to the rules of dramaturgy that activities involving delusion, art of magic, war, bewildering movements due to anger must be shown in a Dima. Viṣṇu avoids an unhappy situation by detecting the evil motive of the demons soon and overpowers them by deep darkness, when they are ready to enter the city of Indra. In the third act, some indication of the ultimate destruction of the cities made of iron and silver is given. Three brothers are named here as Sarvatāpa, Sūryatāpa and Candratāpa. The first attack on the iron and silver cities was repelled however by Sūryatāpa and Candratāpa. Kārtikeya expresses his strong desire to fight with Sarvatāpa who, considering the young age of the adversary, refuses to measure his strength with him. In anticipation of the imminent downfall of the demons a deep gloom fills his mind; but he finds some solace and consolation at the sudden appearance of their preceptor Bhārgava on the spot. Kārtikeya is prevented from fighting with the demons by Nārada at the end of the third act. In the original Kārtikeya's intense enthusiasm to participate in the coming warfare is not mentioned at all. In the fourth act Bhārgava, the preceptor of demons, scents danger ahead and exhibits his eagerness to avert the impending calamity by performing some auspicious rites. Śiva with Brahman as charioteer is ready to destroy the three cities with one arrow. Bhārgava, in order to create some confusion in the minds of gods, brings into view another group of three cities; but the destruction of demons being imminent, they misunderstand this good design of Bhārgava and destroy them with their own arrows. A bewildered person in danger forgets everything, and this is quite true of Sarvatāpa who does not hesitate to curse his preceptor even at that critical moment. At last the decisive hour for the destruction of demons comes and the gods are extremely jubilant at the downfall of their enemies. The arrangement of events in the fourth act is more satisfactory having been depicted with appreciable dramatic interest and glitter of technical skill. The manner the dramatist handles the event of creation of a false group of three cities and consequent

nervousness of demons at their sight is creditable indeed. At places he is really able to show signs of originality, but this characteristic, without getting any chance of possible manifestation, is cramped under the pressure of his excessive enthusiasm to follow strictly the rules of dramaturgy. It is clear from the aforesaid discussion that he has departed from the original in several places only to exemplify the canons of dramaturgy; and in this process wherever it has been possible for him to show dramatic genius, he has done that in spite of this intention.

Some other compositions dealing with this well-known myth deserve mention here. The *Tripura-dāha* by Ravisūnu, the *Tripura-dahana* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, the *Tripura-dahana* by Vāsudeva and an uparūpaka entitled *Tripura-mardana* are some other works whose literary worth is negligible, and as such they do not call for detailed discussion. Nṛsiṃha-rāya, the father of Ānandarāya makhin, wrote a campū-kāvya under the caption *Tripura-vijaya-campū*.

CHAPTER V

Legends of the Mahābhārata in other Works

Kathā-sarīt-sāgara

Numerous popular tales are collected in the 11th century metrical adaptations of the *Bṛhatkathā*. The original *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya is lost to us, but the two Kashmirian versions namely, the *Bṛhatkathā-mañjarī*¹ of the polymath Kṣemendra and the *Kathā-sarīt-sāgara*² of Somadeva assist us to form some idea about the original *Bṛhatkathā*. Here we are to confine our attention to the *Mahābhārata* legends that have crept in the *Kathā-sarīt-sāgara* in the course of the progress of other stories. Stories of Sunda Upasunda,³ Purūravas and Urvaśī, Nala and Damayantī and some other moral stories have found their way in this collection of popular tales. It is useless to note down points of agreement and disagreement of all those stories in detail as they, being nothing but inset stories, have been narrated with remarkable brevity. This work uses the device of placing stories within a long story. Stories of Sunda and Upasunda,⁴ Purūravas and Urvaśī,⁵ Kuntī and Durvāsas⁶ are inserted cleverly within the famous legend of Udayana and Vāsavadattā.

The epic background of the Sunda and Upasunda story is recalled by the trouble-monger Nārada, who wants to point out the evils of the company of women to the king of Vatsa ready to start for the village of Lāvāṇaka with his beloved wife Vāsavadattā. The poet creditably finishes the story in six verses only, and the measured words of these six verses are sufficient for the portrayal of the vivid picture of the two demons who are power-mad and licentious too. In an age

1 Ed. Sivadatta and Parab, NSP., Bombay, 1901.

2 Ed. Durgaprasad and Parab, NSP., Bombay, 1889 (reprinted 1903, 1915 etc.)

3 MBH., I. 201-4.

4 KSS., III. I. 135-40.

5 KSS., III. III. 4-30.

6 KSS., II. II. 36-42.

when ornate language and verbal complexities dominated the writings of an author, such pictorial narration in simple language deserves high praise.

The story of Kuntī and Durvāsas is told in connection with the advice of Padmāvati's mother to her daughter to behave with Vāsava-dattā in a polite manner, as divine persons often loiter on the surface of this earth in disguised forms. Durvāsas' wrathful temper and consequent pacification due to Kuntī's agreement to place the hot pot of sweet rice on her back are related by seven verses only. These few words paint a glowing picture of the angry sage, and at the same time bring into relief Kuntī's extraordinary forbearance for which she is able to satisfy the whimsical demand of her guest. The story of offering sweet rice to the sage is our poet's own innovation, no such story to support Kuntī's patience and bring into prominence at the same time the irascible temperament of this ever angry ascetic is found in the epic. There the daughter of Kuntibhoja is mentioned to have received a lucky boon from this sage by rendering him hospitality.

The poet gets a chance of introducing the story of Purūravas and Urvaśī in connection with the king Udayana's narration of the pangs of separation to his dear relatives and intimate officials after the recovery of his kingdom and marriage with Padmāvati. Here, of course, the poet takes greater space for dwelling upon this familiar legend and gives us more information than that provided in the epic. No special attempt is made in the epic for a connected account of the story which is dealt with partially in the section of genealogy. Urvaśī's attraction for the king, Viṣṇu's favour for her union with the king who was a devotee of the same deity, the curse of separation by Tumburu insulted by Purūravas in the court of the gods who were enjoying the dance of Rambhā, the separated couple's distressful existence and the final reunion through the grace of Viṣṇu satisfied by the king's penance—this is the summary of the story as given in the *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*. In the epic only Urvaśī's marriage with Purūravas and the names of her sons are mentioned. It is probable that the author of the *Kathā-sarit-sāgara* must have drawn up from some other sources.

A complete account of the Nala story¹ is given by the Brāhmaṇa named Sumanas to the princess Bandhumatī passing anxious days in the absence of her husband. The poet here is not guided by the standard of brevity as in other stories, for he has not hesitated to touch upon all the details. Marked difference from the epic story is not noticeable; some names have been slightly changed. The wind-god is also mentioned here as desirous of getting Damayantī as his wife; so the princess in the wedding hall finds not five persons but six having similar appearance like Nala. Kali and Dvāpara together were on the lookout for an opportunity to throw Nala in dire distress after his marriage with Damayantī. Nala accepted service in the kingdom of Ṛtuparṇa as a cook under the name of Hrasvavāhu.

Pañcatantra

Some didactic stories of the epic are found in the *Pañcatantra*—the most well known collection of beast-fables. Countless fables with gnomic stanzas are put together in a systematic manner in this work. There is no certainty how far these gnomic stanzas are original, because some of them are found in the epics and elsewhere. That the great epic which has exerted tremendous influence on various sides of Sanskrit literature, may influence the writer of the *Pañcatantra* also, is not a matter of wonder at all. The original *Pañcatantra*, which must have existed long before 570 A.D. when the Pahlavi version was made, is not available. The mode of inserting gnomic stanzas in the prose narrative has been current since the time of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Jātakas*, so we cannot state with certainty whether the author selected these stories from the epic or from the floating gnomic literature of that age. The presence of a few epic stories in the *Pañcatantra*, however, gives us a chance of discussing their treatment in both the places.

The story of king Śibi's munificence and generosity is conspicuous by its frequent occurrence in the *Mahābhārata*. In the Vana-parvan, a part of the story up to the intervention of Nārada, who brings to an end the undesirable dispute between two Kṣatriya kings Śibi and Suhotra by declaring king Śibi's superiority in emphatic terms, is narrated. But in the same parvan the real story of testing Śibi is

1 KSS., IX. VI. 237-416.

described previously under the title *Śyena-kaṭi*¹. Prominence of this story becomes clear from its remention in the *Anuśāsana-parvan* where occurs the same version of the story with the king's name as *Vṛṣadarbha*. The same story with slight variations appears in the *Pañcatantra* under the caption "*Mahātmanah Śiber upākhyānam*". There Indra takes the form of a pigeon and Dharma of a hawk. The chief objective of the insertion of this story here is nothing but to magnify the virtue of protecting a refugee at any cost.

In the *Śānti-parvan*, Bhīṣma lying on his bed of arrows recounts many tales in order to impart moral lessons to persons standing by his bedside. *Śakunopākhyāna*² is the story of three fish, one of which due to his procrastination is compelled to court death despite the good advice of the intelligent one. This epic story is found in the section '*Mitra-bheda*' of the *Pañcatantra*. The fish *Dīrghasūtrin* is named there as *Yadbhaviṣya*. He is so named for his habit of depending on the future. In the epic, *Pratyutpannamati* on account of his intelligence and presence of mind is able to save himself by jumping from the net; but in the *Pañcatantra*, both *Anāgatavidhātā* and *Pratyutpannamati* scenting danger ahead escape from the pond in time. Evils of procrastination are pointed out by this story. The idea that a man's failure to rise to the occasion brings about his destruction is expressed by several verses.

The *Hitopadeśa*³ which is current mainly in Bengal is a work by *Nārāyaṇa*, who was patronised by *Dhavalacandra*, and who must have lived before 1373 A.D.; as this date is mentioned in one of the manuscripts of the work. Numerous stories of the *Pañcatantra* have been recounted with omission and alteration in this work which consists of four books. In the section entitled *Sandhi*, the story of *Sunda* and *Upasunda* is touched upon in brief, but in spite of this brevity difference from the epic story in point of narration cannot be ignored. A lengthy account of demons' bravery and their fearlessness in the whole world due to a boon received from *Brahman*, and their ultimate annihilation because of their strong lust to enjoy the beautiful

¹ MBH., III. 130-1.

² MBH., XII. 135.

³ Repeatedly printed in India, but not yet critically edited. The better known edition is by P. Peterson, BSS., 1887.

lady Tilottamā alone is found in the Ādi-parvan. In the *Hitopadeśa*, they are stated to have received a boon from Mahādeva. In a gust of anger, Mahādeva agrees to hand over Pārvatī to them, and in accordance with the advice of an old Brāhmaṇa to enjoy the goddess after defeating the other in point of strength, they fight each other and ultimately die. Despite these variations, the story surely contains a reflection of the Sundopasunda story of the epic. The lesson that persons equally strong must make truce with each other is sought to be taught by this story.

Some Minor Works

Besides the works mentioned and discussed in preceding chapters, there are other numerous compositions connected with the story element of the *Mahābhārata*. These works being of mediocre type failed to make a strong impression on the mind of readers, still their poetic value, so far as the influence of the *Mahābhārata* on Sanskrit literature is concerned, should have proper recognition in literary circles.

The *Arjuna-carīta* is a mahākāvya by Ānandavardhana and as its name signifies, it deals with the heroic activities of Arjuna. The Kashmirian polymath Kṣemendra wrote a drama *Citra-bhārata* by name. The *Hara-keli* of the Cāhamāna king, Viśāladeva Vignarāja of Śākambharī (Sambhar), describes the conflict between Mahādeva and Arjuna, but the entire poem is not available; only a portion of it is preserved in a stone inscription at Ajmere. A drama *Bhīma-parākrama* by Vyāsa Mokṣāditya is mentioned in the introductory portion of the *Pārtha-parākrama*. Rāmadeva Vyāsa patronised by Haihay princes of the Kālacurī branch of Rāyapura wrote the *Subhadra-pariṇayana* in the first half of the fifteenth century. The *Bhārata-campū* was written by Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, the son of Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita and Kāmākṣī Devī towards the end of the sixteenth century. The *Pāṇḍavābhūdāya* consisting of two acts deals with the birth of the Pāṇḍavas and *Svayaṃvara* of Draupadī. The drama *Pāṇḍavānanda* is mentioned by Kuntaka and Abhinavagupta in their works. The *Pārtha-vijaya*, a drama by Trilocana, and the *Subhadra-haraṇa-prabandha* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa are some other similar works.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

KĀVYA

In the preceding chapters of Book I, it is made clear that the writers influenced by the *Mahābhārata* utilised the heterogeneous elements of the epic in their compositions in different ways showing varieties in many respects ; but a broad point of their difference from the writers influenced by the other epic lies in the fact that mostly works based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* cover the entire story of the epic without much variation. Of course there are compositions dealing with a part of the Rāma story, but they are very few in number; therefore all poetical compositions dealing either with the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* or a part of the main story are to be discussed in the first chapter, and similarly all dramatic compositions are to be put together in the second chapter.

Raghu-vaṃśa

Kālidāsa's *Raghu-vaṃśa* stands unparalleled in the realm of Mahākāvya dealing with the Rāma story. In keeping with the title, Raghu is made the central figure in the earlier part of the poem, but Rāma's activities are narrated with artistic force and skill in the later part of the work. This work is not, however, exclusively concerned with the Rāma story; for it gives an interesting account of kings belonging to the solar dynasty—Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha, Rāma and twenty-four other kings—the last king mentioned being Agnivarṇa. The account of the solar race is found in narrative form in various Purāṇas as well as in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. The chronology of kings mentioned in the *Raghu-vaṃśa* does not tally with that of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, on the contrary it bears resemblance to the account presented in the Viṣṇu-purāṇa and Vāyu-purāṇa. The reference to earlier masters¹ in canto I of the *Raghu-vaṃśa* probably indicates Kālidāsa's knowledge of the Purāṇas. For the portion of his work dealing with Rāma, Kālidāsa has depended solely on the *Rāmāyaṇa*,

1 Athavā kṛta-vāgdvāre vaṃśe' smin pūrva-sūribhiḥ/

but he has remodelled the story in his own way, choosing and discarding matter to suit his own literary purpose.

The first three cantos are devoted to the narration of king Dilīpa's childlessness, his attendance on the divine cow Nandinī, birth of Raghu through Nandinī's grace and Dilīpa's horse-sacrifice. The next five cantos give an account of Raghu's conquest of different countries, the performance of Viśvajit sacrifice, attainment of money from Kubera for satisfying Kautsa, Aja's marriage with Indumatī and her tragic end. Kālidāsa's source of this portion is not exactly known to us, still his mode of narration with picturesque brevity and artistic skill displays his novel presentation of the theme. He follows Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* from canto IX where king Daśaratha, dumb-founded and grieved at the unexpected death of the hermit's son by his arrow, is cursed by the sorrow-stricken blind parents in whose presence dies their son. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* the blind parents were taken by Daśaratha near the dead body in the forest, but here the poet heightens the tragic effect by making the boy breathe his last in the very presence of his parents. Canto X narrates Rāma's birth as an incarnation of Viṣṇu after the performance of Putreṣṭi sacrifice by Daśaratha. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* the gods approach Brahman first with an ardent appeal to annihilate the persecuting Rāvaṇa. Brahman advises them to implore Viṣṇu for a speedy remedy; but our poet has done away with this indirect approach and made the gods appear straight before Viṣṇu who gives them assurance about killing Rāvaṇa in near future. In canto XI the poet gives a detailed account of Rāma's heroic exploits in the vicinity of the hermitage of Viśvāmitra and his marriage with Sītā, but the poet with a marvellous ingenuity and brevity practically finishes the whole story up to the death of Rāvaṇa in canto XII. Slight variation from the epic in the recounting of the crow story (XII. 21-23) and burial of Virādha¹ is introduced

1 Taṃ viniṣpiṣya Kākutsthau purā dūṣayati sthalim/
Gandhenāśucinā ceti vasudhāyāṃ nicakhnatuḥ//

RV., XII. 30.

In the Raghu-vaṃśa Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, killing the demon Virādha, bury him immediately thinking that the whole forest region will be polluted by the foul smell of his corpse; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is buried alive.

in this poem. In course of his aerial journey in canto XIII, sweet memories of forest life as well as the sorrowful reminiscences of intense agony after his separation from Sītā appear before his mind's eye, and he points out these places of interest to Sītā with a heart overflowing with love. The poet here makes a full use of his marvellous power of romantic description which, really speaking, discloses Rāma's strong love for Sītā. These past reminiscences of early happiness and sorrow heighten by contrast the tragic effect of separation in the next canto where Rāma, as a king, performs his royal duty by banishing beloved Sītā from his capital for the satisfaction of his subjects who spread a scandal about her chastity. The last portion of the Rāma story forms the subject-matter of canto XV, where Sītā enters the nether world in the very presence of Rāma who also leaves the world soon after the accomplishment of his mission. The remaining cantos present uninteresting pictures of some of the unknown descendants of Rāma, of which Kuśa's dream in canto XVI and Agnivarṇa's sad turn of fate in canto XIX keep up the literary interest to some extent; but the poet's abrupt conclusion of the work cannot escape the notice of a casual reader even.

Vālmīki's narration is marked by simplicity of language, but Kālidāsa's excellent presentation of the same is characterised by high wrought imageries, polished style, elegant diction, subtlety of expression and ingenious embellishment. He never aims at over-elaboration; above all his restraint in description, sense of proportion and moderation enable him to present vivid pictures of the old narrative.

Setu-bandha

Literary efforts for composing kāvyas even in Prakrit language won approbation in early ages. Several such works reveal how distinguished writers like Pravarasena, Rājaśekhara and others utilised melodious Prakrit language for their valuable compositions. The Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit, as is evident from the *Kāvya-darśa*¹ of Daṇḍin, was mainly used for writing poems. Pravarasena's *Setu-bandha*, Hāla's *Sattasāi*,

1 Mahārāṣṭrāśrayāṃ bhāṣāṃ prakṛtaṃ prakṛtaṃ viduḥ/ KD., I. 34½.

Vākpatirāja's *Gauḍa-vaha* and Rājaśekhara's *Karpūra-mañjarī* are some noteworthy compositions in Prakrit. Of these, Pravarasena's *Setu-bandha* is connected with the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and as such a brief discussion on the work is being held here. He is a pioneer in this direction and was emulated by Hāla, Vākpatirāja and others.

The work of Pravarasena is also known as *Dahamuhavaha* and *Rāvaṇavaha*. It does not narrate the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but deals with the main topics of the Laṅkā-kāṇḍa. The aforesaid titles clearly explain the theme of this epic poem which contains a description of the bridge and slaying of Rāvaṇa. Earliest references to this Prakrit Mahākāvya are found in the *Kāvya-darśa*¹ of Daṇḍin and *Harsa-carita*² of Bāṇa, so these references lead us to establish the view that this epic poem was composed before the seventh century A.D. The connection of this epic with Kālidāsa's name strengthens the belief that it was composed most probably in the fifth century A. D. It is often held that this epic poem was composed to commemorate the construction of a bridge of boats in Srinagar by king Pravarasena of Kashmir, but too much importance cannot be attached to this view for want of sufficient proofs. The colophon³ running at the end of each canto in the Bombay edition gives rise to an impression that Pravarasena II of the Vākāṭaka dynasty wrote this epic poem, and he was fortunate enough to receive the valuable help of Kālidāsa in his literary venture.

The poem consists of fifteen cantos and the poet, while narrating the story of the Laṅkā-kāṇḍa, has overlooked the details of the original and in order to maintain the nature of a Mahākāvya introduced long description of different objects in strict conformity with the rules of theories on poetry.

In canto I which contains a description of autumn and the Malaya mountain, Rāma, surrounded by valiant monkeys, reaches the sea-shore. The vast ocean with billows lashing on the shore greets them, but the monkeys get frightened at the thought how they will be able

1 Sāgaraḥ sūkti-ratnānāṃ Setu-bandhādi yanmayam// KD., I. 34½.

2 Kīrtiḥ Pravarasenasya prayātā kumudojjvalā/.

Sāgarasya paraṃ paraṃ kapi-seneva setunā// HC., I. 15.

3 Iya siri Pavarasena-viraiye Kālidāsa-kaye Dahamuhavahe mahakavve.....

to cross it to reach Laṅkā. Throughout the whole second canto, the glory of the ocean captivates the imagination of the poet, whose deep knowledge of maritime matters is recorded here. The highly spirited speech of Sugrīva for putting new inspiration and energy in the minds of frightened monkeys for the destruction of their enemy by giving up despondency in canto III is marked by literary excellence of the highest order. Sugrīva's speech is followed by that of Jāmbuvat, who instils new inspiration in the monkeys in canto IV, and the poet utilises his sound knowledge of political philosophy through this animated speech of Jāmbuvat. In canto V the ocean struck with the arrows of Rāma is agitated to a degree, as a result of which it is ablaze with rising flames. The construction of the bridge is ordered by Rāma in canto VI and monkeys with due allegiance to him carry out the order by engaging themselves in that heavy task in canto VII; but preliminary failures cause their depression. The construction of the bridge is completed with proper connection between Malaya mountain of India and Suvela of Ceylon in canto VIII. The subsequent two cantos give the poet the opportunity of describing Suvela mountain, sports of women and nightfall. The story is again resumed in canto XI with the showing of false head of Rāma to Sītā, whose piteous lamentation at that terrible sight can be appropriately compared with that of Rati in the *Kumāra-sambhava*. Trijaṭā's consolation in affectionate language cannot console her. Pravarasena's poetic ability blended with imaginative touches finds full expression in this canto. The poet devotes next four cantos to the narration of the fierce battle between the two combatant troops and the ultimate destruction of Rāvaṇa at the hand of Rāma. The poem is brought to a conclusion with a description of the coronation of Vibhīṣaṇa and return of Rāma to Ayodhyā.

In order to measure the success of Pravarasena in literary sphere, his own verse¹ in canto I regarding the possible effects of a good com-

1 The verse, if rendered into Sanskrit turns thus—

Parivardhate Vijñānaṃ sambhāvyaṭe yaśaḥ arjyante guṇāḥ/
Śrūyate supuruṣa-caritaṃ kiṃ tat yena na haranti kāvyālapāḥ//

position is to be taken into consideration. He states in that verse that there are many advantages of a good *kāvya*. Special knowledge is gained, fame is attained, acquisition of virtues is made possible and the reader becomes familiar with the career of great men. There is no such thing in a good poetical composition which does not attract the mind of the reader. This remark, however, is partially true in the case of his own composition. The summary of the poem shows clearly that only a small portion of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story is narrated here, but this narration is replete with different charming descriptions demonstrating his poetic talent, varied knowledge and inventive genius. The detailed description of ocean, mountain, autumn and nightfall reveals his power of close observation of nature and at the same time brings into view his knowledge of Indian mythology and philosophy. His power of characterisation is brought to light through the speeches of Sugrīva, Sītā and Trijaṭā. Upamā, Yamaka, Rūpaka—all these *alaṅkāras* are profusely used. His novelty and original approach to the composition of an epic poem in Prakrit language, although modelled on artificial Sanskrit *kāvya*, have won him due recognition in literary circles, and his association with world famous Kālidāsa has enhanced the literary value of his work too.

Bhaṭṭi-kāvya

The *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya* which is otherwise known as the *Rāvaṇa-vadha* is named after its author Bhaṭṭi. The concluding verse¹ of the poem “*Kāvyaṃ idaṃ vihitam mayā Valabhyām*” enables us to come to the conclusion that he composed this poem in Valabhī under king Śrīdharasena. But since four kings of this name ruled at Valabhī, it is very difficult to determine when Bhaṭṭi flourished. The last king ruled till 651 A.D., so it is generally believed that Bhaṭṭi wrote his poem before that date. Bhaṭṭi is often identified with Vatsabhaṭṭi of Mandasore inscription on the ground of similarity between the verses of inscription and the description of autumn in the *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya*;

1 *Kāvyaṃ idaṃ vihitam mayā Valabhyām*
Śrīdharasena-narendra-pālitāyām/. BK., XXII, 35.

but this identification is wholly absurd in view of some grammatical mistakes in the inscription.

The *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya* which narrates the whole story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* up to Rāma's return from Lankā and coronation was composed mainly for the purpose of illustrating the rules of grammar and figures of speech; so it is called by Mallinātha an *Udāharaṇa-kāvya*. A minute study of the whole poem convinces us about the remarkable success of our author in this direction. The composition of a Mahākāvya requires great talent, excellent command over language, perfect skill in delineation of characters and power of description. Our poet has amply used his genius in making his own composition a Mahākāvya. This poem consists of twenty-two cantos in four sections, namely, Prakīrṇa-kāṇḍa, Adhikāra-kāṇḍa, Prasanna-kāṇḍa and Tiñanta-kāṇḍa. The Prakīrṇa-kāṇḍa which is concerned with the illustration of miscellaneous rules of Pāṇini's grammar narrates the story up to the abduction of Sītā. The Adhikāra-kāṇḍa, which describes the story up to the punishment of Hanumat at the hand of demons after the destruction of Aśoka garden, exemplifies different suffixes, rules of Ātmanepada, Parasmaipada, Ṇatva and Ṣatva-vidhānas. The Prasanna-kāṇḍa which continues the story up to the construction of the bridge is concerned with exemplifying figures of speech. The remaining portion of the story is covered by the Tiñanta-kāṇḍa connected with illustration of tenses and moods. It is true that a reader versed deeply in grammar will find this poem worth-reading; but if a person for want of profound proficiency in grammar makes an attempt to study it as a poem without paying any attention to the purpose for which it is composed, he will soon face disappointment. The poet himself has stated at the end of his composition that his work is a source of deep delight to the learned only¹.

Truly this work cannot be ranked with the *Raghu-vaṃśa* and the *Kumāra-sambhava* of Kālidāsa; but we must make some allowance

1 Dīpa-tulyaḥ prabandho' yaṃ śabda-lakṣaṇa-caḥṣuṣām/
Hastāmarṣa ivāndhānām bhaved vyākaraṇād ṛte//
Vyākhyāgamyam idaṃ kāvyam utsavaḥ sudhiyām alam/
Hatā durmedhasaś cāsmiṇ vidvat-priyatayā mayā//

BK., XXII. 33-4.

for the purpose for which the author is inspired to write this poem. Occasional flashes of grammatical genius and excellent arrangement of the theme for illustrating the rules of grammar bear eloquent testimony to the poet's success in his purpose. Literary excellence and poetic beauty cannot be expected in a composition suffering from this restricted outlook. But it can hardly be denied that at places the poet has written highly charming verses, wherein the grammatical motive has been overshadowed by poetic charm. The second canto describes Sītā in a language both ornate and impressive:¹

Hiraṇmayī sālalateva jaṅgamā cyutā divaḥ sthāsnur ivācira-prabhā/
Śaśāṅka-kānter adhidevatākṛtiḥ sutā dade tasya sutāya Maithilī//

'To his son was betrothed his daughter Maithilī who looked like the twig of a tree, golden and moving, like the lightning fallen from the sky but steady, and like the presiding deity of the moon's beauty.'

Such verses clearly prove that he could have displayed his poetic genius more perfectly, had he not been all along guided by his professed motive. He has no freedom of phraseology as he has to use words important from the grammatical point of view. Such strained labour for continued search of appropriate words has to a certain extent robbed the work of its poetic value, but among authors of such artificial composition, Bhaṭṭi undoubtedly stands foremost.

Jānakī-baraṇa

Kumāradāsa in his *Jānakī-baraṇa* related the story of the Rāmāyaṇa up to the abduction of Sītā in twenty-five cantos. Kālidāsa was held in high esteem by Kumāradāsa, who without the slightest hesitation borrowed ideas and phrases from the *Raghu-vamśa*. This was the reason why a legend regarding Kumāradāsa's intimate friendship with Kālidāsa was current for a long time. He is known as Kumāra, Nātha-kumāra, Kumāra-datta and Bhaṭṭa-kumāra and therefore doubtfully identified with Kumāra Dhātusena, a king of Ceylon, who flourished in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. From

1 BK., II. 47.

direct reference to Kumāradāsa in Rājaśekhara's *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*,¹ we come to know that he attained popularity as a poet in the 10th century A.D. Citations from *Jānakī-haraṇa* are met with in different anthologies too, but the full text of the book was not available for a long time. The major portion of the poem, that is, up to canto fifteen has been recovered from a Sinhalese Sanna (*paraphrase*) of Rājasundara. The non-availability of the original text is a great handicap to a proper estimation of the poet as well as his composition; but no other alternative being left for the recovery of the original, the usefulness of the Sinhalese Sanna cannot be ignored. That the poem was composed in twenty-five cantos is known from the colophon preserved in the Sanna. The colophon further states the name of the author and the poem and cites the last stanza of canto XXV.

Points of deviation from the epic story in Kumāradāsa's work are negligible. For adding charm to his composition he has brought in some beautiful poetic descriptions. His poem opens with a picturesque description of Ayodhyā. The first canto also gives an account of Daśaratha and his heroic deeds. It closes with the curse of the hermit whose son meets death at the hand of king Daśaratha. The influence of Kālidāsa on Kumāradāsa is distinctly revealed in the second canto where the poet makes the depressed gods approach Viṣṇu for help who, moved with pity, promises to assume human form for bringing an end to the persecution of Rāvaṇa. The description of spring and the king's sport with his wives in the artificial pond in the royal garden in canto III reminds one of similar verses of Kālidāsa. From canto IV we come to know that king Daśaratha gets four sons by performing the sacrifice known as Putra-kāmeṣṭi, and when they grow up, Viśvāmitra approaches king Daśaratha for seeking the help of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to remove disturbances to sacrifice. The female demon Tāḍakā is put to death by Rāma after his arrival in the forest. Canto V gives a description of the peaceful life of the dwellers

1 Yato Medhāvīrudra-kumāradāsādayo jātyandhāḥ kavayaḥ śrūyante
Kāvya-mīmāṃsā, GOS, p. 12.

In the Sūkti-muktāvalī, Jalhana quotes this verse of Rājaśekhara :—
Jānakī-haraṇaṃ kartuṃ Raghuvāṃśe sthite sati/
Kaviḥ Kumāradāśaś ca Rāvaṇaś ca yadi kṣamāḥ// SM., IV. 76.

of the hermitage and the destruction of thousands of Rākṣāsas at the hand of Rāma. We get a marvellous description of the city of Mithilā in canto VI where Rāma accompanied by Viśvāmitra comes, and is chosen as son-in-law by king Janaka after his success in breaking the bow of Śiva. Canto VII is concerned with the narration of the love-sick condition of the hero and the heroine and their marriage, and the following canto gives an account of their dalliance after marriage. In canto IX Paraśurāma suffers defeat at the hand of Rāma and canto X describes Rāma's departure to the forest, where Rāma sends back Bharata in spite of his repeated requests for return and expresses his strong determination to live in the forest. This canto concludes with the abduction of Jānakī. Daśaratha's lecture on duties of a king to Rāma in the first part of this canto is to be noted. Canto XI treats of the fight between Jaṭāyu and Rāvaṇa, death of Jaṭāyu and the following canto narrates Rāma's preparation with the monkey-chief for the deliverance of Sītā. Twelfth and thirteenth cantos contain description of autumn and rainy seasons.

Kumāradāsa's composition is characterised by elegant simplicity, wealth of description, vigorous narration and subtlety of expression. The subject-matter treated in the *Bhaṭṭi-kāvya* and *Jānakī-haraṇa* is practically the same, but Bhaṭṭi's grammatical motive stands in the way of an elegant composition. It is true that Kumāradāsa had no such motive in view, but his enthusiasm to make his work similar to that of Kālidāsa has hampered the spontaneity of his composition. His admirers do not hesitate to rank him with Kālidāsa, but that does not appear to be a correct appraisal of his poetic ability. But when we say this, we must not forget that he enjoys quite a respectable status as a writer of Sanskrit verses. Had he not been inspired by an ardent desire to follow in the footsteps of Kālidāsa, he would have been able to show his individuality and originality. The standard of high composition and the mode of achieving that standard were before him, but he could not take advantage of that properly. Of course his poem does not exhibit the extravagance of later Mahākāvyas. His gift of pointed phrasing, lively expression, simple diction, metrical skill and above all, want of any deliberate attempt to expand his subject-matter with the conventional kāvya embellishments have

lifted his poetry from the dead level of the commonplace and the conventional.

Rāma-carita

Abhinanda, the author of the extensive poem *Rāma-carita*, is the son of Śatānanda, and is to be distinguished from Gauḍa Abhinanda who is profusely quoted in the anthologies. Abhinanda attained such celebrity for his charming composition and vigorous style that references and citations are found in many notable works of later date. The *Sadukti-karṇāmṛta* and *Sūkti-muktāvalī*¹ are the two well known anthologies where about twenty-five verses are attributed to Abhinanda, although only four of them are found in the *Rāma-carita*. Soḍḍhala, who flourished in the first half of the eleventh century A. D., praises Abhinanda for his singular poetic talent in the introductory verses of his *campū-kāvya Udaya-sundarī-kathā*². The *Kīrti-kaumudī*³ of Someśvara, who flourished in the middle of the thirteenth century A. D., speaks highly of the merits of Abhinanda; and Ujjvaladatta in his *Uṇādi-sūtra-ṛtti*⁴ quotes several verses from the *Rāma-carita*. In the

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|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Sadukti-karṇāmṛta</i> —II, 748. ; | <i>Rāma-carita</i> —II. 84. |
| | „ „ —V. 100. ; | „ „ —XV. 67. |
| | <i>Sūkti-muktāvalī</i> —141a. ; | <i>Rāma-carita</i> —II. 99. |
| | „ „ —141a. ; | „ „ —II. 98. |

- 2 *Sṛṣṭaṃ tad atra yuvarāja-nareśvareṇa*
Yad duṣkaraṃ kim api yena giraḥ śriyaś ca/
Pratyāyanaṃ sphutam akāri nīje kavīndram
Ekāśane samupaveśayatābhinandam//

Udaya-sundarī-kathā, 95.

- 3 Someśvara mentions the name of Abhinanda in this verse where he wrongly states the superiority of Yaśovīra to other renowned poets.

Na Māghaḥ ślāghyate kaiścin nābhinando' bhinandyate/
Niṣphalaḥ Kālidāso'pi yaśovīrasya sannidhau//

Kīrti-kaumudī, P. 3

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|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 | <i>Uṇādi-sūtra-ṛtti</i> —I. 2. ; | <i>Rāma-carita</i> —XIII. 86. |
| | „ „ „ —I. 48. ; | „ „ —X. 2. |
| | „ „ „ —IV. 117. ; | „ „ —XVIII. 85. |

eleventh century A. D. Bhoja profusely but anonymously quotes verses from the poem. From all these references it is clear that Abhinanda attained high renown during the five centuries from the eleventh to the fifteenth. In the 36th canto¹ of his work Abhinanda mentions his patron king Hāravarṣa Yuvarāja, son of Vikramāśīla, but the identity of this king with Devapāla, the son of Dharmapāla of Gauḍa cannot be convincingly established for want of proper evidence. Relying on this identity some scholars are inclined to fix the date of Abhinanda in the earlier half of the 9th century A. D., as king Devapāla became famous in the second half of the 9th century A. D.

Abhinanda's *Rāma-carita* consisting of forty cantos is to be termed a Mahākāvya, in as much as it fulfils most of the conditions laid down in the definition of Mahākāvya of Daṇḍin. In spite of his adherence to the rules, he does not forsake his independent imagination and originality. Like other Rāma-kāvya it does not begin with an account of king Daśaratha and the birth of his sons; instead it commences its plot with Rāma's great anxiety regarding the necessary steps to be taken for the rescue of Sītā. He eagerly awaits the arrival of Sugrīva whom he intends to send to Laṅkā after the rainy season for bringing the news of Sītā. His departure from the original is obvious in many portions of his work. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Sugrīva's fidelity and devotion to Rāma are unparalleled, but in the *Rāma-carita* Rāma refuses to take his help for bringing the news of Sītā in view of his possible reluctance. The poet says that Sugrīva himself comes to serve Rāma after some delay. Rāma, annoyed with him, does not rely much on his help and at times treats him as a servant. In the *Rāma-carita*, Rāma sends as tokens a ring, an anklet and an upper garment through Hanumat in order to console Sītā; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* Hanumat

¹ Jayati jaganti bhramanti kīrtiyā saha Hāravarṣa-nṛpa-śāśinaḥ /
Śīrasi kṛtā kṛta-vidyāiḥ kṛtir iyam āryā-vilāsasya //
Rāma-carita, XXXVI. 86.

Pālānvayāmbuja-vanaika-virocanāya
Tasmai namo'stu yuvarāja-nareśvarāya /
Koṭi-pradāna-ghaṭitojjvala-kīrti-mūrṭiḥ.
Yenāmaratva-padaviṃ gamito'bhinandaḥ //
Ibid, XXXVI. 88.

takes only the ring as a token. In the *Rāma-carita* ordinary monkey-soldiers are first sent in search of Sītā; but on their failure the chiefs of the army including Aṅgada start searching for Sītā. Being thirsty near the Vindhya mountain they want to enter a cave at the entrance of which slept a demon. There Hanumat is surprised by a female monkey trying to allure him. That monkey soon assumes the form of a charming lady, and leaves the place only when Svayaṃprabhā, the mistress of the cave, makes her appearance there. This episode is not found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The account given by Svayaṃprabhā for making the cave her abode differs from that of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Rāma-carita* Aṅgada's loyalty to Sugrīva is clearly exhibited; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* Hanumat's influence prevents Aṅgada from doing any harm to Sugrīva. In the poem Aṅgada expresses his ability to cross the ocean; and in order to comply with the request of Jāmbuvat allows Hanumat to do so; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* Aṅgada plainly states that he has not the ability to cross the ocean. In the poem Vibhīṣaṇa as a great philosopher admonishes Sugrīva for lamenting over the loss of Rāma and his army under the influence of Nāgapāśa of Indrajit; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* Sugrīva plays the role of a philosopher for consoling Vibhīṣaṇa mortified exceedingly at the loss of the Rākṣasa dynasty. In the *Rāma-carita* the colours of the four creepers brought for the revival of the whole army destroyed by the Brahmāstra of Indrajit are mentioned, but the *Rāmāyaṇa* makes no mention of colour.

In this extensive Mahākāvya, the story proceeds very slowly and interruption is frequently caused by the conventional descriptions of city, ocean, mountains, sunrise and moonrise. The first ten cantos narrate the story up to the search of Sītā by the monkeys and Hanumat's acceptance of tokens. The following ten cantos slowly take the story to the incident of Sītā's meeting with Hanumat. The next sixteen cantos give a full description of the war between the monkeys and the Rākṣasas and conclude with the destruction of Kumbha and Nikumbha.

The last four cantos have two definite recensions.¹ The authorship

¹ A—A MS. copy in the Govt. Orient. MSS Library, Madras contains cantos 1-40 by Abhinanda. The 40th canto is incomplete. B—A MS in the

of one is attributed to Abhinanda and another to a less known author Bhīmakavi by name. These last four cantos narrate the conflict of Rāma with Indrajit and Rāvaṇa and their ultimate destruction at the hand of Rāma. The first supplement differs considerably from the preceding cantos in style and handling of the plot; so the authorship of Abhinanda is highly doubtful. Bhīmakavi in the second supplement,¹ however, states that the work was left incomplete and the task of completion devolved upon him. He is conscious of his poetic ability and speaks highly of his own composition in a verse² at the end of each canto in the second supplement.

Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī

The Kashmirian polymath Kṣemendra of the eleventh century made an abridgement of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in seven kāṇḍas under the title *Rāmāyaṇa-mañjarī*. His extreme fondness for shortening the epic stories and also other ancient works has been pointed out in our discussion on the *Bhārata-mañjarī*. His departure from the original, as regards content and structure, is almost negligible in this work. Here we are to consider his mode of compressing the epic story as a measure of his poetical achievement.

The Bāla-kāṇḍa begins with the story of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and closes with the marriage of Daśaratha's sons. He closes his Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa with the death of Daśaratha, but in the original, we find that the closure of the kāṇḍa is effected with the entrance of Rāma into Daṇḍaka forest. The succeeding incidents up to the arrival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa at the lake of Pampā after the abduction of Sītā are covered by the Araṇya-kāṇḍa. Kṣemendra narrates up to the crossing of the ocean

library of the Oriental Institute, Baroda contains cantos 1-36 by Abhinanda and a recension of cantos 37-40 by Bhīmakavi.

1 Iti śrīmad Abhinanda-kāvye kāyastha-jñāti-kula-tilakena maham śrī-Devapāla-tanayena maham śrī-Bhīma-kṛtau sarga-catuṣṭayyām catvāriṣattamaḥ sargaḥ.

2 Na madhuraṃ madhu phalgu ca phānitaṃ
Rasaparā na sitāpi sudhā mudhā/
Adhara eva nava-pramadādhara
Lasati Bhīma-kaveḥ kavita-rase //

by Hanumat in the Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa, but the topic is included in the original in the Sundara-kāṇḍa, which recounts in detail Hanumat's meeting with Maināka and Surasā on his way to Laṅkā through the ocean. To maintain the form of a kāvyā the author brings in the description of spring, rainy season and autumn in the Araṇya-kāṇḍa and Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa. Mere narration of events without a break creates monotony and makes a composition boring; in order to avoid that defect Kṣemendra provides relief to readers through the description of seasons. The Yuddha-kāṇḍa of the *Rāmāyaṇa-maṅjarī* concludes with the destruction of Rāvaṇa, but in the original the lamentation of Rāvaṇa's wives, Vibhīṣaṇa's coronation, Sītā's ordeal and union of Rāma with Bharata are inserted in this portion, whereas all those events find their way in the work of Kṣemendra in the Uttara-kāṇḍa. The remaining incidents including Sītā's entrance into the nether region, and the passing away of Rāma and his brothers have been recounted in the Uttara-kāṇḍa. Kṣemendra's characteristic diction and mode of narration dominate the whole composition. Simplicity of language and simplification of the whole story will encourage readers to go through the book. By reading other compositions based on the epic story, a full view of the contents of the Rāmāyaṇa cannot be formed, but in spite of his abridgement, Kṣemendra has exhibited a special aptitude by serving this purpose. The following verses reveal the simplicity of his composition and use of appropriate similes: ¹, ²

Rājā ced dharma-maryādāṃ lobhād utkramya vartate /
Unmūlopaplavenaitāḥ sarvathā nihatāḥ prajāḥ //

‘If a king out of avarice transgresses the principles of religion, all his subjects then are fully ruined by a revolution which brings destruction along with it.’

Tataḥ papāta Paulastyah sraṣṭa-sāyaka-kārmukaḥ /
Kṛttaḥ Sītā-nikāreṇa krakaceneva pādapaḥ //

1 RM., 11. 276.

2 *Ibid.*, VI. 1296.

‘Then Paulastya with his bow and arrow slackened fell down like a tree cut by an axe’ as if pierced by the insult done to Sītā.’

Jānakī-pariṇaya

The *Jānakī-pariṇaya* is a poem in eight cantos by Cakrakavi,¹ the son of Lokanātha and Ambā. Information about his parents is gathered from the last verse of each canto : —

Yaṃ sūnuṃ janayāmbabhūva mahitaḥ śrī-Lokanāthaḥ sudhīḥ/
Khyātaṃ Cakrakaviṃ satī-samudayaḥ sammānitāmbābhīdhā//

‘Lokanātha, a man of renown and vast learning, and Ambā who was respected by chaste ladies, gave birth to a son who came to be known as Cakrakavi.’

The last verses of the fifth and seventh cantos tell us that he composed two other kāvyas—the *Rukmiṇī-pariṇaya*² and the *Pārvatī-pariṇaya*.³ The *Draupadī-pariṇaya* is his another work and an informative discussion on the same has been made in a preceding chapter dealing with works concerned with the episodes of the *Mahābhārata* story. The present work, as its name signifies, deals with a part of the epic story i.e. up to the arrival of Rāma in the city of Ayodhyā after his marriage with Sītā. After paying due homage to his predecessors, the poet commences his work with a description of the city of Ayodhyā and her ruler. Canto II contains verses in praise of Viṣṇu and a description of Rāvaṇa’s tyranny. At the end of this canto we find, a divine person appears after the completion of Putreṣṭi sacrifice with a pot of milk and rice before Daśaratha who is directed to distribute it among his wives. The third canto narrates the birth of four sons and the march of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with Viśvāmitra for destroying the demons. The next two cantos tell us about the death of Tāḍakā,

1 The author appears to have lived in the 17th century.

2 Sargo’sau Janakātmajā-pariṇaye navye tadiye mahā-
kāvyē cāruṇi Rukmiṇī-pariṇaya-bhrātary abhūt pañcamah//
JP., V. 71½.

3 Sargo’sau Mithilādhirājatanujā-pāṇigrahe tan mahā-
kāvyē cāruṇi Pārvatī-pariṇaya-bhrātary abhūt saptamah//
Ibid., VII. 80½.

arrival of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in the city of Mithilā and the breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāma. The story of Gaṅgā's descent on earth is recounted by Viśvāmitra to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa on their way to Mithilā. Daśaratha's arrival and the marriage of his sons form the subject-matter of the sixth and seventh cantos. The last canto winds up with Paraśurāma's encounter with Rāma.

The theme of the poem exhibits no departure from the original. Elegant and imaginative touches make a composition worth-reading, but in this work no attempt is made by the poet to demonstrate his fertility of imagination. His descriptions are not of a high standard; and above all, his stereotyped poetic diction makes his composition unattractive.

CHAPTER TWO

DRAMA

The Pratimā-nāṭaka

As compared with the *Mahābbārata* plays ascribed to Bhāsa, the two well known *Rāmāyaṇa* plays—the *Pratimā-nāṭaka* and the *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka* are larger in extent, and as such evince in a greater degree the poet's remarkable skill in introducing innovations in every act. In the *Pratimā-nāṭaka*, an attempt has been made to dramatise in seven acts the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* beginning with the abandonment of the consecration of Rāma at Kaikeyī's demand, and ending with the return of Rāma to Ayodhyā after fourteen years. The plot of the whole drama can be made distinct by a clarification of the points of departure from the original.

In the first act, all arrangements for Rāma's coronation are stopped at the intervention of Kaikeyī demanding Rāma's exile in the forest for full fourteen years. In this act the valkḷa incident has been invented by the poet to explain the proverb that coming events cast their shadows before. Sītā, out of fun, puts on a bark dress brought by one of her maid-servants from the theatre-hall just before the coronation of Rāma. This incident foreshadows the impending departure of Rāma dressed in bark garment with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā. The cancellation order of consecration is communicated by Rāma himself later on to Sītā, who then realises the far-reaching implication of the bark dress she has just put on out of curiosity. Daśaratha's poignant grief on account of Rāma's exile in the forest for fourteen years is portrayed strikingly in the second act, which demonstrates the poet's admirable power of delineating a situation full of pathos. The third act is concerned with the statue-gallery. This act has a bearing on the title of the play and bears a distinctive mark of the poet's creating faculty and delicate handling of the situation. Bharata, perturbed and unnerved at the news of the serious illness of his father, rushes back from his maternal uncle's house to Ayodhyā; but the gravity of the situation lies in the fact that the charioteer, knowing everything

about the sad incidents of the capital, gives evasive answers to the queries of prince Bharata who is being brought back to Ayodhyā practically for the coronation. The closely guarded secret of the charioteer is very skilfully disclosed and dramatically conveyed to the prince on his entry to the statue-gallery, where the marble statues of dead kings of Ikṣvāku clan, namely Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja and Daśaratha are carefully preserved. At the sight of Daśaratha's statue, he loses his balance of mind and does not want to hear anything about the statue of his father; but the temple-keeper unravels the whole mystery centering round the statue-gallery. From the point of dramatic technique, the third act is the pivot of the whole drama. It closes with the departure of Bharata to the forest for bringing back Rāma to the capital. Delineation of character is the main motive of the poet in the fourth act, where we find not much action but Bharata's sacrificing spirit and noble purpose which raise his character to an elevated plane. The incident of Sītā's abduction has been painted in a different manner in the fifth act. Rāma, intent on observing some rites concerning the departed spirit of his father, happens to meet Rāvaṇa who comes there in disguise. He attracts Rāma by his profound knowledge of the Śāstras and advises him to offer the flesh of some wonderful deer of the Himalayas to satisfy his manes. Rāvaṇa, by his magic power, brings to Rāma's view such a deer in whose pursuit Rāma leaves the hermitage, and the abduction of Sītā takes place without any interruption from any quarter. Lakṣmaṇa has all along been kept away from this incident in the drama. The whole sixth act has been arranged on a novel plan. From Sumantra, Bharata learns of Sītā's abduction, and with a heavy heart takes to task his mother for whose greed all these undesirable calamities are taking place. Kaikeyī's explanation that Daśaratha died as a result of a curse, and that her slip of tongue in saying fourteen years instead of fourteen days has caused Rāma's long exile, satisfies somehow Bharata who then without delay marches against Rāvaṇa with a huge army. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Bharata is not informed of Sītā's abduction, and does not proceed to assist Rāma in his fight with Rāvaṇa. The innovations of the last act are noteworthy. After the destruction of Rāvaṇa, Rāma

returns to the hermitage where takes place his coronation in the presence of Bharata, his mothers, citizens of Ayodhyā, Vibhīṣaṇa and Sugrīva. All of them, later on, start for Ayodhyā for celebrating the ceremony on a grand scale.

Bhāsa's sympathy for the fallen and persecuted is distinct in this drama too. The poet has deviated from the original in painting the character of Kaikeyī. She has been an object of public calumny, but she has patiently tolerated everything for her husband's honour. For the fulfilment of the curse on Daśaratha, she has to ask for Rāma's exile under the pretext of a dowry (*Śulka*) promised to her by king Daśaratha in place of two original boons. She wants to send Rāma into exile not out of greed for the kingdom, but knowing very well that the king is doomed to die of sorrow for his son, she, for the operation of the curse, chalks out such a plan as will avert the death of Rāma. She feels inspired to carry out her plan, as it is supported by well known sages like Vaśiṣṭha, Vāmadeva and others. Kaikeyī is delighted to participate in Rāma's coronation in the forest, and expresses her desire to see it gone over again in the capital. The nobility of her motive is misunderstood, and her explanation of the position does not satisfy all; although at last it convinces Bharata. The poet has made her the very embodiment of true patience, for the silence with which she bears the insulting terms used to her by near and dear ones is surprising indeed. Her dying husband in utter frustration of hopes and intense agony accuses destiny of not making her a tigress of the forest¹, and it is her own son Bharata, who on meeting her after his long sojourn abuses her rudely, refuses to address her as mother and states before all that her presence between his other mothers Kauśalyā and Sumitrā is condemnable².

Noble aspects of Bharata's character also arrest our attention. Bharata's self-sacrifice; striking fidelity to Rāma, strong sense of justice are given expression to in touching language by the dramatist. The

1 Anapatyā vyaṃ Rāmaḥ putro' nyasya mahīpateḥ/
Vane vyāghrī ca Kaikeyī tvayā kiṃ na kṛtaṃ trayam? // PN., 11. 8.

2 Mama mātus ca mātus ca madhyasthā tvam na śobhase/
Gaṅgā-yamunayor madhye ku-nadīva praveśitā // *Ibid.*, 111. 13.

following verse reveals touchingly Bharata's mental anguish at the news of his father's death and brother's exile :¹

Ayodhyām aṭavībhūtām pitrā bhrātrā ca varjitām/
Pipāsārto' nudhāvāmi kṣīṇa-toyām nadīm iva//

'Like a thirsty man rushing to a river the water of which is dried up, I am proceeding towards Ayodhyā which has turned into a forest, as it is deserted by my father and brother.'

Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka

Events beginning from Sugrīva's coronation after the death of Vālin at the hand of Rāma, and ending with the consecration of Rāma on his return to Ayodhyā after fourteen years of exile have been dramatised in six acts in the other *Rāmāyaṇa* play *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka*. In the *Pratimā-nāṭaka* the poet's striking departure from the epic story is highly prominent in every act, but in the *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka* he has followed the *Rāmāyaṇa* story only with slight omissions and alterations. The drama is so named, because it is concerned with the consecration of Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa and Rāma.

The poet's sympathy for the fallen kings and warriors on the verge of ruin is exhibited in most of his plays. Sympathetic characterisation of Vālin and Rāvaṇa in this play draws our attention from the very beginning. In the first act Vālin, disregarding the earnest entreaties of his dear wife, rushes desperately to fight his brother Sugrīva, but after a vain struggle he is treacherously killed by Rāma. No satisfactory explanation of Rāma's conduct is offered here. Vālin's statement prior to his death proves that he is not liable to punishment; although at the close of the act the dramatist makes him utter-*Bhavatā daṇḍitatvād vigata-pāpo' haṃ nanu*. 'Being punished by you, I am really sinless.' Vālin's seeming satisfaction for meeting death at the hand of Rāghava does not at all keep back from our view the wrong stand of Rāma. The fact that the monkey-chief has been killed for no fault on his part is quite prominent here. The second and third acts faithfully follow the original, and give a picture of Sītā in captivity, Hanumat's meeting with Sītā, Hanumat's heroic activities in the city

of Lañkā and banishment of Vibhīṣaṇa for sympathising with the enemy. The touch of the poet's inventive genius is to be seen in the fourth act in the manner of crossing the ocean. In the *Rāmāyana*, the monkeys throwing stones in the sea continually construct a bridge for making their passage to Lañkā, but here god Varuṇa, out of deep reverence for Viṣṇu born as Rāma on earth, gives passage to Rāma and his soldiers by dividing the water into two parts—*Eṣa mārghaḥ, prayātu bhavān*. This bears resemblance to the episode of Vasudeva's crossing the Yamunā in the *Bāla-carita*. In the fifth act there is a fine depiction of Rāvaṇa's character. True, he is the haughty king of the demons, and always ready to ill-treat his subordinates and fulfil his desire by adopting wrong course; but he has a soft corner too in his heart, he is not devoid of affection. His heart-rending lamentation at the passing away of his beloved son Indrajit stirs up the feelings of all readers. Indrajit has been killed by an ordinary human being—that is beyond the range of his belief:¹

Devāḥ sendrā jitā yena daityāś cāpi parāṅmukhāḥ/;

Indrajit so'pi samare mānuṣeṇa nihanyate//

'That Indrajit too, who has conquered gods including Indra and driven back all the demons, is killed by a man in the battle-field!'

Upset greatly at this critical moment, he feels a strong inclination to kill that captive lady who is the sole cause of destruction of his family and kingdom. The sixth act describes Rāma's union with Sītā after the death of Rāvaṇa and Rāma's consequent coronation. In this drama Rāma has all along been identified with Viṣṇu,² and he does not accept Sītā in the last act until the fire-god certifies in the following manner:³

Imāṃ bhagavatīm Lakṣmīm jānīhi Janakātma-jām/

Sa bhavantam anuprāptā mānuṣīm tanum āśritā//,

'Know, this daughter of Janaka is goddess Lakṣmī. Assuming human form she has come to you.'

Their divinity is not emphasised in the *Pratimā-nāṭaka*.

1 ABN., V. 12.

2 Mānuṣaṃ rūpam āsthāya cakra-śārṅga-gadādharah/
Svayaṃ kāraṇa-bhūtaḥ saḥ kāryārthī samupāgataḥ// Ibid., IV. 14.

3 Ibid., VI. 29.

Mahāvīra-carita

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Bhavabhūti has given valuable information regarding himself and his family in the prologues to his three plays, but no clue as to his date can be had from these portions. It is stated therein that he belonged to a religious and learned Brāhmaṇa family of the Kāśyapa gotra, whose members were followers and teachers of the Taittirīya branch of the Black Yajurveda. They had the surname of Udumbara and dwelt in Padmapura, apparently in Vidarbha. He was the grandson of Bhaṭṭa Gopāla and son of Nīlakaṇṭha and Jātūkarṇī. He won the title Śrīkaṇṭha. He acquired proficiency in grammar, rhetoric, logic and other branches of learning, and wide knowledge in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Sāṃkhya and Yoga. His works of course bear testimony to his varied knowledge. All his plays were enacted during the festival held in honour of Lord Kālapriyanātha, normally identified with Mahākāla of Ujjayinī.

The Kashmirian poet Kahlaṇa states that Bhavabhūti and Vākpatirāja—the author of the huge Prakrit poem *Gaudavaha* were patronised by king Yaśovarman of Kānyakubja.¹ No reference to patronage by any king is, however, traceable in the plays of Bhavabhūti; on the contrary it is evident from his own statement² that he failed to secure recognition during his lifetime and cherished high hopes for wide popularity in future. The poem *Gaudavaha* was composed in about 736 A.D. before Yaśovarman's defeat by king Lalitāditya of Kashmir, so it is probable that Bhavabhūti flourished in the last part of the seventh or the first part of the eighth century. His posteriority to Kālidāsa and Bāṇa is certain. Bhavabhūti is praised by Rājaśekhara in

1 Kavir Vākpatirāja-śrī-Bhavabhūtyādi-sevitaḥ/
Jito yayau yaśovarmā tad guṇa-stuti-vanditam//

Rājatarāṅgiṇī, IV. 145.

2 Ye nāma kecid iha naḥ prathayanty avajñāṃ
Jānanti te kīṃ api tān prati naiṣa yatnaḥ/
Utpatsyate'sti mama ko'pi samānadharmā
Kālo hy ayaṃ niravadhir vipulā ca pṛthivi// Mālatī-mādhava, I. 6.

the *Bāla-rāmāyaṇa*¹ and anonymous citation from his works is found in the *Kāvya-lamkāra*² of Vāmana; so these references help us fix the lower limit of his date.

The early history of Rāma beginning from his arrival in the hermitage of Viśvāmitra with Lakṣmaṇa, and ending with his return from Laṅkā and his coronation is dramatised in seven acts in the *Mahāvīra-carita*. In keeping with the title of the play which signifies the dramatist's intention to portray the valorous activities of the hero, the dramatist in his work has dealt mostly with those episodes as throw a flood of light on the warlike deeds of Rāma. He has no doubt collected materials for his play from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but the account which he gives of the life and deeds of Rāma exhibits marked difference from the epic story. He has changed the epic narrative to suit the purpose of his drama, and these judicious changes and innovations give evidence of his constructive ability and inventive genius. In both the dramas relating to the history of Rāma's life, he has bravely deviated from the well known epic story, the changes in which are generally disliked by ordinary people; but it should be borne in mind that all these points of deviation are greatly influenced by dramatic consideration.

From the very onset of the play, strong emphasis has been laid on Rāvaṇa's imminent conflict with Rāma. A messenger named Sarvamāyā comes from Rāvaṇa to the hermitage of Viśvāmitra and makes a proposal for offering Sītā to Rāvaṇa in the presence of Viśvāmitra, Kuśadhvaja, Rāma and Sītā. Signs of mutual attraction of Rāma and Sītā are revealed prior to his entry and indirect answers are given to the proposal of Rāvaṇa. Breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāma entitles him to gain Sītā as his wife, and this news compels the messenger to leave the place to communicate to Rāvaṇa the failure

- 1 Bābhūva valmika-bhavaḥ kavīḥ purā
Tataḥ prapede bhuvī bhatṛmeṇṭhatām/
Sthitalḥ punar yo Bhavabhūti-rekḥayā
Sa vartate samprati Rājaśekharaḥ// BR., I. 16.
- 2 Kāvya-lamkāra—I, 2. 12 ; Mahāvīra-carita-I. 54.
,, ,, —IV. 3. 6 , Uttara-rāma-carita-I. 38.

of his mission, and we find that the seed of the dramatic conflict is sown in this defeat of Rāvaṇa as a suitor. The second act makes us cognisant of the shrewd diplomacy of Rāvaṇa's valiant minister Mālyavat who, after hearing of the death of Tāḍakā, Subāhu and Mārīca and the acquisition of divine weapons by Rāma, starts cherishing doubt as to the fruitfulness of his plans, still he takes steps to execute his policies with a seemingly cheerful mind. Rāvaṇa's exasperation at the unexpected death of his brave followers and rejection of his proposal inspires to immediate action Mālyavat who very deftly actuates Paraśurāma to fight his rival Rāma. As in the original story, Rāma does not meet this angry sage on his return journey to Ayodhyā after his marriage. Paraśurāma although charmed at the stately appearance of Rāma cannot give up his motive of extirpating the Kṣatriyas even after an exchange of hot words with Śatānanda, Viśvāmītra and others in the capital extending over the whole third act. Paraśurāma's discomfiture at the hand of Rāma instigates Mālyavat to take recourse to another scheme in the fourth act. Śūrpaṅakhā in the disguise of the maid-servant Mantharā is sent to Lakṣmaṇa in the capital with a letter expressing Kaikeyī's intention of sending Rāma to the forest for fourteen years and making Bharata king in his place by virtue of two boons promised to her by king Daśaratha. The scheme succeeds and Rāma, accompanied by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, sets out for the forest without paying any heed to the entreaties of his well-wishers, and his mind is exceedingly delighted at the thought of killing the demons disturbing the sacrifices of the sages. The interlude of the fifth act gives us the news of Sītā's abduction through the conversation between Sampātī and Jaṭāyu and later on, Vibhīṣaṇa's alliance with Rāma is announced through a letter delivered by the female ascetic Śramaṇā to Rāma. Overjoyed at Sītā's forceful captivity, Mālyavat in the meantime forms a conspiracy with Vālin who exposes Rāma's duplicity in fighting against him. Vālin's death leads angry Rāvaṇa in the sixth act to measure his strength with Rāma in a direct combat. Through the grace of the sage Agastya, Rāma endowed with divine vision comes to know of future events and becomes ready for the speedy destruction of the demons. The seventh act describes Rāvaṇa's death, Sītā's rescue,

confirmation of her chastity by the fire-god and Rāma's coronation. Rāma and Sītā are highly blessed by Indra, Brahman, Maheśvara and Daśaratha who come from heaven to rejoice at this happy turn of event.

These innovations are introduced with the sole object of placing before the audience a well knit and consistent plot, but a weak conception of the dramatic conflict side by side has not enabled the poet to reveal the full dramatic utility of so many changes. Astute Mālyavat's failure as a statesman should have been depicted more realistically. Rāma's success in every case through divine grace completely overshadows that aged deft politician, whose well planned policies fail to bear any fruit in an unrealistic atmosphere. For a quick and direct appeal to spectators the dramatic conflict, therefore, should have been handled with greater dramatic sense and skill. Besides this, Bhavabhūti's usual lack of moderation and restraint, descriptive prose passages, emotional stanzas, alliterative phrases, long compounds in most cases hamper dramatic action and make the whole play an uninteresting one. The exchange of hot words between Paraśurāma on the one hand, Janaka, Daśaratha, Rāma and their well-wishers on the other, extends over two acts and thus becomes monotonous and unimpressive to readers. The dramatist has not paid proper attention to characterisation too. All the characters are rather mediocre. The *Mahāvīra-carita* being his earlier work reveals some deficiencies, most of which have remarkably disappeared in his mature composition.

Uttara-rāma-carita

The *Uttara-rāma-carita* of Bhavabhūti seeks to dramatise in seven acts with considerable alteration the activities of Rāma's later life extending from the banishment of Sītā to the final reunion. The interest of the drama centres chiefly round the fine delineation of the sentiment of pathos. The treatment of the subject-matter here is defective from the point of dramatic action at places, but it being the product of the poet's mature genius shows marked signs of improvement in dramatic technique, characterisation, depiction of sentiment, analysis of the emotions of the human mind and description of the

sublime grandeur of nature. Its majestic and sublime poetry feasts and enraptures our mind, and often makes us forget its deficiency in action. Bhavabhūti has written altogether three dramas, but we can form a true conception about his literary characteristics by reading this drama alone.

The dramatist has derived his plot from the *Rāmāyaṇa* ; but he has reshaped the epic story in a novel manner for his own dramatic purpose. Signs of departure from the original and innovations are manifest in almost every act of the drama. The idea of the picture-gallery in the first act dominates wholly the mind of the poet, who takes great delight in portraying vividly the scenes of forest-life. This conception of the picture-show is most probably borrowed from Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*, where in the fourteenth canto it is mentioned in a verse¹ that Rāma and Sītā are highly pleased to see the pictures of their forest-life. That simple idea has been amplified in the first act with fine descriptions of their early life, wedding ceremony and forest residence coupled with the portrayal of refined sentiments and unlimited pleasures of the happy family consisting of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā. The idea, that coming events cast their shadows before, is exemplified distinctly in this scene by appropriate references to the probability of separation in the near future and the cruel decision of Rāma to send Sītā into exile for the satisfaction of his subjects. The subtle expression of this idea just after the grand descriptions of the sweet pleasures of a happy home heightens the dramatic effect and offers the poet ample scope for the perfect delineation of the sentiment of pathos, to which he has really subordinated other side interests of the drama. Departure from the epic story on minor points in the play cannot be lost sight of. In the drama Sītā is stated to have been banished in the advanced stage of pregnancy, so that after the departure of Lakṣmaṇa she, overpowered with labour pain,

1 Taylor yathā-prārthitam indriyārthān
 Āsedyoḥ sadmasu citravatsu/
 Prāptāni duḥkhāny api Daṇḍakeṣu
 Sañcintyamānāni sukhāny abhūvan// RV., XIV. 25.

throws herself on the water of the Gaṅgā where she gives birth to twins who are taken charge of by goddess Bhāgīrathī and goddess Earth, whereas in the *Rāmāyaṇa* she, being banished in the primary stage of her pregnancy, is seen crying by Vālmīki who with the help of his disciples brings her to the hermitage where she gives birth to Kuśa and Lava a few months after. This minor change reveals the benevolent attitude of the two goddesses whose sincere efforts to effect the reunion of Rāma and Sītā in the last act are no less admirable. Another point of departure from the epic story in the first act is to be met with in the timing of Śatrughna's expedition against the demon Lavaṇa. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* some time after the banishment of Sītā, Śatrughna is asked to slay the demon Lavaṇa, and on his onward march he spends one night in Vālmīki's hermitage where Sītā has been residing at that time; but in the drama almost simultaneous occurrence of the two incidents is referred to. Rāma's sorrow is full to the brim at the time of Sītā's banishment, so in order to rouse up the martial spirit and heroism of Rāma, the news of Lavaṇa's persecution is introduced just at the proper time. Rāma, being conscious of his royal duties, at once decides to send Śatrughna to assassinate the demon.

The second act opens with the interview of the female ascetic Ātreya with the forest deity Vāsantī. The friendly conversation of the two supplies the readers with valuable information regarding the intelligence of Kuśa and Lava, who are studying with Vālmīki, and the probable visit of Rāma to the Pañcavatī forest to kill the Śūdra ascetic Śambūka. The next point of divergence is found in the event of the beheading of the Śūdra ascetic. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Rāma, being advised by Nārada, kills the Śūdra ascetic some days after the departure of Śatrughna in order to bring back to life the dead child of a Brāhmaṇa; but in the drama about twelve years after the exile of Sītā, Rāma revisits Janasthāna for killing the Śūdra ascetic. Bhavabhūti has taken all possible care to show that Rāma's love for Sītā remains unabated in spite of such a long difference of time. The familiar surroundings of the Pañcavatī forest are full of old reminiscences, and as such Rāma fails to control his grief and tears as well, though he is of calm disposition by nature. The poet

will show their final reunion and with this motive in view he never misses an opportunity to exhibit their mutual fidelity and strong love for each other. In the second act his grand description of the sublime and majestic beauty of hills and wild scenes of nature knows no parallel in Sanskrit literature. Bhavabhūti's descriptive power is demonstrated at its best here. The fertility of the poet's reproductive imagination is skilfully displayed in the third act, where Sītā's invisible presence in a spirit form is well conceived by the poet for masterly depiction of the sentiment of pathos. The act is wanting in action, but the dramatist succeeds in making up that deficiency by a thorough analysis of the workings of the human mind and subtle portrayal of the different phases, through which real love and its emotions pass in different conditions. Rāma's longing for Sītā, heart-rending lamentations, intense agony of separation enable us to have a peep into the poet's motive of idealising conjugal love through the purifying influence of sorrow. That situation has become dramatically impressive by the presence of Sītā in a spirit-form. Sītā, although grieved at her husband's conduct, forgets her sorrow and resentment at the sight of her pale bereaved husband lamenting bitterly in the old familiar surroundings of Daṇḍaka and Pañcavatī. With a loving heart she resents the cruel words of her dear friend Vāsantī rebuking Rāma for banishing innocent Sītā at the instigation of his subjects, and readily wants to caress her husband whenever he falls in a swoon out of profound deep-rooted sorrow. Even a long period of separation has not hindered in the least the spontaneous flow of love in their heart. The artistic and dramatic handling of this scene has paved the path for the final reunion of the hero and the heroine in the last act. In the fourth act Bhavabhūti brings together in the hermitage of Vālmīki sage Janaka, Kauśalyā, Vāsiṣṭha and Arundhatī—all of whom are highly surprised at the sight of Lava, and a faint hope as to the existence of the offspring of Rāma rises in their minds. We hear nothing of this meeting either in the *Rāmāyana*, or in the *Padma-purāna*. This is absolutely the product of the poet's imagination.

The Vidūṣaka's character is conspicuous by its absence in the *Uttara-rāma-carita*, but the dramatist has dexterously compensated

that defect by introducing a laughter-provoking conversation between Saudhātaki and -Bhāṇḍāyana in the interlude of the fourth act. The idea of a duel between Lava and Candraketu is also found in the *Padma-purāna*, which gives an elaborate account of the fight between Lava and Kuśa on the one and Śatrughna and Puṣkala, the son of Bharata on the other hand. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* nothing is mentioned regarding the strained relation between the guards of the sacrificial horse and twin brothers. The poet has handled the situation in a new manner by making Lava and Candraketu fight against each other,

Bhavabhūti's indebtedness to Kālidāsa is manifest in many places of the *Uttara-rāma-carita*, but it is admitted on all hands that Bhavabhūti has the rare ability of assimilating the borrowed ideas and presenting them in a new garb to enhance artistic and dramatic effect. The recognition scene of the sixth act bears close resemblance to the seventh act of the *Abhijñāna-śakuntala* where Duṣyanta recognises his son. The major point of divergence from the *Rāmāyaṇa* is noticeable in the final reunion of Sītā with Rāma in the last act. It is true that dramatic convention does not allow a tragic end, but the poet's handling of the theme from the very beginning proves that he has turned a real tragedy into a real comedy of union not only in strict adherence to dramatic rules, but also in conformity with his desire to present it as a natural culmination of the prolonged sorrows of separated life described in the foregoing acts. By the enactment of a miniature play on the happenings of Sītā's life after her exile, Bhavabhūti brings about their final reunion and herein he has exemplified dramatic technique of the highest order.

From the point of characterisation Bhavabhūti's departure from the epic story cannot be overlooked. The divinity of Rāma and Sītā is highly emphasised in books I and VII of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but Bhavabhūti's Rāma and Sītā have been humanised, they share the joys and sorrows of life like ordinary human beings. The dramatist's portrayal of Rāma's character both in his private and public capacities shows his creative power at its best. His Sītā is an embodiment of womanly love and self-abnegation; repeated trials bring out in brighter relief the unswerving truth of her character.

Kundamālā

The *Kundamālā* is a drama in six acts by Dhīra-(or Vīra-)nāga. The author is a citizen of Arārālpura which cannot be identified till now with any known place. His posteriority to Bhavabhūti is certain, as the latter's remarkable influence is traceable in his conception of Chāyā-Sītā and final union. Śāradātanaya in his *Bhāva-prakāśa*¹ mentions the work, and verses from this work are found in the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*² of Viśvanātha and *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* of Bhojadeva.

The subject-matter of the work is similar to that of the *Uttarārāma-carita* of Bhavabhūti. The first act opens with the banishment of Sītā who is deserted by Lakṣmaṇa in the forest infested by wild animals. The shocking news of exile is communicated to Sītā by the dejected Lakṣmaṇa there and Sītā, overpowered with deep grief and finding no other alternative, submits meekly to her lot. Finding her in that pitiable plight, the great sage Vālmīki takes her to his own hermitage. The interlude to the second act gives us information about the birth of Kuśa and Lava and the performance of Aśvamedha sacrifice by Rāmacandra in the vicinity of Vālmīki's hermitage. Then follows a conversation between Vedavatī and Sītā in which the latter gives vent to her deep grief of separation from Rāma. The significance of the title is explained through the events of the third act where Rāma, while loitering in a melancholy mood with Lakṣmaṇa on the bank of the Gomatī, notices a garland of Kunda flowers floating on the water. From a minute observation of the artistic mode of the wreathing of the garland, he comes to the conclusion that this is wreathed by Sītā and she is living surely in a nearby locality. Then they gradually come near the hermitage of Vālmīki. At that time Sītā, invisible to men through the grace of Vālmīki, is engaged in plucking flowers there. Now she gets a golden opportunity of knowing the heart of Rāma lamenting bitterly for Sītā. In the fourth act the author strikes a note of poignant pathos by describing Rāma's intense grief at the

1 Kundamālātra suśliṣṭā sandhi-pañcaka-saṃyutā/

Bhāva-prakāśa, VIII. 23½.

2 KM., I. 2 with prose ; SD., VI. 36.

sight of the old familiar scenes of the forest. Near the lake of the hermitage Rāma feels the presence of Sītā, but gives way to utter despair when he does not find her. At the end of this act Rāma is led to believe by the jester that the celestial nymph Tilottamā has deluded him in the forest by imitating Sītā's activities. The sight of Kuśa and Lava in the fifth act fills Rāma's mind with doubt and he cannot attain mental equanimity, until his belief that they are Sītā's sons is confirmed. In the sixth act Kuśa and Lava describe the story of the *Rāmāyana* in simple verses up to the desertion of Sītā. Vālmiki then brings to Rāma's court Sītā who has to testify to her chastity and is then accepted by Rāma.

The story of the *Rāmāyana* has been related without any significant modification in this work. In order to explain the title, the poet has brought in the episode of the garland of Kunda flowers. He has tried to exhibit some originality by the episode of the alleged imitation of Tilottamā, but that serves no useful dramatic purpose. Excessive love of form and expression invariably leads to a corresponding neglect of content and theme, but no such tendency is found in the author of the *Kunda-mālā*. His narration of the theme in simple language has made his work worth-reading.

Āścarya-cūḍāmaṇi

The *Āścarya-cūḍāmaṇi* of Saktibhadra,¹ who belongs to South India, is a drama in seven acts on the epic story beginning from Śūrpaṅkhā's appearance before Lakṣmaṇa in the forest and ending with the fire-ordeal of Sītā. Saktibhadra's date cannot properly be ascertained. As a drama, the work is not impressive at all. The title refers to the crest-jewel by which Sītā is recognised, but this incident has no special importance in the narration of the subject-matter.

The poet has adopted the device of creating confusing situation by bringing to light the magic art of the demons who change form at will. The first two acts describe Śūrpaṅkhā's passionate love for Lakṣmaṇa. Her disappointment caused by insult at his hand has

1 Saktibhadra is believed to have flourished in the 9th century A.D.

been used as one of the motives of conflict. The poet exhibits his inventiveness in the third act by slight modification of the epic story. After the departure of Rāma to catch the golden deer alive, Rāvaṇa enters the Pañcavatī forest with his charioteer and Śūrpaṅkhā. Rāvaṇa and the charioteer assume the forms of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa respectively, and Rāvaṇa takes away Sītā telling her that they should at once proceed to help Bharata in his danger according to the instruction of the ascetics of the forest. Śūrpaṅkhā in the form of Sītā misleads Rāma, who looks at the flying Sītā in the sky but wrongly takes her to be Māyā Sītā. Through irony of fate, Sītā too forms a wrong impression about Rāma standing on the ground and submissively proceeds with Rāvaṇa. Mārīca in the form of Rāma tries to delude Lakṣmaṇa, but this delusion does not last long as Śūrpaṅkhā is forced to disclose everything. Jaṭāyu's interference does not save Sītā who is carried to Laṅkā in the fourth act. Interlude to the fifth act relates Mandodarī's dream about the impending calamity of the Rākṣasa race, and in the act proper, a minister makes Rāvaṇa conscious of the critical situation. But the latter shows no interest in it, and he professes instead his passionate love for Sītā. The sixth act brings to Sītā Hanumat who offers the wonder-ring of Rāma and accepts the miraculous crest-jewel of Sītā as a token of recognition. The last act refers to Rāvaṇa's destruction and the fire-ordeal of Sītā.

It is true that the poet has not been able to demonstrate constructive ability of a high order and integrity of imagination in his play; still his lucidity of diction in verses and prose passages will tempt readers to go through his book. Bhavabhūti's influence is traceable in the conception of the central feud between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. As in the dramas ascribed to Bhāsa, here also we find the line in the prologue: — "*Kim nu khalu mayi vijñāpana-vyagre śabda iva śrūyate*" and Sthāpanā in place of Prastāvanā. Of course the peculiar dramatic technique of plays attributed to Bhāsa is shared by almost all South Indian plays. It has been claimed that Śaktibhadra is also the author of the Abhiṣeka and the Pratimā, but no importance can be attached to that suggestion for want of adequate proofs.

Anargha-rāghava

The prologue¹ of the play gives us some definite information regarding the poet's lineage. The poet is the son of Tantumatī and Vardhamāna of Maudgalya gotra. The date of Murāri cannot be determined with certainty. Mañkhaka in his *Śrikanṭha-carita*² and Ratnākara in his *Hara-vijaya*³ refer to Murāri as a dramatist, and some verses from *Anargha-rāghava* are also cited in the *Daśarūpaka*.⁴ From these references, either the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century may be fixed as his approximate date. While describing Rāma's aerial journey on way back to Ayodhyā, Murāri describes many famous places and along with them, he specifically mentions Māhiṣmatī as the capital of Kālacuri kings. Therefore it is surmised that our playwright must have been patronised by some king of that dynasty.

The *Anargha-rāghava* seeks to dramatise the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in seven acts. The poet has a high opinion about his own composition, for which reason he calls his drama *Anargha-rāghava* and in the prologue he does not hesitate to describe himself as Bāla-Vālmiki.⁵ In the long prologue he has spoken highly of his own erudition, but a thorough study of this unusually lengthy drama does

1 Asti Maudgalya-gotra-sambhavasya mahākaver Bhaṭṭasri-varḍhamāna-tanūjanmanas Tantumatī-nandanasya Murāreḥ kṣīr abhinavam Anargha-rāghavam nāma nāṭakam.

2 Prakramair haṭṭha-vakrimno Murārim anudhāvataḥ/
Śri-rājaśekhara-giro nibi yasyokti-sampadām//.

Śrikanṭha-carita, XXV. 74.

3 Añke kunāṭaka ivottama-nāyakasya
Nāsaṃ kavir vyadhita yasya Murārir ittham/
Ākrānta-kṛtsna-bhuvanaḥ kva gataḥ sa daitya-
nātho Hiranyakaśipuḥ saha bandhubhir vaḥ//.

Hara-vijaya, XXXVIII. 68.

Here the word 'Murāri' means Viṣṇu, still the mention of words 'añka' 'nāṭaka' and 'Murāri' in a single verse creates an impression that Ratnākara refers to the dramatist Murāri here.

4 Anargha-rāghava, III. 21; Daśarūpaka, II. 2.

5 Asya hi Maudgalyānām Brahmarṣiṇām anvaya-mūrdhany asya Murāri-nāmadheyasya Bāla-vālmiker vānmayam amṛta-vindu-niṣyandi kandalayati kautukaṃ me.

not permit a reader to form a similar opinion regarding the poet's scholarship and mode of composition for reasons stated below.

The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is dealt with in the whole drama without any notable modification. In the first act Viśvāmitra approaches king Daśaratha for seeking his permission to take Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to his hermitage to ward off the demons. Daśaratha at the end of the first act reluctantly parts with his dear sons. In the beginning of the second act which is rather long, the two pupils of Viśvāmitra—Śunaḥśepa and Paśumedra relate the history of Vālin, Rāvaṇa, Hanumat and Tāḍakā. This is followed by a description of the hermitage, its dwellers, noon and the sunset by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa who have already entered the stage. After Rāma's fight with Tāḍakā, a proposal for a visit to the city of Mithilā is made by Viśvāmitra. The act closes with a grand description of the city of Mithilā and her ruler. In the third and fourth acts the poet's intention to imitate Bhavabhūti is distinct, but his treatment of Rāvaṇa's feud and Mālyavat's conspiracy lacks dramatic vigour, and as such serves no useful dramatic purpose. The fourth act closes with the encounter of Paraśurāma with Rāma who politely exchanges words with his antagonist. It is worthy of notice that Paraśurāma does not come here at the instigation of Mālyavat which he does in Bhavabhūti's drama. The fifth act is concerned with the description of Rāma's marvellous and heroic deeds, Sītā's abduction and Rāma's lamentation. The act is brought to a conclusion with Vālin's death and Sugrīva's coronation. In the sixth act we find an indirect reference to the construction of the bridge, Rāvaṇa's discomfiture and death by persons carrying on conversation on the stage. In the seventh act the poet lets loose the reins of his imagination, and composes innumerable verses to describe the aerial journey of Rāma on his way back to Ayodhyā and in doing all this, he pays scant heed to dramatic action. By composing one hundred and fifty two verses in the last act he really satisfies his poetic fervour at the cost of dramatic excellence.

For want of dramatic action Murāri's composition does not elicit praise from readers. His poetic inspiration is genuine and it would have been better had he composed a Mahākāvya without attempting

to dramatise the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. His monologue, dialogues, characterisation, delineation of sentiment speak of his moderate dramatic power. He fails to exhibit restraint in useless elaboration of the incidents through verses. At places his verses are characterised by inherent melody of words producing musical cadence; but really speaking as a whole he does not, like Bhavabhūti, possess the rare gift of producing sound effects by a delicate adjustment of word and sense. It is held that Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīra-carita* and *Mālatī-mādhava* give rise to monotony, for the dramatist seems to be fond of making his compositions inordinately lengthy, but compared with them, the monotony caused by Murāri's *Anargha-rāghava* containing five hundred and forty stanzas in seven acts with prominent defects is far greater and as such it can never claim the highest appreciation of readers.

Bāla-rāmāyaṇa

The whole story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* up to Rāma's coronation has been loosely dramatised in ten acts in the *Bāla-rāmāyaṇa* by Rājasekhara whose writing amply bears the marks of a decadent period. In a long prologue containing twenty verses, he gives an account of himself and his erudition.¹ A close analysis of the whole play containing about seven hundred and eighty stanzas will reveal that his treatment of the epic theme, despite some innovations shown on the lines of Bhavabhūti, lacks dramatic vigour. The progress of the story is often interrupted by his strong zeal to compose descriptive and sentimental verses. The dimension of his drama and the feeble handling of the plot are in themselves discouraging.

The first act opens with a conversation between Śunaḥśepa and a Rākṣasa, disguised as an ascetic, who informs us that the person having the ability to break Śiva's bow will get Sītā as wife. On account of his passionate love for Sītā, Rāvaṇa comes to Mithilā to fulfil the condition of marriage. This misdirected passion of Rāvaṇa has been made the real cause of conflict between him and Rāma, and this departure reveals the author's imitation of Bhavabhūti. The

1 Mahārāṣṭra-cūḍāmaṇer akāla-jaladasya caturtho daurdukiḥ Śilavati-sūnur upādhyāya-śrī-rājasekhara ity aparyāptaṃ bahumānena.

dramatist has failed to draw an impressive picture of Rāvaṇa as rival to Rāma. His passionate longing for Sītā has been unnecessarily elaborated upon in the second act, and Paraśurāma frankly refuses to help this licentious fellow. The interlude of the third act narrates Rāma's bravery in warding off demons and also Rāvaṇa's disappointment for not getting Sītā as his wife through the conversation between two birds Citraśikhaṇḍa and Suvega. Act III proper shows the staging of the drama 'Sītā svayaṃvaraṇa' in Rāvaṇa's palace and this device of an inset play is again borrowed from Bhavabhūti. Bhavabhūti's influence is again reflected in the author's conception of Mālyavat's conspiracy, but here he effects the banishment of Rāma with the help of Mantharā and demons disguised as Kaikeyī and Daśaratha. The fourth act recounts Rāma's encounter with Paraśurāma, and the following act shows the poet's novelty in devising entertainment for Rāvaṇa by means of puppets dressed up as Sītā with speaking parrots inside. While dealing with Mālyavat's diplomacy, the dramatist uses again this device of showing the severed head of a speaking puppet resembling the face of Sītā to strike terror into the hearts of enemies. Rājaśekhara unsuccessfully imitates Kālidāsa in describing Rāma's pangs of separation, and in his ardent appeal to all creatures to give him the information of his beloved. Rāvaṇa's death occurs in act IX and the poet narrates the aerial journey of Rāma and his party in about one hundred verses in the last act like Murāri. Rājaśekhara's excessive attention to description and composition of long verses specially in Sragdharā and Śārdūla-vikrīḍita metres has done a great harm to his play. For want of dramatic action his work bears no dramatic charm, and as such it has not won the approbation of readers.

Mahānāṭaka or Hanuman-nāṭaka

The *Mahānāṭaka*, also known as *Hanuman-nāṭaka*, is to be called a drama for its having the word *nāṭaka* attached to it; but really speaking it reveals very few characteristics of a drama. This huge work gives a full picture of almost the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* practically in verses, most of which are freely plagiarised from the existing works on the same epic story. Two chief recensions of the

work are found. The West Indian recension compiled by Dāmodara Miśra in fourteen acts is known as *Hanuman-nāṭaka*; and the East Indian redacted by Madhusūdana Miśra in ten acts is styled *Mahā-nāṭaka*. The work exhibits most of the irregular features and peculiarities of the decadent period of Sanskrit drama and its authorship is yet undetermined. Both the recensions however make a bold attempt to attribute the authorship to the mythical Hanumat, the faithful follower of Rāma. In the Prarocanā verse of the Mahā-nāṭaka of Madhusūdana Miśra it is stated—“*Vālmīker upadeśataḥ svayam aho vaktā Hanumān kapiḥ*”. At the end of every act of the same recension the authorship of legendary Hanumat is confirmed by such lines as “*eṣa śrīla-Hanumatā viracite śrīman Mahānāṭake*”. There is some speculation regarding the priority of Dāmodara Miśra’s recension. Most probably there existed an essential nucleus centering which these two huge recensions developed by the addition of verses from existing works on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The earlier recension might have come into existence during the reign of Bhoja of Dhārā, with whose name is associated the recovery of this anonymous composition by learned commentators.

The first act of Madhusūdana Miśra’s recension covers the epic story up to the marriage of Rāma with Sītā with the only innovation marked by the presence of Rāvaṇa’s messenger Śauṣkala in the court of Mithilā to communicate his lord’s message to Janaka. Paraśurāma’s encounter with Rāma terminating in Rāma’s victory over the former forms the subject-matter of the second act, which concludes with a description of conjugal happiness of Rāma and Sītā. This is followed by their tragic separation in forest-life in the next act. The usual course of epic story is narrated in the following acts. Sītā is carried away by Rāvaṇa in spite of the interference of Jaṭāyu in the third act, and Rāma’s heart-rending lamentation for his dear wife, and indiscriminate questioning to animate and inanimate objects alike for her news cover the fourth act ending with Rāma’s friendship with Sugrīva. Hanumat’s adventurous meeting with Sītā, burning of Laṅkā, construction of a bridge over the ocean are narrated in an ordinary manner in the following two acts. In act VII Aṅgada comes to the court of Rāvaṇa as a messenger, but the lord of the demons turns a deaf

ear to his warnings. Mandodarī too advises him to give up Sītā, but he tries instead to frighten the captive lady by showing her the severed head of Rāma. In act IX occurs the death of Rāvaṇa after fierce battle of Laṅkā ; and here takes place Sītā's ordeal of fire also, out of which she comes out unhurt and her chastity is confirmed by the gods. The last act describes Sītā's banishment during her pregnancy in the vicinity of Vālmīki's hermitage and passing away of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.

The author of the work shows no intention of adhering to the rules of a drama. Stage directions so prominent in a dramatic composition are wanting here. No appropriate dialogue is found ; the mode of conversation in verse is not attractive at all. The work is concerned with a panoramic description of epic events without dramatic motive or action. The author would have attained greater success, had he attempted to put the whole matter in the form of a kāvya. Of course this, being a composition of the decadent period, betokens the general features of an irregular drama. Taking into consideration the popular taste of the period, the author shows preference to narration and recitation in this semi-dramatic composition. The importance of dialogue and action so necessary in a drama has been ignored. Prose passages which we find in some acts are totally negligible in comparison with stanzas. At places prose portions more difficult than those of Bhavabhūti from the point of intelligibility hamper frequently the progress of the story. In the fourth act while describing the lamentation of Rāma, the author writes a prose passage consisting of thirty three lines at a stretch where long compounds, some covering nine lines, some ten lines, are used. Such portions remind us of Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* and *Harṣa-carita*. The author has unsuccessfully tried to imitate Bhavabhūti's style. His alliterative verses lack the forceful construction of Bhavabhūti, in whose alliteration sound and sense go hand in hand. The author has unhesitatingly borrowed verses verbatim from Bhavabhūti. For instance, *cūḍā-cumbita-kaṅkapatram*¹ and *iyam gehe Lakṣmīr*² are taken from the Uttara-rāma-carita : —

¹ MN., II. 3 ; URC., IV. 2α.

² MN., IV. 28 ; URC., I. 39.

Cūḍā-cumbita-kaṅkapatram abhitas tūṇī-dvayaṃ pṛṣṭhato
 Bhasma-snigdha-pavitra-lāñchanam uro dhatte tvacaṃ rauravīm/
 Mauñjyā mekhalayā niyantritam adhovāsaś ca māñjiṣṭhikam
 Pāṇau kārmukam akṣa-sūtra-valayaṃ daṇḍaṃ paraṃ paippalam//

‘On both sides of his back are two quivers of arrows, the feathers of the Kaṅka birds at the ends of which are touched by the tuft of his hair, his breast has holy and lovely marks of ashes, he has put on the hide of the Ruru deer, his lower garment dyed with Mañjiṣṭhā is tied by a girdle made of Mūrbā grass, he has in his hand a bow, a rosary of beads and a staff of the Pippala tree.’

Īyaṃ gehe Lakṣmīr iyam amṛta-varttir nayanayor
 Asāv asyāḥ sparśo vapuṣi vahulaś candana-rasaḥ/
 Ayaṃ kaṅṭhe bāhuḥ śīśira-masṛṇo mauktika-saraḥ
 Kim asyā na preyo yadi paraṃ asahyas tu virahaḥ//

‘She is the very goddess of wealth in my house, she is like a brush of nectar to my eyes, her touch is like a thick sandal paste to my body, this hand of hers on my neck is like a cool and even string of pearls. Everything belonging to her is highly dear to me, but separation from her is intolerable.’

Prasanna-rāghava

The traditional narrative of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is adopted for dramatisation in seven acts in the *Prasanna-rāghava* by Jayadeva, the son of Sumitrā and Mahādeva of Kauṇḍinya gotra. The author is to be distinguished from other Jayadevas well known in literary history by the personal account given in the prologue.¹ This Jayadeva is certainly the author of a work on rhetoric known as *Candrāloka*; and most probably he acquired the title of Pīyūṣavarṣa for his sweet and

1 Kavindraḥ kauṇḍinyaḥ sa eva Jayadevaḥ śravaṇayor/
 Athāsīd ātithyaṃ na kim iha Mahādeva-tanayaḥ//
 Lakṣmaṇasyeva yasyāsyā Sumitrā-kukṣi-janmanaḥ/
 Rāmacandra-padāmbhoje bhramad bhṛṅgāyate manaḥ//

fluent style.¹ Some information regarding his personal history can be gathered from the book, but no definite conclusion about his date can be ascertained either by internal or external evidence.

The dramatist's attempt to introduce innovations in his work has not met with appreciable success, as the literary effect of the whole play is marred by his weak dramatic technique and workmanship. Artistic effect always centres round dramatic action. Changes are, therefore, brought in generally not only for creating a novel atmosphere, but also for maintaining unity of action and proper characterisation. A general analysis of the play act by act will reveal distinctly the deficiencies of the composition. In the first act after an unusually long prologue Dālbhyāyana, the disciple of Yājñavalkya, informs the audience of the earnest desire of king Janaka to offer his daughter to a worthy man, but his speech punctuated by the conversation of the bees which he pretends to hear is rather clumsy, and betrays a lack of dramatic sense. Then a long and boring description of kings present in the *svayaṃvara* ceremony of Sītā betrays the dramatist's tendency to imitate Kālidāsa and Śrīharṣa; but mere imitation of Kālidāsa without his characteristic sense of proportion and appropriately charming phrases demonstrates his feeble handling of a situation. The presence of Bāṇa demon in the *svayaṃvara* ceremony exhibits a deviation from the original. Such innovation is generally introduced for dramatic effect, but here we see that Bāṇa demon is brought on the stage only as an arrogant rival to Rāvaṇa. Incidents of the second act are put in a new setting which bears the distinct mark of Kālidāsa's influence. Like Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā, the dramatist allows Rāma and Sītā to meet each other before their marriage in the temple of Caṇḍikā, in consequence of which they pick up close intimacy within a short time. The author has utilised this scene for showing his capacity of delineating the sentiment of love; as it has no direct bearing on the incidents narrated in the succeeding act. In the *Abhijñāna-śakuntala* the masterly description of the first meeting of the hero and the heroine

1 Candrālokam ayaṃ svayaṃ vitanute Piyūṣavarṣaḥ kṛtī/

Candrāloka, I. 2,

keeps up the smooth flow of the narrative in the next act, but here no such attempt is made by the dramatist. The third act gives a simple account of Sītā's marriage with Rāma after the breaking of Śiva's bow without any departure from the original. In the fourth act the stage is set for the unavoidable conflict between Rāma and Paraśurāma, and the latter after an exchange of hot words finds no other alternative but to recognise the supremacy of his rival. In the fifth act a major portion of the narrative is reproduced in a charming manner. The five river goddesses assemble in one place with the ocean and discuss with deep interest the vicissitudes of Rāma's fortune. The spectators are informed of the sojourn of Rāma, his encounter with the Rākṣasas, abduction of Sītā and Sugrīva's accession to the throne of Kīṣkindhyā from their conversation. The dramatist's novel method of presentation in this portion is remarkable indeed, but the whole effect has lost its point by a mere narration of past events by different personages. Rāma's intensity of grief at the loss of Sītā in the following act is touchingly expressed by his strong appeal to inanimate objects, birds, animals to give him the news of Sītā; and that poignant agony of separation subsides to a certain extent when, by a Vidyādhara adept in magic, he is shown the events of Lankā including Sītā's ordeal of fire which proves her chastity and loyalty to Rāma. Moreover, the conversion of burning coal into pearls is the poet's novel idea to produce direct proof of Sītā's chastity. The last act gives an account of Rāvaṇa's death and the aerial journey of Rāma and party. In the end several verses describing evening, darkness, moonrise, moonlight, morning, sunrise etc. unnecessarily extend the composition without serving any dramatic purpose, and as such they reveal distinctly the poet's lack of sense of proportion.

The dramatist's attention to language to describe properly different feelings is to be appreciated. Soft and soothing expressions are used in case of delineation of the sentiment of love, and again sharp lengthy phrases are profusely applied for describing the anger of Paraśurāma or heroic sentiment. Similar sense of appropriateness in point of language is noticeable also in the depiction of the sentiment of pathos.

Dūtāṅgada

The *Dūtāṅgada* of Subhaṭa narrates in four scenes the embassy of Aṅgada. From the prologue¹ we come to know that the play was produced at the court of Tribhuvanapāla, who seems to be the Caulukya prince of that name who ruled at Anhilvad at about 1242-43 A.D. The play was acted during the Spring festival arranged to commemorate the restoration of the Śiva temple of Devapattana in Kathiawad by the deceased king Kumārapāla. In the prologue the *Dūtāṅgada* is mentioned as a Chāyā-nāṭaka, but really speaking, no special characteristics of shadow-play are found in this composition. The Chāyā-nāṭaka in the sense of shadow-play was not known to Sanskrit Theorists, and as such its existence in olden days is exceedingly doubtful. Verses from known and unknown Rāma-dramas have been inserted into this book;² for this reason it may be said that the technical term Chāyā-nāṭaka has been used in the sense of adaptation or borrowing (chāyā).

Rāma in the first scene encourages Aṅgada to go to Laṅkā for demanding the restoration of Sītā; and Aṅgada expresses his willingness to do it in boastful language. Rāvaṇa in the second scene does not pay heed to the salutary advices of Vibhīṣaṇa, Mandodarī and Mālyavat, all of whom try their best to dissuade him for incurring the displeasure of Rāma. In the third scene Rāvaṇa tries to deceive Aṅgada by showing the love of Māyā Sītā for the lord of the demons; but his efforts are not crowned with success, as Aṅgada detects his duplicity and angrily leaves the stage with threats. The last scene gives us information regarding the death of Rāvaṇa and Rāma's victory by means of conversation between the Gandharvas.

1. Yad adya vasantotsave deva-śrī-kumārapāla-devasya yātrāyāṃ pada-vākya-pramāṇa-pāraṅgatena mahākavinā śrī-subhaṭena vinirmitaṃ Dūtāṅgadaṃ nāma chāyā-nāṭakam abhinetaṃ,

2. Verses from Bhavabhūti, Rājaśekhara and Hitopadeśa are found in this work. The dramatist himself has admitted at the end of his work that he has borrowed verses freely from other compositions.

Svanirmitaṃ kiñcana gadya-padya-bandhaṃ kiyat prāktana-sat-

kavindrāiḥ/

Proktaṃ gṛhītvā praviracyate sma rasādhyam etat Subhaṭena nāṭyam//

DAN., I. 56.

The theme is well chosen and dramatised within a short compass with some touch of originality. Rāvaṇa's motive of deluding Aṅgada by bringing Māyā Sītā on the stage and showing her love for the lord of Laṅkā is the only innovation of the poet in this play. The want of dramatic action and proneness to narration—the prominent defects of the dramas of an irregular type are also noticeable in this play. Its utility for dramatic performance on the occasion of a festival is to be recognised, but in spite of its self-description as a Chāyā-nāṭaka, we cannot regard it as a shadow-play.

Unmatta-rāghava

Both Virūpākṣadeva and Bhāskara have written one-act plays under the same title *Unmatta-rāghava*; but their dramatic subject-matter differs widely. Virūpākṣadeva's plot has a close connection with the epic story, but Bhāskara has created completely a new situation to describe Rāma's madness caused by Sītā's disappearance. Bhāskara's play,¹ known as *Prekṣaṇaka*,² opens with a conversation between Sītā and Madhukarikā who are engaged in plucking flowers. As Sītā proceeds a few steps forward, she is turned into a gazelle through the curse of Durvāsas. Coming to know of her disappearance from Madhukarikā after his arrival in the cottage with the golden deer, Rāma turns mad in intense grief. Then commences the heart-rending lamentation of Rāma for his beloved wife, for whom he makes a frantic search in the whole forest. Rāma's grief subsides with the entrance of Agastya who discloses the cause of Sītā's disappearance. Durvāsas practised hard penance in a part of the forest which always wears charming appearance for the luxuriant growth of flowers. Any woman entering that part is turned into a gazelle. Seeing Sītā's miserable plight in the form of a gazelle, Agastya is moved with pity and makes her free from the curse. The appearance of Sītā

1 It is mentioned in the prologue that the play was written to entertain a group of scholars who assembled to pay respect to Vidyāraṇya. The distinguished scholar Vidyāraṇya flourished in the 14th century, so on this basis Bhāskara's date may be determined.

2 *Unmatta-rāghavaṃ nāma yat Prekṣaṇakam uktavān*, UR (B)., 1. 2½.

exceedingly delights everybody and the play closes with a happy union of the couple.

The dramatist has chosen a new situation, but the mode of presentation is not highly impressive. The influence of Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīya* is distinct in Sītā's transformation into a gazelle and Rāma's search and maddened soliloquies. No dignity and magnificence of diction are found either in his prose passages or verses. His effort to maintain the short extent of one-act play is commendable, and this is possible for him as he is not carried away by a tendency to write ornate prose and embellished verses.

Unmatta-rāghava

The *Unmatta-rāghava* of Virūpākṣadeva is a one-act play known as *Prekṣanaka*. Some lines in the prologue¹ throw a flood of light on the identity of the dramatist. He is the grandson of king Bukka and son of Harihara. He is said to have been the ruler of Karṇāṭa, Cola and Pāṇḍya countries and his victory-pillar was constructed even in Ceylon.²

The play proper opens with a description of the golden deer which Sītā wants to have at any cost. Rāma, urged by Sītā's ardent desire, follows hastily the running deer and Lakṣmaṇa too leaves Sītā to comply with her request for helping Rāma. On their return they find the cottage empty; and Rāma thinking of Sītā's calamity bursts into tears and starts lamenting aloud. Rāma in his miserable condition turns mad; and as he moves about, he asks every object he passes by about his beloved. Mango tree, Asoka, Navamālikā, Campaka, Vakula, cuckoo, parrot, deer, elephant etc. are earnestly implored by Rāma trying to elicit information from them regarding the whereabouts of Sītā. Sometimes he regains his normal sense and seeks some

1 Pautro Bukka-narendrasya dauhitro Rāma-bhūpateḥ /
Vidyate hi Virūpākṣo rājā Hariharātmajaḥ // UR (V), I. 3.

King Bukka and Harihara reigned at Vijayanagara in the 14th century and Virūpākṣadeva ruled there in the beginning of the 15th century.

2 Tasya rājñāḥ Karṇāṭa-Tuṇḍīra-Cola-Pāṇḍya-maṇḍalādhipateḥ Siṃhala-dvīpa-vinyasta-vijaya-stambhasya soḍaṣa-mahādāna-dikṣitasya sakala-kalāvilāsini-svayaṃvara-pateḥ kṛtim unmatta-rāghavaṃ nāma prekṣanakaṃ prayogato darśayeti.
UR (V), Prastāvanā.

explanation for this mishap by connecting Sītā's loss with some sin committed by him in previous birth through these lines :¹

Racitaḥ sukhāntarāyaḥ kasya kadā vā mayā na vijñātam/
Tasyaivāyaṃ hi vipākaḥ kathaṃ hi bhūyas tam eva kurvīya//

'I cannot remember whether I ever hindered the happiness of anybody ; this calamity is indeed due to such misbehaviour. How can I repeatedly do good to that person?'

At the end of the play, the author adopts a new device for altering the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* slightly and thereby adheres to the laws of dramaturgy. The loss of Sītā makes Rāma furious, and in his utter distress, a voice from behind encourages him saying that Lakṣmaṇa has gathered correct information regarding Sītā's captivity from Jaṭāyu, and after extirpating the Rākṣasas and their lord he will soon arrive with Sītā. Then the whole story of conflict with Rāvaṇa is put into a single verse :²

Vāliny unmulite drāk pramudita-manasaḥ Sūrya-putrasya sāhyād
Baddhe setau kapīndrair lavaṇa-jalanidhiṃ Lakṣmaṇo laṅghayitvā/
Hatvā Paulastyam ājau saha rajanicaraiḥ sendrajit-Kumbhakarṇam
Devīm ādāya bhūyas tava savidham asāv āgataḥ puṣpakena//

'Lakṣmaṇa seated on the Puṣpaka chariot has again come to you with the queen, crossing the ocean with chiefs of monkeys by the bridge constructed with the help of the jubilant son of the sun-god after the destruction of Vālin, and killing in the battle Rāvaṇa, Indrajit, Kumbhakarṇa and other Rākṣasas.'

Rāma's creditable achievement with regard to the destruction of Rāvaṇa and his followers is thus overlooked. The play closes with the arrival of Lakṣmaṇa with Sītā and other followers; and thus the happy union of the hero and the heroine takes place. The reference to their divinity at the end of the play is an obvious sign of spontaneous flow of deepest veneration for them from the heart of the poet.³

1 UR (V), I. 75.

2 Ibid., I, 89.

3 Catvāraḥ sahajā manuṣya-vapuṣā yūyaṃ Hareraṃśakāḥ
Sīteyaṃ kamalā vanaukasa ime sarve'pi nākaukaṣaḥ/
Yātāḥ samprati tāś caturdaśa samāḥ Sāketam etya tvayā
Bhūyo'pi tri-yugāvirodhi-caritenārādhanīyaḥ prajāḥ//

UR(V), I. 95.

A perusal of the book makes it obvious that while dealing with the subject-matter, the poet has all along borne in mind the title of the work. To achieve his end, he has composed about one hundred verses which are no doubt impressive from the point of view of sweet diction and clear sense. The major point of deviation, however, will give a rude shock to all readers who will not be willing at all to give full credit to Lakṣmaṇa for the annihilation of the Rākṣasa dynasty. The theme, of course, does not give the writer any scope to exhibit his distinctive dramatic genius. Nevertheless as the poet has no tendency towards laboured artificiality regarding expression and phrasing, we can look upon it as a work worth-reading.

Adbhuta-darpaṇa

It is a drama in ten acts by Mahādeva, the son of Kṛṣṇa Sūri of the Kauṇḍinya-gotra. The author, who belonged to Tanjore, flourished towards the middle of the 17th century. The epic story commencing from Aṅgada's mission to Rāvaṇa and ending with the coronation of Rāma has been dramatised in this play. The author has revealed his eagerness to reshape the epic story with touches of originality, but a critical analysis of the work makes it obvious that his innovations serve no useful dramatic purpose; on the contrary they have made some portions uninteresting.

The playwright's intention to create new situations by emphasising the magic powers of demons is manifest from the very beginning. In the first act, a demon Śamvara by name in the guise of the monkey Dadhimukha relates to Lakṣmaṇa the false news of the treachery of Aṅgada, who has reacted to the policy of dissension successfully applied by Rāvaṇa, as he is assured that he would be given the kingdom of Kiṣkindhyā and thus he would get the chance of avenging the death of his father. The same demon in disguise in the second act creates confusion by making Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa believe that Sugrīva has been killed. By his art of magic, he shows the severed head of the lord of the monkeys and deludes them. Assuming the form of Aṅgada, Śamvara again appears to create some complication in the third act, but the timely arrival of Sugrīva, the false news of

whose death has been announced in the preceding act, makes clear the whole position to the best satisfaction of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Statements of this disguised demon, however, do not impress the shrewd Lakṣmaṇa, who suspects some duplicity in his conduct from the very beginning. In the fourth act all present express their strong desire to punish Śamvara severely, but Rāma's intervention saves him for the time being. The interlude of the fifth act describes Mālyavat's concern over the impending battle, and the act proper shows an attempt of malicious Śūrpaṅkhā to delude Sītā by showing her the severed head of Rāma. Sītā falls into a swoon, but the assurances of Trijaṭā and Saramā help her to regain consciousness. The following three acts describe the incidents of Laṅkā which are visualised by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa through the magic mirror. The presence of false Rāvaṇa, false Rāma and false Lakṣmaṇa in these acts makes the whole dramatic situation complicated, and the author does not achieve any appreciable success by this innovation. The real Rāma, real Lakṣmaṇa, real Rāvaṇa too are present there, and they enjoy the conversation of their false counterparts and at places make appropriate remarks too. The real battle and death of Rāvaṇa are narrated in act IX by means of conversation between Laṅkā and Nikumbhilā. The dramatist in act X wants to relate the last part of the story in a different manner. After the death of Rāvaṇa Śūrpaṅkhā, in order to avenge the death of her brother, tells Māyā that assuming the form of Rāma, she will not want to accept Sītā as she has lived long in the palace of Rāvaṇa. In that case, strongly attached as she is to Rāma, she will enter fire or do something else to end her life. That takes place accordingly, but Sītā comes out of fire unhurt. Then real Rāma enters and gladly accepts her. The alteration in the last act does not reveal any dramatic motive, it again exhibits the poet's desire to bring to prominence the magic power of the demon.

The dramatist's attempt to make an imaginative presentation of the legend does not produce any dramatic interest. From the very beginning he ignores the character of Rāma whose mental weakness, despondency and bewilderment are magnified through his statements. In Lakṣmaṇa, however, we find an opposite character. His farsightedness, courage, presence of mind draw our admiration. The following

verse proves the steadiness of his mind. News of Aṅgada's treachery inspires him to utter.¹

Sarvā vānara-vāhinīyam athavā bhū-cāriṇaḥ prāṇino
 Yaḍ vānupraviśantu rākṣasa-balaṃ lokāḥ trayāḥ seśvarāḥ/
 Prākārātṭaśilā-vighatṭita-śikhā-śirṇa-sphuliṅgaiḥ śarair
 Ārya.bhrū-racanām vinaiva nimiṣā Laṅkeyam ādīpyate//

'Let the whole army of monkeys, or all creatures of the earth, or three worlds with their lords join the Rākṣasa army. By me the whole Laṅkā will be burnt without the help of my eldest brother by arrows emitting flames, the tips of which will become slender being struck against the hard stones of the wall.'

CHAPTER III

1. CAMPŪ

Rāmāyaṇa-campū

The well known Campū-kāvya concerned with the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *Rāmāyaṇa-campū*, which is ascribed to Bhoja of the 11th century A.D. In the concluding verse of the Yuddha-kāṇḍa, it is stated that the first five kāṇḍas are composed by Bhoja and the sixth kāṇḍa is written by Lakṣmaṇa Sūri,¹ son of Gaṅgādhara and Gaṅgāmbikā. In some manuscripts, however, exists a seventh kāṇḍa, that is, the Uttara-kāṇḍa by Veṅkaṭarāja.

In this work we find a faithful representation of the epic story with no signs of originality. The Bāla-kāṇḍa narrates the birth of Daśaratha's sons after the performance of Putreṣṭi sacrifice, departure of Rāma with Viśvāmitra, Rāma's marriage with Sītā and defeat of Paraśurāma. The next kāṇḍa covers the tragic death of Daśaratha after the departure of Rāma from Ayodhyā. Herein is distinctly exhibited Bharata's self-abnegation in ruling the kingdom in the name of Rāma. The Araṇya-kāṇḍa is concerned with Sītā's capture by Rāvaṇa and Rāma's piteous lamentation for his beloved. After recounting the death of Vālin and coronation of Sugrīva in the Kiṣkindhyā-kāṇḍa, the author passes on to the incident of Sītā's meeting with Hanumat, whose heroic adventure ultimately results in the destruction of the whole city of Laṅkā in the Sundara-kāṇḍa. Bhoja's composition here concludes abruptly, and the rest of the epic story dealing with Rāma's fight with Rāvaṇa, the destruction of the latter and his dynasty and Rāma's return to Ayodhyā with Sītā is related by Lakṣmaṇa Sūri in the Yuddha-kāṇḍa.

1 Prāg Bhojodita-pañcakāṇḍa-vihitānande prabandhe punaḥ/
Kāṇḍa Lakṣmaṇa-sūriṇā viracitaḥ ṣaṣṭho'pi jiyāc cīram// Rcm., VI. 110.
The 6th kāṇḍa of Lakṣmaṇa Sūri is included in NSP ed. Bombay 1898.

The narrative encumbered with difficult prose passages containing prolonged sentences runs in a stereotyped manner, in consequence of which we find an uninteresting account of the epic story. At times, few verses of elegant beauty provide some relief to readers:¹

Kalyāṇa-vāda-sukhitāṃ sahasaiva kāntām
Kāntāra-cāra-kathayā kaluṣīcakāra/
Ambhoda-nāda-muditāṃ vipine mayūrīm
Santrāsayann iva dhanur dhvaninā pulindah//

‘Rāma disheartened his wife who was happy to hear the auspicious news of coronation, by disclosing to her the news of imminent departure to the forest, just as a hunter frightens a peahen delighted at the thundering of clouds by the twang of his bow in the forest.’

In describing the sage Agastya, the author uses a charming simile²:

Prabhām ivārkīṃ tamasāṃ nihantrīm
Brāhmīm dadhānaṃ niyamena lakṣmīm/
Taponidhiṃ śaurya-nidhiḥ prasannaḥ
Sva-nāma saṃkīrtya nanāma Rāmaḥ//

‘Rāma, pleased and valorous, uttered his name and bowed down to that great sage, who acquired by regular penance spiritual power which removed darkness (ignorance) like the rays of the sun.

2. ŚLEṢA-KĀVYA

*Rāma-carita*¹

Of Śleṣa-kāvya written on the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāma-carita* of Sandhyākara-nandin deserves special mention. The author discloses his identity and praises highly his own work in a supplement called *Kavi-prasasti* which is attached at the end of the poem. He is the son of Prajāpati-nandin and grandson of Pināka-nandin of Puṇḍra-vardhana in North Bengal. He narrates the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* along with the historical incidents of the reign of Rāmapāla with words

1 RCM., II, 31.

2 *Ibid.*, III, 12.

conveying double meanings. He finished the work during the reign of Madanapāla, the son of Rāmapāla, in the eleventh century. His father was a minister of Rāmapāla, and as such the author must have derived first hand knowledge of the events occurring in the reign of Rāmapāla from his father.

The author has completed his theme within a short compass of four chapters consisting of two hundred twenty verses composed in Āryā metre. The poet's constant effort to apply punning words has considerably checked the spontaneous flow of the narrative. The major portion of the *Rāmāyana* story including the birth of Daśaratha's sons, destruction of demons in the hermitage of Viśvāmitra, departure of Rāma for the forest, Sītā's abduction and the burning of Lañkā by Hanumat has been hurriedly covered in the first chapter. The main events of the epic story can be picked up with difficulty on account of the unintelligibility of his verses. The second chapter gives an account of the construction of the bridge, Suvēla mountain and the death of Rāvaṇa. The description of Suvēla mountain, though insignificant, occupies a major portion of the chapter and the poet has to do it deliberately, as it facilitates the narration of some historical incidents of Rāmapāla's reign. The third chapter extols Sītā's virtues and narrates Rāma's return to Ayodhyā with Sītā, Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa and Aṅgada. The concluding chapter relates Sītā's exile in the forest and the passing away of Rāma and his brothers after Kuśa was made the king. Strictly speaking, the epic story has been briefly gone through in the first two chapters and only a small portion is covered by the last two chapters. A perusal of the whole book reveals that the author has only touched upon the main outlines of the epic story; and so far as narration of incidents is concerned, no proportion in chapters is maintained. Of course the author's artificial effort and laborious search for double entendre are the main causes of this glaring defect. Another point to be borne in mind is that the author's primary purpose is to relate the historical events of the reign of Rāmapāla; and to achieve this purpose, he does not mind any flaw with regard to the epic story. The importance of the work lies in its narration of contemporary historical incidents, but from the literary point of view its value is negligible.

The poet's boastful remarks in the *Kāvī-praśasti*¹ demonstrate high self-confidence in his poetic abilities. It is not possible even for a scholar to appreciate his writing without the help of a commentary. He calls himself Kalikāla Vālmīki,² but when we take into account Vālmīki's simple diction and lucid style, we do not feel inclined to approve this title of Sandhyākara-nandin. Such laboured embellishment and strained expressions brought in by astonishing feats of verbal jugglery have made his work unimpressive to readers. The following verses and their translations will reveal the laborious nature of his efforts:^{3&4}

Anvaya-bhavanaṃ sahasāmantavrajam abhyupeta-sābhāyāṃ/
Anumene sa mahādo ravi-tanayaṃ mitra-bhāvaṃ āpannam//

'He (Rāma), with long arms, supported Sugrīva (the son of Sun-god) who, being the chief source of strength and having established friendship with him, came there with a promise of help.'

'He (Rāmapāla), with long arms, recognised the compact circle of feudatory chiefs, which was a source of the supply of his forces, the policy of which was kept secret, and which having formed an alliance with him offered him assistance.'

Kṛcchreṇa ratna-garbhāṃ sūnus tasyājñayāśu cāturyāt/
Janakabhavaṃ sa sumantrāśrita-sauta-vidhis tato vanaṃ ninye//

'At his command his brother, with great difficulty, promptly and cleverly took the jewel-wombed daughter of Janaka to the forest with Sumantra as charioteer.'

'His son, clinging to wise counsel and filial duty and acting under his orders, cleverly and promptly brought the native land full of precious things under his protection with great difficulty.'

1 Kāvya-kalā-kula nilayo guṇa-maṇi-merur maṇiṣiṇām iśaḥ/
sīmā sāhityavidāṃ aśeṣa-bhāṣā-viśāradaḥ sa kavīḥ//

RC., KP. 5.

2 Avadānaṃ Raghu-parivṛḍa-gauḍādhipa-rāmadevayor etat/
Kali-yuga-rāmāyaṇam iha kavir api kali-kāla-Vālmikīḥ//

Ibid., II.

3 RC., 1. 44.

4 Ibid., IV, 3.

3. DŪTA-KĀVYA

The Dūta-kāvya is one of the important branches of Sanskrit literature and epic stories provide theme for several Dūta-kāvya. The Megha-dūta of Kālidāsa is a unique production in this direction, and not a few poets felt inspired to compose Dūta-kāvya of ordinary dimension in direct imitation of the Megha-dūta. Many of them do not possess the distinctive poetic genius which accounts for an original creation, and as such their compositions bear distinct marks of strong imitative urge in this direction. Some of these works, therefore, mostly lacking in quality have after all enhanced the quantitative value of this branch of Sanskrit literature. Imitative tendency is clearly discernible even in the structure of some works where Mandākrāntā metre has been employed to play its usual role, but instances of poets showing variation by the use of Śārdūla-vikrīḍita, Śikhariṇī, Mālinī and Vasanta-tilaka metres are not rare. Animate objects like the parrot, peacock, cakravāka, swan, cuckoo, cakora and inanimate objects like the Moon, the wind, the tulasī plant are chosen as messengers to convey assuring messages to desired persons as quickly as possible.

The Haṃsa-sandēśa of Veṅkaṭanātha Vedāntācārya, also known as Vedānta Deśika and the Bhrāmara-dūta-kāvya of Rudra Nyāya-pāñcānana, being two Dūta-kāvya on the Rāma story, are fit for discussion here. The main story of the Mahābhārata too attracted the attention of writers of Dūta-kāvya and the name of one such Dūta-kāvya deserves mention here. This is the Monodūta of Tailaṅga Vrajanātha composed in 1758 A.D. In this work Draupadī seeks the help of mind to act as a messenger to Kṛṣṇa in her helpless condition at the time of her insult by Duḥśāsana in the court. Swiftmess of mind is known to all, and the author's wise reliance on the ability of mind to carry the message of Draupadī to Kṛṣṇa shows his right selection.

Haṃsa-sandēśa

The period of Veṅkaṭanātha Vedāntācārya who composed the Haṃsa-sandēśa can roughly be fixed between 1268 A.D. and 1367 A.D.—a period famous in the history of the Hindu kingdom of

Vijayanagara. The private life of the poet was marked by simple habits, polite dealings and strict observance of religious rites. He was repeatedly requested by his friends to approach king Bukka for financial assistance during days of dire hardship, but he turned down their requests on account of his averseness to royal patronage. He lived and died for culture.

The learned scholar gives clear evidence of his literary genius by the composition of the epic poem *Yādavābhyudaya* on the life of Śrīkrṣṇa. The influence of the *Kumāra-sambhava* on this work is distinctly traceable. A philosophical drama *Saṅkalpa-sūryodaya* is the product of his dramatic genius and philosophical erudition, and it belongs to the group which includes the valuable dramatic composition *Prabodha-candrodaya*. He throws some light on his personal life in this dramatic composition. His intelligence and memorising capacity helped him to acquire vast knowledge before the age of twenty. The poet died at the age of one hundred eight; his is a long life of ceaseless literary activity. Śrī Appayya Dīkṣita wrote commentaries on many of his works and paid unhesitatingly glorious tribute to his literary genius.

The *Haṃsa-sandeśa* of the poet is an erotic lyric of 110 stanzas in Mandākrāntā metre in direct imitation of the *Megha-dūta*. It consists of two Āśvāsas, of which the first contains sixty verses and the second fifty. Rāma, anxious for Sītā's rescue, makes hurried arrangement in consultation with Sugrīva for marching against Rāvaṇa, still he cannot avoid some delay in the matter. After returning from Laṅkā Hanumat reports the distressing condition of Sītā to him. The miserable plight of his beloved makes him gloomy. He is extremely eager to deliver her as early as possible, but the unavoidable delay in this respect may enhance her dejection and endanger her life, so beholding a swan on the waters of the Tuṅgabhadrā, he sends it to Laṅkā to give her necessary consolation.

Like the *Megha-dūta*, the first Āśvāsa gives a pen-picture of the path the swan is to cover from the Tuṅgabhadrā to Ceylon. During the journey, it will pass through mount Mālyavat, Sahya hills, mount Anjanā, Tundīra, Kāñcī, Śrīraṅgam, the land of the Colas, the river Tāmaparṇī and lastly the lofty peak of Suvēla mountain on which lies the shining city of Laṅkā. The description of this long charming

path enables the poet to give topographical information along with the display of his descriptive power.

The poet describes the distressing condition of Sītā in the second Āśvāsa just in the manner of Uttara-megha of the *Megha-dūta*. The swan is earnestly requested by Rāma to deliver his message for her immediate assurance after recognising her from this description. It is instructed to come back with a return message of his beloved.

The author, versed as he is in different branches of philosophy, has introduced Vedantic doctrines in some verses, but this intricate discussion does not hamper considerably the literary motive of the poet and as such can be set aside for estimating the poetic value of the work. The composition is not, however, extremely fascinating, still there are verses of lofty conception and grace. It must be frankly admitted that it has a definite worth of its own in the range of Dūta-kāvya literature, and those who want to read it as a kāvya will have their motive satisfied by proper appreciation of the work.

Bhramara-dūta-kāvya

The *Bhramara-dūta-kāvya* of Rudra Nyāya Pañcānana of Bengal, who flourished in the 17th century, narrates a fictitious incident like the *Haṃsa-sandeśa* of Veṅkaṭanātha. The Dūta-kāvya is so named because a bee is sent to Sītā with Rāma's message. The message is not a new one—it is the same manifestation of pathos only in a new form. On hearing of Sītā's miserable condition in the Aśoka forest, Rāma is overpowered with deep grief and seeing a couple of bees on a lotus in the lake requests the drone to start with his message from Citrakūṭa to the Aśoka forest in Laṅkā. During its journey it will pass through Vindhya mountain, the river Revā, Karṇāṭa, the Kāverī, Kāñcī and the ocean. After a vivid description of Laṅkā, Rāma sorrowfully states his actual message to the drone, who is in turn blessed by Rāma with the words that it will never be separated from its beloved. The topographical information in the *Haṃsa-sandeśa* and *Bhramara-dūta-kāvya* is almost similar, and both the poets adorn their works with descriptive elements. Rich imageries, sweet diction, graceful expression, appropriate use of figure of speech and the application of Mandākrāntā metre add to the

literary excellence of this composition. The author has written numerous books on logic, but the present work shows that he is not lacking in poetic ability too. His contribution to Sanskrit literature of the 17th century is a matter of great pride to his countrymen.

4. A WORK WITH A LEGENDARY THEME

Rāvaṇārjunīya

Legends of the *Mahābhārata* supply inspiration to many writers for the composition of the Mahākāvya and dramas, but the legends in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are very few in number and have been rarely utilised for a similar purpose. As such writers mostly applied their poetic talent to compose kāvyas on the entire story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Some exception is found in the case of Bhaṭṭabhīma (Bhaumaka) who composed the *Rāvaṇārjunīya* on the conflict between Kārtavīrya—the king of the Haihayas and Rāvaṇa. The story was narrated to Rāma by the great sage Agastya in the Uttara-kāṇḍa¹ to teach the lesson that a boastful man sometimes suffers defeat for his arrogance. Bhaṭṭabhīma's date and place of birth cannot be properly ascertained. A reference to the author is found in the *Suṛtta-tilaka* of Kṣemendra who calls it a “*Śāstra-kāvya*.”²

Once Rāvaṇa with his attendants comes to the city of Māhiṣmatī to fight with its ruler. At that time Kārtavīrya surrounded by innumerable ladies is sporting in the midst of water. Rāvaṇa, a staunch devotee of Mahādeva, worships the deity and has several garlands set afloat on the water of the Narmadā; but the conduct of the king Kārtavīrya who withdraws the current of the river causes his exasperation. In the fight that ensues, Rāvaṇa is made captive after his discomfiture. Pulastya's intervention secures his liberation and ultimately both the rivals agree to be friendly to each other.

Imitating Bhaṭṭi, Bhaṭṭabhīma has composed this poem in eight chapters for illustrating the rules of grammar. This motive that stands

1 RAM., VII, 31-3.

2 Śāstra-kāvyaṃ caturvarga-prāyaṃ sarvopadeśakṛt/

Bhaṭṭi-Bhaumaka-kāvyaṃ kāvya-śāstraṃ pracakṣate//

Suṛtta-tilaka, III, 4.

uppermost in the minds of such poets from beginning to end never permits them to adhere to a high poetic standard. Here like Bhaṭṭi, the sole concern of the poet is to find out appropriate words and phrases for explaining grammatical rules. One word, however, can be said in favour of Bhaṭṭabhīma. In spite of his main purpose, he has not neglected the story element and has tried his best to maintain simplicity of language. It is possible for us to understand his verses without the help of a commentary. Leaving aside the Vedic sūtras, the poet has exemplified all the remaining sūtras of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. The epic legend is very short and he has lengthened it with some descriptions. King Kārtavīrya and his qualities, his sport with ladies in the midst of water, his fight with Rāvaṇa have been elaborated. Verses of elegant beauty are sometimes met with in his work :¹

Suptotthitāḥ pravikasan nayanāravindāḥ
 Kāścit samā yuvatayo nalinībhir āsan/
 Nidrā-nimīlad-urunetra-saroja-śobhāḥ
 Kāścit prabhāta-samaye ca kumudvatīnām//

‘Some young ladies with their expanded lotus-like eyes bore perfect resemblance to the lotuses just after their sleep and some, with their broad eyes having the beauty of lotuses but still closed under the influence of sleep, looked like lilies in the morning.’

The following verse reveals how he shows his efficiency in illustrating four rules of grammar (*Parājer asoḍaḥ, Vāraṇārthānām īpsitaḥ, antardhau yenādarśanam icchati, janikartuḥ, prakṛtiḥ*) in a single verse maintaining its poetic charm and appeal :²

Reṇucayāt pathi parājayate sma kāścid
 Antardadhe karivarād aparo’ śvasādī/
 Jātaṃ kapola-phalakān madavāri tasmād
 Bhr̥ngān nyavārayad ibhaś cala-karṇa-tāla//

‘Some horseman was obstructed by dusts on the way, some disappeared leaving the track to a lofty elephant. The elephant with

1 RAR., VI, 82. It is an illustration of the rule “Tulyārthair atulopamābhyāṃ tṛtīyānyatarasyām,”

2 *Ibid.*, III, 12.

his long moving ears prevented the bees from sitting on his broad temples where appeared ichor.'

5. SOME MINOR WORKS

Besides the works discussed in the preceding chapters, some other compositions on the epic story were made by minor writers. It may be worthwhile to mention some of their names:—

The *Rāmābhyudaya* of Yaśovarman, the king of Kānyakubja, is a lost drama probably in six acts. Citations by Ānandavardhana and also in anthologies under Yaśovarman's name were probably made from this work. The *Udātta-rāghava* of Māyurāja is cited in the *Daśarūpaka* and the *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*, but we have no definite information regarding this drama as it is lost. Both Kuntaka and Abhinavagupta refer to three Rāma-dramas—*Chalita-rāma*, *Kṛtyāravaṇa*, *Māyāpuṣpaka*, whose date and authorship are unknown. The *Udāra-rāghava* of Śākalyamalla is a poem in sixteen cantos on the entire Rāma story, but only nine cantos are available. The *Rāmāyamakārṇava* of Veṅkaṭeśa is an instance of Yamaka-kāvya and the *Rāmacandrodaya* of the same author is an extensive Mahākāvya in thirty cantos. Several Rāma-dramas like the *Jāmadagnya-jaya* (Vyāyoga), the *Abhinava-rāghava* of Kṣīrasvāmin, who was the pupil of Bhaṭṭendu-rāja, the *Raghu-vilāsa* and the *Rāghavābhyudaya* of Rāmacandra are mentioned in the *Nāṭya-darpaṇa*, but these works are not available. The *Jānakī-parinaya* is a drama in six acts by Rāmabhadra Dīkṣita, son of Yajñarāma Dīkṣita and pupil of Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita. The literary value of this work is negligible. The whole issue has been here complicated by confusing disguises of the Rākṣasas appearing as Viśvāmitra, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā.

The *Svapna-daśānana* of Bhīmaṭa of the 8th century is mentioned by Bhoja and Rājasekhara. Bhīmaṭa is often identified with Bhīma—the author of the *Pratijñā-cāṇakya*, but this view is untenable for want of reliable proofs. Somadeva in his *Kathā-sarit-sāgara* has devoted some space to the narration of the Rāma story in the *Alaṃkāravatī* Lambaka¹. The meeting of Indra with Ahalyā

¹ KSS., IX. 1. 51-112.

and their miserable plight due to the indignation of the sage Gautama have been recounted there in the third chapter¹. Kṣemendra of manifold literary activities composed a drama named *Kanaka-jānakī* towards the second half of the 11th century and the work is cited in his *Kavi-kaṇṭhābharāṇa*. Hastimalla, the pupil of Govinda Bhaṭṭa, wrote at the end of the 13th century a drama *Maithilī-kalyāṇa* by name in five acts in Southern India. Vāmana-bhaṭṭa Bāṇa is believed to have written a poem *Raghunāthābhyaṇḍaya* in the beginning of the 15th century. The drama *Ānanda-rāghava* was composed by Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dikṣita, the son of Śrīnivāsa Dikṣita and Kāmākṣī Devī towards the end of the 16th century. The *Uttara-campū* of Veṅkaṭadhvārin of the 17th century is an incomplete work dealing with the story of the *Uttara-rāmāyaṇa*, and another poet of this century Vāsudeva by name wrote the *Rāma-kathā*. The *Rāmābhyaṇḍaya* was written by Rāmadeva Vyāsa. It is a short play of two acts dealing with the well known topics—the conquest of Laṅkā, the fire ordeal of Sītā and Rāma's return to Ayodhyā. The *Raghunāthāvilāsa*, a drama by Govinda Dikṣita, the *Rāghava-vilāsa* by Viśvanātha, the author of the *Sābitya-darpaṇa* and the Rāma epic *Raghuvīra-carita* are some other works dealing with the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. Dr. Aufrecht in his *Catalogus Catalogorum* mentions a *Raghuvīra-carita* of seventeen cantos written by Mallinātha. It deserves mention in this connection that Madhurāvāṇī, a court poetess of king Raghunātha of Tanjore, composed a work *Rāmāyaṇa-sāra* on the principal story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the 17th century. The *Bhāumī-pariṇaya*, a drama by Ratnakheṭa Dikṣita, has not been published.

¹ KSS., III. III. 137-47.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters we have endeavoured to show the dimension of great epics—the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. The *Mahābhārata* had its origin in the legends and traditions of a great historical war, whereas the *Rāmāyaṇa* grew out of the recollections of the glorious age of the Kośalas and the Videhas. As a heroic poem the superiority of the *Mahābhārata* is undeniable; but as a poem delineating the softer emotions of our daily life, the *Rāmāyaṇa* makes a stronger appeal to the minds of millions in India. The *Mahābhārata* describes the political life of ancient India with all its heroic grandeur; high aspirations and lofty chivalry of the heroic age find full expression in this epic. The *Rāmāyaṇa* represents mainly the domestic and religious life of ancient India; its sincerity and sweetness, its liberality and nobility arrest the attention of all readers. A close penetration into the ancient life of the Aryans enables us to realise fully why India produced and preserved for full two thousand years two epics instead of one national epic. Truly speaking, the two together give us an accurate picture of ancient Indian life and civilisation, and as such both make a deep impression on Indian minds. No work however enriched by imaginative touches can withstand the chance of extinction unless it contains in an abundant measure some elements of undecaying truth, unless it depicts vividly human feelings and human life to some extent. It is a matter of common knowledge that not only the kernels of the epics but also the different episodes, legends, myths, fables and didactic stories were known to the intelligentsia of the country as well as to the common man who had not undergone any discipline in education. With rapt attention people have heard the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* from their seniors and whenever occasion permits, they are ever ready to pass them on to their juniors to uplift their mental and moral outlook. Therefore the unmistakable influence of these two epics on the formation of character or on the advancement of knowledge or on Indian social life for centuries is undisputed. The

tradition seems to be an almost unbroken one and even the modern mind, in spite of its scientific angle of vision, does not and cannot escape from the varied influence of the two epics. The gnostic verses and small didactic stories can guide them even in this scientific age when the human race faces total extinction due to the discovery of fearful weapons.

The characters of the epics, whether real or fictitious, leave permanent impression on the minds of the Indian people and some of them are idolised and enshrined in their hearts with intense devotion; while others are regarded as the expression of all that is dark, hideous and ignoble, and as such fit for rejection. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we find a lofty admiration of what is sublime in human character. The intense devotion of Rāma and the loyalty and womanly love of Sītā run like two threads of gold through the whole fabric of the epic and ennoble and purify the work in the eyes of all Hindus. Rāma and Sītā are the ideals of perfection so far as manhood and womanhood are concerned; their fortitude under trials and tribulations, their proneness to truth and nobility, their strong sense of duty under all vicissitudes of fortune raise before all the Hindu ideal of a perfect life. Bharata and Lakṣmaṇa too are held in high esteem for their brotherly love and stern devotion to duty. In the *Mahābhārata*, each hero has a marked personality of his own, clearly distinguishable from those of other heroes. The stately and majestic queen Gāndhārī, the affectionate mother Pṛthā, the sensitive Draupadī cherishing her anger till the wrongs done to her are fearfully avenged, the tender-hearted and beautiful Subhadrā—these are vivid images which reveal the creative power and richness of fancy of a high order. The noble and truthful Yudhiṣṭhira, the valiant Bhīma and the ever agile Arjuna are the jewels of the Indian epic. The pictures of haughty and uncompromising Duryodhana and the evil-minded Duṣṣāsana are drawn with due prominence among the wicked sons of the old and blind Kuru monarch. Thus while the Indians try to imitate the characters of Rāma, Bharata, Yudhiṣṭhira and Gāndhārī, they are also strictly prohibited to emulate the ideals of Rāvaṇa, Duryodhana and Sakuni.

The story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the mainspring of inspiration to religious reformers, and at the same time it has purified the popular

faith of our modern times. Rāma, a strong votary of truth and dutifulness, is identified with the spirit of God. He is believed to have descended on earth as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the preserver of the world. The monotheism of Viṣṇu was propagated by Ramananda, Ramanuja, Kavira, Chaitanya and others; and down to the present day, although people in India are found to worship many images in many temples with strong devotion, they still hold fast to the cardinal idea of one God and believe the heroes of the ancient epics—Kṛṣṇa and Rāma to be the incarnations of the God who pervades and rules the whole universe.

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Popular appeal of these two epics lies in another characteristic feature which distinguishes them from all other works of later Sanskrit literature. It lies in the grand simplicity of the narrative which is in direct contrast with the artificial graces of later Sanskrit poetry. The poetry of Kālidāsa, for example, ranks high in poetic beauty and grandeur; almost every verse of his works flashes with similes. The poetry of the epics is simple and unpolished. The author hardly uses a simile or a figure of speech unless it comes naturally to him. When occasion for comparison arises, he accepts them and notes them down; but he shows no eagerness for verbal embellishment. He has full confidence in the grand narrative, in the striking incidents and in the heroic characters which are impressive enough to hold millions of listeners spell-bound.

A profound knowledge of the epics is absolutely necessary to trace their influence on the life and civilisation of the nation, on the development of modern languages, literatures and religious reforms. Different writers with different outlooks and impressions ransacked unhesitatingly this glorious treasure-house of ideas, stories and phrases with the inevitable result that their productions differ from one another in nature and form as well. The epics have their doors open for all. Whoever may penetrate deeply into them will surely come out of them delighted and ennobled. To poets, plagiarism is not a sin at all; they feel a strong inclination to plunge deep into such valuable treasure to change what is copper into pure gold. It is quite natural for them to take stock of the assets of the past as well as

their liabilities to the future. A ready consciousness of their debts to future generations serves as an incentive to use their poetic talent to the highest degree of efficiency. Presentation of old materials without appreciable touches of originality and free play of imagination involves unproductive labour and is, therefore, useless. All persons have a natural likeness for newness and variety, so poets are naturally inspired to bring in new variation in their literary compositions. They win approbation only when their works stand the test of criticism. The more an author is capable of demonstrating fanciful modification for successful handling of the plot, the more his production gains literary excellence. In most cases, later writers have tried to cast their glance on epic episodes from a new angle. They have spared no pains to find out a fresh utility for those stories ; they themselves find immense pleasure in their task and at the same time have succeeded in distributing it to readers. In some cases the new outlook of authors is influenced by motive other than literary. Of course, the genius of different poets has always sought to improve upon or modify the character and situation of the original to their respective advantage ; but the fact remains that the source from which these poets have selected their themes has a fascination for generations of students. The popular appeal of the epics has been understood by succeeding generation of writers and poets, and they thought that it would be to their advantage if they could select their subject-matter from the epics.

Thus we can say without being accused of exaggeration that the whole range of classical Sanskrit literature is permeated by the spirit of the great epics. When we say this, we must not be misunderstood, for we are also aware of the fact that there were few other sources, particularly, the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya which also inspired the creative genius of succeeding poets ; but the quantity of literature, as reviewed by us, which we think has been fairly exhaustive, will prove beyond any vestige of doubt that the imagination of Indian poets, in general, was stirred up by the poetic beauty and variety of character of the two great epics. Not to speak of classical Sanskrit literature, all the provincial literatures of India have also utilised epic sources to the fullest extent.

APPENDIX

It is worthy of notice that unabated influence of the two epics is found also in some latest compositions of less known writers. Really speaking, the literary value of those works is insignificant, still they deserve enumeration here to add substantial weight to the contention that so far as the universal appeal of the epics is concerned, time even does not appear to be a strong factor to curb their influence. The works, which are to be mentioned now, convey clear evidence of literary efforts of writers of different provinces in this direction.

The *Pāṇḍava-vijaya* is a poem in twelve cantos by Hemacandra Roy. As its name signifies, it narrates the victory of the Pāṇḍavas in the battle of Kurukṣetra. Absence of astonishing feats of verbal jugglery and lengthy monotonous descriptions accounts for the brevity and intelligibility of this composition. The *Jarāsandha-vadha* is a poem in ten cantos by Tāriṇīśaṅkar Vidyāratna. The *Bhīṣma-vijaya* is a prose composition by Lakṣmaṇa Sūri in eight ucchvāsas. No other renowned poet in Sanskrit literature has made an attempt to give a pen-picture of the life history of Bhīṣma. The incidents of his life have attractive elements of a fine composition and the present author, taking into consideration the literary possibilities of this episode, recounts in this work his birth, his memorable vow for which he acquires the title Bhīṣma, display of heroism, salutary advices to persons standing around his death-bed and ascent to heaven. The simplicity of language and methodical treatment of the subject-matter within a short compass are commendable. Rāma Śāstrī presents the story of king Nala in ten acts in his drama *Bhaumī-pariṇaya*. The narrative has been cleverly handled here with an ingenious display of originality in every act like the *Nala-vilāsa* of Rāmacandra Sūri.

The *Daśānana-vadha* of Yogīndranātha Tarkacūḍāmaṇi is a prose composition in ten chapters. The destruction of Rāvaṇa being the main theme, the author devotes his attention specially to Rāvaṇa's haughtiness, his fascination for Sītā and the city of Laṅkā. The author shows some novelty in Rāvaṇa's desire for an amicable settlement with

Rāma. Rāmapāṇivāda, the well known writer of Kerala, has composed several works in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Malayalam. The drama *Sītārāghava* and a poem *Rāghavīya* in twenty cantos prove his fondness for epic theme. Figures of speech and rules of grammar are illustrated in these works profusely, still his planned motive has not hampered the sweetness of verses and simplicity of language. The *Rāma-vijaya* is a poem dealing with the heroic exploits of Rāma and his final victory over Rāvaṇa in nine cantos by Rūpanātha Upādhyāya of Mithilā. The work contains descriptions of different seasons in sweet language and each canto closes with the word Śrī. The *Raghunātha-vijaya-campū* consisting of five vilāsas is an uninteresting composition by Kṛṣṇakavi. The *Haṃsa-dūta* is a dūta-kāvya in direct imitation of the *Megha-dūta* in two parts by Nityānanda Śāstrī, the first part consisting of sixty eight verses and the second fifty-eight verses. The *Paraśurāma-carita* is a fine composition by Hemacandra Roy in ten cantos. Generally works based on the Rāmāyaṇa are concerned with the main story, but works on episodes are very rare. This composition serves that purpose and seeks to narrate Paraśurāma's birth, his gaining of divine weapons, conflict with Kārtavīrya and extermination of the Kṣatriyas.

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