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THE SOCIAL PLAY IN SANSKRIT

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PREFACE

This Transaction is a resume of a lecture delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture by Dr. V. Raghavan, Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Madras.

It is often overlooked, in the natural preoccupation with the great legacy of treasures of the mind and Spirit which ancient Sanskrit literature enshrines, and which modern India holds in trust for the race, that ancient India had also a dramatic literature which challenges comparison with that of any other country, ancient or modern. India's Kalidasa, of all the world's dramatists, perhaps best merits comparison with Shakespeare; his *Sakuntala* has won high encomiums, evoking great enthusiasm from a critic of the discernment of Goethe. It is, however, a drama of the heroic class, which Dr. Raghavan is at pains to distinguish here from the social drama with which this study is primarily concerned, and several exemplars of which he analyzes, Sudraka's *Mrcchakatika* being the best known.

This Transaction of the Institute will convince many of the appropriateness of the title under which Dr. Franklin Edgerton wrote in *The Aryan Path* for October 1936, "The Humanizing Effect of the Study of Sanskrit." In that essay he expressed the belief that few other humanistic fields were so well adapted as Sanskrit to make Europeans question the conviction, so widely held even by scholars, consciously or unconsciously, that European civilization is *intrinsically* superior to any other. These social dramas especially show men and women like us, conveying the impression of a common humanity that transcends the differences of era no less than of geographical locality. The great Upanishads show the unity of mankind on the upper levels of man's being; here we see its unity in the humdrum round of daily living, when the attention is turned outward towards the life of the senses.

We hope that "The Social Play in Sanskrit" will play its part in bringing readers to the recognition of the essential oneness of the human family.

THE SOCIAL PLAY IN SANSKRIT

IN this lecture I want to emphasize the value of the social play in Sanskrit and to show to you, by a notice of specimens of it, including some which once existed but are no longer extant, that this was really a well-represented class of Sanskrit drama.

Hillebrandt and others propounded, in the early days of the investigation of the history of Sanskrit drama, what is called the theory of the secular origin of the Sanskrit drama, which later writers like Keith, who saw the beginnings of drama in ritual and religion, refuted. It is, however, accepted by all that, though characters like the *Vidusaka*, and features like the occasional use of Prakrt which renders the drama almost bilingual, do not necessarily point to a secular origin, a popular play did exist which contributed its elements to the Sanskrit drama.

Whatever be the findings of research on this matter, the tradition and the text of the *Natya Sastra* have themselves some light to throw on the social thread in the development of the Sanskrit stage. Tradition always bears seeds of significant facts, and in its very last chapter, the *Natya Sastra* of Bharata has an account of how the *Sastra* came down to earth during the time of King Nahusa, which shows that the earliest plays were popular parodies of high society, i.e., what may be referred to as the early representatives of the *Prahasana* type (XXXVI. 29-30). It is said that this roused the displeasure of the higher ranks who pronounced all actors sudras (*Ibid.* 34, 35).

Now, if we analyze the ten types of drama which Bharata describes in his "Dasarupa" chapter (No. XVIII) We find that the types fall into two definite classes, the heroic and the social. Of the "ten dramas," *Nataka*, *Vyayoga*, *Samavakara*, *Dima*, *Ihamrga* and *Anka* go together as examples of the heroic drama, while *Prakarana*, *Prahasana*, *Bhana* and *Vithi* go naturally together as representing the social type. If we reverse the later order of importance, we get the actual line of historical evolution.

Though Bharata puts all these together and calls them *Dasarupaka*, and though the types that later developed were given the name *Uparupaka*, as if all the varieties in the former were major ones and all those in the latter were diminutive forms, the real position is that the *Dasa-rupaka* group is historical and comprises smaller and bigger forms, irregular and regular ones, finger-posts, in fact, on the road of the evolution of the Sanskrit drama from crude forms to the perfect types. Those in one, two, three or four acts were the precursors and how the progress actually took place, I have analyzed in my paper "*Dasarupaka*" in the *Journal of Oriental Research*,¹ and I shall refer to it briefly here.

When this progress towards a more elaborate and more complete form was taking place, the movement was really on two parallel lines, the heroic and the social, each culminating in a perfect type of its own trend, the *Nataka*, the heroic drama *par excellence*, and the *Prakarana*, the pre-eminent social play. The seal is set on this course of development by the text itself, which calls these two the *Purna-vrtti-rupakas*, the most complete forms. One of the elements of this completeness is the presence of *Kaisikivrtti* or elements of grace and beauty, of women-players, singing and dancing, and the opening chapter of the *Natya Sastra* confirms the later addition of this *Vrtti* and the women-players who are to be proper media of its expression.

The *Dima*, exemplified by its first specimen, the *Tripuradaha*, Siva burning the demon Tripura, portrays the act of a God; *Samavakara* is the coming together in conflict of the Gods

¹ Vol. VII, pp. 277-290.

² See my paper, "The Vrttis," *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. VI, pp. 355-6.

and demons, Devas and Asuras, and its first specimen, with which the traditional history of the art starts, is the churning of the ocean; these two present, respectively, the act of the great God and the acts of the lesser gods and form the earliest presentation of an elevated action of beings of a higher plane; the very elaborate description of the “Samavakara” preserved by Bharata shows that there was a stage in which this was the important Sanskrit drama. The *lhamrga* is an extension of the acts of the Gods with the love element introduced; and now the transition takes place from the heavenly heroes to their friends on earth, the great epic kings, the *Rajarsis*, giving us the *Vyayoga*, a slightly modified form of the *lhamrga*. This series soon reached its normal perfection in the *Nataka*, in which the life and doings of an exalted epic King are dramatized.

Let us now see the parallel course of the other strain in the *Dasarupaka*. The *Vithi* was a verbal affair, a series of witty exchanges; the *Bhana* was a monologue in which an amorous man recounted to the audience his romantic adventures; the *Prahasana*, originally in one act and later in two, combined these features and presented a slice of life in which farce was achieved along with love among persons of society, of the rank below that of royalty, a stage which is reflected in the story, already referred to, of the actors being cursed as Sudras for holding up to ridicule the affairs of members of higher ranks. This trend progressed towards its full manifestation in the *Prakarana*, the perfected form of the social play in Sanskrit.

The ideals that lie at the base of these two types, the *Nataka* and the *Prakarana*, are different; the two are distinct in a substantial manner; the aim of the poet in the *Nataka* is to present what has been conceived as the highest type of human personality, the sublime type, called the *Dhiredatta*; this is a heroic ideal. On the other hand, in the *Prakarana*, the poet is out to hold up the mirror to the world, to depict society as it is in its rank and file. As the name signifies, it gives life’s medley, and a whole train of virtues which the type naturally engenders, find scope here, provided the dramatist is up to the mark, virtues that come in the train of variety of incident and individuality of character.

In the heroic *Nataka* as in its poetic counterpart the *Mahakavya*, owing to the predominance of the high purpose of a *Rajarsi* as the upholder of Dharma, the tendency is to gravitate too soon towards a set type—the particular, especially here, being subordinate to the general; in the social *Prakaranas*, the emphasis shifts to the many; idealism gives place to realism; the elevated to the actual; interest develops, poetic effusion is replaced by action, the appeal widens, the production becomes more stage-worthy; in fact, we get everything that would appeal to the modern mind.²

Nor did the interest and appeal of the *Prakarana* fail to have its influence on the *Nataka* itself. The increasing play of the love-theme, together with its ancillaries like the *Vidusaka*, was slowly converting the character of the *Nataka*, so much so that the graft-type of the *Natika* came as the natural and inevitable outcome of this process; the diminutive and feminine name of *Natika* is sufficiently suggestive of the *Prakarana* features which came to be grafted on to the *Natika*. This graft-type is already seen in Bharata’s text. The process was really one of give and take, for the *Prakarana* did not fail to be impressed by the high idealism of the *Nataka*.

With the *Bhana* and the *Prahasana* behind it, the *Prakarana* in its early stage was what the theorists call *Sankirna*, a type which abounded in incidents and characters of a lower type; it did not take long for it to refine itself into what has been later recognized in texts as the *Suddha* variety, in which higher types were presented and the love-story featured was

² Vol. II (1937-8). pp. 23-54, 307.

that of the virtuous family life of these ranks. Sometimes we read in the texts of a *Prakaram* or a *Prakaranika* on the analogy of the *Natika*, in which, on a *Prakarana* stem, nataka-features were engrafted; but the texts that speak of this are late and are mere examples of theoretical ramification rather than reflections of an actual practice.

The heroic and the social is a distinction which runs through Sanskrit literature in general. Among sourcebooks which supply themes for poets, while the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the resort of the *Nataka*, that great epic of social life, the *Brhatkatha*, is in the very line of the *Prakarana*[^] and has, in fact, supplied the theme for some *Prakaranas*. The story-books, of which the *Pancatantra* is the foremost, belong to this category. Among poets of the great classical age, Dandin is a genius who found this a highly suitable medium and illuminated it with his panoramic prose narrative, the *Avantisundari* or *Dasakumaracarita*.

If the *Nataka* ideal had given us a sublime Kalidasa and his *Sakuntala*, the *Prakarana*, which had been an ideal of no less force, had produced the brilliant Sudraka and his *Mrcchakatika*. The prevailing Indian attitude being, however, more attuned to the epic and the heroic, the *Prakarana* did not keep the attention of literary men in a pronounced manner. While, on the one side, this led to a neglect of this type, not only on the production side but also on the side even of preserving the manuscripts of the specimens produced, on the other, the rise of the *Natika* proved definitely detrimental to the production of *Prakaranas*. Any zest that poets had for it was satisfied by the scope that the *Natika* afforded; in fact, the *Nataka* itself was eclipsed by the *Natika*, which became the normal form of the later love-romance.

Despite these circumstances, the department of *Prakaranas* was not as impoverished as its meagre survivals lead the general students and writers to suppose. There is, no doubt, some truth in the observation of Keith in explanation of the paucity of *Prakaranas*:—

The example of the *Mrcchakatika* induced few imitations, doubtless because would-be imitators had the sense to realize the appalling difficulties of producing anything worthy of setting beside that masterpiece.

The statement pays a truly deserved tribute to Sudraka and has, as much, been induced by the appalling mediocrity and total failure of the few later specimens, with the sole exception of the commendable effort of Bhavabhuti. This statement, however, is not completely justifiable when we take into consideration the *Prakarana* literature that once existed. An account of Sanskrit literature is no longer possible now on the basis only of extant specimens or, what is even more unsatisfactory, only of those in print. Discoveries of such works of dramaturgy and general literary criticism as Abhinavagupta's great commentary on the *Natya sastra*, Bhoja's encyclopedic *Sringara Prakasa*, the informative *Natyadarpana* of the Jain authors Ramacandra and Gunacandra, the rare *Nataka-laksanaratnakosa* of Sagarandinandin and the compilation of Saradatanaya called *Bhavaprakasa* have opened our eyes to a many times more vast Sanskrit literature. These works have removed the unsatisfactory condition pertaining to many of the dramatic varieties, which, till now, had few representatives. Not the least important of the new plays that have come to our knowledge from these works are the *Prakaranas*. The specimens show that, firstly, the class was well represented; secondly, that specimens of sufficient merit existed whose loss is a matter of real regret, and that Sudraka had no mean successors in Visakhadatta and Brahmayasvin.³

In his commentary on the description of this type by Bharata (Gaekwad Oriental Series,

³ *Natyadarpana*, p. 95 (Gaekwad Oriental Series)

XVIII. 47-55), Abhinavagupta mentions 21 varieties of the *Prakarana*. Ramacandra and Gunacandra, who follow Abhinavagupta generally, reproduce him and, where necessary, amplify him, explain these 21 varieties in greater detail (*N. D.*, p. 119, G. O. S.) and conclude that they have described only such varieties as have actually been seen by them (*drsta*), and ignored further classifications which form merely a theoretical ramification. This would lead us to suppose that illustrative specimens of all these varieties existed; it may be urged that these authorities do not cite a specimen for each, but it must be noted that they do cite some; anyway, that poets worked out quite a good number of variations on this type and gave a good account of their inventive skill is clear not only from the above statement, but also from fragments of *Prakaranas* which they actually cite during their exposition of the different aspects of the art.

Those heights of character are maintained only by the so-called *elite*, that ideals could be well presented only by choosing epic heroes, is not true. The purpose of Dharma is that it should be followed by everybody and the aim or the true nature of culture is that it should have percolated to the smallest and lowest in the society. Similarly it is not as if suffering were possible in terms of greatness and true tragedy only in the life of the epic figures. The authors of the *Prakarana* realized this adequately and gave us some memorable characters whose nobility and refusal to do a small or mean thing and whose consequent suffering uplift us, and whose manifold endowments of culture, steadfast attachment, generosity and comprehensive humanity endear them to us.

To regret again and again that the so-called tragedy proper is impossible in Sanskrit may be all right in writers whose minds are fed on the Hellenic heritage, but within the Indian scheme, the *Prakarana* does present the tragic element in a conspicuous manner. Even theory recognizes it: the *Natyadarpana* says that while the general dramatic technique in the *Prakarana* is the same as in the *Nataka*, the *Prakarana* has an important difference in the reduction of the *Kaisiki-vritti* which enjoys full scope in the *Nataka*. In explanation of this the work says that too much display of *Kaisiki* is out of place as the *Prakarana* abounds in suffering and instances the *Mrcchakatika*, the *Puspadusitaka* and the *Tarangadatta*, the elegant effusions of the *Malatimadhava* being unreservedly dubbed contrary to the practice of the elders (p. 120). This element of tragedy is thus essential to the *Prakarana* and in the best specimens does not deteriorate into the conventional love-impediment of a *Natika*.

The antiquity of the social play is borne out by the fragments of the dramatic writings of Asvaghosa discovered by Luders. When the Saketa Brahman Asvaghosa went over to Buddhism, the brilliant literary equipment of his former Brahman hood placed at his disposal an effective vehicle for the propagation of his new faith; the Buddha's interdiction in the *Anguttara Nikaya* against profaning his teaching by making poetry out of it was overlooked; just as in his *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* Asvaghosa turned the *Mahakavya* medium to spiritual ends, "Upasanti," so he turned the medium of the Sanskrit drama too to an identical purpose. Of the three fragments discovered at Turfan, the one in which the colophon authenticates Asvaghosa's authorship presents the story of the Buddha converting Sariputra and Maudgalyayana, the Brahman; and the *Vidusaka*, coupled with the title, *Sariputraprakarana*, support the conjecture that we have here the normal *Prakarana* given a religious orientation. The second fragment is an allegory dealing with abstract concepts as characters.⁴

It is in the third that we definitely see the elements of the social play, though here, too,

⁴ See my paper "Sobriquets in Sanskrit," *J. O. R., Madras*, Vol. XVIII, iv, p. 257.

the poet harnesses the medium for a spiritual end. We meet here with the whole *milieu* of the *Prakarana* and the *Prakasana*, viz., a courtesan named Magadhavati, a *Vidusaka* named Kaumuda- gandha, a Somadatta, a rogue, a Prince, a maid-servant, besides Sariputra and Maudgalyayana, a garden, vehicles and a festival on a hill-top. There is a little pleasantry between the courtesan Magadhavati and a male character named Dhananjaya; right in the style of such scenes in the dramas that we know; for some imaginary fault of his, the *Ganika* proposes a series of playful punishments for him, one of which is that he must be forced to drink excellent wine. All this points to this type having already been perfected in the pre-Christian age.

Of *sudraka* it is not necessary to speak much here as his play is available, and its pre-eminent position in this class is recognized on all hands. Even writers like Keith., generally lukewarm in appreciation, bestow unreserved praise on it, with the exception of the criticism of its over-luxuriance and its lack of unity. In fact, Ryder would consider it one of world's greatest plays but for what he considers its sole drawback, its exceeding richness and variety.

The prologue says: “*cakara sarvam kila Sudrako nrpah*” (King *Sudraka* put into his drama *everything*)—the great love of Carudatta and Vasantasena, the course of politics, the perversity of the law, the nature of the wicked and, above all, Fate, which, like a pulley on a well, raises one and lowers another. The courtesan, who, contrary to her class, declares equality as the attraction and loves a poor Brahman of merit; that Brahman himself, a merchant by calling, poor by munificence, lovable and possessed of a character and a generosity which could spare his mortal enemy any punishment; his staunch friend Maitreya, Sarvilaka the flashy Brahman who, for love of a girl, commits a theft according to the textbooks on that science, wants to execute a breach in the most attractive design and takes part in a political revolution; the hero's enemy, sakara, who is a strange composite of fool and villain, braggart and coward, but always the most entertaining malaprop; the *Vita* who can assist only without transgressing the bounds of Dharma, to which Nature herself, if not men, is a constant witness; the mere cart-driver whose fear of sin and the other world is proof against the best bribes that his idiotic master can offer him; gamblers, a shampooer, cart-drivers, judge and jury, executioners and a Buddhist monk—nearly 30 characters, are thrown in, the distinctiveness of none of these, not even the smallest, getting blurred.

An intriguing complex of motifs of ornaments and carts complicates the plot and augments the tragedy; while the political coup in the background contributes to the importance of the characters and the intensity of the action. With his gamblers, one of whom can walk backward and freeze himself into a stone idol in an empty temple; the *Vidusaka*, by far the best of his class and free from the hackneyed jokes of his compeers in other plays ; and above all, the Sakara, who makes everything topsy-turvy, mixes up mythology and specializes in a spate of synonyms, *Sudraka* provides for us the utmost in humour, the best in the whole range of Sanskrit drama, *sudraka*, moreover, is not so preoccupied with all this variety in men and incidents, that he has no time for precious *Subhdsitas*, appreciation of beauty and art, or exquisite poetry such as in the description of the rains where the rhythm and the effects of showers falling on different surfaces is admirably caught (V,52). No less is the author an artist in the introduction of the poignant touch and of pathos, such as in little Rohasena asking Vasantasena how, if she was his mother, she was decked with jewels, and in the scene in the last act when, on the way to the gallows, as Rohasena comes to him, Carudatta transfers to him from his own body that *yajnopavita* which constitutes, without gold or pearl, the ornament of Brahmans.

Visakhadatta occupies a sufficiently important place in Sanskrit drama for having

rejuvenated the *Nataka* with a fresh theme in his *Mudraraksasa*. In this unique political play, where intrigue and action reign supreme, the poet has not much scope for the display of his poetic powers, though his gift in that line is evident even here in the description of the Sarat season in Act III. To give him scope for greater display of his poetry,⁵ he wrote the romance *Abhisarikavancitaka* on the theme of Udayana's love. But it was in a third play that ViSakhadatta achieved a more varied distinction, combining his natural predilection for a political theme with the capacity to depict a love-story. We are at present interested in this third drama of ViSakhadatta because it is a *Prakarana*, and one that takes a high rank among the productions in this class.⁶

This *Prakarana*, called *Devicandragupta*, is one of our major losses in the dramatic field, but more than one work on dramaturgy quotes from it, and the excerpts made are numerous, long and from the different acts of the play, so that we have a fairly good view of this creation of ViSakhadatta. The sources of our knowledge of this drama are Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Natya a Sastra*, Bhoja's *Sringara Prakasa*, the *Natyadarpana* and the *Natalaksanaratnakosa* of Sagarandini; and confirmation of the out-of-the-way theme of the play is to be had from both literature and epigraphy: Bana's *Harsa-carita*, Sankara's commentary thereon, Rajasekhara's *Kavyamimsa*, the Sanjan Copper Plate of King Amoghavarsa I and the Sangli and Cambay Plates of Rastrakuta Govinda IV. If the *Mudraraksasa* dealt with the Maurya Candragupta, the *Devicandragupta* of the same poet dealt with Candragupta II, Vikramaditya, of the Gupta Dynasty.

The theme in brief is that Candragupta II had a weak elder brother Ramagupta on the throne before him, who, being defeated by the Saka Chief, agreed, as part of the ignominious peace forced on him, to part with his Queen, Dhruvadevi to the Saka Chief. Scandalised at this and anxious to save the honour of the house, young Candragupta dressed himself as

⁵ See also *Natyadarpana*, p. 117, Gaekwad oriental Series

⁶ As the reproductions of this passage in *The Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, IV, 78-79, and in Dr. S. K. De's edition of the *Vahroktijlvita*, p. 226, are not satisfactory, I am giving it here from the Madras Ms. of the *Vahroktijlvita* with my own emendations:—

प्रास्ताबिकसन्निवेशशोभिनामपि प्रबन्धावयवानां प्रधानफलसंबन्धनिबन्धनुग्राह्यनुग्राहकभावः स्वभावसुभगप्रतिभाप्रकश्यमानः कस्यचिद्विलक्षणः बकचमकारिणः कवेः अलौकिकं वक्रतोल्लेखलावण्यं समुल्लसयति! यथा पुष्पदूषितके द्वितीयोद्धे प्रस्थानात् प्रतिनिवृत्त्य निबिडान्धकारायां बिभार्यार्थम् अमन्द मदनोन्मादमुद्रेण समुद्रदत्तेन निजं निकेतनं- नन्दयन्तीसंमाननाय मलिम्लुचेनेव प्रविशता प्रकम्पवेगविकलालसकायनिपातनिहतनिद्रस्य द्वारदेशशायिनः कलहायमानस्य कुवलयस्योत्कोचकारणं स्वकरादङ्गुलियकदानं यत् कृतम्, तच्चतुर्थेऽद्धे मथुराप्रतिनिवृत्तेन तेनैव-निष्क्रम्य समावेदितसमुद्रदत्तवृत्तान्तेन कुलकलङ्कातङ्ककदर्थ्यमानस्य सार्थवाहसगरदत्तस्य विदूरस्तनुषाशीलशुद्धिमुन्मीलयत्तदुपकाराय कल्पते! तथा च सागरदत्तस्य वचनम्—

“तदङ्गुलियं सुतनामचिन्हं

चरित्रशुद्धिं.....!

...नुतापस्य..

... पापस्य भवेत्स शुद्धिः!!

अत्र भृत्य! किमिति त्वया प्रथमतरमस्माकम् (गप)!” कुवलयस्योत्तरम् (a Prakrit passage, difficult of reconstruction, follows ; it refers to his having been witness to Samudradatta's entering the house that ^{night} इत्यादि! तदवधार्य (gap). Madras Ms. R. 3332, pp. 200-1).

Dhruvadevi and, with an armed retinue dressed as women, went to the Saka camp and stabbed the Chief. On his return, popularity in the palace and the love of the Queen were turning towards Candragupta. Jealousy arose between the brothers, followed by palace intrigue; eventually Candragupta did away with his brother, married his widow and became the great King Sahasanka Vikramaditya.

Now this story, if reliable, makes a new contribution to Gupta history and reveals the character of one of the most reputed Emperors of India in a wholly new light. While some historians have accepted the facts unfolded in this newly known drama, and suggested epigraphic and numismatic adjustments, others still refuse to accept the authenticity of the story; they cannot identify and place the Kaca coins but complain that Ramagupta has no coin, forgetting that in a not dissimilar situation, the last British Emperor's elder brother who abdicated issued no coin, currency note or stamp bearing his effigy, at least not as Emperor of India, during the momentous months that he was on the⁷ throne.

I have set forth the whole material and reconstructed the plot, act by act, in my paper on this drama in *The Journal of the Benares Hindu University*. Here I will indicate only the main lines of the development of the plot, and the situations and passages where the poet comes off best.

Like the *Mudraraksasa*, the *Devicandragupta* also opens after the battle; the Saka Chief had defeated Ramagupta and the scandalous peace of surrendering the Queen to the saka Chief had been agreed to by Ramagupta in counsel with his Ministers, the latter having insisted on this course of action. When Act I opens, we find young Candragupta, referred to throughout as Kumara, anxiously thinking of the means to save the situation in his brother Ramagupta's camp; Candragupta sees Dhruvadevi in the sad plight to which the imbecile act of her husband had reduced her and describes in a verse how she stood mortified with shame, fear and dislike; it is already night and Candragupta thinks of the propitiation of a vampire, *Vetalasadhana*, for the purpose.

The *Vidusaka*, Atreya by name, the friend of Kumara Candragupta, is asking him how, when the whole place is closely guarded, he hopes to get out of the camp. Now, in keeping with the nature of the *Prakarana* there is a courtesan named Madhavasena who is an important character in the play. Madhavasena was attached to the Court and to Queen Dhruvadevi, and the Queen had given her garment and jewels to the courtesan. A maid was carrying them and going in search of the courtesan, who she learns had been rather down in spirits and had consequently sought diversion in the company of Candragupta. Madhavasena leaves the Queen's garment and ornament with the Prince and the *Vidusaka*, upon which suddenly the idea flashes across young Candragupta's mind that he might disguise himself as Dhruvadevi, in her own dress and decorations, and go to the Saka's camp. Act I ends with Candragupta "becoming Dhruvadevi."

In Act II, he meets his elder brother Ramagupta before going to the Saka camp to kill the Chief. The dialogue between the brothers, that has been quoted twice, reveals that the natural physical endowments of Candragupta were probably such that the guise was complete and

⁷ युक्तिक्ष्च सविच्छेदोक्तिः । यथा पुष्पदू षितके-

समुद्रदत्तः- भर्ता तवाहमिति कष्टदशाविरुद्धं

पुत्रस्तवैष कुत इत्यनुदारतैषा ।

शस्त्रं पुरः पतति किं कखाणि हन्त

व्यक्तं विरौमि यदि साम्युपपत्स्यते माम् !! N.D. p.102

that the two brothers loved each other. The dialogue is being overheard by Dhruvadevi herself who is nearby with a character called Sutradhari, who, probably like the Pandita Kausiki of the *Malayikagnimitra*, was a companion of the Queen.

The point, for which the critics quote this passage, *Trigaia*, shows that some amount of further dramatic purpose is also achieved by the poet by making Dhruvadevi mistake Ramagupta's loving words to his brother as words of love uttered to another lady. Ramagupta's repeated reference to his giving up of Dhruvadevi draws also a pathetic response from Dhruvadevi, and in her words we already see the undercurrent of disgust with her husband which is to assume greater proportions later.

In a prologue to Act III, some minor characters of Ramagupta's camp reveal that the daring act of stabbing the Saka Chief has been accomplished by the Prince. Into the main part of Act III itself we have unfortunately no glimpse, but it should have been a very important act; for, now that the enemy has been removed from the scene, the drama develops in the palace itself; the new turn that affairs take should be in this act.⁸

From the single glimpse that we have of Act IV, we gather that Madhavasena, the courtesan already mentioned, and Candragupta were on intimate terms and it is a love scene that we see here. In one of the two verses -quoted from this context, there is the suggestion of some imprisonment; it appears likely that Candragupta had become sufficiently the favourite of everybody to have now become the object of the anger of Ramagupta who had once been so much attached to him.

For in the Fifth Act we are told that Candragupta was in danger and was somewhat afraid of his adversaries; he was also in love, which fact he had to hide; this is surely the love that had developed between him and Queen Dhruvadevi.

The drama is noteworthy also for preserving the element of dramatic technique called *Dhruva* by which moods and situations are suggested. This act had a *dhruva*- song both at the beginning and at the end; the entrance *dhruva* shows that the scene was laid on a moonlit night, that, thanks to his own brilliance and service, the Prince, by a perverse fate, was facing an adverse turn in his fortunes, and that to save himself from the danger developing in the palace, he had feigned madness. As the act closes, Candragupta was planning to enter the palace somehow or other. We learn that the palace was very inimically disposed and that his mind was full of several purposes. The Prince feigned madness as part of his plan of action at that critical juncture and this the critics specially take note of,

The extracts in *Natya Sastra* literature leave us here, but for the further part of the story we have the two copperplate inscriptions already referred to, which summarize the whole story and ascribe to Candragupta the eventual killing of his elder brother and the taking of

⁸ तत् ज्ञेयार्थनिर्णयान्निर्णयः । X X X X यथा वा पुष्पदृष्टिके प्रकरणे
'किन्नामनक्षत्रोऽयं बालकः ?' इति समुद्रदत्तेनः पृष्ठः सेनापतिः- 'विशाख-
नक्षत्रोऽयं बालकः' इत्याह । समुद्रदत्तः श्रुत्वा पूर्वानुभूतं नन्दयन्तीसभागं
स्मरन्नाह- "तदा किल नन्दयन्त्या पृष्ठेन मया कथितं यथा-
'एतौ तौ प्रतिच्छयेते चारुचन्द्रमसप्रभौ (सं प्रति) ।
ख्यातौ (प्रान्हे) कल्याणनामानौ उभौ तिष्यपुनर्वसू ॥' इति ।
तदाधानादू दशमं जन्मनक्षत्रमिति ज्योतिःशास्त्रसमयविदो यदू ब्रुवते
तदुपपन्नमेव" इति ।

his wife and kingdom. Also, there is an Arabic version of this story in the *Majmalut-Tawarikh* which confirms the details and says that the feigned madness was adopted as a means of entering the palace. The Arabic version also saves the character of Candragupta somewhat by telling us that it was the younger brother who was originally to have married the lady but had to make a noble sacrifice for the sake of his elder brother.

In our drama, at the very opening, the verse in which Candragupta describes Dhruvadevi not only shows his concern from an objective stand-point, but reveals personal feeling not dissociated from the suggestion of attachment. That the final act of the play towards which the poet was working up the plot is the marriage of Candragupta and Dhruvadevi is very clear, for that is the meaning of the title *Devicandragupta*.

The special interest of the plot and the way the dramatist has managed it are evident from the above. The play is obviously not so full of characters and incidents as the *Mrcchakatika*, from which it differs in a basic respect. It may be asked how this story of a King is legitimate for a *Prakarana*, which is to present the fortunes of Ministers, merchants and Brahmans, of characters of non-royal ranks; the text is explicit on this point with respect to the hero, and, with respect to the heroine, and the text is equally explicit in specifying her as *Manda-gotra*. But it is clear from Abhinavagupta's explanation that the life and doings of recent Kings are fit themes for the *Prakarana* and that "*Manda-gotrangana*" refers not only to a lady of humble station in life but also one of mediocre character, *i.e.*, not a virtuous lady (II, pp. 431-2, G. O. S.). Dhruvadevi certainly answers to a *Manda-vrta* and historically also the Guptas are known to have been of humble origin.

Visakhadatta has scored a distinct success by handling a theme of this nature, and the plot has not only been worked out effectively and with a sense of unity and compactness, but the motifs of disguise, murder, *vetala-sandhma* and feigned madness contribute to the striking-ness and gripping interest of this *Prakarana*. The style of the poet, too, as in the case of his other political drama, expresses itself in a manner eminently suited to the theme. While poetic effusions and descriptive excursions are not indulged in, direct and effective expression of both beauty and feeling are found here in sufficient measure.⁹

Compared to Sudraka and Visakhadatta, Bhavabhuti was an author who was more of a poet than a dramatist. Even traditional judgment singles out only his *Uttar aroma-carita* for praise. In his *Prakarana* the nature of the type requires more story and greater action, but it cannot be said that Bhavabhuti achieves anything notable in that line in his *Malatimadhava*. In fact, he produced in this play a conventional set-up which, by the facility which it gave for easy imitation, became responsible for the production later of so-called *Prakaranas* with¹⁰out any distinction. In the prologue, Bhavabhuti himself mentions his ideals for the drama.

Contexts for the subtle and ample enfoldment of many Rasas. Endearing acts of the characters that bespeak their high friendship and affection, bold manoeuvres along the lines laid down in the treatises on love, various or striking incidents, episodes, the gift of skilled speech and expression.

Of these there is one point on which the poet has carried out his aim fully, *viz.*, the exploitation of the methods and materials of the pursuit of love as elaborated by Vatsyayana

⁹ Nyasa, Varendra Res. Soc. Vol. I, Under II. I.17, P. 348, the illustration for Prahna which gives also the correct reading of the second line which is misquoted in works of dramaturgy (See Sahityadarpana, VI.194)

¹⁰ Wrongly Printed in the Gaekwad Oriental Series edition as तदेष त्रपा.

in his *Kama Sutra*. Neither variety nor striking incidents can be said to have been used with ability; the introduction of an escaped tiger and an attempt at suicide by a fall are conventional and the imitateness of the love-mad Madhava is palpable. There is, however, something to be said of the passing of a male in disguise for the marriage of Nandana, and certainly most noteworthy material is introduced by the poet in the employment of the Kapalikas and their ritual of human sacrifice for managing part of the tragic complication of the love story and, along with it, the use of the terrible background of the crematorium and the fearful rite of *Mahamamsa-vikraya* resorted to by the desperate hero.

With Act V, located in the crematorium, Bhavabhuti scores a unique distinction in the whole range of Sanskrit drama and fulfils his own ambition of depicting many Rasas; for nowhere else do we have such a depiction of *Raudra* and *Blbhatsa*, to the success of which contribute

all the characteristic poetic gifts of Bhavabhuti, his elevated and elaborate manner and his ability to match sound to sense. Ardent and deep emotion and its exalted and spiritual expression, couched in an exuberant style, are Bhavabhuti's main merits; and his delineation of the moods and contexts of love ensures that the *Malati- madhava* will always keep its appeal.

From the notice of the *Mrcchakatika* and the *Malati- madhava*, accounts of the *Prakarana* in histories of literature or the drama tail off to later insignificant efforts. Ramacandra, to whom we are so thankful for the *Natya- darpana* and the wealth of its material, wrote his own plays, three of which are *Prakaranas* cited by him. The mere assemblage of many incidents and motifs of wonder and danger does not make his *Kaumudimitrananda* a noteworthy specimen of this class. Uddanda Kavi's *Mallikamaruta* produced in Kerala in the 15th century merely duplicates the *Malatimadhava*, even in character- names of equal and similar syllabic content.

Of the *Prakaranas* known only through citation, the best and most widely quoted, the *Devicandragupta*, has already been dealt with. Before we go to the other *Prakaranas*, into which we get an insight through similar citations, it is necessary for showing the strength of this class of drama, to mention specimens which are known only by name or in brief indications. The *Bhdna Padma- prdbhrtaka* of Sudraka quotes from a *Kumudavati Prakarana* in which a nurse, a Princess and a lover, Surpaka, figure, and the nurse, in the fulness of her age, points out to the Princess that she is too young for love.

To illustrate the type in which a courtesan alone figures as *Nayika*, a *Prakarana* named *Tarangadatta* is referred to in the *Dasarupakavaloka*, the *Natyadarpana* and the *Bhavaprakasa*; in the same type featuring the courtesan, the *Sahityadarpana* mentions a *Rangavrtta* (VI. 226) and the *Rasarnavasudhakara* a *Kamadatta* (III. 216). As an example of a *Prakarana-theme* drawn from sources like the *Brhatkatha*, Abhinavagupta mentions the story of Muladeva, but we are not told of the actual *Prakarana* or *Prakaranas* employing his stories. Muladeva is one of the social heroes of ancient India, and numerous stories of exploits, particularly in love, gathered round him. One of the *Prakaranas* that we know from extracts appears to have relation to the cycle of Muladeva stories, but, before we speak more of that important and interesting play, the *Puspadusitaka*, we may notice a few others of which we have more than a mere mention but not sufficient citation to have an adequate idea of the whole theme.

The *Anangasena-Harinandi* is one such, of which a single glimpse is given to us by the authors of the *Natya- darpana* (p. 95). We are glad we know the name of its author as

Suktivasa-Kumara, but anything of him beyond this we do not know. The occasion for the citation in the *Natyadarpana* is the illustration of the *Sandhyanga* called *Chadana*, which, according to a second interpretation, is said to be the putting up with an unbearable thing for the sake of an ulterior higher purpose. The play from which the *Natyadarpana* draws the illustration for this is expressly mentioned as a *Prakarana*, the act from which the actual quotation is made being the ninth. The illustration, instead of quoting any particular verse or prose passage, gives the gist of a part of the plot: as the name of the play implies, Harinandi is the hero and Ananga-sena, figuring in the title, is evidently, as the “sena” ending of the name denotes, the courtesan, having as prominent a rôle in the play as the heroine herself; that the actual heroine is different is confirmed also by the words of the *Natyadarpana* which mentions her as Madhavi.

A third important character of the play is a Prince, Candraketu by name. The Prince gives Madhavi a pair of ear-ornaments which she sends to the hero.

The hero, Harinandi, gives it to the mother of a Brahman named Puspalaka for the purpose of securing the latter’s liberation from the imprisonment imposed on him by the King. This Brahman, Puspalaka, is probably the *Vidusaka*, or, if we are to take it that there is no *Vidusaka* in the play because this Brahman is not so designated, we may take Puspalaka as an intimate friend of the hero, functioning in much the same capacity as the *Vidusaka*.

As fate would have it, Harinandi’s effort to save his Brahman friend landed them in greater trouble; the ear-ornaments being those of the palace, having been sent originally by the Prince, the poor Brahman is proclaimed a thief who had stolen ornaments from the palace; and, condemned by the King to death, he was about to be taken to the gallows. At this juncture Puspalaka’s mother rushed to Harinandi with the adverse news, upon which, to save his Brahman friend, Harinandi himself accepted the guilt of theft on his own part and bore the calumny.¹¹

The drift of the story would suggest rivalry between Prince Candraketu, the *Prati-Nayaka*, and Harinandi. Even the solitary citation shows sufficient originality on the part of the author and also variety of incidents. The noble character of Harinandi comes out prominently, as also the loyalty of his Brahman friend, who endures, for his friend’s sake, victimization from the palace.

The *Prayogabhyudaya* is a *Prakarana* which, if its name should have significance, has some very effective plot construction. It is quoted by Bhoja in his *Sringara Prakasa* and by the authors of the *Natyadarpana* though unluckily the same passage is quoted in both works, in illustration of the same point, the *Vlthyanga Prapanca*, which is indulgence in witty conversation. Tarangadattaka is the only character mentioned by name; he is, in all probability, the hero. The play has the *Vidusaka* and, in the quoted portion, we have an exchange of witty talk between the *Vidusaka* and the maid-servant of Tarangadattaka. While the passage does not help us to know anything of the actual story, it reveals to us an author who has the gift of humour.

From Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* (IV. 704 ff.) we know of a highly respected Sankuka who described the battle between Mamma and Utpala (c.850A.D.) in his poem, *Bhuvanabhyudaya*. We have also the Sankuka, better known in *Alankara Sastra*, as one of the expounders of Bharata. In the *Natyadarpana* we meet with a Sankuka who is characterised as a Minister. This Amatya Sankuka wrote a *Prakarana* known as *Citrotpalavalambitaka*. The single citation from this affords us only an all too meagre glimpse into its Fifth Act. All that we

gather here is that the palace figures as the scene of action, that a theft takes place there, probably near the heroine's apartments, for the *Nayika*, her maid and an old man, Sthavira, who is obviously, like the *Kancukin*, one of the guards of the harem, are said to be in fright. It is to illustrate fright, *Udvega*, that this *Prakarana* is cited. The alarm "Catch him, bind him!" is raised in the green room.

Among the varieties of *Prakarana* in the determination of which the nature of the hero plays a part, some writers mention a specimen called the *Padmdvatiparinaya*. The *Bhadvaprakdsa* of Saradatanaya tells us (p. 243, line 12) that the story here is of a Brahman (*vipra-carita*). The *Natalaksanaratnakosa* of Sagarandin has three references to this *Prakarana*; in the first of these, it is confirmed that the theme here is the story of a Brahman (line 2783); from the next reference (line 27S9) we gather that courtesan-love is also made an integral part in this *Prakarana*, thus making it a specimen of the *Sankirna* variety; the third reference carries a quotation and an introductory explanation of the *Lasyanga Pracchedaka*, for which it is cited as an illustration; from these, it is seen that the courtesan mentioned above as figuring here is called Vilasavati. Padmavati is, of course, the *Ndyika*. Vilasavati is jealous of the hero's love for Padmavati and she sends Indumati, who must be her maid or companion, obviously to prevent Padmavati from meeting the hero. The drift of the meagre passage shows that the hero and the heroine have made an engagement to meet; the hero had arrived earlier, and had evidently referred to his expectation of Padmavati's arrival, and Vilasavati, who was there with her companion, had overheard it; she is first upset, but soon with her resourcefulness thinks of a plan and employs her companion to go to Padmavati and tell her something that would make her give up the idea of going to meet her lover.

The *Puspadusitaka* is as serious a loss in the field as the *Devicandragupta*. Citations from it are, in respect of extent, next only to those from the latter. The oblivion into which its author fell is undeserved, for, when an example of a *Prakarana* with a theme of pure domestic love and a virtuous heroine is to be cited, authorities cited regularly the *Puspadusitaka* rather than the *Malati-madhava*.

One of the important references giving us substantial information on this play occurs in Abhinavagupta's commentary on the description of the *Prakarana*. While commenting on the verse defining the nature of the *Nayika*, there is a discussion of the word "*Manda-kulastri*," and Abhinavagupta says that the heroine is either one of nonroyal birth or one of sullied character (p. 465, Madras MS., pp. 431-2, G.O.S. ed. II). It is in connection with this that Abhinavagupta discusses the heroine in the *Puspadusitaka* and gives us valuable insight into its plot. The observations of Abhinavagupta reveal also the author of the play as Brahmayasas-svamin.

Brahmayasas-svamin may be the same as the Brahma-yasvin who occurs in the anthology *Sarngadharapaddhati* with the sobriquet "*Netra-tribhaga*" a phrase used by him in an excellent and well-known verse of his on the timid little glance of the lover that the beloved stole. The verse itself is quoted by Anandavardhana in the *Dhvanyaloka* for the suggestiveness of the very expression that gave him this sobriquet.⁵ Jinendrabuddhi's grammatical work, *Nyasa*, too, makes an anonymous quotation from this play. All of which show that the *Puspadusitaka* is the work of an important and somewhat early poet, once quite well known.

Abhinavagupta's discussion also, which warmly defends the author, reveals the importance of the author and his work. Some critic before Abhinavagupta had criticized the

Puspadusitaka as involving a basic inconsistency in that high-natured persons, such as the characters obviously are, behave in an unbecoming manner, the father-in-law of the heroine, for instance, during the absence of his son, suspecting a lapse of behaviour on the part of his daughter-in-law and sending her into exile and she, again, living in that condition in the abode of a hunter-chief.

Abhinavagupta replies that the condition of “high nature” or “exalted disposition”—*uttamaprakrti*—is to be interpreted in accordance with the station in life occupied by each, that a merchant can be judged only in comparison with his compeers and not by the standards enunciated for epic personalities, that the condition *Manda-kula*, specified for the hero and the heroine, does apply to them; further, that a suspected lapse is not incongruous with a *kulastri* being the heroine, for *Manda* comprehends such a lapse and in this case, the suspicion being thoroughly baseless, no breach of the rules is committed. Abhinavagupta ends by saying that such criticism does not sully the fame of Brahmayasas-svamin, but sullies only that of the critic.

Kuntaka, a younger critic of the same period as that of Abhinavagupta, has three occasions to speak of this play, and in one of them he helps us with a *resume* of the plot. The *Natyadarpana* makes eight references to and citations from it. The *Natakakalaksanaratnakosa* gives an equal number of references and quotations. The *Sahitya-darpana* makes one reference and gives one anonymous quotation. From all these it is possible to have a considerable view of this play.

Abhinavagupta says that the play begins in a momentous manner; at the very first juncture, *Mukhasandhi*, the father-in-law, hears the words “Asokadatta, etc.” uttered somewhere and is seized with a suspicion about the chastity of his daughter-in-law, Nandayanti; the son is absent; still, the father-in-law takes the decision to banish Nandayanti; the suspicion about her character continues till the very end of the play, *Nirvahanasandhi*, and forms the basis of the plot in the intermediate portions of the play; the banished lady goes to live in the abode of a military chief of the hunters.

The warmth with which Abhinavagupta defends the *Puspadusitaka* is paralleled by the obvious appreciation that Kuntaka had for this play. In his *Vakroktijivita*, this critic quotes from it twice to show the excellence of its plot construction, the way in which the incidents and episodes are fitted into the main theme, how the former help the latter and how one thing closely hangs on another and leads to it.

In his first mention of the *Puspadusitaka*, Kuntaka is referring to Acts II and IV of the play. Samudradatta, the hero, has returned from abroad; in his great love, he rushes in the pitch-dark night to have the company of Nandayanti; and he has to enter the place in a stealthy manner, like a thief. There is a guard there, Kuvalaya by name, who gets up from his sleep as Samudradatta stumbles over him in his flurry and fatigue, but Samudradatta silences him with the bribe of his ring. This ring plays an important part later in Act IV, where Samudradatta’s father, whose name is given here as Sagaradatta, is in great anguish regarding the blot on the family caused by the suspected unchastity of his daughter-in-law; just then the servant Kuvalaya, who had been away at Mathura in the meantime, returns and reveals, producing the ring, the visit that Samudradatta had paid to his wife that night. Sagaradatta looks at the ring, sees his son’s name on it and is satisfied about the purity of his daughter-in-law’s character. In the same strain, the father-in-law is struck with remorse for having fastened on his daughter-in-law a base calumny and imposed on her the hardship of exile and exclaims that he must seek some expiation to purify himself of the sin.⁷

In the longer second reference, Kuntaka gives us more information about the plot. The first thing mentioned is the soliloquy of Samudradatta on the beach where he had come away on *Pravasa*, without a private meeting with Nandayanti; it was the first time he was experiencing such a terrible separation and he gives vent to his longing and dejection. The second point referred to is what has already been mentioned in the first citation, viz., the visit that Samudradatta, after his return, paid in the night to his wife after bribing Kuvalaya with an ornament; this reference clinches the incident, mentions the scene as the garden and says that Samudradatta came together with his beloved that night; incidentally we learn that the heroine Nandayanti was the daughter of Naya- datta. The third thing mentioned is the suspicion about the behaviour of the daughter-in-law, her banishment and the justification of that act, evidently by the father-in-law. The fourth is the return of Kuvalaya from Mathura, his showing the ring to Sagaradatta, the demonstration of the purity of Nandayanti; the remorse of the father-in-law for the exile endured by his daughter-in-law in an advanced state of pregnancy, his anxiety to expiate for the wrong, which had been mentioned in the first citation, and his departure on a pilgrimage for that purpose. The fifth mention is of a character named Lamakayana who conveys to Nandayanti, under the protection of the forest-chief, news of the welfare of Samudradatta. The sixth is the wonderful reunion of all. (*Vakroktijivita*, Madras Ms., pp. 217-18: De's ed., pp. 226, 236-37, J.O.R., IV, pp. 78-79).

The *Natyadarpana*, in one of its citations from this play (p. 94), refers to its Fifth Act. The quotation, which consists of a verse with a prose preface and forms the speech of a Brahman, is an observation on the dish called *Marjita*, made of curd, ghee, etc. The speaker said that to a Brahman, *Marjita* was a sweet noose of death, and that, despite the fact his son, his brother and his father had all died from the effects of *Marjita*, he was indulging in that wretched blight of the family (*Gotraghni*). This is given in illustration of the *Sandhyanga Apavada* or finding fault with a thing or a person, and is to be taken probably with the second reference under *Lamakayananka* in the *Natalaksanaratnakosa*, where Nandayanti is said to give a feast to the Brahmans as an act of merit, obviously in the course of the regular acts of propitiation that she was going through during her period of exile. The Brahman's fling at *Marjita*, eaten evidently at that feast, carries also certainly a cruel fling, delivered either consciously or in irony, at the poor lady who is providing the feast, as herself being a "*Gotraghni*."

In illustration of the *Sandhyanga Yukti*, which is a broken utterance, occurring towards the close of the penultimate Sandhi, the *Natyadarpana* quotes (p. 102) a verse spoken by the hero Samudradatta; he is in a terrible dilemma. He is probably apostrophizing at first his wife:—

"To call myself your husband is incongruous with this state of suffering. To question where you got this son from is contemptible. The instrument of suicide rushes forward. What shall I do? If I were to cry aloud, she would come to my succour and prevent me from suicide."

This is a rather tense situation. Nandayanti has given birth to the child, and Samudradatta, when speaking this is very near her, for he is afraid that his cry might bring her to him and prevent him from ending his miserable life torn by doubt and anguish.⁸ The reference to himself being in a condition of difficulty in which he probably could not convince her that he is her husband, might be understood against the background of the plot, according to which, as we shall see presently, the marriage and nuptials were secret, and Samudradatta and Nandayanti had to recognize each other *in public* only on the very eve of the Nirvahana of the play.

With the next citation (p. 105), we have moved into the last *Sandhi*, where the complications are showing signs of resolving into harmony and understanding. It is in illustration of the *Sandhyanga Nirnaya*, the clearing of a doubt and the determination of a fact that the *Natyadarpana* says that in the *Puspadusitaka Prakarana*, Samudradatta asks the *Senapati* what the natal constellation of the boy-child is. It is clear that this *Senapati* is the Sabara- *senapati* referred to by Abhinavagupta as the person under whose shelter Nandayanti spent her exile; it is further clear from this citation that the confinement had taken place under the same roof. The *Senapati* informs him that it was *Visakha* and at once Samudradatta is reminded of his previous meeting with Nandayanti; at That meeting she had asked him about the two stars near the moon.

As in the citation noticed earlier we have seen that it was very dark when Samudradatta rushed into the garden, it is clear that it was the dark fortnight; the couple had been together for the night and when Nandayanti had asked about the stars near the moon, it had been in the small hours of the morning and Samudradatta had said that they were *Tisya* and *Punarvasu*. This is a much remembered context, as the verse is quoted in diverse works, including the *Nyasa*. Samudradatta is convinced by this evidence that his wife is pure and that he was the father of the child; for, he adds, as the astrologers say, birth has taken place in the tenth star (*Visakha*) from that of conception (*Punarvasu*).

A verse that the *Natyadarpana* quotes (p. no) after this represents the stage in the same context, when Samudradatta is together with the same *Senapati*, and in all likelihood, immediately precedes the previous quotation. The verse is a dialogue between the two, Samudradatta and the *Senapati*:¹²

“Is this a dream?”

“Not at all.”

“Is it some mental delusion?”

“Peace be with you.”

“Who, then, is the lady here ? (तदेषाञ्ज का?)

“Your wife.”

“How then this child on her lap ?”

“This is your son.”

“It is untrue.”

“This *Alambdyana* surely knows the story of this.” (आलम्बायन एष वेत्ति नियतं संबन्धमेतन्दतं)

“Who brought about this in such a disjointed manner?”

“Fate.”

“Everything could be understood now.”¹⁸ It must be after this that Samudradatta assures himself of his paternity of the child by verifying his natal star.¹³

From the *Natakakaksanaratnakosa* we know that, as in some of the early dramas, the different acts of the *Puspadusitaka* had different names. So, to make the most out of Sagarandin’s references, we have to bring together references not identified properly and indexed under different heads by the editor of that treatise. There are two references under the title *Puspadusitaka* itself (lines 2783, 2793); four under the act-name *Grhavatika*, *Grhavrksavatika* or *Vrksavatika*, all of which refer to the same act (lines 1714, 3042, 3164, 3166); one under the title *Nandayantisamhara* (line 3066); and two from another act, *Lamakayananka* (lines 968, 2825).

¹² Wrongly printed in the Gaekwad Oriental Series edition as आलम्बाय न एष.

¹³ N.D., pp. 110-11

The first of the citations from the *Grhavrksavatika* act gives us the same verse (Act II, as we know from Kuntaka) in which Samudradatta speaks about the constellations near the moon being *Tisya* and *Punarvasu*, already noted in one of the later extracts occurring in the *Natyadarpana*. From this it is to be understood that the verse occurs both in the first context, when the union takes place, and in the end where the father inquires about the child's star.

The second citation from the same act illustrates the "concealing" of something, and is an exchange between Nandayanti and her maid called Rajanika. The latter sees something unusual is curious and put the straight question, "What is this?"

Nandayanti replies, "Nothing."

Two more references to the same act give two passages from Nandayanti's speech; in the first she expresses dejection at her misfortune, and in the second she tells her husband that the *Karnikara* flower is just like his heart, colorful but without any fragrance, which seems to be a mild fling at him. Probably both these passages are to be interpreted in the light of the separation which is immediately and necessarily to follow.

Sagarandin twice refers to Lamakayananka. In the first reference, he alludes to pain and suffering; and, in the second, to a Brahman-propitiatory feast given by Nandayanti which is mentioned also by Sarvananda in his commentary on the *Amarakosa*; and, as noted already, the *Natyadarpana* mentions this as Act V. That a character named Lamakayana figures here is known also from the second long reference made by Kuntaka.

Nandayanti-samhara is the name of the act from which Sagarandin cites a verse which is the same as the *Natyadarpana's* illustration for *Yukti* or a broken utterance already noticed. The title of the act may be interpreted on the analogy of *Venisamhara*, or* as *m* the case of the 3 expression *Astra-samhara*, meaning the "bringing back (or bringing together) of one sent out."

There are a few more general references to this play. That the hero is a merchant, Vanik, is mentioned in more than one text. The *Natyadarpana* says that, along with the *Mrcchakatika*, the *Puspadusitaka* affords an example of the final resolution of the tragedy being largely dependent on Fate, *Daivayattaphala*. (p. 50)

The title of the play is mainly found as *Puspadusitaka*, and occasionally as *Puspadhositaka* (*Sahityadarpana* VI.226). The third reference in the *Vakroktijivita* mentions the name *Puspadusitaka* among titles of plays which are significant and emphasize the central idea of the play (De's edition, p.243). Unfortunately, none of the extracts help us to understand what this vital title-incident of the plot is. A few explanations suggest themselves, but one must not indulge in them in the absence of any clue whatsoever.¹⁴

Two general references in Abhinavagupta bear on the source of the play, which is, by itself, an interesting question. Abhinavagupta says that the story of Samudradatta is an example of what a Prakarana author takes from the literary production of an earlier author and handles with some innovations. In Dandin's *Avanti-sundari* there is a story of Samudradatta bound up with the character Muladeva, but we cannot, in the present state of our knowledge of the *Puspadusitaka*, say whether it was based on this version or comprised all the incidents mentioned here. On a fundamental point, the Dandin version says that the tragedy in Samudradatta's relations with Nandayanti was due to his rivalry with the clever and all-powerful Muladeva, that Samudradatta had courted Muladeva's enmity by making

¹⁴ See Avantisundarikathasara IV. 77-91

love to a courtesan of his and that Muladeva had sworn to carry off Samudradatta's wife and marry her; consequently, Samudradatta had married secretly, but Muladeva had contrived to contact her in secret by an underground passage, declared her his wife before the King and got Samudradatta banished on the charge of stealing his wife. The unfortunate lady was determined to commit suicide in the Ganges when a man, who turned out to be her own husband, rescued her.

One thing more may be said in this connection: the *Puspadusitaka* is repeatedly mentioned as the example of the play in which the chaste wife (*kulastrī*) alone figures. In none of these extracts is there anything that bears the seeds of even a distant echo of the mischief of Muladeva as being at the bottom of the whole tragedy. Along with this, we should also consider the observation of Abhinavagupta that the play in which Samudradatta figures is an example of a theme derived from earlier poets, but freely bandied by the author. We should, however, confess that, if the Muladeva hypothesis is not even slightly hinted at, the extracts or texts offer us no clue either to find out that important link with which the play opens and the tragedy starts, the cause of the suspicion about Nandayanti's chastity; the mere mention by Abhinavagupta of "A3oka- datta, etc." in this connection is too meagre, though even that would be enough to discount the figuring of the renowned Muladeva in the play.

If the *Devicandragupta* departs from the *Mrcchakatika* with a daring fratricide and a widow-remarriage, the *Puspadusitaka*, with equal boldness, breaks new ground with the scandal of unchastity on circumstantial misunderstanding, which is not less intense because it is so common. If the true ideal of a *Prakarana* is to see the joy and tragedy and the triumph of character among the common folk, we may confidently say that some at least of the Sanskrit dramatists had a true comprehension of this medium and gave us dramas which could take high rank among productions in this branch of literature.