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1.1 Introduction of Sanskrit Drama.

Sanskrit Drama literature is quite popular since classical times. A brief outline of the general structure and arrangement of the Sanskrit Drama is provided here which will help in understanding the technical remarks on the construction of the present play here. Poetry in Sanskrit, from its inherent nature, as apart from its intrinsic merit, is divided in two kinds – *Drśya* what is capable of being seen or exhibited’ and *Śravya* what can only be heard or chanted’. The drama falls under the first division. ‘*Rūpaka*’ is the general term in Sanskrit for all dramatic compositions, which also comprises a subordinate class called *Uparūpaka*. The – *Rūpaka*, which has *Rasa* or sentiment for its substratum, is divided into ten classes, viz,

नाटकं सप्रकरणं भाणः प्रहसनं डिमः ।

व्यायोगसमवकारौ वीथ्यङ्केहामृगा इति ॥¹

The *Uparūpakas* or Minor Dramas are eighteen, the most Important of which are *Nāṭikā* such as the *Ratnāvalī*. ‘*Vidvaśālabhañjikā* &c., *Trotakam* such as the *Vikramorvaśīyam*, and *Sattakas* such as ‘*Karpūramañjarī*’ – all differing very little from the general features of an *Nāṭaka*. Having thus disposed of the division into which the whole of the scenic art is capable of falling, we turn to the principal division among the ‘*Rūpakas*’ themselves which is three fold:-

वस्तु नेता रसस्तेषां भेदको वस्तु च द्विधा ।

तत्राधिकारिकं मुख्यमङ्गं प्रासङ्गिकं विदुः ॥²

1. *Vāstu* or the plot of the play.

2. *Netā* or the Hero.

¹ Javaji Tukaram, Dhanika’ commentary of *Daśarūpakam* by *Dhanañjaya*, Kashinath pandurang parab, Bomabay, 1897, p.3

² Ibid. p.4

3. *Rasa* or the sentiment.

These three are the essential constituents every dramatic piece.

1.2 *Vastu* or The Plot.

‘*Vastu*’ is primarily of two kinds: ‘*Adhikārika*’ ‘Principal’ and *Prāsāngika* or ‘Accessory’ The Principal is that which relates to the chief characters or the persons concerned with the essential interest of the piece, and pervades the whole arrangement. The Accessory is that which appears in furtherance of the main topic, and is concerned with characters other than the Hero or her Heroine. The latter is of two kinds; viz. ‘*Patākā*’ and ‘*Prakarī*’. The ‘*Patākā*’ or ‘Banner’ is an episode by which the progress of the plot is illustrated, furthered or hindered (so as to give additional interest to it). It is of considerable length, and sometimes extends to the very end of a play. The ‘*Prakarī*’ is also an episodically incident - of limited duration and minor importance one in which the principal characters take no part besides these two, there are three other elements required for the development of the plot. These are ‘*Bīja*’ or the seed, ‘*Bindu*’ or the drop, and ‘*Kārya*’ or the final issue. *Bīja* is the circumstance leading to the ultimate end briefly stated, which, as the plot develops bears multifarious result, and which is as it were the seed of the plot. *Bindu* is what cements a break in the plot caused by the introduction of some other incident. ‘*Kārya*’ is the final object of the plot which being attained the whole is finished. These five are technically called *Arthaprakṛitis* (अर्थप्रकृतयः).

बीजबिन्दुपताकाख्यप्रकरीकार्यलक्षणाः ।

अर्थप्रकृतयः पञ्च ता एताः परिकीर्तिताः ॥³

The *Vastu*, which is thus divided into five classes, may again be divided into three classes according to source of its derivation. It may be borrowed from history or tradition, or it may be fictitious or mixed, i.e., partly drawn from history and partly

³ Opcit.p.6

the creation of poet's fancy. *Nāṭaka* belongs to the first class, a '*Prakaraṇa*' to the second.

As regards its development a dramatic plot has five stages or conditions called *Avasthās*⁴

They are-

1. *Ārambhaḥ*: beginnings or setting on foot of the enterprise.
2. *Yatnaḥ* : efforts.
3. *Prāptayāsāḥ* : prospect of success.
4. *Niyatāptiḥ* : certain attainment through the removal of obstacles and
5. *Falāgamaḥ* : obtainment of the desired object.

While these five stages are in progress there must be some links to connect them with the principal and subordinates parts of the main action (the episodes and incidents).

These are called the *Samdhis*. They are five in number, answering to the five '*Arthaprakṛtayah*:' each of which they join with its corresponding stage, viz. *Mukha*, *Pratimukha*, *Garbha*, *Avamarśa* and *Nirvahaṇa* (*Upasamhāra*).⁵ Thus '*Mukha*' *Sandhi* is combination of the *Bīja* and *Ārambha*, i.e. where in the seed is sown, so to speak, with all its *Rasa*. In the *Pratimukha* there is the means (*yatna*) to the chief end, as originally implied by the *Bīja* in the *Mukha* which herein sprouts up. In the *Garbha* there is attainment and non-attainment of the desired end, implying a further sprouting up of the original *Bīja* There are impediments, but the main plot gains ground under resistance. The *Avamarśa Sandhi* is that in which the seed attains a more luxuriant growth than in the *Garbha*, being accompanied by *Niyatāpti* of the end but, whose final result is postponed furthered off by fresh impediments of

⁴मुखप्रतिमुखेगर्भः सावमर्शोपसंहृतिः | Pandya, Shanti Kumar, *Daśarūpakam of Dhanañjaya*, Parshva Publication, Ahmedabad., First edition-2001. 1/24, P. 63.

⁵Ibid.p.63.

various sorts (as in the *Śakuntalā* the king's forgetting *Śakuntalā* after marriage owing to *Durvāsā's* curse). The '*Nirvahaṇa*' or consummation is the harmonious combination of all the aforesaid parts in the final catastrophe.

The subject – matter, whether historical fictitious or mixed, is from its inherent nature, capable of a twofold division. It is divided into.

Sūchya deserving to be suggested or implied only, as being of a dry or otherwise unfit character; and

Dṛśyaśrava fit to be represented and heard as being highly sentimental and pleasing. The suggestion or implications one made in five ways.

विष्कम्भचूलिकाङ्कास्याङ्कावतारप्रवेशकैः ॥⁶

1. *Viṣkambhaka* refers to the “supporting scene”. According to the *Natyasastra* Chapter 20, it is one of the five explanatory devices (*Arthopaksepaka*). These ‘explanatory devise’ were liable to occur due to his extreme condensation of the subject-matter. The term is used throughout *Natyasastra* literature.

Viṣkambhaka is of two types:

- *Suddha* (pure); made up with the middling characters only.
- *Samkirna* (mixed); made up with the inferior and the middling characters.⁷

2. *Chūlikā* is the suggestion of some incident from behind the scenes (*Nepathya*)

3. An *Ankāśya* is one where in is suggested by the actors at the time of their departure the connation between the Act finished and the one to be commenced, which otherwise would look disconnected, as the speech of *Kāmandakī* and others at the end of the 3rd Act of the *Mālatīmādhava*.

4. *Ankāvatāra* consists in costing the seed of the subject- matter of an Act in the previous Act before it has drawn to its close, so that the Act following is a

⁶ Ibid v. 1/58, p.69

⁷ www.wisdomlib.org.

continuation of the one preceding; e.g. The sixth Act of the *Śākuntalam*. The germ of which is implanted at the end of the fifth Act.

5. A *Praveśa* or 'introducer' is one which being interposed between any two Acts suggests like the *Viṣkambhaka* some past or future events to show the connection between the parts of the story through the conversation of low characters. It can never introduce the first Act. According to commentator Jagaddhara, the language in a *Praveśaka* is generally Sauraseni or any similar dialect as opposed to the Sanskrit found in a *Śuddaviṣkambhaka*.

The subject-matter is further divided into three kinds' *Sarvaśrāvyam* or *Prakāśam*, *Aśrāvyam* or *Svāgatam* and *Niyataśrāvyam*. The terms are and *Apavāritakam*⁸ Independent of these divisions, there is one called *Ākāśabhāṣitam* (*Ākāśe*)⁹ or speech from the void.'

1.3 Netā or the Hero (Nāyaka)

The Hero is required to be modest, decorous, comely, munificent, civil of sweet address, eloquent, sprung from a noble family, &c. Heroes are mentioned to be of four kinds; viz. *Dhīrodātta*, *Dhīralalita*, *Dhīraśānta*.¹⁰ & *Dhīroddhata*. *Dhīrodātta* or the Hero of sublime qualities, is one who is magnanimous, patient, not given to boasting, self-possessed, of firm resolve, whose high spirit is concealed and who is true to his engagements. We are not concerned with the other three classes of Heroes here. Each of these Heroes may be of one or other of four sorts. He may be *Dakṣiṇa* or 'gallant' etc. equally devoted to many women though principally attached to one; or *Śaṭha* sly, i.e. one who being attached to one lady, covertly acts in a way unpleasant to her; or he may be *Dhṛṣṭam* 'bold' openly making his

⁸Op cit. p. 70

⁹ibid. 1/65, p. 72.

¹⁰ibid. 1/65, p. 73.

professions to another, and not ashamed even when reproached or lastly, he may be *Anukūla* ‘favorable’ devoted to one Heroine only. The *Dhīrodātta* hero has eight manly qualities *Śobhā, Vilāsa, Mādhurya, Gāmbhīrya, Dhairya, Tejasa, Lālitya* and *Audārya*.¹¹

Among the assistants of the Hero the principal is *Pīṭhamarda*, the hero of the *Patākā* or episode, clever in discourse devoted to his master, and a little inferior to him in qualities. Next comes the *Vidūṣakaḥ* his constant companion, whose business consists in the repartees of wit, in helping his friend in his love intrigues and thus assisting in the general denouncement of the play. The Third, and of the equal rank with the *Vidūṣakaḥ* is *vita*, who knows one art only and is thereby useful to the Hero. The Hero thus equipped may still take in to his service ministers of state and ministers of religion, ascetics, allies, etc. as well as eunuchs, mutes, barbarians (*Yavanas*). Sometimes there may be a Rival – Hero called *Parti Nāyaka*, who is avaricious, bold, impetuous criminal and of evil conduct.

The *Nāyikā* or the Heroine, who must be possessed of qualities similar to those of the Hero, is of three kinds. She may be the wife of the Hero (*Sviyā*), as *Sītā* in the *Uttararāmacaritam*, or on belonging to another (*Anyāparakīyā*), or a common woman (*Sāmānya* or *Sādhāraṇāstrī*) as *Vasantasenā* in the *Mrcchakatikam*. The *Parakīyā* (so called because she is in the power of her guardian) may be a maiden or the wife of another. But the latter must not be introduced as the Heroine in a play. The maiden’s love, however better helps the *rasa* and is, therefore, the most favorite theme with many Sanskrit poets. Further division and subdivisions of the *Nāyika* are not introduced here, as they have very little to do with the construction of the drama.

¹¹ibidp.72

For her assistant the Heroine's may have a *Sakhī*, *Dāsī*, *Dhātreyī*, *Pratīveśikā* and others possessing qualities corresponding to those of the friends of the Hero.

1.4 Rasa or Sentiment:

Rasa is that lasting impression or feeling produced to his overwhelming delight in a man of poetic sensibility by the proper action of the '*Vibhāva*'¹² and '*Anubhāva*' as well as the '*Sāttvikabhāva*' and '*Vyabhicārībhāva*' , '*Bhāva*' or Feeling is the complete provision of the heart by any emotion, whether of pleasure or of pain, arising from the object under sight. '*Vibhāva*' or Excitant is that which being perceived nourishes the main sentiment. It is divided into '*Ālambana*' that which is, as it were, the support or substratum of the *Rasa*, the person or thing with reference to which a sentiment arises such as the Hero or the Heroine, and *Uddīpana*, or what excites or enhances (adds to the development of) the sentiment, such as the moon, the beauties of the vernal season &co., Beauty, decorations &c. of the principal characters, in the case of *Śṛṅgāra*. *Anubhāva* or an Ensuing is the outward manifestation of interval feeling through the eyes, face & co. The *Sāttvika* or Natural *Bhāva* are a subdivision of *Anubhāva* and are mentioned as eight in number –

स्तम्भप्रलयरोमाञ्चाः स्वेदोवैवर्ण्यवेपथू | अश्रुवैस्वर्यमित्यष्टौ |¹³

The *Vyabhicāra* 'or the Accessories are those *Bhāva* which are not strictly confined to any *Rasa*, but appearing and disappearing like waves in the ocean, they serve as feeders to the prevailing sentiment and strengthen it in different ways. *Sthāyībhāva* or the permanent sentiment of a composition is one the ocean melting all salt into water- which, not being interrupted by any sentiment contrary or akin to its nature occurring at interval, converts all of them into its own nature. Now a *rasa* would prove contrary to another if the *Āśraya* or substratum of both were the same. But as

¹² Opcit.p.97

¹³Op cit. v. 6/7 p. 95

Aṅgī (principal) and *Aṅga* (subordinate) a *rasa* may be mixed with one or more of others.

There are eight *Sthāyībhāvas* - *Rati*, *Hāsa*, *Śoka*, *Krodha*, *Utsāha*, *Bhaya*, *Jugupsā*, and *Vismaya* on which are based respectively on the eight sentiments –

Śṛṅgāra the Erotic, (*Rati*)

Hāsyā the comic, (*Hāsa*)

Karuṇā the pathos, (*Śoka*)

Raudra the furious, (*Krodha*)

Vīra the Heroic, (*Utsāha*)

Bhayānaka the terrible, (*Bhaya*)

Bībhatsa the loathsome (*Jugupsā*) and

Adbhuta the marvelous, (*Vismaya*)

There is a ninth sentiment that of *Śānta* the Quietist, having (*Śama*) or tranquility for its '*Sthāyībhāva*.' But it is not suited to dramatic purposes and rarely occurs as a main sentiment in a drama. Of these eight sentiments, *Śṛṅgāra* and *Hāsyā* and *Vīra* and *Adbhuta*, *Bībhatsa* and *Bhayānaka* and *Raudra* and *Karuṇā* are akin to each other, as they proceed from the same condition of the mind. As we are concerned with the Erotic alone, that being the prevailing sentiment in *Kālidāsa* plays, we shall say something about it here *Śṛṅgāra* is mainly divided in to *Vipralambha* or love in separation and *Sambhoga* or love –in-union. The former the *Daśarūpaka* subdivides in to two kinds, *Ayoga* the Non-consummation of marriage, and *Viprayoga* the separation of the lovers deep in love after marriage.

The former, which arises from the dependent position of one or the other of the parties. Or through distance or through the intervention of adverse fate, has ten stages, *Abhilāṣa*, *Cintā* mentioned in the com; *Cintā* 'anxiety' occurs through *Mana*, *Pravāsa* or some such cause. *Mana* 'jealous anger', arises from a breach in the duties of love (*Pranayabhaṅga*) and may be on both sides (rarely, however, the *Nāyaka* is

main. This *Mana* has several varieties, such as *Īrṣyāmāna*, *Ānumānikramāna* etc. it is capable of being dispelled in six ways- *sāstrābhedena dānena natyupekṣārasāntaraiḥ* - and called *Guru*, *Laghu* or *Madhyama* according to the greatness on the smallness of the effort required to make the *Nāyikā* give it up. *Sambhoga* is when the two lovers are in the enjoyment of each other's company, engaged in looking at each other, kissing each other etc.

1.5 The General conduct of the Nāṭaka:

Every dramatic piece open with a prelude or prologue *Prastāvanā* which is itself introduced by what is called the *Nāndī*. This Nandi, according to some, must suggest the gist of the whole plot. The *Sūtradhāra* may sometimes retire after the recital of the *Nāndī*, in which case another actor called *sthāpaka* (for he establishes as it were the topic of the play) takes his place. In the prelude, which may begin with a brief allusion to the poet's literary attainments his genealogy, etc., the *Sūtradhāra* or the *sthāpaka* suggests the subject in the form of the *bīja* or by a simple beginning, or by naming the character about to enter (as in the *Śakuntalā*). He must please the audience with sweet songs descriptive of some season and couched in the *Bhāratīvṛttī*. The *Prastāvanā* is of two kinds-

1. *Prarocanā*

2. *Āmukha*

In which the *Sūtradhāra* holds conversation with the actress or his assistants bearing on the subjects to be introduced. This latter is of other three kinds, of which one is *prayogātīśaya*. When the entry of a character is directly indicated by the *Sūtradhāra* saying 'Here he enters', that is *prayogātīśaya*.

The prelude being over the piece is commenced, being here-after arranged and exhibited in the manner indicated in the three foregoing sections. The whole matter should be well determined and divided into acts and senses. An *Nāṭaka* may consist of from five to ten Acts. The hero should be *Dhīrodāttah*. The prevailing sentiment

should be *Śṛṅgāra* or *Vīra* (or sometimes *Karuṇa*), other being introduced as conducive to its development nothing should be introduced in the play which either does not esteem the Hero or is discordant with the main sentiment. An Act must not be tiresomely long, should be full of *Rasa*, and introduced by *Viṣkambhakam*, etc. according to necessity. Its close is marked by the exit of all characters. Such incidents as journeys, massacres, wars, etc. should not be represented in a play; they may only be indicated. The death of the Hero must never be exhibited. This Account for the somewhat monotonous character of Sanskrit plays and the absence of tragedies in Sanskrit. The play should end, as it began with a benediction or prayer, called the *Bharatvākya* as it is repeated by the principal personage in his character of an actor, and contains an expression of wishes for general prosperity and happiness. The unity of interest or action must be maintained throughout. As regards the language to be used in piece, the Hero and the higher characters speak in classical Sanskrit. While females and other minor characters speak in the different *Prākṛta* dialects.

The student will have seen from the foregoing sketch, that the characteristic peculiarities of the Indian drama are mainly three:--

1. Its peculiar structure;
2. The absence of the distinction between comedy and Tragedy; and
3. The diversity of language to be spoken by the characters.

The above-mentioned general characteristics of *Nāṭaka* belong with certain modifications to the other divisions of the *rūpaka* as well. Of these we may notice the *prakaraṇa* and the *troṭakam*. The plot of a *prakaraṇa* should be fictitious and drawn from real life in a respectable class of society. The Hero, who must be *dhīraśānta*, may be of ministerial rank, or a *Brāhmaṇa*, or a *Vaiśya*. The Heroine may be a maiden of a noble family, or a courtesan. The Most appropriate sentiment is the Erotic. Gamblers and others low characters should be introduced. There should

be ten Acts. The *Mālatīmādhava* and the *Mṛcchhakatikam* belong to this species. A *troṭakam* may consist of 5, 7, 8 or 9 Acts. The characters to be represented should be celestial as well as human (as in the *Vikramorvasiyam*). The *Viduṣaka* should take a prominent part in it and be present in every Act. The prevailing sentiment should be *Śṛṅgāra* in other particulars it does not differ from the *Nāṭaka*.

1.6 The Sources of the *Uttararāmacarita*.

The story of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, on which Bhavabhūti has based his *Uttararāmacaritam*, is one that is most popular and held in Universal reverence. The incidents of the Drama are to be round in the last *Kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, necessary changes being freely made to improve the dramatic effect and to ensure dramatic success. The *Uttararāmacaritam* is a sequel to the *Mahāvīracaritam* and the two plays together present a dramatic epitome of the life history of Rāma. The dramatic form has an advantage over the poetical one in that it produces more telling effect and appeals more to the heart, and thus the story remains firmly fixed in the memory with vivid precision. To examine in what particulars the poet has departed from the original, and with what justification. He has made one most important change, and several others of a minor significance. The end of the original story is tragic, where Sītā is taken to the nether world by the Goddess Earth, and Rāma soon finishes his Earthly career. But Conforming to the canons of Sanskrit dramaturgy which prohibit a tragic end, the poet changes the original and makes the play end with the happy meeting of Rāma, Sītā and their Sons, after a period of long, sorrowful separation. The *Rāmāyaṇa* describes that there was a fight between Rāma on one hand and of his sons on the other, where in Rāma was worsted; but Bhavabhūti does not wish to make him noble Hero suffers martially at the hands of his sons, and he, therefore, arranges that the fight should be between Candraketu and Lava, the status of the fighting Princess being equal. Rāma's meeting with Vāsantī and the invisible

presence of Sītā while he was in the *daṇḍaka* forest are two inventions of the poet which enable him to describe the pathetic distress of his Hero when Separated from his beloved and to exhibit how deep – seated and changeless their affection was. The Visit of the sage Vaśiṣṭha with Arundhatī and Rāma’s Mothers is not to be found in the original, but is invented by the poet, as their presence was necessary for bringing about the final catastrophe as conceived by him.

The influence of *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa* is abundantly visible throughout this play, which contains actual quotations even from the famous epic (VI.31, 32, 36). There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that he had the *Rāmāyaṇa* before him; the question arises, however, whether there is any other version of the Rāma’s story which he had access and which he utilized for the purposes of his play. The story of Rāma is given also in the *Padmapurāṇa*, in three different places; and, as the version given in the *Pātāla-Khaṇḍa* has many points of similarity between Acts IV – VI of the *Uttararāmacarita*, Dr. Belvalkar has come to the conclusion that probably Bhavabhūti derived his material from that source. We think, however, there are not sufficient grounds for holding such a belief until the present *Padmapurāṇa* is shown to be definitely anterior to Bhavabhūti in date. The *Purāṇas* have undergone various amplifications and sweeping revisions at various periods, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether the current recensions are identical with those that were extant fifteen centuries ago. The *Padmapurāṇa*, in particular, has long sections which bear close similarity, to Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśam* and *Śākuntalam*; they would appear to be the work of someone who was familiar with and admired the works of India’s most famous poet. Dr. Belvalkar himself seems to have been conscious of this characteristic of the *Purāṇas*, for after stating that “more probably, However Bhavabhūti derived his material from the *Padmapurāṇa*,” he immediately states in the next paragraph that Bhavabhūti’s Source “must undoubtedly have been some account like that in the *Padmapurāṇa*”. It should also be noticed that even the

Padmapurāṇa account does not exactly tally with Bhavabhūti's, and the learned Doctor himself has pointed out the variations. In view of these facts it is impossible to accept the *Padmapurāṇa* categorically as the basis of our play. Doubtless several forms of the Rāma – History were current in ancient India, and Bhavabhūti might have derived Supplementary material from these.¹⁴

1.7 Changes made by Bhavabhūti in the 7 Acts of *Uttararāmacarita*.

Uttararāmacarita by Bhavabhūti (7th century) deals with the History of Rāma's Later Life, Beginning with his coronation, the Abandonment of Sītā, and their final Reunion. Bhavabhūti says 'He has only given a dramatic form to the *Rāmāyaṇa Kathā* of Vālmiki. It is true that the main characters and events in this play are drawn from the *Rāmāyaṇa* but the changes in characters Bhavabhūti has made, including the happy end cannot all be ascribed to the demands of the dramatic or Bhavabhūti has, in fact, he presented the Rāma story with a new motivation within an overall design implying purposeful Art.

1.8 Bhavabhūti's Sītā: A Woman of Substance.

The *Uttarakāṇḍa* believed to be a late addition to the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* is a Strange Epilogue that completely changes the complexion of the epic A heroic Romance ending happily with the coronation of Rāma and Sītā is turned in to a hunting tragedy in just fourteen out of a total of one hundred and eleven cantos of the Kanda.

Fearing defame for himself Rāma casts the pregnant Sītā away from the bosom of the family when he learns that public opinion in his kingdom is scathingly critical of his acceptance of her even after the fire ordeal.

¹⁴The *Uttararāmacaritam of Bhavabhūti* commentary of Viraraghava, M. R. Kale, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi 1982. p.27.

Bhavabhūti *Uttararāmacaritam* with commentary Saradaranjanray, Bhartiya kala Prakashan Delhi 2008. p. (xxxii).

It makes little literary sense that the question of Sītā's chastity should be raised again after it has been satisfactorily resolved by her successful ordeal by fire at the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. Even the Gods have been witnesses to that Rāma should be so arbitrary, unfair and ruthless to her, knowing she is pure. Over the centuries many have been troubled by strange exit of the unhappy Sītā from this world as indicated by the existence of Variant versions of the story that avoid the final tragedy by contriving to bring Rāma and Sītā together of all these it is only Bhavabhūti's.

Uttararāmacaritam, a play in Sanskrit in seven acts, outstanding for its rare sensitivity that treats Sītā with dignity, as a woman whose feelings count. Bhavabhūti lived probably in the early eighth century AD while his literary abilities match those of Kālidāsa, his humanism and modernity of mind set him far above his more famous and far more lyrical predecessor. Remarkably, Bhavabhūti's major concern. In his day is the healing of Sītā's mind and heart. Her doubts about Rāma's love, and her anger at the repudiation have to disappear her own capacity for love, benumbed by her long suffering has to be revived before and reconciliation with honor is possible, only then would justice be rendered to Sītā and to all Indian womanhood.

This is what the poet achieves in the crucial second third acts that distill the essence of *Karuṇa Rasa* (Pathos) in *Daṇḍaka*.

Wandering into *Janasthāna*, he is assaulted by the memories of his one happy day there, spent in the company of his beloved Sītā his distress makes him cry out.

हा हा देवि स्फुटति हृदयं ध्वंसते देहबन्धः

शून्यं मन्ये जगदविरतज्वालमन्तर्ज्वलामि ।

सीदन्नन्धे तमसि विधुरो मज्जतीवान्तरात्मा

विष्वोडमोहः स्थगयति कथं मन्दभाग्यः करोमि ॥¹⁵

(Alas! Alas! My queen! My Heart breaks, my limbs full apart,

A fire consumes me incessantly, the world seems empty.

My distressed soul sinks despondent in to a blinding darkness.

I am whatever shall I do?)

Sītā who lives in the underworld with *Gaṅgā* and *Pr̥thvī* is in the forest too but she is invisible she hears Rāma cry out in pain. She see him pale and thin. He faints again and again when memories becomes unbearable. Sītā rushes to him to restore him to consciousness with the touch of her hand, Rāma senses her presence, recognizes her dear and familiar touch, “Beautiful like a pile of snow. Soft like a fresh lovely sprout” but is confused when he, does not see her he despairs that his mind is playing tricks on him. Sītā fully realizes that Rāma’s love is hers forever, her anger melts away and the thorn in her heart is removed. She could now go back to him with honor and dignity. Having thus effected a change of heart in Sītā, Bhavabhūti, in the last Act, gathers family, including Rāma. And the people of his kingdom to watch a play depicting the travail of Sītā. After being abandoned how Sītā is unable to hear her labor pains and in fear of the wild beasts jump into the River, and how she is saved by *Gaṅgā* and *Pr̥thvī* who take her with them to the nether world, leaving the twin boys she delivered with Vālmīki.

Accompanied by *Gaṅgā* and *Pr̥thvī* who hand her over to Arundhatī Proclaiming her Purity to the whole world, Sītā, revives Rāma with her touch. The people of the kingdom bow to her and the seven sages shower Petas on her. Rāma accepts Sītā .The play ends on a happy note.

Bhavabhūti stands tall in the world of Sanskrit literature for making Sītā count as an Individual.

¹⁵Op.cit.p.87

1.9 Śambuka episode:

Śambuka (Sanskrit Śambhūka) is, in Hindu Mythology a character in the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇ* a version of *Rāmāyaṇa*. According to that version Śambuka, a Sudra ascetic was slain by Rāma for attempting to perform penance in violation of dharma the bad karma resulting from which caused the death of a *Brahman*'s son. It is believed that Śambuka was beheaded in a hill near Nagpur in Maharashtra.

1.10 Source of the story:¹⁶

The killing of Śambuka appears in the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa* book 7 the *Uttarakāṇḍa*' (Final chapter) Sargas 73 -76 in the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa* version of *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Scholars such as Puruṣottamacandra Jain, Bhagavan Singh and John Broking too write that this story "is of late origin" The story is considered to be of dubious origin due to the following reasons:

- The story does not find mention in summaries of *Rāmāyaṇa* in *Purāṇas* or the Mahābhārata.
- Hindu texts have never cited the episode of *Śambukavadha* to debar Śudras from *Tapasyā*.
- The entire *Uttarakāṇḍa* itself is suspected to be a later addition due to. Inferior poetic quality of the verses.
- Occurrence of the sixth *Kāṇḍa*.
- The text of *Rāmāyaṇa* as reflected in the 70 or so existing Commentaries varies highly. The story does not appear in any of the other 14 or so Sanskrit versions of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*.
-

¹⁶ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>.

1.11 Story: -

Three scenes setting sargas are paraphrased and then the crucial one is presented in full:

When Rāma is reigning as a Virtuous king a humble aged Brahmin comes to him, weeping with his dead son in his arms. He says that Rāma must have committed some sin, or else his son would not have died.

1.12 Criticism and apologies:

Some critics interpret this event as injustice met on Śambuka, and are of the opinion that Rāma had slain Śambuka because of his birth as a Sudra.

Dravidian Movements hold the position that Lord Rāma murdered Śambuka to reinstate the apartheid Varṇa system, which is an important feature of Hindu Dharma. E.V. Rāmasami used this episode to argue that Rāma as depicted in the *Rāmāyaṇa* was clearly not the benevolent king devotes claimed him to be. Ambedkar in contrast, said that to condemn Rāma based on this incident was, to miss the point. The true point of the story of Śambuka was that it demonstrated the unsustainability of the *Varṇa* system, and the extent to which its existence depended on the harsh punishment of those who sought to transgress it.

The critics are of the opinion that the story of Śambuka was problematic for early Hindu authors Bhavabhūti (c.7th century) is his *Uttararāmacaritam* while Kālidāsa (c. 4th century) mentions the incident of Śambuka without any comment in his *Raghuvamśa*.

Later Hindu authors adopt other means to explain the reason behind Rāma's killing of Śambuka. The *Puṣṭimārga Vaiṣṇavite* tradition of Gujarat points out that the *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to in the forest Śambuka therefore deliberately violated dharma in order to get Rāma's attention and attained salvation when he was beheaded. The celebrated Kannada poet Kuvempu, in his play *Śudra Tapasvī* shows Rāma as

having to both carry out his duty by punishing Śambuka, and Simultaneously project Śambuka, as a pious and devout sage from persecution and it. Turns the story in to a critique of Brahminical attitudes.

The apologetics firstly argue that not all tapas is done for a pious purpose. Rāvaṇa, a Brahmin killed by Rāma, had also performed penance but not for pious reasons. They argue that Śambuka was killed for clouting penance with a motive of attaining a celestial power with his material body which is not an unselfish motive for which penance is meant to be performed. It is particularly forbidden (e.g. story of *Triśanku*) in Hindu mythology to aspire for entering heaven with a material body. The belief is that the material body is only for performing ones karma on earth.¹⁷

Bhavabhūti closely follows the *Rāmāyaṇa* story as given by Vālmīki, with some changes mainly dictated by the exigencies of dramatic representation. Thus,

1. New characters, the Sūtradhāra and Naṭa residing in *Ayodhyā*, the rivers (deities) *Tamasā* and *Muralā*, the sylvan deity *Vāsantī*, *Ātreyī*, the two pupils Saudhātaki and Bhāṇḍayāna, Vidyādhara and Vidyādhari etc., These do not in any way affect the story in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

2. The *Citradarśana* episodes the dual between Lava and Candraketu and Rāma's appearance on the scene to put a stop to the fight, the arrival of Janaka, Kauśalyā, Vasiṣṭha and Arundhatī to stay at Vālmīki's hermitage, are not to be found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. They could not be said not to harmonies with the *Rāmāyaṇa* story as a whole.

3. The Śambūka episode and Śatrughna's departure to exterminate Lavaṇa demon are described as happening not at the time mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

4. Bhavabhūti describes Santa as the daughter of Daśaratha. She is the daughter of Romapāda according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

¹⁷ Śambuka – Wikipedia the free encyclopedia.
<http://en.m.wikipedia>. Org.

5. The *Garbhanāṭaka* is an invention made by Bhavabhūti.

These are after all, minor changes. The one important change that Bhavabhūti deliberately makes is as regard the end of the Rāma. In the last verse, Bhavabhūti tells us that his *Uttararāmcaritakathā* is *Abhinayaivirnyastarūpā*. Ignoring the tragic end of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bhavabhūti describes Sītā's reunion with Rāma which, according to him ought to be the proper *Kāvyaārtha*. Bhavabhūti need not be understood to have made this change on his own. The *Padmapurāṇa* (on the Patalakhandā) does refer to this version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (According to the *Padmapurāṇa* version, the *Aśvamedha* horse was guarded by Puṣkala, son of Bharata). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* reason why Bhavabhūti preferred a *Purāṇa* version of the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Bhavabhūti is, however, mostly indebted to Kālidāsa's works. As regards the introduction of some episodes, with their bearing on the construction of the plot in his play. Bhavabhūti, in fact, deliberately challenges comparison with Kālidāsa, as is clear from his *Mālatīmādhava* Act VII which is modeled on Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīyam* Act IV.

1. The *Citradarśanam* episode was undoubtedly suggested by *Raghuvamśam* XIV. 25.

तयोर्यथाप्रार्थितमिन्द्रियार्थनासेदुषःसद्गसु चित्रवत्सु ।

प्राप्तानि दुःखान्यपि दण्डकेषु सञ्चिन्त्यमानानि सुखान्यभूवन् ॥¹⁸

Bhavabhūti practically refers to episodes directly mentioned by Kālidāsa in his Rāma cantos.

¹⁸ Mallinath Sanjivani commentary of *Raghuvamśam* by Kalidasa, Kashinatha Pandurang parab, Bomabay, 1893, p.242

2. The Beautiful message sent by Sītā to Rāma (Raghu XIV) furnishes Bhavabhūti with many ideas and expressions for being incorporated in the *Uttararāmacarita*.
3. The reference to Bharata, the author of the *Naṭyaśāstra* the *Garbhanāṭaka* being represented by the Apsarases etc. – all this may have been borrowed from the *Vikramorvaśīyam*
4. Rāma's conclusion that Kuśa and Lava were his sons has its counterpart in Śakuntalā, Act. VII. Bhavabhūti elaborates the whole mental process, while Kālidāsa leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions from the facts mentioned.
5. Apparently Bhavabhūti thought Duṣyanta's remorse in Act VI was not properly described by Kālidāsa, so he takes particular care to describe Rāma's grief in great detail (Duṣyanta had enjoyed his married life with Śakuntalā for just a fortnight or so, while Rāma was Sītā for certainly more than fifteen years before he abandoned her.).
6. The part played by *Aṣṭāvakra* in bringing the two messages, one about the urgent necessity of fulfilling the pregnancy longing of Sītā and the other viz. the duty of a king suggested by the part of Vaikhānasa in Śakuntalā Act I, who in a few words gives an amount of information directly bearing on the development of the plot there.
7. Rāma is brought back to his sense of duty, when deeply distressed, by the arrival of the sages crying for help, Duṣyanta is also described as giving up his lethargy when Mātālī comes to ask for his help on behalf of Indra.
8. Bhavabhūti makes Janaka (the counterpart of Kaṇva in the Śākuntalam) an important character and describes him in most thoughts. He apparently thought that Kālidāsa had not done sufficient justice to Kaṇva and had missed an opportunity to tell his readers what the father of an outraged daughter should feel.

9. Kālidāsa makes Sānumatī (Śakuntalā's friend) witness Duṣyanta's grief due to remorse. Herself being invisible Bhavabhūti makes the heroine Sītā herself a witness to the hero's grief.

Bhavabhūti has closely followed the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as given by Vālmīki and Kālidāsa making minor changes therein and also inventing new characters in any way affecting the main story, excepting only in one point – viz. the reunion of Sītā with Rāma for which Bhavabhūti may have been indebted to the *Padmapuraṇa* version.¹⁹

M. R. Kale has given a summary in his book like that-

The *Uttararāmacarita* is based on the well – known story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, with certain changes introduced by the poet. The summary of seven acts is as follows:

Act -I.

After the Benediction and the announcement of the title of the play, with a few words about the author, the audience is informed in the Prelude (*Prastāvanā*) that the monkey chiefs, the holy sages, and other guests assembled in *Ayodhyā* for the coronation of Rāma after his Victory over Rāvaṇa, were allowed to return to their respective homes after festivities in their honors. There is an incidental allusion to a scandalous rumour about Sītā and a suggestion that evil might come to her by reason of it. The audience are further told that Rāma has just repaired to the inner apartments to console Sītā who is depressed at the departure of her father Janaka. It is at this point that the actual play begins. Rāma is introduced as trying to comfort the disconsolate Sītā, when a messenger arrives from the hermitage of Rāma's Brother –in-law, R̥ṣyaśṛṅga, with a blessing on Sītā from Vaśiṣṭha and a direction from Arundhatī and others to Rāma, to satisfy the longings of Sītā, who was at that time

¹⁹R. D., *Uttararāmacaritam of Bhavabhūti*, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, Third Edition – 2002
p. XVI to XVIII.

Web: *Uttararāmacaritam* (The later story of Rama HB/P. b)

<https://play.google.book.com>

far gone with child. Vaśiṣṭha sends word to Rāma to preserve the glory of his race by looking to the welfare of his Subjects. Rāma, in accepting the message, vows to sacrifice everything, “even including Sītā,” to the General good, thus foreshadowing as it were the abandonment of Sītā to please his subjects. Lakṣmaṇa enters and proposes as a diversion that they may pay a visit to the picture gallery, which they accordingly do. They inspect the paintings on the wall which present different scenes in their past lives; the reminiscences thus called up are both painful and delightful. While this is going on, a spy employed by Rāma to go about in the city to note how his rule was liked by the people, comes in and whispers the evil news about the aspirations cast on the purity of Sītā. This is a staggering blow to Rāma, who is torn by the internal conflict between his deep love for Sītā and the necessity of abandoning her to please his people. Finally he resolves to sacrifice her to his senses of duty, and orders Lakṣmaṇa to take her to the forest and leave her there. Lakṣmaṇa accordingly departs with Sītā to fulfill his elder brother’s behest.

Act – II

An Interval of twelve years separates the first Act from the second. By means of an interlude (*Viṣkambhaka*), the poet informs the audience as to the events that have happened since after the close of the first Act. Sītā, being abandoned in the forest, gives birth to twin sons, who are taken charge of by Vālmīki. He names them as Kuśa and Lava, and takes great pains to educate them in the various arts and science. In the meantime Rāma had begun to perform the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. Sītā’s place as his consort being supplied by a golden image of her. The sacrificial horse was dispatched round the world with a large army having Lakṣmaṇa’s Son, Candraketu as its general. The most recent act of Rāma was his starting out in search of a Śudra ascetic named Śambhūka whose unauthorized penance had caused the death of a Brāhmaṇa’ Son. Here ends the Interlude. Then Rāma is shown as discovering Śambhūka in the *Danḍaka* forest and killing him with a sword. The Śudra ascetic

appears before Rāma in his celestial form and greets him for having raised him to heaven. The sight of the *Daṇḍaka* forest and *Janasthāna* reminds Rāma of old happening and arouses painful emotions. Finally he departs in the company of Śambhūka to pay his respects to the sage Agastya who lived nearby and who had expressed a desire to see him.

Act – III

In An Interlude of (*Viṣkambhaka*) there is a dialogue between two Rivers – Goddesses, *Tamasā* and *Muralā*, which acquaints the audience how Agastya’s wife Lopāmudrā, through her deep affection for Rāma, sends word to the Goddess Godavari to protect Rāma in his sad bereavement lest he might do violence to his person, in the midst of his old associations in the *Daṇḍaka* forest exciting sorrowful memories. *Tamasā* tells *Muralā* that there was no need of any such precaution, since the Goddess *Gaṅgā* had come to the River – Goddess *Godāvarī* with Sītā whose touch possessed the magic power of reviving Rāma from swoon, if need should arise; by the favour of *Gaṅgā*. Sītā was rendered invisible to Rāma who therefore would not be aware of her presence. The whole act is occupied with describing in detail the lamentations of Sītā and Rāma occasioned by their presence in the forest closely associated with their past life. Rāma afterwards returns to *Ayodhyā* to finish the horse – sacrifice, and Sītā returns to *Gaṅgā* to perform the ceremonies connected with the twelfth birth – day anniversary of her twins.

Act – IV

In the Interlude (*Viṣkambhaka*) the dialogue between two pupils of the sage Vālmīki inform the audience that great preparations are being made in the penance grove to welcome with due hospitality. The sage Vaśiṣṭha, and Rāma’s mother and Sītā’s father Janaka, who are all on short visit to Vālmīki’s hermitage as his guests. Janaka then enter alone, and in a pathetic soliloquy gives vent to his deep grief. Then at the request of Vaśiṣṭha, Rāma’s Mother Kauśalyā comes to meet Janaka, and both are

over powered by the same feelings of grief and anguish. Kauśalyā spies at a distance a boy who resembles Rāma in his dignity. They all guess as to who he may be, and send the chamberlain to Vālmīki to ascertain the truth. The boy is no other than Lava. He salutes the elders who are strangers to him, and tells how his preceptor Vālmīki has written a history of Rāma, the published portion of which ends with the abandonment of Sītā, the later part, connected with her exile being yet unpublished. While they are thus engaged in conversation, the boys in the hermitage run to Lava, their fellow – student, to announce to him, the arrival of a horse. They drag off Lava to behold the wonderful animals not seen ever before. An attendant arrives from Vālmīki and tells Janaka that the sage replies that everything will be disclosed in time. Lava and the boys hasten towards the horse, and Lava, recognizing it to be a sacrificial horse, orders the boys to capture it and lead it to the hermitage. A soldier enters and advises Lava to desist from his foolishness. Lava desires him and welcome in a truly martial spirit the opportunity thus afforded to challenge the whole hostile army to fight.

Act – V

The soldiers are worsted by Lava and find themselves compelled to flee. The timely arrival of their leader Candraketu fills them with hope of protection. Candraketu observes Lava fighting like a true warrior, undaunted and undismayed by the vast forces ranged against him. Candraketu openly commends the Valour of Lava and Challenges him to a fight. Lava in the meanwhile reduces the whole army to a paralyses silence means of his magic missile (called Jṛmbhaka). This fills Candraketu with wonder and amazement. He descends from his chariot and the two youths meet face to face. The conversation that ensues happens to turn upon Rāma’s heroic deeds. Lava makes some alighting remarks which provoke the anger of Candraketu; they thereupon hasten to the battle – field to fight out their dispute to the bitter end.

Act – VI.

In the interlude (*Viṣkambhaka*) between a Vidyādhara and his wife, the audience are informed that a fierce combat is raging between the two princes. Fire –missiles are met by water missiles, which are again counteracted by wind – missiles. In a dreadful and uninterrupted manner the fight continue for some time, when it is arrested by the arrival of Rāma on the battle – field. The fight is stopped, and Rāma lovingly asks Candraketu to embrace him, which the latter does. Then Candraketu, in a true chivalrous spirit, requests his uncle to treat Lava with the same warmth of affection. Rāma closely glances at Lava and is impressed with his martial bearing. Lava, on the other hand, is invaded by a sense of calmness and modesty. He learns from Candraketu who the august Personage before him is and salutes him. On knowing that he is Candraketu’s uncle, Rāma embraces him, and on being implored to forgive Lava’s audacity commends it and asks him to withdraw the charm which had through the whole army into a stupor. A conversation goes on as to Lava’s history, and the presence of Kuśa is announced. Kuśa learns from Lava that he is in the presence of Rāma, and salutes him. Rāma embraces him, and feels in the embrace a sense of parental affection and find in the two boys a facial likeness to children of the Raghu race. On closer observation he notices in them a vivid resemblance to the features of Sītā; this leads to a conversation which is painful to Rāma in its association. Rāma views from a distance the approach of Vaśiṣṭha, Arundhatī Kauśalyā and Janaka, and is overcome by a deep sense of affliction and shame to be thus brought face with Janaka. He hastens to meet them.

Act – VII

This Act opens with a dramatic representation arranged to bring about a most touching union between Rāma and Sītā. The plan is Vālmīki’s, who chooses this method of convincing Rāma of the spotless purity of Sītā. The stage - manager announces the play and the cry of Sītā is heard. The manager tells the audience that

Queen Sītā is about to throw herself in to the waters of the *Gaṅgā*. Rāma excitedly calls upon her to stop, when he is reminded by Lakṣmaṇa that it was merely a Dramatic show. The Goddess Earth and *Gaṅgā* try to console Sītā, The conversation is carried on by the three, revealing step by step how Sītā gave birth to her sons, and how they were to be brought up by Vālmīki. The audience is convinced of the purity of Sītā's married life, and even Rāma calls upon his people to testify to it. Then Arundhatī introduces Sītā in person to bring back to consciousness Rāma who was under a deep swoon owing to Great Grief. Arundhatī then addresses the assembled people, and gently rebukes them for doubting the chastity of Sītā, who is praised as being purity incarnate by even Gods and Goddesses. A most happy union takes place, and the customary Benediction (*Bharatavākya*) ends the play amidst general rejoicings.

It will be noticed that the Principal points in the development of the plot are:--

1. The arrival of the spy with the news about the evil ramous encoring Sītā;
2. The abandonment of Sītā near Vālmīki's Hermitage;
3. Rāma's visit to the *Daṇḍaka* forest in connetion with Śambhūka's austerities;
4. His being brought in contact with Sītā who remains invisible;
5. The *Aśvamedha* sacrifice commenced by Rāma;
6. The capture of the sacrificial horse by Lava at the Hermitage of Vālmīki;
7. The fight between Lava and Candraketu;
8. Rāma's arrival on the scene which puts an end to the fight;
9. Rāma's interview with Lava and Kuśa;
10. The Declaration of Sītā's purity by the Earth, divine *Gaṅges* and *Arundhatī*;
11. And the Happy union of Rāma and Sītā at the end.²⁰

²⁰M. R. Kale, *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1982, p. 23.
Uttararāmacarita by Saradaranjanray, Bhartiya kala Prakashana Delhi, 2008. p. (xxxii)

1.13 Introduction of Bhavabhūti:

The Author's Name:-

R. D. Karmarkar²¹ has given information about Bhavabhūti. '(The Poet's Name)' in his Book.

There should really have been no controversy about the personal name of the poet, in the face of the expression *Bhavabhūtirnāma* which occurs in all the three *Prastāvanā* to the plays. But the commentators Vīrarāghava, Jagaddhara, Tripurāri and Ananta Paṇḍita (who are not earlier than the 15th century) try to show off their ingenuity by relying upon the expression (*Bhaṭa*) *Śrīkaṇṭhapadalāñcanaḥ* and the different ways of explaining the term Bhavabhūti.

Vīrarāghava – Śrīkaṇṭha was the personal name (*Pitrkṛtanāmedam*);

Bhavabhūti was the appellation given to the poet by the King who was pleased with the verse- 'साम्बा पुनातु भवभूतिपवित्रमूर्तिः' |

Jagaddhara – नाम्ना श्रीकण्ठः प्रसिद्धया भवभूतिरित्यर्थः ।

Tripurāri – भवभूतिरिति व्यवहारे तस्येदं नामान्तरम् | (Thus all the above three commentators take Śrīkaṇṭha as the proper or personal name.)

Anantapaṇḍita says that the appellation Bhavabhūti was due to the verse गिरिजायाः कुचौ वन्दे भवभूतिसिताननौ ।

Bhavabhūti is also explained as Bhavātbhūtiḥ yasya saḥ (who owed his prosperity to Śiva).

The fact that the commentators give different interpretation of the word Bhavabhūti and that the word *Lāñchana* (in श्रीकण्ठपदलाञ्छनः) means 'a characteristic' show that in

²¹ Karmarkar R. D., Bhavabhūti, Karnātak University 1971, p. 120.

the eyes of the commentators, the expression ‘ Bhavabhūti’ is more important, and is more likely to be the personal name of the poet.

The expression *Udumbara* – (*Ḍambara* as read by Jagaddhara) *Nāmānaḥ* shows that Udumbara was the surname (as the ancestors are so described) or family name because the family lived in the town Udumbara. To take the name of the town as the surname is a characteristic of the Karnātak people (the Maharashtra people add the affix ‘Kara’ to the name of the town; so Udumbarakāra would be according to the modern style), abbreviated as B. N. Udumbara.²²

P. V. Kane has given information about Bhavabhūti in his book *Uttararāmacaritam*. In the prelude to the *Uttararāmacarita* the author introduces himself as “श्रीकण्ठपदलाञ्छन...भवभूतिनाम” | Hence Bhavabhūti was the name of the poet and he earned the title Śrīkaṇṭha – one having the Goddess of learning in his thought possibly by his rendition.

Two other books besides the *Uttararāmacarita* are ascribed to him. The *Vīracarita* a book on the earlier history of Rāma ending with his return from *Laṅkā* and the *Mālatīmādhava*, a romance. In all these, the three things are common, viz.

1. The author is Bhavabhūti who earned the title Śrīkaṇṭha
2. The author comes of a Brāhmaṇa Family of Padmapura in *Vidarbha*.
3. The Dramas were all first staged on the occasion of the festival of the *Kālapriyānātha*.

Thus there can be no doubt that these three Dramas were written by the same author. The *Vīracarita* adds that poet’s father was Nīlakaṇṭha and Grand - father Bhaṭṭagopāla.

Blinded perhaps by the gloom of Nīlakaṇṭha’s “Kaṇṭha” some are misled into the belief that the poet’s name was Śrīkaṇṭha and Bhavabhūti was a mere title, failing to

²² Karmarkar R. D., Bhavabhūti, Karnatak University, Dharwar, 1971p. 4 to 5.

see that Bhaṭṭa Gopāla and his son Nīlakaṇṭha have no “Kaṇṭha” in common in their names chapter and verse and cited by the supporters of this theory; thus the poet while eulogizing अनंगपण्डित “गिरिजायाः कुचौवन्देभवभूतिसिताननौ” also “साम्बापुनातुभवभूतिषविव्रमूर्तिः”²³ (According to Vīrarāghava) this pleased Lord ‘Bhava’ (Śiva) to such an extent that he bestowed on the poet the title ‘Bhavabhūti’.

Again this may be noted that in old writings the poet is always referred to as Bhavabhūti not as Śrīkaṇṭha. Thus in the fourth century, Rājaśekhara wrote in his *Bālacarīta* --

‘बभूव वल्मीकभवः पुरा कविस्ततः प्रपेदे भुवि भर्तमेण्ठताम् ।

स्थितः पुनर्यो भूवभतिरेखया स वर्तते सम्प्रति राजशेखरः ॥’²⁴

Next came Kalahaṇa in the 12th century with the verse-
कविवार्कपतिराजश्रीभवभूत्यादिसेवितः ।

जितो ययौ यशोवर्मा तद्गुणस्तुतिवन्दिताम् ॥ (*Rājatarāṅginī*, IV, 144)

In the 14th century Govardhanācārya, in his *Āryāsaptasatī* wrote-

‘भवपूतेःसम्बन्धाद्भुधरभूरेव भारती भाति ।

एतत्कृतकारुण्ये किमन्यथा रोदिति ग्रावा ॥’²⁵

In the Bhojaprabandha, the following verse is attributed to Kālidāsa: -

सुकविद्वितयंमन्येनिखिलेऽपि महीतले ।

भवभूतिः शुकश्चायंवाल्मीकिस्त्रितयोऽनयोः ॥’²⁶

But is quite unnecessary to hunt up these and similar references;

“श्रीकण्ठपदलाञ्छन...भवभूतिर्नाम” is decisive and seems to leave no room for discussion.

²³ Dr.Jain Rama, saahitya – meghdutam and Uttararamacaritam, Mukta shiksha vidhyalaya, 2015, p.3.

²⁴ श्रीवास्तव किरण, आचार्य राजशेखरकृत ‘काव्यमीमांसा’ का आलोचनात्मक अध्ययन, इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय १९९८, प.४.

²⁵ गोवर्धनाचार्या, ‘आर्यासप्तशती’ १/ ३६) Shri Ramakant Tripathi, Varanasi, Chaukhamba Vidhyabhavan, 1965.

²⁶ Karmarkar R. D., Bhavabhūti, Karnatak University 1971, p. 120.

The *Mālatīmādhava*, as if to make assurance doubly sure, reads *Bhavabhūtirnāma* for *Bhavabhūtirnāma*. There is a deal of difference between *Bhavabhūtirnāma* the former is compound of *Bhavabhūti* and *Nāman* where *Nāman* means name and nothing else. The compound means “one whose name is *Bhavabhutibhavabhūtirnām* is not a compound. *Bhavabhūtiḥ* and *Nāma* are separate words joined together by *Samdhi*. *Nāma* is an *Avyaya* indicating *Prākāśca* publicity, celebrity etc. Hence *Bhavabhūtirnām* literally means knows as *Bhavabhūti* this however is a very common way of stating the name of a thing thus

“हिमालयो नाम नागाधिराजः” “कालिन्दीतटवटः श्यामो नाम” “गिरि प्रवस्रणो नाम”, चित्रकुञ्चवान् नाम दनुकबन्धाधिष्ठितो दण्डकारण्यभूभागः”, “श्रमणा नाम सिद्धशवरी”, etc.

i. His Home:

The Prelude to the *Vīracarita* supposes *Padmapura* in the *Dakṣiṇāpatha* to be the poet’s Home (अस्ति दक्षिणापथे पद्मपरं नाम नगरम् । तव etc.) it is usual to render *Dakṣiṇāpatha* as “the way to the south” this seems to require correction. The Mahabharata in स्या the *Vanaparva* says-

एते गच्छन्ति बहवः पन्थानो दक्षिणापथम् ।

अवन्तिमृक्षवन्तञ्च समतिक्रम्य पर्वतम् ॥

एष पन्था विदर्भाण्मी गच्छन्ति कोशलान् ।

अतःपरञ्च देशोऽयं दक्षिणो दक्षिणापथः ॥²⁷

Here are several roads leading to *Dakṣiṇāpatha*. They cross the hill *Rkṣavat* and go beyond *Avanti*. This road goes to *Vidarbha*, those lead to *Kauśala*. To the south beyond this place the land is known as *Dakṣiṇāpatha* which is the modern Deccan.

²⁷ Roy, Sarasaranjan, Commentator Uttararamacarita, Bhartiya kala prakashan Delhi, 2008, p. xiv.

Deccan is evidently a corruption of *Dakṣiṇa*. The town of Padmapura in the Deccan is vague. The *Mālatīmādhava* with more definiteness reads दक्षिणापथे विदर्भेष etc. The quotation from the Mahabharata above places *Vidarbha* in the Deccan. *Vidarbha* is the Modern Berars. We have it then that Bhavabhūti was born in *Padmapura* in the Berars. *Padmapura* has not yet been identified.

ii. His Family Life:

As in the case of Kālidāsa, nothing is known about Bhavabhūti's marriage, wife, children etc. From the description of family life as a whole, found in the three dramas, it may be surmised that the poet must have enjoyed a happy domestic life, blessed with children, for a pretty long time. Bhavabhūti attaches great importance to the sanctity of family ties and to the proper observance of the rites ordained by the *Śāstras*.²⁸

iii. His Age:

Though born in the Berars, Bhavabhūti passed his best days at *Kānyakubja* as one of the court – poets of King Yaśovarmān. The verse quoted above from the *Rājatarāṅginī* may be freely rendered thus – “Yaśovarmān was a poet himself and commended the services (*Sevita*) of a host of poets *Vākpatirāja*, Bhavabhūti and others. When defeated by Lalitāditya, he made good use of his poesy by singing in praise of the victor. From this and a few other minor considerations Bhavabhūti is supposed to have lived towards the latter part of the 7th century A.D.

iv. His creed:

The *Vīracarita* begins with a salutation to the absolute (*Brahman*)

“अथ स्वस्थाय देवाय नित्याय हतपाद्मने ।

²⁸ Karmarkar, R. D., *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, Delhi, Third Edition – 2002, p. 9.

त्यक्तक्रमविभागाय चैतन्यज्योतिषे नमः ॥”²⁹

Every Hindu is a believer in the *Vedas*; hence salutation to the सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं ब्रह्म is natural with him. This *Brahman* is altogether unconditioned, and as such, cannot be the subject – matter of the devotee’s meditation. The mind hankers after something conditioned- a personal god. Hence believers in *Brahman* are also seen to be *Śaiva* etc. In their creed, *Śiva*, *Viṣṇu* etc. are the objects of their daily worship – they are *bhaktas* of *Śiva*, *Viṣṇu* etc. which are to them but manifestations of Brahman himself. What was Bhavabhūti - a *Śaiva* or a *Vaiṣṇava* or what?

The *Uttararāmacarita* furnishes no clue; it opens with a salutation to the old masters

—

“इदं कविभ्यः पूर्वोभ्यो नमोवाकं प्रशास्महे ।

विन्देम देवतां वाचममृतामात्मनः कलाम् ॥” (*Uttararāmacarita* 1/1 p. 1.)

In the *Mālatīmādhava* the poet makes salutation to *Śiva* and *Gaṇeśa*. The case of *Gaṇeśa* may be left out of consideration. He is invoked by everybody to guard against hindrance in undertakings. Was then the poet a *Śaiva*?

There are considerations which cannot be ignored in giving an answer to this question. The prelude to the *Vīracarita* has the following –

प्राचेतसो मुनिवृषा प्रथमः कवीनां यत् पावनं रघुपतेः प्रणीनाच वृत्तम् ।

भक्तस्य तव समरंसत मेऽपि वाचस्तात् सुप्रसन्नमनसःकृतिनो भजन्ताम् ॥³⁰

The first classical poet was Vālmīki. He has recorded the holy life of Rāma. I am a *bhakta* of Rāma. My speech also has revelled in recording that life. May the learned accept my record. “In this, *Bhakta* is a devotee, a worshipper; not a mere admirer. To Bhavabhūti, Rāma was the Primeval Soul himself. Thus, in the *Vīracarita* he makes *Vasiṣṭha* speak of Rāma as –

²⁹ Op.cit. p. xiv.

³⁰ Op.cit.p. xvii

क्षमायाः स क्षेत्रं गुणमणिगणानामपि खनिः

प्रपन्नानां मूर्तेः सुकृतपरिपाको जनिमताम् ।

कृपारामो रामो वहिरिह दृशोपास्यत इति

प्रमोदाद्वैतस्वाप्युपरि परिवर्त्तामह इमे ॥³¹

“In Rāma resides forbearance and all virtues. To those that report to him. Rāma is prior – birth – merit embodied in this life. Rāma has to be seen within by meditation, but he reveals in showing favour and is hence being seen without. From the consequent joy, we are transported even above him.”

Still more explicit is what in the *Vīracarita* comes from the presiding deity of *Kubera's Alakā*; thus –

“इदं हि तत्त्वं परमार्थभाजामयं हि साक्षात् पुरुषः पुराणः ।

त्रिधा विभक्ता प्रकृतिः किलैषा त्रातु भुवि स्वेन सतोऽवतीर्णा ॥”

“This is the treasure of those that have acquired the supreme Treasure. This is the Primeval Soul Himself. This is the first Cause (divided subsequently into *Brahman*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśvara*) which has come down on earth for the salvation of the good with a sight of its real self.”

These and similar sentiments are those of genuine worship and are not compatible with mere admiration. Hence as he himself declares, Bhavabhūti was a *bhakta* of Rāma.

The question is likely to arise that if Bhavabhūti was a worshipper of Rāma, why does he salute *Śiva* in the *Mālatīmādhava*?

The answer is simple. The worshippers of *Viṣṇu* worship him either in the form of Rāma or as Kṛṣṇa. Those two classes of *Vaiṣṇavas* are always of variance with each other. But *Śiva's* position is unique; no body quarrels with *Śiva*. In public bathing ghats when a bather shout *Jayasītārāma*, he is immediately challenged by dozens of

³¹ Op.cit.p.xvii

voices with the cornershout *Jayarādhāśyāma*, and vice versa, while Jayagaurīśnkara is at once taken up with alacrity by almost every one present. There is therefore no inconsistency in a worshipper of Rāma saluting *Śiva*. Or it may be that as a dramatist. Bhavabhūti saluted *Naṭarājaśiva* the ideal lover at the beginning of his drama, for he was to depict the ardent love of Mālatī and Mādhava.

“आरोग्य भास्करादिकच्छेत् धनमिच्छेद हुताशनात्” etc. As health is asked of Sun – God wealth of fire – God, so love is asked of *Śiva*. Thus this is no inconsistency with a *Rāmabhakta*.

v. **Kālapriyānatha:-**

All the three dramas were represented on the stage at the Yātrā festivities in honour of *Kālapriyānātha*. Shri Lele understood by *Kālapriyā* to be the modern Kalpi, but this view has not found favour with scholars, so also the view that the expression refers to *Mahākāla* of Ujjain. M. M. Miraśi, on the strength of the verse कल्याणानां त्वमसि³² (*Mālatīmādhava* I – 3) etc., holds that *Kālapriyānātha* refers to the Sun, a big temple in honor of whom is mentioned in the *Purāṇas*, situated south of the *Yamunā* in the center of *Āryavarta* (also at Multan in the West, and at Konārka in Orissa) and that Bhavabhūti was apparently a devotee of the Sun. Against this it might be argued that though the prayer to the Sun (कल्याणानां त्वमसि..) breathe s intense religious fervor, it in no way can be a convincing argument that Bhavabhūti was devoted to the Sun. An equally beautiful prayer to the Moon is found in *Vikram* by Kālidāsa, but that cannot prove that Kālidāsa was a devotee of the Moon. We are of opinion that Bhavabhūti’s *Kālapriyānātha* is the *Svayambhū* (not constructed by any human agency) known as *Suvarṇabindu* (not constructed by any human agency) *Śivaliṅga* known as *Suvarṇabindu* (described in *Mālatīmādhava* Act IX – as

³²Commentator, Jagaddhara, *Mālatīmādhava of Bhavabhūti*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1970. P.7

मधुमतीसिन्धुसंभेदपावनोभगवान्भवानीपतिरपौरुषेयप्रतिष्ठः सुवर्णबिन्दुरित्याख्यायते) at the confluence of the *Madhumatī* and the *Sindhu* rivers. Bhavabhūti deliberately uses the roundabout expression Bhavabhūti, to correspond to *Kālapriyā (Bhavani) nātha*.³³

vi. His works:-

As stated before, Bhavabhūti wrote three books, so far as it known at present, and they are all dramas. Two of these the *Vīracarita* and the *Uttararāmacarita* are based upon the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. With reference to the genesis of these two books the poet himself explains, in the verse “प्राचेतसो मुनिवृषा प्रथमः कबीनाम्”etc., quoted before, that being a *Bhakta* of Rāma they found it necessary to re – write the History of Rāma with certain alterations. The last line of the verse is “तत् सुप्रसन्नमनसः कृतिनोभजन्ताम्” | There तत् refers to the poet’s own correct word. This record is in the form of a *Drśyakāvya*; so the correct word with respect to it is *Paśyanta* – let them witness this. The poet avoids and prefers *Bhajantām* –let them accept. This is suspicious. It seems to suggest that his record apparently differs in places former that of Vālmīki, and he exhorts the audience to accept his version of the story. Let us see what these differences, if any, are and what they have got to do with Bhavabhūti’s *Bhakti* in Rāma.

(1) As a *bhakta* of Rāma the poet is shocked at the mean device adopted to slay the monkey – chief Bālī. It casts a slur on his favorite diety which as a *Bhakta*, he is bound, he thinks, to try to wipe out. His version is that Bālī was killed in a fair fight wherein he himself was the aggressor.

(2) The poet cannot bear the idea that Sītā was banished without Consolation with Vaśiṣṭha and the elders. His divinity is incapable of taking such a hasty step. No, it

³³ Karmarkar, R. D. Bhavabhūti, Karnatak University, Dharwar, 1971 p. 6 to 7.

was not that Rāma deliberately omitted to consult them, but at the time they were away from *Ayodhyā* and could not be consulted.

(3) Bhavabhūti's heart weeps to see Sītā go down to Patala leaving his Deity, his heart's idol, disconsolate. The very idea is repulsive to a *Bhakta*. He thinks that the *Rāmāyaṇa* must be a comedy; it must not be a tragedy. Accordingly he works to words that end.

(4) Incidentally he deems it necessary to absolve Kaikeyī of all responsibility in the matter of Rāma's exile.

The *Vīracarita* deals with *Rāmavanavāsa* and *Balivadhā* and the *Uttararāmacarita* takes up *Sītāvivāsana* and *Pātālapraveśa*.

The third line of the verse quoted before his “भक्तस्य तत्र समरंसत मेऽपि वाचः” | the past tense in *Samaramsata* (समरंसत) has to be noted. It implies that the poet's speech (*Vācaḥ*) is no longer engaged in recording the story of Rāma; the story is already recorded. This seems to suggest that, at the time the *Vīracarita* was being staged the *Uttararāmacarita* too was completed, though the staging of it took place later on. Thus it appears that the verse “प्राचेतसो मुनिवृषा प्रथमः कवीनाम्” etc.

Warrants us to say that the poet's three dramas were staged in the order *Viracharita*, *Uttararāmacarita*, *Mālatīmādhava*.

Sanskrit is unanimously supposed that the *Vīracarita* was staged first but as regards the other two Dr. Śri Rāmakṛṣṇa Gopala Kālapriyā in his preface to the *Mālatīmādhava* says- “*Mālatī-mādhava* must have been his second work, and the *Uttararamacarita* the last. In the benedictory stanza at the end of this, the play is represented as the production of his mature intellect.” Here in the foot note is quoted the line “शब्दब्रह्मविदः कवैः परिणतप्रज्ञस्य वाणीमिमाम्” | from the last verse in the *Uttararāmacarita* to justify the assertion “the production of his mature intellect” by “परिणतप्रज्ञस्य वाणीमिमां” | Later writers, including Prof. Laxman and Dr. Belvalkar all follow Dr. Bhandarkar.

Here the reasoning is, because the poet was of mature intellect when he wrote the *Uttararāmacarita*, therefore the *Uttararāmacaritam* was the last work. It will perhaps strike many that when the intellect has matured it is just the time to commence writing. Not to stop writing. There seems to be no bar to the supposition that after his intellect had matured the poet first wrote the *Vīracarita*, then the *Uttararāmacaritam* and last the *Mālatīmādhava*. Maturity of intellect does not necessarily imply old age and decrepitude that compel one to stop all work. *Vṛdhvatva* is of two kinds *Jñānavṛdhvatva* (maturity in knowledge or intellect or genius) and *Vayovṛdhvatva* (maturity in age).

Moreover, before building upon the epithet परिणतप्रज्ञस्य it is necessary to see if *Parīṇataprajñsya*, is by common consent the reading here and if so whether we all agree that it refers to Bhavabhūti and no one else. Regarding that the first point it may be noted that Vīrarāghava reads *Parīṇatām prājñsya* for *Parīṇataprajñsya*. This throws doubt on the authenticity of the reading. The reading it self being thus open to question it is not safe to base on inference upon it.

But for argument's sake, let us accept the reading *Parīṇataprajñsya*. Well, to whom does the epithet refer? Not to Bhavabhūti. Here there is another epithet *Śabdabrahmavidah* to qualify the poet. The poet, whoever he was, was both *Parīṇataprajñsya* (of mature intellect) and *Śabdabrahmavidah* (enlightened in *Brahman* in the shape of speech). But Bhavabhūti was not *Śabdabrahmavidah* he himself says he was not. In the opening verse of the *Uttararāmacarita* prays that he might become enlightened in *Brahman* in the shape of speech – “विन्देम देवतां वाचममृतात्मनः कलाम्” | Hence, neither *Śabdabrahmavidah* nor *Parīṇataprajñsya* in the line “शब्दब्रह्मविदः कवेः परिणतप्रज्ञस्यवाणीमिताम्” can refer ‘to Bhavabhūti.

The reference is to Vālmīki the second half of the stanza as given by Vidyāsāgar is

—

वाल्मीकेः परिभावयन्तुभिनयौर्विन्यस्तरूपां बुधाः ।

शब्दब्रह्मविदः कवेः परिणतप्रज्ञस्य वाणीमिमाम् ॥³⁴

In this the only possible construction is शब्दब्रह्मविदः परिणतप्रज्ञस्य कवेः वाल्मीकेः etc.

It is but fair to note that in the above some read *Tamotām* for *Vālmīkeḥ*. This reading Also occurs in one of Vidyāsāgara’s manuscripts. Sir Bhāndarkar and other were probably misled by this reading.

A little reflection will show that *Tamotām* cannot be the correct reading here. With *Tamotām* the complete verse reads –

पाप्मभ्यश्च पुणातु वर्द्धयतु च श्रेयांसि सेयं कथा

मङ्गल्या च मनोहरा च जगतो मातेव गङ्गेव च ।

तमोतां परिभावयन्त्वभिनयैर्विन्यस्तरूपां बुधाः

शब्दब्रह्मविदः कवेः परिणतप्रज्ञस्य वाणीमिमाम् ॥³⁵

The construction is “...सा इयं कथा । ताम् एताम् ‘इमां वाणी परिभावयन्तु’ | There are two separate sentences here. In the first sentence *Sā* (सा) refers to something well-known (प्रसिद्धार्थ) and absent (परोक्ष). The word कवेः secure the presence (*Sannidhi*) of the absent thing before the vision of our mind. If so, the *Parokṣatā* is gone, and the प्रसिद्धि too being already indicated the ‘*Tām*’ in the second sentence serves no purpose; hence, it is objectionable.

Besides, as the second sentence is an *Anvādeśa* (subsequent assertion) *Etām* there should be *Enām*. Moreover, the simultaneous presence of *Tām*, *Etām*, *Imām* in similar senses is extremely awkward and makes the sense obscure.

On the other hand with reading *Valmīkeḥ* we have to construe – “...सा इयंकथा | इमां वाल्मीकेः वाणी परिभावयन्तु” which leaves no doubt as to the sense intended. The absence of अन्वादेश

³⁴ Ibid. p. xx

³⁵ Ibid. p. xx

in इमाम् is only a question of grammar and is not perhaps altogether in defensible as I have tried to show elsewhere.

In these circumstances there is very likelihood that *Valmiki* is the correct reading here and Sir Bhadarkar's conclusions do not follow. If then my interpretation of the verse “प्राचेतसी मुनिवृषा प्रथमः कवीनाम्” etc. be correct, it is safe to say that *Mālatīmādhava*, not *Uttararāmacarita*, is the last work of the poet.

But one of our poet says- (Bhavabhuti) “व्याख्या बुद्धिबलापेक्षया” (a keen wit can mould the interpretation any way it likes). Some clever critic might perhaps interpret my verse quite differently and thus vitiate my conclusion. Let us therefore see if independent evidence is available.

I. In the *Mālatīmādhava* the style is purer and more attractive than what we find in the *Uttararāmacarita*. Now, the plot of a story depends largely upon inspiration. A happy idea may flash and illustrate the mind at any age. It cannot therefore be said that, of two stories by the same author, the more attractive is the product of a more advanced age. But the style improves with age undoubtedly. Hence the style of *Mālatī-mādhava* is proof that it came after the *Uttararāmacarita*.

II. In the prelude to the *Uttararāmacarita* the Sūtradhāra, after stating the day's business says “एषोऽस्मि कार्यवशादायोध्यकस्तदानीन्तनश्च संवृतः”- “Owing to the requirements of my duties I have not become a citizen of *Ayodhyā* of Rāma's time”

Next follows – “(समन्तादवलोक्य) “भो भो: etc. (Looking round)” Ho! Ho! etc. “Now, who looks round here? Not the Sūtradhāra, but the citizen whom now the Sūtradhāra, represents. This is defective. The prelude should have ended with *Samvṛtaḥ*. The stage – direction should have been something like thus (etc. परिक्रम्य निष्क्रान्तः) | इति प्रस्तावना | ततः प्रविशति कश्चिदायोध्यकः । अयोध्यकः (समन्तादवलोक्य) भोभो: etc.

Referring to the prelude to the *Mālatīmādhava* we find – “सूत्रधारः- वाढम् । एषोऽसि कामान्दकी संवृतः । नटः – अहमप्यवलोकिता (इति परिक्रम्य निष्क्रान्तौ) । प्रस्तावना | ततः परिवृत्य रत्कपट्टिकानेपथ्येकामान्दक्यावलोकिते

प्रविशतः” etc. – “Sūtradhāra – all right. Here I have become *Kāmandaki*. Actor- I too have become *Avalokita*. (Exeunt after going round the stage.) Then enter *Kāmandaki* and *Avalokita* dressed in scarlet”

This is in perfect order. In other words the defect noticed in the *Uttararāmacarita* is corrected in the *Mālatī-mādhava*. This means that the *Mālatīmādhava* comes later than the *Uttararāmacarita*. Had the *Uttararāmacarita* been the later works, the defect avoided in the previous work would have occurred there at all.

III. Sanskrit poet often have in the prelude a kind word or two for the audience, In the *Vīracarita*, Bhavabhūti’s first work we read-

वश्यवाचः कवेः काव्यं सा च रामाश्रया कथा ।

लब्धश्च वाक्यनिष्पन्दनिष्पेषनिकषो जनः ॥³⁶

“ The poet is the master of speech , the theme is the supremely interesting story of Rāma, and the audience is one of connoisseurs of the merits of composition.” Here the poet, a candidate for fame, is conscious of his own merit, is conscious of the merits of his work and has full confidence in the judgment of the audience. His expectations are therefore high.

In the *Uttararāmacarita* there is no mention of the audience; instead we have the cynical remark – “यथा स्त्रीणां तथा वाचां साधुत्वे दुर्जनो जनः” –People are wicked while judging of women and speech.”

The language is that of disappointment. The hope with which the *Vīracarita* was launched have not been realized. The poet is therefore now indifferent to words his audience.

The prelude to the *Mālatīmādhava* is in a different vein.

There the poet is furious and lets the audience have the full measure of his venom of abuse. Says he –

³⁶ Ibid. p. xvii

ये नाम केचिदिह नः प्रथयन्त्यवज्ञा

जानन्ति ते किमपि तान् प्रति नैष यत्नः ।

उत्पत्स्यतेऽतस्ति मम कोऽपि समानधर्मो

कालो ह्ययं निरवर्धिर्विपुला च पृथ्वी ॥³⁷ (*Mālatīmādhava* I. 6.)

“There are certain vile (नाम कुत्सायां क्रोधे च) no – bodies केचित् here who delight in airing their contempt of me. What do they know? I do. They know? I do not write for them. People there are surely elsewhere to appreciate me; even here, there will be a time when people will sing in my praise.” To emphasis the wide difference in birth and training between himself and his critics he belauds his own family, thus-

ते क्षोत्रियास्तत्त्वविनिश्चयाय भूरि श्रुतं शाश्वतमाद्रीयन्ते ।

इष्टाय पुत्राय च कर्मणेऽर्थान् दारानपत्याय तपोऽर्थमायुः ॥³⁸

Now, mark the attitude of the poet towards the audience in the dramas. It is respectful in the *Vīracarita*, indifferent in the *Uttararāmacarita*, abusive in the *MālatīMādhava*. In what order did these changes in the attitude appear? That is our problem for solution.

Well, an author is always expected to be respectful towards his audience. Hence, it is natural to suppose that the *Vīracarita* was the poet’s first work.

Assuming that the *Vīracarita* was a failure and remembering that the poet had a high opinion of himself and his work we respect indifference to words the audience in the next work this means that the *Uttararāmacarita* was the poet’s second attempt.

It seems to say with some amount of certainty that the sequence of the dramas is – *Vīracarita*, *Uttararāmacaritam*, *Mālatīmādhava*.

³⁷Commentator, Jagaddhara, *Mālatīmādhava of Bhavabhūti*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1970. P.6

³⁸ Op.cit.p.

Theses dramas as we learn from the preludes were all staged at the festival of *Kālapriyānātha* (*Kālapriyānāthayātrāyām*) it is usual to make *Kālapriyānātha* as identical with the *Mahākāla* as Ujjain.

Mahākāla is a well know name why should the poet alter it – persistently alter it – in to the unheard of *Kālapriyānātha*? Besides, as shown above, Bhavabhūti was the court – poet of Yasovarman at Kanauj why then should he go to Ujjain to have dramas staged there? That would be on affront to his patron Yasovarman which that king would never forgive the supposition seems absurd it is more natural to take *Kālapriyānātha* as some deity enshrined somewhere in Yasovarman’s own territory. The word *Kālapriyānātha* metros “the guardian deity of *Kālapriyānātha*” again *Kālapriyā* would be happy name for newly founded city it means “the favorite of time (*kāla*)”, i.e., “Imperishable “for it is “time” that destroys cities. It struck me a few days ago that the modern city of Kalpi might be the *Kālapriyā* of Bhavabhūti on referring to Dr. Belvalkar’s translation.

vii. His fame:

As appears from the preludes to his works, Bhavabhūti’s career as a dramatist was one of disappointment. He received no public favor during his life- time. But after his death came a time when people felt attracted to wards his dramas gradually there arose a decent body of admirers. That was the time when the line “कवयः कालिदासाद्या भवभूतिर्महाकविः” – “Kālidāsa etc. were poets but Bhavabhūti was the prince of poet’s used to be quoted and answered by the opposite party with the cry “तरवः पारिजाताद्याः स्नुहि वृक्षी महतरुः” the *Pārijāta* etc. are tress but the cactus is the prince of trees³⁹.”

³⁹ Op.cit p.(xxvi)

At the present time Bhavabhūti enjoys a worldwide fame. Professor Wilson says- “brilliant thoughts occur – the justice and beauty of which are not surpassed in any literature.

“Paṇḍit Vidyāsāgar in remarks – “Noble and lofty sentiments abound in his works in a measure not to be usually seen in those of other poets.” Sir Bhandarkar has- “He shows a just appreciation of the awful beauty and grandeur of Nature enthroned in the solitudes of cleanse forests, cataracts and lofty mountains. He has on equally strong perception of storm grandeur in human character, and is very successful in bringing out deep pathos and tenderness. He is Skillful in detecting beauty even in ordinary things or action and in distinguishing the nice shades of feeling. He is master of style and expression, and his cleverness in adapting his words to the sentiment is unsurpassed.”

All this is very high praise and renders prophetic the poet’s words “उत्पस्यतेऽपि मम कोऽपि समानधर्मा” | these appreciations reach us with reasons assigned for them, whereas we do not know what made his books unpopular during the poet’s lifetime. We shall try see if there is anytime anything even in the poet’s best work with which the critic is likely to be dissatisfied.

The *Uttararāmacaritam* is by common consent supposed to be the masterpiece of Bhavabhūti. There is the current saying “उत्तरे रामचरिते भवभूतिर्विष्यते” - Bhavabhūti excels himself in the later history of Rāma. Are these any defects, any serious defects in the drama? Let us search for the reply.

If we went to see the defect then it can be said that, the very outset it appears that language is heavy; often it is unmusical; in places is repulsive. It jars and grates to such an extent that Govardhanācārya in the verse from the *Ārya –Saptaśtī* quoted before compares Bhavabhūti’s composition a rocky soul in a jesting mood.

भवभूतेः सम्बन्धात् भूधरभूरेव भारती भाति ।

एतत् कृतकारुण्ये किमन्यथा रोदिति ग्रावा ॥⁴⁰

“Coming in contact with Bhavabhūti. Goddess speech has turned in to a rocky soil. Hence it is that when Bhavabhūti’s speech weep the poet’s says that the rock itself weeps” –

We are aware that sometimes this very verse is interpreted as a high tribute to the pathos of Bhavabhūti. Writing the text of the verse does not seem to justify this interpretation.

Govardhana does not like Bhavabhūti’s style and cuts a jokes.

But unattractive of style is a minor – offence in a dramatist like every story –teller, he has other more important ends to meet. The foremost of which is to make the incidents appear natural and consistent with one another. In other words the dramatist has first of all to secure a perfect technique. If the technique is defective all interest in the story is gone; lofty ideals and masterly delineation of character fail to make a permanent impression.

Bhavabhūti’s technique in the *Uttararāmacaritam* leaves much to be desired. I shall cite a few instances, only a few out of a lot.

I. In the prelude the Sūtradhāra says-

एषोऽहं कार्क्यवशादायोयकस्तदानौन्तनश्च संवृतः | (समन्तादवल्लोका)

भो भो...किमिति विश्रान्तचाराणानि चत्वरस्थानानि ?” (*Uttarāramacarita*. Act-1, p.3)

This has already been cited as a defect because the acting begins with the entry of the citizen of *Ayodhyā*. The prelude therefore should have ended immediately before the Sūtradhāra should have left the stage. The *Daśarūpaka* says-

“प्रस्तावनान्ते निर्गच्छेत् ततो वस्तु प्रपञ्चयेत्”- The Sūtradhāra must leave the stage after the prelude and thereafter the staging should commence. Strictly speaking this only offends

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.xxv

against the rules of dramaturgy and is not an instance of defective technique but all the same no orthodox critic would tolerate it.

II. After the above follows – “(प्रविश्य) नटः भाव, प्रषिता हि इतः स्वगृहान् महाजेन लङ्कासमरसुहृदः etc. (Entering) Naṭa – Honoured Sir, the allies in the war at *Laṅkā* have been sent away to their homes by the Mahārājā. Etc. This too is defective; No Naṭa can come in after the prelude has ended.

Again this Naṭa addresses the Sūtradhāra as *Bhāva*. The Sūtradhāra retunes the compliment with *Māriṣa* but *Bhāva*, *Marisa* etc., are terms allowed in the prelude only. Thus here the poet offers us the prelude only Sūtradhāra, Naṭa *Bhāva*, *Māriṣa* etc. are out of place if the prelude continues then “किमिति विश्रान्तचाराणनि चत्वरस्थानानि,” वेदेशिकोऽस्मीति पृच्छामि” etc. are inconsistent.

The dilemma certainly cannot escape the vigilance of the critic.

III. In answer to the Sūtradhāra’s query “किमिति विश्रान्तचाराणनि” etc. why the yards are idle” etc. the Naṭa says “प्रषिता हि इतः etc. the guests have left etc. He also adds-

वशिष्ठाधिष्ठिता देव्यो गता राघवमातरः |

अरुन्धतीं पुरस्कृत्य यज्ञे जामातुराश्रमम् || (*Uttararāmacaritam* Act- 1/1 p. 6)

-“Vaśiṣṭha has gone to Ṛṣyaśṅga’s place taking the queen –mother with him.” This is irrelevant. We can understand music in honor of guest, but Vaśiṣṭha. And the queen mothers can have nothing to do with it. Their presence or absence cannot start or stop music.

The poet wants to keep them away at the moment of Sītā’s exile as explained before and informs the audience accordingly, forgetting, however, that the information is irrelevant at this stage. The technique is faulty here.

IV. Next we are told that Vaśiṣṭha etc. have reached Ṛsyaśṛṅga's place and sent word thought Aṣṭavakra to explain why Rāma and Sītā were not invited Aṣṭavakra says-

“वत्से, कठोरगर्भेति नानीतासि |

वत्सोऽपि रामभद्रस्त्वद्विनोदार्थमेव स्थापितः | (Uttararāmacaritam. Act-1, pp.13)

Child your term is full, so you have not been brought over; Rāma too has been left there to entertain you.”

The fullness of Sītā's term requires explanation. The queen mother left in the morning; Aṣṭavakra reached *Ayodhyā* that very day at about noon; Sītā was delivered of twins. If delivery is to take place in the afternoon the elders will guess it from looks etc. in the morning. Sītā was the darling of the elders, was given & for lost and was recovered unexpectedly after a lapse of 14 years. That was her first conception. In the circumstances the elders cannot think of leaving her on the day of delivery even for a few hours, whereas this absence was to be for 12 years. Any Hindu mother –in-law would unhesitatingly decide to stay on till delivery and then go. This is another defect in the technique.

V. Further, Aṣṭavakra reports that the queen-mother etc. have asked to Rāma to satisfy without delay any *Dohada* (puerperal longings) Sītā might have. It is queer to think of *Badhumata's Dohada* after the expiry of the whole term on the day of delivery. The request was unnatural at this stage.

VI. Rāma's reply to the above is –“क्रियते यद्येषा कथयति” “It will be done if she discloses it.” Rāma doubts by immediately declaring her wish and even uses the word *Dohada* itself without a blush.

The *Dohada* was to roam in the forest once again and to bath in the Bhagirathi; and on the day of delivery Rāma does something stranger. He orders Lakṣmaṇa to take her over to Vālmīki's hermitage, forgetting that her term being full it was not deemed

advisable to take her over to R̥syaśṛṅga's place. Sītā now asks Rāma to accompany her. Rāma retorts that it was cruel of her to think that a request for it was necessary. Yet when getting in to the car she finds Lakṣmaṇa alone. There she does not even ask where Rāma was and why he did not come.

All this is extremely unnatural. The unnaturalness arises from assuming that Sītā's terms was full. It is worthwhile to see if this is at all a possible assumption.

In the *Vīracarita* we find that after having killed Rāvaṇa, Rāma starts that very day for *Ayodhyā* which he reaches in the evening. Coronation follows the next day. Festivities continue for a little over two weeks. Aṣṭāvakra comes on the day the festivities cease. Including that day we see that since her deliverance Sītā has been living with her husband for about a fortnight. Yet the poet say Sītā's terms was full when Aṣṭāvakra came! This is a glaring incongruity which no critic can tolerate.

Bhavabhūti has left us no materials to judge if Sītā has conceived before her abduction by Rāvaṇa, which supposition alone can remove the incongruity here. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki does not allow the supposition as will be obvious on references to the *Sundarakāṇḍa*.

VII. A very curious feature of Aṣṭavakra's visit is that the messages sent through him did not occur to the elders at the time they left *Ayodhyā*. Forgetfulness is pardonable in the queen – mother. Forgetfulness is pardonable in the queen – mother; but why should Vaśiṣṭha forget? He too has been through Aṣṭavakra. this very urgent and important piece of advice of Rāma –

जामातृयज्ञेन वयं निरुद्धास्त्वं बाल एवासि नवश्च राज्यम् ।

युक्त्रं प्रजानामनुरञ्जने स्यास्तस्माद् यशो यत् परम धनं वः ॥ (*Uttararāmacaritam* 1/11 p.13)

“ I am detained here for 12 years. You are a mere boy and only recently crowned. So try to please your subjects by all means. This will make you popular is what your ancestors have all prized.” The nervousness of Vaśiṣṭha about Rāma's abilities as

displayed in this verse makes it imperative for him to add here – “In matters of moment do nothing without consulting me.”

On the other hand, Vaśiṣṭha had no reason to think so lightly of Rāma. He know who Rāma was as is obvious from the verse-

“क्षमायाः स क्षेत्रं गुणमणि गणानामपि खनिः” etc. Quoted before, hence, the advice sounds inconsistent in his mouth.

This much is enough to show the nature of the technique of the *Uttararāmacaritam*. I will, however, add two more instances:-

VIII. In Act II we learn that the elders have been dismissed by Ṛsyaśṛṅga but Arunadhatī has declined to go back to *Ayodhyā* which is now bereft of her beloved Sītā.

The queen – mother approve. Vaśiṣṭha advises them to go and live in Vālmīki’s hermitage why? Vaśiṣṭha had a hermitage of his own. There they could all go and thus avoid going back to *Ayodhyā*. Of course Vaśiṣṭha knew what was going to happen at Vālmīki’s hermitage as described in Act VII and was perhaps actuated by that knowledge to make the suggestion. But the suggestion should have come with all the appearance of naturalness in it, and this it fails to do

IX. In act VII, on hearing a hubbub, Vālmīki explains उक्त्वातलवणो मधुश्वरः प्राप्तः”. Śatrughna is returning from Mathura after having killed Lavaṇa.” The expedition against Lavaṇa had started 12 years before as we know from Act I. We have then to suppose that a regular war has been in progress against Lavaṇa. These 12 years, the Rākṣasa were Defying Rāma’s forces all the while. In that case the *Aśvamedha* becomes an impossibility because the conqueror of the whole world alone has the right to it.

As said these are only illustrative of the defects of technique and do not make on exhaustive list. Modern critics have however learnt to shut their eyes to defects of

technique. We do not know how they learnt it, but the art is there are in a highly improved form, for, not only do they knew wink at defects but actually see beauty in them. Thus Dr. Belvalkar and Professor Lunman⁴¹ speak of the “almost perfect development in form and technique of the *Uttararāmacaritam* and of “the advance which Bhavabhūti had made in his technique” in the first act of the *Uttararāmacaritam*.

Here let me not be misunderstood. My objects in noticing these defects, is only to see if the poet’s detractors those who come out purposely to condemn- got any real hold against him, and thus to explain why the poet was unpopular during his life time. In time, the play of passions and prejudice ceased and admirers arose if I am asked to speak on the ground for admiration, I think little would remain unsaid.

X. Bhavabhūti, The Man:

We often judge a man by his writing, by the trend of his thoughts. This is not safe and often likely to mislead. We shall however apply the test to Bhavabhūti to see what results it yields in the *Uttararāmacaritam* in the verses-

इयं गेहे लक्ष्मीरियममृतवर्तिर्नयनयो-

रसावस्याः स्पर्शो वपुषि बहुलश्चन्दनरसः ।

अयं कण्ठे बाहुः शिशिरमसृणो मौक्तिकसरः

किमस्या न प्रेयो यदि परमसह्यस्तु विरहः ॥⁴²(*Uttararāmacaritam*. 1/38 p. 36)

and.

अद्वैतं सुखदुःखयोरनुगुणं सर्वास्ववस्थासु यद्

विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र जरसा यस्मिन्न हाय्यो रसः ।

⁴¹ Op.cit.p.(xxxii)

⁴²Kale, M. R., *Uttararāmacaritam of Bhavabhūti*, Motilala Banarasidass, Delhi, Reprint 1982, p.36.

कालेनावरणात्ययात् परिणते यत् स्नेहसारे स्थितं

भद्रं प्रेम सुमानुषस्य कथाम्प्येकं हि तत् प्राप्यते ॥⁴³ (*Uttararāmacaritam*. 1/39 p. 36)

The verse “अङ्गादङ्गात् स्नुत इवनिः स्नेहजो देहसारः” etc. quoted before is again a happy delineation of parental affection. Very likely then Bhavabhūti was a loving husband and an affection father. In his description of nature it is the somber and the terrible that usually attract his where others see aesthetic beauty alone. In keeping with this, in the region of mind also, Nature in agony, not in ecstasy, he likes to depict. He prefers the shades keeping away from the sun – shine. The inference ought to be that the poet was a pessimist of a morose temperament this is supported by the absence of the jester in his drama.

From the absence of the jester some argue that the poet had no sense of humour. In the *Uttararāmacaritam* only once he cracks a joke that is when Lakṣmaṇa points out the pictures of the wives of the four brothers skipping over that of his own wife Sītā laughingly asks-

“वत्स, इयमपि अपरा का” – Dear child, who is this other girl?

I think this a bit unfair to the poet’s sense of humour cannot be absent where there is the sense of the ludicrous; and the latter the poet did possess undoubtedly.

1.14 Bhavabhuti and Umbeka (Umveka, Uvveyaka) Identical

The following facts about Umbeka are well established-

1. Umbeka also wrote a commentary on the Slokavartika of Kumarila; his comments on the first verse of the Sloka are –

अत एव वार्तिककारैर्विशुद्धज्ञानदेहायेत्यादिना ग्रन्थादौ महादेवो नमस्कृतः |

2. Umbeka also wrote a commentary on the Bhavanaviveka of Mandanamisra, wherein he quotes the Karika, अन्यदेव हि धात्वर्थसामान्यकर्णात्मकम् | अन्यच्च भावना नाम साध्यत्वेन व्यवस्थितम् || as that

⁴³Ibid.p.36

of his Guru and Bhattapada. This shows that Kumarila Bhatta was the Guru of Umbeka.

3. Kamalasila in his commentary on the Tattvasamgraha quoted Uvveyaka as a writer of Mimamsa (It appears that Uvveyaka is just a variant for Umbeka).

In a very old manuscript of the Malati, the colophons occur-

इति श्रीभट्टकुमारिलशिष्यकृते मालतीमाधवे तृतीयोऽङ्कः,

इति श्रीकुमारिलस्वामीप्रसादप्राप्तवाग्भैभश्रीमदुम्बेकाचार्यविरचिते मालतीमाधवे षष्ठोऽङ्कः |

It is true that only one manuscript so far is known to support the above, but there is no reason to suppose that the writer wrote this out of his own brain.

Again, Citsukhacarya in his Tattvapradipika a writes –

तस्माच्छास्त्रं शब्दविज्ञानसंनिकृष्टे बुद्धिरिति लक्षणमलक्षम् | तथा, आप्तवाक्यं शब्दप्रमाणमिति नैयायिकानामपि –

आप्तोदीरितवाक्येषु मालतीमाधवादिषु |

व्यभिचारान्न तदुक्तमाप्तत्वस्यानिरुक्तितः ||

भूतार्थविषयं वाक्यं प्रयोक्तव्यम् | यथा, अङ्गुल्ये हस्तियूथशतमास्ते, इति | तत्रार्थव्यभिचारः स्फुटः |

It appears from the above that Citsukha regards Bhavabhuti and Umbeka as identical. M. M. Mirashi does not agree to this, on the ground that if Citsukha held that view, he would have written उक्तं च तेनैव and not उक्तं चैतदुम्बेकेन, but surely चैतत् is sufficiently forcible to suggest the same thing as तेनैव.

Umbeka. At the beginning of his Tatparyatika on Slokavartika has verse-

ये नाम केचिदिह नः प्रथयन्त्यवज्ञा जानन्ति ते किमपि तान्प्रति नैष यत्नः |

उत्पत्स्यतेऽस्ति मम कोऽपि समानधर्मा कालो ह्यं निरवधिर्विपुला च पृथ्वी ||

(The verse occurs in the Malatimadhav Act I.)

We regard this evidence as more or less conclusive to prove that Bhavabhuti and Umbeka are one –

1. It is admitted that Umbeka was a very proud man; he was not afraid to criticize Sabara and Kumarilabhatta, his own teacher (probably in some Mss. यथोक्तं गुरूणा is found, as referring to kumarila), and justifies his conduct by quote inform the Mahabharata the verse-

गुरोरप्यवलिप्तस्य कार्याकार्यमजानतः |
उत्पथप्रतिपन्नस्य परित्यागो विधीयते ||

2. It is not unusual for writers to make use of well – known verse of authors of established reute, for their own purpose but it is well – nigh impossible to believe that Umbeka, proud and self – welled that he was, would have condescended to make use of a verse of a contemporary writer.
3. Umbeka’s date is generally accepted as being about the eighth century.
4. The chances are therefore that Bhavabhuti and Umbeka are identical, even if we do not accept Bhavabhuti to be pupil of Kumarilabhatta.⁴⁴

1.15 Bhavabhuti as Viewed by Mammata:⁴⁵

Acarya Mammata, a Kashmir – born rhetorician, composed his famous text on the history of the science of poetry in India, before the 12th century. The text entitled ‘Kavya Prakasa’ has the unique honor it. The exception being only the Paribhasendu- sekhara of Nagesa Bhatta. This gives us an idea of the high honor, in which the text has always been held. Bhavabhuti, who flourished many centuries before, emerged as one of the most read and discussed authors. This truth is proved by the simple fact that the Kavyaprakasa quotes verses from Bhavabhuti’s plays abundantly. The plainly simply written texts neither attracts applauses of connoisseurs nor do they invite scathing diatribes. If the playwright has been an

⁴⁴ Karmarkar, R.D. by Bhavabhuti, Karnataka University, Dharwar1971, p. 7 to 9

⁴⁵ Jha, Dr Naveen Kumar, Bhavabhuti A counterpoint, J. p. publishing house, 2012, p. 195, 196

object of ridicule or scathing critique, it certainly testifies to the worth his plays owned. While composing his plays, Bhavabhuti must have been aware of it that made him to proclaim:

सर्वथा व्यवहर्त्तव्यं कुतो ह्यवचनीयता |
यथा स्त्रीणां तथा वाचां साधुत्वे दुर्जनो नरः ||

Mammata, at some places, quotes his own verses to substantiate his assertions also but mostly, Bhavabhuti's verses have been cited to exemplify the defects in literature. To me, this fault – finding or criticism would have appeared more rightful and appropriate, had it been done by Anandavardhana. Anandavardhana's literary approach amply attests to the assumption. I shall try to take them in under:

In the 4th chapter of the Kavya – prakasa, while explaining the accomplishment of रस (passion) and prior to mentioning the eight passions, Mammata cites a verse from the first act of the Malatimadhavam, mentioning the ensuants alone in the form of the languishing of the body and so forth:

परिमृदितमृणालीम्लानमअङ्ग प्रवृत्तिः
कथमपि परिवारप्रार्थनाभिः क्रियासु |
कलयति च हिंशाशोर्निष्कलङ्कस्य लक्ष्मी
अभिनवकरिदन्तच्छेदकान्तः कपोलः ||

Bharata declares the process of the accomplishment of passion through the conjunction of the excitant, the enchant and the variant. In the example quoted above the alone serves in the said accomplishment.

In the 4th chapter, Mammata declares two varieties of the erotic passion viz. (i) in union (ii) in privation. Erotic in privation is further divided into five kinds longing, separation, jealousy, residence abroad and curse. Exemplifying 'longing' (अभिलाष) a verse from the fifth act of the M.M. has been quoted:

प्रेमाद्राः प्रणयस्पृशः परिचयादुद्गाढरागोदया-

स्तास्ता मुग्धदृशो निसर्गमधुराश्चेष्टा भवेयुर्मयि |
यास्वन्तः करणस्य बाह्यकरणव्यापाररोधी क्षणा-
दाशंसापरिकल्पितास्वपि भवत्यानन्दसान्द्रो लयः ||

A verse from the act of the M. M. is cited to suggest the fragility of the limbs of Malati due to the erotic passion, the nominal affix 'Ka' is employed which signifies pitiableness:

भूयो भूयः सविधनगरीरथ्यया पर्यटन्तं
दृष्ट्वा दृष्ट्वा भवनवलभीतुङ्गवातायनस्था |
साक्षात्कामं नवमिव रतिमालती माधवं यत्
गाढोत्कण्ठा लुलितलुलितैरङ्गकैस्ताम्यतीति ||

In the eight chapter of the Kavya – Prakasa, the first verse of the M.M. is quoted to suggest the fact that figure (stringed simile) adorns the passion through the expressed meaning:

मनोरोगस्तीव्रो विषमिव विसर्पत्यविरतं
प्रमाथी निर्धूमो ज्वलति विधुतः पावकः इव ||

Sanskrit writers are both modest and arrogant. This nature of his also visible in his works. Bhavabhuti is also one of these. Without caring about his critics, he does what he thinks and tells the critics in Malatimadhava that “This is not for you.” This shows the ego of the artist Bhavabhuti. Bhavabhutis ego, who calls himself Brahma in the Uttararamacarita, “Vani- Saraswati to me ‘Vashya, is different from Kalidasa’s modest sentence like – मन्दः कवियज्ञः प्रार्थी | and indicates a different mood of the poet. This does not mean that the poet is disrespectful. It can only be said that his confidence has intensified with the criticism of the critics. Without suffering from modesty, Bhavabhuti has spoken clearly about himself in the prologues of his plays. He calls himself पदवाक्यप्रामाण्यः | the constitution of his own drama by himself,

the constitution of the most सरसरमणीयता संविधानकस्य | Malatimadhava concludes in the last verse he gives himself a certificate and says: अस्ति वा कुतश्चित्तदेवभूतं विचित्ररमणीययोज्ज्वलं प्रकरणम् | By separating from Valmiki, Bhavabhuti brings such a happy ending to his play. For that there have been many criticisms on Bhavabhuti. The reason is that it is a departure from the famous Ramakatha, so may not like it.

In the Bhavabhuti drama the poet himself is in the background and conveys his ideas through the characters, in the Uttararamacarita Vasanti, Janka and Kausalya criticize Rama for abandoning Sita while Bhagirathi and Arundhati defend Rama. Arguments of commentators:

Criticism of Vasanti: The forest deity Vasanti comes in the third issue. She is the goddess of Janasthan and also the beloved friend of Sit. The thought of Sita, Queen of Ayodhya being abandoned by Rama and consequently becoming a beast of burden in a forest full of wild animals, makes him shudder. Vasanti holds Rama responsible for this situation of Sita. His displeasure is evident in his behavior towards Rama. Instead of calling Rama रामभद्र, he uses the words राजा, महाराज etc. for him and asks only for the expertise of Lakshmana. The following details are found for the impropriety of Sita tyaga in Vasanti's view

1. According to Vasanti, Sityaga is a very terrible thing which is worse than any other terrible event.
2. Rama is Sita. Has given he used to say sweet words like त्वं जीवितं त्वमसि मे हृदयं द्वितीयं...etc. to Rama Sita. Rama promised to abandon Sita who became faithful to this. Have betrayed.

Janaka is the father of King Sita. As soon as he gets the news of Devyajanasambhava Sita's abandonment by Rama, he feels desperate. In order to get out of that feeling, he becomes a hermit. In spite of his honest efforts to remove the impulse of grief,

twelve years pass, and his grief has not diminished. He clearly shows displeasure towards this behavior of Rama. Kausalya is called the mother of Prajapalak (Rama). He has the following reasons for considering Rama's work inappropriate.

1. Rama's act of Sityaga is highly humiliating and extremely intolerable. Also, in this act, Sita and Bhagavati Vasudha are also grossly insulted. How Prithvi, Sita's Mother could bear it is a matter that cannot be understood.

2. The matter of Sityaga is shameful for everyone. This terrible incident is never to be forgotten.

3. Janaka, who went to Valmiki's Ashram, did not even match the Vevvan of Kausalya of there. He feels that the sight of Rama's relatives who behave harshly becomes painful like salt on the surface.

4. Rama has raised false suspicions about the character of the daughter of the earth by taking the censure of the people as a target. People who think unholy for the holy Sita are called Duratmas and the step of renunciation of Sita is thoughtless and hasty.

5. People did not believe in the story of Sita's ordeal in distant Lanka, but Rama had faith. And who and how is the fire that sanctifies my daughter' Sita is the daughter of the earth and is pure by birth. By abandoning Sita, Rama has insulted everyone. Kaushalya's hurt feelings:

Rama's rejection of Kaushalya, who believes that Sita is her daughter –in-law but also Duhita's daughter, does not constitute. He doesn't like to enter Ayodhya, the palace without Sita, so he goes to Valmiki's Ashrama with Kulguru Vasistha. Meeting Rama is an indirect criticism of Rama's move.

Sita's mother Prithvi also shows displeasure towards Rama. He feels that रामभद्र is behaving like a child. He did not consider Sita's grasped hand, Mother Earth, Janaka, Agni himself, Sita's loyalty or his own progeny growing in her womb as standards. He also says that he himself endured Sita's abode among demons, but this second

renunciation is extremely unbearable. Aryaputra of Sita in Garbhanataka, when ह्य आर्यपुत्र, स्मारितास्मि says, Prithvi says bitterly as if threatening him,' Aryaputra, who are you? आ: कस्तवार्यपुत्र: | through the above characters, the playwright has presented a tone of disapproval against Rama's decision. They believe that the step taken by Rama as a king entertain the people was completely inappropriate for Sita.

R. D. Karmarkār has said in his book Bhavabhūti- Bhavabhūti was, no doubt, a very learned man, and what is more, he delights in parading his knowledge, wherever possible. A Puritan by conviction, he holds firm views about the orthodox tenets of the Śāstras, and is well grounded in the various lore's. Thus-

1. Bred and brought up in family of pious Brāhmaṇa ancestors who had performed even the *Vājapeya* Sacrifice, Bhavabhūti believes in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* cult of sacrifices with heaven as its goal, and in the daily observance of fire-worship by the house- holders. He believes in the efficacy of Tapas and performance of vows like *Paraka*, *Santāpana*. He uses the expression *Arthavāda* in *Uttara* I, which is frequently used in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* texts, and in *Mahāvīra* I, 'Ambuni majjantyalabuni gravanah plavante,' which is probably borrowed from the *Śābarabhāṣya* on the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*.

2. He was well versed in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣad*'s, *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* systems of philosophy. He gives the impression of having studied the *Yogaśāstra* and Tantra, literature of the *Śaiva* sects well. He uses the expression *Vivarta* (a peculiar concept in the *Vedanta* philosophy) twice in the *Uttara*. It is, however, doubtful whether the word denotes there the doctrine of *Mayā* expounded later by Śaṅkarācārya. There is constant reference to the three qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* (expounded in the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy) in the three plays.

1. Bhavabhūti's acquaintance with the *Nyāyasūtras* is clearly seen in *Mālatī* V, where the expression, *Samskāra*, *Pratyaya*, *Smṛti* etc. are used in their technical sense. According to one commentator, the verse 'Lileva' etc., refers to the *Sāṃkhya*, *Yogācāra*, *Sautrāntikā*, *Tridaṇḍī*, *Patañjali*, *Naiyāyika* and *Vijānavāda* doctrines. The expression निगृहीतोऽसि in *Uttara* IV, reminds one of 'Nigrahassthāna' in the *Nyāya* philosophy.

2. *Kāmasūtra* is actually quoted (*Malati* VII) and the remedies resorted to by Kāmandaki to prepare the minds of *Mālatī* and *Madayantikā* for a stolen marriage follow closely the lines laid down in the *Kāmasūtras*.

3. The very name Kāmandaki. The schemes and strategy of Mālyavat in *Mahāvira* (act IV) are in accordance with the *Arthaśāstra* of Cāṇakya, and such other works.

4. The poet must have been also closely acquainted with the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya (from which several incidents in *Mālatī* are borrowed) and the *Purāṇa* literature.

5. He was well-versed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* story; curiously enough, the characters in the Mahabharata are not much in evidence.

6. He makes use of a large number of *Alamkāras* in his plays and is fully conversant with Rhetoric's

7. He uses a large number of meters and knows the science of Prosody very well. He uses the longest *Daṇḍaka* meter (54 letters in a quarter) with great effect in describing the goddess *Cāmuṇḍa* in *Mālatī* (Act V).

8. He is the only Sanskrit poet who gives two verse which read the same in Sanskrit as well as Prakrit. He uses many an out of the way words and expression, thus showing that he commands an extensive vocabulary. He has also introduced situations where the same verse or expression is addressed by two, three or even

more characters to two different persons, or to one and the same person similarly a verse is split up into different portions that are uttered by different people.

9. The accurate description of Padmāvati (*Mālatīmādhava*. Act IX), the *Daṇḍaka* region (*Mahāvīracaritam* and *Uttararāmacarita*), rivers etc., points out to the poet's own impressions in these matters.⁴⁶

1.16 Bhavabhūti's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature and Indian Culture:

Karmarkar R.D. has said in his book Bhavabhūti that-

Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti can be regarded as true representatives who have contributed materially to make what Indian culture stands for. As is well known, Indian and tradition attach great importance to the solidarity of the family and harmonious relations between the members of the family. Bhavabhūti appears to be just more outspoken in his views, than Kālidāsa. Bhavabhūti has dealt with the love of husband and wife in a comprehensive manner and holds fixed view on the matter which he is never tired of repeating: -

1. True love must begin as 'Love at first sight'.
2. It must not be influenced by extraneous considerations.
3. It must be reciprocal, and must lead to the union of the hearts.
4. It may be consolidated by conversation, interview and advice of the elders.
5. The marriage must secure the sanction of the parents and elders.

Bhavabhūti thus believes (in company with the great poets all over) that marriages are made in heaven, and are to be lived on the earth, with the good will of the elders and relatives.

⁴⁶Karmarkar R. D., Bhavabhūti, Karnatak University, Dharwar, extension Lectures Publication Series -6, 1971. P. no. 68 to 71.

He further emphasises that the happiness of a married couple is incomplete unless there are children. In memorable words, he says that the hearts of husband and wife. In drawing the character of Sītā as an ideal woman, Bhavabhūti shows how an ideal wife completely subordinates herself to the will of her husband even in the most adverse circumstances.

Bhavabhūti points out that reverence to the elders and the honor of the family, should be always kept in mind in any walk of life. Cast in a Puritan mould that he was, Bhavabhūti enjoins on all that the daily duties prescribed by the *Śāstras* should be performed without question, and holds similar views on the duties and feelings of women and wives.

Mālatī says (Act II) that she regards her duty to her parents as the foremost to require her attention. Bhavabhūti, no doubt, believes that the solidarity of the family is the most essential thing to be guarded by all at all costs. Even the ascetic lady Kāmandaki exerts her utmost towards this end.

In a well – known verse, Bhavabhūti, perhaps drawing upon his personal experience, describes how ideal relation could be established between the parents of the bride and the bride – groom.

Sanskrit poets are usually charged by modern critics with displaying a very narrow out – look and harping upon the same worn out topics, and showing no concern for the great injustice to the common man at the hands of the privileged classes. Such a criticism can be levelled against almost all the old classical writers, both Eastern and Western. It must not be forgotten that one cannot dictate to anyone what ideology he should follow. A poet is bound to be influenced by the times in which he lives and he is within his rights to select what patriarchal form of society and tried their utmost to see that it contributed to the well-being of the society as a whole. They do not refer to the miseries of the plebeians prominently, or have no suggestions to make for the material prosperity of the masses, but their answer probably would be

that these were matters mainly for the King and his officers to consider, and that their chief concern was with ‘moral armament.’ Besides, a conventional Sanskrit drama gives hardly any scope for a discussion of such matters.

Bhavabhūti has succeeded in placing before his readers a faithful and complete picture of a happy family living harmoniously, and equally capable of resisting adverse Fate, fortified by an undying faith in true love. And the poet has done this in poetic language of a high order. According to Sanskrit critics, Bhavabhūti writes in the *Gauḍī* style which allows the use of long compounds adding to the dignity of a passage, while the *Vaidarbhī* style (of which Kālidāsa is the chief exponent) advocates the use of simple and easy expressions. It would be seen from a careful scrutiny of Bhavabhūti’s works that Bhavabhūti has successfully used both the *Vaidarbhī* and *Gauḍī* styles (a mixture of these two is sometimes called Pāñcālī) and has displayed a remarkable judgment in using appropriate meters in describing the various sentiments. Thus while describing the *Vīra* or *Bhayānaka* or *Bībhatsa* sentiment, he writes in the *Gauḍī* style; but the *Vaidarbhī* style is rightly resorted to in the description of the *Śṛṅgāra* (especially love – in – separation) and the *Karuṇa* sentiments. It is needless to point out such passages; the reader can easily spot them out; many of them can rival the best poetic passages found in Kālidāsa’s works.

Bhavabhūti gives evidence of his love for nature in all its aspects. The description of the *Daṇḍakāraṇya*, and the beasts, rivers, etc., therein shows a very close and sympathetic observation of that region on the part of the poet. (See for instance, the description of holy confluences of the Godavari, एते ते कुहरेषु...पुण्याः सरित्संगमाः *Uttararāmacaritam* II, or that of the bear’s दधति कुहरभाजां etc.) The appeal of the softer beauties of nature is exquisitely described in the briefest possible manner in *Uttararāmacarita*. II, where Rāma says- त्वया सह निवत्स्यामि वनेषु मधुगन्धिषु । इतीहारमते चासौ स्नेहस्तस्याश्च तादृश । and so forth. The dictum – sound must echo to the sense is assiduously

respected in the description of the ghosts in the cemetery, and the activities Kapālikās in *Mahāvīracaritam* V.

That Bhavabhūti has not succeeded as much as he claims as a dramatist may be granted, but it is evident that he gives ample proof that he can evolve poetic language. Bhavabhūti is very proud of his poetic powers, and ready to assert himself, and he has left a permanent impression upon Indian culture as a whole, by his delineation of family life and religious favor, which alone can ensure the right kind of progress and uplift of society as a whole.

1.17 Conclusion:

Seeing the excellent poetry of Bhavabhūti and the dominance of his speech, the shortcomings noted above of Bhavabhūti are nowhere to be found in its merits and the idol of Bhavabhūti, which fascinates and impresses the connoisseurs of all the three periods, remains with an elevated head.
