

Chapter – 3

Critical Study of Prahasana

00. Introduction: - In the west, the comedy arose before the classical age in Greek, which was performed at the city of Dionysia, the home of dramatic theatre of Athenian. By the end of fifth century B.C., the comedy in Greek got the pre-eminence. The new age of comedy was started towards the end of the fourth century B.C. It is known the comedy was discovered through Homer's epics, such as 'Dios Apate' of The Iliad. It has given some mythological comics. Homer's famous paint on gods like 'The Odyssey' was producing comedy. The paintings on vases were providing some evidences about the comic characters like cooks, angry old man, drunken old women and sneaky slaves in the classical age. However, comedy, in the sense of a humorous drama, can be traced back no further than the sixth century BC. The word comedy or 'komoidia' means literally in Greek "party (kom) song (-oid-)". It was revealed where partiers sang songs, in which they teased, mocked and made fools of spectators or public figures.

So the comic drama was formulated in Greek through the opening monologue, the Parodos (the opening choral song), the alternating rhythm of episode and chorus and the agon (where two characters debating on some issue). Then comedy also inverted features common in tragedy. Noble characters, for instance, were made base, sacred odes became bawdy ballads and solemn dances turned into lascivious strip-teases, like the infamous koadax dance (literally, 'the rope'). Some old Athenian comedies are: Aristophanes' The clouds, Knights, Frogs, Dionysus, Birds, Lydians, Chionides' Beggars, Heroes, Persians.

Menander was the last great Athenian dramatist of this genre. His dramas touched every human being. He was one of the greatest vehicles ever for reflecting upon life and society (Google search, Wikipedia, Dramen).

In India, the concept of comedy (*hāsyā*) is very different from that of the west. Bharata considers that comedy (*hāsyā*) derived from erotic (*śṛṅgāra*) only (*śṛṅgārāddhi*

bhaveddhāsyā, - Nāṭyaśāstra.VI. 40). However, Abhinava Gupta states that Comedy (*hāsyā*) can be developed from any type of sentiments like erotic (*śṛṅgāra*), tragedy (*karuṇā*), furious (*raudra*), marvellous (*adbhuta*), heroic (*vīra*), terrible (*bhayānaka*), disgusting (*bībhatsa*), (*etena sarve rasāḥ hāsyē antarhitāḥ iti darśitam*, Nāṭyaśāstra., Published by Sampurnananda University, Vol. 1, p. 297). Bhoja also objects to Bharata's view that '*hāsyā*' is derived from *śṛṅgāra* only. He states that it can also be derived from any other sentiments (Śṛṅgāraprakāśa, XI.72). In the Nāṭyaśāstra, Bharata has defined laughter (*hāsyā*) as the sentiment born out of the permanent or dominant mood called mirth (*hāsa*), (*hāsyō nāma hāsthāyibhāvātmaka* - Nāṭyaśāstra.VI.62).

The comedy (*prahasana*) is derived from the root '*has*'. Therefore, the purpose of Prahāsana is to burst into laughter. Thus, the laughter (*hāsyā*) sentiment constitutes the main sentiment in it. In fact, Prahāsana is the oldest form of drama and existed even before Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. The Ṛgveda refers to the Prahāsana through the conversation between Indra and his wife Indrānī from tenth *mandala* (X.86). The conversation may have given the perfect shape to the Prahāsana. From the statement of Bharata, it is clear that Prahāsana is the oldest stage development and most popular in the history of Sanskrit drama. (*sarvalokaprahasanairbādhante hāsyasamśrayaiḥ* - Nāṭyaśāstra, XXXVI. 28).

0. Aim: - This chapter on the Prahāsana with special reference to Mattavilāsa, by Mahendravarman, explains as to how it follows the rules of Bharata and Dhanañjaya. Further, the article shall justify as to how Mattavilāsa is a Prahāsana.

01. The Author – The author of the Mattavilāsaprahāsana is king Mahendravarman. He was the Pallava king ruling Kāñcī, in 610 century A.D., defeating brave rivals like Bāṇas. He succeeded his father Simhaviṣṇu and ruled the southern India for many years.

He was a gifted poet. His love for literature was the reason for composing the Prahāsana, even with hectic political routine. His excellent knowledge of poetry and command over Sanskrit and Prakrit were added advantages for composing the Prahāsana. He was known for his work, Mattavilāsa Prahāsana in the history of Sanskrit

literature.

02. Summary of the play – The Mattavilāsa Prahāsana is a one-act drama. The drama starts with the entry of a Kāpālika, by name Satyasoma, with his fiancée, Devasomā. Both Satyasoma and Devasomā are heavily drunk and in that drunken state, the Kāpālika forgets the name of his companion and calls her Somadevā. Devasomā became enraged for the ‘*gotraskhalana*’. Satyasoma asks for pardon and blames his own drunkenness for the mistake and vows to stop drinking. But Devasomā pleads with him not to stop drinking which she considers ‘sacred’. The Kāpālika agrees and after praising his own sect, which permits drinking and attacking the Buddhism, he wishes to have another spell of drinking. They go to a nearby liquor shop, which is compared to a sacrificial hall. The Kāpālika notices that his begging bowl is missing. He also laments that the loss of his bowl may lead to the banishment from his religious order. The Kāpālika fears that it might have been stolen either by a dog or by a Buddhist monk, since it contained a piece of roasted meat.

Meanwhile, a Buddhist monk enters, cursing the elderly monks of his order for prohibiting wine and women. He believes that in the beginning, there were portions in the sacred texts, which permitted these things and that the old monks, have deliberately suppressed them from the younger monks. He vows to trace the original text and thus render yeoman service to his religion. The sight of this monk, hiding something inside of his cloth, arouses the suspicion of the Kāpālika. He demands the monk to show the hidden object. The *bhikṣu* argues that it is his own begging bowl but the Kāpālika charges him with stealing of his bowl. In the fight that ensues between the Kāpālika and the monk, his companion Devasomā is knocked down by the sturdy Buddhist monk. At this stage, a Pāśupata enters, who offers to mediate between them. The *bhikṣu* then shows up his bowl, which is red in colour. But the Kāpālika says that the original black colour of his own bowl might have been turned red by the sticky reddish robe of the Buddhist monk.

At this stage, a mad man comes carrying a bowl, which he had snatched from a

dog. The Kāpālika recognizes it to be his own bowl. He tries to snatch it away from the mad man who refuses to budge. Being called an ‘*unmattaka*’ the mad man requests the Kāpālika to find another ‘*unmattaka*’ whom he is anxious to meet and take the bowl as free for his services. The Kāpālika directs the lunatic to look for the ‘*unmattaka*’ behind a wall and the lunatic hurries behind, leaving the bowl. The Kāpālika feels elated at the recovery of his bowl. Devasomā remarks that her lover shines in the company of his bowl like the evening in conjunction with the moon. The play ends with the conventional ‘Bharatavākya’. (The summary has been taken from ‘Prahasana in Sanskrit literature’ by S. Ramaratnam, 1987).

03. Rules of the Nāṭyaśāstra - In the Nāṭyaśāstra (XX. 8-9, 99-104, XXI.44), Bharata defines that 1) Prahasana is of two varieties, i.e. pure (*śuddha*) and mixed (*samkīrṇa*). 2) The pure type should have the characters like Mendicants, Sages, Brahmins and others. Their conversation should be humorous, which is usually used by low and mean persons. 3) The mocking words can be used in abundance, but there should be proper language and behavior. It should have planned and purposeful plot full of humour and emotion. 4) The mixed type should have the characters like courtesans, paramour, eunuch, lecher, rogue and harlots. They should be recognized from their flashy and colourful costume. Their activities are also bizarre and courageous. 5) One could use the things related to the worldly behavior and connection with fraud in the Prahasana, where the rogue and parasite engage in quarrel. 6) In Prahasana, a poet can use ancillaries of the *vīthī* as per requirement. 7) The Prahasana should be composed without using gay style (*kaiśikīvr̥tti*). 8) The Prahasana should have two junctures, i.e. Opening (*mukha*) and Conclusion (*nirvahaṇa*) and also verbal style (*bhāratīvr̥tti*).

04. Rules of the Daśarūpaka: - In Daśarūpaka (III.54-56), Dhanañjaya states that 1) Farce (*prahasana*) is similar with Bhāṇa (*tadvat*) in plot, juncture, gentle dance, act and style should contain is of three types, i.e. regular (*śuddha*), modified (*vikṛta*) and mixed (*samkīrṇa*). 2) The regular one contains heretics (*pāṣaṇḍī*), Brahmins (*vipra*), servants (*cēta*), serving maid (*ceṭī*) and parasites (*viṭa*). 3) It should be full of humour

and with appropriate costume and language. 4) The modified type of Prahāsana contains eunuchs, chamberlains and ascetics. 5) It should have the language and dress like those of desired persons. 6) The mixed Prahāsana follows some characteristics of the *vīthī* and is having the characters like rogues etc. 7) The Prahāsana should include the six fold of comic sentiment.

05. Difference between the rules of the Nāṭyaśāstra and those of the Daśarūpaka: - 1) Bharata states Prahāsana to be only of two types (*śuddha* and *saṁkīrṇa*) but Dhanañjaya states it to be of three types adding modified (*vikṛta*) with pure (*śuddha*) and mixed (*saṁkīrṇa*).

2) Bharata includes Viṭa and servant like characters in the mixed type of Prahāsana, whereas Dhanañjaya includes them in pure type of Prahāsana. Therefore, Dhanañjaya states that the mixed should have the ancillaries of Vīthī and filled with rouges. Bharata states that Bhāratīvr̥tti should be implemented in the Prahāsana; however, Dhanañjaya completes this saying ‘*tadvat*’, means Prahāsana should follow Bhāṇa in plot, juncture, act, style and gentle dance, but Bharata did not mention about the act and gentle dance. 3) Bharata has not mentioned the six type of comic sentiments, stated by Dhanañjaya, which are to be implemented in the Prahāsana. 4) Dhanañjaya states that *vīthyāṅgas* should be implemented in the mixed type of Prahāsana, but Bharata states that they should be implemented only in the suitable cases.

06. Rules followed by the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana – 1) The Mattavilāsa Prahāsana of Mahendravarman is a pure (*śuddha*) type of Prahāsana.

2) Bharata accepts that the pure (*śuddha*) type of Prahāsana should have the characters like Brahmin, sages and mendicants. However, Dhanañjaya states that ascetics, eunuchs and chamberlains should be in the modified (*vikṛta*) type of Prahāsana. The Mattavilāsa Prahāsana contains the characters like mendicants (Kāpālīka), Buddhist monk (Nāgasena) and mad man (Unmattaka), therefore, according to Bharata, the Mattavilāsa is a pure type of Prahāsana and according to Dhanañjaya, it is a modified type of Prahāsana. 3) In the pure (*śuddha*) type of Prahāsana, the language and behavior should not be vulgar and

should be full of humour. The Mattavilāsa Prahāsana is a descent type of Prahāsana by Mahendraverman. It is the story of Kāñchi Street. The story involves both Buddhist and Śaivite characters. There is no vulgarity in its language and behavior. It is a simple comedy. 4) The plot of the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana describes deceits and arrogant deeds such as the involvement of a mad man and the interference of another man. 5) The plot draws from the worldly affairs such as quarrel for a bowl by two mendicants. Both Bharata and Dhanañjaya accept the use of *vīthyaṅgas* in Prahāsana. However, their opinions are different. Dhanañjaya states that the *vīthyaṅgas* should be used for mixed (*samkīrṇa*) type of Prahāsana; but Bharata states that it can be used in any type of Prahāsana as per necessity. The *vīthyaṅgas* are thirteen in number, i.e., (1) Speech with a hidden meaning (*udghātyaka*), (2) Unexpected turn (*avalagitam*), (3) Unworthy Praise (*prapañca*), (4) Triple explanation (*trigatam*), (5) Deception (*chalam*), (6) Witty retort (*vākkelī*), (7) Out-vying (*adhibalam*), (8) Abrupt remark (*gaṇḍam*), (9) Re-interpretation (*avasyandita*), (10) Riddle (*nālikā*), (11) Incoherent talk (*asatpralāpa*), (12) Humorous speech (*vyāhāra*), (13) Euphemism (*mṛdavam*). The Mattavilāsa Prahāsana has used five types of *vīthyaṅgas* like *prapañca*, *asatpralāpa*, *mṛdavam*, *avalagitam* and *vākkelī*.

Unworthy praise (*prapañca*) – It has applied unworthy praise, as Kāpālika, Satyasoma, gives compliment to his companion Devasomā that she has gained a rare elegance because of her austerities. ‘*priye devasome! satyametat, tapasā kāmarūpatā.....rūpātīśayaḥ kṣaṇāt pratipannaḥ*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.38).

Incoherent talk (*asatpralāpa*) – It has applied incoherent talk, in the form of madman speaking that the ocean sitting on the back of a domestic pig, reached up to the sky, crushed Rāvaṇa and seized the sea monster ‘*grāmasūkaramāruhya gaganamutpatitena.....ghaṭotkaca iva* (Mattavilāsa, Unni, pp.55-6).’

Euphemism (*mṛdavam*) – It has applied euphemism, as Kāpālika criticizes about the practice of the Buddhist monk and says to Devasomā that these wrong doers are tormenting and forcing junior fellows to practice celibacy, even as they are putting restrictions on their general behavior. ‘*nakhalu te pāpāprāṇinaḥ parikleśayanti*

(Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.40).’

Coincidence (*avalagitam*) – It has applied coincident as Kāpālika knows that their begging bowl is lost and was in deep thought that it may have been taken by the street dog or by any Buddhist monk. At the same time, a Buddhist monk enters hiding something under the upper cloth, which creates suspicion in the mind of Kāpālika and Devasomā. ‘*priye! tarkayāmi śūlyamāmsagarbhatvācchunā vā śākyabhikṣuṇā veti*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.43).’

Humorous conversation (*vākkeli*) – It applies humorous conversation, as the conversation between Kāpālika and Śākyabhikṣu creates a good humour, *vākkeli* (Mattavilāsa, Unni, pp.45-54).

In addition to these *vīhyaṅgas*, the Mattavilāsa betrays the Prahāsana elements; i.e. *upapatti* and *vyāhāra*. The best example is the claim of Kapālika that Buddhists have compiled their scriptures stealing from the Vedānta and the Mahābhārata and the humorous conversation between Kapālika, Śākyabhikṣu and Devasomā. Dhanañjaya advocates to use gentle dance in Prahāsana as in Bhāṇa, whereas Bharata is silent, but in Mattavilāsa Prahāsana it is just reflected.

07. Characters of the drama – In the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, there are five characters, i.e. Sūtradhara (the stage manager), Naṭī (an actor and wife of the stage manager), Kāpālika (Satyasoma, a mendicant belonging to the Śaivīte sect), Devasomā (a wench), Śākyabhikṣu (Nāgasena) a Buddhist mendicant and Pāśupata (Babhrukaḷpa) a Śaivīte belonging to another order and Unmattaka (a madman or lunatic).

Sūtradhāra – The stage manager is glad to introduce the play since it serves to pacify his senior wife angered by his devotion to his younger wife.

Naṭī – The actress is the wife of Sūtradhāra who resents the partiality of her husband to her co-wife.

Kāpālika – The Kāpālika Satyasoma is the principal character in the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana and a lower type of hero who lives near the Ekāmrānātha temple in Kāñcī. He is the person, who loves food and drinks. He thinks liquorshop is the sacrificial place for

people. He believes in his religion and does not like the Buddhists and always criticizes them. He thinks that these Buddhists have stolen the portions of the Mahābhārata and the Upaniṣads and made them their own texts. He describes Kāñcī artistically and thinks that the Kāpālikas should have their begging bowls, which are the signs of Kāpālika. The recovery of *kapāla* makes him believe that he has regained his Kāpālika sect. He believes that bowl is everything for him and for his lord Śiva. It proves by his sentence that “*bhagavatprasādāt punarapi Kapālī śamvṛttaḥ*”. (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.58).

Devasomā – Devasomā is a humorous character and the heroine of the play. She belongs to the Śaivite order but shifts her alliance to the members of different sects, as she pleases. She drinks liquor up to her satisfaction. She thinks that the city of Kāñcī is as sweet as liquor “*bhagavan, bhagavatī vāruṇī iva anavagīta-madhurā kāñcī*.” (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.41). She has full faith in the religion of her companion. She is clever and quarrelsome. She does not like the Buddhist monks and calls them ‘*dāsyāḥ putra*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.49). She does not believe in the court matters with the Buddhist monk, because they bribe the Judge (*eṣa punarane kavihārasamadhi gatavittasañcayo.....mukhāni pūrayitum pārayati*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.54).

Śākyabhikṣu - Buddhists were corrupt in the period of Mahendravarman. They did not know good manners. Nāgasena is the soft-spoken Buddhist but likes to have non-vegetarian food. He is angry with the elderly Buddhist monks, because they have prohibited wine and women in the religion. He has weakness for women. When he sees Devasomā, the word immediately comes out of his tongue that ‘*aho lalitarūpā upāsikā*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.46)’. He is eager to drink wine offered but hesitates because somebody may see. He has good knowledge of his religious text.

Pāśupata – He is a different type of Śaivite. Now he is not interested in the liquor or women. He is in a mood of revenge with Kāpālika, because, he took away his ladylove by force. ‘*tadidānīm pratihastiprotsāhanena śatrupakṣam dhvaṁsayāmi*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.50).

Unmattaka – Unmattaka is a mad man roaming in the street of Kāñcī. He completes the drama by returning the begging bowl of Kāpālika. The author has given him brilliant words and his character feels like a real madman moving. His words are like “*unmatto duṣṭakukkura īdr̥ṣena nāma sūratvena mayā sahāpi roṣam karoṣi, grāmasūkaramāruhya gaganamutpatitena sāgareṇa prabhañjya rāvaṇam balād gṛhītaḥ śakrasutastimiṅgilaḥ.*”(Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.55).

08. The Style (Vṛtti) in the Mattavilāsa – According to Bharata and Dhanañjaya, verbal style (*bhāratāvṛtti*) should be applied to a Prahāsana. The verbal style is divided into four kinds; i.e. propitiation (*prarocanā*), pre-face (*āmukha*), garlands (*vīthī*) and farce (*prahasana*). Though Bharata states that verbal style is based on humour, which comes through the language and costume, it has also two parts based on comic, i.e. Prahāsana and ancillaries of *vīthī*. These ancillaries of *vīthī* are used in the comic plots like Prahāsana, Bhāṇa. In general, the verbal style should be used in the prologue of every drama; and hence prologue should include at least one of the five divisions of the element called *āmukha*, i.e. abrupt dialogue (*udghātyaka*), story caught up (*kathodghāta*), excess of representation (*prayogātīśaya*), entrance (*pravṛttaka*) and continuance (*avalagita*). In the Mattavilāsa, excess of representation (*prayogātīśaya*) is applied, because, in excess of representation, the character enters through the observation of the stage-manager. Here Kāpālika enters through the observation of the stage-manager with his female friend Devasomā.

09. Sentiments in the Mattavilāsa – Laughter (*hāsya*) is the main sentiment in the Prahāsana. According to Bharata, laughter (*hāsya*) is the very essence of its permanent state, laugh (*hāsa*), (*hāsyo nāma hāsasthāyibhāvātmakeḥ* - Nāṭyaśāstra.VI, Kedarnath, p.97). Bharata further states that the laughter is of two types; i.e. self-centered (*ātmastha*) and centered in others (*parastha*), (Nāṭyaśāstra.VI. Kedarnath, p.97).

Again, Bharata states that the laughter sentiment is of six kinds, i.e. gentle smile (*smitam*), smile (*hasitam*), gentle laughter (*vihāsitam*), deriding laughter (*uphasitam*),

indecent laughter (*aphasitam*) and reeling laughter (*atihasantam*), (Nāṭyaśāstra.VI.53).

Dhanañjaya states that all these six types of laughter are employed in the Prahāsana, '*rasastu bhūyasā kāryaḥ ṣaḍvidho hāsya eva tu* (Daśarūpaka.III.56)'.

Mahendrarvarman's Mattavilāsa Prahāsana has applied some gentle laughter (*vihasitam*) through the characters like Kāpālīka, Devasomā, Buddhist monk and Unmattaka or mad man. For instance, when intoxicated, Devasomā begs support of Kāpālīka; but when he tries to support her, he himself falls down and says 'Dear Devasomā! Why are you angry with me? You distance yourself when I try to support you (*priye devasome! kim tvam kupitāsi, yadavalamitumupasarpato me dūrībhavasi* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.39). The conversations of Kāpālīka and Devasomā are funny and create laughter in so many cases, even when they lose their begging bowl. The Śākyabhikṣu's hatred for his religion also creates very good laughter (*bhoḥ paramakāruṇikena..... vidhānam ca na dṛṣtam* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.44). Further the fighting between Kāpālīka and Śākyabhikṣu is also very funny. For instance, when Kāpālīka asks for the bowl, Śākyabhikṣu says '*namaḥ Buddhāya*' and then Kāpālīka replies that admire *kharapaṭa*, who promulgated the science of theft or the Buddha, who is very superior to *kharapaṭa* in this field (*namaḥ kharapaṭāyeti vaktavyam.....buddha evādhikaḥ* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.47). Further, the incoherent talk of the mad man creates very good laughter, when he says that the ocean having reached up to the sky on the back of a domestic pig, smashed Rāvaṇa and seized the sea-monster, the son of Śukra! (*grāmasūkaramaruḥya gaganamutpatitena sāgareṇa prabhñjya rāvaṇam balādgrhītaḥ śakrasutastimiṅgilaḥ* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.55). Thus, in this way, the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana is full of very good laughter and makes every situation very interesting.

Another sentiment, that is prevalent in the Prahāsana, is marvelous (*adbhuta*), which is compulsory for every drama at the conclusion or Nīrvahaṇa Sandhi (*nīrvahaṇe kartavyo nityam hi raso 'dbhutastajñaiḥ* - Nāṭyaśāstra.XIII.94). Here in the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, the act of getting the bowl through the mad man provides for the marvellous

sentiment.

10. Application of the Junctures – Bharata states that Prahāsana should have two junctures, i.e. opening (*mukha*) and conclusion (*nirvahaṇa*). The opening juncture is formed by the combination of beginning (*ārambha*) and germ (*bīja*). The germ (*bīja*) is very small, but, its influence is very huge and pervades the entire drama. Here in the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, the germ is, losing of the begging bowl (*kapāla*) by Kāpalika Satyasoma ‘*priye, kva me kapālam*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.42). The eagerness to obtain the result constitutes the beginning (*ārambha*). In the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, the beginning is the searching of the lost begging bowl. Therefore, the opening juncture starts with the objective of getting the lost begging bowl (*kapāla*). It continues up to the mad man enters into the stage.

Then the second juncture is the Conclusion (*nirvahaṇa*) juncture. The juncture is formed with the combination of the denouement (*kārya*) and the attainment of the result (*phalāgama*).

The denouement (*kārya*) comes in the end of the main plot, which is developed from the beginning. Here in the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, denouement (*kārya*) is the process of getting the begging bowl by Kāpalika and Devasomā. Further the attainment of the result is the accomplishment of the result. In the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, the accomplishment of the result is getting of the bowl. Thus, the conclusion (*nirvahaṇa*) is the mixture of denouement and the accomplishment of the result (*phalāgama*) leading to the final result. It becomes applied when Kāpalika and Devasomā regain their lost bowl (*kapāla*) from the mad man and their happiness returns after regaining the bowl. (*chiram mayā caritamakhaṇḍitam tapo maheśvare bhagavati bhaktirasti me, tirohitaḥ sa tu sahasā sukkena nastvamadya yat kuśali kapāla! drśyase* - verse.21).

11. The technical aspects: The Mattavilāsa has applied the technical aspects like intimation scene (*cūlikā* or *nepathya*), prologue (*prastāvanā*), aside (svagata or *ātmagata*), aloud (*prakāśa*) and epilogue (*bharatavākya*). There is no use of explanatory scene (*viṣkambhaka*) and also there is no benedictory verse (*nāndī*), before prologue

(*prastāvanā*) but the stage manager recites the benedictory verse, at the begging of the prologue.

Prologue (*prastāvanā*) – Generally the prologue comes after the benedictory verse, which is conducted by the stage-manager (*sūtradhāra*) and actor (*naṭī*) or establisher (*sthāpaka*) or jester (*viduṣaka*). It gives information about the play, author etc. in an amazing way. In the *Mattavilāsa*, *prastāvanā* is said as *sthāpanā*. Here *Sūtradhāra* and *Naṭī* have conducted the *sthāpanā*. Before the introduction of the play and the author, *Sūtradhāra* recites the benedictory verse (*bhāṣāveṣavapuḥ.....kapālī yaśaḥ* - verse.1), which should occur before the prologue.

Aside (*svagata* or *ātmagata*) and Aloud (*prakāśa*) – When the actor utters the dialogue for both audiences as well as for co-actors and the same is audible, it is called aloud, but when the actor utters the dialogue and the same cannot be audible, it is called aside. These two terms are applied in the *Mattavilāsa* somewhere though not frequently.

Intimation Scene (*cūlikā* or *nepathya*) – Intimation scene is of the five types (*arthopakṣepaka*) and is also called *cūlikā*. It is used frequently as *nepathya*, as the Intermediate speech comes from behind the curtain, which explains some important matters by any character. Generally, this technical item is used frequently in all type of dramas. This term is also used in the *Mattavilāsa* in some places.

Epilogue (*bharatavākya*) - At the end of the drama there should be an auspicious verse called ‘*Bharatavākya*’, which is the final benediction or praise (*praśasti*) coming at the end. One of the actors, in chorus with other actors, sings it to mark the end of the dramatic enactment. In the *Mattavilāsa*, the epilogue has the significant role in the drama, which is prayed to fire, Brahmin, cows and the king who protect the people performing their duty (*śaśvad bhūtyai prajānām.....śatrumallena lokah*).

12. The Society: – The Pallava kings were well learned and highly cultured, tall, well built and possessed all the dignified characteristics of royalty. For example we have in *Mahedrarvarman* an author of Sanskrit plays, a great musician and an all round artist. In addition, we come to know from *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* that he had profound knowledge

about Hindu laws, Indian Philosophy and Literature. For instance in one place he advises ‘*pratyakṣe hetuvacanam nirarthakam*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.51) through the character Kāpālīka and his moral advice like ‘*adattādānādviramaṇam munīśikṣāpadam*’ (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.51) through the character Śākyabhikṣu. In the prologue, Sūtradhāra talks about the high quality of Mahendravarman. He was the head of the Pallava race and had defeated many kings by his own strength (*śatruṣaḍvarga nigraha paraḥ* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.37). He was compared to Indra and was superior to Kubera in his generosity.

The Pallava court was adorned with ministers, priests and poets. There was a secretariat, treasury, private secretary of the king to solve the problems of the state and to support the king. The king was known for his good governance. The great poets like Bhāravī, Daṇḍin adorned the court. The state was and guarded by their army and naval forces.

All four sections of people like Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdras were living harmoniously in the state. The Brahmins were higher and respected people. They were learned, well-versed in all the Śāstras and intelligent. They were gods of the earth.

In art and architecture, Pallavas were very rich. In the period of Mahendravarman, the temple architecture and rock-cutting were developed tremendously. The people like spinners, weavers, potters, cattle-breeders, goldsmiths, carpenters, owners of oil presses, wholesale merchants of various articles, farmers were carrying out their respective business. Mahendravarman used to have great respect for all types of religion. He himself was a Jain by birth, but at the end, he embraced Shaivism and became a Hindu. In his period, the Buddhist religion also spread vastly, because the play Mattavilāsa describes about the two religions, i.e. Buddhism and Shaivism. The state gave freedom for its citizens to practise any religion. The Buddhists were corrupt. They were engaged in anti religious works and were prone to be attracted towards women (*aho lalitarūpā upāsikā* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.46), they also drank wine and ate meat. They were living in Rājavihāras (*mayābhimatavarṇagandharaso*

matsyamāmsa prakārabahulo'yam piṇḍapātaḥ samāsāditāḥ, yāvadidānīm rājavihārameva gacchāmi – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.43). The Śaivas were living in the Śaiva temples, worshipping lord Śiva (*ayamekāmravāsī duṣṭa kāpālikaḥ* - Mattavilāsa Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.45). They loved their god and remembered him every moment. In Mattavilāsa, when Kāpāli losses his begging bowls, he calls Śiva as ‘*māheśvarā! māheśvarā! asmadīyam bhikṣābhājanamiha bhavadbhiḥ kim drṣṭam?* (Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.43).’ The *bhikṣus* were living with alms, begging door to door (*bhavati bhikṣām dehi* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.42).

The people at that time had only minimum requirement. They knew that pain brings pleasure in their life if they faced them courageously (*duḥkhsya kāryam sukhamāmanantaḥ* - verse.8). The people were living in the houses of mud-walls and thatched roofsand in the mansions made of bricks and tiles, but structures of a permanent kind were considered a luxury (*ahonuhkalu vimānaśikhara.....kāñcipurasya parā vibhūtiḥ* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.41). The villages and towns were constructed with well planned lay outs and facilities of water and road.

The judicial court situated in Kāñcī was known as *adhikaraṇa*. The people used to respect the judicial system (*nāyam vyavahāro mayā paricchettum śakyate, tadadhikaraṇameva yāsyāmaḥ* - Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.54).The people following right path never fear judicial system (*kṛtamanena, kutaścidapi nyāyyavrṭterbhayam nāsti* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.54). The people used to have faith on Dharma and usually avoided sins, which need to be expiated (*mahānti bhūtāni prāyaścittairapanītakalmaṣāṇi bhavanti* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.53).

13. Status of Woman – Though Mattavilāsa has not elaborated on the status of women of that time and the same needs to be obtained only from the history. However, we can understand the status of woman in general from the two characters, i.e. Naṭī, the actress or the wife of the stage-manager and Devasomā, the fiancée of Kāpālika. In general, women were free in this period. There were no restrictions placed on them. The beautiful intoxicated women could dance near the sacrificial ground. Their dance used to

be in abandon and hence upper garments used to slip down and they were trying to put them back to their place (*ucchritaikahastā.....mattavilāsanṛttāni* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.41). The female ascetics also used to drink heavily (*mattāmiva mattāmiva mām bhaṇasi* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.38). Although female ascetics drank wine, they were afraid of destruction of their penance (*mā mā mama kāraṇād vratabhaṅgena tapaḥ khaṇḍayitum* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.39). The women believed in the offerings (*vrata*) and penance (*tapa*), which led to extra ordinary merits. According to Kapālī, Devasomā got her beauty due to the offerings (*tapasā kāmarūpatā prāpyata iti* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.38). They obeyed and gave respect to their partners and were dedicated to them. The wife was allowed to go out with husband, even she could watch drama and musical performance with her husband (*ārya! kim cirasya kālasya yauvanaguṇabharamattavilāsaprahasanam darśayitumāgato'si* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.35). Those days, men could marry many women even older than themselves and the stage manager had two wives (*samāsāditaḥ khalu mayā yavīyasīm bhāryām.....vyalīkāyām jyeṣṭhāyām* – Mattavilāsa, Unni, p.35). C. Minakshi (1938, Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas) states that there a few evidences are available about the status of women during the Pallava dynasty. The queens of the Pallavas were cultured and pious and vied with their lords in religious charity and in the construction of the monuments for their favorite deities, which even today stand as works of art and beauty. Even ordinary women were pious minded and made endowments to temples; and the Brahmin women donated paddy for lamps and worship. The women were allowed to have their own property (*strīdhana* and *aṅgamaṇi*)’,

14. Conclusion: Mahendravarman, the author of the Mattavilāsa Prahāsana, is a well-known king of the seventh century A.D., belonging to the Pallava dynasty, ruling in Kāñci. He was a powerful king and a poet. The Mattavilāsa is a well-composed Prahāsana type of drama. The Mattavilāsa has a very small plot, appropriate for a short Prahāsana. However, the author has made it very humorous. The language used in the

drama is quite hilarious without being offensive. The story is about a quarrel, between two Śaivite ascetics with another Buddhist ascetic for a begging bowl, lost by the Śaivite ascetics. Since it is a one-act play, it lasts only for a short duration of time.

The Mattavilāsa belongs to pure or modified type of Prahasana, though Bharata and Dhanañjaya differ from each other regarding the nature of a Prahasana. The Mattavilāsa Prahasana is based on worldly affairs like quarrel. It should be noted here that Mahendravarman has applied some ancillaries of *vīthī*, such as *prapañca*, *asatpralāpa* and others mentioned in the drama, proposed by Bharata to use in any type of Prahasana. Here it should also be noted that Mahendravarman a predecessor of Dhanañjaya, has accepted only the rules of Bharata. According to Dhanañjaya, the ancillaries of *vīthī* should be applied in the *saṁkīrṇa* type of Prahasana. However, Dhanañjaya also suggests that in *saṁkīrṇa* type of Prahasana, one should use courtesan (*gaṇikā*) and harlots (*veśyā*), rogues (*dhūrta*), parasites (*viṭa*); but Mahendravarman's Prahasana does not contain such characters. Thus it can be classified as a pure (*śuddha*) or modified (*vikṛta*) type of Prahasana, depending upon whether we follow Bharata's or Dhanañjaya's rules.

Mahendravarman's Prahasana contains the characters, such as mendicants or ascetics from different sects and a madman and the drama contains very few of characters; and therefore, it qualifies to be a pure type of Prahasana. Through just five characters, Mahendravarman has created very good humour.

According to Bharata, Prahasana should apply verbal style, because the drama is based on humour; and the verbal (*bhāratī*) style, consisting of laughter and costume can create humour. Verbal style (*bhāratīvr̥tti*) has two parts, which are based on comic, i.e. farce and ancillaries of *vīthī*. These two also create humour in the drama. Thus, Mahendravarman, accepts this and has applied the verbal style (*bhāratīvr̥tti*) in the Mattavilāsa Prahasana.

Laughter is the main sentiment in any Prahasana. Bharata does not mention anything about the laughter (*hāsya*) sentiment; however, Dhanañjaya states that

Prahasana should apply six types of laughter, such as slight smile (*smita*), smile (*hasita*), gentle laughter (*vihasita*), laughter of ridicule (*upahasita*), vulgar laughter (*apahasita*) and excessive laughter (*atihāsita*). Mahendravarman's Mattavilāsa Prahasana is full of humours but it has applied only one type of laughter out of six types, i.e. gentle laughter (*vihasita*).

According to the rules of Bharata and Dhanañjaya, a Prahasana should have two junctures, i.e. opening juncture (*mukhasandhi*) and concluding juncture (*nirvahaṇasandhi*). Both junctures are the essential characteristics of Prahasana, which are well reflected in the Mattavilāsa of Mahendravarman.

Mahendravarman has applied few technical aspects. He has not applied even benedictory verse before the prologue. Sūtradhāra recites the benedictory (*nāndī*) verse. There is no use of interlude scene (*viṣkambhaka*) after the prologue. Immediately he starts the drama. Perhaps it is so because the Mattavilāsa is a short drama.

The drama Mattavilāsa Prahasana of Mahendravarman reflects about the high cultured society of that period. Though the plot of drama is small, he has managed to mention so many things about people, society, religion and administration. Many types of religious people such as Buddhists, Hindus and Jains are depicted to be living in the society. Mahendravarman was ruling the state with the advice of learned men and his court was adorned with highly experienced ministers, priests and poets for good governance. People also used to enjoy their lives happily.

In the period of Mahendravaman, women were quite free to undertake any professional work. They were free to accept any religion. They were allowed to become ascetics and to move freely with male ascetics. They were even allowed to dance and drink wine. There was no restriction on them from the law. However, women in general were dedicated to their husbands. People were marrying many women.

Now it could be concluded that the Mattavilāsa does not fully satisfy the characteristics of Prahasana recommended either by Bharata or by Dhanañjaya. However, it is a very good humorous drama by Mahendravarman.

Table of Comparison:

Details	Source Book (1)	Prahasana type of Play	Source of Book (2)	Prahasana type of Play	Deviations
	Nāṭyaśāstra	Mattavilāsa	Daśarūpaka	Mattavilāsa	
Plot	Two types, pure and mixed	Pure type	Three types, pure, modified and mixed	Modified type	Though Bharata did not state about six type of
Character	In pure type of Prahasana, there should be mendicants, sages, Brahmins and others. In mixed type of Prahasana, there should be courtesans, paramour,	ascetics	Pāṣāṇḍi, Brahmins, servant maid, parasites and servant in pure type; eunuchs, chamberlains, ascetics in modified type; rogues in mixed type	ascetics	laughters in the rules of Prahasana, but sixth chapter of Nāṭyaśāstra indicates that poet should use all these elements in the humours play. However, Dhanañjaya

	eunuch, lecher, rogue				states to use the six type of laughters in the Prahasana. Mahendrava- rman's Mattavilāsa has applied only one type of laughter i.e. gentle laughter (<i>vihasita</i>).
Sentiment	Laughter	✓	Six fold comic sentiment	Only gentle laughter (<i>vihasita</i>) is there	
Style	Verbal style without gay style	✓	Verbal style	✓	
Juncture	Opening and concluding	✓	Opening and concluding	✓	
Act	---	One act	One act	✓	
Ancillaries of <i>vīthī</i>	As per requirement	Some ancillaries of <i>vīthī</i> like <i>prapañca</i> , <i>astpralāpa</i> etc.	Ancillaries of <i>vīthī</i> in mixed type only	Some ancillaries of <i>vīthī</i> like <i>prapañca</i> , <i>astpralāpa</i> etc.	
Gentle dance	---	---	Gentle dance as in Bhāṇa	Just reflected	
Other	Humorous	✓	Pure type is	✓	

features	<p>conversation, abundance of mocking words and proper language in pure type, mixed type with flashy and colourful costume.</p>		<p>full of humorous with appropriate costume and language; modified type should have language and dress like those of desired persons</p>		
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