CHAPTER IV – FEMINISM IN BALI – THE SACRIFICE

I INTRODUCTION: Bali–The Sacrifice is Karnad’s English version of his Kannada play entitled Hittina Hunj. Hittina Hunja was published first in 1980 and was subsequently enacted in Kannada and in Hindi very successfully. Later, the author trans-created in English for the production at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre in England and the English version was published in 2004. This play is based on Yashodhara Charite about the influence of which on the author, Aparna Bhargava Dharwadker writes that Karnad has felt that “the myth continued to reveal unexpected meanings with passing years.”¹ In this chapter, a study is undertaken to examine the tendency of feminism in Bali–The sacrifice. However this chapter is divided into five parts. Part one presents the aim of the study undertaken in this chapter. Part two provides the plot of Bali–The Sacrifice. Part three offers the synopsis of the Yashodhara Charite. Part four is devoted to study feminism in Bali–The Sacrifice. And part closes the chapter by way of summing up the study in part four.

II Plot of Bali: The Sacrifice: Karnad has acknowledged in his preface to this play that for the plot of Bali: The Sacrifice, he has “drawn upon the thirteenth century Kannada epic, Yashodhara Charite, by Janna, which in turn refers to back to the ninth-century Sanskrit epic, Yashatilaka, by Somadeva Suri”.² While Yashodhara Charite is regarded as an epic in Kannada, S.Duraiamsy Pillai, who is the author of its Tamil version entitled Yasodara Kavyam, states that “Yasodara Kavyam is one of the five sub epics”³ in Tamil literature and the remaining four works are Soolamani, Udayana Kumara Kavyam, Naga Kumara Kavyam and Neelakesi. However the content of these versions are identical to one another at large. Before examining the treatment myth in Karnad’s Bali: The Sacrifice, its plot and the resume of Yasodra Charite are in order.

The plot of Bali: The Sacrifice is woven around the family of the King (King Yashodra). As the play opens, King discovers that his wife, Queen Amritamati, and the Mahout are in the inner sanctum of the ruined temple after their routine copulation. On
gaining entry into the temple, King confirms that the woman who has stayed with the
mahout is none other than his wife. His wife prevents him from killing the mahout. At
this moment a memory episode of the King and the Queen is shown. While he
withdraws from the temple he meets his mother who is on her way to the temple to offer
a sacrifice. On his mother’s demand for the reason for his dullness, he tells her a lie that
he has had a bad dream. On the advice of his mother, he agrees to offer the sacrifice of
cock of a life-size of dough. He takes it into the inner sanctum. When Queen agrees
finally to join her husband to cut the dough cock to sacrifice, the dough cock becomes
alive which creates laughter to all. Thus the play comes to an end.

III. A NOTE ON YASODHRA CARITE – THE SOURCE TEXT

The myth of dough cock sacrifice – an act of violence - is meant to preach against the
notion of not only the human and animal sacrifice as a ritual to appease the deities but
against the very that thought of sacrifice - violence in intent - also . Such acts are
considered as sin. This theme is the nucleus of the plot of Yashodra Charite. It is
illustrated in the episodes King Yashodra, his wife Queen Amrtamati and his mother
Queen Candramati. A synopsis of Yashidra Charite is as follows.

King Maaridatta of Yaudheya appeases his tutelary goddess Chandamaari by arranging
periodical offerings of animal sacrifices. On one such day, he decides to offer human
sacrifice and commissions his officer Chandakar to fetch a human pair in that regard.
He announces that the citizens can sacrifice the pairs of lower animals after he sacrifices
the human pair with his own hands failing which may bring down the fury of the
goddess upon them.

Chandakarman catches hold of a human pair – brother and sister- to the king in
the temple. The human pair is characterized by fearlessness and is not perturbed in the
least even at the sight of the gruesome spectacle there and the certain prospect of their
death. When the king seeks their blessing they wish that wisdom which consists in
doing good to living beings, might dawn upon him soon. On king’s begging to tell how
they could be so fearless in the face of death even at such tender age, the brother whose name now is Abhayaruci narrates the story Yasodhra which is in a way his autobiography.

Yasodhra was the son of Yashoga and Chandramati the king and queen of Ujjayini. He was an embodiment of matchless might and dignity. He vanquished many a foe in battle and took for his queen the lovely lady Amratamati. They soon were bestowed with a son called Yasomati. In the mean time, on discovering gray hairs on his head, the old king renounced the world after transferring the kingdom to Yasodhra and betook himself to the forest to practice austerities.

Yasodhra was glorious in his kingdom with the abundant love from his queen and devoted worship from his people and no disturbance from his enemies. He led a heavenly life in the company of his sweet wife.

When the King fell asleep with his arms around her after enjoying love’s delights with the queen one night, the king’s elephant-keeper suddenly broke forth into song (a raga called Maalavapanchamam), sweet and enchanting in the stable outside. On hearing the ravishing song, the queen took to fancy for the gifted singer at once. Subsequently she bade her maid, Gunavati, to procure him as a paramour. Having failed to dissuade the queen from her ill deed, the maid pays a visit to the elephant-keeper and was shocked to find that he was a stinking wretch, a cripple, with running sores all over the body, and was true to his name Astavanka. On his consent, the queen enjoyed clandestine pleasure with the cripple, seizing every opportunity that came day and night, until her love for king Yasodhra ebbed away.

On having noticed the Queen’s coldness gradually, King undertook a vigil feigning sleep in bed one night and discovered his wife’s adultery with Astavanka. Besides, he also found that his wife’s paramour lashed his wife for her delay. The king, who was an eyewitness all along, was on the point of cutting down both the sinners in his mounting fury; but he bravely restrained himself and returned to his bed without
revealing himself. On his shock over the misconduct of Amrtamati whom he had taken for a paragon of virtue so long, he gave a hint to his wife that he was aware her conduct and went to mother to pay his respects as usual.

When the fond mother made loving enquiries about Yasodhra’s consternation, he told a lie that he had a bad dream of the lovely moonlight being united with darkness. Having believed her son innocently, Candramati suggested that offering sacrifices to goddess Candikaa was the only remedy to avert the evil foreboded by the dream. Unwilling to violate the first religious principle of non-violence and as a concession to his mother’s sentiments at the same time, he performed the sacrifice to the goddess a feint cock made of dough on the day of the Festival of the Mother Goddess. When the beheaded bird of flour shrieked like a living cock, the King’s sorrow was complete. He feels betrayed doubly by his wife through her adultery and by his mother through pushing him to perform the sin of sacrifice. As he became certain of eternal punishment in birth after birth, he handed over the kingdom to his son. While he was ready to the forest, he and his mother were invited by the Queen for a banquet and were poisoned to death by Amrtamati.

Subsequently, the chain of their rebirths with full of suffering started. In the first instance Yasodhra and Candramati were born as peacock and dog respectively. In the second, they were born as boar and cobra, in the third as red-eyed fish and crocodile, in the fourth as he-goat and she-goat and during this birth the son goat mated with the mother goat, in the fifth birth a goat and a buffalo and in the sixth and last birth both of them were born as cocks in an untouchable house and were brought up by Chanakarman.

On one occasion, he listened to Akampana, a sage, who gave the account of the sufferings of the cocks in birth after birth all because of violence in intent. On hearing it, the cocks recollected their past births, became religious and crew aloud. King Yasomati, who arrived there at that moment, shot them down with a sound-guided missile and the
departing souls of them entered the wombs of his queen Kasumaavali. Subsequently they are born to Yasomati and Kasumaavali as twins – Abhayaruci and Abhayamati.

On another hunting expedition, Yasomati directed his anger to the ascetic for he thought that his sight was an ill-omen due to which he could not get any game. But he learnt that the ascetic was none other than a king of Kalinga and also about his old members of the family. While his grandfather-Yashoga- was in heaven, his mother-Amrtamati- was damned to hell and his father –Yashodra and his grandmother-Chandramati are born as his own children now after having undergone various births.

Subsequently, Yasomati, Abhayaruci and Abhayamati renounced the world leaving the kingdom to Yashodra II. The twins became apprentices of saint Sudatta and were taken by Chandakarman to King Maridutta to be offered as human sacrifices to Goddess Mari. The twins, who have suffered in various births for the sin of their violence just in intent, state that they are filled with wonder and pity when they see Maridutta about to kill a whole host of living animals. On hearing the story, king Maridutta seeks spiritual instruction from sage Sudatta and begins to practice love by giving up evil ways. Above all, the grim goddess Mari herself renounces her love of violence.

IV ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION OF MYTH IN BALI–THE SACRIFICE:
Karnad has recast the myth Yashodra Charite in his play Bali-The Sacrifice to address the notion of non-violence in the contemporary context. Like a artisan, he altered the tone and spirit of this myth to provide an alternative perspective to the principle of non-violence. As stated earlier, the motif of the myth of Yashodra Charite is to emphasize that non-violence in intent too is a sin. Karnad modifies the episodes of Yashodra Charite in order to reflect upon this notion in his Bali-The Sacrifice.

It is important to note that the myth of Yashodra Charita commences with the episodes of Yashodra’s parents after the prelude dealing with Maridatta. Then it is loved
by the episodes of Yashodra’s conjugal bliss. The following is the synopsis of it
K.Krishnamoorthy provides as:

Ujjayini, the famous city in Avanto, was being ruled by a glorious king,
Yasogha, whose charming queen was Candramati. To them was born a son, significantly
called Yasodhara. The prowess of the prince was mighty and his dignity matchless. He
vanquished many a foe in battle and took for his queen the lovely lady Amrtamati who
gave birth to a prince Yasomati. Meanwhile, the old King renounced the world after
transferring the kingdom to Yasodhara. The chance discovery of grey hairs on his head
made him world-weary, and he betook himself to the forest to practice. Now the cup of
Yasodhara’s happiness was full. The Queen loved him, the people worshiped him, and
he had no enemies to disturb his peace. Hr regaled himself in the company of his sweet
wife.4

Karnad seems to be not interested in the story of Yashodra’s parents. He wants
to reflect upon and interrogate Amarmati’s indulgence of adultery with the palace
mahout in the present context. Thus he starts the play with the scene in which the sex
between the mahout and Amarmati is depicted. There is the depiction sex between the
mahout and Amarmati in Yashodra Cahrite too but it takes place in the mahout’s
quarter.

Karnad has not only digresses from the source book with regard to the opening
scene, but has also intensified the profanity of this by depicting the same as occurring in
the temple. When the play opens, the king is found with a torch light near the temple
which suggests that he has come in search of his wife. Then the Queen and the mahout
are interacting with each other inside the temple.

The interaction implies that the mahout does not know the real identity of the
woman with whom he has been pursuing liaison all these days. When he realizes that
somebody is observing them outside the temple, he persuades her to cooperate with him
in the drama as if they are making so that the person outside the temple would leave that place. The scene is illustrated from the play as follows:

MAHAOUT (*in a whisper*): Don’t panic. Do as I say. Do as I tell you … Just laugh. Be merry. Come on. (*The Queen tires to laugh but the attempt ends in a moan. The Mahout laughs loudly, theatrically. But he is scared. It’s not easy. Knock.*)

MAHOUT: We must pant.

QUEEN: Pant?

MAHOUT: Yes, yes, pant. Heavy breathing. You and me—(*He pants heavily*) Let them think something’s going on … that we’re making love here. You see what I mean? Sin in the inner sanctum. They’ll slap themselves on their cheeks, say what’s the world coming to, curse and go away. Come on … Pant … heavy … (*He demonstrates panting*) Hunnh … Hunnh … Yes. Like that. Come on. (*The Queen moans in anguish*) That’s it. Oh God! You’re good, this is heaven. Yes. This is … aaah … Come on. Come. Aah. (*The King knocks again. The Queen curls up in fear> The Mahout increases his labours*) Good. Oh God, you are good—good … (*Knocking again. The Mahout yells.*) Hey, who’s that? Are you deaf? Can’t you hear I am with my woman? Go away. (*To the Queen*) Come now … yes … Turn this way. That’s it … Oh you’re divine.⁵

From the dialogue between Astavanka and the Queen, it is revealed that the Queen is happy with her husband as far as their conjugal love is concerned and is not ready to admit why she has been attracted towards Astavanka when Mahout enquires her. Later she replies to the query of husband stating that she has heard a melodious voice owing to which she happens to have come to the Mahout. But in Yashodra Charite, Amrtavati shares the secret with her handmaid Gunavati which is presented in the verses 34,35 and 36 thus:

the elephant-keeper who remained awake there, sang forth a song, melodious sweet. It was clearly rendered through the musical notes. It was excellent by the richness
of voice. It was sweet and splendid by his skill in harmony. It was ravishing by the symphony of Malava-panccama. The Queen, lying on her couch with half closed eyes, her body languid after the amorous sports, heard this ravishing song, and at once took a fancy for the gifted singer.

The above depiction differs from Yashodra Charite is two ways. Firstly, Amratavati and Astavanka have been in liaison with mutual willingness for a quite a long time but Karnad alters it in his play by showing that the Mahout is not aware that the woman who has been sharing bed with him all these days is the Queen herself. It suggests that the mahout has been in touch with so many women that he does not remember them individually. Secondly, while Amravati meets Astavnga in his quarter in Yashodra Charite, it is depicted in Bali – The Sacrifice that they meet and indulge in intercourse in the old temple with in the palace area. Since the depiction of the drama of the mahout and the queen as indulging in the physical intercourse amounts to emerging pornographic and voluptuous, the play intends to ridicule the notion of sublimity as it rejects such frank treatment of sex violates the grandeur of thought. It suggests that the play eschews the notion of myth by incorporating profanity in the place of sacredness.

There is alteration in the part of the subsequent episode. Amratavati hears the melodious song of Astavanka and falls in love with without seeing who he is. She is able to establish love with him through her mistress. Then she visits him every stealthily and enjoy delights with him frequently. As a result, she loses her interest in her husband. The king detects the change by observing that she is not usual in her temper in her looks, embraces, kisses etc. As he decides to discover the truth, he acts as if he is fast asleep in night. On mistaking that her husband is in deep sleep, she leaves their bed chamber and goes to Astvanka’s quarter.

The king follows her secretly and is shocked to discover that she is carrying out liaison with his servant. He also observes that his wife is abused by Astavanks in many
ways. Thus he becomes furious and draws his sword to eliminate him but withdraws from owing to his royal ethics. This part of episode occurs in the verses 57, 58, 59 and 60 and the text of them is as follows:

When the King saw her being enjoyed by him after this reassurance, he flew into a rage and waved his sword to cut down the two (culprits). Yet, in his firmness, he reasoned within himself:- “Of what worth is this mean creature, a groom of my elephants? And a woman, though vile, does not merit the death-penalty. It till becomes my royal might; on the other hand, it will only tarnish my fame, spotless now as a pearl necklace. How can this sword of mine, meant for slaying heroic enemies on the battle-field, be employed against creature so base? To be sure, a lion will not employ his tender tooth, which can tear out the temples of elephants, against mere jackal. So did the King, (majestic as a royal swan, decide in his mind, and he returned in peace and lay down on his couch sand-white.)

But Karnad has altered this portion of Yashodra Charite in his Bali-The Sacrifice. The King seems to have come to the courtyard in search of his wife and is now found seated on one of the outer steps of the temple inside which Astavanka and the Queen have gathered secretly for lovemaking. In a while, King’s mother also arrives there with a sword covered on a tray. The King takes it from her and knocks on the door of the ruined temple. Once again, the Mahout and the Queen pretend to be in intercourse in order to make the visitor move away from there. When the King continues his knock, the mahout becomes angry and shouts at him from inside the temple. As he impatient, he opens the door and comes out with a stick to sort him out; he discovers that the visitor is none other than his king.

The interaction among the three emerges as mockery of the doctrine of non-violence in the Jain faith. When the King is about to draw his sword, his wife and mother react to it symbolically suggesting that it amounts to committing non-violence. Taking this as an advantage, the Mahout mocks at him in this way:
KING: I said shut up! (The King draws his sword and is about to slash at the Mahout when -- )

QUEEN: Your Majesty – (The Queen Mother on the steps too suddenly stands up as though she has sensed something. The King freezes, stares, uncomprehending, at the sword. Then almost with a sense of hopelessness, lets it slide back into the scabbard. The Mahout heaves a sigh of relief.)

MAHOUT: Of course, how could I forget? You are a Jain. You can’t indulge in violence. You aren’t permitted to shed blood. Ooh! I forgot that—(He giggles in sheer relief. Giggling and talking to himself he retires to his corner.) Whew! That was close! … I mean … how could you draw the sword. You aren’t allowed to kill. Huh! (The Mahout sits on his mattress. … But we continue to see the Mahout as he begins to drink. …)8

This is followed by an interlude which Karnad has created out his own imagination and incorporated it in his play. This interlude is divided into two parts. The first part depicts the period before the marriage of the King and Queen. It is used to mock at the principles of both Jain Faith and Hindu Faith. At this time, the king is a prince and has gone to the Queen’s house to select as his bride. He enters the garden and urinates on a tree over there. The Queen arrives there and through the humorous dialogue between them, the author satirizes the faith of both. The King states that there is no god in Jain Faith and they follow only their Saviours who are always nude. The Queen reacts to him by saying that his goddesses eat goat, sheep etc.

Then the King tries to soothe the Queen, who has become unhappy with him on account of his damaging comments on her race and Faith, by stating that he could hit a bird sitting on a branch of a tree. Subsequently, he strikes a bird by a stone but the bird is found dead. Here the author highlights the ambiguity in their mind set. The Queen who fails to see violence in getting the bird knocked down as a chivalrous sport sees
violence when the bird is wounded and killed through the same means. Even the King fails to justify his act to her. Thus it is also a mockery of the notion of-violence.

In the subsequent, episode, they appeared as a married couple and the Queen intimates her husband that she is pregnant. There is comedy in this instance as the Queen regards that she has become pregnant because of the act of her husband urinating on her rose bush. In a way this instance is a myth about myth.

On learning the pregnancy of her daughter-in-law, the Mother Queen makes her preparation to express the gratitude of the royal family to her family deity through animal sacrifice. But the Queen objects to the act of her mother-in-law stating that she and her husband are Jains and there should not be any incident of bloodshed according the Jain’s principle of non-violence. The King approaches his mother and tries dissuading her from performing animal sacrifice. At this juncture, she reminds him that she has the right to observe the rituals of her religion and that he is himself not a Jain by birth. On the contrary, he has converted himself to the Jain faith. Besides, she suspects rightly that her daughter-in-law is pregnant in actuality. She charges allegations about her behaviour as being not in consonance with reliability. Thus the interlude closes.

The incorporation of this interlude, which is also a myth of Karnad’s own, is very significant with regard to Karnad’s objective to adapt the myth. Firstly, it highlights the factor that there is consensus among the Faiths about the notion of non-violence. In other words, the notion of non-violence is not universal. Secondly, it evinces subtly that the Jains are converts from Hindu religion. Lastly, conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has been in continuation till date.

Karnad is an innovative in his career of creative writing. Taking cue from the myth of Yashodra, he has created a few more myths of his own with his power of imagination. Though Yashoodra Charite has not elaborated on the details regarding the factors responsible for Astavanka’s ugly personality and gifted voice, Karand provides them in the adaptation of that myth in play.
Mahout tells Queen his story as how he is ugly. He was born on a full moon day and there was an eclipse too then. As the moon or sun is said to be under the grip of demons on such occasions, the impact of the evil is cast on the children born on such occasions. Mahout’s mother delivered him while she witnessing a snake gobbling up the eggs of sparrows in the nest in the eaves. Since he was born at such a juncture, he is ugly.

Karnad creates one more story with regard to his gifted voice. Mahout explains this factor to Queen again. He says that they cult has a god in his village. A stone which is held by the hanging roots of a banyan tree is treated as the god of the mahouts. During his boyhood, the mahout asked the god as why he had made him ugly unlike the Commander-in-Chief or the King who was handsome. Then the god also asked him whether the people laughed at him to which he replied in negative. Subsequently, the god informed him that he had endowed him with strength in the place of beauty so that he could sort out the people. The mahout was content with the god’s argument and expressed that if had got a handsome face, he needed no strength since he could manage the people with that face. Then the God granted him the melodious voice as compensation to his ugly face.

Karnad has not just borrowed the story from the myth from Yashodra Charite but also added his own stories to the myth in play Bali-The Sacrifice. From the above instances it is revealed that the author converts the superstitious belief to a story with his creative imagination. Besides, Karnad has tried to protect the interests of the socially underprivileged class by giving dignity to them. He has done in two ways. Firstly, he has dismantled the notion that the people of low caste are naturally ugly by stating that the mahout was born ugly because of the eclipse. It hold good to the child of any race. Secondly, he elevates the personality of the mahout by attributing the sweet voice to him which is better quality of beauty and more lasting than the handsome look. It is testified in the depiction of Queen falling head over heel in love with the mahout.
Karnad has altered the episode dealing with aftermath of Yashodra’s discovery of his wife’s adultery with Astavankahe in his play. In the original, Yashodra returns to his bed chamber and makes his wife know indirectly that he is aware of her conduct with Astavanka. Then he visits his mother to get solace from her spotless love. Her mother receives him fondly and goes showering blessings on him without knowing the present state of his mind. However, she does notice some gloom on his face and enquires him in that regard. His response appears in verse 9 and 10 of Canto III thus:

But last night, O mother, I vividly saw that moonlight got itself separated from the moon, bearing the full glory of the opening nigh-lotuses (also, of the illumined earth below’) and made union with darkness. Not even once, in my life, have I ever seen such a thing even in dream. It has got itself fixed in my mind and is causing me unbearable agony.⁹

Karnad shows this instance differently in his play. King does not return to his palace quietly after detecting his wife’s liaison with Mahout. On the other hand, King has followed her up to the temple while she was going to Mahout and waited outside overhearing the movements of their lovemaking. Then he meets his Mother while he returns running to his palace. His mother demands explanations for the change in his action. The dialogue between them given below evinces how the author has altered the original text:

MOTHER : What is it? What’s wrong?

KING : Me? Nothing.

MOTHER : Don’t try to fool me. I know you. The moment I saw you from there. I knew. Even in the dark. There’s something wrong. Isn’t there? Very wrong. …

KING: Mother, why are you hounding me? Why don’t you leave me alone?

MOTHER: You are telling lies. You are trying to hide something from your mother. Must be something really serious. (Pause. Fiercely) Tell me. Tell. I can’t help you unless you tell.
KING: Around midnight, I had a dream. It woke me up.

MOTHER: Yes? What was it?

KING: In the dream … (Pause.) I saw that the royal swan in our garden had caught in mud and was flapping its wings.

MOTHER: It was asking for help.

KING: I don’t know. I suppose so …

MOTHER: It was caught in mud. Trapped. And crying out for help?

KING: Yes.

MOTHER: Then?


MOTHER: And you came to check if the swans were alright?

KING: No. Not really. I don’t know. Perhaps yes. It was a vivid dream. It felt real. (laughs) Anyway the swans are there, safe, fast asleep. That’s all. Are You happy? …

MOTHER: I know. And I’m glad you told me. It’s a bad dream.¹⁰

The depiction of the interaction between the King and Mother is different from the same in Yashodra Charite. While the relationship between the mother and the king in the myth is characterized by genuine and concern, the same in Bali-The sacrifice is characterized by superficiality. The son implies his wife’s bad conduct subtly through an anecdote to his mother as it is required for noble theme of the epic; King seems to be hypocritical to convey the same message to his mother.

Then Mother makes arrangements for the atonement of the bad dream through sacrificing a hundred fowl to her goddess. This differs from the original once again because the mother persuades her son to offer not a hundred fowl but a dough cock in sacrifice to the goddess. The portrayal of the proposed sacrifice of a hundred fowl is abruptly discontinued and King and Queen are found now.
King and Queen come to a compromise as the former states that he needs her. The latter too assures that she would not betray him again. This is a striking deviation from the original myth as there is no such reunion at all. On the contrary, in Yashodra Charite, Amravati poisons her husband and mother-in-law to death. But in Bali-The Sacrifice, King forces his wife to agree for intercourse with him in the presence of Mahout inside the temple. When wife resists his attempt to seduce her, he becomes angry and scolds her to go to the ugly mahout. It is depicted in the play thus:

(He kneels in front of her and pulls her down, gently, almost pleading, to her knees. The as she kneels in front of him, he begins to undress her. Takes off her pallu. The Mahout moans in his sleep. Startled, she looks at him. The King, gently)

Don’t be afraid. Let him wake up. Let him see. What does it matter? Let the whole world see. We are coupled in the eyes of God. We need not be ashamed of anything. We must strip ourselves of any shame. Become naked like our Saviours.(He loosens her hair. Kisses her shoulder. Caresses her bosom. Kisses her gently in thr cleft. She shudders. He tries to untie her blouse. Suddenly the Mahout moans in his sleep and she reacts. Tries to get away. But the King has anticipated that. They struggle. The Mahout sits up with start.)

QUEEN (Viciously): Get away from me …( She pushes the King aside and rolls away. He reaches out for her violently and then stops. He laughs.)

KING : The fowl leave us no choice. Don’t you see? There’s no alternative!

QUEEN : Get away from me. ( The Queen is trembling with humiliation, almost on the verge of tears. Suddenly she turns to the Mahout on his mat and then looks back at the King, defiantly.)

Mahout feels hurt by the King’s words of abusing him and tries to leave the place once for all. Queen insists him to throw the dough cock in vain. Then the Mahout departs from there. After his departure, Queen attends to King and agrees to join him to
sacrifice the dough cock. Subsequently, when King tries to cut the dough cock, they hear the crow of the cock. Queen begins to behave as if the cock is real and woos it to eat something. Since she is ready to listen to her husband’s reminder that the cock is a fake, he picks up and squashes it into a mass to make her realize. But Queen feels hurt and attempts to stab him by the sword. However, she holds up a while and kills herself by pressing the point of the blade on her womb.

It is very important to note that the end of *Bali-The Sacrifice* suggests that the author has altered very theme of *Yashodra Charite*. While *Yashodra Charite* dwells upon as what Krishnamoorthy observes:

The initial motif of the tale is a queen’s degrading infidelity to her noble and loving husband who, who along with his mother, is finally administered poison by her; and this has been superimposed by the fundamental concepts of Sramani ideology, such as the doctrine of ahimsa(even in intent), the theory of rebirth, and the inviolable and undiluted moral law that one can never escape the consequences one’s thoughts, words and acts. These and allied concepts have been oft repeated by Jaina authors in all their narratives with a view that erring man and woman might learn a lesson for the well-being of themselves and of others, both in this world and in the next. The motif of *Bali-The Sacrifice* is multiple and the chief of them is to highlight the plight of woman in the name of progeny. Mother Queen is never ready to believe that Queen is capable of becoming pregnant. Her husband fails to convince his mother in this regard. Besides, Queen is scarred of her mother’s-in-law obsession with animal sacrifice to celebrate her pregnancy because she feels that it amounts to violating the principle of her Jain Faith. Hence, Queen is forced to abort all her conceptions for two reasons. Firstly, she does so to prove that her pregnancy is real. Secondly, she does so because she hates to give birth to a child either when animal sacrifice is observed by her mother-in-law or when she possesses the thoughts of such sacrifice as both of them are regarded as violence.
Notes:


2 K. Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita (Dharwad : Karnataka University, 1963)


4 Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita, 49.


6 Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita, 108.

7 Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita, 2001-01.

8 Karnad, Bali The Sacrifice Collected Plays Volume One, 204.

9 Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita, 204.

10 Karnad, Bali The Sacrifice Collected Plays Volume One, 228-29.

11 Karnad, Bali The Sacrifice Collected Plays Volume One236-237.

12 Krishnamoorthy, Vadiraja’s Yasodharacarita, vii.