CHAPTER - III

THEME, SOURCE, PLOT, DEVIATION AND EVALUATION OF THE THREE DRAMAS OF HARṢA

The beauty and success of drama depends on the selection of the theme and the skill in the application of various aspects such as the arrangement of situations, descriptions of events and employment of different techniques. This chapter tries to give emphasis on these important aspects set up in Harṣa’s dramas. This is done by starting with the Nāṭikā Priyadarśikā which will be subsequently followed by Ratnāvalī and Nāgānanda.

Theme of the drama Priyadarśikā

The theme of Priyadarśikā is the union of king Udayana and Āranyikā whose actual name is Priyadarsikā.

Source of the drama Priyadarśikā

The Vastu or plot of Priyadarśikā is the love-affair of Āranyikā and king Udayana, the king of Kauśambī. It is a romantic drama where Vāsavadattā is the chief queen, who is the daughter of Mahāsena, the king of Ujjayinī. In this drama the heroine Priyadarsikā is introduced as Āranyikā, who is kept in the inner apartment of queen Vāsavadattā as an attendant but in course of time when she has grown up, comes in the notice of the king. Her extra-ordinary beauty attracts the king and the later falls in
her love. The story ends with the union of Udayana and Priyadarśikā with due approval of the chief queen.

This story is narrated in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva with some minor changes in the events and characters. But the drama *Priyadarśikā* is earlier than the *Kathāsaritsāgara* and hence it can easily be ascertained that *Kathāsaritsāgara* would not be the source of this drama. Rather it can be said that both the plots of the works are driven from the same source. From a hypothesis it appears to us that the *Vṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, composed in the first century B.C. can be the source of this drama but, mishappeningly it is not close to our hand and it is quite difficult to prove the fact.

**Story of Udayana found in the Kathāsaritsāgara**

There was a land named Vatsa which was a pride of the earth and in the midst of that land there was a beautiful city named Kauśambī. A king, named Śatānīka ruled in that city. He had no any issue. Once, while roaming in the forest for chasing, he met with sage Śāṇḍilya, who knowing the grief of the king, visited his city and advised the queen to perform an oblation, chanting some mystic verses. Following this path the queen got a son who was named as Sahasrānīka. In course of time, Śatānīka made his son the crown prince. Once, a battle arose between the gods and the *Asuras*. In that battle Śatānīka joined Indra, who was his friend and slain
many Asuras. But, unfortunately, he met with death in that battle. On his death, the royal dignity descended to his son Sahasrānīka.

Indra arranged a grand feast, on the victory over the Asuras, where, Sahasrānīka had also been invited, as he was the son of Indra’s friend. Sahasrānīka attended that programme. There, he saw that the gods were engaged in sporting in the Nandana Garden and he was also desirous of a suitable wife for himself. Indra, perceiving his desire told that his desire would be accomplished as a suitable match for him had been born upon the earth. Indra also narrated the previous birth of Sahasrānīka. He was the cursed Vasu, who had been overpowered by the love of an Apsarā named Ālambhuṣā and was cursed by Brahma to have birth as human being. Apsarā Ālambhusā also took birth in Ayodhyā with the name Mṛgāvatī, as the daughter of Kṛtavarmā.

Having heard from Indra about his past, Sahasrānīka, hurried to his kingdom and narrated the whole story to his minister Yugandhara and without making any delay, sent an ambassador to Ayodhyā to seek the hand of Mṛgāvatī. Kṛtavarmā, having heard this from the ambassador informed kalavatī that message. Queen Kalavatī immediately approved that proposal, saying that “king, we ought certainly to give Mṛgavati to Sahasranika, and, I remember, a certain Brahmana told me this very thing in a dream.”

So, the marriage of Mṛgāvatī and Sahasrānīka took place in the approved manner.
Udayana was the son of Mrgāvatī and Sahasrānīka. Gradually, Udayana grew up and the king developed on his son the cares of empire and established in his throne his excellent son Udayana, whom the subjects loved so well. Lastly he ascended the Himalaya to prepare for his final goal. Udayana took the responsibility of the kingdom of Vatsa, which his father had bequeathed to him. He established himself in Kauśambī and ruled his subjects well. But gradually he became absorbed in various types of passions. He bestowed the responsibility of the kingdom upon his ministers. His only anxiety was, he always remained thinking that there was no any wife found equal to his quality and birth. He liked Vāsavadattā, the daughter of Chaṇḍamahāsena but was worried as how this maiden to be obtained. On the other hand Chaṇḍamahāsena also thought that Udayana would be the suitable husband to his daughter but as, Udayana was his ally, there arised an obstacle in that relation. Finally, Chaṇḍamahāsena went to the temple of Durgā to pleade her which may bless him. When he offered prayer to that deity, he heard from a bodiless saying that his wish would be accomplished very shortly. Chaṇḍamahāsena then sent his ambassador to Udayana, with the proposal of teaching music to his daughter but abiding the advice of his minister Yaugandharāṇa, Udayana sent message that if Vāsavadattā wanted to learn music from him, then, she should be sent to Udayana. Chaṇḍamahāsena, hearing this, could understand that Udayana would not come in his hand in this way. So he thought of a plan and had
made a large artificial elephant as a prey as he knew that Udayana was fond of elephant hunting and to make him a prisoner he had to play this trick. Udayana was informed by the scouts about that elephant and all at once he thought that if he could catch that elephant for Nādagiri, Chaṇḍamahāsena would surely be in his power and give his daughter to him. Ultimately he approached to it alone, playing lute in melodious tune. As soon as he arrived there, a troop of soldiers came out of the artificial elephant and had caught him. Udayana fought against them but finally he was captivated and brought in the presence of Chaṇḍamahāsena. He, then, appointed him as the music teacher of Vāsavadattā. Later on they were bound in love-bondage and one-day, with the help of his two ministers, Yaugandharāyana and Rumaṇvat who were his real well-wishers, Udayana escaped along with Vāsavadattā towards Kauśambī.

As time passed Vāsavadattā began to feel great affection for the king of Vatsa. She became ready to go against her father also. But, there was no any reason to take any step further because a merchant, who was the friend of Yaugandharāyaṇa, came from Ujjayinī and informed his friend that king Chaṇḍamahāsena was pleased to have Vatsarāja as his son-in-law and also sent his warder to him. The king of Vatsa, having heard this news immediately expressed that matter to Vāsavadattā. Vāsavadattā was exceedingly delighted and was anxious for the marriage ceremony.
The warder of Chaṇḍamahāsena came to Yaugandharāyaṇa and spoke as follows “the king Chandamahasena sends you this message. You did rightly in carrying of Vasavadatta yourself, for I had brought you to my court with this very object, and the reason I did not myself give her to you, while you were a prisoner, was, that I feared, if I did so, you might not be well disposed to me. Now, o king, I ask you to wait a little, in order that the marriage of my daughter may not be performed without due ceremonies. For my son Gopalaka will soon arrive at your court, and he will celebrate with appropriate ceremonies the marriage of that sister of his.”

Then, the king of Vatsa, being pleased, set out for his own city the next day and reached Kauśambī within two or three days. All the citizens started to enjoy as their king had returned to his kingdom. The marriage ceremony was over after the coming of Gopālaka, Pulindaka and other kings. Thus, Vatsarāja, after obtaining Vāsavadattā began to pass his days in pleasure. But, his two ministers, Yaugandharāyaṇa and Rumaṇvān were busy in thinking that the kingdom of Vatsa had been confined to a small corner of earth, due to his devotion towards women, wine and hunting. So they should try to bring the whole empire of the earth under Udayana’s territory. The two ministers, then, planned to bring Pradyota, the king of Magadha, who was the enemy of Vatsarāja, in favour of their king, with the help of marriage of his daughter Padmāvatī to the king of Vatsa. And, for their purpose, they took Vāsavadattā and her father in the confidence
and chalked out a plan. They spread a rumour that Vāsavadattā had been burnt in a fire-incident in the village, Lāvāṇaka. They knew that the king would not marry Padmāvatī while Vāsavadattā was alive and Pradyota would also not accept the marriage proposal. But, as, the most important obstacle is removed, it has become easier for Pradyota to give his daughter in the hand of Vatsarāja.

**Plot of the drama Priyadarśikā**

The drama *Priyadarśikā* starts with a Viṣkambhaka where the chamberlain of Dṛḍhavarmaṇa narrates a series of incidents: he repents for the misfortune of his master and starts to give a description of the valour of Dṛḍhavarmaṇa stating that he is a peer of Raghu, Dīlipa and Nala. He is surmised that such a vigorous king has been attacked by the cursed king of Kaliṅga. He is worried that his master, who has promised his daughter to Vatsarāja Udayana, could not keep his word as he had been attacked by the king of Kaliṅga. Chamberlain also informs that Dṛḍhavarmaṇa has vested the responsibility of his daughter in his hand. Accordingly the chamberlain places her in the house of the forest king Vindhaketu as he is in a friendly bondage with Dṛḍhavarmaṇa but when he goes to take a bath in the holly pool of Agasthya, some people instantly attacked Vindhaketu, slew him and burnt his palace and turned that place into a śmaśāna. He searches the whole surroundings but finds none there, for which he could not know the whereabouts of that princess and is in a restless condition. From his
utterance it is also known that Udayana has escaped from the captivity of the king Pradyota, of Avantī, carrying off his daughter Vāsavadattā and reached his kingdom.

**Act I**

After the *Viṣkambhaka* the main act starts with a conversation between Udayana and his companion *Vidūṣaka*. They discuss about the king’s imprisonment. In between their discussion the king expresses his eagerness to know the report of the forest king Vindhaketu and orders that the minister Rumaṇvan should be called in. Rumaṇvan and Vījaṇyasena immediately are informed and they also approach the king with the news of victory over Vindhaketu. They report how Vindhaketu has rushed over them, roaring like a lion, with his few followers and has not waited for his army. They praise his valour and also describe elaborately the fight against their enemy Vindhaketu and ultimately their success over him. Vījaṇyasena further informs that when Vindhaketu has been slain, along with his followers, his wives follow him in his death. Rest of them, who were alive, had taken shelter on the peak of the Vindhak-sūd mountain. But a young girl was there in Vindhaketu’s house. They have captivated that beautiful girl and taken her with them, and also waiting for the decision of the king regarding her settlement.

Thus, the girl, on the command of the king has been vested upon the chief queen Vāsavadattā. Queen Vāsavadattā has also been informed by
Yaśodharā regarding the instruction of the king. The king announced that
the girl should be given proper teaching on art, dancing and singing. The
king, moreover, tells that he should be informed when the girl would be fit
for giving marriage. At the end of the first act the king expresses to show
honour to Vījayasena and dispatches him for annihilating the king of
Kaliṅga.

Act II

The second act starts with the entrance of Vidūṣaka where he
expresses that he has been summoned by the queen Vāsavaddattā to receive
the svastivācana as she has been observing a vow. A very attracting
conversation takes place between the king and his friend Vasantaka. The
king goes to the palace garden where the queen Vāsavaddattā has been
engaged in observing a fast. While walking in the garden the king suddenly
sees Āraṇyikā, who has come with Indīvarikā, one of the attendants of the
queen Vāsavaddattā for collecting flowers, on the command of the queen, as
she has wanted to present an offering to the sage Agasthya. The king being
struck by the beauty of that girl hides himself behind a cluster of trees and
waits to overhear the conversation between Āraṇyikā and Indīvarikā. The
king becomes successful in his mission while he could know that the
maiden is the daughter of Vindhaketu. Āraṇyikā is bussy in collecting
lotuses from the pond in the shower house garden but suddenly she has
been attacked by some wicked bees. Āraṇyikā starts calling Indīvarikā to
rescue her but as she was far away from her, *Vidūṣaka* suggests the king to enjoy the opportunity. Being convinced by the proposal of the *Vidūṣaka* the king approaches there and clasps her at her neck. Āraṇyikā removes her upper garments from her face which was used by her to protect the face from the harassment caused by the bees. When Āraṇyikā could know that it is not Indīvarikā, she starts to call her for protection. At that very moment it becomes clear to her, from the utterance of *Vidūṣaka*, that the person who has saved her from the attack of the bees is the king Vatsarāja. Hearing her voice Indīvarikā approaches there. The king and the *Vidūṣaka* have left that place immediately in the fear of being seen by them. Āraṇyikā, however, is glad to find that it was king Vatsarāja whom she has been betrothed by her father and falls in love with him. She leaves the place with Indīvarikā with a broken heart. The king also being smitten by love leaves that spot with his companion.

**Act III**

The third act opens with a monologue of Manoramā, an attendant of Vāsavadattā. She informs that a beautiful play, composed by Saṅkṛtyāyaṇī, is going to be dramatized on the occasion of *Kaumudī* festival and on the command of Vāsavadattā, Manoramā has to perform the role of the remaining part of the king and Āraṇyikā has to play the part of the queen. Manoramā, therefore, searches Āraṇyikā and finds her in a position of longing for the king. From her free utterings Manoramā could discover that
Āraṇyikā is in deep love with the king, who has rescued her from the attack of bees. She, therefore, helps Āraṇyikā at her love-sick condition and puts some lotus leaves on her bosom to give comfort to her.

Meanwhile Vidūšaka arrives there in search of Āraṇyikā, as his friend Vatsarāja is also longing for her and wants to meet his object of love. By the joint effort of Vidūšaka and Manoramā a way has been discovered to arrange a meeting between the two lovers. Manoramā wishpers the planning to Vidūšaka and starts with Āraṇyikā.

Next starts the scene of ‘Mimic play’ which is scheduled to be performed in the play house. The name of the play is ‘Udayanacarita’. Queen Vāsavadattā accompanied by her attendants and friend Sānakṛtyāyanī comes to the play-house to witness the play. Manoramā does not play the role of the king rather the king himself acts his part and Āraṇyikā as the queen, according to the device made by Vidūšaka and Manoramā. When the play starts the king acts in such a way which rouses suspicion in the mind of the queen. Unable to witness such a scene Vāsavadattā, leaving her seat, goes out and finds Vasantaka, sleeping in the adjoining room. She thinks that the king might be there but from the mutterings of Vasantaka she could understand the actual fact. Vidūšaka, in his sleep, reveals the whole trick and spoils the entire matter. Vāsavadattā, being carried away by anger, immediately orders to stop the play. She blames Manoramā for such a necked plan. She also accused Vasantaka and binds the hands to
reap the fruit of his evil policy. The queen orders both Āraṇyikā and Vasantaka to be imprisoned. In the last part of this act, the king tries to reconcile queen Vāsavadattā and prays for forgiveness, but the queen without showing any interest to his words, departs from that place.

Act IV

The fourth act starts with Praveśaka, with a conversation between Manoramā and Kāṇcanmālā, the two maids of Vāsavadattā, where Mānoramā speaks herself of the long continuity of anger of Vāsavadattā which is caused by the activities of the king in the ‘Mimic play’. She also expresses her effection for Āraṇyikā who has been imprisoned by Vāsavadattā and informs Āraṇyikā’s intention of killing herself too. That time Kāṇcanmālā enters with the message that a letter has been sent by Aṅgāravatī, to Vāsavadattā, narrating that the king of Kaliṅga had imprisoned the husband of her mother’s sister, a year ago, for which she is in a very distressed condition. She is worried, thinking that her husband has not shown any consciousness regarding this matter.

Sāṃkrtyāyanī consoles her friend Vāsavadattā saying that king Vatsarāja is not such type of person who will remain idle in such a crucial situation. On the other hand, while searching a way of setting Āraṇyikā free from the captivity of Vāsavadattā, the king and the Vidūṣaka find her sitting in the centre of the ivory chamber. The king begs forgiveness for his earlier deed. At that time Sāṃkrtyāyanī informs the king, the real cause of
her sorrow. The king also informs her that a big army has been sent by him to Kaliṅga and expecting something positive. At that time Vījayasena, the victorious commander general and the chamberlain of the king Dṛḍhavarmaṇa appear there and the chamberlain informs that Vījayasena has defeated the king of Kaliṅga in battle and slaying him restores Dṛḍhavarmaṇa to his kingdom. Chamberlain also narrates the previous incidents regarding Āranyikā, her betrothing by her father, how she is lost. By this time Manoramā approaches there with the sad news that Āranyikā has taken poison in the prison. Vāsavadattā, who captivated her, hearing this news is smitten with penitence. She immediately orders to bring Āranyikā before the king, who is an expert in poison curing, the knowledge of which is acquired by him while residing in the world of Nāgas. Accordingly, Āranyikā has been brought before the king by her friend where the chamberlain recognizes her and exposes her identity before them, saying that Āranyikā is the daughter of Dṛḍhavarmaṇa, his master, whose real name is Priyadarśikā. The king starts his process of curing her with the magical formulas and ultimately becomes successful to save the life of that princess. Vāsavadattā is delighted on seeing that Āranyikā, who is none but her cousin, has regained her life. She also repents for her misdeeds towards her and places her hand on the hand of her husband and thus by the approval of the chief queen Vāsavadattā, the desired union between the hero and the heroine takes place. The drama closes with a
happy ending by the utterance of Bharatavākya or customary benedictory stanza³.

**Deviation from the source**

As it has been mentioned that the source of this drama is misted up, so it will be better to point out here the deviations of the drama Priyadarśikā from the later version of Vṛhatkathā. In this connection, the story of Kathāsaritsāgara has been taken to chalk out the deviations.

(1) In Priyadarśikā the hero Udayana is described as a powerful king. No reference of his father is found in this drama while in kathāsaritsāgara he is introduced as the son of Sahasrānīka who married the daughter of kṛtavarmā, the king of Ayodhyā. (2) Kathāsaritsāgara narrates the story of the birth of Udayana but in Priyadarśikā, no such reference is found. (3) In Priyadarśikā, Vāsavadattā is introduced as the daughter of Pradyota while in Kathāsaritsāgara Vāsavadattā’s father is mentioned as Chaṇḍamahāsenā. (4) The captivity of Āraṇyikā by Vījayasena at the end of their victory over Vindhaketu is an important event of the drama Priyadarśikā, is absent in Kathāsaritsāgara. Rather a similar incident is found in kathāsaritsāgara, where it is mentioned that a princess named Vandhumatī was captivated by Gopālaka and handed over to the queen. (5) In Kathāsaritsāgara the forest king is introduced as a friend of king Udayana who gives shelter to
Udayana while he escaped from the captivity of Chaṇḍamahāsena taking Vāsavadattā with him but in *Priyadarśikā Nāṭikā*, the mention of a forest king named Vindhaketu is found who has been slain by the commander-chief of king Udayana.

**Theme of the drama Ratnāvalī**

*Ratnāvalī* is a romantic drama, dealing with the love-story of princess Ratnāvalī and King Udayana.

**Source of the drama Ratnāvalī**

The story of *Ratnāvalī* is similar to that of *Priyadarśikā* only with some minor changes. This story is also found in Bhāsa’s *Swapnāvāsavadattam*, so naturally a question arises whether Harṣa has borrowed this story from his predecessor Bhāsa and if not so what is the source of this drama? It is noticed that the story of Udayana was popular among the people of those days. Kālidāsa in his famous lyrical poem *Meghadūta* also mentions the name of Udayana⁴. So it can be said that Bhāsa and Harṣa has followed a common source for their works. The story of Udayana is found in the two versions of *Vṛhatkathā* i.e. in *Vṛhatkathāmaṇjarī* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*. But between these two, no one can be regarded as the source of *Ratnāvalī* if the time of composition is judged. *Ratnāvalī* is composed in the seventh century A.D. while *Kathāsaritsāgara* and *Vṛhatkathāmaṇjarī* were written in eleventh century A.D. i.e. much later than the composition of the drama *Ratnāvalī*. So it will
be wise to say that all the works of Harṣa are drawn from a single source and it is the \textit{Vṛhatkathā} of Guṇāḍhyā of the first century B.C. which is now lost.

\textbf{Plot of the drama Ratnāvalī}

\textbf{Act I}

Following the tradition of Sanskrit drama, \textit{Ratnāvalī} starts with a series of benedictory verses. After that benediction \textit{Sūtradhāra} enacts the name of the play and its author. The main act starts with the entrance of Yaugandharāyaṇa, the prime minister of Udayana. In the \textit{Viśkambhaka} Yaugandharāyaṇa narrates all the past incidents: king Vikramavāhu had a daughter named Ratnāvalī. A sooth-sayer had forecast that who ever would marry Ratnāvalī would become a sovereign king. Yaugandharāyaṇa the well-wisher of king Udayana, hearing this news, approaches her father with the marriage proposal of his master. But as the king Udayana is already married, king Vikramavāhu refuses his proposal. For the welfare of the kingdom of Udayana, Yaugandharāyaṇa chalked out a plan and circulates a rumour that queen Vāsavadattā has been perished in a fire-incident at Lāvānaka. As the only obstruction has been removed, Vikramavāhu agrees to the proposal of Yaugandharāyaṇa and sends Ratnāvalī in a ship for Kauśambī. This ship, unfortunately, wrecks in the mid-ocean but luck favours Ratnāvalī as she is rescued by a trader of Kauśambī, recognising by her jewel necklace. He hands over the princess to the prime- minister
Yaugandharāyaṇa. The prime-minister then takes her to Vāsavadattā and introduces her as Sāgarikā. Accordingly, she is appointed as an attendant of the queen in her inner-apartment. Yaugandharāyaṇa also explains that Ratnāvalī was escorted by Vasubhuti and Bābhravya and unfortunately they had become the victim of the ship-wreck. Being rescued from that mishap and getting no any trace of Ratnāvalī they join the army of general, Rumanvān, to lead an expedition against the king of Kośala, according to the order of Udayana. Moreover Yaugandharāyaṇa expresses his intention of bringing Ratnāvalī in the inner apartment of king Udayana. He plans that if the maiden resides in the inner apartment, oneday she will come in the notice of the king and may meet with a love-bondage. He also thinks that in such a way her chastity would not be questioned by anyone.

After the Viṣkambhaka, the king accompanied by his friend Vasantaka enters the stage. The king expresses to him that his kingdom has become entirely secured as all his enemies have been vanquished and the responsibility of the kingdom has been vested upon a competent minister. He is now free from all kinds of anxiety and hence he wishes to enjoy the sight of the spring festival. The king and the Vidūṣaka discuss and describe the charming atmosphere of the annual Madana-festival where the citizens of his kingdom were engaged in enjoying that spring festival. At that time Madanikā and Cutalatikā, the two attendents of queen Vāsavadattā enter and start to sing and dance on the stage. Vidūṣaka also joins them in
dancing. They have sported for a long time and getting tired Madanikā and Cutalatikā go to convey the message of queen Vāsavadattā to the king that he has to go to the Makaranda garden as the queen has desired to worship the image of god of love, placed under the red Aśoka tree. Accordingly, the king, accompanied by Vidūṣaka starts for the Makaranda garden. A very beautiful picture of that garden comes out from the narration of the king. Vāsavadattā with her attendents reaches the Makaranda garden and orders Kāñcanmālā to bring the materials that are needed for worship. At that moment, Sāgarikā, the heroine, appears there with the materials for worshipping. Observing her presence, Vāsavadattā, at once, sends her away on a pretext that she should take care of sārikā as all the attendents are entirely occupied with the Madana festival. The queen feels to keep Sāgarikā away from the range of the sight of the king as she is extremely young and beautiful. On the other side, Sāgarikā is too much excited to witness the ritual of Kāmadeva festival in that kingdom. So going some steps farther she conceals herself by the cluster of the tree. She also gathers some flowers to worship Kāmadeva.

As the king arrives there, he has been given a seat by the queen. Vāsavadattā offers worship to Kāmadeva and then to her husband. Sāgarikā, who has been observing the sight of that worship, becomes astonished, thinking that the flower-arrowed Cupid is accepting worship in a visible form and she too, offers worship, standing behind the tree. Later
on, from the song of a bard she could recognize that it is the king Udayana, to whom she was betrothed by her father. Sāgarikā falls in his love at her first sight and remembering her ill-luck looks at the king, sighing deeply.

The day has drawn to its close so the king expresses to enter inside the palace. All the royal members leave as the Madana festival is over. Sāgarikā too, leaves that spot with a broken heart.

**Act II**

The second act starts with an Interlude where a conversation takes place between Susaṅgatā and Nipuṅikā. Susaṅgatā, the friend of Sāgarikā waits for her, occupying a cage in her hand. While she meets Nipuṅikā she is informed by the later that Sāgarikā has been seen to go to the plantain bower carrying a picture board, brush and a paint box. After returning from Madana festival, the love-sick Sāgarikā becomes anxious to have a glance on that person whose very sight has inspired her mental pangs. She blames her misfortune and at last finding no other way she tries to satisfy her desire, makes a portrait of the king. Susaṅgatā on the other hand, arrives at the plantain bower where she finds her friend engaged with the picture board. She can ascertain the matter when she has witnessed the situation. Susaṅgatā asks her friend about the person in that picture board. In answer to her query Sāgarikā expresses that it is the lord Cupid. Susaṅgatā, being a clever girl, draws the picture of Sāgarikā on it, saying that she is making the picture of Rati, by the side of Cupid as it is incomplete. Ultimately
Sāgarikā discloses her love-sickness to her friend. As their conversation is going on, a monkey gets loose from the palace and opens the door of the cage, in which the Mynah bird (sārikā) of queen Vāsavadattā was kept. So, both Sāgarikā and Susaṅgatā have left the place immediately, keeping the picture board in hurry, in the plantain bower. On the other side, getting the chance, the bird flies away and approaches the plantain bower where the king and his friend Vasantaka were already present. That bird mutters the whole conversation, took place between the two friends and flies away. Both king and Vasantaka try to follow the bird, but it disappears. In the mean time, Vasantaka finds a picture board, lying on the ground. The king takes the picture board forcefully from his friend and the picture on the canvas convinces the king of his own association with the love. On the other hand, Susaṅgatā, accompanied by Sāgarikā enters the banana bower to collect the picture board and overhears the conversation between the king and his friend. In this banana bower, the first meeting between the hero and the heroine takes place. But, this meeting does not last long as the chief queen Vāsavadattā arrives there, accompanied by Kāñcanmālā. The secret of the love affair has been caught red handed, as Vāsavadattā has seen the picture board, dropped from the hand of the Vidūṣaka. But she has not reacted much rather suppressing her anger on the pretext of attack of headache leaves the spot immediately.
Act III

In the beginning of the third act, it is known from the conversation of Kāñcanmālā and Madanikā, two maids of the queen that the king is pining for Sāgarikā. Accordingly Vasantaka and Susaṅgatā have made an arrangement of a secret meeting between the two. It is planned that Susaṅgatā in the disguise of Kāñcanmālā will arrive, taking Sāgarikā with her, dressed in queen’s robe. She tells Vidūṣaka to wait at the gate of picture-gallary and thus they will be united in the Mādhavī bower. But at the time of meeting, the queen Vāsavadattā has been presented before the king, by the jester. The king mistaking Vāsavadattā as Sāgarikā opens his heart with words of love but he feels embarrassed when Vāsavadattā reveals her infront of the king. The entire plan has been disclosed to the queen by Kāñcanmālā, for which the queen takes her step. The king begs pardon to her but the queen departs from that place without reacting much.

Just then, Sāgarikā, in the guise of Vāsavadattā arrives there and knowing the situation she goes to commit suicide. Thinking how Sāgarikā would be punished by the queen, the king proceeds towards the queen to get her favour.

On the other hand, when the secret has been discovered by the queen, Sāgarikā makes a noose of creeper and about to hang herself but she
is noticed by the *Vidūṣaka* who makes a call for help and the king approaching there saves her, taking her as the queen. The union between the two thus takes place. But ill-luck, queen Vāsavadattā appeared there with the intention to beg apology for her rude behaviour and finds the king with Sāgarikā in an untolerable situation. The king, again, falls in her feet but the queen leaves that place arresting both the jester and Sāgarikā.

**Act IV**

The fourth act starts with a *Praveśaka*. Susaṅgatā enters with a necklace of jewels on the stage sighing piteously for the helpless condition of her friend. Being struck with sorrow, Susaṅgatā expresses to Vasantaka who has been released from captivity, about the future danger of her beloved friend and informs that she has been taken away by the queen in the dead of night. She also hands over the necklace to him as instructed earlier by Sāgarikā to do so. Susaṅgatā and *Vidūṣaka* bring forth the fact of Sāgarikā’s banishment.

On the other way the queen circulates the news that Sāgarikā has been taken to Ujjayini. The king also gets the news of the expulsion of Sāgarikā from his friend and the later also shows the jewel-necklace which was worn by that girl. On that very moment, the news comes to the ears of the king Udayana that the king of kośala has been slain by Rumaṇvān in
the battle. The king commands Vasundharā for telling Yaugandharāyaṇa to bestow his favour on that fellow.

Next, a magician named Sarvasiddhi arrives in the kingdom of Udayana. He is from Ujjayini. The king accompanied by the queen was engaged in witnessing the performance of the magician but it has been interrupted by the arrival of Bābhrabhya and Vasubhuti who had joined the army of Rumaṇvān being saved from the shipwreck. Vasubhuti, seeing the jewel-necklace with Vidūṣaka recognizes it and narrates the whole incident happened at the time of their journey on the sea and the proposed marriage of Ratnāvalī and Udayana. Suddenly this narration has been disturbed by a fire-incident. The fire has broken out in the Royal house where Sāgarikā has been imprisoned by the queen. She, being scared, immediately begs to the king to rescue Sāgarikā from this mishap. The king too, without wasting time rushes there and saves Sāgarikā. Later on, it has been discovered that it was not the real fire but the effect of the super quality of the magician. Seeing Sāgarikā, Vasubhuti recognizes his princess and opens her identity. The prime-minister Yaugandharāyaṇa also appears there and discloses the whole plan made by him. He begs apology for his secret planning. Thus everything has been cleared up. Everyone is happy. The drama ends with the union of Udayana and Ratnāvalī, by the prior approval of the queen.
Theme of the drama Nāgānanda

The self-sacrifice of Jīmūtavāhana for the welfare of the serpents is the main theme of this drama.

Source of the drama Nāgānanda

In the prelude of the drama Nāgānanda, it has been stated that king Harṣa has composed a drama, entitled Nāgānanda, the source of which is Vidyādhara Jātaka. But in the collection of Jātakas, available today, no such work by the title Vidyādhara Jātaka is found. The story of Jīmūtavāhana is however found in the two versions of Guṇāḍhya. The two versions are Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadeva and Vṛhatkathāmañjarī of kṣemendra. The original Vṛhatkathā is unfortunately not in our hand. In the Kathāsaritsāgara and Vṛhatkathāmañjarī there are descriptions of the story of Jīmūtavāhana, but both these works cannot be the source of the drama Nāgānanda as these are composed in the eleventh century A.D. and our poet Śriharṣa flourished in the seventh century A.D. a far earlier than those works. But as there is a similarity in the story of Kathāsaritsāgara and Nāgānanda, it would not be illogical to say that Śriharṣa has borrowed the theme of Nāgānanda from the original Vṛhatkathā composed by Guṇāḍhya, who flourished much earlier than Śriharṣa.

The Kathāsaritsāgara pays more attention to the narration, while in Vṛhatkathāmañjarī the author cuts short the story element. For the practical
purpose, therefore, it will be better if the story of Nāgānanda is compared with that of Kathāsaritsāgara.

The story of Jimūtavāhana found in the Kathāsaritasāgara runs thus:

At the peak of the mountain Himalayas, there was a city named Kāñcanapura, where Jimūtaketu, the king of Vidyādhāras reigned happily. He had a Kalpatree in his garden by the favour of which he became the father of a jewel-like son Jimūtavāhana.

Jimūtavāhana was brave, modest and a veritable ornament of the Vidyādhāra family. When he reached his youth, Jimūtaketu crowned him as Vidyādhāra prince. Jimūtavāhana desired to remove poverty from the world through the Kalpatree and conveyed his prayer to the tree. Kalpatree also agreed to his proposal and showing favour to him it returned to heaven. From such an event Jimūtavāhana’s fame spread in the three worlds. To Jimūtavāhana the riches and wealth are transitory. So when he heard that his kinsmen desired to invade his kingdom, he abandoned his kingdom and did not want to be the cause of their slaughter and went to forest accompanied by his parents. There, they began to pass their life constructing a small hermitage on the Himālaya Mountain. By this time, Jimūtavāhana met with Mitrāvasu, the son of the Siddha king Viśvāvasu. In course of time a deep friendship developed between Jimūtavāhana and Mitrāvasu.
Oneday, while walking in the forest, Jīmūtavāhana reached the Gaurī temple. There, he saw a very beautiful and charming maiden, absorbed in playing lute, accompanied by her girl friends. Her beauty captured the heart of Jīmūtavāhana. She also fell into his love. When Jīmūtavāhana asked her name, he could know from her friend that her name was Malayavatī. Malayavatī also could know the whereabouts of Jīmūtavāhana, at their first meeting. Her friends showed him great honour and offered him a garland of flower. Jīmūtavāhana placed the garland in the neck of Malayavatī with great love. At that very moment, the maid of Malayavatī appeared there with the message of her mother and said that she had been summoned by her mother. Thus the hero and the heroine departed from each other.

Both the hero and the heroine were stricken by their separation. Malayavatī, being unable to bear the separation went to the forest, on the next day, and tried to commit suicide, but was prevented by a Divine voice which let her convince that Jīmūtavāhana, the prince of Vidyādhara would be her future husband. Jīmūtavāhana also heard that Divine voice and rescued her from committing suicide. Meanwhile, one of her girl servant approached there and informed her that the brother and father of Malayavatī also selected Jīmūtavāhana as their son-in-law. Jīmūtaketu was
also agreed at their proposal. Thus the marriage of Jīmūtavāhana and Malayavatī took place with due consent of the parents.

Oneday, Jīmūtavāhana, while walking on the sea-shore accompanied by Mitrāvasu, found some bones and became very much astonished. From Mitrāvasu he wanted to know what the fact was. Mitrāvasu then described the whole incident that the king of serpents, Vāsukī promised Garuḍa to sent one serpent each and every day to please him. These bones were nothing but the result of Garuḍa’s cruel action. On hearing that Jīmūtavāhana decided to sacrifice his life to save the serpents. When he was thinking so, suddenly he heard someone weeping in a heart rendering voice and being hurt by that sound he also approached there. He found a woman who was crying embracing her son. He was Śaṅkhacūḍa that was selected by Vāsukī, the king of serpents as the victim of Garuḍa for that very day. Jīmūtavāhana then consoled the woman, saying that he would save Śaṅkhacūḍa. Śaṅkhacūḍa then went to Gokarṇa to pay his homage before Garuḍa’s arrival. But, meanwhile, Garuḍa arrived there and took away Jīmūtavāhana mistaking him as Śaṅkhacūḍa. Jīmūtavāhana’s desire got the ultimate goal. The gods also showered flowers from heaven seeing his doctrine of benevolence.

Garuḍa tortured Jīmūtavāhana with his beak and blood was also falling from his body. His crest-jewel fell at the feet of Malayavatī while he
was being carried away by Garuḍa. Jīmūtaketu could learn everything through his supernatural power and reached the Malaya-mountain. On the other hand, when Śaṅkhacūḍa returned from the temple of Gokarna, he did not find Jīmūtavāhana and started to search him following the blood track. He went to Malaya-mountain and could discover that Garuḍa was devouring Jīmūtavāhana. He then informed Garuḍa that he had committed a great mistake by carrying away this great fellow Jīmūtavāhana. Garuḍa was about to eat him but getting that information he began to repent for such a cruel activity. By this time Malayavatī and the parents of Jīmūtavāhana arrived there. They were crying on his distress. Unable to bear the pain of his body Jīmūtavāhana took his last breathe. Each and everyone sank on tears. Malayavatī then started to rebuke Gaurī and blamed her. She was a great devotee of goddess Gaurī. Gaurī was pleased at her devotion so she appeared there and showered nectar on dead Jīmūtavāhana, by the result of which Jīmūtavāhana regained his life and was crowned as the king of Vidyādhara by the favour of goddess Gaurī. Garuḍa also offered a boon to Jīmūtavāhana. Jīmūtavāhana then prayed him to give relief to all serpents from the bondage of Garuḍa. Garuḍa also agreed to his proposal and promised not to kill the serpents here after. All the serpents also regained their lives. Malayavatī became very much wondered and at the same time very much happy, seeing her beloved alive.
The parents of Jīmūtavāhana began to flow in ocean of joy and started to enjoy a happy life with their son.

**Plot of the drama Nāgānanda**

**Act I (The prologue): The day of Indra festival**

In praise of Buddha two benedictory stanzas are offered which show his rock firm posture of meditation, after invoking lord Buddha to protect his audience, the stage manager announces that he has been requested by the feudatory kings of Śrīharṣa to perform the play, based on the *Vidyādhara Jātaka*, composed by the Emperor himself. He congratulates himself that he has the good fortune of enacting a drama composed by such an expert poet as Śrīharṣa, teaching of such an attracting theme, before such an enlightened audience, with the help of skilled actors. The *Sūtradhāra* then calls his wife and learns from her that his aged parents have retired to the forest. He declares that he will also follow them to serve his father in the imitation of Jīmūtavāhana, the hero of the drama.

**The main scene**

The main scene takes place in the penance grove near the Gaurī temple. The hero Jīmūtavāhana accompanied by his friend Ātreya is searching for a suitable place, on the Malaya mountain where they can reside, as his old parents expressed their desire to stay there. Jīmūtavāhana, being a devoted son, having willingly resigned from the
charge of kingship, went to forest. He has done his level best to let his subjects live in happiness and prosperity.

Roaming the Malaya Mountain, both of them come to a hermitage. They have been struck by the grandeur of Malaya Mountain and the atmosphere of the penance grove, the hero, therefore, decides to stay there.

There the tunes of melodious music came to their ears from Gaurī temple of the hermitage. Following the sweet sound they entered into the Gaurī temple and concealed themselves behind the Tamāla tree to find out who was singing. The heroine Malayavatī was playing on lute, before the goddess Gaurī. A conversation was going on between Malayavatī and her maid. The Vidūṣaka from that conversation could come to learn that she is a maiden and goddess Gaurī revealed herself to her in a dream and gave a boon that Emperor of Vidyādharas will be her future husband. The hero Jīmūtavāhana is charmed by her beauty. The Vidūṣaka dragged the hero into the presence of heroine. The maid welcomed them and offered seats. Malayavatī felt embarrassed to stand before them. At that moment a hermit entered there to inform Malayavatī that she should return home according to the order of her father Viśwāvasu. The hermit also informed that her brother Mitrāvasu has gone to princes Jīmūtavāhana to propose him to marry his sister. The heroine than departs unwillingly. Without knowing the identity, both the hero and heroine fall in love with each other.
The first act gives us an account of character of the hero, as he is a devoted son, whose only aim in life is to serve his father. He is also prepared to lay down his life to serve for the cause of others. In this act the hero and the heroine meet for the first time and fall in love at their first sight.

**Act II**

Two maids of princess Malayavatī hold a conversation with each other, which informs us that princess Malayavatī became very much tired by the exertion of plucking flowers and also was exhausted by the autumnal heat, desires to take a rest in the bower of sandal creepers. She is waiting for her brother Mitrāvasu who had gone to Jīmūtavāhana with the proposal of her marriage.

**Main scene**

The main scene takes place under the sandal bower. The heroine being absent minded on account of her lovesick condition, desires to go to the sandal bower to allay her anguish. Her mind distracted by her passionate longing for the hero and her mental heat rather than physical, growing the more. The maid, whom the secret of her heart is confessed, tries to alleviate her burning torment by applying sandal juice on her bosom. But it was in vain.

Then the love-lorn hero, accompanied by his friend Vidūṣaka approached there and searched the same stone slab where he has seen in his
dream, his beloved being angry with him, through love and weeping for some reason unknown to him. He describes the dream, to his friend, which the heroine over hears from behind the tree and becomes disappointed with that narration, which she though could not at all understand. The hero than portrayed the image of his love on the stone-slate. At that stage Mitrāvasu, the brother of Malayavatī, approached there without giving any information and expressed the order of his father, the king of the Siddhas and proposed to offer him his sister’s hand in marriage. On his approval, the hero concealed the portrait hurriedly. Thinking her to be different from Malayavatī, the hero declined the aspect of proposal. The Vidūṣaka saved the situation by asking Mitrāvasu to take permission of the parents of Jīmūtavāhana. Mitrāvasu then went away.

Having listened to the conversation, the heroine found herself in desperate state of mind, believing that the hero is in love with someone else and that he had nothing to do with her. Her hope has turned into disappointment, and it has darkened into total despair. So finding no other way, she tried to commit suicide by hanging herself with a creepers nose.

The maid, suspecting her intention, watching her from behind and whenever she discovered that the heroine is going to commit suicide, she cried for help. The hero, then, rushed to the spot and found that his beloved was the same as Malayavatī, whom he rejected to marry. He then showed her the portrait and she was also convinced of his love. At the same time,
one maid appeared there and informed that the hero’s parents have consented to the proposed marriage and the marriage was to be celebrated that very day, they were called away for an auspicious bath.

In this act, again the dramatist drew the sketch of hero through the utterances of prince Mitrāvasu.

This act marks a full developed stage of love between hero and the heroine. The hero was very much affected by the arrows of cupid. The rescuing of the heroine by the hero is a very conventional method used to further the process of love.

**Act III**

The third act takes place in the *kusumākara* Garden on the Malaya Mountain. The wedding ceremony has been completed. All the *Siddhas* and *Vidyādhara* people are engaged in merriment. The intoxicated Viṭa and Cheṭa now entered the garden with wine glasses in their hand. Viṭa is waiting for his beloved Navamālikā. The *Vidūṣaka* too, enters the garden to see his friend Jīmūtavāhana with his body wrapped up in red garments like a woman to protect him from bees. Śekharaka, under the influence of his intoxication, over eager to see his love, mistakes the jester for her and embraces him. Navamālikā and Śekharaka both make fun of him but later they beg apologies.

Now, a quiet yet warm love scene spread before the eyes. The hero and the heroine enter the garden. The hero is fascinated by the Venus like
beauty of his newly-wed bride and compares it with the charming of the Kusumākara Garden. He also compares the lovely face of his love with Indras garden. Both of them are very happy.

The happiest moment passes like a fleeting arrow. The excited Mitrāvasu comes on the scene and informs the hero that his enemy Mātaṅga has snatched away his kingdom and Mitrāvasu wants the permission of the hero to stay under the usurper. The hero is pained at the punishing attitude of Mitrāvasu. He also expresses that he would even sacrifice his life for the sake of others, what then of the kingdom? He then departs with Mitrāvasu and wants to convince him of his own view. In this context, the hero glorifies the sun whose only effort is for the good of others.

Humer is found in this act which is caused by the incident of Vīṭa and Cheṭa. This humour is inserted at the proper situation that is at the time of marriage festival.

The erotic mood is also evident from the activities of the hero. The hero under the influence of love is shown as gallant lover who showers the complements on the beauty of his beloved.

**Act IV**

The Interlude

A conversation is held between the chamberlain and Mitrāvasu’s father and the door-keeper. He enters with a pair of red garments, in
accordance with the order of Mitrāvasu’s mother, for the bridegroom and bride on the occasion of Happy Diwali festival. The door-keeper also tells that he has been commanded by Viśwāvasu to summon his son Mitrāvasu, as some gift should be made to his son-in-law on that occasion.

**Main scene**

The main scene of this act is found to take place on the sea-shore. The hero Jīmūtavāhana, accompanied by Mitrāvasu goes to sea-shore to take a stroll. Reaching the Malaya-mountain they see a heap of bones, white like the snowy mountain. He could know from Mitrāvasu that these are the skeleton of serpents, devoured by Garuḍa, one by one every day, according to the agreement made by the king of serpents (Vāsukī) to save the other serpents. At that time the door-keeper comes to summon away Mitrāvasu. Suddenly, the hero hears the lamentation of an old woman which has hurt him very much. This unfortunate woman is none but the mother of Śaṅkhacūḍa. She is coming to the place of slaughter, as her son is the victim, chosen for that day. The hero feels very sorry for the woeful plight of Śaṅkhacūḍa and tries to save him by sacrificing his own life. But, Śaṅkhacūḍa does not agree to the proposal. He says that he must carry out the order of his master and also expresses that he will not be able to allow such a person like the hero.

Jīmūtavāhana begs the red garments, the symbol of victim, to Śaṅkhacūḍa, but he denied. So the hero becomes dejected as his ambition
will not be accomplished. Just at that moment, the chamberlain appears there and offers a pair of red garments to the hero. Getting this, the hero becomes very much happy and thinks that his marriage with Malayavatī has proved fruitful. He wraps himself with the garments and lies on the slaughter-stone.

As there is a little delay at the arrival of Garuḍa, Śaṅkhaḍudra goes for a few minutes to worship the God of South Gokarna, before the end of his life. By this time, Garuḍa has arrived and taken away the hero, in the beak, thinking him as the victim. The gods shower flowers in admiration of this great self-sacrifice and there is also the sound of celestial drums too.

The real nature of the hero and the significance of the drama are manifested fully in this act. To the hero, the happiness of life lies in self-sacrifice. This happiness is more thrilling than that of the cool soothing embrace of Malayavatī. The hero is determined to sacrifice his life for the sake of Śaṅkhaḍuda, on the other hand Śaṅkhaḍuda too equally resolved not to accept the help of the hero. This conflict makes the fourth act interesting and thrilling.

**Act V**

In the fifth act it is observed that the anxious king Viśvāvasu sent his door-keeper to know the whereabouts of Jīmūtavāhana. He meets the aged parents of Jīmūtavāhana, accompanied by Malayavatī, where all of them are anxious over his undue delay, finding that he has not returned.
from the beach so far. All of them feel an evil-omen and become uneasy over his prolonged absence, guessing that some evil might have befallen him. In that situation, a crest-gem smeared with blood, drops on the feet of Jīmūtaketu. He becomes dejected thinking it to be of Jīmūtavāhana, at that very moment Śaṅkhacūḍa also returned to previous spot having worshipped at the temple of Gokarna. He is following the track of blood of the hero on the ground to overtake Garuḍa for the release of Jīmūtavāhana whom Garuḍa has mistaken as his victim. Śaṅkhacūḍa becomes very much dejected as he could not able to win the glory of having saved the serpents for a day, nor he could carry out his master’s order. He feels himself shamefully disgraced and at the same time mourns for Jīmūtavāhana. Then he appears the vicinity of the place where Jīmūtavāhana’s worried family stands. They learn from him the whole incident, how Garuḍa has victimised Jīmūtavāhana. On hearing this, the parents and Malayavatī make a resolve to give up their lives too. At the absence of Jīmūtavāhana, they also donot want to keep their lives and starts towards the Malaya mountain taking light in their hands to burn themselves, in case Jīmūtavāhana has already been devoured by Garuḍa.

Reaching the mountain they find that Jīmūtavāhana is lying before Garuḍa in a very serious condition. His blood is sucking, his flesh is torn by the terrible claws of the pitiless Garuḍa, but he is quiet calm, without any physical pains. Śaṅkhacūḍa approaches Garuḍa on the peaks of the
mountain and explains to him that he is not the victim, the serpent, sent by Vāsuki. Hearing this Garuḍa is convinced and realizes that he has committed a great sin by killing that noble fellow. His heart is swallowed up with remorse.

Jīmūtaketu, the father of the hero, his mother and wife Malayavatī are in the stage of entering the fire, on the pathetic plight of the hero. His mother blames Garuḍa on his merciless action. But the hero does not allow his mother to do so. On the other hand, Garuḍa decides to atone for his sin by entering the fire. At once, perceiving his intention, the hero admonishes him not to do so. With the permission of his father he advises Garuḍa to expiate for his son by abstaining from killing the creatures. He also advises Garuḍa to help all living beings in need of help through all possible efforts without selfishness. Garuḍa promises to follow his advice.

The hero also told Śaṅkhacūḍa to return home and console his parents and wife and dies on that stage. Garuḍa flies to heaven to request Indra to pour down the shower of nectar to save the lives of the hero and all the serpents, devoured by him.

Malayavatī invokes Gaurī and accused her of the failure to keep her promise that Malayavatī would marry the Vidyādhara king. Being pleased by the devotion of Malayavatī the Goddess Gaurī appears on the scene and revives the hero and crowns him as the king of Vidyādharas. The shower of nectar by Indra, fallen from the heaven revives all the dead serpents.
This act is remarkable for the sacrifice of life by the hero, instead of another. Here the character of the hero and Śaṅkhacūḍa stand on the same footing. It is very difficult to decide who outshines the other.

The whole scene is very pathetic and the audience is actually on the verge of tears when the hero expires leaving the aged parents and his wife Malayavatī in grief. But the story ends with a very happy feeling, when goddess Gaurī appears on the stage and revives the life of hero.

**Deviation from the source**

In order to make the drama pleasurable, poet Harṣa brings some minor changes in the drama Nāgānanda. In some cases he changes the events and introduces some new characters like Vīṭa, Cheṭa only for the advantage of dramatization.

The changes are as follows:

1. In the original the Hero abandons the kingdom when he hears that his kinsmen desires to invade his kingdom, he does not want to be the cause of their slaughter but in the drama the hero abandons his kingdom only to serve his aged parents and goes to forest. 2. In the original the birth of the hero has taken place by the favour of the Kalpatree, but in the drama no such reference is found. 3. In the original the hero and the heroine meet in the Gaurī temple and become identified with each other through their friends but in
Nāgānanda the hero and the heroine leave the temple without knowing the identity of each other. 4. In the original the heroine is summoned by her mother and leaves the temple while in the drama she leaves the place to show honour to her father’s order. 5. In the original the messenger is her maid but in the drama it is Tāpasa who conveys the message to Malayavatī about her father’s order. 6. In the original, a divine voice prevents Malayavatī from committing suicide but in the drama she is restrained by the hero. 7. There is a reference of Boon that the emperor of Vidyādharas will be the future husband of Malayavatī which is absent in the drama. 8. Vīṭa and Cheṭa are absent in the original but in the drama Nāgānanda they are present and occupy a vital role. 9. There is also no any reference of the incident that Mātaṅga has invaded the kingdom of Jīmūtavāhana in the original source but the drama introduced such an event. 10. In the original the crest gem falls at the feet of Malayavatī while in the drama it falls at the feet of his father. 11. In the original there is a reference of a Boon given to Jīmūtavāhana by Garuḍa, such incident is not found in the drama.

Thus in the drama Nāgānanda the dramatist Harṣa proves his great power of imagination in decorating the incidents. The dry incident of the original gets a nice expression in the hand of the dramatist Harṣa.
Evaluation of the three dramas

A drama is evaluated on the basis of its features and technicalities adopted by the dramatist. The three dramas of Harṣa would also be judged here from those points of view starting with the Nāṭikā Priyadarśikā.

In case of Priyadarśikā, it is noticed that there are eight female representations and it consists of four acts which is a principal feature to get the recognition of Nāṭikā. The hero here is of Dhīralalita type. Vṛtti of this play is Kauśikī as Erotic sentiment predominates here. Thus all the characteristics of Nāṭikā are artistically applied in this drama for which this is designated as Nāṭikā. In both the Nāṭikās i.e. in Priyadarśikā and Ratnāvalī, composed by Śrīharṣa, the hero is found to be afraid of the queen and proceeds in his love affair cautiously from the fear of the queen. Both the works are titled after the name of the heroines.

Śrīharṣa’s Ratnāvalī also consists of four acts. In this drama, there are eight woman characters- Vāsavadattā, Ratnāvalī, Susaṅgatā, Madanikā, Cutalatikā, Kāñcanmālā, Nipuṅikā and Vasundharā. The hero, Udayana, is a popular legendary king, possessing the Dhīralalita character. The heroine Sāgarikā is the daughter of the king of Ceylone who has been appointed in the inner apartment of Udayana. She remains engaged in singing, dancing etc. Seeing Udayana, in the Madana festival she falls in love with the king at her first sight.
As it is mentioned earlier that in Nāṭikā, the hero would always be afraid of the chief queen for the concealment of his love-affairs, in Ratnāvalī also it is noticed that the king Udayana is described to be afraid of the queen Vāsavadattā. The chief queen Vāsavadattā is presented as a sentimental woman for which, the king tries to reconcile her again and again.

The Vṛtti of Ratnāvalī is also Kauśikī as the predominant sentiment here is Erotic. There are five Sandhis in Ratnāvalī. The Mukhasandhi, Pratimukhasandhi and Garbhāsandhi are found in the first three acts of this drama but the rest two Sandhis are found in the fourth act where Vimarṣasandhi is found in a very little extent.

Judging from the above facts it can be said that it is a successful Nāṭikā only from the point of plot it may face criticism, as the plot of Nāṭikā should be invented by the poet’s own imagination. Priyadarśikā also comes under the same category.

Śrīharṣa’s Nāgānanda is a famous Nāṭaka, consisting of five acts. The Vastu or plot is based on Vṛhatkathā of Guṇāḍhya. Here the hero Jīmūtavāhana is Rājarṣī and from the famous Vidyādhara dynasty. He possesses all the qualities of Dhīrodātta type of Nāyaka. He is introduced as an idol of modesty, firmness of determination, worshiper of art, heroism, self-respect, enthusiasm, devotion to duty, kindness and so on. This drama
includes all the five Sandhis. The principal sentiment of this drama is Heroic, though there is a great dispute regarding this sentiment and this matter will be discussed elaborately in the coming chapter. This drama starts with a benedictory stanza in which Lord Buddha has been praised⁹.

In Nāṭaka, there should be the situation for Adbhutarasa in the concluding part and it is noticed that in the end of the drama, the hero regained his life with the favour of Gaurī and nectar also has been showered from heaven through which the serpents too regained their lives. Here the author has shown his great skill in the maintainance of the command of Dramaturgy. All these evidences placed Nāgānanda in the pure category of Nāṭaka.

Śrīharṣa has conformed the various rules of dramaturgy in his works. All the three dramas started with prelude or prologue which is introduced by what is called Nāndī. Among the five types of Prastāvanā, Śrīharṣa has applied Kathodghāta in Ratnāvalī which is found when the Sūtradhāra utters the verse “dvīpādanyasmādapi …….” etc., then Yaugandharāyaṇa enters the stage uttering the same one. In Nāgānanda, the Prastāvanā is of Prayogātiśaya type while in Priyadarśikā it is of Avalagita variety.

As, it has already been discussed that the Sanskrit drama is one-act-one-scene, and in order to inform the incidents that occurred in the past and the incidents that will occur in future, the technicalities like Viṣkambhaka and Praveśaka are employed. It is observed that the Nāṭikā Priyadarśikā starts with a Viṣkambhaka where the chamberlain narrates a series of
events that were happened in the past. It is known from his speech that his master Dr̥dhavarmaṇa has been suddenly attacked by the cursed king of Kālīṅga. He also informs indirectly that King Dr̥dhavarmaṇa is alive and is in captivity, who at his distressed condition promised his daughter, the heroine of the play, to Vatsarāja, the king of Kauśambī, who is unfortunately also in captivity, though later on he has escaped from imprisonment and returned to his kingdom with Pradyota’s daughter Vāsavadattā. In this monologue it is informed that Priyadarśikā was placed in the hands of Vindhaketu, who was slain by Vījayasena, the commander of Vatsarāja. Here the Viṣkambhaka is Śuddha type as it is done by Kaṅcukin, who is a Middle character. Praveśaka is found in between the third and the fourth act of the drama. Here, a conversation is held within Manoramā and Kāṅcanmālā, where they speak about the queen’s long continued anger, hardship of confinement to Āraṇyikā and the letter, sent by Aṅgāravatī to her daughter Vāsavadattā, narrating the captivity of her sister’s husband. All these incidents have not been shown on the stage but through Viṣkambhaka and Praveśaka those events are informed which also make a connection with the coming acts.

From the analysis of various events it is observed that Priyadarśikā does not follow the various cannons of dramaturgy. The Sandhis are not elaborated by the author in this Nāṭikā. Mukhasandhi is started from the settlement of Āraṇyikā in the inner-apartment, in the guidance of the
queen, according to the order of the king. The incidents up to the close of the second act show the continuity of this Sandhi. Pratimukhasandhi is illustrated in the third act where the cause of Āraṇyikā’s union with Udayana is developed. In the third act, the love affair is discovered by Manoramā, Āraṇyikā’s friend and also by Vidūṣaka and hence the seed is partly seen, but it is not perceptible to queen Vāsavadattā, only it is inferred by the queen. Garbhasandhi is also found in the third act. The union of Āraṇyikā and Udayana is again and again interrupted and hence they become separated. In the disguise scene i.e. in the ‘Mimic play’ the effort for the attainment of the objectives is observed. But this attempt is also destructed by the idle-talk of the Vidūṣaka in his sleep, which has been discovered by Vāsavadattā, so, again there is separation. In Pratimukhasandhi, there is effort for the attainment of the Fruit but in Garbhasandhi it meets with various obstacles and hence it is connected with the third Kāryavasthā i.e. Prāptyāśa. It should be remembered that in Garbhasandhi the presentation of the loss or failure is essential.

Avamarṣa is found in the Praveśaka of the fourth act of the Priyadarśikā where Manoramā, entering the stage informs the long continuity of the anger of queen Vāsavadattā who does not show pity towards Āraṇyikā and imprisoned her, who has been prevented earlier by Manoramā from committing suicide. So it is seen that the attainment of the
goal i.e. the union of the hero and the heroine is doubted for some calamities and hence illustrates the *Avamarṣasandhi*.

*Nirvahana* is connected with *Phalāgama* where the seed gets ripen and this *Sandhi* follows from the incident of drinking poison by Āraṇyikā upto the union of the king and Āraṇyikā in the *Nāṭikā Priyadarśikā*.

In case of *Ratnāvalī Nāṭikā*, the *Viṣkambhaka* is found in the beginning of the first act where the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa informs the prediction of the soothsayer, who prophesised that who ever would marry Ratnāvalī would become a prosperous king; the rescue of Ratnāvalī from the ocean and her deliberation into the hands of the queen. These events are not shown in the drama, but from Yaugandharāyaṇa the past events come to the knowledge. There is an indication of future events also.

*Praveśaka* is inserted in the remaining three acts of *Ratnāvalī*. To inform about the entrance of Sāgarikā, there comes the employment of *Praveśaka*, in the second act. From the very conversation of Nipuṇikā and Susaṅgaṭā it is known that Sāgarikā is going to plantain bower and then starts the second act with the entrance of Sāgarikā.

In the *Praveśaka* of the third act, two maid-servants of Vāsavadattā named Kāñcanmālā and Madanikā relate how Susaṅgaṭā has planned to bring about a meeting between the king and Sāgarikā. It also informs of the love in the mind of the king for the heroine Sāgarikā.
In the *Praveśaka* of the fourth act Susaṅgatā offered a jewelled necklace to *Vidūṣaka* which was handed over by Sāgarikā to her, during Sāgarikā’s departure, which is to be given to a *Brāhmaṇa* as a gift. She also informs that Sāgarikā has been sent to Ujjayini.

Sanskrit dramaturgy deals with various elements among which *Arthapraṇḍati* is an important one. It is the element of the plot. The five *Arthapraṇḍatis* have been discussed in the second chapter of this work and here these are drawn to evaluate Śrīharṣa’s dramas from this point of view.

*Vīja*, the first element of *Arthapraṇḍati*, is found in the action of Yaugandharāyaṇa in the achievement of Ratnāvalī by king Udayana, which is the seed and where from one knows about the rescue of Ratnāvalī from the sea and her arrival to the palace of Udayana. Next element is *Vindu*. In case of Ratnāvalī, it is the king who is presented to remember his love for Ratnāvalī in every act and adjusts his resources, according to the need of occasion, because Ratnāvalī herself is in an utterly helpless condition. *Patākā* and *Prakarī* are absent in Harṣa’s dramas. As stated earlier that *Kārya* is essential for the attainment of the end, it is noticed that this element is present in all the dramas of Harṣa.

The five stages have also been very artistically revealed in Śrīharṣa’s *Ratnāvalī*. According to the dramatic rule, the beginning or *Prārambha* is generally made by the hero or the heroine. But, as it has been mentioned in the second chapter of this work, that if the hero entrusts his
affairs to the care of his minister, then the action can be made by the minister also and it is observed that in Ratnāvalī the action is begun by the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa. Here the hero Udayana is an amorous king and his affairs are managed by his minister Yaugandharāyaṇa, where the end to be achieved is the union of Udayana and Ratnāvalī. He had put Ratnāvalī in the palace of king Udayana so that she could easily come to the notice of the king, and as thus it is seen that in the first act, Ratnāvalī saw the king in the spring festival and fell in love with him in her first sight.

In case of Ratnāvalī, Śrīharṣa has shown great skill in the presentation of Yatna or Effort. It can only be realized by taking into consideration the effect of it, because the effort here in itself is very innocent and insignificant, but it is quite in keeping with the helpless condition, in which the focus of the situation, the heroine is placed, as also her basic mental state. Sāgarikā, the heroine, is no other than Ratnāvalī in disguise, was appointed in Udayana’s harem as a keeper of the queen’s pet-bird. In the day of the spring festival, when she saw the king, Udayana, fell in love with him. But as she is simply an attendant on the queen, she could imagine what her own fate would be, if the queen somehow could know her love for the king. She tried her best to have a glance at her object of love. At last finding no other way she decided to see the king in a picture, drawn by her. So she repairs to the plantain bower and sit down to draw a picture. This is the effort which is ultimately responsible for her union with her object of love.
Pratyāśa is that stage of action where the central figure many times faces interruption from the opposite party and also overcomes it. In Ratnāvalī while Sāgarikā was sitting in the plantain bower, completing the picture of the king, Susaṅgatā, the friend of Ratnāvalī came there and realizing the intention of Ratnāvalī, drew the picture of Ratnāvalī by the side of king’s picture. Susaṅgatā who could come in Ratnāvalī’s confidence promised all help to Ratnāvalī. While they were engaged in conversation, they had to rush for safety because a monkey had got loose. In hurry, they left the picture-board in the plantain-bower. On the other side, the mynah bird of Vāsavadattā flew away which was delivered to Sagarikā and both the heroine and her friend ran after it. In the meantime, the king approached that place and found the picture-board lying there. The mynah in that situation arrived in the garden and muttered the whole conversation, taken place between Susaṅgatā and Sāgarikā. The king could come to know the whole matter of discussion from this mynah. When Sāgarikā and her friend returned there to bring the picture board they could hear the voice of the king and with the help of Susaṅgatā, the king could meet Sāgarikā. But within a very short period the meeting was disturbed by the Vidūṣaka who make a quibble, “here is another queen Vāsavadattā”. So Sāgarikā with her friend left that place and ran away. The king could understand the quibble of Vidūṣaka and reproved him severely. At that time, the queen Vāsavadattā really arrived there with her attendant. The Vidūṣaka on her arrival tried to conceal the picture-board by keeping it in his armpit. But this picture-board suddenly dropped from his hand, while
he started dancing, lifting his arms, on hearing a remark from the queen Vāsavadattā. Unfortunately it was picked up by her attendant and was shown to the queen. This made the queen to guess what was going on around her. While unable to bear the fact, she left the place immediately by giving an excuse that the picture board has caused headache to her. She committed Sāgarikā immediately to the charge of one of her attendants who was no other than Susaṅgatā and was fortunately the friend of Sāgarikā. In this way the drama reflects the presence of two opposite groups formed out of its various characters and there started the struggle between these two groups. In one group there were queen Vāsavadattā and her attendants Kāṅcanmālā and Madanikā and Sāgarikā, her friend Susaṅgatā, the king and Vidūṣaka were in another group. Vāsavadattā played the role of opposition and stood as an obstacle in the union of the king Udayana and Sāgarikā. Vidūṣaka helped the king in his respective action and arranged a plan that Sāgarikā would be disguised in the dress of the queen and Susaṅgatā in that of kāṅcanmālā and they would be taken by Vidūṣaka to the king. In this way they advanced.

Vāsavadattā, also having found out their plan approached there with Kāṅcanmālā and by mistake, was taken to king by Vidūṣaka. The king, on the other hand, mistaking Vāsavadattā as Sāgarikā congratulated her for her disguise and began to the profession of his love. Knowing the truth Vāsavadattā left that place with great anguish.
Sāgarikā, however, came to know the whole incident and decided to commit suicide by hanging herself. In the meantime the king decided to reconcile the queen. But as he started to go to the residence, the Vidūṣaka informed him that the queen was going to put an end to her life by hanging herself and asked him to rescue her. When the king rushed the spot and removed the noose from her neck, he discovered that it was Sāgarikā in the disguise of Vāsavadattā. In this way the two lovers met once again and the cause of the heroine advanced.

Vāsavadattā on the other hand, thought that her action was too rude to the king and hence she wanted to reconcile him. But when she approached there she heard the love-talk between the king and Sāgarikā. This incident enraged her and hence she arrested Sāgarikā and left the spot. Thus the struggle between two opposite groups revealed again and again in this drama and the hope for the attainment of the desired object is found to be interrupted.

Niyatāpti is nicely illustrated in Ratnāvalī, which began with the reconciliation of the queen by the king for the purpose of his union with Ratnāvalī. In the fourth act of this Nāṭikā, it is noticed that Yaugandharāyaṇa explains all the plans made by him and the purpose of the secrecy about the identity of the heroine. After the disentanglement of the plot, the action was proceeded a step further and the union of the king and Ratnāvalī took place which is the prime objective of the drama.
The great skill of Śrīharṣa is also observed in the employment of five Sandhis in his dramas. Sandhi or juncture is the combination of phases of the main action with its subsidiaries. As there are five stages of action, the Sandhis also are five. They are Mukha, Pratimukha, Garbha, Vimarṣa or Avamarṣa and Upasamhṛti or Nirvahana. While the five stages are in progress there must be some links to connect them with the principal and sub-ordinate parts of the main action and hence Sandhi is necessary here.

*Mukhasandhi* is illustrated in the first act of Ratnāvalī, in the celebration of spring festival and the depiction of the basic mental states of the minister Yaugandharayaṇa, the king and the heroine Sagarikā.

*Pratimukhasandhi* consists in the development of the seed. The second act of Ratnāvalī illustrates this. In the second act of this drama, the love of Sagarika for the king is found to be developed which is the seed and this seed is partly perceptible as this matter is known to her friend Susaṅgatā and to the king’s friend Vidūṣaka and it is imperceptible as it is only inferred by the queen Vāsavadattā from the picture-board that was hidden by Vidūṣaka and incidentally comes to her notice.

*Garbhasandhi* which is a further development of the seed is illustrated in the second act and a portion of the third act of the drama *Ratnāvalī*. In the second act the king and Sāgarikā met for the first time in the garden, where the picture-board was left by the two friends Sāgarikā
and Susaṅgatā. But, as soon as, queen Vāsavadattā had arrived that place they became separated. In the disguise-scene the supposed meeting of the hero and heroine is noticed to be disturbed as queen Vāsavadattā approached there in place of Sāgarikā and later on revealed her identity to the king. Thus here also the supposed attainment of the objective has been interrupted. Again in the noose scene it is noticed that the hero and the heroine united with each other but that time also they became separated due to the arrival of the queen. This way again and again the loss of the attained has been depicted in this drama which clearly illustrates the Garbhasandhi. This loss differentiates Garbhasandhi from Avamarṣasandhi. In Ratnāvalī, Avamarṣasandhi is illustrated in the boarding of the king over the situation where Vāsavadattā arrested Sāgarikā and kept her in the royal palace till the fire scene.

In Nirvahanasandhi where the seed gets fully developed and ripens to a stage of fruition, is illustrated in the last act of the drama Ratnāvalī. The incidents followed from the fire-scene upto the end of the drama shows the application of this Sandhi.

Examining all the facts and events it has been discovered that Harṣa has applied almost all the technicalities of Sanskrit dramaturgy in his dramas. He has applied these technicalities brilliantly and perhaps, because of this, the later dramaturgists like Dhanaṅjaya and Viśwanātha gave many references from Harṣa’s dramas and this also qualifies to consider Harṣa’s
drama as one of the good models of drama. He has employed various types of *Prasthāvana, Arthopakṣepaka, Arthaprakṛti*, stage of action and *Sandhis* in his dramas and showed that he was well acquainted with the various canons of dramaturgy and it is noticed that all his dramas fulfilled almost all the criteria laid by Sanskrit dramaturgy.
Notes and references


2. Ibid. *Kathāmukha*, Ch. XIV.


6. ‘Vṛtti syāt kauśikī….’ SD. Ch. VI. 272.


