Chapter VII

SHAKESPEARE AND JALSHANKER PRASAD (Part Two)

In Janmejaya ka Nagyajna, written in 1922-23 but published in 1926, Prasad dramatises Janmejaya's horse-sacrifice utilizing many traits of Shakespeare's romantic art. The play as a story of ambition and revenge, recalls Shakespeare's Hamlet, Macbeth, and other plays. The Nagas and Janmejaya want to be avenged upon each other. Damini leaves her husband's home and remembers only one thing that she has to take revenge upon Uttanka. Uttanka, in his turn, takes oath to have vengeance upon Takshak. In fact, it seems as if every character has the motive of revenge to fulfil.

The revenge-motive makes the play full of external conflict. External conflict is chiefly concerned with the struggle of the Nagas and the Aryas. Takshak, the leader of the Nagas, and Janmejaya, that of the Aryas, direct their forces against each other in the battle. The internal conflict is presented in the minds of Sarma, Takshak and Damini.

Behind these external and internal conflicts, Prasad like Shakespeare, emphasizes the hand of fate or destiny in the play. This feeling pervades the play. Jaratkaru, when struck

2. Prasad, Janmejaya ka Nagyajna, pp.53-4 and 59.
by the arrow of Janmejaya and dying fast, says:

अद्धर की लिपि ही सब काह करती है। स्मरण रखना मनुष्य प्रतिष्ठ का अनुभव और नियति की दास है।

(Janmejaya ka Nagavajna, I, vii, pp. 43-4)

And, Janmejaya remembers and repeats this at least four times in the course of the play. Vedvyas also regards destiny as the driving force behind all human actions:

दम्न और अहंकार धे पूर्ण मनुष्य अद्धर शक्ति के क्रीड़ा कल्प है। हम नियति के तत्त्व में मत मनुष्यों की कस्तोलिन की अनुकूल बनाकर अपना कार्य करते है।

And:

अद्धर शक्ति ने तुम्हारे लिये मी एक बड़ा मारी क्लेश रख छोड़ा है।

(Janmejaya ka Nagavajna, III, i, pp. 73 and 78)

This idea of destiny, it may be said, is not new to the Eastern mind, but the way Prasad expresses it in his plays, seems to be the natural outcome of Prasad's study of Shakespeare. Kent, in King Lear, says:

"It is the stars,  
The stars above us, govern our condition"

(IV, ii, 34-5).

Lear is of the opinion that:

"I am even
The natural fool of fortune."

(IV, vi, 195-6).
And, Gloucester says:

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; They kill us for their sport."

(IV,i,36-7).

If we compare these statements from the two plays, it will come to light that Prasad drew inspiration from Shakespeare. He regards destiny as the force behind all human actions and regards man as the plaything of gods and as the slave ('natural fool') of fortune. The words 'श्रीरि' and 'दाश' for 'sport' and 'natural fool' all the more confirm our conjecture. Prasad does not stop here. Like Shakespeare, he also calls destiny the 'wheel' (चक্র) and man the 'instrument' (वस्त्र) of fortune.

Sarma says at one place:

उनके प्रकृति के चक्र में पिस जाने दिया।

(I,i,p.10).

at another:

में उस अद्वंत शक्ति का यन्त्र हूँ। वह जो मेरे लाभ है मुक्त से कोई काम कराना चाहता है।

(III,iv,p.88).

These naturally seem to be inspired by the statements of Edgar and Edmund:

Edgar. -----------------------------
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
make instruments to plague us;

Edmund. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle;

(V,ii,172-3 and 175-6).
For Shakespeare, destiny plays with man but the basis of this play is provided by man's own inherent flaws. The gods are just and they make our own vices the instruments to plague us. Sooner or later, plague they must. Albany even goes to the extent of saying that:

"If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
   Send quick down to tame these vile offences
   It will come,
   Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
   Like monsters of the deep."

(IV,ii,46-50).

And again, when he hears from the messenger the news of the death of Cornwall, he gives vent to his feelings thus:

"This shows you are above,
   You justicers, that these our nether crimes
   So speedily can venge!"

(IV,ii,79-81).

Prasad is also with Shakespeare in his belief that the wheel of fortune crushes those who seek to hinder its natural course by their misdoings and that good deeds always have a moral inspiration behind them. Thus, Manimala and Astika are represented as the instruments of fate in forging peace and friendship between the Aryas and the Nagas in the play, while Kashyap is the contriver of evil deeds who meets his death at last at the hands of a Nag. At the news of his death, Vedvyas is made to speak like Albany:

(III,viii,p.108).
Shakespeare regards this world as a stage upon which men come, play their part and then depart. Antonio says:

"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano; A stage where every man must play a part, And mine is a sad one."

(The Merchant of Venice, I, i, 77-79).

Macbeth also believes with Antonio:

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more;"

(Macbeth, V, iv, 24-6).

In his play, Janmejaya ka Nagyajna, Prasad also utilizes this image. He makes Mansa speak, like Shakespeare's characters, in the same vein:

क्रम इस विश्व के रंगमंच पर नाटक ने कोई रचनात्मक अभिनय नहीं किया।

(I, i, p. 9).

We may notice Shakespeare's influence in the sub-plot also. Love is not the main theme of the play, but the first-sight love of Manimala and Janmejaya has a bearing on the main story. Similar is the case with the story of Damini's passion for Uttanka and the story of the love of Someshwara and Sheela in the sub-plot. Thus, the sub-plot runs parallel to the main plot.

In characterisation also some influence of Shakespeare is traceable. There is a variety of characters. Kashyap has
some traits of the Shakespearean villain. He dies persisting in his villainy like Shakespeare's Aaron in Titus Andronicus. Mansa is like the women of Shakespeare who frequently plunge themselves into the seething turmoil of their times like Queen Margaret in Henry VI, Parts I, II, and III.

The theme of the play is ambition and revenge. Though the play ends happily, it possesses serious and sardonic events like the death of Jaratkaru, the attempt to murder Uttanka and Jarmejava, and the intrigue to kidnap Vapusthamama, the wife of Janmejava. The Nagas and the Aryas fight a battle. But reconciliation and peace are brought about by the union of Manimala, the daughter of Takshak, and Janmejava. The play ends with the ringing bells of marriage and reconciliation, and harmony is established between the hostiles. Thus, the play resembles the tragic-comedies of Shakespeare.

Kamna, written in 1923-4 and published in 1926 is an allegorical play modelled after Krishna Mishra's Sanskrit play Prabodh Chandrodaya in respect of technique but it bears the influence of Western thinkers like Rousseau, Tolstoy, Shaw, and others, in respect of its philosophy. Shakespeare's influence is nevertheless traceable in the use of 'pathetic fallacy'. In the storm scene in King Lear, 'the stormy soul

1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, Western Influence in Hindi Drama, pp.232.36.
runs out storming in the night of the soul as mad as the 1 elements'. Prasad likewise presents the reaction of Vivek's mental torment on the natural objects. A portion of the city topples down on account of an earthquake as if to show its wrath against the misguided Dambh and others and to show its sympathy with Vivek. The play is full of action, conflict, intrigue and murder. The soliloquies also recall Shakespeare in their thread-bare exposition of the psychological working behind the actions of the characters, of the inmost recesses of their hearts.

Skandgupta Vikramaditya, published in 1928, is Prasad's most successful historical traged-comedy. The play avoids the observance of 'Nandi', 'Sutradhar', 'Purvaranga', and 'Bharatvakya', and employs conflict - both external and internal deaths, murders, suicides, intrigues, conspiracies, battle-scenes drinking on the stage, embracing, - almost all the prohibitions of the Sanskrit drama. Like Shakespeare's history plays, specially all the three parts of King Henry VI, Richard III, and King Henry VIII, the Hindi play is replete with intrigues and battles.

The very first reading of the play recalls to us Shakespeare's tragedies specially Hamlet. Strictly speaking,

though not a tragedy, it is very much in the vein of the Shakespearean tragedy and indeed at one moment it appears as if the play would end tragically. And this tragic calamity proceeds mainly from the actions of the hero - his indifference towards power and authority, aided, of course, by other circumstances. Thus the dictum that 'character is destiny', with all the Shakespearean qualifications, is applicable to this play.

Like Shakespeare's plays, the plot of the Hindi play is developed through external conflict. In his tragedies and historical plays, the English dramatist presents the conflict through a series of unexpected events, battles, murders etc. Prasad also presents the external conflict through these very agencies. The hero Skandgupta bears the brunt of the rebellion of his own step-mother, Anantdevi assisted by Bhatark and Prapanchbuddhi, and the invasion of the Huns under the leadership of Khingil--He fights at least three battles, besides having to face many family struggles and conflicts. The play is indeed a plethora of conflicts - domestic, political, social and religious. The domestic conflict is between Anantdevi and Devaki, and between Purgupta and Skandgupta. The political conflict is between the Gupta rulers and the Huns. The social conflict is between good and evil respectively represented by

1. See the end of the third act.
Parnadatta and those misled or erratic persons who want to lead a life of luxury even at the time of a national calamity. The religious conflict is between Buddhism and Brahmanism. Then there is external conflict between Devasena and Prapanchbudhhi when the latter wants to sacrifice her to Goddess Ugratara, between Govind Gupta and Bhatarak, between Skand Gupta and Bhatarak, and between Rama and Sharvanag. There are intrigues to take away the lives of Devaki, Devasena and Skand Gupta. Prithvisen, Manadandnayak, Naahapratihar and Vijay commit suicide; Kumargupta is murdered; Prapanchbudhhi is hanged; Govind Gupta, Bandhuvarma and Parnadatta are killed in the battle; Devaki dies of a heart-break; and Jaimala burns herself upon the pyre of her husband.

In Shakespeare the conflict is often conceived as taking place between two persons, of whom the hero is one, or between two parties, one of them having the hero as the main figure. Thus, the majority of characters fall into two opposite groups. Similar is the case with Prasad's play. There are obviously two antagonistic groups - one of Skand Gupta and the other of Anantdevi. The clash, in each case, is either between

2. Ibid., IV, pp.121, 25.
3. Ibid., III, p.91.
4. Ibid., II, p.75.
5. Ibid., II, p.69.
6. Ibid., II, pp.64 and 68.
the hero Skandgupta and his adversaries or between a member of the hero’s group and one of the opposite party.

In this action and conflict, 'chance' or 'accident' plays the same role as in Shakespeare’s plays specially King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, and Romeo and Juliet. This play of 'chance' or 'accident' in Shakespeare’s plays has been defined by Bradley thus:

"Chance or accident here will be found, I think, to mean any occurrence (not supernatural, of course) which enters the dramatic sequence neither from the agency of a character, nor from the obvious surrounding circumstances." 1

Shakespeare gives free scope to this factor of 'chance'. In Romeo and Juliet, Romeo does not get the Friar's message about the potion and Juliet does not awake a little earlier from her long sleep. It is an accident that Edgar does not reach the prison earlier to save the life of Cordelia in King Lear, and Desdemona loses her handkerchief at the most critical moment in Othello. In Macbeth again, it is sheer chance that ambitious Macbeth meets the three witches and his own plotting wife at the ripe time and also that Duncan comes to be his guest. Like Shakespeare, Prasad also utilizes this device to bring about dramatic effect and surprise in the play. Thus, it is by chance that Skandgupta arrives to save his mother Devaki at the very

moment when the plotters are going to kill her, that Matrigupta appears on the spot to save Devasena when Prapanchbuddhi is about to sacrifice her, that Govindgupta surprises the Huns by his emergence in the guise of a saint when they are torturing the people, that Skandgupta escapes drowning though Bhatark destroys the Kumbha dam and that when Skandgupta needs an army to fight, Bhatark atones and finds a chest of diamonds while digging the ground to bury the dead body of Vijaya.

Again, as in Shakespeare's plays, it is not only the conflict without that matters here but also the conflict within. There is an outward conflict between persons and groups; there is also a conflict within the soul of the hero and the souls of the other characters. Thus, Skandgupta, like Hamlet, is torn between his indifference to authority and duty towards the kingdom. It is his indifference to power and authority which comes in his way of performing his duty. Like Hamlet, it is his scrupulous nature and his thinking too much on the subject which are partly responsible for the temporary eclipse, if not tragedy, in his life. If Parnadatta, Chakrapalita, Devasena and others had not been there to encourage him to be conscious of his rights, his life would have been a complete tragedy like Hamlet's. Bhatark too, like Macbeth, is tossed by a conflict

1. Prasad, Skandgupta Vikramaditva, III and IV.
in his conscience between the forces of truth and falsehood,  

good and evil. The internal conflict presented in the  
characters of Matrigupta, Devasena, Vijaya and Sharvang likewise  
frequently recalls *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

In fact, Prasad brings into use the Shakespearean  
conception of 'spiritual force'. The evil in Bhatark clashes  
with the good in Skandgupta; this is the outer conflict. But  
these forces also collide within the soul of Bhatark himself:  
this is the internal conflict. Similar conflict is to be found  
in the characters of Sharvanag, Rama, Devasena and Matrigupta.  
Sharvanag is pitted against Rama, his own wife as good versus  
evil, as loyalty versus disloyalty, and this strife finds its  
echo in his own heart also. Likewise, Vijaya's realism and  
tendency to measure up everything in terms of gold clashes  
against the idealism of Devasena; and its corresponding conflict  
rages in her own heart as well as in Devasena's. Matrigupta's  
emotionalism conflicts with his lack of worldly wisdom.

There is one more aspect of the conflict in the Hindi  
play which has its origin in Shakespeare. Shakespeare presents  
the conflict of some inner feeling in the heart of a character

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2. "This will mean whatever forces act in the human spirit,  
whether good or evil, whether personal passion or impersonal  
principle; doubts, desires, scruples, ideas - whatever can  
animate, shake, possess and drive a man's soul."  
A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 18.
3. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *Western Influence in Hindi Drama*, pp. 244-45.
with the outward circumstances. Macbeth, after murdering Duncan and gaining the throne, is directed by his conscience to keep himself aloof from committing any such heinous acts, but the outward circumstances do not let him do so. Macbeth says:

"I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'wr.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
which must be acted ere they may be scann'd."
(Ill,iv,136-40).

Prasad also presents this very circumstance in the character of Bhatark. After doing many evil deeds, Bhatark's conscience goads him to be virtuous and to abstain from evil but he is prevented from being and doing so by outward circumstances. His feelings find vent in the Shakesperean vein:

अंहे । पाणि भूं मैं लिंग मनुष्य को बुद्धि नहीं । कुल्ले उसे अलक्कर अंचे नागपात में वाँच लेता है । दुःस्वाद ।
(Ill,p.88).

In Hamlet's mind there is the desire to avenge the murder of his father which clashes with the outward circumstances partly created by Claudius, Polonius and others. In the Hindi play, Skandgupta has a feeling of indifference towards power and authority which comes into clash with the outward circumstances, partly created by Parnadatta, Chakrapalita, Devasena and others and partly by the then political situation. But Prasad does not carry it to the extent of a tragedy owing to his bias for the conventional ending of the Sanskrit drama.
In this play too, as in *Ajañatshatru*, Prasad assigns the Shakespearean function to the sub-plot. The main plot deals with Skandgupta's heroic efforts to put down internal rebellion and to drive out the foreign invaders. The accessory story of the love of Skandgupta for Vijaya and Devasena enhances the effect of the main plot and provides for it a wider perspective. It also presents a contrasting picture of the two types of love - the fickle and changing love of Vijaya and the constant love of Devasena. Then, there are the stories of Bandhuvarma and Jaimala, Matrigupta and Malini, Sharvanag and Rama, and Prakhyatkirti and Prapanchbuddhi. They all serve either as a commentary upon or as a contrast to the main plot. For instance, Jaimala tries to invoke a sense of duty in Bandhuvarma and sees her own good in the good of her husband; but Anantdevi gets her husband murdered to fulfil her own ambition. In the arrangement of the sub-plot also, Prasad lays emphasis on action and conflict.

When we pass on to the construction of the plot, we find that it is characteristically like the construction of Shakespeare's tragedies. The Hindi playwright may have observed the five stages of development (Karyavasthas), the five elements of the plot (Arthaprapktis), and the five junctures (Sandhis) of the Sanskrit drama but their influence pales before the Shakespearean influence in respect of the stages
of action. In Shakespeare's tragedies, the first act usually presents the exposition, often introducing us to the 'dramatis personae', 'their position in life, their circumstances, their relation to one another, and perhaps something of their characters'; and it 'leaves us keenly interested in the question what will come out of this condition of things'.

This situation threatens conflict. Shakespeare never opens his tragedy with the conflict already begun. The first act is always a preparation for the conflict. The same thing happens in the Hindi play. Almost all the characters are introduced in the first act with their dispositions, circumstances, and with some traits of their character in relation to one another. At the end of the first act the exposition is complete and the situation is one which threatens conflict. In the course of exposition the dramatist has to impart necessary information to the audience regarding the development of the plot of the play of which the audience has little knowledge. Shakespeare does it by way of actions and events which 'arrest, startle and excite'. Prasad also utilizes this method. The playwright wants to inform about the state of affairs in the reign of Kumargupta, the nature of Anantdevi and her hostility towards

1. A.C. Bradley, op. cit., p.41.
2. It is to be borne in mind that this preparation is not of the type of 'Prastavana' (Introduction) of the Sanskrit drama.
Devaki. Instead of narration by some character, Prasad arranges scenes of action and events. Then, there is another Shakespearean practice. Like King Lear, the sub-plot of the Hindi play has a separate exposition. The sub-plot concerns Skandgupta's love affair with Vijaya and Devasena. The last scene of the first act brings Vijaya and Devasena before us and acquaints us with their dispositions and natures.

After exposition comes conflict. The play has the well-marked rise and development of the conflict in the efforts and events of Skandgupta to subdue his enemies in the second and the third acts. At the end of the third act, there is clear enunciation of the crisis as Skandgupta and his army are lost in the waves of Kumbha. The fourth act clearly marks the decline of the action. But there is no clearly marked catastrophe.

Regarding the conflict, one thing is most important. Prasad follows the Shakespearean principle of alternation in both of its forms. In the first place, the play has a constant alternation in the 'rises and falls' in the tension, 'a regular sequence of more exciting and less exciting sections'. Usually an exciting scene is followed by a quieter scene to

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2. Jagannath Prasad Sharma, Prasad ke Natakon ka Shastriya Adhyayan, p.89.
3. A.C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, pp.48 and 50.
give relief after emotional strain. We also find that the first and the fourth acts are relatively quiet while the third act is highly critical and that the scenes of high pitch and low pitch are of about the same length in the quieter part; while the scenes of high pitch are comparatively shorter than the scenes of low pitch in the highly critical part of the play. In the second place, there is alternation in the advancement of the cause. Before the crisis, in the broader sense, the cause of the adversaries of Skandgupta is advancing on the whole; and through the remaining part it is relenting, while the cause of Skandgupta advances in turn. In the narrower sense also, this principle of alternation is followed: in one scene the cause of the adversaries advances and then Skandgupta's counter-action follows. Thus, the whole plot moves rising and falling in alternation.

Prasad presents variety and individualisation in characterisation like Shakespeare. The play has characters from every order of society and displays variety of traits in them. There are persons from royal families like Kumargupta, Govindgupta, Skandgupta, Puragupta, Bandhuvarma, and Kumardas among the male characters and Anantdevi, Devaki, Jaimala and Devasena among the female characters; there are characters from the middle strata like Bhatark, Parnadatta, Chakrapalita, Prithvisen, Matrigupta, Hudgal and Vijaya; there are characters
from the lower strata like Sharvanag, Nayak, Ek Sainik, Rama and Jaya; and there are also religious characters like Prapanchbuddhi, Prakhyatkirti and Ek Brahma. While all these characters have representative traits typical of that order to which they belong, they are strongly individualized by the playwright's stroke of genius. For instance, the characters belonging to the royal families have in themselves the traits of royalty, but at the same time they also possess the peculiarities of their own individual characters. Skandgupta is different from Puragupt, though they are the sons of the same father and Devaki is sharply divergent from Anantdevi, though both are the queens of the same king.

The method of contrast in characterisation, first employed by the playwright in Ajatshatru, is worked with full force in this play also. Like Shakespeare's King Lear, the characters are sharply contrasted. We may put pairs of contrast thus: Kumargupta and Govindgupta, Anantdevi and Devaki, Skandgupta and Puragupta, Bhatark and Parnadatta, Devasena and Vijaya, and Prapanchbuddhi and Prakhyatkirti. With this contrast there is also cross-contrast. The contrast is not only presented among the male and female characters separately but there is also contrast between the males and females. Thus, Sharvanag is contrasted with his own wife Rama in respect of loyalty, and Matrigupta with his own beloved Malini in respect
of love, Bandhuvarma with his own wife in respect of sacrifice for the sake of the nation and Bhatark with his own mother Kamala in respect of good and evil.

When we come to individual characters we find the inspiration of Shakespeare's characters working behind many of them. Skandgupta, like Hamlet, Richard II, and other similar characters, is of a thoughtful bent. He sees an ocean of difficulties storming around himself and suffers from a sense of self-reproach. He says:

हस्ताक्षर राज्य का लोक किस किसिंदे? हृदय में अश्वेतुत्त राज्य में अश्वेतुत्त परिवार में अश्वेतुत्त। कैसे मेरे लिस्तत्व कौ ? मालम होता है कबी निश्चित की शान्ति रजनी में मैं ही चमक लैड़ूं। यदि मैं न होता तो यह संसार अपनी स्वाभाविक गति है जानकर है कहना करा ।

(Skandgupta Vikramaditya, III, p. 89).

this soliloquy is strongly reminiscent of the following soliloquy of Hamlet:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?"

(Hamlet, III, i, 56-60).

When, in a moment of utter despair, Skandgupta comments upon his crown thus:

तेज भद्र अम्बाजी की टीकरी भी बीतत है।

(Skandgupta Vikramaditya, IV, p. 129).
he reminds us of Richard II, when he likewise says:

"I'll give my jewels for a set of beads:
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;
My figured goblet for a dish of wood;
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff."

(King Richard II, iii,iii,147-51).

Bhatark's character is partly modelled on the character of Macbeth and partly on the character of the Earl of Warwick. Like Macbeth, he is ambitious and brave; has the same murderous look and embodies in himself the conflict between good and evil. His role as a king-maker is reminiscent of the Earl of Warwick in the third part of King Henry VI. He possesses the same outspokesness and the same capability of adapting himself to circumstances. Moreover, the relation of Bhatark with Anantdevi is much similar to the relation of the Duke of Suffolk with queen Margaret in the second part of King Henry VI. Bhatark shares some traits with those of Shakespeare's villains like Iachimo who turn virtuous in the end.

Like Bhatark, Anantdevi bears out Shakespeare's influence in two ways. She is like queen Margaret in her sensuality and in her attempt to realise her ambition through her son as a tool. But more important is Lady Macbeth's inspiration working behind her character. She is ambitious and intriguing. To fulfil her ambition, she plots to kill the king and to supplant him with her own son. She says to Jaya:

(Chaurūhūryā Bho Būkhe Kā Shubhād Śe Bhī Shāfink Hitāe Hāē Hē Bhe Bhāpāī
Pārād Śe Hī Vākāe Uṭāē Hāē Unkāe Līsāe Unnitā Kā Kānēkāit
Mārē Nāhīe । Vākalākārā Kā Dūrēm Ṣāvā Ṣāvā Unkāe Līsāe Ṣvāpān Hāe ।

(Skandagupta Vikramaditya, I,p.27).
How reminiscent these words are of Lady Macbeth's when she says to her husband:

"Art thou afear'd
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would',
Like the poor cat i' the adage?"

I, (Macbeth, vii,39-45).

Like Lady Macbeth, Anantdevi instigates and goads Bhatark to commit crimes.

Prapanchbuddhi is out and out a villain like Iago. He belongs to that order of Shakespeare's villains who die but do not leave their villainous habits like Aaron in Titus Andronicus. Vijaya also belongs to this very category. Her inspiration seems to have come from Goneril in King Lear. In the intensity of her lust and in the fickleness of her love, she is the true counterpart of her Shakespearean sister. If Goneril can poison Regan, her sister but her adversary in love with Edmund, Vijaya can lead Devasena, her one time very intimate friend and then her adversary in love with Skandgupta, to a place where Prapanchbuddhi may sacrifice her to Goddess Ugratara. She has the same trait of jealousy in her character. And when her villainy is exposed to her penitent husband Bhatark, she commits suicide like Goneril.

Devasena is a complex character but her love for Skandgupta is like the love of Viola for Duke Orsino in
Twelfth Night. These words of Viola may well be applied to Devasena:

"She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief."

(Twelfth Night, II.iv,112-17).

This idea finds echo in the words of Jaimala when she says to Devasena:

त उदार है कि प्रेम के समक्ष में नहीं आता? जब न गाती
लेब तैरे पीलतः की रागिनी रोती है और जब तू हइती है तब
शाय मिनाद की प्रस्तावना है।

(Skandgupta Vikramaditya,III,p.96).

And her own words also convey this state of her heart:

मैंने कभी उनसे प्रेम की बात करके उनका अपमान नहीं होने
दिया। नीरव जीवन और तात्त्विक व्याकुलता कवौटने का
शुभ मिलता है। जब हुदय में सुनन का रवर मिलता है
लेकि कृष्णन का स्वर मिलना तैती है।

(Skandgupta Vikramaditya,III,p.97).

Thus, Shakespeare's idea is worked out in depicting the character of Devasena.

Aristotle stipulated that the characters of a tragedy must be 'good' and persons of high estate. Shakespeare's tragic heroes also are persons of high estate, generally belonging to

1. F.L. Lucas, Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle, Chapter V.
the royal families but are not always 'good', though generally they are so. Shakespeare has not circumscribed the goodness of character to the royal personages only. Thus, when the Earl of Gloucester is blinded by Regan and Cornwall for supporting Lear, a servant displays goodness and courage. He opposes them for torturing Gloucester and is put to death treacherously by Regan while he is engaged in fighting with Cornwall. Prasad recalls Shakespeare in the treatment of the character of a soldier. While the huns are invading the country, Bhatark, Anantdevi, and others of their camp are busy in drinking, revelling and intriguing. The soldier is annoyed at all this and calls Bhatark a traitor on his very face. This quite matches the courage of the servant in *King Lear*.

Mudgal is a traditional type of jester, as we find in Sanskrit drama, always showing proneness to gluttony. But Dhatusen is partly designed after the pattern of Lear's Fool. He is witty, satirical and prophetic. The second scene of the first act is full of his wittily satirical reflections and the force of the truth of his reflections makes him a prophet-jester like Lear's Fool. He satirizes the indifference of Kumargupta towards the affairs of the state by saying that the great empire

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of Magadh was established simply by wielding the sceptre.

Then, he flings a witty satire at Kumargupta, who is completely
overpowered by the influence of his young and ambitious queen
Anantdevi, and says that the counsel of a woman minister is
better than the counsel of bearded ministers. And the remarks,
in which he speaks of princes as wolves and hints at the
poison-girl (Vishkanya), are all full of irony. It is
interesting to note that Lear's Fool also likens a son to a
wolf. These witty remarks and reflections prove prophetic
and bring home to us the fact that 'jesters do oft prove
prophets'.

In Prasac's play, there are also some verbal echoes
and the echoes of situations of Shakespeare. Devasena says:

कृष्ण चौह में गिरने है पहिले विचे का अक्लम्ब ले लो
विजया।

(Skandgupta Vikramaditya, III,p.86).

This is just the Hindi version of what Iago says to Othello:
"O! beware, my lord, of jealousy", but employed in a different
context. This situation in the first act where Bhatark meets
Anantdevi in private recalls a similar situation in the second.

2. Ibid., pp.15-6.
3. Ibid., pp.18-9.
5. Ibid., V,iii,71.
part of *Henry VI*. The following dialogue ensues between Bhatark and Anantdevi:

**Bhatark**: महादेवी की जय हो ।
**Anantdevi**: परिहास न करो मंगच के महाबलाभिकल । देवकी के रहते किन गायक है पुरुष महादेवी कहते हो ।
**Bhatark**: हमारा दुःख कई रहा है और आये दिन सानारक की बनता प्रभा सभी कोही ।

*Skandgupta Vikramaditya, I*, p. 27).

This recalls the following dialogue between the Duchess of Gloucester and Hume:

"Hume. Jesus preserve your royal majesty!
Duch. What sayst thou? majesty! I am but Grace.
Hume. But by the grace of God, and Hume's advice
Your Grace's title shall be multiplied."

*Henry VI, Part. II, I, ii, 70-2).

Then, in the fourth act of the Hindi play there is an eruptive situation between the Brahmans and the Buddhists. Here, in the manner of the consummate actor Antony, Dhatusen appears on the scene and by subtle insinuations carries his point admirably, first by pleasing the Buddhists and then the Brahmans; and the gathering somewhat displays the mentality of the mob in *Julius Caesar*.

The soliloquies of the Hindi play possess characteristically Shakespearean traits which we shall discuss later on. Prasad uses 'pathetic fallacy' at several places in the play like Shakespeare. It provides a proper atmosphere for

the coming events and instils in us the feeling that the coming events cast their shadows before. We have glimpses of human actions in the natural objects and the happenings in nature forebode some future event. In the first act, Sharvanag, while working as a royal guardsman for the palace-gate feels the night to be very much fierce and, after a few minutes, there is noise and the fierce roaring and striking of the thunder. The noise of human beings is followed by disturbances in nature. This grim atmosphere portends some evil event in the future. In the same scene, the dialogue between Sharvanag and a soldier regarding the fierce atmosphere reminds us of the third scene in the first act of Julius Caesar in which Caesar points out to Cicero that the fierceness of the night is portentous of coming events. Cassius senses this 'strange impatience of the heavens' and concludes:

"That heaven hath infus'd them with these spirits
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state."

(Julius Caesar, I,iii,67-71)

This is just how the reader feels after reading the dialogue of the Hindi play. Like Julius Caesar's death, the unnatural death of Kumargupta follows this grim atmosphere.

In the manner of Shakespeare, Prasad also provides comic relief after the serious scene of the death of Kumargupta

1. Prasad, Skandgupta Vikramaditya, I,p.34.
and the suicides committed by Prithvisen and two others by
introducing humorous dialogues between Mudgal and Matrigupta.
Sometimes, Shakespeare uses such humorous scenes in the later
part of his tragedies which have two functions, to afford
'variety and relief' and to heighten the tragic feeling by
contrast. Prasad follows Shakespeare in respect of the first
of these functions. He does not use this humorous scene in
the later part of the play but certainly after a most tragic
situation. His purpose is obviously to provide variety and
relief after the tragic situation.

The idea of destiny behind human actions is present in
this play also. The playwright violates the Unities of Time
and Place. The Sanskrit plays also do not observe them but
they have their own devices to show the wide expanse of time
and the shift of place. Prasad does not have recourse to these
devices. Like Shakespeare, he grossly violates these two
unities. In the play in question, the first scene is laid in
Ujjain and the second is shifted to Kusumpur situated at a
distance of hundreds of miles from Ujjain and the last scene

2. A.C. Bradley, Shakespearian Tragedy, p.61.
4. In Sanskrit drama the five forms of scenes of introduction
(Arthopkshepaka) namely, Vishkambhak, Praveshak, Chulika,
Ankavatar, and Ankamukh or Ankasya, scenic apparatus and
curtains are used to denote this shift of place or of the
elapse of time.

—See Bhagirath Mishra, Kavyashastra, pp.118-9.
of the first act is located in Malva. The same thing may be said with regard to the Unity of Time. Years elapse between two scenes but no indication is given of it. The scenes follow one after another as if they occur quite in sequence and much time has not elapsed between them.

After a brief excursion into the domain of 'free-love' in *Ek Ghunt* (1929) in the Shavian style, Prasad's fancy returns to the realm of romance in his biggest play *Chandragupta* (1931). This historical tragedy-comedy avoids the observance of 'Nandi', 'Sutraddhar', 'Purvaranga', 'Prastavana', and 'Bharatvayka' and is full of battles, murders, suicides, combats, intrigues, amorous scenes, rhetorical speeches - practically all the paraphernalia of romantic drama.

Like Shakespeare's tragedies and historical plays, the Hindi play is a cock-pit of physical action and outer conflict. The very first scene opens with the talk of the invasion of Alexander and ends in a hand-to-hand sword-scuffle between Ambhik and Chandragupta. There is conflict between Alexander and Chandragupta, between Alexander and Parvateshwar, between Chandragupta and Nanda, between Nanda and Shaktar, between Chanakya and Nanda, between Chandragupta and Phillips, between Chandragupta and Selucus and between Sinharan and Alexander. It is through this conflict that the plot of the
play is evolved. The arrangement of unexpected events, battles, murders, suicides etc. makes for external conflict.

Like Skandagupta Vikramaditya, this play also gives free play to 'chance' or 'accident' in order to bring about dramatic effect and surprise in the play. It is by chance that Chandragupta reaches in time to save Kalyani and Lila from a fierce tiger; that Selucus saves unconscious Chandragupta by killing the lion sitting by his side in the forest; that Chandragupta enters the prison by force to save Chanakya at that very moment when Rakshas and Varruchi are pleading with him; that Alaka appeared to arouse the sentiments of the people at the time when Chanakya is trying to win over Ambhik to his side against the invasion of Selucus; that Chandragupta comes to save Karnelia when she is about to commit suicide after her father's defeat; that Chanakya appears in the court when Selucus expresses his wish to see this wise man.

In devising external conflict, Prasad, in his play Chandragupta, is indebted to Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus. In the last act of his play, Shakespeare shows that Titus's son Lucius advances to besiege the city of Rome and ends the

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1. Prasad, Chandragupta, I, iv, p. 22.
2. Ibid., I, x, p. 48.
3. Ibid., I, vii, p. 38.
4. Ibid., IV, vi, pp. 176-78.
5. Ibid., IV, xi, p. 201.
6. Ibid., IV, xiv, p. 213.
tyrannical rule of Saturninus and Tamora. He also shows that Titus, with the help of his son Lucius, takes revenge of the unjust execution of his sons Martius and Quintus and of the ravishment of his daughter Lavinia, by killing Tamora, Saturninus and Tamora's sons Chiron and Demetrius. Lucius gets public support for the siege of the city and, is, afterwards proclaimed the Emperor of Rome by common consent. We find echoes of all these situations in scenes viii and ix of the third act of the Hindi play. Chandragupta besieges the city of Magadh with an army and ends the tyrannical rule of Nanda. He wins full support of the public and is, afterwards, proclaimed the Emperor of Magadh by common consent. Like Titus, Shaktar kills Nanda to avenge the death of his seven sons and the maltreatment of his daughter Suvasini. In devising these situations Prasad sacrifices historical date and also violates the rule of Sanskrit drama according to which the scenes of sieges and murders should not be shown upon the stage.

But outward conflict is not the soul of the drama: it is rather a foil to the internal conflict. Chandragupta is an active warrior but sometimes he becomes a passive hero like Hamlet and finds himself confronted with a sea of troubles:

क्षण । युद्ध देखना चाहिए तो मेरा हुँकार काही देखो मालविका । बाजा और निराशा का युद्ध भाग और अपात अक्षाद्य । कोई कभी नहीं फिर भी न जाने जैन मेरी समृद्ध सूत्री में रिकल्चर चिन्ह लगा देता है । (Chandragupta, IV, iv, p. 164).

Chanakya is busy directing people against Alexander and Nanda, but even he gets time to ponder over his mental state. The king of Gandhar is divided against himself. Parvateshwar is brave and a man of action but he is also tormented by the thought of his insult at the hands of Alaka. Shaktar's heart is full of inner struggle and conflict over Nanda's cruelty towards himself and his sons. Kalyani is likewise swayed by inner conflict. And the last words and song of Malvika point to her mental torment.

In characterisation also we find some influence of Shakespeare. The English dramatist has painted two types of villains: those who persist in their villainy till their death and those who change and leave their villainous habits. The Hindi plays has both these types. Rakshas represents the former while Nanda represents the latter. And Kalyani, Alaka and Malvika have the inspiration of those women characters of Shakespeare who carve out their way through the tense political situations like Joan of Arc and Queen Margaret. Regarding characterisation, one thing more is noteworthy. Sometimes, like Shakespeare, Prasad eliminates some characters rather cruelly when there is no action or role left for them. Thus,

2. Ibid., I,viii,p.39.
3. Ibid., I,ii,p.111.
4. Ibid., II,vi,pp.131-33.
5. Ibid., IV,i,p.152.
when Prasad thinks that Kalyani may be a hinderance in the way of Chandragupta, he makes her commit suicide. And Malvika, who also loves Chandragupta, is sacrificed to save him.

This play also presents the idea of destiny. And the idea of the world being a stage finds its expression in the words of Malvika:

\[\text{(Chandragupta, II,iv,p.78).}\]

Chanakya also says:

\[\text{(Chandragupta, IV,vi,p.183).}\]

There is one more hint of Shakespeare's influence in the Hindi play in joining Chandragupta and Karnelia in wedlock to prevent any future conflict between Chandragupta and Selucus and to forge peace between them. Bhas's Sanskrit play Pratijna Yogandhrayan also joins Udayan and Padmavati in such a political marriage but the effort of Chanakya through Varuchi to evoke love in the heart of the Greek Princess and then to propose marriage before Selucus recalls the effort of the Duke of Burgandy in Henry V. Moreover, love and marriage are the main

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1. Prasad, Chandragupta, IV,i,p.155.
2. Ibid., IV,iv,p.166.
3. Ibid., pp.146, 171, 174, 180 and 190.
4. Ibid., IV,vi,p.174.
theme of the Sanskrit play while in both the English and Hindi plays they are only accessory. Three more facts confirm our view. First, the names of the Princesses in both the plays - Karnelia and Katherine - resemble much and the Hindi play has a lady named Alice, an imaginary character, attending on Karnelia and quite interestingly, the name of the lady attending on Princess Katherine is also Alice in the English play. Secondly, like Henry V, Chandragupta bears love for Karnelia already. Thirdly, there is a close resemblance between the words that are said to express the role of woman in maintaining peace between the two kings. Queen Isabella says:

"Haply a woman's voice may do some good
When articles too nicely urg'd be stood on."

(King Henry V, V,11,93-4).

This idea is expanded thus by Chanakya in the Hindi play:

"किन्तु क्षणिग्न स्वार्थं से प्रभु नहीं होते हस्ताक्षर कल्याणं
को रोकने में क्षमता प्रमाणित हैं। अंततः दो बालको पूर्ण
कारण के बीच में एक प्रौतिकवी का रहना आवश्यक है।"

(Chandragupta, IV,xiv,pp.213-14).

Being a romantic tragedy-comedy, the play disregards the three Unités of Time, Place and Action. The action of the play is spread over a wide expanse of more than twenty five years. The incidents are laid at different distant places. The first scene of the first act takes place at Taxila and the second shifts to Fatliputra in Magadh; the sixth scene is laid at the banks of River Indus and the seventh switches back to
Magadh. Thus, in whole of the play the scenes rapidly shift from place to place covering long distances.

_Dhruvaswamini_, the last of Jaishanker Prasad's dramatic creations in three acts published in 1933, is a small tragi-comedy which dispenses with the observance of 'Nandi', 'Sutradhar', 'Prastavana', 'Purvaranga', and 'Bharatvakya', and has several scenes presenting battle, death, murder and other such prohibitions of classical Sanskrit drama. The object of the drama is to portray the bravery of Chandragupta, the importance of Ramgupta and the ability of Dhruvaswamini while dealing with the social problem of divorce by a woman in specific circumstances.

Dr. V.N. Mishra regards this play as one directly influenced by Ibsen on the ground that Prasad read Ibsen and that the play delineates one of the problems of women. Perhaps he got his cue from Dr. D.K. Lal Srivastava who also regards it as such without assigning any cause to his presumption. But this view is a gross misinterpretation of facts. It is true that _Dhruvaswamini_ deals with the problem of divorce but the treatment is not like that in Ibsen's drama of ideas. In the first place, Prasad does not put forward any new problem.

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1. Dr. V.N. Mishra, *Western Influence in Hindi Drama*, pp.259-60.
He simply tries to represent an old historical fact and to revivify it with the richness of his own imaginative vision. The story of Ramgupta, Chandragupta, and Dhruvaswamini, as treated in the play, is taken from Vishakhadatta's Devis-Chandragupta and it has the sanction of such historians as Rakhaldas Banerji, Professor Altekar, Jayaswal, Abul Hasan Ali and Bhandarkar. Secondly, the most important change brought about by Ibsen in the field of dramatic technique was the element of discussion generally introduced in the last act of the play. The key-note of this discussion is intellectualism and realism. But Prasad's treatment is neither intellectual nor realistic. There is a sort of discussion towards the end of the play, but it stems from the works of Narad, Parashar and Kautilya. In the discussion of the problem, Ibsen impresses upon our minds that the soul of the individual suffers under the stress of social conventions which act like an impersonal force called destiny. This is not so with Prasad. If Chandragupta suffers on account of social conventions, he also benefits from them: society is not against him but with him. The villain Ramgupta, being in power tries to evade the situation, but has to bear the consequences as the society's

1. Prasad, Introduction to Dhruvaswamini, pp.3-8.
verdict is against him. Then, a realistic playwright like Ibsen is always rational, being utterly impatient of human weaknesses and softer feelings. His hard logic freezes out sentiment and emotion. There is no place for 'romantic frivolities'. But Prasad's play is full of emotion and poeticality. The very first speech of Dhruvaswamini is a proof of it. There are four songs expressing a heightened emotion. The character of Mandakini has that greasiness about her which invites comparison with some of Shakespeare's women characters. Thirdly, a play of ideas generally begins with the catastrophe and presents the past story retrospectively, but Prasad still clings to the five stages of action beginning with the exposition in the play. Forthly, unlike romantic drama, the problematic plays of Ibsen avoid the presentation of external conflict in life. But Dhruvaswamini has enough of it: the very first act begins in a war camp; the last part of the second act has the conflict between Chandragupta and Shakaraj ending in the death of the latter on the stage; and, the third act has its roots in action concluding in the death of Ramgupta on the stage. Finally, in a play of ideas, there is no place for soliloquies, asides and exciting incidents; while the Hindi play has as many as seven soliloquies and is full of exciting incidents. In fact, there

2. P.F.D. Fenent, Ibsen's Dramatic Technique.
is stress on human values rather than on any problem. Thus, Prasad is with Shakespeare and not with Ibsen, though some allowance may be made for Ibsen's impact in the detailed colourful instructions given in the beginning of every act and in the presentation of only one scene in one act.

Dr. Mishra endeavours to trace the influence of Ibsen's treatment of a problem regarding women, as presented in his play *The Doll's House*, on Dhruvaswamini. He says:

Thus, he tried to impress upon us that Prasad took inspiration from Ibsen's play and portrayed the same problem. This seems fantastic. Prasad's play deals with the problem of divorce in specific circumstances, while Ibsen's play has no such problem. It deals with the awakening to the sense of individual responsibility on the part of a woman who is always treated as a spoilt child. The theme insists on the women's right to individual self-development. The one lays emphasis on the outward and historical circumstances - Dhurvaswamini was forced to marry Ramgupta while she loved Chandragupta; the other lays
emphasis on the inner circumstance - Torvald Helmer is Nora's own choice but she feels that he treats her like a doll. Then, in the Hindi play there is not only the social problem but the political problem also. It is not only the question of Dhruvaswamini's divorce of Ramgupta but also the question of getting rid of an unjust, cruel, and usurping king in him.

The presentation of the sub-plot in contrast to the main plot clearly bears out Shakespeare's impact. Prasad employs the story of Koma and Shakaraj to serve as a commentary on and to heighten the effect of the main story of Chandragupta and Dhruvaswamini. This contrast is presented in characterisation also. The fickleness of Shakaraj is contrasted with the constancy of Chandragupta. This factor of contrast had already been employed by the playwright in Aijatshatru on the model of King Lear. Therefore, to say that it is due to the influence of Ibsen seems unconvincing.

Shakespeare's impact is obvious in the employment of the sub-plot, in characterisation, in the portrayal of emotions and in the presentation of both external and internal conflict. In the character of Ramgupta, Shakaraj and Shikharswami, we find some traits of Shakespeare's villains who die persisting in their villainy till the end like Shakespeare's Aaron in Titus Andronicus. Their tragic end is also presented like the end of a

1. See Chapter V of the present study.
Shakespearean villain. But Shikharswami leaves his villainy in the end.

The play is like the tragi-comedies of Shakespeare—a mingled yarn of smiles and tears. Though the play ends happily, there is an atmosphere of grimness and sombreness. Ramgupta is just put to death and his corpse still lies upon the stage besides the deaths of Shakaraj, Koma and Mihirdev.

We may note Shakespeare's influence in two more ways, i.e., in the use of dramatic irony, and, in the working up of a suitable atmosphere. The use of dramatic irony, we find in the statements of Mihirdev and Dhruvaswamini.

Mihirdev says:

बह देख नील लौहित रंग का धूमकेतु छंदिल माव मै हस लुग़ की और फिका मनानक संकेल कर रहा है |

(Dhruvaswamini, II,p.43).

And we come to realize the truth of his statement later on. Dhruvaswamini, while talking to Chandragupta (in disguise) says:

बन्दे! मेरे मार्ग के आकाश में धूमकेतु छी अपनी गति बन्द कर। |

(Dhruvaswamini, II,p.47).

And these words come true with respect to Shakaraj who is perturbed to hear them.

In the creation of a proper atmosphere in the play, Prasad seems to have taken inspiration from Julius Caesar
and King John. The soothsayer in *Julius Caesar* warns Caesar time and again against the idea of March and Peter of Pomfret warns King John against the very hour of his relinquishing the crown. Prasad also makes use of it. Mihirdev asks Shakaraj to beware of the trailing star. In *King John*, there is the apparition of five moons as a natural prodigy to foreshadow the coming disaster and Prasad employs the trailing star to indicate the approaching end of Shakaraj. Such things are powerfully suggestive and poetically conceived, and it is undeniable that Prasad, like Shakespeare, achieves a fine dramatic effect by employing such natural prodigies. Like Shakespeare too, he refers to the hand of destiny behind every human action. Dhruvaswamini says:

> जीवन नियति के कठोर हंगित पर चलिगा ही।

(*Dhruvaswamini*, I,p.27).

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3. Hubert, *Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about The other four in wondrous motion.*
   
   King John. Five moons!
   Hubert. Old men and beldames in the streets
   Do prophesy upon it dangerously:
   (*King John*, IV,ii,183-87.)