BOOK TWO

PERUNDEVANAR AND BHARATA VEMBA
1. THE AGE OF PERUNDEVANAR.

As long as fifty years ago Sri. S. Krishna Swami Ayyangar, a renowned historian, observed that Perundevanar is a well-known name in Tamil literature, but it is not without considerable obscurity. The subject still remains as it was fifty years ago and any student of Perundevanar is even today left with many problems in his identity.

In Tamil literature, one comes across a number of persons with this name (Perundevanar). A brief account of some of them will be given here.

There is one Perundevanar to whom the authorship of only two poems is ascribed. The poems are 83 of Narinai and 51 of Aham. There is very little known of him besides the authorship of these two poems.

The second celebrity of this name is known as "Bharatam Padia Perundevanar". Certainly, the epithet "Bharatam Padia" (who sang the Bharatam) is suggestive of his greatness as a Bharata poet in Tamil. Perhaps he is the first Bharatha Poet in the South Indian Vernaculars. The Tamil Epic bard must have followed the time-old Epic tradition of singing the poem to a large audience, and thereby must have earned the name "Bharatam Padia".

The third celebrity of this name is recognized as the author of "Bharata Vemba". As there is a reference to a Pallava monarch who was victorious at Tellaru in one of the stanzas (4) in Bharata Vemba, critics have said that he was patronized by that great monarch.

There is another Perundevanar who is a commentator of "Veeracholi" a 11th Century Grammar in Tamil.

Kadalur Perundevanar and Kavisagara Perundevanar are the others with this name.

Confusion prevails in distinguishing Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba from Bharatam Padia Perundevanar.

Sri Ayyangar deals with the problem at length in an article "on the Age of Perundevanar" published in the Annals of Bhandarker Institute Volume III and in Chapter VI of his work "Beginnings of South Indian History".
In 1925, writing a prefatory note to Bharata Vemba, he presented his observations on the problem of identity and the age of Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba already made in his works referred to above. Correct identification of the person in question will pave the path for fixing the age. So the passage is given below:

"The author of this work is Perundevanar. There is no verse in the prefatory part of the poem, which seems to give us an indication of the time by mentioning a patron of his, as it seems. The patron referred to is merely described as one who conquered other kings in a battle at Tellaru. The commentary, of course, explains the hint into a Pallava King who won this victory. We know from epigraphical evidence that Nandivarman III, the grandson of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, gained a victory at Tellaru, and is usually described as Nandivarman, the Victor at Tallaru. The probability seems to be that this Perundevanar lived in the time of this particular Nandivarman, and enjoyed his patronage. The period of time, therefore, would be the middle of the 9th century. The work, therefore, may be safely ascribed to this particular period. But the problem has been unfortunately complicated by the circumstance that Tamil Literature knows of a Perundevanar who made a poetical Tamil version of the Bharata."

He also composed invocatory verses to the well-known eight Tamil Sangam collections. This position requires to be considered before final judgment becomes possible.

A well attested literary tradition has come down to us through the centuries that the fugitive poems composed by Sangam celebrities, and by other contemporaries more or less, were collected and put into their present form with invocatory verses for eight of the collections by Perundevanar, who made a poetical Tamil version of the Mahabharata. It is too readily taken for granted that the version that is thus referred to, and the Perundevanar, who composed the invocatory verses to the Sangam collections, is the Perundevanar, the author of this version. There are difficulties in the way of accepting this position. Among the works for which this
Perundevanar has composed invocatory verses are two of which we know some details. One of them is the work called Ahananuru. This collection consists of 400 poems composed on different occasions by different poets, the poems themselves being of different lengths. All these were collected together at the instance of a certain Pandiyan called Ugrapandiyan, by a prominent scholar called Rudrasarman, who is described as the son of Uppurikudi Kilan, resident of Madura. If Rudrasarman made the collection for the Pandiyan ruler, the verse of invocation proceeding must have been made on the same occasion, and therefore, Rudrasarman, Ugrapandiyan, and Perundevanar must have been contemporaries. Another collection, Aingurumuru was made by an author, whose name is given as Kudalur Kilar, and who is said to have done it for his patron the "Chera of of the elephant look". The name Kudalur Kilar is found among the 49 Sangam celebrities, and to him is also ascribed one of the stanzas in the collection of Tiruvalluva Malai, the stanzas reputed to have been composed on the occasion, when the Sangam accepted the Kural of Tiruvalluvar. If Perundevanar again composed an invocatory verse for this work, the presumption seems warranted that he was a contemporary also. It is sometimes taken for granted that the collections were made at various times, and that they were all edited at a later period by Perundevanar, who composed the invocatory verses, and that this editor, it is considered, might have been a contemporary of Nandivarman of Tellaru. It is presuming too much to say that a collection was made by authors of reputation without an invocatory verse, and the invocatory verse was felt to be necessary by a mere editor, who introduced his own composition into the edition.

We are not left to this negative criticism along, for considering that the Perundevanar, who composed the invocatory verse was not the contemporary of Nandivarman of Tellaru. It is improbable that an author who introduced the name of his patron with some little of gusto in the version of the Bharata before us, should not have given some kind of reference to that patron in the various collections that he has taken upon himself to edit. We have a reference to a Tamil version of the Mahabharata in one of the copper plate charters discovered by the Epigraphical Department more than thirty years ago, and which is yet to see the light of the day.
The charters themselves are datable sometime in the tenth century, and they give a long dynasty of Pandyian rulers, who occupied the throne of Madura in succession after "the flood", and beginning with Kadungone Pandiyadhiraja. In the part referring to the rulers that had gone before "the flood", three incidents are given considerable prominence. They are (1) winning of a victory of Talayalanganam, (2) the establishment of the Sangam at Madura, and (3) the making of a version of Bharata in Tamil. We are not provided with any hint as to whether these were incidents ascribable to a particular reign, or whether they were incidents of different reigns. The problem, therefore is to decide whether they are referable to the same reign, and what the probable time of that reign must have been. The question is examined in some little detail in Chapter VI of my "Beginnings of South Indian History", and in an article "On the Age of Perundevanar", which appeared in the Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute, Volume III. The salient features of the discussion are that we know in Tamil Literature of one Pandian, Victor at Talayalanganam. Poems are sung in praise of him by various poets, pre-eminently Nakkirar and Marudan Ilanagan, both of Madura. Both these literary men were among the competitors composing a commentary for the work Iraiyanar Ahanporul. According to tradition, Rudrasarman who collected the Ahananuru was appointed judge between these two and various others, who composed similar commentaries. Thus Rudrasarman must have been contemporary of Nakkirar, Marudan Ilanagan, and Ugrapandiyan on the one hand and of the Pandian, victor of Talayalanganam on the other. Therefore this last Pandian must have been the same as Ugrapandiyan, or that Ugrapandiyan must have succeeded the other Pandian. Nakkirar, as we know, was president of the third Tamil Sangam according to accepted tradition and Marudan Ilanagan was a member thereof; and also Kudalur Kilar of the third Sangam must have been contemporary with the Pandian victor of Talayalanganam.

If as was pointed out above, some of the collections happened to be made about this time, and if a Perundevanar made invocatory verses for each of the eight collections, it is not too much of an inference to regard him as a contemporary, and the Tamil version of the Mahabharata might well be the version by that Perundevanar, who must have preceded Nandivarman of Tellaru by centuries.
The Sinnamanur plates which give the information puts the three incidents together in the period anterior to "the flood", and from the context, the inference would seem justifiable that it was long anterior. It was pointed out elsewhere that Nilakantan of Musiri, who edited and wrote his own commentary on the Iraiyanar Ahapporul says in the introduction that Iraiyanar Ahapporul came to him by an unbroken succession from teacher to pupils through ten generations, and the Pandiyan whom he celebrates in the illustrative verses should have been a Pandiyan of the seventh century. If this is so, the first Tamil version of the Bharatam has to be looked for ten generations before the seventh century, say about 300 A.D. This conclusion merely confirms what Pandit Gopala Ayyar surmises in his introduction. He has collected a few stanzas, 46 in all, from the Mahabharata of Perundevanar quoted in Nachinkinikayar's commentary on the Tolkappium, and other commentaries etc., and finds that none of these quotations is traceable in the Perundevanar's Bharatam that he publishes. The Bharata Vemba that he has published in a work that must be regarded as distinct from the Tamil Bharata which the author Perundevanar is said to have composed. There is a bare possibility that in later Perundevanar edited the Tamil Bharatam of his name sake with the verse containing the reference to Tellaru merely added which, from the known circumstances of the case, is extremely unlikely.

In the above discussion Sri. Ayyangar while solving the problem of identity, fixes the date of two Perundevanars. Sri. Ayyangar who has made much research on the age of Perundevanar entertains no doubt to place Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba in the middle of the 9th century A.D.

Sri M. Raghava Iyyangar one of the greatest Savants and the research scholars of Tamil Nadu in his "Sasanattamizha Kavi Charitam" (Pages 24 and 25) expresses the view that Perundevanar the author of Bharata Vemba was patronised by Tellarerinda Nandi (830 - 854 A.D) a Pallava Monarch.

Sri Pulalinga Pillai another eminent scholar in his work "Tamil Literature" Section III under the Caption "Ettukokai" says as follows:

"Almost all of these (Ettukokai) have the introductory invocation from the pen of Perundevanar 815 -870 A.D. the author of Bharatam called after him."
Though Purnalinga Pillai felt that the invocatory songs to six of the eight poems of the anthology Ettutokai were composed by Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba which is not acceptable to Sri S. Krishnaswamy Iyyangar and others, he comfortably places Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba in the middle of the 9th Century A.D.

Sri K.A. Neelakanta Sastry a great name in the field of South Indian Historical Research agrees with Sri M. Raghava Iyyangar and Sri, Krishnaswamy Iyyangar and accounts him as one of the last celebrities among the poets that flourished in the post Sangam period between 600 - 850 A.D. He says "It may well be that the entire work (Bharata Vemba) was written by a single author in the 9th century. His poetry confirming to a long established tradition rendering its diction, while his prose was modelled on the style of the learned commentaries the only prose then known ".

Solitary reference to Perundevanar and his work Bharatam is available in the commentator's notes in Tolkappiyam. Perasiriar and Naccinarkiniar - both eminent commentators of Tolkappiyam, while commenting on the 237th cannon in the section Poruladhiyam Seyyuliyl (Tommaidane Uraiyodu Punarnda Palamai Metre) give "Perundevanaral Padapatta Bharatamum Togaduru Yattiraiyum" as examples for Tommai. (Tommai is a poem of considerable length with prose insertions here and there and with an ancient theme "like Bharatam sung by Perundevanar and Togaduru Yattirai". In Sanskrit, Kannada, and Telugu such composition is called Champu. Togaduru Yattirai is a poem dealing with the aspects of the war between the Chera Monarch and Adigaiman of Tagaduru which took place late in the Sangam age.

Tamil scholars and historians give a date to it in the middle of 9th century A.D. This work is not available. Solitary citations affirm its existence once upon a time. Perundevanar's Bharatam is quoted prior to Togaduru Yattirai. So it must have been an earlier work. Historians as well as the literary critics give Perundevanar a date, anyway, not later than the 9th century A.D. His Vaishnavism and the language of religion also look more faithful to the Vaishnavism and the religious language of the Alwars who lived earlier than the 9th century A.D. Sri. Ramanuja's (1018 A.D) vocabulary of Visishtadwaita is not to be seen in Bharata Vemba. We see the passionate sentiment of bhakti of Alwars in it and not
the systematized philosophical thought of Sri Ramanuja. When examined in this light Perundevanar seems to have lived earlier to Ramanuja and after the Alwars. To place him in the 9th century A.D. seems to be more proper.

The solitary verse in Bharata Vemba referred to the victorious Monarch in Tellaru battle also gives us the impression that the author of the poem was a contemporary of Nandivarman III of Pallava Dynasty. The verse is

"VANMAIYAR KALVIYAN NABALATTA LANVINAIYA
LUNMAIYAR PARAL URIMAIYAR RINNMAIYAR
VERRVENDAR VANERA TTELLARRIL VENRANO
DIYAR VENDARER PAREDIR ".

"At Tellaru he was able to send to Swarga the enemy kings who came on their chariots; he is possessed with the great qualities like wisdom, sense of propriety, sovereignty etc. Who can stand before such a conqueror with a challenge to fight?"

In the entire work Bharata Vemba now available to us, the author seems to be very indifferent to make a mention of the contemporary biographical or autobiographical details. In his selfless dedication to the forthcoming story of ubiquitous Tirumal he has not cared to introduce himself to the readers in any way. Such an impersonal author of a devotional song could not help but praise a monarch at least in a solitary verse. This clearly shows the intensity of loyalty and affection of the author to the Monarch.

The sentiment and the tone of loyalty and love of the author for the monarch in the stanza certainly makes the reader feel that the author was not only a contemporary but also a beloved court poet of the king.

Nandivarman III is known to the history as a great lover of letters. It is evident from inscriptions that Nandi possessed scholarship in Tamil and patronised the language.

This "Pallavar Koman" who was victorious at Tellaru is called the 'Panditaralayan' (Refuge to Pandits and Poets'—Bharata Vemba Prose passage after verse-4).

That he patronised the poets is evident from the verses 96, 108 and 111 of Nandikalambagam (biography of Nandivarman III) a quasi historical work, the author of which is not known. (Some critics confer the authorship of this work on Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba. This work is said to have been composed and read out
Nandikalambagam calls him "CHANDRAKULA PRADEEPA". The Pandavas and the Kowravas also belong to CHANDRAKULA. By being known as a descendent of CHANDRAKULA he might have asked Perundevanar to sing the great epic story of his forefathers in Tamil.

After the great victory at Tellaru Nandi enjoyed a peaceful time for more than a decade. In his exuberance after the victory he would have identified himself with the victorious Pandavas and would have asked the court poet Perundevanar to compose the war poem in Tamil.

Now we can be more precise about the date of the composition of Bharata Vemba by knowing the date of the victory at Tellaru.

Sri K.A. Neelakanta Sastry says in his "History of South India": "He (Dantivarman) was followed by his son Nandivarman III (844-66), a much abler monarch than his father, who organised a strong confederacy against his aggressive Pandya contemporary Srimara Srivallabha, and early in his reign inflicted a severe defeat on the Pandya at Tellaru in the Wandiwash taluk of the North Arcot District. His allies were the Gangas, the Cholas, and even the Rashtrakutas. The location of the field of battle shows the extent to which Pandya aggression had developed, and this doubtless made it easy for Nandivarman to find support. The victory of Tellaru was a turning point. It gave Nandi the permanent title "Tellarerinda" and was followed up by further successes as a result of which the Pandya forces were rolled back into their home country, and the Pallava army advanced as far as the banks of the Vaigai, in the heart of the Pandya kingdom.

"Late, however, Srimara recovered his strength and about 859 was able to defeat Nandivarman and his confederates in a battle near Kumbakonam."

\[n 859 A.D.\] Nandi was defeated by the same Pandyan ruler whom he defeated at Tellaru. The verse in Bharata Vemba will not be worthy of its sentiment and tone of appreciation for Nandi if it was written after his defeat in 859 A.D. So one can with great confidence fix the date of Bharata Vemba's composition earlier to 859 A.D. and after 844 A.D.

At this stage a study of epigraphy helps us to arrive at a more precise date of Bharata Vemba's composition. An inscription issued by Nandivarman III in the 6th year of his rule does not con-
tain the epithet "Tellarerinda" for him. But many other inscrip-
tions issued later invariably mention the victory at Tellaru. Some
one can infer that the Tellaru battle took place and ended in favour of
Nandi just after 850 A.D. So we can conclude that the poem Bharata
Vemba was composed after 850 A.D and not later than 859 A.D.

2. PERUNDEVANAR’S PATRON

Biographical data of Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba is not ava-
lable to us in any form. Neither epigraphy nor literature comes to
our help to construct the history of the author. Under these cir-
cumstances one has to solely depend on the internal evidences and
make a guess work of the whole story. Even in his Bharata Vemba
he has not left anything autobiographical. He we had his complete
work with colophon we might have come across some information therein.
The only note in the entire work available to us now is one
Vemba (4) that speaks of the greatness of a monarch who was victo-
rious at Tellaru. This is the pivot on which the entire network
of the story of the relationship between the poet and his supposed
patron revolves. Based on this poem critics have constructed the
history of the poet. Neither the historians nor the literary cri-
tics differ in their opinions about the relationship between the
two persons.

Bahir inscription and the Velurpaliyan plates give us details
of this King of Tellaru. Nandi Varman III (844–866) of the Pallava
dynasty was the famous monarch who was victorious at Tellaru. He
is the son of Dantivarman Pallavamalla (795–845). Danti Varman’s
mother was a Rashtrakuta Princess.

G.J.V Dubreul in his paper "The Pallavas" writes "The
Velurpaliyan plates (S II.Vol. II Part 5 P.5) tells us that Nandi-
varman Pallavamalla had for wife Reva who like (the river) Reva had
(her) birth from a great king (or from a high mountain) and it was
of her that Danti Varman was born; and Reva was probably the daugh-
ter of a Rashtrakuta king named Danti. This will explain the poli-
tical relations that subsisted at this period between the Pallavas
and Rashtrakutas."

"In 780 probably at the beginning of the reign of Danti Var-
man the king of Kanchi helped Govinda II in his struggle against
Dhruva. The later succeeded however in dethroning his brother
(E.P. Ind.Vol.III No. 17 P.104 Pages 75-76)".
The mother of Nandi was a Kadamba Princess named Aggalanim-mati. The Velurpaliayam plates that contain this information add that he had to fight for the throne of his father. (V.20). This (Nandivarman) puffed up with the prowess of his arms acquired the prosperity of the (Pallava) kingdom, not easy for others to obtain by killing (his enemies) on the battle field. There is here perhaps an allusion to the battle of Tellaru which was fought within the first ten years of his reign, since the Tilagthanam inscription (No. 52 of 1895) dated in the 10th year gives Nandi the title Tellarerinda.

Who was the enemy with whom he fought this battle? Very probably it was the Pandyas. The Poem Nandikalambogam, the hero of which is Tellarerinda, tells us in Verse 64 that he was victorious on the Banks of the Vaigai (river in Madura) Ind. Anti Vol. XXXVII Page 72.

The town of Tellaru is undoubtedly the village of Tellaru which was once the capital of Tellaru Parru (Insc.No. 73 of 1908) and now forms part of the Wandiwash Taluq of the north Arcot District. The existence of this town during the Pallava period has been proved in Pallava antiquities Vol.I page 69. I have in fact found in this place numerous remains of temples built in the Pallava style.

We may suppose that on the occasion of Nandi Varaguna tried to seize the rest of the Pallava empire and marched on Kanchi. Nandi stopped the invader at Tellaru, inflicted many defeats on his notably at Palaniyam (Nandi Lalambagam Verse 31) alias Palaiyam near Kumbhagonam and pursued him back up to the bank of the Vaigai.

This glorious campaign in which Nandi earned the surname of Tellarerinda enabled him to reign peacefully not only at Kanchi but also on the banks of Kaveri.

In the country round Tanjore and Trichinopoly we find some inscriptions of the Victor of Tellaru in the 10th year of his reign. His reign was also rich in poets." P. 79 & 80.

Nandikalambagam and the prose piece after the 4th Vemba in Bharata Vemba praise this monarch as PANDITARALAYAN. Bahur inscription and other inscriptions praise him as a VAISHNAVA.

Bahur inscription says (Verse 13). "Just as Lakshmi was the wife of Muradwish the queen named Sankha who was born in Rashtrakuta family was the wife of Nandiverman".
Verse 14 of the same inspection reads "Sankha the queen of the King who resembled the earth in forbearance who was kind to people like a mother was resplendent as LAKSHMI incarnate ".

All these records say that the patron of our poet was a lover of letters and a Vaishnava.

For a poet who is not conscious of himself and his times anywhere in his work, to Praise a monarch atleast in one of the poems, there must be very strong attachment with the monarch. This really means that the monarch had occupied a place of high regard in the heart of the poet. He must have been his patron. Out of gratitude for him he could not but remember him and record his greatness in his work at least once in a way.

Further, for our purpose it is important that the Tamil Bharata poet, Perundevanar was associated with a royal family which had matrimonial alliances with the Rashtrakuta kings. The Poet's patron Tellarreinda Nandi married Sankha the daughter of Nripatinga Amogha-versha, a Rashtrakuta king. Earlier his grandfather married Reva the daughter of Dantidurga another Rashtrakuta king. Tellarerinda Nandi's father-in-law Amoghavarsha was a great man of letters. He is said to have written the Kannada Kavinajamarga. His son-in-law was called the Panditaralayan. His love for literature was so great that some legends have been concocted about his love of letters. Nandikalambagam a quasi historical work describes at length the monarch's love for literature etc. Sri.K.A. Neelakantha Sastri says that "The Nandikalambagam which has Pallava Nandivarman III for hero is much more trustworthy and of real value on the history of the time " when compared to other such quasi-historical works.

3. PERUNDEVANAR'S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND.

Perundevanar's dedicated love of TIRUMAL has a very deep religious background. Without reviewing the religious history of the period which shaped the poet, it is hard to evaluate the plan and the purpose of his entire work.

The period between 500 A.D. to 850 A.D. is marked with unique developments in religious history of South India.

Jainism and Buddhism were enjoying popular respect along with Hinduism. Before 500 A.D. there seems to have existed a balance of all the religions. Marks of religious tolerance can be noticed in Silappadigaram and Manimekalai. But in Kanchi and other important
places in the south the Jains seem to have established themselves very strongly. Jinasena in his ADIPURANA praises Samanthabhadrā, the great Jain Scholar of his abilities in disputations.

In Sravanabelgola inscription we see the sloka:

पूर्व पार्वतीपुर रत नगरे भेरि सया लाखिता
पक्षारागि विसिन्धुठिकौ विषये कान्तिपुरे वेदित्रै
प्राप्ति है करहारकं बदुर्भरं धियो कहै संकटं
वादार्थी विज्ञायानहु नरणं ते शाकुल बिखीडितं

Such Jain scholars as Samanthabhadrā were great disputants. A JAINASANGHA seems to have been established in Kanchi. Such developments in favour of Jainism worried the lovers of Hinduism. People began to fear that the whole country would be converted to Jainism. By that time the Jains have already started attracting the people by writing popular religious literature in the native dialects. Jainism was growing in the Popular level and challenging the Vedic doctrines in disputations.

To save the vedic religion from complete fall a strong reaction was the need of the hour. Then the combeting forces emerged in the south from among the Saivits and the Vaishnavites. Sri K.A.N. Sastry observes; "The growth on the one hand, of an intense emotional Bhakti to Siva or Vishnu, and on the other, of an outspoken hatred of Buddhists and Jains are the Chief Characteristics of the new epoch. Challenges to public debate, competition in the performance of miracles, tests of the truths of the doctrines by means of ordeal, became the order of the day. Parties of devotees under the leadership of one gifted saint or another traversed the country many times over singing, dancing and debating all their way. This great wave of religious enthusiasm attained its peak in the early 7th century and had not spent itself in the middle of the 9th."

These devotees the Nayanars and the Alwarś were the saviours of the Vedic religion. Nayanars, the life givers of Saivism and the Alwars the torch bearers of Vaishnavism racing with each other, both rivalling and overpowering the Jainism established the sweet
popular melodious Bhakti cult in the land. Sri. M.S. Rama Swam! Ayyangar and Sri. B. Seshagiri Rao in their "Studies in South Indian Jainism" describe the religious scene as follows: Thus during the middle of the 7th century A.D., the Jains sustained serious reverses both in Pallava and Pandya country. But they were not routed out of those territories for Tirumangai Alwar, the famous Vaishnava Saint and the feudal chieftain of a small group of villages called Alinadu in the north Eastern part of Chola country and who flourished in the earlier half of the 8th century A.D. has frequent notices of the Jains. He shared with his predecessor Tirumazhisai Piran the bitter hatred of the Jains and other heretical sects. Another Alwar Tondardipodi a contemporary of Tirumangai joined this general movement against the Jains and his hymns are terrible invectives against the Jain faith as the following quotations will show: (1) Nammugam Tiruvandali (2) Tiruvalmozhii 5-10-5. This clearly shows that the Jains lingered long in the country and that Tirumangai Alwar, a great religious disputant came in conflict with them in the course of his pilgrimages to the eighty eight Vaishnava temples scattered throughout South India. By the time of Nammalwar perhaps the lost of the Vaishnava saints, Jainism and Buddhism had nearly died out in South India as he makes only a few references to the Jains. "

By the time Perundevanar was born the struggle was all over and the rhapsodous devotional Vaishnavism was an established popular faith. Four thousand devotional musical compositions of the Vaishnava Alwars were echoing in the air. They were the breath of Perundevanar's nostrils, when he was mature to take up the project of presenting the great epic, a drama of the ubiquity of TIRUMAL. The devotion with which he presents his TIRUMAL, the tradition with which he styles his narration and the conviction with which he imbibes his eloquence are all derived from the Alwars.

4. PERUNDEVANAR'S LITERARY HERITAGE.

In Perundevanar we see certain striking literary features. They are his CHAMPU model, Vemba meter and the Manipravala style.

(a) CHAMPU: Much has been said about the origin and development of the Champu style by many scholars in every language.
There is an argument that CHAMPU style is a contribution of Karnataka. The earliest champu's known to Sanskrit are Nalachampu of Trivikrama Bhatta, a court poet of the Rashtrakuta King Indra III (915-17) and Yushhstilaka Champu of Somadeva who was patronised by Arikesari a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas" says R.S. Murge in his book "The heritage of Karnataka" (Page 190). He also says that the Champu composition might have been in vogue even earlier, as there is a mention of it in the 27th verse of the 1st chapter of Kavirajamarya and claims "that the CHAMPU form of composition is, in all probability the gift of Kannada poets to Sanskrit literature."

A mention of this type of composition is there even earlier in Tamil Tolkappiam a Tamil book of grammar belonging to the Sangam period i.e., before 4th century A.D. refers under Seyyilal cannon 237, வரைணம் பொருள்படுத்தல். The commentators give Perundevanar's Bharatam as an example to it.

If it is a reference to Perundevanar of Bharatavemba the date of Champu in Tamil goes back to the 9th century. If it is a reference to Perundevanar who was called the "Bharatampadia" it goes back to the Sangam period.

But a well chiselled and critically recognised 1st Champu work available now in Tamil literature is Bharata Vemba. Champu Art is not very popular in Tamil. Kambaramayanam, Villi Bharatam and many such big epic works are all in pure verse form in Tamil, whereas in Kannada and Telugu Champu is the dominating literary style employed for all such major works.

If one accepts that the earliest available Champu work in the South Indian literature is Bharata Vemba it needs some review.

There are 830 verses in Bharata Vemba (in Two and a half cantos ). Long and short prose insertions put together, they equal the number of stanzas. We realise that the Champu style is mainly employed here for the purpose of PRAVACHANAM. Almost all the prose pieces are with pre-explanatory interrogation like—

Such interrogatory endings instill interest in the audience regarding the PRAVACHANAM.

The sanskrit words used in these prose passages serve at times as Sanskrit substitutes to pure Tamil words in the verse. The poet seems to have expounded his work in the court of the king, or to an
audience where a good number of Sanskrit scholars were present (perhaps to certify the poem's merits in comparison with the Sanskrit original).

In the absence of these prose insertions the Vembas look disconnected in story telling. Some of the suggestive words used in the Vembas are pregnant with meaning that they had given scope for Villi Puthurar to compose more than one stanza to bring out the entire meaning therein.

Perundevanar often uses words like ภาษา (Please note) in the prose passages. While doing the PRAVACHANAM such pages will alert the audience. Another technique employed for the sake of emphasis in PRAVACHANAM is using of words ending with common phonetic sound.

After singing a Vemba the PRAVACHANAKARA first explains, then links it with the coming poem and alerts the audience. We find all the qualities of the PRAVACHANA art in the CHAMPU style of Bharata Vemba. One can safely come to the conclusion, after careful examination, that the author had styled his CHAMPU composition mainly for the purpose of PRAVACHANAM. Hence Perundevanar's work can be called a descriptive oral epic.

(b) VEMBA: Perundevanar has selected the metre Vemba and employed it with utmost competence in rendering the epic into Tamil. In selecting the Vemba metre a sentiment would have prevailed on the author. According to the canons of Tamil Prosody each metre has its own caste, colour and region. Vemba belongs to Brahmin caste, its colour is white, its region is forest (கத்திக்) and the land of the region, according to canons of Tamil literary criticism, is Krishna. Perundevanar had come forward to sing the entire epic poem in glory of that Lord Krishna. He is suggestive of his hero in selecting the metre.

The first three Alwars (ஆல்வார்கள்) have sung their Prabhandas only in this metre. They are Perundevanar's guides and philosophers. Perundevanar looks very faithful to them in his work not only in thought but also in selecting metre.

Vemba is a tough and testing metre. Only poets with robust competence in verification can take the challenge and compose the Vembas of the standard beyond criticism. Tamil scholars approve of...
the high standard of Perundevanar's art of Vemba construction. Perhaps Puhalendi is the solitary comparison to Perundevanar in this art.

(c) MANIPRAVALA: As far as we know, Perundevanar is the first poet to employ the Manipravala style in a KAVYA. The striking characteristic of the age is the inflow of northern sanskrit influence. "Numerous words and concepts in the domain of ethics and religion and philosophy were freely borrowed and incorporated in Tamil," says Keelakantha Sastry. The Alvars have freely borrowed Sanskrit words and have incorporated them in their PRABHANDAS. But in general literature Bharata Vemba is the first to do this job. The art of amalgamating the Sanskrit and Tamil words is beautiful in Perundevanar. It is generally an art very alien to Tamilians. We find this art only in the commentaries on religious works in Tamil. Perhaps the commentators felt that pure Tamil proves ineffective to convey the full meaning and the spirit of the texts. This art has much to do with the Jainism. Jains have started propagating their religion in the native dialect blended with the aryan vocabulary. This medium of language was used by the commentators in the later period. But Perundevanar rightly selects and employs it in his Bharatam. For him Bharata is not a poem for the sake of poetic art. It is a religious thesis wherein one should focus throwing new light on the ubiquity of that great TIRUMAL. That TIRUMAL of the great epic must be understood not only in Tamil but also in Sanskrit to the audience of his land. He succeeded it.

The linguistic fanaticism hates the inroads of any foreign dialect. But the hatred should not deny the historic remains of an object or posterity. The latest edition of Bharata Vemba (1974) is presented to the reader by removing all the Sanskrit words in the text and substituting Tamil equivalents to them. It is an unkind act of distorting the text. With the latest text in hand, it is very difficult to assess the art of Perundevanar's poetry. Already the copies of the old editions are extinct. For a research scholar of Perundevanar, in future, the publishers and the editors of the new edition are denying atleast the scope of interpreting one aspect of the author.

2. Puhalendi as the famous author of "Nalavemba"
Perundevaner's society as depicted in his Bharata Vemba is dominated with certain other sentiments apart from the predominant sentiment of Bhakti. They are sentiments of gratitude, charity, and valour. We come across beautifully chiselled poetic images of these sentiments several times in Bharata Vemba.

It was an age of overlapping influences in literature with a fusion of two cultures, Aryan and Dravidian, conflict of three religions—Jainism, Saivism, and Vaishnavism, and amalgamation of two languages—Sanskrit and Tamil. Popular devotional literature of greater nobility empowered with music and classical literature of finer embellishment illuminated with the sentiment of love and dignified by the nerve of religion flourished side by side in this age. Two types of literature—one of oral glory (for Pravachana) and the other of literary distinction, shared the appreciation of the people. Under the influence of these mixed literary trends and religious sentiments, Perundevaner's Bharata Vemba was composed. As such we find a new version of the great epic of Bhagavan Vyasa in Bharata Vemba. All the variations from the original text have meaning with reference to the age of the author.

5. BHARATA VEMBA—VARIATIONS

A. UDYOGA PARVA—Bharata Vemba is a non-episodic poem. The main story is narrated in a PRAYACHANA style. The stanzas are descriptive and poetic. The intervening prose passages are either connective or commentative. The poem is neither encyclopaedic in its content nor purely didactic in its purpose. The author's aim is not to be totally faithful to the original. Though he has a great regard for the Vedas, he does not aim at presenting the Vedic theme of the epic. He is more attracted by the Vaishnavism in the epic than by any other aspect of it. He saw the Vaishnavism in it as the Alvars saw it. Hence it is the Vaishnavism of the Alvars that shaped Perundevaner into a Bharata Poet.

5'A.I. UBHIOUS PIRUNHAL—Mahabharata appeared to him as a master poem singing the glory of Lord Krishna. It was "NARAYANA KATHA" or "2 Vasudeva's Glory".

The glorious character of Sri Krishna in Mahabharata had left indelible image of its own in the hearts of the people of Tamil literary world. In ancient Tamil Literature we find a number of poems in praise of His feet. Such usages as "Eripandavan", "Lonade", "Eppadi Ganesar"
are common in ancient Tamil literature.

Ancient Tamil literary world whether it is Jain or Hindu seems to have developed a love for that glorious epic character Krishna. In Silappadigaram a work attributed to a Jain author we find the following verses in praise of Krishna.

"Of Tirumal you have been worshipped and praised by Devas crowding together and you have measured the three worlds dispelling ignorance at the same time with your two Lotus Feet. Those are the same feet which walked its way (to Duryodhana's Court) in embassy for the Pandavas. You killed your enemy by taking the form of a lion, Are these due to your Maya? It is really awe inspiring. We are not able to avail your PARATWAM with Saulabhyam.

"Lord Krishna thwarted the machination of Kamsa. Such Krishna has taken the trouble of going as an embassy for the sake of the Pandavas to the Court of Duryodhana with his ninety nine brothers. When he went the Vedas followed his feet, praising him. So, that tongue is unfit to be called a tongue if it is not going to chant in praise of Krishna, he who is none else than "Narayana".

All these verses are presented before a scholar who does not know that they are from Silappadigaram he will give them a place in the devotional literature of the Vaishnavas.

Though the exploits of the feet of Lord Krishna are well described in Rig Veda, the author of the Silappadigaram describes them with reference to an incident in Mahabharata, the most important incident that decided the fate of eighteen Akshohini army namely going
on an embassy to Kaurava's Court.

Describing the Lotus Feet of Krishna in ecstasy is the Vaishnava tradition. "भक्तिवद्वारा" is the common word of reverence and obedience in the Vaishnava parlance. Feet of Narayana or his devotees are next to none in greatness. This vaishnava tradition is very ancient in Tamil commentary.

Without an exception all the Alwara have sung in praise of Krishna of Mahabharata. Being a devoted student of Vaishnava literature, Perundevanar must have made a thorough study of the story of Krishna in Tamil literature that existed prior to him. His Bharata Vemba evidently speaks of his mastery over Sanskrit. He had gone through all the Vaishnava literature in Sanskrit. Bhasa's six Bharata plays and Bhattanarayana's Vanisamhara were already there before him. In many places in his work he had followed these Sanskrit authors.

Having toiled in dedication for years he had now equipped himself with all the abilities to approach the great epic.

Now his approach to Mahabharata undoubtedly is that of the approach of a Vaishnava Ubiquitarian. He had planned to write the whole story of Mahabharata as the story of Krishna. By the time he started his work, he saw Krishna everywhere in his world of imagination. He is a Krishna haunted writer in Bharata Vemba.

14th century Bharata poet Villiputhurar says that he wants to render the great epic into Tamil, because the story of Krishna appears in it here and there. But to Perundevanar it is not here and there that Krishna's story appears in it; it is Krishna's story itself that appears everywhere in it.

Mahabharata is a holy book to him, it is a song in praise of Tirumal to him. In tune with this taste and temperament he composed a Bharata. In great epics like Bharata one has to go in search of the unity of plot and character. The epic poet frequently sacrifices these literary merits for the sake of ethical eloquence and religious fervour.

In Perundevanar it is an achievement that the entire plot revolves round one character - that is Sri Vasudevan, the hero of the poem. In a way, the epic of many heroes is shaped into an epic of one hero in Perundevanar.

In the absence of any colophon in the available work of Perun-
devanar we do not know whether he had in the beginning given any plan of his work. We also do not know whether he had given any name to his poem. Bharata Vemba is a name given by the reader, and not by the author.

5. A. II. MAGNITUDE AND PROPORTIONS:

In the available Bharata Vemba the first Parva is Udyoga Parva.

In the original Mahabharata this Parva contains about 7000 slokas in 196 chapters. In Perundevanar there are 463 stanzas. Except four stanzas of AHAVAL metre all the others are Vembas. Perundevanar has omitted all the secondary episodes.

III. KRISHNA INTRODUCES SWETA:

Perundevanar begins Udyoga Parva with a reference to Sweta which is not in Bhagavan Vyasa. The episode of Sweta is given in four Vembas (from 14 to 18). It is a peculiar episode, the source of which is not known till now. Villiputturar faithfully follows Perundevanar and incorporates the anecdote in his Bharatam. The Commentators of Villi Bharatham also could not unearth the sources for this anecdote and expressed their opinion that it was a variation.

The story runs in this manner.

Krishna comes with Abhimanyu, Sweta, Satyaki, Samba and others to Dharmaraja. Virata seeing Sweta with Krishna, asks Krishna, with tears trickling in his eyes "Where did you meet him? Where was he all these days? Where was he educated? Why did he leave me?" Krishna narrates to Virata a peculiar story of Sweta. "He was in Swarga. The eight vasus cursed him. He became a peacock. He was shot at with an arrow on which name was incised. He fell at your feet. Not knowing that he was your son, you drove him away. He performed TAPAS and got an arrow and a divine quiver in which arrows will never be spent up. He came to Dwaraka. In a fight between the Suras and the Yadavas, he took the side of the Yadavas and killed 16000 suras with his divine arrows. Now he has come with me. You coronate him as the YUVARAJA". Saying so Krishna makes a number of valuable presents fit for a royal dignitary.

In Mahabharata we only know that Sweta was a son of Virata by his first wife Suratha.

Sweta going away from Virata, living in the Swarga, Vasus cursing him, he fighting the Suras to help Yadavas and Krishna's meet-
The changes have a bearing on the future story of Bharata Vema. Later Krishna makes him the Commander-in-Chief of the Pandava Army. One can convincingly say that Krishna brought him only with this purpose as he knew his invincible prowess at the time when he killed 46000 Suras.

5 A. IV. दिवसोधर्मम् पितरं विश्वामित्राम् करण? Can anyone eat a man's salt and support his enemies?

Udyoga Parva is a prologue to the forthcoming war story of unparalleled magnitude. Ultimate victory depends on the basic foundations laid down for this purpose.

Both the sides have summoned their allies to come and support them in the coming great war. Now the forces are on their way to both the sides.

Salya along with his large army starts for Upalavya to join the Pandavas. Salya’s invincible prowess is known to the world and Duryodhana cannot ignore such a major power joining the Pandavas to fight him. Duryodhana plays a strategy here. By exploiting the weakness of Salya he wants to win him over to his side.

When Salya was on his way to Upalavya, Duryodhana made thousand and one arrangements all along the way for his comfort. Salya was immensely happy. He felt that it was an honour done to him. He would give him any boon. But who was the engineer behind all these arrangements? Salya earnestly wanted to know and reward him. Now came in to the scene the whitened sepulchre, Duryodhana. He put the pride in his pocket and stood before him. Salya was unhesitant to reward him with whatever he wanted. Duryodhana wanted his martial help against Pandavas in the war. Salya granted him his wish. So far Salya’s character by any standards is exemplary with very fine sentiment of gratitude.

Then he proceeded to Dharmaraja. He narrated to him in detail what all had happened. He confirmed that he would act up to his word. Bhagavan Vyasa’s Dharmaraja seems to have not much minded the whole thing. Yudhistira said:

Then he proceeded to Dharmaraja. He narrated to him in detail what all had happened. He confirmed that he would act up to his word. Bhagavan Vyasa’s Dharmaraja seems to have not much minded the whole thing. Yudhistira said:
Dharmaraja looks highly composed in his state of mind.
But he had a request to make to Salya. He asks: Dharma-raja guessing that Salya would become the Charioteer to Kama and requesting him to indulge in the act of Kama. Foreseeing of Salya's service in Duryodhana's army shows the political insight of Dharmaraja. But asking Salya to indulge in the act of Kama is a request not expected of Dharmaraja. Still astonishing is Salya complying with the request as unhesitatingly as he promised Duryodhana of his support. Bhagavan Vyasa's art is superb here. Salya in Bhagavan Vyasa is not an ideal character. It is a kind of character that is very human in nature. Easily liable to err as his nature is, he makes head over heal promises. Sensitive to circumstances as he is he behaves in an impracticable manner. His impulsive sense of gratitude knows no pros and cons. When he was blind with ego and overwhelmed with the sense of appreciation for Duryodhana he granted him what ever he wanted. But when he came to his senses he could not be sincere to his promises. He could not but be divided in his loyalties.

Karna is also as blind as Salya with his ego. But his sense of gratitude is as unshakable as the Himalayas. Temptation of any magnitude even the crown of sovereignty and submission of the angelic beauty of Draupadi could not make him budge an inch from his stand. The most dependable man we see in Karna. Bhagavan Vyasa plays drama with these two characters, partly similar and partly dissimilar, to-

In the above lines two issues deserve critical study. Dharmaraja guessing that Salya would become the Charioteer to Karna and requesting him to indulge in the act of Kama. Foreseeing of Salya's service in Duryodhana's army shows the political insight of Dharmaraja. But asking Salya to indulge in the act of Kama is a request not expected of Dharmaraja. Still astonishing is Salya complying with the request as unhesitatingly as he promised Duryodhana of his support. Bhagavan Vyasa's art is superb here. Salya in Bhagavan Vyasa is not an ideal character. It is a kind of character that is very human in nature. Easily liable to err as his nature is, he makes head over heal promises. Sensitive to circumstances as he is he behaves in an impracticable manner. His impulsive sense of gratitude knows no pros and cons. When he was blind with ego and overwhelmed with the sense of appreciation for Duryodhana he granted him what ever he wanted. But when he came to his senses he could not be sincere to his promises. He could not but be divided in his loyalties.

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gather facing Krishna and Arjuna in the great battle. Karna is known in the world as an equal bowman to Arjuna and Salya is known as an equal charioteer to Krishna. The drama played by these two pairs in the war front is beautiful in Mahabharata.

Regarding Salya, Perundevanar has a different line of thinking. When we examine Perundevanar’s Bharatam, next to the sentiment of Bhakti we find the sentiment of gratitude dominating therein. Perundevanar highlights his sentiment in the best manner in portraying the character of Salya and Karna. Feasting a man’s salt and speaking ill of him is the heinous crime that Perundevanar can never reconcile with. In tune with his taste and temperament he made certain changes, while introducing Salya, Perundevanar praises him through the character of Duryodhana like this:

"... hanuman...领导者...领导者"

(he is a great warrior and Satyavadi). Perundevanar maintains these two qualities of the character with all the seriousness.

Duryodhana got prepared food for Salya.

Salya who is pleased of the feast given by Duryodhana says, "having eaten a man’s food how can one help his enemies." The same sentiment of gratitude is expressed again and again in five successive Vembas (20 to 24).

Salya, true to his word leaves his large army with Duryodhana in the Hastina and goes to UPapalavaya alone (23). Perundevanar has completely omitted the long conversation between Salya and Dharmaraja. He has idealised both the characters of Salya and Dharmaraja. Perundevanar’s Dharmaraja rightly says that it would be impossible for any one to win the Kauravas if he joined them. He wanted to know the way that they can win him in the war. Dharmaraja’s suggestion to Salya to indulge in dispiriting Karna is omitted. Then Salya’s reply is that of a fatalist. He said that he was fated to die in the hands of Dharmaraja. The reply also looks very casual because he is fighting against him. The entire episode is presented in a very brief manner in 9 Vembas. But the expression that one should be faithful to the man whose salt he eats is expressed half a dozen times. The reader will easily think that what little change Perundevanar made here is only to ventilate his favourite virtue namely gratitude.
There is again some change in the timing of this episode. The episode is prepared by Perundevanar. In Bhagavan Vyasa this incident takes place after the incident of Krishna becoming Arjuna's charioteer.

In Bharata, timing of this episode has its own merits. Dur-yodhana might have thought that he had lost a good charioteer in Krishna. To make good of the loss, he might have played the game to win Salya, who is known as an equal to Krishna in that art, over to his side.

As Perundevanar has totally dropped that idea, timing this incident like this, anyway has no significance. In Bhagavan Vyasa, Salya, while consoling Dharmaraja narrates the story of Indra's sufferings in detail. Perundevanar has not provided place to any secondary episode in the scheme of his poem. So he has given up that story altogether.

"KRISHNA BECOMES THE CHARIOTEER OF ARJUNA"

In Udyogaparva Bhagavan Vyasa presents the character of Sri. Krishna in its fullness. The political diplomacy in his mission to unite the cousins, after its failure, the strategy in revealing to Karna the secret of his birth, the divine Ubiquity in his Viswarupa-darpana and the Dharmic partiality in accepting to be the charioteer of Arjuna are some of the important facets of this character portrayed in this Parva. Perundevanar who emerged to present Sri Tirumal as gloriously as possible found all scope to draw the line of beauty of this character to his satisfaction in this Parva.

Political diplomacy demands all possible efforts to avert war. After the marriage of Uttara, all those who have attended the function met and discussed the future course of action. Krishna's counsel was to send a brahmin to Kauravas. It was accepted. Dru-pada's Purohita was soon summoned and he was commissioned to go as an envoy to Hastina. Then Krishna took leave of Pandavas and the others and left for Dwaraka. In the original the brahmin is Dru-pada's Purohita. But in Perundevanar it is Dharmaraja's Purohita.

The brahmin's mission failed. In all probability war was inevitable. Then the Pandavas sent messages to all their allies for support and Arjuna personally left for Dwaraka to seek Krishna's help and the help of other Yadavas.

3. Tiruvallikkenie Pasurum of Tirumangai Alwar.
Perundevanar was something different in the treatment here.

After the brahmin returns from Hastina, Dharmaraja requests him and sends him to Dwaraka to report the details of his embassy to Krishna.

Dharmaraja Says: "Meet and report to that 'Maya' what all the king Duryodhana said."

In a way it is the opening scene of Perundevanar's great drama of Tirumal. Here while sending the Purohita he names Krishna as 'Mayan' a name much loved by the Alwars and particularly meaningful in this context. Again in the very next Vemba Perundevanar uses this word. At the request of Dharmaraja the Purohita went to Dwaraka and met Krishna. Then he fell on the Lotus Feet of Krishna and narrated the story of his embassy and its failure. Krishna's reaction was very quick. He said that they would be conquered by Arjuna; and asked the brahmin to immediately go to Upaplavya to send Arjuna to him. The description of Krishna who is sending for Arjuna speaks volumes of Perundevanar's art of suggestive poetry.

"The Lord of the Universe is sending for Arjuna to consult him to declare war. Such Krishna's hands contain "Sankha" (counsel) or arrows the instruments of war. The very purpose of his AVATAR is for bringing war to reduce the burden of the earth. The image presented in the stanza is an image of a warrior who is ready to take part in the war. Again for three times the word Mayavan is used. All these words with multiple suggestions present before the reader the blueprint of the future course of action drawn in the mind of Vasudeva. The word MAYAVAN is indicative of the immediate drama that Vasudeva is going to play with Duryodhana and Arjuna.

Aggressive initiative is taken by Krishna in asking the brahmin to send Arjuna. Perundevanar's Krishna is more interested in

4. Vemba 69.
5. Maya's flower like feet.
6. Vemba 68.
declaring war than Yudhistira or Arjuna. In fact victory over Ka-
ravas is a victory over the evil. It is more a mission of Krishna
the Lord of the Universe than that of Arjuna or anybody else. So
Perundevanar's Krishna sending for Arjuna is explanatory of Bhagavan
Vyasa's purpose in Mahabharata.

The message of Krishna to Arjuna through the brahmin is very
carefully worded. He asks him to send Arjuna who has a chariot with
the KAPI in its banner - the KURANGU which troubled the ten-headed
and twenty handed Ravana and set fire to his capital Lanka. The
twenty lines in the Ahaval metre are pregnant with meaning and sug­
gestive of the war and the victory for the Pandavas. More excellent
is the expression "Send Arjuna of Veera Kuranguthes?" It suggests
that there is something very important concerning the chariot of Ar-
juna.

In Bhagavan Vyasa Arjuna comes of his own accord to Krishna
immediately after the return of the Brahmin from Hastina, and on the
same day Duryodhana also leaves for Dwaraka with the same purpose.
Perundevanar did not want to say that Duryodhana went to Krishna of
his own accord. He made Dhritarashtra advise his son to do so.
Dhritarashtra wanted Duryodhana to approach Krishna even before Pan-
davas came and asked for Krishna's help. Then Duryodhana leaves for
Dwaraka and reaches first. Krishna knew it and ordered his gate
keepers to let him enter his chamber freely and he himself pretended
sleeping. Duryodhana entered his room. A gorgeous seat was ar­
ranged by the side of his head. Duryodhana proudly walked and -
took that seat.

In Bhagavan Vyasa both Arjuna and Duryodhana enter the room
at the same time. Duryodhana sits at the side of his head and Ar-
juna very humbly sits at the feet of Krishna. In Perundevanar
Arjuna comes later. Both in Bhagavan Vyasa and Perundevanar Arjuna
is very unostentatious. He takes a seat at the feet of the Lord.
Krishna's Lotus eyes pretending sleep now blossom. Duryodhana says
"When the war takes place, Krishna you must stand in front of my
chariot (सच कार 4हिय शीत)." 8

This note is not there in Bhagavan Vyasa. Duryodhana's con-
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
7. Valient monkey bannered chariot (Vemba 69).
8. Vemba 89.
ceased slight at Krishna in asking him to become his charioteer might have pained Krishna much. Perhaps, Perundevanar is suggesting that this slighting request of Duryodhana made Krishna to become a charioteer to Arjuna at the later's request. First Arjuna is seen and then Duryodhana. When both of them requested Krishna's help Krishna says "First he spoke to me with his looks; only after that you spoke to me with your voice". Then Duryodhana stipulates "if you go to them you should not take the divine weapon against us." The reader can very well understand by the 'divine weapon' that Duryodhana is afraid of Krishna's CHAKRAYUDHA which had killed Sisupala the other day before all of them.

The beautiful drama reaches the climax when Krishna throws a joke at Arjuna's request "look here Arjuna! now without a weapon I am a lion without teeth or nails, whom do you prefer? - Me without weapons or 16000 army called Narayanagopalan." To Duryodhana's pleasant surprise Arjuna selects Krishna and requests him to be his charioteer (Perhaps Arjuna caught the idea from Duryodhana's slighting request). Immediately, Krishna orders the chariot of Arjuna to be brought "and he touches it. Perhaps it is a kind of promise to Arjuna. Then he gave Duryodhana the army.

Perundevanar handles this scene with almost devotion and dexterity. Being an idolator of the Alwars, Perundevanar knew the unparalleled importance of this incident. It is here that the Almighty styles himself a charioteer of the virtue to be remembered by the eternal posterity by the name PARHASARATHY. A beautiful pauram on this Charioteer by Tirumangai Alwar is very famous and popular in the devotional literature in Tamil. It is called Tiruvalikkai pasuram.

The Mayavan's beautiful drama with arrogant Duryodhana sitting at His Pillow on a diamond decked chair and unostentatious Arjuna sitting at His feet in devotion and He himself playing the miracle of making Arjuna select him alone without weapons, is the key that throws open the gateway for victory to the virtue. Beautiful co-ordination between the allegory and the literary art in Perundevanar can be seen here in this sequence.

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10. Vemba 93
11. Vemba 97
12. By Tirumangai Alwar
The entire episode is presented in 24 anustub stanzas in Bhagavan Vyasa — in a fast lucid narrative style. Perundevanar presents the same episode in 47 Vembas and 48 intervening prose passages. Perundevanar's Vemba is a quartet more than two times the length of an anustub. It means it is four times the original in length. Added to this about 48 prose passages of either narrative or descriptive nature are also there in Perundevanar.

Perundevanar’s sincerity in presenting the characters in their fullness gives dramatic effect to this episode. Arjuna’s submission to Krishna in devotion, mirrors the Alvar’s Vaishnava PRAPATTI. Epithets like MAYAVAN, EMBERUMAN, KADALVANNAN, MINPONDA ADIXON are Vaishnava in spirit. Words like ARULIPADU are the Vaishnava traditional vocabulary. Perundevanar’s dedicated efforts to make his poem a song of Krishna begins with this episode and it serves as a foundation on which he builds up the entire story of the poem towards that direction.

In Perundevanar we find frequent references to incidents in Ramayana. Even in this episode we find such references.

5. A VI. வெண்டிப்படு கற்றை ராலேன்கு தேவசங்க

KRISHNA GOES ON AN EMBASSY FOR THE PANDAVAS:

Between the incident of Krishna taking the side of Pandavas and Krishna going on an embassy to the Kauravas "Sanjaya Yana Parva" is there in the original. In Perundevanar Sanjaya’s mission succeeds Krishna’s mission.

"Bhagavadyanaparva becomes "Vasudevan Toothu" in Perundevanar. Both in the original and in Perundevanar Vasudeva (Krishna) is the central figure in this episode. In Perundevanar, Vasudeva is not only the Central figure in the episode, he is also the engineer of the entire structure of the Pre-war machinery. He is the master mind behind every strategy that brings success to the Pandavas. Political acumen, and the righteous indignation of Sri Krishna are portrayed by Perundevanar in a surpassingly brilliant manner. In

13. Vembas 70, 81 and 99.
presenting all these aspects the author had to effect a number of va-
riations in his work.

In Bhagavan Vyasa Yudhistira explains the situation to Krishna
before asking him to go to Hastina on an embassy. All this takes
place after Sanjaya's mission for peace.

"I have heard Sanjaya, and I have heard you also. I have under-
stood the feelings of both of you" says Krishna.

Dharmaraja Fears Vidura's Bow:

In Perundevanar a long conversation lasts between Krishna and
Dharmaraja. This conversation which is carefully conducted has a
bearing on the future action of Krishna.

At the outset Dharmaraja anxiously presents before Krishna his
fears about Vidura and his divine bow. If Vidura enters the field
against them with his invincible divine bow who can stand before him?

In Bhagavan Vyasa we know Vidura as a minister of high ethical
calibre and as a man of philosophic bent of mind. As a warrior and
a Bowman, he does not appear anywhere in Mahabharata. But Perunde-
vanar brings in a note of change in this character. Later in this
episode Vidura is said to have broken his bow as a protest against
Duryodhana's unparliamentary behaviour with him.

In the scheme of Perundevanar Dharmaraja's fears about Vidura
are not baseless. In the same manner he expresses his fears about
other great warriors like Aswathama, Karna and Bhishma. Krishna
consoles him by saying that valient men like Sahadeva, Nakula and
Abhimanyu can win them. But Krishna's answer is purely casual.

He has taken into account the fears of Dharmaraja about Vidura, Aswa-
thama and Karna, and with a sense of additional responsibility of
solving these problems, he goes on an embassy to Kauravas.

Bhimasena Roars Out For War:

After conversing with Dharmaraja, Vasudeva speaks to Bhima-
sena.

Perundevanar's Bhima is entirely different from Bhagavan Vya-
sa's. Bhagavan Vyasa's Bhimasena says to Krishna

"Krishna! You speak to Duryodhana in the manner in which peace can be achieved." The unusual peace loving tone of Bhima surprises Krishna, and he smiles at it, and rubs Bhima on the wrong side to instigate him. Then only Bhimasena becomes furious. But in Perundevanar, Bhimasena not only does not speak of peace, but also angrily abuses his fate that had made him the brother of Dharmaraja. He says to Dharmaraja "I have sinned to have born as your brother." He speaks of the united braid of Draupadi, and in plain angry terms he roars out for war.

Arjuna's desire to use the Pasupata, Nakula showing the braid of Draupadi are also minor changes, in Perundevanar.

5. A VI C. VASUDEVA SHOWS VISWARUPA TO SAHADEVA :

In the conversation between Krishna and Sahadeva, we come across a major variation in Perundevanar.

Perundevanar's Sahadeva is entirely different from Bhagavan Vyasa's. Bhagavan Vyasa's Sahadeva says:

Even if Bhima, Arjuna and Dharmaraja adhere to Dharma, I discard that dharma and I would like to fight."

This valient Sahadeva is converted into an evolved man of high wisdom by Perundevanar.

When Krishna asks him to offer his opinion, Sahadeva says "you are for bringing about a great war in which the Kauravas, Pandavas and the other kings are destined to die. After killing all the people you want to exist alone." Krishna interrupts and says "If you think that you know for what I am going, and what I do, Sahadeva! You find me out in which pillar I hide myself among these thousand pillers of this Pandal." Saying so he disappears. Sahadeva without mistake finds out the pillar in which Sri Vasudeva hid himself.

15. Vemba 120
16. Vemba 131
17. Vemba 132
Then Sri Krishna exhibits his Viswarupa to Sahadeva. Sahadeva praises him in many meaningful epithets.\textsuperscript{18}

Description of Viswarupa is beautiful. Krishna praises him and hugs him with love. Perundevanar is certainly not economical in presenting the episode in eight vembas and an equal number of intervening prose passages of considerable length.

A thorough study of the folklore literature of Perundevanar's times in Tamil may reveal the origin of this variation.

In this episode several usages of traditional Sri Vaishnava vocabulary make their appearance.

\textbf{5:4\textperiodcentered}**. **DRAUPADI'S BRAID YET TO BE TIED** : 

In Vembas 139 and 140 Perundevanar presents the picture of Draupadi with unfurled hair exactly as he is seen in \textit{VENISAMHARA} of Bhatta Narayana.

Draupadi taking an oath that she would not tie her braid till Dussasana and Duryodhana are killed is not there in Bhagavan Vyasa. This is the creation of Bhatta Narayana in his \textit{Venisamhara}. Perundevanar follows \textit{Venisamhara} in presenting the conversation between Krishna and Draupadi.\textsuperscript{19}

Dharmaraja decrying the ladies at this stage is yet another variation. He says to Krishna that the ladies should not be consulted in solving the political issues, as the ladies, children and mad people are of one category.\textsuperscript{20}

While describing the response of Duryodhana to the arrival of Krishna in Hastina, Perundevanar has something new to say. Duryodhana wants to receive him along with others. But Sakuni interferes at this stage and says that the world will mistake Duryodhana to a coward, if he goes and receives the messenger of the Pandavas. Only at the instance of Sakuni, Duryodhana changes his earlier decision. Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Aswathama, Karna, Vidura and other kings go to receive him.

In Bhagavan Vyasa Krishna goes to Dhritrashtra's palace first. Then he meets Kunti. One entire \textit{Adhyaya} is devoted to this meeting.

\textsuperscript{18} Vembas 134 and 135.  
\textsuperscript{19} Vemba 137  
\textsuperscript{20} Vemba 141
Kunti's grief is presented in a touching style. Krishna consoles her and says that her sons will be victorious.

Perundevanar has certain changes here. He does not bring in the Krishna-Kunti meeting at this stage. He postpones it to a later stage with a definite purpose.

**KRISHNA GOES TO BOWMAN (VIDURA):**

In Perundevanar Krishna goes to Vidura's house. Here Perundevanar very meaningfully says " இன்றே கேட்டென் கிருஷ்ணர் நான் " "He went to the house of Vidura, a great Bowman."

Now we come to understand the purpose of introducing the conversation between Dharmaraja and Krishna in the previous scene. Dharmaraja's first reference was to " விசுவநாத வி஧ுரவர் " (Bowman Vidura). Krishna's political acumen has already started working in the direction of solving the problems of Dharmaraja. His reluctance to go to the royal palace of Duryodhana and his affectionate visit to Vidura's hut are more meaningful in Perundevanar. It is true that Vidura is a devotee of the highest order. But Krishna's visit to Vidura's hut is not completely a dedication to the devotional purpose; it has a political end too.

Vidura hosting Krishna is described in one sloka in Bhagavan Vyasa: 

In Bhagavan Vyasa the food is loved by Krishna for its quality - the virtuous man's food). Though Perundevanar's Krishna, in going to Vidura's hut, is as much dedicated to political service as to the love of a devotee, his Vidura is dedicated to love of his Lord alone in hosting Krishna.

Pure Sri Vaishnava style haunts the entire atmosphere in Vidura's residence while hosting Sri Vasudeva. Perundevanar says that Sri Vasudeva entered the 'Kennel of the dog' - கிளோர்குண்டை. This is a pure Vaishnava expression emerging from the 'தேவனுக்கு பூமியைக் கருதியால் உயிரும் புயலாம்' (befitting oneself before God and his devotees). Vidura forgets himself in great joy and says: மற் அப்பா குருவுகளை அவர்களின் கைகளில் இருந்து வேளை வீட்டில் செய்யாள்.

21. Vemba 152
(How much PUNYA this dog's kennel of mine has done for the Lord to step into it). He prostrates and pays respect to Krishna (Sri Krsna). Rich feet (Sri Padungal) are adored. Sri Vasudeva smiles. Perundevanar showers the traditional Sri Vaishnava devotional vocabulary in the description of the scene.

Perundevanar's art lies in successfully maintaining the double purpose in this episode, namely Krishna's political strategy, and Vidura's love for the Lord. Now Vidura is a Krishna-haunted soul. If anybody slights Krishna he cannot simply endure it.

In Bhagavan Vyasa the 92nd Adhyaya of Udyogaparva describes Vidura's narration of the malicious nature of Duryodhana to Krishna. Perundevanar's Vidura is rendered incapable of speaking a word about any other thing except about his Lord's greatness. Perundevanar has his own suggestive art of high order. He makes his Vidura praise his Lord like this: O Lord! you saved the daughter of Drupada; you took the entire land from Bali. The eulogy is specially meaningful in this context. Fulfilling the wish of Draupadi and recovering the land of Pandavas from Duryodhana are beautifully suggested in it.

5'A·V·P. KRISHNA IN THE COURT OF DURYODHANA :

Krishna leaves for Duryodhana's Court. The arrangements in the Court of Duryodhana are different in Perundevanar. Duryodhana orders all the kings not to show respect to Krishna as he enters the Court. A threat is hurled at them, that their riches will be taken away from them if they pay homage to Krishna. Making these arrangements and sitting on the Veera SINGASANAM Duryodhana sends for Krishna to enter the SABHA.

Krishna arrives in the Court hall. The reaction of the assembly is vividly described by Perundevanar.

22. Vemba 152
23. Vemba 155
24. Vemba 158
Bhishma and Drona paid him respects folding their hands in reverence; the kings prostrated; Karna bowed down his head (perhaps not to see him); Sakuni stretched his hands stopping.\

In the succeeding explanatory prose passage Perundevanar says that Dussasana and the other brothers along with Sakuni and Karna remained indifferent.\

One can see the influence of Bhasa in this scene. In "Dutasvakya" of Bhasa, we see that the threat of Duryodhana to the kings and their inadvertent submission to the impelling influence of Krishna's appearance. But Perundevanar's DUSTA CHATUSAYA (the group of the wicked four) looks more adamant; impenetrably hard.

Duryodhana regrets the action of Krishna, accepting the food of Vidura and disappointing him. Krishna's reply is the same as it is in Bhagavan Vyasa. But the very next moment Duryodhana, before asking Krishna for what he came all the way to him, praises him like this:

"0 Yadava! Achyuta! Adbhuta Tatparataya, Father of the entire world of life!

This sort of ecstatic eulogy by a person like Duryodhana looks strange here. For a moment Perundevanar seems to have forgotten the character and the sequential propriety under the intoxicating influence of his devotion for Krishna."  

In Bhagavan Vyasa Duryodhana's treatment is normal.

Coming to the point Krishna asks for the share of the Pandavas. Duryodhana's reply is very curt. He says, I do not give land even of the hair's breadth. Krishna explains the consequences of such adamant decision. Duryodhana in a furious manner beats a pillar with his hand and abuses Krishna of low birth.

Krishna declares war, and asks them to make preparations to meet in kurukshetra. He leaves the assembly hall, and stays in a separate MANTAPAN.

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25. Vemba 163.
26. Surprisingly we see Duryodhana behaving in the same manner in Pampa Vikramarjuna Vijaya 9-30,32
27. Vemba 167.
How Duryodhana is very angry. He looks at Vidura and says...

"Having eaten my food this fellow takes the side of my enemies; he feeds the envoy of my enemy with my food as if it is his own. He deserves to be bastard."

These slurring remarks of Duryodhana inflames anger in Vidura. The great Bowman in Vidura, in a fume, roars out to Duryodhana.

"I desist to kill you because I do not want a slur on me that I had killed my elder brother's son. Further I do not want to suffer the blame that, I had killed a man whose salt I had eaten. The best course left to me is not to enter your Court. Saying so in a fit of anger Vidura broke his bow which is equal to those bows of Siva and Rama. Further Vidura angrily said "your loose words of slur have burnt my ears. I do not enter the battle field for you."

Saying so Vidura broke the divine bow into two pieces and took an oath not to take part in the forth coming war.

Why did Vidura break his bow and took an oath not to enter the battle field? It is not entirely because Duryodhana abused him. Just a while ago Vidura had hosted the Lord and his obsessing influence on him is still very fresh. Perhaps Vidura would have endured Duryodhana's slights at him personally. When Duryodhana spoke abusively of his Lord and found fault with his action of hosting his Lord, he lost all restraint and resorted to the drastic step of breaking the divine bow and taking the oath.

In Tamil Villi, who has very faithfully followed Perundovanar in composing his own version of Bharatam makes his Vidura speak out the same reason for his reaction:

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30. Prose passage after Vemba 179
31. Vemba 180
32. Vemba 181
33. Vemba 182.
O Krishna! When you, who is beyond our thought and perception, came all the way as a messenger, this arrogant Duryodhana did not oblige you. The arrogance and the anger with which he spoke to you became intolerable to me. That is why I broke my bow into two pieces.  

Now after this high drama, we understand the political diplomacy of Krishna in going to Vidura's house for food. How carefully Krishna does away with the fear of Dharmaraja of Vidura's bowmanship is very beautifully narrated here.

5AviH. KRISHNA SENDS KUNTI TO KARNA:

Now Perundevanar presents his hero Krishna who is at solving another problem posed by Dharmaraja before he left for Hastina. Karna's invincibility is well-known to the world. He has been challenging Arjuna since boyhood. He is the right hand of Duryodhana. If they can make away with Karna, clear walkover in the war is sure for the Pandavas. But Karna's loyalty to Duryodhana is very strong.

Karna is not a man to play fast and lose with a friend who stood by his side and saved him when his prestige was at stake.

In Bhagavan Vyasa Krishna reveals the secret of Karna's birth to him, and asks him to come back to his brothers to be honoured by them as a King. When Karna turns down the offer and confirms his loyalty to Duryodhana, Krishna does not make a second trial to black sheep him.

Perundevanar's Krishna - Karna episode is different, from that of Bhagavan Vyasa and it is more interesting too. This episode does not confine itself to these two characters alone. Kunti and Indra also come into play very major roles under the direction of Sri Krishna. As already said in Bhagavan Vyasa after the visit of Dritarashtra, Krishna goes to Kunti and consoles her of her grief. In Bhagavan Vyasa this happens before he saw Duryodhana in his court.

Perundevanar's Krishna visits Kunti only after the first meeting between himself and Duryodhana. The meeting resulted in Vidura's exit from the Kaurava Camp.

Now his visit to Kunti is not a formal domestic programme as in Bhagavan Vyasa. It is more politically motivated. He narrates...
what had all happened in the Kaurava Sabha.

Then abruptly he speaks of Kunti's past; reminds the story of her begetting Karna and throwing the child in the river. He also says that he has become an invincible warrior and a faithful friend of Duryodhana. Though a brother now he is a fearful foe to Bhima and Arjuna. Then he asks her to go to Karna to beg a boon — a word not to use the Nagastra against Arjuna. Kunti is surprised. She was under the impression that none else than herself knew about Karna's birth.

Then she says: "I did not know that you are aware of this!" Here she gives a reason for abandoning the child: "Knowing that the land where the child lives will be destroyed, I abandoned him." She grieves to lose him by asking him not to use the Nagastra, and laments for the separation of the child from her.

Krishna poses a sharp question. "If one Pandava dies the other four also die, as each is the life to the other among them. If Karna dies you will have the other five alive. Which do you prefer — one for five or five for one?" Posing the problem to her he leaves for the residence of Vidura.

Perundevanar drops the curtain here leaving the drama to be resumed some time later. His art of rousing suspense in the audience and making them more eager to see the conclusion is beautiful here. The description of sunset and the nightfall is not only beautiful, it is also suggestive. The darkness has enveloped the world. Sun's radiance has given place to the lamp's light. This beautiful poem provides scope for any amount of imagination. Just as the small lamps are fighting the darkness, two souls are left in pensive mood to fight their own problems. One is Duryodhana fighting his way for achieving his goal to remain the sole monarch of the undivided land. Second is Kunti fighting her affection to lose either one son or five sons. For Kunti Karna, her son by Sun-God is a setting sun now. For Duryodhana — Prosperity is a setting sun.

In Perundevanar not a single line of poetry that describes nature is devoid of thoughts concerning the theme. He mirrors the

35. Vemba 195.
36. Vemba 197
37. Vemba 201.
movement of the theme and its thought content in his nature. This is one among such beautiful poems.

5A·VI I. DURYODHANA AND HIS FOLLOWERS PLAN TO TRAP KRISHNA:

That midnight Duryodhana, Dussasana, Sakuni and Karma had a secret meeting. They decided to trap Krishna. For that purpose they got a deep pit dug in the assembly hall. In that pit they stationed mighty Rakshasas and strong wrestlers. Over the pit they built a beautiful throne for Krishna to be seated. Then they asked Sanjaya to bring Krishna.

Next morning Krishna got into his chariot to go to Pandavas. Then Sanjaya came and told Krishna: O Lord! Do not be angry. Duryodhana wants to do as you said earlier. He sent me to bring you.

Then Krishna turned his chariot and went to Duryodhana's Court. Duryodhana offered the throne specially prepared for him. Krishna knew it, and took the wonderful Viswarupam. Perundevanar dedicates about 150 lines of beautiful poetry to describe in ecstasy the Viswarupa of the Lord.

Specially one can look at the following lines:
We worship thee that art our father.
We worship thee that art our Lord.
We worship thee that art our King.
We worship thee that art the Lord of Goddess Earth.
We worship thee that art dark in hue.
We worship thee our Lord that saved the elephant.
We worship thee Krishna that slew Kamsa.
We worship thee our Lord that art black as a cloud and that slumbrest over dark blue ocean.
We worship thee that cut the thousand arms of Banasura.
We worship thee Lord that sucked at the breast of the she demon Puthana.
We worship thee God that measured the vast universe.
We worship the Maya that crawled between the Marutha trees.
We worship thee Mahesa that churned the great ocean.
We worship thee the Supreme being that lifted up the Mount Govardhana.
We worship thee that bearest the Sankha and Chakra in the hands.
We worship thee that art armed with a club, the bow Sarnga, sword, Nandka, Bhindivala, and Vajra.
We worship thee that fillest the eight sides of the world.
We worship thee that art second to none.
We worship thee that kept the Swarga, the sky and the earth
in thym womb at the time of deluge, and brought into
existence again.
We worship thee Tirumal on whose breast shine Laxmi, and the
dark mole Srivataa.
We worship thee that art the destroyer of sins, and the bea-
tower of heaven.
We worship thee whose holy feet, the inexplicable Vedas are
still in search of.
We worship thee the purifier of the sins of devotees.
We worship thee that hid thyself in a piller to slay Hiranya-
kasipu.
We worship thee that accepted the boy Prahalada as they servant.
We worship thee that art beyond the knowledge of Brahma and
other Gods.
We worship thee that art the Lord of Lakshmi seated in the Lotus.
We worship thee mighty one, that brought the earth in thy tusks.
We worship thee of thy feet that showerest mercy on everyone.

All these lines which end with the reverential expression 'POTRI'
meaning "Worship" create an atmosphere of devotion and they absolute­
ly make no difference with the prayers of Alwars. Perundevanar
changes the metre here. His devotional ecstasy cannot be fettered
by the strict cannons of the Vemba metre. AHAVAL is a blank verse
best suited to the spontaneous flow of praise.

After the devoted eulogy of VISWARUPA, Perundevanar does not
forget to describe the reaction of Duryodhana:
Adamant Duryodhana stirred not from his seat, yielded not in
the manly words he spoke, and raised not his hands in worship. Sure­
ly are not these the essential characteristics of a warrior?

In Bhagavan Vyasa we do not come across any description of
Duryodhana's response to Krishna's Viswarupa.

Here we come across yet another gesture of Sri. Vasudeva
which portrays his political strategy. After he withdraws his
Viswarupa, Krishna takes hands of Aswathama and Karna, goes to a
separate place, and speaks to them. Dharmaraja had entertained fears.

35-A. Stanza No. 212. Ahaval lines from 111 to 139.
36. Vemba 216.
about both these warriors. Really they are the source of great strength to Duryodhana. He must, somehow or other, as the mission for peace has failed, deprive Duryodhana of the support of such invincible warriors. If it is not possible, their morale should be demeaned. 

Though Karna's reference is there in the original, Krishna-Arvathama meeting is not there. Krishna speaks to Karna, "You are a witness to Duryodhana's refusal to give the land for which Yudhistira has a right." 

Then Krishna narrates to Karna the story how he was born and what relationship he has with the Pandavas. While narrating this past story of Karna we see an interesting note of variation about the 'MANTRA' initiated by Durvasa to Kunti. In the original Durvasa gives a single MANTRA to Kunti. But Perundevanar says that he initiated five MANTRAS to her. Another interesting note of variation is Durvasa foretelling that Kunti would become the wife of Pandu. In Bhagavan Vyasa's Durvasa does not speak a word about Kunti's marriage with Pandu.

Both these notes of change confirm the basic nature of the divine intervention in the human story to achieve the preordained finale.

How Karna got his name has been explained here in a different manner from the original. In the original the name 'Karna' is conferred on him for the reason that he cut open his Kavacha and Kundala to give them to India. Perundevanar says that he was born from the ear (KARNA) and therefore he got the name. Perundevanar also gives another reason; Surya himself as an ASAREERI named the new born child as Karna. These notes of variation about Karna give us the scope to think that there were a number of popular stories afloat in the air about Karna.

Perundevanar once again gives expression to the sentiment of gratitude in the conversation between Krishna and Karna. By revealing the secret of his birth, Krishna renders Karna mentally agi-
tated. Krishna has a deeper motive in doing so in Ferundevanar. Later, he sends Kunti to Karna to exploit the man who is already mentally softened by him. In the original Krishna does not take an initiative to send Kunti to Karna. After Krishna's meeting Karna is not as strong psychologically as he used to be. In a way he is rendered vulnerable to be exploited further.

After a long conversation with Karna Krishna turns to Asvathamama. To Aswathama also he says "Aswathama! You are a witness to Dyuryodhana's refusal to give at least five villages to Pandavas". Further Krishna says to him: "Listen! You are a good brahmin! You are an AVATARA of Siya. For us, the divine Trio, you are the Lord. If you want to help us to get over the difficulties, you favour us with this request. Even if Duryodhana himself comes to you with a request that you should become a Commander-in-chief of his army do not accept."

A reference to Aswathama's commandship does not arise in the original. In Venisamhara a scene is created with reference to Aswathama's commandship. But Ferundevanar's reference varies even from the theme of Venisamhara also in this respect.

In the same way as Krishna revealed the secret of Kama's birth to him, he reveals to Aswathama the purpose of his birth. Reminding Aswathama of his original self and requesting him to help in achieving victory for the virtue, will certainly dilute the concentrated loyalties of Aswathama to Dyuryodhana.

Krishna's aggressive political movements penetrate further and we see a tricky politician in him now in Ferundevanar.

While the conversation with Aswathama is going on, Krishna let slip his ring and looked up about the sky, and exclaimed "May it proper ". He then asked Aswathama, pointing with his finger to see if the sun is surrounded by a hollow. Aswathama then took up the ring and handed it over to him.

This trick of Krishna had completely polluted the minds of the courtiers with grave suspicion about Aswathama. They begin to talk among

42. Vemba 227.
43. Vemba 228.
Aswathama the great warrior, in the very face of this assembly, has promised Krishna something. Cursed by him.

Duryodhana's reaction is still more strong. He says to the assembly: "Drona's son Aswathama has fallen a prey to the trick of Krishna and as sworn by his ring something to him. How can we still have confidence in him?"

Duryodhana within himself, almost suspends Aswathama along with Vidura from the list of his men, and banks upon the prowess of Karna. He says "Vidura and Aswathama do not match Karna."

At this stage Aswathama had to come out with an explanation to the assembly. He exhorts that a man who proves unfaithful to the salt will go to hell. He pleads that he is not guilty, and explains the situation.

All these variations in Perundevanar serve his purpose to present his Tirumal in a new dimension. Every incident, which helps Pandavas for victory is engineered by Krishna. Perundevanar either creates such incidents, or relates the incidents which are already there in the original, with Krishna. In reminding Aswathama of his original avatar we are hinted to foresee Aswathama's nocturnal killings in the Samptika Parva, which brings total destruction of the remaining army on the Pandava's side. This act is quite in accordance with the duty of Siva, the divine destroyer, (Laya Karaka) among the divine tric, as remarked by Krishna to Aswathama.

Krishna's mission is not a single compliance with the request of Yudhistira as it apparently looks. It is something more; and more important than that. So Perundevanar floods light on the divine blueprint of the activities of Krishna and presents a clear picture of the ubiquity of his Lord. While doing so, the author has not forgotten the proprieties of human narration and poetic art.

Yudhistira sent Krishna to bring peace. But he only brought war. So it is quite evident that it is not a simple compliance with the request of Yudhistira. Perundevanar does not conceal it. He, with all the eloquence says "Krishna did not mind his own greatness;
walked all the way to Duryodhana's SCBHA to beg for territory; but he only succeeded in getting war. It is his desire to relieve the goddess of Earth of her burden. After achieving war, while he rode back to Vidura's house, Perundevanar brings in the Gods and the Vedas to shower eulogies on him. Now he understood how Perundevanar had conceived the character of Krishna.

As Krishna in sincerely working to bring about war, he must also sincerely work for the victory of the Pandavas. His instigation has failed to bag Karna's support. Obstinate Karna should be dealt with in a different way. Ingenious Krishna immediately decides to exploit the virtue of generosity of Karna which has almost become a vulnerable part of his invincible life.

There is a saying in Tamil: "கமா தூய்வு, சந்த வேட்டை மற்றும் கவசை தந்து விழுந்து செவ்வலார்: " (No rain after Karthigai, no charity after Karna). Perundevanar very beautifully weaves the episode of Karna in which he proves the proverb in all its eloquence.

In Bhagavan Vyasa, Indra, of his own accord, treacherously robs off Karna's Kavacha and Kundala, in his anxiety, to bring victory for his son Arjuna.

Perundevanar's Vaishnava-ubiquilarian vision does not approve of independent action on the part of any character. Perundevanar's Indra does not independently proceed to take away Karna's Kavacha and Kundala. It is Krishna - Sri Vasudeva that commissions Indra to discharge this vital task. In Perundevanar, Indra is only a servant - DASA to be at the beck and call of the Lord Sri Vasudeva.

Sri Vasudeva calls Indra and commissions him with the task of ruining the might of Karna, with a view to bring victory to Arjuna.

Krishna knows very well, as to whom he should employ for this task. Indra is the divine parent of Arjuna and he should act as a tool to achieve the goal.

Indra appears before the Lord. Krishna says "Look Indra! If you want that your son should win in the forthcoming war, go you begging, in the guise of a brahmin to Karna, and persuade him to give his golden ear rings and the coat of armour with which he was born."
Sri Vasudeva carefully tutors Indra to successfully do the job. Perundevanar dedicates four Vembas for this purpose.

First time, Indra goes in the guise of a brahmin in the afternoon, when Karma had given away everything to the needful. He flatters him, and prepares him to stick to his word, that he would give away whatever he wanted. Then he asks for Kavacha and Kundala. Karma gives them away to him, in spite of Surya as an ASAREERI checking him not to do so. Surya even tells Karma that the brahmin is none else than Indra.

After receiving the objects, Indra goes to Krishna. At this stage, Perundevanar has something very new to add to this episode.

Sri Vasudeva asks Indra to go to Karma again in the guise of a brahmin to fetch the precious diamond in his hand. Reference to a precious diamond in the hand of Karma is not to be seen anywhere in the original. This again allows us to think that a number of stories about Karma were in vogue in Perundevanar's times.

Now Indra is guilty. He feels very delicate to further rob off Karma. He says to Krishna "I have almost taken away his life by depriving him of his Kavacha and Kundala. How can I go to him again?" 50

Krishna insists to do so, saying "For the welfare of the children, people are licenced by the VEDAS and SASTRAS to even indulge in lying".

It is said that Indra soon realised his mistake and submitted himself to Krishna.

He soon goes to Karma for the second time. He asks him to give the diamond in charity to him. Instantly Karma takes the diamond to give. Now Indra says "Karma wash your eyes and mouth, and have your sweet meal, and then, when you are in the mood, give me the previous ruby" 51

Karma's reply is of a highly evolved soul. He says "O Brahmin! in this world of ours, our intentions, our word, and our circumstances of life, are not of permanent nature. This physical frame of ours and the material riches are quite unstable. Therefore receive the ruby now, even when I give it to you with the best

50. Vemba 276.
51. Vemba 283.
of intentions, and go home.\textsuperscript{52}

In the ensuing prose passage there are certain interesting notes of variation.

While Indra was about to go, the sin of deceiving Karna (as Brahmahatya) follows him. Then Indra returns and offers a divine weapon to Karna. Karna says that he would not take the weapon in return.

In the succeeding two Veabas Indra compells him to take it and describes its invincible efficacy. Indra gives Karna a lance and reveals his original personality. He also stipulates not to use it against Arjuna. He asks Karna to release it on Chatotkach\textsuperscript{53}; and disappears not to be seen again in the drama of Karna in Perundevanar.

The episode of Indra taking away the Kavacha and Kundala of Karna, in the guise of a brahmin is also there in the original. But it is very brief. It is referred to in one sloka in Adiparva, and in one sloka in Vanaparva\textsuperscript{54}. Perundevanar devotes about 60 Veabas.\textsuperscript{55} He dedicates the entire episode to magnify the glorious munificence of Karna and the importance of the role played by Sri Vasudeva. In Udyoga parva of Bhagavan Vyasa we do not come across any reference to this episode. Perundevanar rightly brings in this episode in the Udyogaparva and very ably adds it as an ornament to his poem.

5-A. VI.L. KRISHNA SENDS KUNTI TO KARNA.

Karna is rendered weak by depriving him of his Kavacha, Kundala and the ruby in the hand. But there is yet another power with Karna that may prove fatal to Arjuna. It is the Nagasstra which had joined him to kill Arjuna. At any cost Arjuna must be protected from it. This time Krishna thinks of Kunti. He approaches her; he asks her to go to Karna to obtain a promise from him not to use the Nagasstra for the second time against Arjuna.\textsuperscript{56}

In Bhagavan Vyasa Kunti goes to Karna of her own accord. She sees him at the holy Ganges, while he was attending to his morning prayers. In Perundevanar, the meeting place is not at the holy Ganges. The scene is shifted to Karna's palace.

This episode in Perundevanar is specially interesting because it contains very peculiar variations.

\textsuperscript{52} Veaba 284.
\textsuperscript{53} Veaba 291.
\textsuperscript{54} Adi 144-145; Vana 310-323.
\textsuperscript{55} Veabas from 234 - 292.
\textsuperscript{56} Veaba 293.
At the instance of Krishna, Kunti goes to the palace of Kama. The gatekeepers are asked to inform Kama of her arrival. They go and inform Karna that Kunti, the mother of Pandavas, has come. It surprises Karna. Mother of Dharma who possesses the right of ruling the entire earth come to grace his palace! Karna wants to receive her and worship her fair feet which is being daily worshipped by the Pandavas. He orders the guards to request the lady to walk in. A secluded apartment in the palace is arranged to meet Kunti. Karna meets her and greets her with folded hands in great reverence. Karna's crowned head which has not known bowing to anybody, now humbly bows down before her. Kunti is also lost in her passionate maternal love for Kama. Milk from her breasts, and tears from her eyes start trickling.

5-A. VI.M. KUNTI WEARS THE "TESTING GARMENT."

Karna asks her: "Noble Lady! Mother of valiant Dharma! What had brought you here and what can I do for you?"

Kunti says that Mayavan has sent her to him, and narrates the relationship between him and herself which is not known to the world. Surprised Karna says "Can I believe, if you say, that I am your son, and the elder brother of the Pandavas?"

Kunti confirms "I am your mother and you are my son. Believe me. It is true."

Now Karna shows Kunti a garment, and says "Many women came to me saying that they were my mothers. But when I gave this garment and asked them to wear it, they put it on and all of them were burnt to ashes. This is the heap of bones of those ladies. Now if you can wear this garment and survive, then you are my mother. Anyway do not kill yourself like these ladies. You take what all you want and go home."

Kunti takes the garment and wears it saying "If this is not the body that had given birth to Karna let it be burnt." She wears it for 32 NADIS and in the 4th NADI she removes it. Now she looks ten times brighter than before. She shines like the rays of the sun and the idol of the molten gold.
Kama sees bright Kunti and falls on her feet. Kunti takes him on her lap.\textsuperscript{62}

This episode of the Testing Garment is not to be found in any version of the Bharata. But we come across a detailed account of this story in a Kannada work called "Neminathapurana" of Karnaparya. There, it is said that Karna got the Testing Garment from Jwalamalini, the female attendant on Chandraprabha Teerthakara. Many ambitious women with a desire to enjoy the status of a royal mother, used to come to Karna claiming his maternity. Then Karna prayed Jwalamalini and performed penance. Pleased by the penance of Karna, Jwalamalini appeared before him, and gave the "testing garment" to him.

The female attendants on the twenty four thirthankars are called Yakshis. In the religious history of the Jains, these Yakshis, at a particular stage, have gained great importance. The origin of the Yakshi cult can be dated as early as 2nd century A.D. An allusion to it is there in the Silappadikaram.\textsuperscript{63} The epigraphical reference to this cult however dates from the 8th century A.D. These yakshis are known for their occult powers. Many Jain propagators took to this school of serving the Yakshis for attaining the occult powers. Helacharya a Jain of Ponmur in the North Arcot district was a promulgator of Jwalamalini cult. It has become a Tantrika Vidya which was much honoured in those days. Of the many stories concerning the occult powers of Jwalamalini this story of Karna's testing garment must have been one. Perundevanar seems to have introduced many such popular anecdotes of various origins into the fabric of his epic poem.

Then Kunti having established the relationship, fondly presents before Karna her request to come over to his brothers, Pandavas. She says that, Karna will be made the King.

Karna regrets the late revelation of the fact. Perhaps it is his sin, his fate, that he should know the secret of his birth so late in life.\textsuperscript{64}

5-A. VI - N. KARNA PLAYS A GAME OF DICE WITH DURYODHANA'S QUEEN.

Karna explains to Kunti, how much help Duryodhana has done to him. When he was a man without any identity Duryodhana offered him a crown, made him the King of a state, and respected him more than
his own brothers and many other kings. Duryodhana loved him to such an extent that he ate his food. How can I desert a friend who ate with me with love? Finally Karna reveals an incident which speaks volumes of the confidence and sincere friendship of Duryodhana for Karna.

One day Karna was playing a game of dice with the queen. She lost the game. When she was about to go without paying the stake, Karna caught hold of her sari. The bracelet of the queen gave way and the precious diamonds in large number fell helter skelter. Just while this happened, King Duryodhana entered the chamber. Karna was stunned. Duryodhana said smiling "shall I help picking up the diamonds?". Should Karna desert such a friend? No, he would happily die in the service of such a great King.

Karna's narration of the incident is there in two Vembas and an intervening prose passage. The explanatory prose passage names the Queen as 'Lakshahai'.

Thousand laurels to the poet who conceived an incident of such immortal beauty to glorify the sincere friendship between Karna and Duryodhana! This description which is not to be seen in the original, seems to have bewitchingly attracted the later poets. Poets not less than the stature of Pampa and Villi have unhesitatingly honoured it by seating it in their poems.

There is no wonder in Villi accepting it, because, all along his work we see him following Perundevanar. Pampa's case is surprising. If perundevanar's date as 9th century A.D. is a fact, one can without any hesitation, say that Pampa was influenced by Perundevanar. There are a number of political and literary evidences which support the view, that Pampa had enough opportunities of seeing Bharata Vemba of Perundevanar. But all such favourable arguments, very natural, as they look, owe their stability to the foundation - the fact that Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba belonged to the age one century earlier to Pampa. Though till now, no note of contradiction is raised by any critic of Perundevanar, regarding his date as 9th century A.D., the way to this decision is not without hurdles in the field of comparative study.

65. Vembas 319 and 320.
66. Vemba 316
67. Vembas 319 and 320.
Perumdevanar has some more new touches to give to this episode of Kunti - Kama meeting.

When Kunti realises that Karna's coming over to Pandavas cannot happen, she comes to the 'point - the point for which Krishna had commissioned her. First she asks him not to kill his brothers. But Karna makes it clear that either he or Arjuna alone should survive. Karna promises that the other Pandavas will not be touched. Kunti promises that the other Pandavas will not be touched. Kunti wants something more from him; she asks him not to use the Nagastra for the second time against Arjuna. Karna readily agrees, and valiantly confirms that he is not a man to use the same weapon again, when it fails in the first instance.

Perumdevanar further portrays the character of Karna with its deep psychological background. Karna, though, a man born in the purple was fated to be called a character's son being nurtured by a charioteer. But he has all the innate qualities of the royal blood. Earlier when Krishna revealed the secret of his birth it had upset him considerably. He must have been greatly joyed to know that he is of royal origin. But, soon he realised that it is of little use to him at this stage. The publicity of it will cause major repercussions in both the royal circles; and ultimately it may impair his image. That is why he said in a desperate tone, when Kunti came to him "it is my fate, my sin, that a late revelation is made." A secret which concerns his life's honour has been revealed to him at a stage when he cannot open it out to the world till his death. But the passionate desire to be called a man of royal origin is very agile in Karna. If it is not possible in his life time, why not it be opened to the world just before his death? This desire has softened Karna so much, that he who is only known for conferring boons on the others, now goes abegging for a boon from Kunti.

The boon that he desires to be conferred on him by Kunti is, if he falls in the battle to Arjuna, then, before he breaths his last, Kunti must take him on her lap, and declare in eloquence before all the kings, that he is her son, and she must feed him with her breast's milk in the battle field. In the prose passage after the

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68. Prose after Vemba 314.
69. Vemba 335
next Vemba the expression "நியர்க் கான்வர் நன்மு பாசுவம் பவதுனக் கண்டு கான்வர் குல்குப்புரை தன்னும்" (what all is not done to me at the time of my birth must be fulfilled at the time of my death) These words speak volumes of the burning desire in Karna that he should be known as a man born of royal mother. Karna also requests Kunti to see that the Pandavas perform his funeral rites.
Finally he requests Kunti not to reveal the secret to Pandavas, and he prostrates to Kunti's feet saying that he is doing it because he may not be able to do it at the time of his death.
Crushed under the heaviness of the wrong done to Karna, Kunti with a heavy heart departs to meet the Hayavan.
She meets Sri. Vasudeva and submits the outcome of her loyal mission to him.

Krishna, by now, has successfully completed his mission and leaves for Upaplavya.
Perundevanar, very consciously, sums up the achievements of his hero just before dropping the curtain of the scene of Sri Vasudeva's mission.
He made Vidura break his bow, deprived Karna of his Kavacha Kundala and the ruby; rendered Aswarthama suspect, deprived Nagastra of its second round of action.

By linking every incident in the theme with the action of Sri Vasudeva, Perundevanar makes him the central figure in the story. Nowhere we see a stroke of artificiality in drawing the new and more dynamic character of Krishna in Perundevanar.
5. A VII. SANJAYA'S MISSION:-

In Bhagavan Vyasa's Sanjaya's mission takes place earlier to that of Sri Krishna's mission, and immediately after the mission of the Drupada's PUROHITA. It is a reciprocative gesture from the Kaurava's side in general, and from Dhritarashtra in particular. For Bhagavan Vyasa, Bharata is not an old story. He was not only a contemporary, but also a member of the royal family of Kauravas and Pandavas. Bhagavan Vyasa might not have carried out a stenographer's version of the conversations, reports and speeches of the characters in his epic poem. He must have taken liberties in introducing secondary episodes.

70. Vemba 336.
vedic quotations and philosophical discourses. But certainly, being a man lived in those days and lived in close touch with the royal family which got involved in the feud, he would not have changed the order of important incidents such as, the missions of various persons to bring about peace. As far as the main epic story is concerned Bhagavan Vyasa's version is nothing short of the historic document of the contemporary politics of the Indian soil. What all had really happened in life need not be in tune with the poetic sense of propriety. We cannot expect Saliya to be lost in Duryodhana's hospitality, and the same man to play the part of a confidential foe to Karnat at the critical time. When we observe such flesh and blood characters with emotions, vices and virtues we can infer that Bhagavan Vyasa had nothing to distort the main theme, incidents and characters.

Now let us review the poetic propriety of the timing of Sanjaya's mission in Perundevanar.

Timing of Sanjaya's mission later to that of Sri Krishna's has a special significance in the frame work of Perundevanar's Bharata Veamba. Perundevanar himself explains why Sanjaya had to be sent on this mission in the opening prose passage of this section Sanjayan "Toothu ".

After Sri Vasudeva left Hastina Dhritarasana and Gandhari met in a secluded chamber and they went on thinking about Sri Vasudeva's coming, the injury that he has done, the great MAYA that he has shown and his help and partiality to Pandavae. They feared the consequences of these events. The passage reads : கிமு த உசன் தருநரா நதூநராமூர்த்தியின் நூற்றாண்டுக்கு சோழும் வத்தளவருளைப் பூந்தியே ஓர்வது சொந்தமுகையே அர்வது பூந்தியே சொந்தமுகையே கொன்று என்று ஒருவருளைப் பூந்தியே உள்ளே சொன்று என்று ஒருவருளைப் பூந்தியே உள்ளே சொன்று என்ற என்ற

When they called for Duryodhna and advised him to give away their share of the land to Pandavas. Duryodhana's obstinancy was beyond persuasion. He was incorrigible in his reply: Even if I lose everything, even if I lose my life, even if all the kings who come to support me are killed I do not give any land to Pandavas " said he.71

Finally Dhritarasana said: O King I do not be killed by Arjuna

71. Rambo 352
supported by Krishna. Give them their share and Duryodhana paid a deaf ear to it.

This is that same Dhritarashtra who asked Duryodhana to go to Krishna to request his support. Then Dhritarashtra must have thought of war and not peace. But now, he, once again asks Duryodhana to give away the Pandava's share to them. Had Krishna come over to the side of Duryodhana, had Krishna not shown his Viswarpupa to Dhritarashtra and others, and had Krishna not played the strategy of separating Vidur and rendering Aswathama a suspect what would have happened?

The idea of commissioning Sanjaya for bringing about peace would not at all have flashed to Dhritarashtra's mind. Now that, the course of events has taken a direction, certainly, disadvantageous to his sons, and his sons are, in all probability, marching towards their end, Dhritarashtra in an anxiety to stave it off commissions Sanjaya. Dhritarashtra's message to Pandavas through Sanjaya is completely devoid of valour, fairness and justice. In a way it is a trial to exploit the goodness of Dharmaraj by exercising the weight of his old age.

Under these circumstances, Sanjaya's mission taking place earlier to that of Krishna's mission has all propriety. The

Even here Perundevanar makes his Sri Vasudeva the hero. While conveying his message Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya to see the Ksheeraabdi-Sayi when he is alone and impress on him to ask Dharmaraja to go to the forests. Dhritarashtra knows fully well that everything depends on what Krishna says.

Here in Upaplavya, Sri Vasudeva knew that Sanjaya was coming. Again he pretended sleeping and after he woke up narrated something of a dream. The contents of the dream was that he saw lotus creeper at Arjuna's feet, and a counch in his hand. Krishna said that the dream predicted a clean victory for Arjuna.

Sanjaya sees Krishna and puts forth his request as instructed by Dhritarashtra to advice Dharmaraja to retire to forests leaving the land to Duryodhana.

Krishna's reply is very curt, "Dharma will definitely fight and we will surely win." Krishna then says "See Dharma and say what you want to say. Stay for a day."
Next day Sanjaya sees Dharmaraja and conveys the message. Dharmaraja is also decisive, though not curt as Vasudeva. Then Bhima chides Sanjaya in his own characteristic way. Sanjaya discharges his duty as he is obliged as an envoy and goes back.

Sanjaya's mission fails.

Sanjaya's mission in Perundevanar is very brief and suggestive of Dhritarashtra's helplessness and Krishna's prominence on the side of the Pandavas.

While Sanjaya left for Upaplavya a very big army follows him in Perundevanar.

Krishna's dream is Perundevanar's creation. In Bhagavan Vyasa Bhima chiding Sanjaya does not appear.

Bhagavan Vyasa's Sanjaya not only speaks on behalf of Dhritarashtra, but also speaks of his own feelings of propriety of making peace at any cost.

Bhagavan Vyasa's 'Sanjaya Yana Parva' concludes with a say of Krishna that he would himself go to Kauravas to try to achieve peace.

While the mission of Sanjaya in Bhagavan Vyasa serves as a preliminary assessment of the mood and movements of the Pandavas to the Kauravas, here in Perundevanar it serves as a last and desperate bid of Dhritarashtra to stave off the catastrophe in vain.

5-A VIII - POWERS MOBILISED:

In this section we come across a few variations of which one is very interesting ie., about the character of Sweta.

It is said in Perundevanar that Kama was authorised to summon all the kings to come to help Duryodhana in the forthcoming war. The text of Kama's message to the Kings sounds very arrogant.

"Duryodhana is very angry. If you do not come to help him in the war you will be punished, as in the case of tax evading kings, by tying your feet."

We do not see any such threatening message in the original.

Then Perundevanar gives the text of Yudhisthira's message to the Kings.

"Even though MAYAN went and asked Duryodhana to give us the share of our land, he refused. So you are requested to come and help us in the war. Those who do not come will be destroyed."
Though a threat is there in Dharamaraja's message, Perundevanar is very conscious to give prominence to the MAYAVAN. The war started with Duryodhana for the reason that he did not concede to the advise of Mayavan.

Even while saying that the kings came to Dharamaraja, it is mentioned that they came because Krishna was on the side of Pandavas.

Bhishma is made the Chief of the Kaurava army by Duryodhana, and Sweta is made the chief of the Pandava army by Krishna.

In Bhagavan Vyasa Dhristadyumna is the Chief Commander of the Pandava army. Perundevanar not only makes Sweta the commander-in-chief but also brings in peculiar notes of variation concerning this character in the Bhishma Parva.

Perundevanar maintains sound unity of this character. At the outset of the Udyoga Parva, he introduces the character of Sweta with a background quite meaningful in relation to the future course of his character. Sweta is said to have possessed a divine bow and an inexhaustible quiver. Further his valour is well recognised by Krishna when he fought for the Yadavas against Suras and killed sixteen thousand of them. Foreseeing war, Krishna seems to have brought him to Upaplavya to make him the commander-in-chief of the Pandava army, in recognition of his invincible valour. In Bhagavan Vyasa no such note of this character is to be seen.

After the mobilisation of powers Krishna sends a messenger to Duryodhana to give them the date of war. There is no such move in Bhagavan Vyasa. Perundevanar follows Bhasa's Play Duta Ghatotkacha in this episode.

Ghatotkacha is selected for carrying the message. Again it is a move initiated by Krishna.

Ghatotkacha enters the palace of Duryodhana. Duryodhana who is in counsel with kings does not look at Ghatotkacha, and ignores his arrival. Ghatotkacha is very angry. He gives a powerful blow to the pillar of the MANDAPAM and it is knocked down. All the kings run away for life. Duryodhana chides Ghatotkacha for his arrogance and unruly behaviour, and asks who he is, for what purpose he had come and why he knocked down the MANDAPAM.

75. Vemba 397
Ghatotkacha replies that he is the son of Bheemasena and that he has come to tell him that the war would take place on the twelfth day.

Though Perundevanar follows Bhasa in shaping this episode there is one change. In Bhasa, Ghatotkacha is commissioned to go to Duryodhana on the 13th day after the fall of Abhimanyu, to convey his certain developments in the Pandava Camp at the instance of Krishna. Krishna instructs Ghatotkacha to go to Duryodhana to convey him the news that Arjuna has taken an oath to kill Jayadratha and he has newly equipped himself with the invincible weapons conferred on him overnight by Siva.

Perundevanar times it back, perhaps to style it as a reciprocative commission to that of Sanjaya. Otherwise it serves no special purpose.

5. A IX PRE-WAR HUMAN SACRIFICE TO THE BATTLE FIELD:

How strongly the local traditions and customs influence the poets can be seen in this section of Perundevanar’s Bharata Vemba. Perundevanar is a Vaishnava Poet, who should have been by nature averse to gruesome customs such as human sacrifice. The sentiment of BHAKTI being the softest, the poet who dedicates his poem to this sentiment must also be of pure thought and sympathetic heart.

If any episode of human sacrifice is there in the original a translator or an independent Bharata poet may accommodate the episode in his poem. But a Vaishnava poet who is devoted to the worship of Sri Vasudeva cannot create an episode of human sacrifice and incorporate it in his poem when no such incident is there in the original.

In Perundevanar a vivid description of Pre-war human sacrifice is there. If it is not an invention of the author, how could it make its way into the poem?

The human society has a weakness, it identifies with every great work or a great person in the past. Naturally a great popular work, as time passes on, loses its original form and gets rapidly corrupted. Local customs and traditions make their way into its body. We find such legends based on local conditions and customs finding place in the Sanskrit text itself. Even as early as the 13th
century A.D. Sri Madhavacharya, the earliest commentator on Mahabharata known to us, laments on the huge spurious stuff that had got into the body of the great epic.

It is not easy to make out which is the original, and which is not, in such a big popular work, after the lapse of many centuries. But Perundevanar's plan of the work is not to present the epic in its full size. Among all the vernacular versions of the great epic the Telugu version of the Kavitraya is the nearest faithful one. Two centuries after Perundevanar, the Telugu poet Nannayya did not come across any version which contained the human sacrifice before war. Had Nannayya found it in the then text, certainly he would not have omitted to list it in his Paramangraham. So this particular section called Kalabali of Perundevanar cannot be, at least, an interpolation in any version of the Sanskrit text. Under these circumstances Perundevanar would have incorporated this of his own accord. The reason, I think, is the influence of the local customs and traditions. Based on these customs, traditions, folklore literature, or oral legendary literature people must have been singing such concocted stories as parts of Mahabharata.

Anyway Perundevanar has given us in a section of his poem in a detailed way how the Kalabali was given on the eve of such a great war. At the outset this move comes from Duryodhana. Duryodhana asks Bhishma, "Please let me know who is the शिवकाश्रिति (one who can see through past, present and future to fix a good day, and Muhurtham for the war)." Bhishma says that the three worlds there are only two such persons. One is Mahadeva and the other is Sahadevan.

Being an enemy can Sahadeva favour him with these suggestions. Duryodhana expresses his doubt. Bhishma praises the virtuous nature of the Pandavas and asks him to go to Sahadeva. He would not hesitate to fix up the Muhurtham which is good to Duryodhana.

Then Duryodhana thinks of Viswakarma and Viswakarma comes. He asks Viswakarma to give him a flying chariot that can go to Sahadeva within half a NADI. Viswakarma accordingly gives him the...
VIMAHA. Duryodhana goes to Sahadevan in the same night. Sahadeva shows him all respect. Duryodhana reveals to him the purpose of his coming. Immediately Sahadeva fixes the Muhurtham on Sunday on which Brihaspati rises in the second half of Dhanurmasha. He also suggests that Iravan (son of Ulipi, Arjuna's wife) is the right man for the sacrifice. Immediately, Duryodhana who has never gone to anybody for a favour now goes to Iravan. He tells Iravan "I have not approached anybody till now for any favour. You are my son. You are very righteous. You give me the boon which I ask for. Iravan accepts to give whatever he wants. Then Duryodhana asks for his blood and flesh to be given on the Amavasya to come. "You have it even now if you want". Duryodhana is very happy and says that he would take it on the coming Amavasya. Now Iravan has a slighting remark against Duryodhana. "You can have it. Do not suspect." People with two tongues are not here".

There is beauty in Iravan saying this. Iravan is born of the Naga Kanya (Serpents). Serpents have two tongues. Here he says that they have no two tongues. Iravan means figuratively. He is striking at the vulnerable part of Duryodhana's character — a reference to the refusal of land to Pandavas. People of the race of two tongues themselves do not indulge in such behaviour of failing their word with one tongue behaves that way.

Duryodhana is pleased at Iravan's magnanimity. He thinks that the kingdom has come to him and leaves Hastina. The same night he is back again in his palace.

The second half of this drama begins with the uncharacteristic anger of Sri Vasudeva. Krishna in his TIRUVULLAM knew what had all happened. He is enraged. He speaks to Dharmaraja. "Foolishly, thinking that they are sticking to their word, not even caring the enemity you are granting boons to your foes. Now what is there that I have to say?" Krishna creates a big scene in anger. He says that Sahadeva has exactly given the same date, and the MUKHURTHA which he had already fixed up for the KALABALI. The whole plan is upset. He thus speaking gets ready to go to Dwaraka, as though he is deserting the Pandavas.

79. Vemba 423
80. Vemba 429
81. Vemba 434
Then Dharmaraja humbly requests him to pardon them and begs him to save them.

After all this fret and fume, Krishna comes out with a solution that the 14th day in the dark half of the lunar month must become the new moon day. CHATURDASI must become the AMAVASYA.

How can Chaturdasi be converted into Amavasya. Reader will naturally expect that Krishna's divine powers come into action to change the planatory movements. Perundevanar's ingenuity or the ingenuity of the author who conceived it, if it was already there for Perundevanar, will bring a pleasant surprise.

Krishna says that Brahmams can do it. Then Krishna calls for the brahmams and requests them to observe the rituals to be observed on Amavasya on the Chaturdasi day itself.

According to Astronomy the dwelling of the sun and the moon together is called the Amavasya. Then the Brahmams begin to observe all the rituals of Amavasya on the 14th day itself. The sun and the moon are surprised. They cannot understand the erratic observation of the Brahmams. But they know the infallible nature of them, and they cannot hastily mistake them. Anyway they want to know how far the Brahmams are correct. So both of them the sun and the moon come to the Brahmams and question them about their behaviour. The brahmams say that Amavasya means the meeting of the sun and the moon, and as both of them are together now, it cannot be other than Amavasya. Though all this is done by the brahmams it is not without the MAHAMAYA of Sri. Krishna says Perundevanar.

In every episode Krishna's part either directly or indirectly must be present.

The problem of human sacrifice is still, there unsolved. Krishna says that there is no equal to Iravan except himself in fulfilling all the qualifications required for the human sacrifice. Iravan is already promised to the Kauravas. So Krishna says that he would himself be the man for the sacrifice for Pandavas. Dhar-

maraja is stupified at this proposal of Krishna.

82. Vemba 445
83. பொருந்து சோகம் சோகமுடைய
84. Prose after Vemba 447
The very idea is ghastly to him. His immediate response is a decision to retire to the forests again. He falls on the feet of Krishna, and Iravan comes with apologies.

Iravan suggests a way out. He asks to take his flesh and blood on the 14th day and perform the rituals. He will offer the remaining flesh and blood to Duryodhana the next day.

This was agreed to.

But Iravan expresses an earnest desire to take part in the great war, and die a warrior's death. Krishna blesses him with life even after taking away all the flesh and blood of his body up to the 9th day of the battle. Perundevanar's Sri Vasudeva is all powerful.

They give the sacrifice on that Chaturdasi day to Goddess Kali and with the permission of Sri Krishna go round the battlefield, riding on the chariots, elephants and horses. The description of the ritual is quite vivid. Iravan's flesh and blood were taken with GANDHA and flowers asense and DEEPA. They give the ball to Kali. They feed the birds like vultures with the flesh of Iravan. Then the warriors take the pledge. They roar like lions. All the warriors take out their weapons and Krishna is asked to touch them. They then go round the field, while the war drums and other martial sounds tumultuously echo in the air.

This melodramatic episode is very artistically handled by the poet. Sahadeva's character has already been glorified by the poet. Already Krishna in appreciation of his devotion showed him the Viwarpure. Now the truthfulness and integrity of Sahadeva is further glorified in this episode. Iravan's sacrifice is not there in Bhagavan Vyasa. His birth is said in Adiparva and his death in Bhishma Parva in the hands of Almbusha.

The episode of Iravan sacrificing himself for Duryodhana is perhaps conceived as a parallel to that of Karna sacrificing his vital possessions for Indra. In both the episodes the heroes are magnanimous. They sacrifice themselves for their enemies. Both of them are valiant.

Perundevanar wants to show that his hero Sri Vasudeva can do and undo things. Even when things go wrong he can ingeniously act
and set them right. He wants to present the character of Sri Vasudeva in its fullness with its two faces human and divine.

The episode makes a good short story with considerable amount of suspense and sentiment.

The entire episode is an innovation of Perundevanar.

5. ARMY ARRANGEMENTS:
There are not many variations in this section.

Duryodhana learns that Pandavas have given the "KALABALI". His response is surprisingly contrary to the expectations. He, recklessly says that the weak people alone perform such rituals as "KALABALI". So he hastens his power to get ready for the war, dismissing the idea of giving BALI to the battle field.

In Perundevanar, Sweta, while arranging his army classifies the ranks of the warriors.

He ranks himself among the ATIRATHAS along with Arjuna and Abhimanyu, Sikhandi, Dhrishtadyumna and Bhima are ranked among Maharathas. Satyaki, King of Panchala and Uttamaujas are SAMARATHAS. Chattotkacha Anjana Varma, Nakula and Sahadeva are listed among ARDHARATHAS.

In Perundevanar Balarama is portrayed as partial to kauravas. He says to Krishna that he does not like to fight against him. So he decides to go away on a pilgrimage. Here Perundevanar presents another new note that Balarama took away Vidura along with him to tour the holy places. In Bhagavan Vyasa Vidura remains in Hastina. In Salyaparva it is said that he took away all the royal women-folk to Hastina.

The important treatise on theology Bhagavad Geetha in Bhishma Parva is reduced to one Vemba followed by a prose piece in Perundevanar.

When Dharmaraja approaches Bhishma, to take his permission to fight against him, Perundevanar's Bhishma says that though he has the same love for both - Kauravas and Pandavas. But he has to fight for Duryodhana because he has eaten his salt. The sentiment of gratitude finds expression again and again in Perundevanar's poem.

We come across another change here. Bhishma reveals the secret of his death to Dharmaraja even now before the battle takes place, whereas in Bhagavan Vyasa he reveals it on the night of the day.

85. Vemba 476
of the battle. Further Bhishma says that he earnestly desires to be killed by Arjuna, as Arjuna in the AMSA of Krishna. In the same manner Drona also, very frankly speaks out that his death can be caused by making a trusted person utter the news of his son’s death. He also says that he will die on the thirteenth day in the hands of Dhristadyumna. In Bhagavan Vyasa Drona only says that unless he keeps away his arms in a meditative mood, nobody can kill him; he will lay down his arms only when a trusted man utters an unpleasant statement. There is no specific reference to the statement of death of his son by Drona in Bhagavan Vyasa.

In Bhagavan Vyasa after the Geetha is exhorted to Arjuna, Krishna makes a last effort to bag Karna’s heart. He goes to Karna and asks him to come back to the Pandavas reminding him of Bhishma humiliating by ranking him among Artharathas. Of course Karna turns down the proposal.

With a matured sense of poetic unity Perundevanar drops the curtain of the Udyoga Parva with this effort of his Sri Vasudeva. This effort results in, a warrior of unparalleled power and unshakable loyalty, dissociating himself from fighting for Duryodhana for a long period of ten days till the fall of Bhishma. The story of Bhagavan Vyasa’s Udyoga Parva and forty three chapters in Bhishma Parva makes the body of Perundevanar’s Udyoga Parva. Of the 830 stanzas (in narrating the story of Udyogaparva, Bhishma Parva and half of Drona Parva) 483 stanzas are dedicated to Udyoga Parva along in Perundevanar. The story of the Bhishma Parva and more than half of the Drona Parva is narrated in the balance of 347 stanzas.

Apart from the magnitude, the treatment of the Udyogaparva also reveals certain important aspects of Perundevanar’s outlook and his art in Bharata Vemba.

As we go to the rest of the poem we see an overall deterioration in the poetic art of Perundevanar. Here and there, we clearly see the slackness in plot construction and characterisation.

The devotion with which he approaches the Udyoga Parva and the care with which he plans the plot construction, and the zeal with which he works on the well planned plot are all sincere and excellent.
His dedicated workmanship in Udyogaparva is entirely due to the reason that the Parva is a song in glory of his beloved Lord Sri Vasudeva. Of all the eighteen parvas, no single parva is as much entirely devoted to the character of Krishna, as the Udyoga Parva. So Perundevanar approaches it with a special interest. In further glorifying, the already glorious character of Krishna in Udyoga Parva, Perundevanar carefully lays out his blueprint of the movements of the character. He brings out a beautiful synthesis of the various aspects of this character. As a result in the Udyogaparva we get a beautifully connected whole picture of the Almighty - the sole engineer of the pre-war machinery who brings decided victory to the Pandavas - the virtuous. Every innovation that the poet makes, goes a long way in achieving this goal. The various changes we come across - whether they are accepted from the then prevailing popular legendary lot, or formulated from the native traditions and customs, or conceived by his own ingenious creative ability, make the Udyoga Parva of Perundevanar a glorious song of his Ubiquitous Tirumal.
From Bhishma Parva the war story begins. Though the main stream of the story tells about the detailed account of the great war, the epic poet does not confine his narration to that alone. Theological exhortations, informative and instructive passages concerning a thousand and one things in the world of human wisdom are also told in these books of the war story.

Perundevanar formulates his own method to cut short the details. He confines his narration to the important details of the war on each day.

He begins the narration of each day's war with an invocatory song and closes the narration of the day's war with a beautiful description of the setting sun. The invocatory song in the beginning, and the description of the sinking sun in the end, are generally so conceived, that they either reflect or suggest the ideas in the story that is being narrated. No piece of description of nature, in Perundevanar is without a bearing on the story.

Being encyclopaedic, the original epic deals in details with every subject. The Bhishma parva begins with the description of the rules of war. Then detailed account of geography is given. Maharshi Vyasa appears and endows Sanjaya with the unique sight of seeing every minute detail of the war and the power of even penetrating into the minds of the warriors to know their feelings and to narrate the war-story of Dhritarashtra.

As Perundevanar's stage is too compact it cannot accommodate all these details. The war-story is narrated by Sanjaya in Bhagavan Vyasa. Perundevanar resorts to direct narration in a PRAVASHANA STYLE. PERHAPS he felt inconvenient to very often repeat the expression "thus said Sanjaya".

In Bhagavan Vyasa Bhagavatgeeta appears in the book of Bhishma Parva. Perundevanar has already done away with it, in one Vemba and one prose passage in the Udyoga parva itself. As this method is to go on narrating the important happenings in each day's war, he confines his YUVANTRA PARVAS to present the bear war story and nothing else. When compared with the Udyogaparva, we find a sort of desultoriness in the narration in the Bhishma and Drona Parvas.
As has already been observed, description of every day's war begins with an invocatory song. The first day's story also begins with a song in praise of the important holy places of Sri Vaishnavas, namely Tennarangam, Tirumalai, Tiru Attiyur and Tirumalirum Solai Malai. Sri Vaishnavas serve the God in five forms: 1. PARA 2. VYUHA 3. ANTARYAMI 4. VIBHAVA and 5. Archa.

Idols in the shrines of all the holy places are the forms of ARCHA. The service in the archa form of God is said to be easy. All the Alwars have laid great importance on this form of service. Every Vaishnava is needed to go round all these Vaishnava centres of pilgrimage. The Alwars have showered very fine lines of eulogy on all these Archa forms of Sri Vasudeva. Being the follower of Alwars Perundevanar in a traditional style begins the book with a praise of these Vaishnava holy places.

In Perundevanar, the first day's war has a significance. We see the exit of an important character that has been newly introduced by Perundevanar through Krishna in the beginning of the Udyoga Parva. This character, Sweta, the son of Virata, is introduced to us in the Bhishma Parva as Chief Commander of the army of Pandavas.

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As in the original, the first recognized warrior to fall on the first day is Uttara, another son of Virata, the brother of Sweta. This infuriates Sweta; soon he appears before Salya; and Salya is in trouble. Bhishma comes to Salya's rescue. Now it is converted into a fierce fight between the two commanders, Bhishma and Sweta. First Sweta brings the banner of Bhishma to the ground. Later, Bhishma pays him in his own coin. Soon Sweta takes another chariot and attacks Bhishma. Sweta is invincible; Bhishma is in trouble. Here, again Perundevanar has something new to narrate about Sweta. The enlivening gods become very jubilant. They go to Indra and ask him about the invincible great warrior. Indra narrates the same story of Sweta as has already been narrated by Krishna to Virata. Now the Gods ask Indra how to dispose him off in the battle. It is a problem even to Indra; he is also ruminating. Now Sri Vasudeva comes into the scene. He takes the form of an ASAREERAVANI, and tells Indra that Sweta is invincible because

86. Tennarangam is Srirangam; Tiru Attiyur is Kanchi; Tirumalirum Solai Malai is Alaharmalai near Madurai.
he has the bow of Siva. As long as he has it in his hand one cannot win him. So by deception he must be made to give up the bow and fight with some other weapon. Then Indra himself as an ASAREERAVANI tells Bhishma to kill him by some deceptive method. As long as he has his bow in his hand you cannot kill him. This is the time for him to leave the earth to go to Swarga. If Sweta is allowed to fight for one Nadi, he will cause total destruction. Very alien to his character, Bhishma concedes to indulge in fraudulent methods. He changes his weapon; takes a sword and other sorts of weapons. He questions Sweta of his skill in handling weapons other than the bow. "It seems your parents have taught you only archery and nothing else." This rubs him the wrong way. In reply he takes a sword and attacks Bhishma. Then Bhishma takes the bow and fight. Bhishma resorting to such fraudulent method is, by any standard, not justifiable. In this encounter Bhishma chops off with an arrow the right hand of Sweta. Sweta fights with his left hand with the sword. Finally Bhishma kills him with the Brahmestra in the form of a VELAYUDHA. The sun out of pathos, for the death of Sweta drowns in the western sea. The battle on the first day comes to a close.

Sweta's story has much to do with Krishna. Krishna brought him into the field. He made him the commander. He brought his death too. We can understand his bringing him and making him the commander. But we cannot understand why, as an asareeri Krishna should suggest to Indra the way to kill Sweta. Indra is another deity working for the success of Pandavas. Why should he suggest the way to kill Sweta to Bhishma? This episode glorifies the character of Sweta but demeans Bhishma's stature. In the concluding stages the stand taken by Krishna and Indra also looks far

87. Vesba 501
88. Vesba 502
89. Vesba 502 Prose.
90. Vesba 503
91. Vesba 504
92. Vesba 500 and 511.
93. Vesba 512. Villi has something more to say here. Villi's Virata laments on the injustice done by Bhishma in killing his son using the arrow.
Perundevanar's Sweta is a tragic hero like Karna, though not of that magnitude. Anyway Bhishma is too great a character to be belittled for the sake of glorifying a character like Sweta. This episode certainly surprises if it is found in any version of the Sanskrit Mahabharata. Sweta is one of the commanders on the side of Pandavas. But he is not the chief commander according to Bhagavan Vyasa.

After the characteristic Vaishnava prayer, Perundevanar begins the description of the second day's battle. The sun came on his chariot, and the kings also came on their chariots.

After Sweta's death Krishna makes Drustadyumna brother of Draupadi the commander-in-chief of the Pandava army. In Bhagavan Vyasa's after the first day's battle Dharmaraja again becomes melancholic. Krishna clears him of all his melancholy. Perundevanar's brevity does not allow to account even these details.

The third day's battle is important to Perundevanar. It is here that Krishna breaks his word, and rushes to attack Bhishma with the Chakra in his hand. Bhishma too forgets in devotion to Krishna and praises him in ecstasy. Bhagavan Vyasa's Bhishma welcomes Krishna and says:

"O! Omnicent Lord! Refuge are you to all. Lord born of Ardhaka Vrishni race come down from the chariot and kill me. Being killed by you, I will enjoy the choicest fortune and fame both here and in the other world."

Perundevanar finds lot of scope here to embellish the episode.

On the third day Bhishma is in his best form and he is irresistibly aggressive. If neglected, he would bring total destruction. Now Krishna thinks that Arjuna cannot make a match to him. So he ignores Arjuna and takes the Chakra in his hand. Arjuna is surprised. He prays "O! God, it is not the Gods that are fighting with me, why have you taken the Chakra. It is enough if you are my charioteer. I can win them. Please withdraw."

At Arjuna's prayer, Bhagavan gets back. Bhishma is much disappointed. He gets down from his chariot and with folded hands says to Krishna:

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94. Vemba 516 and 517.
95. Bhishma Parva 96 to 98.
96. Vemba 539.
My days may be long or short. But the moksha is in your hands. It is not in my hands. In Vedas it is said that those people who die in your hands are the great (who go to moksha).97

O Lord! Hiranyakshih, Hiranyakasipu, Kama, Ravana, Sisupala and the thousand handed Banasura have all gone to Swarga by being killed by your Chakra. I also desired to be killed by your Chakra. This Arjuna deprived me of that fortune.98

Here Bhishma is greatly disappointed when Arjuna stopped Krishna. Arjuna becomes the target of Bhishma's criticism. We find a highly evolved Vaishnava soul in Bhishma. A good amount of Perundevanar's subjective element is portrayed here.

In the story of the 5th day's battle, in Bhagavan Vyasa, we find Bhishma giving a detailed account of Nara and Narayana and their story in 4 chapters. Perundevanar completely omits it. As has already been said the scheme of his work does not give detailed accounts of any character. We find the author more brief and more suggestive. Effective development of a sentiment, especially the sentiment of Bhakti, is there.

During the description of the 9th day's battle we find certain interesting tones of variation from Bhagavan Vyasa. Though the 8th day's battle ends with the death of Iravan in the early hours of the day, Duryodhana loses eight of his brothers. Duryodhana is miserable. In this miserable state he comes to Bhishma and speaks bitter words about the integrity of the old warrior.

"My valiant brothers are killed by Bhima. Inspite of all the warriors doing their best they are falling. You are remaining neutral and not taking interest in us.99" Hearing this charge Bhishma feels much humiliated. Tears trickle from his eyes. He says: "This kind of consequences have been already told by me by Vidura and Gandhari. But you never cared to take them into your faith. Now things are going out of hands," saying this Bhishma.

97. Vemba 540
98. Vemba 541
99. निर्वा पुरुषराजोऽभिद्वैतं हृद्दृष्टं सबसे सवे सवे से मिनकू असवीकृतं स्वयंत्वशासकेऽवस्त्रेते
pleads his helplessness. Finally he says "Anyway stand firm in the battle".

These statements speak volumes of Bhishma's righteous indignation. He says that the Pandavas are invincible even to Indra and at the same time asks Duryodhana to stand firm and continue fighting them.

Here Perundevanar very beautifully reads in between the lines. Bhishma really meant that Duryodhana did only care Karna, neglecting all of them.

Perundevanar magnifies the subtle suggestion made therein by Bhishma.

Duryodhana comes to Bhishma and speaks to him with tears in his eyes "My brothers are killed before your eyes. Are we, who are banking upon your valour, to be completely ruined?" Perundevanar now very jubilantly goes on presenting a microscopic picture of Bhishma's feelings which are suggested in the two slokas of Bhagavan Vyasa. (Bhishma-parva 88-43 and 44).

Bhishma reminds the past to Duryodhana, when he only took Karna and Sakuni into confidence, and neglected his advice, and mockingly asks him "Where is Karna the first of the Atirathas?" Again he refers to his remarks at the time of Vidura's exit. "The other day when Vidura broke his bow I posed a question. Now who are going to face Arjuna and Bhima? Then Karna out of jealousy abused me. Now what is the use of lamenting upon the consequences?" Duryodhana keeps all the while silent.

But in the evening when he returns to his camp, he breaks down into sobs, in sorrow for his brothers who are dead. Then Perundevanar brings in Dhritharashtra, Gandhari and the royal womenfolk and presents a scene of pathos. In Bhagavan Vyasa all these characters do not make an entry into the battle field at this stage. Perundevanar forgets his economy here. At times he forgets all economy while fostering a sentiment. That night Duryodhana goes

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100 Vemba 596
101. Vemba 597 and 598
102 Vemba 599
103 Vemba 600
to Karna. Perhaps Bhishma's words "Where is Kama, the first of the ATIRATHAS?" must be echoing in his ears. He sees Kama and referring to his oath that he would not participate in the battle till the death of Bhishma, he requests him to break that oath and fight for him. He explains that the situation very badly requires his interference. Karna is very arrogant "Let Bhishma come and accept his inability before all the warriors; then I will come and restore the entire kingdom to you even tomorrow" says Karna. Karna's language is very foul. He uses a phrase "हेमेकार्यमिनि" "105 "Let Bhishma come and eat grass before the kings" (as a sign of his inability). Really brutal! Certainly it does not speak nice of Karna.

Desperate Duryodhana seems to have lost all sense of propriety. He commissions Dussasana to carry the statement as it is, to Bhishma. Equally foolish is Dussasana. He goes to Bhishma and prays "O Lord! I beg you by your feet. I make a request that brings victory to us, please do not feel ashamed to eat grass tomorrow before all the kings, in the battle field." Bhishma's blood is up with anger. But he suppresses it and says: "Tomorrow will be the last day that I fight. I will die of Arjuna. After my death the king of Anga will give you the empire. Then you can rule over it." Bhishma is very curt in his reply.

In Bhagavan Vyasa 97th Chapter of the Bhishma Parva deals with this episode. It is not crude as it is in Perundevanar. The idea of humiliating Bhishma does not arise anywhere. Neither Karna nor Duryodhana entertain such intention. Duryodhana is seen much worried on account of series of set backs on his side, and the loss of a number of his beloved brothers. Something must be done to counter act the invincible powers of Bhima and Arjuna. It is the sole concern of Duryodhana. Karna also looks sympathetic to Duryodhana under these circumstances. But he does not want to break his promise that he would not fight till Bhishma's death. So he asks Duryodhana to convince Bhishma to retire from the battle field and allow him to

104. Vemba 614
105. Vemba 614
106. Vemba 615
107. Vemba 616
108. Vemba 617
fight. Bhagavan Vyasa handles this sequence with utmost care.
It is not Arassasana that goes to Bhishma. Duryodhana himself goes
to him. Duryodhana’s approach to Bhishma and his way of conducting
himself to put the matter before the grand old man are presented
with an unparalleled skill. See how Duryodhana approaches and
speaks.

"Folding hands in reverence, shedding tears Duryodhana said
to Bhishma, we are depending on you in this battle. You are capa­
ble of winning even the gods like Indra and others in the battle.
The Pandavas and their supporters can be easily won by you. We
deserve your kindness. So kindly kill the Pandavas along with their
supporters in the way Indra kills the Danavas."

He is all apologetic to the great warrior before proposing
a thing like his retirement from the battle. Still he hesitates
to speak out the proposition and continues:

Earlier you told us that you would kill all the Somakas,
Panchalas, Kekayas and Karushas. Now you keep up your word and
kill the Pandavas along with the Somakas.

Finally see how nicely he proposes:

Bhishma Parva 97- 36-38

Bhishma Parva 97, 39-40.

आत्म रथां म जातार नित निष्कासन परंतु लाक्ष के कुच स्वाभाविक तितिकरता
ल भवान सदृष्टु अनिवार्य अंतर्गत समागम सभी कौटुं भक्ति गण स्वतः आगम भागते

Bhishma Parva 97, 39-40.
BOOK TWO

- 107 -

"Whether it is due to kindness to Pandavas or due to enmity to us, or due to my misfortune, you are saving Pandavas. Kindly permit Karna to enter the battle field. He will win the Pandavas in the battle.

At the most, that is all that he could say. Sanjaya says to Dhritarastra:

Speaking thus your son Duryodhana did not speak anything further before Bhishma the really valiant".

Here the chapter also closes. Dropping the curtain at the finest moment! Delicacies of the human psychology in a highly cultured society cannot be portrayed better than this by any poet.

When compared with these lines of highest refinement in literary art, Perundevanar's parallel passage in Bharata Vemba looks very crude. We find a marked deterioration in Perundevanar's poem after the Udyoga Parva.

Description of the 9th day's battle is very brief in Perundevanar. There are only 11 Vembas and equal number of prose passages. He has avoided all the details. Many encounters, deaths and strategies are all skipped over.

In Bhagavan Vyas'a 9th day's battle is described in 11 chapters of considerable length. Bhishma being rubbed on the wrong way by Duryodhana in the previous night, Bhishma's ire has reached the zenith. Krishna again sees the devil of destruction in Bhishma. He loses his balance. Again he forgets his promise and personally goes to attack Bhishma with Chakra. Bhishma's devotional submission - Arjuna's interference - all these are repeated. Perundevanar does not record them again.

Having seen Bhishma's devastating attacks Dharmaraja goes to Bhishma, unseen by others, to find a way of winning him. As this
is already done on the eve of the battle itself, Perundevanar does not repeat it.

If we analyse the character of Bhishma of his mind, word and deed, as presented in these chapters by Bhagavan Vyasa we find in him a man much tired of this worldly life. He has seen enough of the world and its futility. Fate has been very unkind to him. He was a very great warrior - a warrior who could even win Parasurama. He had very strong ideals. He lived a perfect man. But the fate had rendered him helpless, that he could not support Dharma. He was to remain a passive observer of all the vagaries of the evil men like Duryodhana, Sakuni and Karna. The worst of it is he had to attack the Dharma for their sake though reluctantly. All this has made him disinterested in life and its various activities. This has not gone unnoticed by Duryodhana. He has chided him many a time, not understanding him of his maturity of thought and life. There is meaning and propriety in Bhishma being momentarily valiant and invincible, and momentarily passive and submissive. Bhagavan Vyasa very rightly repeats this sort of record of Bhishma. Bhagavan is second to none to present any character in its fullness. Bhishma is blessed with his own choice of death. As the battle prolongs Bhishma's desire to permanently retire from life grows more. So he readily reveals the secret of his death to Dharmaraja on ninth day. Perhaps he fought all these days very eagerly awaiting a rich death in the hands of Lord Krishna. Twice it was at his door. But it did not happen. He was envious of those who died in the hands of Krishna. Finally he reconciles to die at least in the hands of Arjuna, born of an ANSA of Narayana.

This thought of Bhagavan Vyasa in its entirety is very well understood by Perundevanar. Though we see some kind of carelessness in the literacy art in Bhishma and Drona Parvas of Perundevanar this line of thought maintains its form all along.

Just before the commencement of the 10th day's battle, Bhishma is introduced exactly in the same manner. He is seen meditating: 

◊ MANASA! Think of that great Lord even before this mortal body is completely worn out (or torn to pieces) and even before it is eaten by the crows and vultures. This is the highest thought of a
realised soul for whom the mortal body becomes a burden. But this mortal body is very essential for making efforts to attain the eternal bliss. Then he gives away gold, clothes and various precious diamonds to Brahmins. Now he looks like a man who is well prepared for the eternal journey into the mysterious regions not known to a worldling. His desire to shake off this mortal body becomes very agile and he remembers the past.

Immensely pleased of his sacrifices to bring home, Satyavati as a queen for him his father had blessed him with two booms namely death at his own choice and not to be killed by any one in the battle. Now he thinks that the time has come to leave this world.

This has been welcomed by the Rishis and the Vasus also.

Rishis and Vasus are pleased to Bhishma's desire to die. They tell him from the heavens "Dear King, withdraw your desire for fighting."

Now there is favourable response from the nature too.

Cool, pleasant, fragrant and favourable breeze blows as though it is welcoming Bhishma's decision to shed this mortal body. The words of the Rishis and the Vasus are audible to Bhishma alone. He falls at his own choice.

Neither Sikhandi nor Arjuna could have killed Bhishma, had he not thought of falling.

In Bhagavan Vyasa we see the more beautiful scene, where the epic traditional, one and on repetition of a line, or half a line of a sloka emphasising a particular idea. Though Sikhandi is there sending his arrows along with Arjuna Bhishma is able to make out very clearly which are the arrows of Arjuna. Here the epic bard resorts to a style of narration which is an ornament to the epic and which is very pleasant to the audience.

110. Bhishma Parva 119- 34-35
111. Bhishma Parva 119 - 36-37
The words "these are not the arrows of Sikhandi" is repeated at the end of each sloka.

Perundevanar’s scope and style do not allow him to bring in this kind of narration. So he gives up.

In Bhagavan Vyasa another anecdote is there. Bhishma asks for water to drink. Duryodhana and other kings bring lavishly items of dinner to him. He refuses them and asks Arjuna to quench his thirst. Arjuna, with an arrow, brings fresh ground water to fall in the mouth of lying Bhishma.

Perundevanar has omitted this incident. Finally Bhagavan Vyasa’s Bhishma quite befitting of him presents a piece of advise to Duryodhana.

"Duryodhana! give up anger. Make peace with Pandavas. Let war end with Bhishma. Let the other survive. Give Pandavas the Indraprastha. Let my end be the end of war; let it please the people and let the kings and relatives return pleased."

Bhishma Parva 121 - 53 to 54.

Bhishma earnestly desires that the war should end with him, and the rest of the kings should survive. He requests Duryodhana to end the war and gave the people.

Perundevanar’s Bhishma is different. He does not give any advise to Duryodhana. Not only that he does not advise him to stop the war, but he also makes a recommendation to Duryodhana to make Karma the Commander-in-chief to win the war.

It is becoming of Bhishma while concluding the Bhishma Parva, in Bhagavan Vyasa, Karma will have a secret meeting with Bhishma. This secret meeting is not there in Perundevanar. He also meets

113. Vemba 666
Bhishma as usual, and apologises to him. Bhishma consoles him and says that he has not done any wrong and that all had happened as a result of Vridhi.  

In Bhagavan Vyasa Bhishma makes an appeal to Karma:

"Valiant Karma! Pandavas are your brothers. If you have love for me join them. Let the enemity come to an end by my death. Let all the Kings return unhurt."  

We do not see any such effort from Bhishma to stop the war in Perundevanar.

Karna's reply to Bhishma is more emphatic than that he gave to Krishna and Kunti when they appealed to him in the same manner.

"As is Krishna to Pandavas, I am to Duryodhana. My riches, my body, my sons and wife are all sacrificed for the sake of Duryodhana. Let not a Kshatriya die a sick man's death!"

Perundevanar's Bhishma Parva comes to a close with another variation.

Karna comes to Duryodhana asking him to appoint him as the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. Karna's claim is like this: "Bhishma has ordered me to take the post of the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. I accordingly take it up and save the entire army. Please appoint me as the Commander." Duryodhana's reply is very peculiar. "Karna! We are one. If you become the Commander-in-chief, then who will be by my side to protect my army?"

Karna requesting Duryodhana and Duryodhana setting it aside in a diplomatic way are not worthy of their characters. Villi who closely follows Perundevanar also presents the whole thing as it is. But Duryodhana says, "if you become the Commander-in-Chief, then who will be sharing my kingship?" Of course the idea of Duryodhana's lofty gift to Karna as a friend is very nice. But Karna's desire to overtake Drona as a Commander is in any way not a good change.

Bhagavan Vyasa's Karna does not stoop to ask for Commander's post. Instead when Duryodhana asks him to suggest the name of the next commander, Karna praises the abilities of Drona and suggest him to succeed Bhishma as the Commander-in-Chief.

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114. Vemba 661
115. Bhishma Parva 122 - 21-22
116. Bhishma Parva 122 -25-26
117. Vemba 673
118. Vemba 674
119. Drona Barva 5-13 & 21
Local Folklore tales seem to have influenced Perundevanar more and they have certainly created him a problem. As a result both the characters of Duryodhana and Karna are demeaned in Perundevanar. Perundevanar could have safely followed the original text and saved these two characters. Karna's stature in Bhishma Parva is not in line with his character in the Udyoga Parva.
Drona Parva is incomplete in Perundevanar. The available part of the Parva narrates the story up to the fall of Abhimanyu.

Bhishma's fall has considerably upset the morale of the Kaurava army. Bhagavan Vyasa's Bhishma Parva begins with the description of the eagerness of the Kauravas to welcome Karna.

The question that who should become the Commander-in-chief after Bhishma arises. Id Bhagavan Vyasa Karna himself suggests Dronacharya's name and Duryodhana appoints him as the Commander.

Newly appointed Commander Drona, pleased with Bhagavan Vyasa, asks him to express his wish that he can fulfill. Duryodhana asks Drona to capture Yudhistira alive.

Perundevanar postpones it to a later stage.

In the narration of the eleventh day's battle, we come across an incident which is not to be seen in Bhagavan Vyasa. Duryodhana with all the army, attacks Yudhistira. Duryodhana, with all the army attacks Yudhistira. Yudhistira kills the army, and ties the hand of Duryodhana with the Nagastra. Immediately Dronacharya appears on the scene, employs the Garudastra and releases Duryodhana from the clutches of Nagastra.

In Perundevanar just after the sunset on the eleventh day, Duryodhana goes to Dronacharya, while thousand torch bearers show him the way. He makes a request to Dronacharya to capture Yudhistira alive. The motive behind capturing him alive is not known in Perundevanar. But Bhagavan Vyasa gives a detailed account of the purpose behind it.

When Drona asks Duryodhana why he does not desire to kill Yudhistira he explains the complications that arise if Yudhistira is killed. The valiant brothers of Yudhistira do not spare them (Kauravas) if Yudhistira is killed. They will see the end of all the Kauravas. So it is not wise to kill him. He must be captured alive and he must be induced to play a game of dice again and he will be once again sent to the forests by winning the game of dice. Truth-

120. Drona Parva 5.21
121. Venba 691
ful Yudhistira will not break his word and his brothers will not
go against his wish. Kauravas can enjoy the entire land for ever.
This will be the permanent victory for them.  

This unscrupulous state craft of Duryodhana behind the re­quest to capture Yudhistira alive is not to be seen in Perundevanar.

Drona accepts to do so on a condition that Arjuna must be
kept away from Yudhistira while he is fighting him. Then the various
warriors come out with valient promises. The oath taking of the
warriors, which is not to be seen in the original speaks volumes of
Perundevanar's love for the sentiment of gratitude.

One warrior says that he would go to that hell, that a man
who takes food from the hands of his faithful wife who is carried
away by another man and who has returned after living with him for
some time, goes, if he does not fight with Arjuna till his death.  
Another warrior says that he will go to that hell, that a man who
kills the superior warriors of his own camp who are in his front,
goes, if he does not stop Arjuna. Another warrior says that he
will go to that hell, that a man who does not react against asking
who elopes with the wife of his king, goes, if he does not sincere­ly fight Arjuna. To glorify the beloved sentiment of gratitude
freely, Perundevanar changes the metre also. Once again as in the
case of Viswarupa, he makes use of the blank verse 'Aha val'.

122. व ये कुत्ती पुरुषस्या मित्रादिकी विजयकाले मम
हते युधिष्ठिरस्ते पार्थो रक्षान्तर्विते जीवेन निन्दु महाम
न न राक्षसार्कार रण्य यद्य निन्दु महाम राणि
पहः व वहं शोभाय स्थात स्वर्ग स्मात न श्रेयाय यथावतः
सन्ध्यात्रतिरूपः कोणी नै तत युधिष्ठिरते न निद्धिते
पुजन दीर्घोक्तरण्याय वापन्न वा रूपसु श्रेयाय
पहोणीं मम जय व्यक्तं दीर्घोक्तरण्याय न स्मृति
उपतीं नवायम विकामसि प्रभृति जात्यान किंविदः

123. Vemba 710
124. Vemba 710
The old age of Bhagadatta and Arjuna's unscrupulous method of killing him make the episode a beautiful drama in the original. Skeleton picture of the battle with Bhagadatta makes the episode insipid when in Perundevanar compared to the original.

Bhagadatta's episode in the original has much to do with the role of Krishna. Perundevanar should have taken advantage of it and presented a scene of devotion to his Lord TIRUMAL. The desultoriness in narration in this episode shows his restlessness to complete the work.

In the entire available work of Perundevanar we come across a peculiar incident in which he shows great respect to Lord Siva.

The thirteenth day's battle claims the lives of two young warriors of unparalleled valour. They are Lakshmana Kumara, the son of Duryodhana, and Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna.

As Arjuna is engaging Sammathakas, Abhimanyu had to enter the Padmavyuha as the alone in the Pandava Camp knows how to break into that VYUHA. The Pandavas decide to follow him immediately, to support him. When they tried to follow, Jayadratha stops them. While Sanjaya narrates this story Dhritarashtra gets a doubt about the invincible prowess of Jayadratha and asks him how he could stop. Sanjaya gives the details of Jayadratha's TAPAS and Maheswara's boon to stop the Pandavas with a single chariot except Arjuna.

Perundevanar gives certain new accounts of this episode.

Duryodhana sees the Pandavas coming behind Abhimanyu to support him particularly Bhima's entrance must be stopped; otherwise, the entire Kaurava army will be destroyed by him and Abhimanyu. So he seeks the help of Jayadratha. Now Perundevanar presents a flash-back.

After suffering humiliation at the hands of Bhima, Jayadratha does penance to get a boon from Siva to win the Pandavas. Siva appears before him and says: தூய மாயையுள்ளளை மாயை தண்டிய பார்த்து செய்தேன். பத்மாவதை திருமால் கட்டு மன்றம் பயணி

After suffering humiliation at the hands of Bhima, Jayadratha does penance to get a boon from Siva to win the Pandavas.
"As Chakrapani is helping them, they cannot be won. But for a while you can humiliate them" saying so he gives a garland of flowers called "Konrai" from his tuft of hair. Now Jayadratha throws that garland of KONRAI flowers across the passage of Padma Vyuha. Bhimasena comes and sees it. He is very angry. But the garland of Siva should not be crossed. He prostrates in respect to the garland of Siva. Then Dhrishtadyumna instigates Bhima to go to the help of Abhimanyu. Bheemasena replies "Even if my entire race is destroyed let it be. But I am not going to cross the garland of Siva. I will kill the man who kills Abhimanyu". Bhimasena's devotion to Siva and his restraint at that critical hour are very unusual. Perundevanar does not want to say that Bhima is also incapacitated to cross the garland. Bhagava Vyasa's Jayadratha stops the Pandavas with a single chariot and there is no mention of any garland.

Perundevanar gives a vivid description of Abhimanyu's fall. Duryodhana thinks that he was Yama to destroy the seven worlds. Some think "He is educated in warfare under the guidance of Krishna ". Some others think "He is the son of Partha; a tiger's progeny cannot be a rat. Drona after a tough encounter with Abhimanyu chops off his arm. Here there is reference to an ASTRA called "KALACHAKRA " Abhimanyu throws it on them. Like the CHAKRA of Narayana it comes. The ten thousand warriors with their weapons destroy it. Now Abhimanyu is helpless. Aswathama kills his charioteer and destroys the chariot. Then comes Jayasena the son of Dussasana. Abhimanyu destroys his chariot and kills him and at the same time he also falls. Perundevanar gives an exist highly befitting to a warrior to Abhimanya. The Devas showered the rain of flowers. Vimanas come along with beautiful divine dancers and take him to Swarga amidst sounds of eighteen instruments.

Perundevanar's work comes to an abrupt stop with another episode which is not to be seen in Bhagavan Vyasa. Even in this episode Krishna plays the prominent role.

125. Vemba 787 and the next prose.
126. Vemba 804.
Arjuna and Krishna return after a successful encounter with the Sāṃskārīs. On the way, they see ominous omens. Krishna comes to know of the tragedy that had happened in the battle at Kurukṣetra. He calls for Indra immediately. Indra comes. He orders him to light a big fire and asks him to be near it, in the form of an old brahmin, as though he is ready to run into it. He also tutors him how to converse with Arjuna when he comes to stop him from running into the fire. Indra gets ready with fire as instructed by Sri Vasudeva. On the way Krishna shows to Arjuna the old Brahmin and asks him to stop him entering into the fire. Arjuna comes to the brahmin and asks him what he is doing. The brahmin says, "I have lost my son. What for should I live in this world. Let me kill myself. Please do not stop me." Arjuna consoles him and says, "You may have sons in future. Why do you end your life?" The brahmin now asks Arjuna, "You are stopping me from running into the fire and consulting me. Suppose the next moment if you happen to be placed in my position do you heed to my advice, not to end your life? Come on, you take an oath before Krishna that you will hear me. If you do so I will also heed to your words." Arjuna accepts and promise to do so before Krishna. Then Krishna and Arjuna proceed towards the camp. The entire camp is gloomy. Arjuna comes to know of the tragedy and laments. Then Arjuna gets ready to run into the fire to end his life.

Perundevanar in his characteristic Pravachana style says:

He begins the next stanza with "Oṃ. The rest of the stanza and the rest of the Bharata of Perundevanar is not available to us.

Of course the rest of this episode can be easily foreseen. If we want to see the complete episode we can see it in Villi. Villi who very faithfully follows almost all the variations that had come from Perundevanar presents the episode in his poem, as expected by any reader.

127. Vemba 817
128. Vemba 818
129. Vemba 820
130. Vemba 822
131. Vemba 830
If by good fortune, Perundevanar's complete work is unearthed in future, any critic's anticipations that it would be similar to Villi Puttannar's Bharatam regarding variations will certainly become true.
What is the emblem in the banner of Duryodhana? This question has already been discussed by the scholars with considerable amount of interest. In a collection of papers presented at a symposium on Pampa, organised by the Centre of Kannada Studies, Bangalore University, Dr. K. Krishna Murthy of Karnataka University has made certain observations on this subject. He says that he was surprised to see a note by an Editor of Bhasa's Karnabhara giving the meaning of 'NAGA-KETUH' as 'Elephant bannered'.

It is true that this meaning surprises even Sanskrit scholars. There are many reasons for this. In Mahabharata, wherever a reference has to be made to the emblem in the banner of Duryodhana the word "Naga" is used.

"Naga" has two meanings - Elephant and cobra (serpent). Both the meanings look appropriate for these reasons. (1) The Capital City of Duryodhana is Nagapura (Hastinapura) and his banner, containing the symbol of (Hasti) an elephant, is proper. (2) Duryodhana's venomous character is such, that the symbol in the banner rightly represents it.

Many poets, a number of critics and almost all the people seem to have been influenced more by the character of Duryodhana as portrayed in Mahabharata, in deriving the meaning of "Naga" as a cobra (a serpent).

Even by the time of Perundevanar this meaning seems to have become very popular. He rarely uses an epithet other than "Anuvyu-rathone" "serpent bannered" to Duryodhana in his work Bharata Vemba. Pampa seems to have meant serpent and nothing else by the word "Naga" concerning the banner of Duryodhana in his Vikramajuna Vijaya.

In the same way as Villiputturar followed Perundevanar, Kanna and Kumara Vyasa followed Pampa and all of them without any second opinion called Duryodhana a SERPENTBannered Warrior.

More surprising note is that even Sanskrit works like Bharata Champu called Duryodhana a serpent bannered king.

All the Telugu poets including Tikkanna have taken the sym-

132. Pampa Ondu Adhyayana pages 10,11 and 17.
bol of Duryodhana’s banner as a cobra. But as Dr. Krishna Murthy observes P.C. Roy and Kannamathantha Datta in their English translations have translated the work “Naga” as elephant. None of them is less sincere in presenting his translation of the great epic.

North Indian commentators and people take the emblem in the banner of Duryodhana as an elephant.

What did Bhagavan Vyasa mean by the word ‘Naga’ in this context? In one context Bhagavan Vyasa clearly says that it is an elephant. The way in which the white elephant of Indra (the king of Beasts) brings dignity to his army, the diamond decked elephant banner of Duryodhana brings dignity to his army.

When it is compared to the white elephant of Indra it is certain that it is the symbol of an elephant. No one compared the cobra to an elephant — that too to a white elephant.

In another context also Bhagavan Vyasa in his beautiful suggestive poetry means that word Naga as an elephant.

In these two slokas the author describes how Bhima brought down the banner of Duryodhana and how he overpowered him.

In the second sloka Bhima is said to have overpowered Duryodhana like an elephant-keeper who overpowers his elephant with the hook (Ankusa).

Bhima brought to ground the elephant banner of Duryodhana and like an elephant keeper overpowered him with ten arrows. Bhima-sena is compared to an elephant keeper and the arrows are compared to the hook of an elephant keeper.

133. Tikkanna’s Bharata Bhishma Parva 1-95
- do - Karna Barva 2-269
This simili clearly suggests that the emblem in the banner is an elephant. Duryodhana is "Nagapuradheesa and Nagaketana." Bhimasena is a banner of the Naga.

Apart from this Bhimasena's banner is said to be bearing the emblem of a lion.

(Bhagadatta cut the lion-emblazoned banner of Bhimasena with three arrows) 135

The enmity between Bhimasena and Duryodhana is symbolised in the enmity between a lion and an elephant. Lion kills the elephant. Bhimasena (symbolised as a lion through the emblem in his banner) kills Duryodhana (symbolised as an elephant through his banner).

While the original text is so clear in its meaning of the word "Naga" why should it be mistaken to a cobra - a serpent? Who is the first author that went wrong and misled the others?

As far as we know Perundevanan is the first South Indian author to call Duryodhana as 'serpent bannered.' He must have been more influenced by the popular legends and folklore. It is too much on our part to charge him that he had not seen the original text sincerely.

But it is difficult to say, that he misled the other poets. Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and even Sanskrit works, in the south, agree with each other in this regard. It must have been a popular South Indian tradition and it must have conveyed the elephant bannered Duryodhana into a serpent bannered Duryodhana.

135. Drona-parva 95-75.
Twenty years after Pandit Gopala Iyengar's edition of Bharata Vembas's publication, another work called PERUNDEVANAR BHARATAM was published by the Saraswathi Mahal Tanjore in 1950. It is also called MAHAVINDAM.

It contains 339 Vembas, dealing with the concluding parts of the story of Mahabharata.

The editor claims that the author of this work is no other than the author of Bharata Vemba.

But the latest edition of Bharata Vemba has not taken the Mahavindam into account, as the editor feels that it cannot be a work of the same author.

I had a detailed discussion with Sri C. Jagannathachariar, Retired Professor of Tamil, Vivekananda College, Madras, later U.C. C Professor, Madras University, on this subject.

The learned scholar also categorically rejects the idea that the Mahavindam is from the pen of Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba. The language, poetic art and the sentiment in Mahavindam, vary from those of Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba. The devoted traditional Vaishnava element in Bharata Vemba is either missing or seen in a distorted and demeaned form in Mahavindam.

Further South Indian tradition regarding the rendering of Mahabharata into native languages generally do not encourage to bring out the concluding parts of the story.

Villi Putthurar, who followed Perundevanar faithfully, also drops the curtain immediately after the victory of the Pandavas. Had Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba rendered this concluding part of the story, Villi would have certainly followed him and concluded his work also with Mahavindam (Swargarohana).

Assuming that Pampa had seen Perundevanar's Bharata Vemba, (as the possibilities are many) if we imagine the shape of Perundevanar's work, in comparison with Pampa's Vikramarjuna Vijaya, it is not possible to think that Perundevanar rendered the story of Mahavindam.

Based on these observations I agree with the editor of the latest edition of Bharata Vemba, and Sri. C. Jagannathachariar, in not ascribing the authorship of Mahavindam to Perundevanar of Bharata Vemba.