Chapter - VI

TRAGIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN OTHER (MINOR) SANSKRIT DRAMAS

Almost all Sanskrit dramas contain tragic element or episode in a greater or smaller degree. Obviously, it would not be possible to analyse all available Sanskrit plays; nor is it necessary for our purposes, because outstanding examples will illustrate the depth and direction of tragic consciousness in other Sanskrit plays also.

(1) Svapnavasavadattaṁ

This is a serious play by Bhasha in six acts. Udayana's lamentation on hearing the death of his beloved queen Vāsavadattā in a palace fire lāvāṇaka grāmadaha is heart-rending. Of course, it is personal tragedy for king Udayana. He remembers Vāsavadattā every now and then and is unable to forget Vasavadatta in waking or dream experiences. On his return from hunting expedition king come to know the tragic end of Vāsavadattā and Yaugandharāyaṇa, who was tryng to rescue her. King was almost driven to madness. Lamentations of Udayana, as reported by Brahmačarīn brings out clearly the sudden shock and the depth of Udayana's intense grief. His words are highly pathetic - "Then that king, who had his body reddened by dust, as he rolled on the earth, suddenly got up and began to lament variously and inconsistently thus: 'O Vasavadatta! O daughter of the King of Avanti! O darling! Alas dear pupil!' Why more? Now not even the Cakravakas are like him (in mourning), not even others separated from other uncommon (excellent) wives. Blessed is the woman whom (her) husband so regards. Though
(she may have been) burnt, she is, indeed, not burnt owing to the love of her husband." Thus Udayana surpasses all the lovers in lamentations. Though Vāsavadatta is dead, she is ever living in the heart of Udayana. He also remembers each and every association with her: "Here I laughed with her, here I talked with her, here I lived with her, here I got angry with her, here I passed the night with her." Thus king who was lamenting incessently was taken away from that village Lāvanāka to a distant place, by the minister Rumanvān.

Vāsavadatta too suffers a lot in her disguise. Her misery reaches climax, when she hears the news of the king having accepted Padmāvati as his wife. Suddenly she reacts to the situation very harshly, but she controls herself immediately. Her plight is very sorrowful, as she cannot take any one into her confidence, nor can she reveal her sufferings to others. At the end of Act II, when everybody was in a hurry to celebrate the auspicious ceremony, Vāsavadatta was so much disappointed that, she feels as if she were thrown into an ocean of darkness.

1. तत्त: स रजा महीत्वपरिसर्पणांपुणापत्तार्कितः सहस्रोत्थाय हा वासवदत्ते! हा अमल्लिताज्ञुच्य त हा प्रिये! हा प्रिय शिष्ये! इति किमपि किमपि बहु प्रल्पितवान्। किं बहुना, नैवेद्यानि तालामात्रेकाका..... भूर्जसेनासय ति दशाःपदेभ्या || Svapna. I-13. Tr. P. S. Sane and S.A.Upadhyaya.

2. इह तथा सह हसितम्, इह तथा सह कहितम्, इह तथा सह पर्चितम्, इह तथा सह कुपितम्, इह तथा सह शापितम्। Svapna. I Act (Words of Brahmacārin).

3. वासवदता - अन्त्याहितम्। (What a calamity!) Svapna, Act II.

4. वासवदता - (आत्मगतम्) यथा यथा लगते, तथा तथा:अत्विकरतिति मे हृदयम्। Svapna, Act II.
Leaving Padmāvati in the palace, who was busy with wedding festivities, Vāsavadatta had come to Pramadavana to alleviate her sorrows. In that lonely garden she feels the bitterness of her grief and says "What a great calamity! my very lord now belongs to another." This utterance of Vāsavadatta reveals her poignant grief. Then enters a maid with flowers and asks Vāsavadatta to weave the wedding garland of Padmavati, in fact who is going to be her co-wife. Her retirement from the marriage celebrations and her purpose of spending time alone in the garden, all become futile and naturally it touches the spectators. The wreathing of the nuptial garland for her co-wife naturally grieves her a lot. That her husband should marry another women is itself an unbearable misery to her and to be compelled to wreath the wedding garland for that marriage is really the height of her misery. That is why she exclaims "must this also be done by me? Oh! really the gods are unkind to me." She is eager to hear about her husband, but is overwhelmed with grief and has to refer to her own husband as a parapuruṣa. Such moving words of Vāsavadatta, cannot but bring tears in our eyes. It is the irony of the fate that Vāsavadatta, though alive, has to refer to herself as dead, at the time of weaving the sapatnimardana herb into the wedding garland.

In the fourth Act, Vasaṅtaka asks Udayana which one of his two queens Udayana loved more. Naturally, answer given by Udayana is in favour of Vāsavadatta. Vidūṣaka's question deepens the misery of Udayana.

5. वासवदत्ता - अहो अत्याहितम्। आर्यपूणोपि नाम परंतिये। संवृत्तः। Svapna, Act III.
6. वासवदत्ता - (आत्मानम्) पूर्वदि पया कर्त्तव्यायात्तीतः। अहो अकर्षणः। खल्लीलतः। Svapna, Act III
as he is reminded of his association with Vāsavadatta. He thinks Vāsavadatta is still alive. But Vidūṣaka makes him aware of the fact that Vāsavadatta is dead long back. He tries to console his friend. At this juncture words of Udayana gives a delicate touch to the situation. He says - "It is hard to abandon deep-seated love. Grief becomes fresh with repeated rememberance. It is the way of the world that the mind gets free from the debt, after shedding tears (i.e. in this world, for the dead) and becomes calm." Thus king tells Vidūṣaka that it is very difficult to forget deep-rooted love. In this world, a person stricken with grief. gets some consolation only by shedding tears.

The fifth Act contains the most important scene of the play, that is the dream scene. The king is always brooding over Vāsavadatta's destruction at Lāvāṇaka. Even in his dream he sees Vāsavadatta. After waking from his dream, he utters that if it were a dream, not to be awakened from it would be a bliss; if it were an illusion, he would like to remain in it permanently. This shows the intense love of the king for Vāsavadatta and the mental torture he is experiencing.

Even in Act VI, grief of the king is renewed by the recovery of the lute Ghoṣavatī. He remembers the happy moments he spent with

7. दुःखं त्यक्तं बद्धमुलोत्तरामः।
   स्मृत्या स्मृत्या याति दुःखं नवासम्।
   यानं त्युष्यं यद्विनयचेवाय बायं
   प्रासादन्वया याति चुक्षिः प्रसादम्। II Svapna, IV-7. Tr. P.S.Sane and S.A.Upadhyaya.

8. यदि तावद्यं स्मृत्यं धन्याम्प्रतिनिधित्वम्।
   अथायं विच्छमो वा स्मादं विच्छमो हस्ति मे चरिम्। II Svapna, V-9.
Vasavadatta, while teaching the art of playing on the lute. Ultimately the result of the message from Mahāsena and Angāravati led to the reunion of Udayana and Vasavadatta.

Thus, the solitary and pathetic suffering of Vasavadatta with her secret sorrow and agony, gives a tragic touch to the play. Her often repeated words "Gods are really merciless to me" compel our deepest sympathy for her and excite in us an emotion of pity for her sufferings. Bhāsa thus, with a very simple style, has been able to move the spectators by arousing in them pity and compassion for human sorrow and suffering.

(2) Pratimā-nāṭakam

This is one of the most interesting drama by Bhasa, in seven Acts. Though the main sentiment of this drama is heroic, first half of the play has the predominance of pathetic sentiment.

Daśaratha had to send his own affectionate son Rāma to the forest, for a period of fourteen years, depriving him of his rightful kingship, in fulfillment of his promise given to his wife Kaikeyī. The exile of Rāma, Sītā and Lākṣmaṇa causes unbearable shock and sorrow to Daśaratha. Act second is full of lamentations of Daśaratha for his beloved sons and daughter-in-law. His mind is filled with the thoughts of Sītā, Rāma and Lākṣmaṇa. He utters their names incessantly. Once he appreciates the act of Rāma, but within a minute he questions it saying 'what religious merit are you going to achieve leaving your age-old father

9. Cf. बुद्धोप्रेष्यदेषेषु यदा मातीमाणयऽऽ।
   हत्तेत्व भ्रस्तकोणोऽऽ कृत्याकाशार्दितम् || Svapna, V-6.
in this critical condition?' He repents - "Oh! Rāma should have born in some other's stomach; I should have been without any son and this Kaikeyi should have born in a forest as a tigress."

He is eager to hear the names of Rāma, Śītā and Laksmana. If anybody utters their names, suddenly he tries to get up, thinking that his own sons might have arrived; but he cannot get up at his own and suddenly falls down. Sumantra had followed Rāma, Laksmana and Śītā to bring them back to Ayodhya, but now he had returned to Ayodhya with vacant chariot. Return of Sumantra is reported to Daśaratha. Daśaratha is eager to know whether Sumantra is successful in his venture. First he inquires about his sons, but due to his intense grief he looses control over his mind and talks like a person suffering from delirium. He tells Sumantra that "Really I have talked irrelevant words; this is not the proper question in the case of ascetics. Therefore, you tell me, whether the austerity of the ascetics is increasing? Is not Śītā pained due to wandering in the forests?" In this manner, he enquires the well-being of his own sons and daughter-in-law, as if ascetics, who are residing in the distant forests. As it is impossible to see them now, even hearing of their names is a pleasant experience to him; not only to hear but

10. अपपत्या क्यं राम: पुरुषोःपन्यस्य महीपते:। वने व्यासी च कैषेववी लया किं न कुलं ग्रहय: || Pratimā, II-8.

11. पत्त्वुन्याय चोत्त्वाय हा हेतुप्रयुक्तव, मुहः। दिः पर्यंति तातेथ यथा वालो रूपः। || Pratimā, II-3.

12. राजा - सत्यमुन्यकमिति मया। नयं तपस्विनामुक्तस्य: प्रशः। ततः कथ्यताय। अपि तपस्विनां तपो धर्मः। अप्यप्रश्नानि स्वाभीनानि विचारति वैदेहि न परिलिख्ये। || Pratimā, Act II.
to express their names often and often, makes him happy. That is why first he hears their names from Sumantra and then he himself repeats it. When Sumantra says 'Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Jānaki, king re-utters it and afterwards says it is not the proper order. He tells Sumantra that Rāma, Jānaki and Lakṣmaṇa is the proper order because let Sītā remain in the middle, as the forests abound in perils. Then Sumantra repeats it, followed by Daśaratha. Sumantra thinks that, perhaps now the king is little-bit satisfied. But with his heart wounded, king cries for them loudly and says - "Once I touch Rāma, once I see him again- with this nectar I think I live, as one whose life has ended, lives with nectar."13 This cry of Daśaratha reaches sky, but all in vain. Then, as a reply to the question made by Sumitṛā regarding the message of Rāma, Jānaki and Lakṣmaṇa, Sumantra conveys the hidden feelings of them in a heart-touching manner. In fact, they have not spoken anything; their silence itself conveyed a lot, hidden in their inner-self. Sumantra says - "All of them, having alighted from the chariot, at Śṛṅgiberapura, stood with their faces turned towards Ayodhyā and having bowed their heads to the great king, began to think of a message.

Having mused over something for a long time they made a quivering motion of their lips in order to speak; but their throats being choked up with tears, they departed to the forest just without saying anything."14

Really, Bhāsa has shown his extra-ordinary skill in depicting tragic sentiment in a most perfect way. In this context perhaps, no other poet would have been so successful as Bhāsa is. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sita were so much over-powered by emotion at the thought of condition of Daśaratha and the grief caused to the elders that they were struck dumb and went away with pitiable looks. Indeed, this is a masterly way of expressing tragic message and no other dramatist or poet has followed this method. Tragic Consciousness of the dramatist has proved to be most efficient and effective at this juncture.

On hearing these words of Sumantra Daśaratha faints. After regaining a little consciousness he feels that, in the absence of Rāma, if he touch Rāma's mother he may get little consolation. Though she is very close to him, he can not see her. Gradually he is loosing control over his senses. Even at this moment he utters his pre-decided purpose of installing Rāma on the throne and he himself retiring to the penance-grove. But now his very purpose has failed as Rāma has gone to forests and himself remaining at Ayodhyā with the burden of the throne. He sends a word to Kaikeyi through Sumantra; "Rāma is gone; may you gain your desired object! I too am abandoned by my life: let your son be brought (here) quickly, that your sin (evil desire) may have its fruit."\[15 At the moment of his last breath he sees his ancestors Dilipa, Raghu and Aja. Even now, he utters the names of Rāma, Janaki and Lakṣmaṇa! Thus, Daśaratha dies in the very presence of our eyes on the stage due to unbearable shock and sorrow.

In the Act Third, Bharata who was living with his maternal uncle in Nandigrāma, comes to Ayodhyā, after a period of twelve years. He does not know anything about the tragic incident that took place at Ayodhyā. He is only informed of the illness of his father, hence he is anxious to see his father as early as possible. But before he enters the city he is stopped at the outskirts, because he should enter the city as soon as auspicious Rohiṇī sets in. He sees a temple like building and enters it with the intention of taking rest for a while. There inside the building he sees four statues and he bows down to those statues. At that time the keeper of the temple (Devakulikah) informs him that the statues are of the Iksvakus, the well-known kings of Ayodhyā. To the queries of Bharata the temple-keeper tells that the first statue is of Dilipa, the second of Raghu and the third one is of Aja. On seeing the fourth statue, Bharata becomes agitated and asks the keeper of the statues to name them again from the beginning. He repeats his earlier words. Bharata is afraid of questioning about the fourth statue, because it looks like the image of Daśaratha. That is why with all doubt he asks the keeper of the statue house that whether the statues of the living are made. Temple-keeper replies that only of those who have passed away are established here. On hearing this, Bharata faints. Bharata thus learns of his father's death. The keeper of the statue house further informs him, how his mother Kaikeyi is responsible for stopping the coronation of Rāma, and how Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa went to forests. Ultimately as a result of all this Daśaratha met an unworthy death. Bharata felt Ayodhyā without his father and brother, is not Ayodhyā, but reduced
to a forest. Therefore, he decides to go to forest to search his brother, Rāghava. But due to unbearable grief and shock he falls in swoon again. Thus, in this act the impact of the 'scene of statues' is responsible for arousing tender emotions among spectators. Pathetic sentiment reaches climax in this third Act; sentiment of pathos overflows like a flood without any obstacles.

Bhāsa's treatment of these two episodes namely, Daśaratha's unworthy death and the impact of the scene of statues, on Bharata, brings out tragic colours to the situations. Daśaratha's own doing proves to be his undoing.

(3) Madhyamavyāyoga

This is a one-act play, written by Bhāsa, deals with the story of Bhima and his son Ghaṭotkaca. Keśavadāsa, a Brahmin with his family was crossing through a forest, is suddenly obstructed by Ghaṭotkaca. Ghaṭotkaca has been ordered by his mother to bring her a human-being for her breakfast. The poor old Brahmin on one side is helpless and seeks others help; while giant Ghaṭotkaca on the other side, is all powerful. The hermitage of the Paṇḍavas was nearby, but four of them had gone to the hermitage of the sage Dhaumya to witness the Śatakūṁbha sacrifice. Middle Paṇḍava, Bhima has been left to look after the hermitage. But he too has gone to a distant place for exercise. At this stage the mental tension of the Brahmin is shown in every detail, as he experiences momentary hope and despair.
In utter despair, Brahmin approaches the giant and requests him, if there is any way out for their survival. Ghaṭotkaca tells him that he would take one of them and allow others to go happily. In fact, remedy suggested by the giant is worse than the disease. Then, they vie with one another in sacrificing themselves as victims, but the old Brahmin is discarded by the giant because of his old age, and the Brāhmaṇī is also ruled out as she is a woman. Of the three sons, father is fond of the eldest and the mother of the youngest, so the middle son Madhyama becomes unwanted by his own parents. He understands the situation and utters in intense grief - "Unwanted by my parents, who would want me? This remark reveals the disappointment and despair of the poor boy who feels himself unwanted. Pleased Ghaṭotkaca asks the boy to accompany him. Then, he takes farewell of his parents and brothers. After obtaining permission from the giant, he goes to a pond nearby to quench his thirst.

At this juncture, old Brahmin is unable to bear the shock and he feels, he is throwing his son into the mouth of death. That is why he shouts - "Alas! alas! we are robbed, oh, we are robbed indeed." 

Further, in utter sorrow he laments "Ah, young man, possessed of lustre befitting thy youth, whose mind was always fixed on thy vows, and devoted to the study of the scriptures, wilt though perish like a

16. Madhyamavāyāyoga, Prose lines before stanza No. 23.
tree in blossom, shattered by the tusk of a mighty elephant?" In this way lamentations of the helpless, old Brahmin, who is going to loose his son in the very presence of his eyes makes the situation very pathetic.

Thus, in this very short one-act play, Bhāsa has exhibited his mastery in depicting tragic sentiment. Though the main sentiment of the play is heroic, the first half of the play gives a tragic touch to the theme.

(4) Dūta Ghaṭotkacam

This is also, a one-act play, Uṭṣṛṣṭiκaṇka, written by Bhāsa. The play describes the tragic death of Abhimanyu, which is full of pathos. Death of Abhimanyu is reported to Dhṛtarāṣṭra through a soldier. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is taken aback by this tragic news and it seemed to him a Śiśuvadhā, which may lead to complete destruction of Kuru family. Gāndhāri too felt very bad and the death of Abhimanyu, in her opinion, is the suggestion of the impending death of Kurus. Duḥśala who was also present at that time, told her parents that the person one who has made Uttarā a widow, has brought upon his wife widowhood within no time. In fact, her own husband Jayadratha led the band of soldiers for the death of Abhimanyu. Dramatic irony touches the heart of the spectators.

17. तद्रथ ! तद्रणतानुश्यकालने !
िवयंप्रच्छल्यन्तप्रसताकुब्रे !
क्रमिष्टहि गज़राजज्ञानचलनोऽस्तरोऽवस्तिरं सेरिपुर्व विनातम्। || Madhyamavyāyoga, 1-24. Tr. C.R. Devadhar.

18.  कोशस्य मित्रपवपताकाहः तानां
वंशत्यः श्ययवचोपयत्वभीतः। || Dūtaghaṭotkacām, 1-4.
On hearing the role played by her husband in killing Abhimanyu, Duḥśalā is now certain about her mis-fortune and she starts weeping. She wants to join Uttarā and to follow her in her intense grief. But Gāndhārī tries to console her, by saying that she should not speak of something inauspicious, as her husband is alive. Duḥśalā is almost sure of her widowhood, because her husband has aroused the anger of Dhananjaraya by killing his affectionate son Abhimanyu. Soldier Jayatrāta explains the situation of Abhimanyu’s cruel killing by Kauravas, to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. He says when Arjuna was engaged in fighting with Samsaptakas, sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra all together obstructed him from all sides and killed him. On hearing this Dhṛtarāṣṭra decides to offer libations to his sons at the banks of Gaṅgā, as their death is sure by their own undoing.¹⁹ Turn of events has made Dhṛtarāṣṭra extremely painful.

Then enters Duryodhana along with Duḥśasana and Śakuni to pay respects to his father and mother. When all of them salute Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Dhṛtarāṣṭra do not express any words of blessings. In his opinion, blessings to those who have killed Abhimanyu, the very soul of Kṛśna and Arjuna, and who are apathetic to their life, is a waste.²⁰ Dhṛtarāṣṭra also expresses

19. भृतराष्ट्रः - गान्धारिः! भृषु।
अत्रेय दाम्याम्महसं हतेवः;
र्वे-नागरक्ष्येन तव-यज्ञेऽः;
न च व्यस्मि शकः सहीलप्रदानः;
कर्तुः पूष्पाः सिनिरोपयथेभु॥ Dūtaghaṭotkacam. 1-10.

20. सीमाः निषेधैः नाते हरे रूपमार्थ्योः।
जीविनेन निग्रेभ्यं कथमासी: प्रमुखवते॥ Dūtaghaṭotkacam. 1-15.
Dulisala. He utters in extreme distress that he is having only one virtuous daughter, who is more affectionate to him than his hundred sons; but now she is going to become a widow because of the indiscretion act of her own brothers. Dhṛtarāṣṭra expresses his aversion to the war; and every word uttered by him conveys his heart-felt grief at Abhimanyu's death. He questions his own son Duryodhana and others that why did not their hands collapsed while killing such a young and energetic boy, who alone was fighting with all of them. But Duryodhana defends his act of killing Abhimanyu. Dhṛtarāṣṭra warns the Kauravas of the coming catastrophe, and misery brought upon their head by their thoughtless act. Thus, Dhṛtarāṣṭra is moved by the tragic death of Abhimanyu and it seemed to him as a Śīṣuhatya (killing of a child), which may ruin his family completely.

(5) Mudrārākṣasam

*Mudrārākṣasam* is a unique play in the whole field of Sanskrit Dramas, written by Viṣakhadatta. Plot of the play is quite serious mainly based on political intrigue and spy-system. Its plot construction, characterisation and style are quite different from any other classical Sanskrit dramas.

In the beginning of the Seventh Act we see Cañdanadāsa, who is a good friend of Rākṣasa, is led to the gallows by the Cāndālas. Cañdanadāsa opposed Candrgupta unto the last in order to protect the

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21. एका कुम्भेङ्कमिन्यमद्युप्रसनाय लभय सुधा पुष्पाभिशिष्ठः ।
    सा मान्यद्वां भवति प्रसङ्गदृष्ट वैधव्यमवलस्यमववास्वतिति || ।
*Dūtaghāṭotkacām*, 1-16.
wife and child of Amātya Rākṣasa. He had given shelter to them, while Rākṣasa was away, busy with planning political intricacies against Caṇṇakya and Candragupta. This very offence of Candanaḍasa had made Caṇṇakya averse and he had ordered for his execution. Now Candanaḍasa enters in the garb of a victim, carrying the stake on his shoulder, followed by his wife, son and other relatives. Indeed, here we come across a fine pathetic scene, the only such scene in the drama. This scene has a close resemblance, with that of the scene in Mṛcchakatikā, Act X, where Carudatta is led to the place of execution. There also wife and son of Carudatta lament for the tragic plight of Carudatta. In the same manner, in this scene, words of the wife of Candanaḍasa and his innocent son is heart-touching.

Caṇḍanaḍasa, eyes heavy with tears, thinks about his own adverse condition. One who was even afraid of breaking the rules of good conduct, should be condemned to death like thieves, worries him a lot. He says in utter distress "What obstinacy does the hunter show in killing the deer that, renouncing flesh, subsists on grass through the fear of death!" Deer is a most harmless creature, yet the hunters kill it. In the same way wicked people, who are bent upon killing, do not think about the innocence of the persons being killed by them. These grief-stricken words of Caṇḍanaḍasa moves his relatives and friends. He observes all of them, who were weeping and feels that perhaps they are offering libations of water by mere falling of tears.

After arriving at the place of execution, Caṇḍālas tell Caṇḍanadāsa to take leave of his family members and relatives. Hence, he asks his wife to return, with his son. But she tells about her firm determination of self-immolation. Caṇḍanadāsa requests her to be alive at least for the sake of their son, who has no experience of this world. She answers pathetically that she would leave him to the house-hold Gods and they would certainly protect him. She asks her son to fall at the feet of his father for the last time. He falls at the feet of his father and asks him what should he do after the death of his father. A feeling of an orphan, pains him. Answer given by Caṇḍanadāsa moves the spectators. He says - "child, live in a country where Caṇḍakya will have no access."

These words of Caṇḍanadāsa makes us clear about all the pains and sufferings he had experienced because of Caṇḍakya.

Caṇḍālas plant the stake and ask Caṇḍanadāsa to get ready. At this moment his wife and son cries for help. But Caṇḍanadāsa tells them that he dies not because of any unworthy act, but for the good cause of his friend. Then, he kisses the head of his son and tries to console him. Even at this stage he does not forget to advice his son. Grief of the wife of Caṇḍanadāsa is unbearable, beating her bosom, she again cries for help loudly. Fortunately, at the nick of time, Rākṣasa turns up to save his friend.

The opinion of Henry W. Wells is quite worthy of record here. "Rākṣasa must choose between his honor that binds him to his oath...

23. चन्दनदास: - पु. चाणक्यविरहिले देसे वस्तवयम्। Mudrārākṣasaṁ, Act VII.
and his affection that binds him to his friend, between an impersonal and a personal obligation. The second tie appears to him and apparently to the dramatist as the more binding. One good is sacrificed to another and to the extent that there is a substantial sacrifice there is at least an impingement on tragedy, comparatively rare in Sanskrit drama.\textsuperscript{24}

Thus, noble-hearted Cañdanadāsa suffers a lot due to his strong will to protect the interests of his friend. He bears all the injustice, without any second thought. He loses his position, prosperity, relatives and friends, yet he stands by his friend with unchanging devotion. Indeed, he must have undergone great mental disturbances. In this way, though \textit{Mudrārakṣasām} is a different type of play, here also we witness a fine piece of tragic episode which proves the tragic consciousness of the dramatist.

\textbf{(6) MAHĀVĪRACARITĀM}

Plot of this drama is taken from the tragic epic \textit{Ramayāṇa}. Bhavabhūti has developed heroic sentiment in this drama, but he has employed the tragic sentiment to support the main sentiment. Some of the scenes of Act IV and V bring tragic colours to the play of which Bhavabhūti is the master.

\textbf{ACT-IV}

The fourth Act of \textit{Mahāvīracaritām} depicts the sentiment of pathos, of which Bhavabhūti is the supreme artist. The preparations for Rama's

\textsuperscript{24} Henry W. Wells, \textit{The Classical Drama of India}, Bombay, 1963, p.63.
coronation are suddenly stopped, as Manthara (disguised Śūrpanākha) appeared with an alleged letter of Kaikeyi, to grant her two boons, viz. to select Bharata as the crown prince and exile for Rāma for a period of fourteen years. Rāma along with Sitā and Lakṣmāna comes to take leave of Daśaratha. The happy atmosphere at once takes the tragic colour, as Daśaratha and Janaka faint unable to bear the shock. After regaining consciousness grief-stricken Janaka says that kings of Ikṣvāku race, in their old-age used to go to forests, after coronating their eldest son; but in case of Rāma and Lakṣmāna they are sent to forests in their early age.

Daśaratha feels very bad on the plight of his daughter-in-law Sita, who is newly married. As an eldest responsible person of the family he thinks that he is sending her to the abode of demons.

Yudhajit (brother of Kaikeyi) felt very severely on hearing the demands made by his sister. He thinks about the adverse effects of her boon: "King (Daśaratha) is thrown into the mouth of death, exile to these two young boys; innocent daughter-in-law is going to be an offer to the demons; world devoid of protection, a permanent stain to our family. Alas! the misconduct of my sister has put the whole world into affliction." 25

25. पत्तिष्ठ्योंक्रस्य ब्रजवति बनमेतुल्लुष्मूण्
वभूषी रशोम्यो बलिवर्ष वराकी प्रणिदिता ।
नितान्तोऽलोकः कुक्षम्ययासा नः परेवृत्तः
स्वयमेऽशात्यं जगद्विविलं विक्रयति || Mahāviracaritam, IV-52.
Bharata too, is touched at the departure of Rama, Lakṣmana and Sita. He intends to follow Rama, but Rama does not permit him. At this juncture, words of Bharata adds to the pathos of the situation. He mourns- "Alas! Alas! what an unfortunate fellow I am! I have been left off by Rāma." Unable to bear the grief he faints away.

Gradually Daśaratha regains his consciousness and tries to prevent Rama from exile. Words uttered by aged Daśaratha, at the last moment of his life brings tears in the eyes of spectators. He laments addressing Rama - "I am going to die within no time; darkness is spreading from all sides of me; my pain is unbearable and I have not experienced such an intense pain so far in my life. You please, bring your moon-like face near my eyes and promise me that you are not going to forests. O my son! do not become so harsh suddenly towards me."27

In this way, the lamentations of the old King, queen mothers and the people of Ayodhya grew no bounds. The entire city, plunged in an ocean of grief.

**ACT-V**

Jaṭāyu tries to rescue Sita from the clutches of Rāvana. But in the encounter with Rāvana Jaṭāyu is killed. Rama and Lakṣmana who were away chasing the golden deer, are shocked at the abduction of Sita.

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26. भरत: - हा हा! करं परित्यागंऽन्ति मन्दभाग्यः? (शति मुख्तिः), *Mahāvīrācaritam*, Act IV

27. प्राणा: प्रायःनि परित्यागंतवाद्वृत्तोऽस्मि परिवि: त्रिवंगस्य कोऽन्ति प्रत्राळ्यवृत्त:।

अक्षोभिः न योग्यतोऽति च देहि

Sita and killing of Jaṭāyu. Rāma eyes heavy with tears mourn for Sita's loss and death of Jaṭāyu. He feels, this ashaming tragic incident is firmly deep-rooted in his heart; his mind with full of darkness and an insult which is permanent for him. Death of Jaṭāyu, who was a good friend of his father, burns his mind and soul, which has no remedy at all. Sympathy for poor helpless Sītā breaks his heart into pieces.28

Intense grief of Rāma moves the spectators. His depth of sorrow can be understood from the following words: "Kings of solar race, who had ruled over the whole universe, established law and order, but I have made them worthy of repudiation. Respectful Jaṭāyu, who was firm, even at the end of an era, I have made him to ascend to heaven. I have lost my wife in this forest. Thus, I did in this world, what others have not executed."29 These ironical words of Rāma makes us clear of the extreme pain and agony he is experiencing.

Lamentations of Rāma at the loss of Sītā grew no bounds. His heart felt words are highly pathetic: "O my beloved! where are you? Talk me with sweet words, or rather it is difficult for persons like me who are worthy of blame. Indeed, Rāvana is fit for appreciation and myself for disparagement, because he had taken revenge successfully."30 These words of Rāma reveal his intense sorrow and suffering.

Thus, these two incidents of Act V, viz. abduction of Sita by Ravana and the killing of Jaṭāyu brings the drama to a climax.

No doubt, Bhavabhūti is the supreme artist in the depiction of pathetic sentiment. He has proved it in Uttarārāmacaritām beyond any doubt. Here in Mahāviracaritām, though the main sentiment is heroic, tragic incidents of fourth and fifth Act heighten the effect of the main sentiment. In this way, the tragic consciousness of the dramatist becomes clear from the above narrated tragic episodes.

Dramas discussed in this chapter contain tragic episodes or incidents of a smaller degree. Though these dramas are of much importance, they have been treated as minor works, only from the point of view of tragic consciousness. Pathetic sentiment is not all pervasive in the theme of these plays. Tragic incidents or episodes helps to heighten the effect of the main sentiment. Udayana's lamentation in Svapnavāsavadattam, death of Daśaratha in Pratīmanātakaṁ, plight of helpless Brahmaṇa family in Madhyamavyāyoga, description of tragic death of Abhimanyu in Dutaṅgaṭotkacarh, firm determination of Candanaḍasa to face death in Mudrārākṣasaṁ, impact of the exile of Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa on Daśaratha and Janaka, abduction of Sitā and the killing of Jaṭāyu by Rāvaṇa in Mahāviracaritāṁ - all these tragic incidents touches the tender emotions of spectators.

In the similar manner, we come across many other plays which contain heroic suffering and agony, themes of which taken from mythology and ancient legends. For example, the story of Hariścandra is depicted
in six acts by Rāmacandra in Satya Hariścandra Nāṭaka. The story of Nala has been presented by Kṣemiśvara in his play called Naiśadhananda. The well known legend of Śibi Cakravarti, who sacrificed his life to save a dove from the clutches of a hawk is dramatized in an one-act play called Karuṇa-vajrāyudha by Ācārya Balacandra. Sorrow and sufferings of Bhartrhari is depicted in a play of five acts named Bhartrharinirvedam by Śri Hariharopādhyāya. Death of Kaṁsa is presented in a play of seven acts known as Kaṁsavadha by Śeṣakṛiṣṇa, Yayāticaritam by Rudradeva deals with the life-story of Yayati in seven acts. Ullāgharāghava-Nāṭaka by Someśvaradeva and Kundamala by Dhiranāga or Dinnaga are based on the great epic Ramayana. Naturally death of Daśaratha, exile for Rāma, lamentation of queen mothers etc. is dramatized in Ullāgharāghava-Nāṭaka and Kundamālā begins with the banishment of Sitā and ends with the consecration of her twin sons. I think, an analysis of the earlier six plays is enough to reveal the character of the dramatic treatment given to this type of plays.