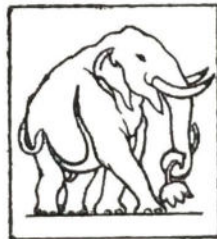


MAHAKAVI
PAMPA

V. SITARAMIAH



BOMBAY
POPULAR PRAKASHAN

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M. V. Murthy

PREFACE

IT WAS a fine thought which prompted the National Book Trust of India to sponsor works on the greatest poets in each of our Regional languages. When I was asked by my friend Manjeri Isvaran to write on Pampa I was happy and felt honoured. The book is now printed and he is, alas, not with us to see it out.

An account of Pampa's two works is given in the body of this little book. I hope at least a working idea of the poet and his worth will be conveyed to readers who will give it, themselves and me a chance.

There is much in it that is elementary to a good student of Kannada literature; but this is primarily meant for non-Kannada readers. Possibly a little more help will be needed by non-Indian readers in the form of explanation of some terms and phrases, which to Indians are normally familiar.

The Illustrative verses printed at the end will enable readers to hear the voice of the poet. The book talks about him; but the verses can catch him as he is. Asterisks and stanza references indicate the correlates. He is a difficult poet and must be attentively read; but the roll of the verse can be felt by all whose tongues can utter the sounds and who can lend themselves to be influenced by the rhythm of the verse. Mine is a general introduction to him. This is at the most the first overall account of a Kannada writer in English. If this succeeds others may in course of time be projected by others more competent than myself. May it come about soon.

Any defects of expression, idiom, usage, typography and even worse may please be overlooked. English is a foreign language and the best of us are nervous using it. All of us may improve with work. To me writing is always difficult though it is a pleasurable experience to exercise oneself in it.

I am grateful to the N.B.T. for commissioning me with this work, to the Popular Prakashan, Bombay, for letting me have freedom in presenting it to the Press and for their other courtesies and to the Press itself for its bearing with me and my corrections.

What is offered must win approbation on merits. If some are moved to a regard for my author, or even feel that they can get interested in him and that they can like a work like this on a **great** poet in my language I shall be grateful.

Arts & Science College
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15th July, 1967

V. SITARAMIAH

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CHAPTER I

THE OPENING

A. INTRODUCTORY

I

PAMPA is called the *Ādikavi*, or the first poet, in Kannada. He is the first poet not in the sense in which Homer is the first poet in Greek or Valmiki in Samskrit. Homer's work, at least the Iliad, is a true epic in the sense that Homer, or someone else, redacted in poetry the ancient myths and legends connected with the heroes who fought the battles in Troy. It was truly the closing of an epoch both in the type of life presented and in the mode of presentation. A truer epic is perhaps the Mahabharata in India; where, too, the myths and legends of many tribes and their many heroes have been gathered into what is in that kind the largest epic of the world. The Ramayana of Valmiki is a different kind of work. It is an epic poem compassing the story of a great hero and his feuds with Ravana and the Rakshasas. It is more of the nature of a single long poem by one author and is exemplar of many a long narrative poem in later times, though the loftiness, the simplicity and the directness of life and utterance contained in it are nowhere matched or approached in later times.

The Ramayana is nearer possibly to the classic *Æneid* of Virgil, though to an Indian mind the Ramayana is naturally the dearer and more spacious; even, greater. Both of them have supplied inspiration to poetic composition in succeeding generations. The *Æneid*, except in the Sixth Book, may not compare with the transparencies or sublimities such as one finds in the depiction of external or human nature in the Ramayana. For finish and adequacy of expression it is the classic *par excellence* in European literature. The Ramayana is a straighter and more human narration of the stories of Rama and Sita, of love, loyalty and brotherliness. Tagore has remarked that India has always deemed family life as of primary importance. As son, brother, husband, friend, protector of Dharma and finally as king, Valmiki's Rama has won

respect and worship in India. Our culture has valued stability (*i.e.* it is *sthitipradhana*) and inclusiveness. That involves largeness of heart, abnegation, forgiveness, endurance and self-control. In making Rama exemplar of these virtues the Ramayana has become the true epic of the Hindu society.

Pampa's work is not an epic in the sense in which any of the above works is an epic; for neither his *Ādipurāṇa* nor his *Bhārata* is an epic in the sense in which the Iliad or the Mahabharata or even a classic of the type of the *Æneid*, dealing with the eponymous hero of ancient Rome is. Pampa's work is simply the first great extant poetic work in Kannada alike for quality and for quantity. It is the first work which has been preserved as such in Karnataka. Other work there certainly was before him in prose and in verse, for the names of other writers and works are mentioned (in Nripatunga's *Kavirajamarga*, 9th C.) chiefly. But in a total way, perhaps, his work 'rang out'¹ all that was current before him and established itself as foundation—as a starting-point and as a model—for all later work in the language.

There is yet another sense in which his work is different from the epics and the classics just mentioned. Pampa's time is the 10th century A.D., and has behind it a whole tradition of epics and the classics, *i.e.* the Mahakavya literature in Samskrit; and much work also in Prakrit. Works on Rhetoric and Poetics, dealing with nice distinctions and what is poetic matter and manner or what is *kavya* and what is not, had established themselves in Indian literature. Poets like *Aśvaghoṣa*, *Kalidasa*, *Magha*, *Sriharṣa*, *Bhavabhuti*, *Bharavi*, *Dandi*, *Baṇa* and *Bhartrihari* had left behind them individual and important work illustrating both the simplicities and the elaborateness and decadence of a particular kind of composition: the beautiful, the passionate and the glorious were as much available as the turgid, the conventional and the wilfully elaborate, the rhetorical and the mannered examples; as much of the *Vaidarbhi* style as the *Gaudi*. Indeed a whole tradition of writing had risen, declined and set.

1 *Munnina Kabbaman ellam ikki meṭṭiduvu*—in one interpretation of the line—(*Pampa Bharata*, XII 59). One critic says that the phrase refers to earlier works of Pampa himself which these two superseded.

The premises of what is beautiful in writing had been worked out and almost exhausted in the extravagances of tropical fancy, conceit and elaborateness in Baṇa's *Kadambari*. The works on Rhetoric and Poetics had more or less covered the ground of the principles of appreciation and discrimination. Though Anandavardhana's work may not have established itself when *Kavirajamarga* was written—it must have become part of the poetic consciousness by the time Pampa wrote.

All of which shows that Pampa came on the poetic scene with a full knowledge of poetical performance and achievement as well as of the critical doctrine before his time, and with a consciousness of all that would be deemed distinction in composition. The *Kavirajamarga* had by then settled standards of composition and exhibited examples of versification. Possibly the works of Asaga, Guṇavarma, Śrīvijaya, a 'Kavivyāsa' were all available to him to thrill or react to and to take off from. Perhaps also knowledge of Prakrit literature had taught him the felicities of a simpler expression in a Desi language even as it might have given him examples of a few Ragale metres based on the Kaḍavakas (clusters of couplet sequences enclosed between two song metres—one at the beginning and the other at the end)—in the Prakrit Puraṇas.

The Tripadis, the Akkaras and the Gitika metres more native to the people of the country but which had not attained to the status of literary acceptance were also current. The writers had still to be looking up to their peers and to the scholars in Samskrit and Prakrit in order to be accepted or acclaimed. It was, therefore, an extensive background of poetic experience that Pampa rose up from. And his work gave us finished types of composition embodying the best that could be deemed poetry by the poets and rhetoricians of the time whatever language they spoke or wrote in.

2

We have only two works to his name: (1) *Ādipurāṇa*, (2) *Vikramārjuna Vijaya*,—called popularly the *Pampa Bharata*—both of them fairly elaborate, the one with 16 aśvasas the other with 14. We do not have any other work which represents him at a practising, experimental or immature period. No lyrics or shorter poems

descriptive of moods and preferences like the short ones we get for European poets. One should be able to mark growing maturity, grasp and wisdom, marking them for levels of achievement and for phases in development. No such evidence or aids are available in Pampa. *Ādipurāṇa* was the earlier work and represents him as he strives to establish himself in the estimation of his contemporaries. It is, as it were, his diploma piece, written when he was 39 years of age, and completed as he declares within three months of beginning it. We see in it already both the power and glory of poetic achievement; and it is hard to say whether for sheer poetic performance it is not equal if not at points even superior to his *Bhārata*. But it is more self-conscious and more aware of a world which he wants to impress and take by storm. There is some insolence of youth as well which is challenging in its assertion of ability and vigour. By the time he comes to the other work, he seems to have won recognition. Friends and admirers and the scholars of the time are one in making a request to him that only he should be capable of writing a whole Mahābhārata work in Kannada so as to bring off so vast a theme successfully and with distinction. He has won recognition and even the affection and confidence of his peers and of a royal patron whose companion and comrade-in-arms he must have been.

The first work is the spiritual history of the first Tirthamkara of the Jaina calendar and expounds the essentials of the Jaina religion; the second essays a literary feat in likening his royal patron throughout to the great Arjuna, hero of the Mahābhārata, though the juxtaposition of the epic and the historical while narrating the story sounds sometimes queer. It desires to present what it considers the grace and greatness in human life in character and achievement—the *laukika* as he calls it—even as he presents the Jinagama in the other. So that his two themes are taken up with religion and heroism. Love and Karuṇa and Adbhuta are there; though they do not preponderate anywhere. They fall into place in an environment dominated by the working out or envisagement of the destiny of a Jina in the one work; and by the heroic history of the Paṇḍavas—notably the achievement of Arjuna—in their conflicts with Duryodhana and his associates in the other. Religion and heroism therefore strike the keynote of the two works.

3

These were also the dominant forces and preference patterns in the lives of individual men and in the life of the time in which the poet lived. The Raṣṭrakuṭas were Jains though Pampa's royal patron belonged to a family which believed in the Śrutis and Smritis of the Vaidika tradition. He himself was a Jain, and his family was converted into that religion in his father's lifetime; and, like in any family newly converted into a faith he was zealous and full of it. He was not only a poet and a scholar. He fought by his prince on the battlefield;¹ was his companion and commander of forces* on the battlefield. Considering the times in which he lived and the stage in the development of the Chalukya fortunes, the atmosphere was charged with historic purpose, tension and adventure. He must have fought along with his master on behalf of Indra III (914-17 A.D.), Amoghavarṣa II (927-30), and [Amoghavarṣa III (936-9)] and against Gojjiga Govinda IV (930-936). He must have known what it was to be valiant and yet noble in self-control—evidences of all of which are in extolment in his *Bhārata*. The inscriptions of the time breathe the same spirit. Religion and heroism thus seem to be the matrix of life in the Karnāṭaka in the tenth century.

It is necessary to know something about the condition of Jainism in his time and about the historical forces in the midst of which Pampa's life and fortunes and his poetic achievements attained fulfilment.

4

A Jaina Acharya, a Śrutakevali, Bhadrabāhu by name, seems to have come to the South from Magadha (modern Bihar) having been warned of a famine of twelve years' duration that would be desolating human life. A Chandragupta of the Maurya line is said to have followed him. When the party came to Śravanabelagola, the Ācharya felt he could not proceed. He directed others to march further south and himself stayed on the hills at Śravanabelgola

1 Pampa in the 13th stanza of the Vemulavaḍa inscription JRHRC (Vol VI. pts 3-4 pp. 186-7) is said actually is refer to him.

with Chandragupta and soon passed away. This place became a centre of Jaina influence from that time onwards. The Jains are said to have been influential in the Andhra and Tamil countries as well. A Jaina influence developed in western India in Gujerat, Rajputana and other areas where those who had migrated to the west changed a few of their original customs and built up the Śvetambara tradition, while those who settled down in the south continued with the Digambara or the Nirgrantha practices. In course of time, both sects tended to live in the same areas, each having its own group of followers while both preached and spread the main teachings of Jainism.

Both the Jaina and Buddhist cults rose and developed influence as protestant, reformist and democratic religions which in character were different from similar but Bhakti movements in the twelfth century associated with Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava sects. Both Jainism and Buddhism upheld Ahimsa, brotherhood and Maitri. Both were pessimistic about and unappreciative of earthly life and had a similar ascetic order and persuasion imposing heavy restrictions on the monks and practitioners; the rules at their Vihāras and the Basadis were severe and rigorous. But while the Buddhist religion influenced the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas in the north and went on a career of extension all over India and regions far beyond it, and in the last stages, by about the seventh and eighth centuries, perhaps, worked itself out as a vital, substantive, influence in India, the Jaina religion settled down amidst the people, influencing social and religious life all around. In its turn it was to a certain extent influenced by Hindu customs and practices even in rituals and worship and participated in public life establishing kingdoms and sustaining them. Both were in the orthodox sense ungodly and rejected the authority of the Vedas and the Varnaśhrama Dharma. But while the Buddhists developed more and more atheistic, abstract and occult traits and, possibly lost virtue in the practice of ethics, many opting for a Śūnyavāda, the Jainas adapted themselves to the social environment in which they had to live. Their acceptance of a Jina and possibility in fulfilment as Jina made it Āstika. This enabled Jainism to become more human and sociable, more acceptable to the communities with which it had to coexist. This has further enabled the Jainas to continue as a live, active

and fruitful member of the body politic in India in succeeding periods also.

Professor A. D. Pusalker summarizes the reason for this as follows:

The Jain Gurus achieved their ends by adopting well-devised and comprehensive methods. The austere, routine, pious life and the absence of possessive instincts seem, in the case of Jain monks, to have always led to their being admired and honoured in the society. As king-makers, they secured royal patronage for generations. By winning over generals, feudal lords and provincial governors, their success at provincial centres was assured under the aegis of these officials. By securing popular support, they had among their followers the most important section of the middle class, the Vira-bañajigas, and the commercial class, whose financial help went a long way in the cause of Jainism. It enabled them to construct magnificent Jinalayas and images. Their spectacular effect, along with the active royal support, made Jainism popular and strong. These Jain gurus themselves owned nothing and wanted nothing. And further their insistence on the observance by the rich of the Jain doctrine relating to the four gifts (learning, food, medicine and shelter) helped a great deal in winning the allegiance and devotion of the masses, as it answered the primary needs of humanity. This resulted in drawing large sections of the populace within the Jain fold.¹

This process went on continuously all through the earlier centuries of the first millennium after Christ and brought almost the whole of the Deccan under the Jaina influence. The Jaina gurus adapted the practices of their religion so as to make it consonant with the setting up of kingdoms, advising the kings in politics and policy and in interpreting the doctrine of Ahimsa. Did they not help to preserve social order, security and stability which are deemed essential for the pursuit of the true religion? The building of Basadis, the raising of the Jina statues and the erection of Manastambhas made them socially a force. Sometimes the type of wor-

¹ *History and Culture of the Indian People: IV: The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 288. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

ship that was offered to the Jina images in temples borrowed colour from the traditional practices and satisfied the religious expectations of people accustomed to such things in the Vedic religion. Indeed, practices like pouring milk, anointing with ghee, offer of Bhakti and promise of Mokṣa, wearing of caste-marks made them almost an alterform of the older religion. This was a concession to popular prejudice while the monks performed their religious duties in conformity with the more austere demands of the original faith and discipline. While giving a social bias to life and behaviour in secular practice, this helped the gurus to retain popular esteem for the spiritual purity and eminence of the religious leaders. They were the gurus, councillors and inspirers of the kings, the generals, the feudatories and the wealthy leaders of the community. They were able to enter into controversy with the most learned among scholars in other religions and defeat them in argument. Their epistemology and dialectic were most elaborate, while their cosmology peopled heaven, hell and earth with the wildest or the most glorious concourse of men, women, gods, demons, yatis and siddhas. Their schools and places of learning were centres of great influence and were held in the highest regard. In addition to writings on religion and dogmatics, they wrote many works which were great as literature and classics, and on the ancillary techniques of writing and argument like Logic, Grammar, Prosody, Rhetoric and Lexicography: altogether a considerable achievement.

5

Among the kings who rose on the political scene in Karnataka, all the three important dynasties—the Kadambas (third century to the seventh), the Gangas (third century to the tenth) and the Raṣṭrakuṭas (eighth century to the tenth)—were under their influence and did everything in their power to advance its cause. The sanctity attached to the Basadis and Gurus was equal to that in vogue favourable to Kaśhi, the Ganges and the Brahmins; and, the cow as sacred was common to both. A great Simhanandi Muni converted an early Kadamba king (possibly Kongaṇivarma I); and the Kadambas were, mostly, Jains ever after. The Ganga kings, were helped to establish themselves as kings in what is now the Andhra

Pradeś and in Kolar and Talkaḍ. The Ganga kings were staunch Jains until both themselves and the Raṣṭrakutas went under about the eleventh century. It is by the Ganga chief Rachamalla that the Gommaṭa image was established in Śravanabelgola. The Raṣṭrakutas after Krishna I (758-73) were many of them patrons and disciples of the Jaina gurus and their influence was great on Nripa-tunga Amoghavarṣa (814-78) and on Kriṣṇa III (939-68). Amoghavarṣa seems to have not only participated in the propagation of the religion but had himself taken holidays from kingship with a view to practising the religion more intensely; while Indra IV (C. 972) the emperor associated with the waterpolo sport seems to have retired to Śravanabelgola in his last days to pass away under the Sallekhana vow. The later Chalukya chiefs who succeeded to political power after the fall of the Raṣṭrakutas were patrons and friends of the Jaina religion; for we find Taila II (973-97) and his son Irivabeḍanga Satyaśraya (997-1000) later as eager to promote their interests as they were to honour poets like Ranna who, if he was Kaviratna for writing the *Ajitapurāṇa*, was made a Kavichakravarti for writing the *Gadayuddha*.

It is into an atmosphere of such regard and worship for the Jaina religion that Pampa came when he became companion of Arikesari who being a Chalukya prince was still a Samantachuḍamaṇi. His immediate forebears were feudatories of the Raṣṭrakuta kings under Indra III, Govinda IV, Amoghavarṣa III and Kriṣṇa III. It is when Taila II of the Chalukya family struck against Karka and crushed the Raṣṭrakuta power (c. 974) that the Chalukya dynasty again became master over the Deccan;—for its imperium had been lost in the time of Chalukya Kirtivarma II of Badami (c. 752). The fact that he was the Jaina son of a newly converted Jaina father did not come in the way of his being a confidant and trusted companion of a Chalukya prince and king who was a Śaiva by persuasion. Indeed, the atmosphere was one of tolerance and friendship between the two religions; for Jainism was still at the height of its power and had no competitor to be afraid of or uneasy about.

The power relationships in the early days of Pampa's life were dominated by the Raṣṭrakuta supremacy; and the western Chalukyas who had been defeated by Dantidurga in the last quarter of

the eighth century were provincial chiefs owing loyalty and feudal service to the master. When Kriṣṇa III was fighting his battles, north and east and south, the Chalukyas were fighting for him; Even when later the Vengi branch of the Raṣṭrakuṭa family fought against Govinda IV and destroyed him, they helped the legitimate scion of the family and did not covet the throne. When the Raṣṭrakuta power waned, and the feudatory chiefs became powerful, Karka II (972/3-91) was jealous and wanted to bring them to book. But by that time enemy kings had already defeated the Raṣṭrakuṭa emperors, sacked their capital Malkheḍ and its treasury and disgraced them causing loss of prestige and power to them. To this was added the worthlessness of the king and the predominance of vicious ministers of whom the subjects were tired. This was time for a powerful and ambitious feudatory like Taila II to seize opportunity and strike for power. And he won an easy victory over the erstwhile masters (974). For a long time the Chalukyas must have been chafing at the loss of their kingdom as a result of the rising to power of the Raṣṭrakuṭas; and this branch of the Chalukya family which was powerful about Tardevadi, near modern Bijapur, claimed descent from the imperial Chalukyas of Badami and re-established themselves as rulers of Karnāṭaka.

Pampa was able to see service with Arikesari as feudatory of the Raṣṭrakuṭa kings and perhaps at the rise into power of the family of his master in 975 (though one does not know if he did that). The religious faith of the time and the political nexus are both reflected fully in the two works which Pampa wrote and gave as gift to the Kannada people.

B. THE POET

I

We do not have much biographical information about Pampa; but it is a mercy that the poet gives us a few details of himself and of his family in his *Bhārata*. We do not also have to infer his time from other evidences; the date of his birth and the date of his completing the *Ādipurāṇa* are specified. No such aid, however, is available for the *Bharata* nor do we know the date of his death. In the same context and in the opening sections of the two works, we get a few more details of his personal accomplishments, his guru, his relations with his patron and the learned men of his court and of the titles which had been conferred on him.¹

One or two writers have suggested that there is an indication that he wrote other works before these two surviving ones which he deliberately suppressed in view of their being inferior to these two. The stanza which is pressed into such service may not bear the interpretation put on it. No other writer, contemporary or later, mentions the name of any other work in association with his name. His purpose in writing the two works is made clear. He tells us what exactly he proposes to do in the course of the work he has undertaken and how he will do it. We get glimpses into his life and time and personality, though no authentic record anywhere of his day-to-day life or of other elements which constitute the development of a poet's personality. It should have been valuable if we had some revealing anecdotes about so great a poet. For such observation and recording there has never been much attention or talent at all in this country generally. What details we have are themselves exceptional, since of many another poet we merely have to guess the time, place and religion and prove even ascription of authorship. Beyond the fact that they might have belonged to some part of the country and could be ascribed to such and such a time between an earlier and a later limit of date, nothing more definite is ordinarily available.

¹ *Kavitā-guṇ-Āṇava, Paramakavi, Sukavijana-manō-mānasōttamsa-hamsa, Sarasvatī-manīhāra, Samsāra-sārōdaya, Nāḍovaja* etc.

This is the account of his family he provides us in the last section of the *Bhārata*. When his master Arikesari is established on the throne, he speaks of his patron sending for him and assigning to him the task of writing a work which will establish his fame on earth. The king and the worthies of his court suggest to him that he should associate integrally the name of Arikesari with the Mahabharata story. No king before him in Kannada had commissioned such a task and no poet had essayed the task of presenting the entire Mahabharata story in one bulk; that if any king could make the assignment it was Arikesari and that if any poet could accomplish it that could only be Pampa. The poet persuaded himself to take up the work because he had been convinced of the intrinsic greatness of his master and friend Arikesari. He was granted a year's time to do it. The task caused him no small trepidation. He completed it in six months.

Pampa's ancestors belonged to Vengi (between the Godavari and the Krishna near to the eastern sea) which was, at least in its western parts, perhaps, part of the Kannada country in those days. A branch of the eastern Chalukyas, feudatory to the Raṣṭrakuṭas, ruled there so that it was within the Raṭṭa empire. Ponna (c. 950) also comes from that area and quite a few others as well who distinguished themselves in letters, science and philosophy. The first illustrious member of Pampa's family, he mentions, is a great-grandfather by name Madhava Somayaji. In the Vengi land there was also a town bearing the name Vengi. With it were associated other townships called Vasanta, Koṭṭuru, Niḍugundi and Vikramapura. The Agraharas were generally endowments given to poets and scholars to enable them to pursue their piety and scholarship and to be centres of learning and culture. Madhava Somayaji was the leading member of his Agrahara. He knew the laws and the sciences, in all of which his mind had thorough and accurate understanding. His fame extended to the sea. He belonged to the Vatsa gotra. It is said that even Indra, the Moon, the Sun and the God of the Winds were deferential to him and to the mantras in the sacrifices he performed; that at the slightest sign of their misbehaviour they would become subject to his curse. So that all the

four corners of the earth lived in dread of him and did his behests. His greatness spread all round and he was the performer of every type of sacrifice (Sarva-kratu-yaji). This was the prowess of Madhava Somayaji. The smoke of his sacrifice rose and spread like as it were the shapely tresses of the Lady of the Directions or like the neck-ornament of the Lady of the Three Worlds. But in the opinion of the young poet, his fame he made black with it.* Obviously, the point that his great ancestor perhaps offered animal sacrifices did not commend itself to the poet in spite of all the other great qualities and achievements distinguishing him.

Abhimanachandra was son to this Somayaji. He gave away the elephants, the horses, the precious jewellery, the gold and the valuables to whoever asked for them either because he was not satisfied with the amassed wealth of his father or the way it was amassed, or because of the essential largeness of his own heart. While this brought him fame, it must have brought him poverty as well. The family, however, continued the traditions of the ancient past in learning and piety. Komarayya, a son of this father, was as famous. He knew all the Vedas and Vedangas and his mind was full of the enlightenment of the Śrutis and the Śāstras. To Komarayya was born a son, a very famous and virtuous one, in whom ignorance was dispelled as by the light of the sun. His name was Abhramadevaraya (or Bhima, according to a variant reading). Pampa was son to this Abhramadevaraya. A special feature of this person is that the father, after thinking deeply, decided that only Jinendra-dharma would match in worth as faith to one born in the highest caste as Brahmin (so it was conceived in those days) and became a convert to Jainism. He desired Jainism to be the faith of his family ever after.

3

We get a few details of Pampa's own qualities. He calls himself a god of the round world; the dread of all the four limbs of an army; firm and unshakable; one who decked himself gaily and with taste; one with a shape like that of the God of Love; sinless. He seems to be fond of saying that he was slightly dark like the core of the plantain; that he had soft curly hair and his face was

like a lotus blossom; that he was of middle height; that his words were balanced, economical and soft; that his dress was pretty, sweet and beautiful. In addition to being one of the best in the Vatsa tribe, he loved good men and was ready to help them; was proud and self-respecting, free from jealousy towards good poets; the words he spoke were like nectar and his face was full and clear and spreading like the lustre of the *śarad* moon. Others added that he was the darling of many a different type of beauty (Andhra, Kerala etc.) and was like a pearl-necklace worn by Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning. The depth and tone of his voice were impressive like the dundubhi (drum). Dundubhi was the year of his birth as well, and his fame was wafted with the sound of dundubhi; and he was like a bee tasting the lotus of his master's foot as he sat with his king in the royal durbar while the dundubhi was resounding. These traits were spoken about, the poet says, in descriptions of him by friends and admirers in open court.¹

One stanza sums up his greatness and his poetry: the loyalty he gave to his master made him destroy on the battlefield the leaders of the enemy hosts of his king. His greatness shone all about the world. Other words of regard spread his name and fame. This is how he shone: what a warrior and poet was Kavita-guṇarṇava.*

Naḍovaja and Samsara-Sārodaya were the other epithets used about him or possibly titles conferred on him. At the end of sections and in descriptions of his heroes he uses these: they were thus descriptive at once of the poet, the patron and the hero of his work.

Though we do not know any details about his early life we might guess that he must have been familiar with the beauty and the natural scenery and the wealth of the Banavāsi land, south of the modern Karwar above the Shimoga District,. In the description he puts into the mouth of the Aryan prince Arjuna, one may infer the deep affection felt by the poet himself. His own family must have migrated from the Vengi land for some time now and passed the heart-land of central Karnāṭaka in Puligere. More than mere

¹ An observation is made by some that the introductory sections containing self praise etc., were the composition of admirers.

love of beauty is indicated in the four or five stanzas descriptive of the Banavasi land. It has tenderness and yearning, richness and taste, and has all the felicities and sense of values which make a young life wish it as fulfilment of desire. Puligere is also the land praised by Nripatunga as the part of the country where the best Kannada language is spoken. Such a Kannada came to Pampa naturally and his expression was therefore rendered rich, sweet and powerful. The relations between him and his patron were more like those between intimate friends than of master and servant, something like the relationship between Kriṣṇa and Arjuna if not even like the intimacy between Duryodhana and Karṇa.

☐ Pampa must have been a person with very deep affections. His veneration to his teacher Devendramuni on one side and his personal devotion to his friend and master Arikesari on the battlefield and in court attest it. He considers Devendramuni as the best of munis. Possibly he is the one praised in the Śravanabelgola inscription (No. 66) as Bharati-bhala-paṭṭa. At the end of each canto of *Ādipurāṇa* the poet subscribes himself as an humble disciple of this guru of his from whom all his powers of expression have flowed to him:

*Idu Devendra-munindra-vandyā parama-jinendra-mukha-candra
vākcandrikā prasara prasādōdirṇa sūkti kallōla mālākirṇa kavita-
guṇārṇava-praṇītam.*

This is a real acknowledgement of a worshipful person to his teacher as much as it is a tribute to the guru and the pupil alike. But the point one might mention is that it is the blessing of a guru and the favour of the Jineśvaras that move his utterance, as he says, and no mere merit or genius on his part. Consciousness of poetic genius can move creation effectively. This, however, is certain: when an impelling faith and worshipful regard for such masters and blessing can be drawn upon for inspiration, poetic achievement itself is bound to be positive, free and consummate. The poet seems to work for his own redemption from the effects of Karma by handling a theme like this; and he deliberately says that he is composing it with limitless devotion. One special stanza declares that choice of such a subject and dwelling on its merit will earn for him not merely earthly gains commonly prayed for but the final spiritual redemption.

In writing the Mahabhārata story his reverence for Vyāsa is great. Vyasa is to him a Bhaṭṭaraka. He never can say in conceit that he is a Kavivyāsa. What urges him to take up the Mahabhārata story is the godliness of his master Guṇarṇava and the desire to picture the greatness of Arikesari as it deserved. His humility before the master-creativity of Vyāsa is indicated by his statement that he does not boast he would be able to swim across the ocean of immortal letters of which Vyāsa-munindra is lord and master. The poet has his pride and dignity, no doubt; and knowledge of his own ability. But he never lets himself be guided entirely by any exaggerated sense of superiority. This has established him in the affection and esteem of men and women in the court and among the learned men all about him, so that they are of one mind in suggesting his name for the authorship of the Mahabhārata story in Kannada. When he completed that work, associating the achievement of Arikesari with the achievement of Kiriṭi, (i.e. the Arjuna of the Mahabhārata,) all were satisfied. His master seems to have given him very valuable diamonds and other jewellery. He always was given a special seat by the side of the master. Villages and cattle wealth as well as a host of damsels—a feature of such gifts in the epic and classical ages in India—were given in plenty and he was praised publicly by king Guṇarṇava as Kavitaḡarṇava. Often the title of the king and the title of the poet are made to match as applying to the secular political aspect of the king and by śleṣa to the poetic aspect. The king in his generosity conferred on him an Agrahara with a special inscription giving it the name of Sara. That was Dharmapura in Bacce (or Cabbe) 1000. A whole stanza is devoted to the description of this Dharmapura Agrahara itself where many types of sacrifices and fire oblations were made by the Brahmins. Its smoke rose to the skies; its tanks and ponds were full of swans and other water-fowl like the koka and sarasa; the Veda recitations in it could be heard well above everything; there was sound of life and business as if it was the sound of the ocean churned by the gods.*

We do not know when he began and when he completed the *Bharata* though we know that *Ādipurāṇa* was completed in the Śalivahana Saka 863 Plava year, Kartika, bright fortnight, Panchami, Sunday, which corresponds to the year 941 A.D. (or 942,

according to a recent calculation). One of his court poets was Somadeva, author of *Yaśastilaka* whose date is Śalivahana Śaka 881 (959 A.D.). We do not know how many years had passed between then and the death of Arikesari. We may, therefore, place the writing of *Vikramārjuna Vijaya* at between 941 and 959 or, roughly, 950.

C. DOCTRINAL

1

The *Ādipurāṇa* is the legend or the epic of the Ādi Tīrthaṅkara called also Vṛiṣabha and Purudeva. Of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, whose line ends with Vardhamana Mahāvira in one cycle of time, he was the first. His time is difficult to ascertain. Only Parśvanatha can be traced to a historical period, about the ninth century B.C. The Jain legends take his time to tens of millennia back. Various such traditions are current about the calendar of these great men — Śalaka-puruṣas,¹ as they are called. The version that is given here is what Gautama Gaṇadhara gave to the king of Magadha in Vipuladri in the presence of Vardhamana Jina, and this was what Vṛiṣabhasenachārya had narrated according to the Ādi Tīrthaṅkara when Bharata the emperor requested his father and guru to elucidate for his benefit the Dharma and the Story. Naturally it not only gives us the life of the Tīrthaṅkaras but all the principal tenets and the graciousness of the Jaina faith. By this time Jinasenachārya (ninth century) had written the bulk of his *Purvapurāṇa* in Samskrit and it was available to Pampa as a source-book and as a work of reference. Out of his love and regard for the religion and for his Guru and for his own soul's salvation, the poet undertakes this work. There is a stanza or two (I. 36-7) that this work can be calculated to bring him the highest beneficence that human life can aspire for and that he does not bother about

1 63 in number: 24 Tīrthaṅkaras, 12 Chakravartins, 9 Baladevas, 9 Vāsudevas and 9 Prativāsudevas. Three of the Tīrthaṅkaras (Śanti, Kuntu and Ara) were Chakravartins as well.

rewards of the earth such as fame, gain or worship. In this work, almost the whole range of the Samskāra (culture) that goes into the making of a Tīrthaṅkara — therefore the entire discipline and process of the Jaina religion — is on view. In Kannada it becomes exemplar to all the Jina Purāṇas written by later writers. Possibly this *Ādipurāṇa*, the *Śantipurāṇa* of Ponna and the *Ājitapurāṇa* of Ranna between them deal with all that is of importance in the understanding of the religion as it appertains to the spiritual evolution of a Tīrthaṅkara. And among the three, Pampa's work is easily the best both as regards the large lines of development in coverage of the ground and in the human quality of the life presented. It is rich and full and is at each stage built up with situations of moving beauty and power, and the exposition of the religion begins with the persuasion by a minister to the king for a change-over from a paganistic and voluptuous life into religion which can transmute and save.

Before going into the details of the spiritual history through ten births of the Adi Tīrthaṅkara expounded to us in this work, we might speak of one or two ideas which distinguish the Jaina religion.

Jainism is one of the two so-called heretical religions of ancient India which burn no incense at and owe no loyalty to the Vedic religion either of the ritualistic or of the philosophic variety. It is interesting to notice that the western and north-western parts of India north of the Vindhyas were the cradle of the Vedic civilization even as they were the nursery of the Mahābhārata heroes and of the Kṛiṣṇa cults. The Madhyadesa between the Vindhyas and the central Himalayan region, in abouts what we now call Uttar Pradeś — and some parts of Madhya Pradeś — cradled the cultural pattern characteristic of the Rāmayaṇa. But the eastern zone stretching between and comprising Nepal and modern north Bengal and more particularly Bihar — Magadha — was the home and propaganda-centre of both the Jaina and Buddhist religions. For some reason not clearly or fully on view, Bihar and Nepal became associated with systems of life and thought which opposed the cults of sacrifice and even of the Bhakti-marga associated with the later Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva forms of it. They did not also accept the principles of social distinction based on the Smritis with their caste

rites and hierarchies. They were less occupied with abstract metaphysical speculation and ritual and more with practical ethics. Indeed they were the atheist counterpart of an ethical religion found, for instance, in the *Bhagavad-Gīta*. The stress in them is on the perfection of individual life and the redeeming it from the consequences of Karma,—which became the intense and even ferocious preoccupation of both of them, denying substantial or true value to life on earth and deeming it the source of all sorrow and delusion—each overdoing it in its special way. Neither of them accepted a supreme godhead; nor worship of the highest as in the Bhakti cults. Buddhism did not accept the soul—or anything for a matter of that—as a substantive reality, but enjoined on all to attain Nirvāṇa through a knowledge of the principles of Karma and through the gaining of knowledge and by the practice of Ahimsa and Maitri (non-violence and friendship). The world, *i.e.* Samsāra, involving cycles of birth and death, is wholly suffering and it must be put an end to. The enlightenment that the Buddha attained to pointed the way to the Bodhi for the rest of mankind. Obviously the problems of self and non-self, the immortality of the soul and its destiny or the fulfilment of the individual were not of the same type of preoccupation as in the orthodox religions. The concepts of heaven and hell also differed slightly more in the Jaina religion than in Buddhism which did not speak much about them.

The Jains too did not believe in a supreme god and absolute either of a Saṅgā (cosmic) or Nirgūṇa (acosmic) variety. But they believed in Jivas—in as many Jivas as individual existences—each of which is hemmed in the world of matter and death, having to suffer the torments of existence through time. But each could, through proper knowledge, attain to Siddhi from the trammels of Samsāra working off the effects of ignorance, illusion and karma. Siddhi is possible for each Jiva separately and independently, and each can attain Jinatva which is the highest achievement of human endeavour. The 'Jina' means a conqueror—a conqueror of Samsara, of ignorance and all the illusions and narrownesses which beset and bedevil human life. If the orthodox systems commended the realization of unity, of one sort or another, with the acceptance of a godhead and, Buddhism directed the attention and endeavour to the realization of Śūnyata (lit. the void) in Nirvāṇa

(extinction or putting out as of a flame), the Jaina doctrine promised through its Anekantavāda a supreme realization for each and all. It is a Pluralism which is as uncompromising as the Monism of the Advaita.¹

More than in the Buddhist creed, severe austerities were enjoined on the Jain spiritual seekers, and the Law of Karma was considered inveterate and ruthless, generating consequences good and evil which must affect the spiritual life and destiny of the individual. The Karma order has to be tackled if the Jiva has to gain Siddhi. No other way is open. A knowledge, therefore, of how the bondage of material embodiment comes to the Jiva and how alone it will be removed and the process and the disciplines involved is essential to each pilgrim on the road to Siddhi. Kevalajñāna, *i.e.*, pure or absolute knowledge, is possible only at this highest point of enlightenment in Religion.

2

There are three elements of the faith which the Jaina Dharma expounds as paths to liberation (Mokṣa-marga): the doctrine of the Three Ratnas (Jewels)—Samyak-Darśana, Samyak-Jñāna and Samyak-Charitra. Darśana is faith. Samyak Darśana is the perfect faith and the completest. All religion is a matter and function of faith; in it only is the creed; acceptance of it is the only way to redemption. Without it one does not qualify to be a follower at all. Knowledge of what constitutes the details of this world of faith is the Jnana. Its epistemology, its body of truth, its discipline and methodology and all that makes it a body of knowledge and a way of Mokṣa constitutes this section of it. A full and true understanding of the doctrine with no doubts to disturb or to overhang any detail of it and an understanding of the whole range of its content gives us a full idea of the system that marks it off from others and makes it uniquely itself. Faith and knowledge are not enough. They have to be embodied in life and conduct. They must become terms of life, *i.e.*, actual realization. That is the section of

¹ The Ultimate One (special or absolute; concrete or abstract) Non-Two, Two, Many or None are thus the goals of life all over the world.

Charitra; and, without this lived practice of faith and knowledge, neither the Śukla-dhyāna (contemplation of the Purest) nor the realization of Kevalatva (lit. the Absolute Unrelated) becomes possible. Samyak indicates the best, the whole. So that these Three Jewels of the Jaina religion and knowledge and acquirement of them are basic.

There is no need here to go into the nature of Truth and the proofs or pramanas peculiar to the Jaina philosophical system. How the process of Karma envelops and conditions spiritual attainment is on view in the spiritual biography of every Jiva—an aetiology or life history—and in a special way the Jiva of him who becomes a Jina or Tirthamkara. Before one accepts the Jaina faith one is an Abhavya; if he is at all inclined towards it he becomes a Bhavya. Though there are many types of Jivas—all of which are conceived as “an eternal substance” (Dravya)—they are of “limited but variable magnitude. Each Jiva is capable of adjusting its size to the dimensions of the physical body in which it happens to be housed for the time being.”¹ Other schools “conceive of the soul as either atomic or omnipresent and therefore as never changing its size. Knowledge or sentience is its very essence. . . . The ultimate aim of life is conceived as casting off these limitations (of empirical life and knowledge) completely so that the soul may regain and reveal its true nature of omniscience. Its perceptions then extend to all objects. Or, rather, there is no perception at all then. . . only a mystic or direct intuition of all things (Kevala-jñāna).”²

In this, “a discarnate state, . . . the soul has all perfections. . . . not only infinite knowledge but also infinite power.”³ A knowledge of the nature and consequences of Karma with its ancillary notions of merit (Puṇya) and demerit (Pāpa) is part of the discipline of each Jiva in its journey of liberation. Karma is given out as a sort of material and function “in an extremely subtle form.”³

3

This Karma introduces the limitations and impediments to every kind of progress. It is a variety of Ajiva (non-Jiva) which is set

1 M. Hiriyāṇṇa. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 61

2 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

against the Jiva. How it holds Jiva prisoner and how one can free oneself from its bonds is the secret of understanding. Every Jiva is enveloped in forms of this Ajiva and the result of a former Puṇya or Papa flows into it (Āsrava) and fixes the conditions and the environment of life in and for this birth. This brings in Bandha, *i.e.*, bondage. This has to be thrown off or destroyed. According to this Religion — as contrasted with some orthodox systems of Indian philosophy — the Jiva experiences joys and sorrows and is the actual doer of things. That is how the consequences come on the Jiva naturally, necessarily. But like in all other religions in India, the principle of Karma is the operative law in transmigration, *i.e.*, in the successive series of births which a Jiva takes in its path of fulfilment. With each death the fruit of Karma follows the Jiva into the new life and envelops it. If this Asrava and this bondage are necessary accompaniments of life at birth, it is given to each individual to gain true knowledge, expiate for the past and qualify to a better life through the acquirement of new merit at any point of life.

This works in two stages. Through a true knowledge of Puṇya and Papa one can stop or check the current of new Karma. This is called Samvara. Fresh Karma and its consequences can then be stopped from affecting one's destiny, *i.e.*, there will be no new commitments or involvements. And when this is efficiently achieved, the next stage of Nirjara, *i.e.*, a falling off, helps in the attainment of liberation, Mokṣa. The effects of Karma which are already in can be burnt out as a result of penances. And when once the bondage of Karma is destroyed through Samvara and Nirjara, Mokṣa is achieved automatically. That is a stage of perfection and realization. The knowledge of Asrava as it leads on to bondage and the knowledge of the relationship between the Jiva and Ajiva leading on to Mokṣa constitute the principles of the Jaina religion.

4

Incidental to this theoretical framework is the system of births and deaths for each life in the series of incarnations before one becomes a Jina. There are four types of birth: that of the animal

1 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

(tiryak — lit. crosswise), of man (manuṣya), of the dweller in hell (Naraka), of the dweller in heaven (Deva) — all of which are subject to the Law of Karma and death — as termination of one stage and beginning of another. Accordingly as the Karma is good or bad, one falls into the status of the animal or the hell-dweller or rises into the status of gods in innumerable heavens where various types of joy can be experienced as reward of merit. There are many Indras as there are many different classes of gods and sky-dwellers. But the status of none of them endures or is constant. An earlier Vedic line (Kṣiṇe puṇye martyaloke viśanti) seems to operate fatefully in all these lives also. But all along one feels or discovers the presence of a friend or a foe or a guru or a disinterested well-wisher whose help, advice or prodding, warning, awakening or direction becomes a spiritual aid if only the mental condition of the Jiva lets itself be affected by it or can respond to it or be moved to reform. This order of Kalyaṇamitras is an interesting constituent of the Jaina religion and one must feel the presence of many a beneficent influence at the most unexpected moments of one's life. And their beneficence is as material as the volition and desire here. Some of these forces open out through their gift of unlimited knowledge of the verities, link one's past with the present and help forwards. In the entire history of each individual Jiva, remorse for the wrong things done, sorrow for and dissatisfaction at the present condition, the passion for a better one and faith in the positive, new one are rendered easy and possible through such ministrations: altogether a blessing for Jivas in travail and purposeful careering.

Yet the life of the Jiva immediately before the Kevalajñānotpatti is that of a human being. From the highest godly status—of an Ahamindra higher than which there is no position for the enjoyment of the fruits of Satkarma or Puṇya — the Jiva is born as the Charama-deha-dhari, the penultimate, human state — wherefrom, in a final period, the Siddha or Tīrthaṅkara realization becomes possible. On an earlier day, the term Arhat (the Worthy One) was used as appellation for both the Buddha and the Jina. But it became customary later to associate Arhat with the Buddhistic system and Jina with Jainism. The Siddha, the Jina and the Tīrthaṅkara are conterminous with but a slight difference in technical position. Jina is general as the conqueror of birth and death. But between

the Siddha and the Tirthamkara there seems to be a slight distinction. The Siddha position is totally transcendent as soon as the Kevala-jñāna is achieved. This is the fifth and highest level of existence (the Pancha-gati). The Siddhas get into a rarefied zone—an alokakaśa—and stay in the enjoyment of their Kevalatva, whereas a special type of wish goes into the making of a Tirthamkara which means a ford or path-maker. And he has the purpose and function of a teacher of the Dharma for the benefit of all Jainas.

In Indian Religion, life on earth and through Samsara is compared commonly to a life in fetters where the fetters are to be broken; or to a thick, vast, pathless, impenetrable forest through which a path should be found and a person should be led out by a guide who knows the path or can help to burn up the forest; or to a turbulent ocean through which a ford has to be made or over which one has to be taken on a vessel to cross to the other shore. The Tirthamkara is a supreme guru of mankind who, through his life and words, is such a pathmaker, ford-maker and fetter-breaker, vessel, guide and exemplar.

5

One more point deserves to be mentioned. In the pristine concept of the Jina, one who has attained to that status acquires a position of awe, culture and super-attainment which has to be felt and understood and worshipped. It is no relationship of the Bhakta and the Bhagavān where there is participation and response, an enjoyment of loving, mutual relationship. The Jina is unaffected by the attitudes or postures of men and women; unmindful of praise and blame, not won over or displeased by human behaviour. In his beneficence and light, the Jina is a source of right knowledge, inspiration and illumination—more to be taken than given. This religion is robust and masculine (if it seems a bit morbid at points) with a promise of hope and realization for everyone. Mokṣa is available for all: it must be worked for individually and gained separately. It possibly dwells a little too much on the evil that is human life and makes too much of penance and austerity. There are grotesque extremes of description in elucidating or in working out the nature and consequences of Karma. It can exag-

gerate its Ahimsa so as to make it look puerile and fantastic to some tastes. But the promise it holds out of positive Mokṣa is as inspiring as it is full of peace and joy and power and certainty of redemption. Men and women are both equally in the picture even as the birds and beasts and dwellers in heaven and hell: all equal participants in this progressive transmigratory process; the different stages in their evolution. There are no discriminations made between men and women, for all can become any of them as a result of Karma and its function as Puṇya and Pāpa. The mess that is the life-process is bewildering and its condition truly pitiful even as it is awesome and formidable. The whole of this process is involved in the career of conquest: and, therefore, the whole system of religion is in subscription. In other words, the Tīrthaṃkara's life envisages the truth and validity of this system.

With this as background, it should be possible for us now to approach the life-history of Purudeva, the first Tīrthaṃkara, the hero of Pampa's *Ādipuraṇa*.

THE ĀDIPURĀNA

The *Ādipurāna* is a poetical work in the champu style in sixteen cantos.

1

The Sargabandha or the Mahākāvya tradition had by the time yielded abundant fruit in Samskrit literature and its traditions and conventions had been assimilated into the practice of writers all over India. The Mahākāvyas were fruits of learning and provided ample opportunity for description and elaboration wherein the imagination of a poet and his gift for elaboration found full scope. If the need of the subject-matter and the powers of the poet challenged or matched each other a great work was produced. Else there would be disproportion between the theme and the literary art and the imagination which gave it form. Kalidāsa, Bharavi, Magha, Dandi and Bāṇa, each in his way, had scored success in the Mahākāvya composition. All the wealth of learning and the finish and efficiency of expression that a writer could put into the work was part of their repertoire in expression. Since works on Rhetoric grew along with creative composition or even preceded such classical work, they had to deal with the subjects always with an eye to satisfying the canons of good kāvya and in addition plead for a distinction in the treatment of their subjects.

When creative imagination was not pure and was the product of learning and construction, the result was more technically satisfying—virtuoso effects than creative art—than imaginatively compact and organic; and when the work became a vehicle of erudition, expression of conceit and rivalry, craftsmanship and artificiality showed up to the detriment of creative art and spirit. Things were less drawn from nature than from books and fancy. One feature of the Mahākāvyas in Samskrit was the adoption of either one form for a whole work or one prosodic mode for each canto, with sometimes a different metre at the end of a canto or sub-section. Even here, when the need of the theme was fully consonant

or in tune with the narrative or descriptive situation success was scored. So too was the use of embellishment in enhancing the poetical or human merit of a given piece of work. Not unoften they were *bravura* patterns and professional. The main story or human interest did not occupy much part of it.

With Baṇa and Subandhu Samskrit Mahākāvya composition had exhausted the resources of one type of technical merit and treatment. Using those conventions would but mean digging deeper into artificiality and conceit. Nature had yielded place to artifice and artifice revelled in sophistication; turgid or meretricious.

2

About the tenth century came a new form called champu which was the Mahākāvya in a new guise and extension of meaning—even a more particoloured coat. We do not know when and where it originated even as we do not exactly know the derivation and correct meaning of the term itself, though as early as Dandi the term gets its description and is marked out as a distinctive *genre*. The Kannada champus were contemporaries of the earliest Samskrit ones.¹ Considering the freshness and vitality of these champus of the Raṣṭrakuṭa period in Kannada, one could say that they were among the pioneers. The first work in a language and the fresh burst of expression in a new literary form combine here to produce true classical merit.

The champu is a mixed dish. Its scope is wide and it is chartered to take in every form of expression. Prose and verse are used at will and the prose itself can be as wilful and sophisticated as the verse. Though the rhythm in the prose is not as accurately measured as in a stanza, often the two media are indistinguishable in essence. There is no principle which fixes the appropriateness of and proportion in the use of the two forms. The literary sense and the genius of the poet should know where to use the one or the other and how much of each. Abuse is more common than fruitful use in the hand of a second rate poet. More varieties of metre were

¹ The oldest *Nala champu* was written by Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa (c. 915) who was himself connected with the Raṣṭrakuṭa king Indra III.

availed of and the ability of the poet to use the largest variety marks him out in power.

When a writer was successful the prestige he could win was immense. He could dazzle the reader and his example would awe the less technically equipped and the simpler-minded writers in the language. Naturally these were learned and aristocratic and adorned the courts of kings and the assemblies of scholars. Contact with and drawing from common life were conspicuous by absence. They dealt with court life or the life of epic heroes and gods. Life of common men, use of common spoken language, and of common metres were avoided if not even derided. If in the hands of masters like Pampa and, later, Ranna this method yielded poetry and real human expression, in the hands of the less gifted ones it degenerated into pedantry, beloved only of the scholar and the aesthete—the wealth more of libraries than live possessions and documents of human worth, suffering as they did from want of blood and removed from the springs of genuine human expression. It became more than human; cultured pearls and jewellery than fruit and flower. of the literary But that time was still away and Pampa as the first master champu form in Kannada achieved effects distinguished as much for technical excellence as for fundamental human worth.

3

In a smaller work, one of the four Puruṣarthas was expected to predominate; the others could be suffered or just, perhaps, register presence. And only one or two rasas might be worked into a poem. But in a Mahakavya or champu, entry was open to the entire chaturvarga: Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa, and to all the flavours or Rasas. The principles of development could be the poet's own as his genius or need willed and shaped it, with no limits either as to size, quantity or variety. It was limited only by the poet's ability to sustain length. Another requirement was for what is called the eighteen items of description: description of the ocean, the town, the king, the court, the garden, the dalliance, the moonlight, the hunt, the visit to veśyavaṭi, war, motherhood, etc. all needful as was thought for greatness of a work and comprehensiveness. For, he who does not know or handle them, what sort of a poet can he

be? When these items came in, naturally, as the development of a great theme demanded, they made for striking and moving power. In the hands of a poor practitioner, they could be but handicaps giving him up in every seam—the works would be more seam than stitched coat or cloth. The convention that a Mahakavya or Champu should contain these elements made the task of writing a demanding one. Here again, when the theme on hand and the powers of the poet were equal the effect was magnificent. We find such a marriage of quality in both the *Ādipurana* and *Vikramārjuna Vijaya*.

The sixteen āśvasas (cantos) of *Ādipurana* are usually grouped into three main sections. The first six deal with the earlier nine births of the Ādi Tirthamkara. The next or the middle one which extends from the seventh canto to the tenth deals with his life till he renounces kingship and his attainment of Kevalajñāna, Samavasaraṇa and Dharma-vihara as they are called, *i.e.*, practically the phase of his spiritual attainment. The last section, from the eleventh canto to the sixteenth, deals with the relationship which developed between the two sons of the Tirthamkara: the Emperor and the Manmatha of the Ādi Tirthamkara's period—ending with the spiritual liberation of all the three¹; incidentally, matter connected with the development of culture under the Manus, the secular organization of the world under the sway of the Emperor and the exposition of Jina-dharma and what possibly may be the future of the Jaina religion itself etc. all find place.

4

The opening stanza is an invocation to Ādi Brahma who is the Lord of the Universe, the dwelling-place of the highest illumination and the one whose words are totally devoted to help in destroying all contact with Samsara. The prayer to Him is that He might in His infinite grace confer on us the blessedness of liberation. The Gurus and the principles of Religion are invoked next and what are called the Five Obeisances (to the Arhanta, Siddha, Ācharya, Upādhyaya and the Samasta Sadhus) are offered.

¹ The mōkṣa of a few others is also narrated in between.

The poet tells us the line of Gurus from whom his own guru Devendramuni derives his tradition and culture. His praise of his guru Devendramuni is full of regard and he says that he is composing this Purana with devotion illimitable. Though this is a Dharma-grantha, he promises to give us both the Jina-dharma and the Kāvya-dharma. The Tīrthaṅkara is the object of praise of both the Indras and the kings. There is no limit or measure to the merit even of him who thinks of him or remembers him occasionally. How then can one describe in words the first Tīrthaṅkara himself and the falling off of the karma of one who describes the character and greatness of the great guru through devotion and contemplation, and through poetic expression, with almost the seal of Sarasvati on it? This work, therefore, is at once a source of joy to the poets and to the entire world of believers in the Jaina religion.*

The work contains also what is of value and benefit to all living things; what gives joy to all the refined and humble and what is capable of achieving Kalyāṇa, *i.e.*, beneficence to the three worlds. To a purāṇa of the Jaina religion there are eight¹ limbs: (1) Lokakara Kathana (2) Deśa-niveśa Upadeśa (3) Nagara-sampat Parivarṇana (4) Rajya-ramaṇiyatakhyana (5) Tirtha mahima Samarthana (6) Chaturgati-swarupa Nirupaṇa (7) Tapo danavidhana Varṇana (8) Tatphalaprapti Prakaṣaṇa.

The work narrates how a Jiva which moves up and down according to good and bad karma comes to have faith in religion becoming a Bhavya; improves and purifies itself through the Three Jewels (Triratna); gets into increasingly better lives and ever higher spiritual status through the practice of Dāna (liberality), Dharma (virtue) Vairāgya (renunciation) and Tapas (penance); how the Jiva becomes an Ahamindra in heaven at the end of the birth cycle cleansed of all dross and comes down to the world of men in a penultimate existence; renounces everything; performs severe penance; destroys all karma; becomes a Tīrthaṅkara; instructs the world in

1 Compare the Pancha-lakṣaṇa of the traditional Hindu religion: (1) Sarga, creation; (2) Pratisarga, destruction and renovation of the universe; (3) Vamśa, the genealogy of Rīśis and patriarchs; (4) Manvantara, the reigns of Manus; and (5) Vamśhanucharita, the history of solar and lunar races.

Jaina religion out of compassion for mankind; and himself attains to Siddhi. So that the entire range of the practice of faith is envisaged in it, making it not merely a handbook of the religion but also a live exposition of the beginning, expansion and reach of the life of a single great man.¹

5

With this preliminary account of what he proposes to do, Pampa begins with an episode in the life of king Mahabala who represents the second of the births of the Ādi Tīrthamkara. The first life as Jayavarma is narrated in the course of the Mahābala story.

By the time the story opens, the change-over from crass irreligion and unalloyed animal existence and preferences has been made. In the eleventh birth before birth as Ādideva he was born Jayavarma as the eldest son of his father. The father overlooked his claims for succession and invested a younger son with office. Desiring therefore to be king at least in the next birth, Jayavarma became a sannyasi. He was depositing the hair which he had plucked out in an anthill when a serpent bit him. The poison was operating causing him great pain. Then he saw a Vidyadhara flying about. It was a glorious sight. He wished that he might be born as a Vidhyadhara if there be any merit in his tapas. This was poor desire of fruit for tapas, but he was born as Mahābala, a Vidyadhara king.

At each successive stage in the evolution purity and worth increase, we find the dross being progressively eliminated; the predisposition to detachment and renunciation is strengthened and a more positive direction to wisdom and peace and self-conquest is made more definite. The quality of life lived at each stage and the penances performed thus record a plus item taking it nearer fulfilment. Some lives are more elaborately presented than others. But the advance into ever higher spiritual levels is in process and on view. What is left over at the penultimate and the last stages is just the

¹ The *Purvapurāṇa* speaks of Dravya, Kṣetra, Tirtha, Kala, Bhava-Phala and Prakṛita as forming part of the kathamukha.

The matter of *Ādipurāṇa* is described as Sthiti, Kuladharotpatti, Vamshanirgama, Puru-samrajya, Arhantya, Nirvaṇa and Yugaviccheda.

finishing phase in both senses of the term. Nothing more needs then to happen, for the highest possible for man is realized.

Like any other Jaina Purāṇa, the constitution of the universe is first described stretching as it does in the sky full of inhabited worlds beginningless, unmade, deathless and enveloped by three types of winds and about fourteen ropes high; its shape is like that of a dancer's akimbo with his palms held against his two sides. To the vision of a Jina who illuminates the three worlds, it stretches successively like a bamboo, a tabor and a hand-drum. There are three such stretches of the world: the lower world, the animal world and the higher world. In the middle one, right in the centre is the Jambu island spherical in shape, surrounded by the salt seas. In the centre of that island is the Mandara hill to whose east and west lie the countries called Videha. In western Videha where flows the river Sita, eight lands stretch to north and south. The seventh among the northern is the land called Gandhila, south of the blue hill Nilachala and west of Vakṣara hill. In the Vijayardha hill at its centre are two Vidyadhara settlements. Alakapura is the city in the northern settlement. A Khacharapati (lord of the skies) called Atibala is its ruler whose wife is Manohari. To this couple is born a son, Mahābala.

When Mahabala came of age his father made him the crown-prince and himself controlled the administration as sovereign lord. The poem describes the hill, the settlements, the river Sita, the felicities of the Videha land and the Gandhila land of the Vijayardha hill. Their wealth of colour and green and flower and fruit and moving winds have a distinction of their own. The mangoes distinguish themselves with the green, the white, the red and the black of their bud, flower, shoot and bee, looking almost like dormitories whose gates open at the spring.* Manohari was famous for her beauty, for her devotion to her lord and the loftiness of her soul. Mahābala was the darling of all eyes and when he attained youth he became the dream of desire for all the young beauties of the Vidyādhara land. The land was well ruled by Atibala and all its enemies were subdued. There was proper awe of the king's prowess. His own establishment lived in admiration of him. Earth seemed to have nothing more to give or desire for.

But then came to him the first notice of old age in the form of

failing freshness; for king Atibala saw the first streak of silver hair on his temple. It seemed to tell him that it was unwise for him to be immersed still in the illuding love of wife and son; that the arch compasser of the end of things, unthwarted in his might, will not delay much longer in catching his throat. He has therefore to wake up. The gray streaks seemed to whisper just this.

A mirror made sure that his was failing prowess against an invincible adversary; and without waiting a moment he decided to renounce his kingship. He sent for the chiefs among his ministers, the great feudatories and the queens and told them of his will to abdicate and hand over powers to his son. To the resounding trumpets, he gave over the white umbrella, the *cāmara*, the throne and all the wealth and overlordship of the sky-dwellers; while he himself opted for penance and the wealth of liberation. A thousand princes and five hundred queens went with him to the seat of Gaṇadhara Kevali. The guru saw the king at his feet telling him he was tired of life and the riches of the earth, that he was too long a fool with endless passion and desire and would have no more of it, that now, old age has faded his person and established itself in his veins a mere cough could shake him, and that he will hereafter throw off all the contacts and shackles of Samsāra. Who else could be as great as Atibala who could so willingly throw away wealth, position and power, relinquish all and proceed to fierce penance? This is the key-note of a poem which in its course throws up many similar situations, all enforcing the same outlook and principle and mode of conduct.

The young king Mahābala was a worthy successor and was surrounded by teachers and ministers who loved him and were devoted to him from the beginning. They were learned: masters of the arts and the crafts of administration. Indeed, his four ministers were proficient in all the four branches of learning and were like the four means¹ of success and achievement. They were famed in the world as Swayambuddha, Mahāmati, Sambhinnamati and Śatamati. It was safe, the king thought, to entrust the administration to four such able men. And with nothing to disturb his mind he got rid of

1 *Chaturupadha*: Loyalty, disinterestedness, continence and courage.

Chaturopanya: Negotiation, bribery, sowing dissension and force.

kingly cares and responsibilities; surrounded himself with the beauties of the Vidyādhara kingdom and with the luxuries and joys of all of which he was lord and master.

With this the first Aśvāsa is brought to a close. The colophon speaks in veneration of Pampa's guru.

The second deals with two major events in Mahābala's life in so far as they deal with his spiritual evolution: the first is an incident in his court and the second the continuation and culmination leading to his passing away and birth as Lalitānga in the Īśana-kalpa (the second of the sixteen heavens in the ascending order). A birthday durbar was the occasion of the first incident. Of the four great ministers, Swayambuddha was the wisest and a highly enlightened soul. He alone was bothering about the faith and the culture of the soul; and, he was interested in the spiritual welfare of his royal master. An opportunity presented itself to him to expound the principles of true religion. The speech rises against a background of wealth, beauty, pomp and power and the spread of all those factors which gather round and sustain a life of pleasure. He tells the master that his royal felicity and wealth are born of former merit—

Ninnī vidyādhara-lakṣmi-puṇya-janitam

This is what he further said to the king. Men are immersed in the ocean of earthly existence. What carries and raises them up to the limits of final liberation is verily the Dharma, whose constituent factors are kindness, self-control, charity, penance and character. All the beauty and enjoyment given to earthly kings and the lords of heaven are secondary possessions (*ānuṣaṅgika phalam*). The truth is none other. Believe. (II. 7)

The first note of positive impact and dynamism is struck here with this element of samyag darśana. This is intended to divert attention of the king and the court from a life of physical pleasures to a life spiritual. Religious life can begin only with such a note—indicating a higher value—and talk of conversion into true believing and living. It is, therefore, the first burst of awakening to a new mode of existence and preference. Without such a change-over and conviction and a realization that one has not lived the proper life so far and the sorrow at and remorse for the wrong attachments and the wronger preoccupations with sensual pleasures, there can be no passage into the religious or spiritual life at all. The conver-

sion need not be into another religion; but from an irreligious or an a-religious form of existence into a true religious life and endeavour.

The way is still far off and the time far away yet for Mahabala to change over. He is a passionate wordling and will need many more years of unredeemed life before the actual conversion into the faith comes to him. The talk, however, is the flourish of a notice and one cannot say that it does not impress him. It does; the mere desire to listen to it and be interested in it is evidence of it. But it needs real desiring and working out. What promises that is the as yet vaguely sensed substratum of earnestness in the core of his being. Else he would not have called upon Swayambuddha to address the court on the subject. That is what will yet save him. Not the Hound of Heaven but the beat of a distant drum—which startles with its call.

Meanwhile as he sits listening, the three other ministers react violently to Swayambuddha's doctrine with arguments for pagan worldliness (Bṛhaspati's Lokāyatika faith by Mahāmati,) with the Buddhistic arguments of the Yogācāra school (by Sambhinna-mati) and with the equally atheistic doctrine of the Buddhist Mādhyamika school by Śatamati. We cannot go into the details of the refutation made by Swayambuddha item by item. A few points may be mentioned about the opening and the closing of this episode. The Cārvāka and atheistic doctrines combine their resources in denying life and soul, question the value of renunciation and spritual attainment, indeed all that makes for the affirmation of the spiritual life. "Life resides in the body, gathering merit and sin, you say; afterwards, into another different body, goes to reside, regulates and harmonizes the fruits of Dharma and Karma, you say; and one who dies is born again. Look you, this is a lie, a display of conceit, O Khecara. How did you believe it? Don't, O emperor of the sky-dwellers, listen to the words of the folks who shave their heads and doff their clothes and say such things. Enjoy the pleasures of the heavenly worlds. As long as one lives one should enjoy the vast open delights of life like the cuckoo which chews the tender shoots of plants in spring. Who knows or has seen here of other births?" (II. 8-9) A whole armoury of logic and dialectic is built up in support of the three different types of stand taken by the members of the opposition. By no stretch of

argument can we accept the affirmation of the life of the soul,—they say: “Do not sweat your life through the torments of the body and the renunciation of wealth in pursuit of the happiness of a spiritual world; or affirming the existence of a soul. What seems real inside or outside of one’s life is but a manifestation of the false and the unreal; what appears to be solid even in wakeful states is no better than the seemingly real as in the mirage, the dream and magic. And so, wherefrom do you derive the soul? Wherefrom the other world? Whence the merits and the sins which are causers thereof? All these are the delightful phantasies of a Gandharva town, seemingly beautiful but false and unreal. Not knowing this, ignorantly, and through wrong claims to enlightenment, people preach penance, charity and ritual; wear themselves thin through the hardships, the torments and the fatigues of body and mind. There is no such thing as the soul. The arguments advanced in its behalf are wrong as logic, supported by wrong illustrations, couched in wrong word-structure and expression and lead to disastrous consequences.”

Swayambuddha knew his ground and was firm in his faith; he was keen-witted and could apprehend the most complex, the nicest subtleties of argument, and was not ruffled or confused by sophistries. His mind was well stocked and he answered them with patient and elaborate—if incisive—logic and with devastating effect. Softly, sweetly and in a serious tone of voice, looking like everything he was speaking, Swayambuddha answered them and from his exposition he achieved a total refutation of the three stands of heretical argument. He was able to establish the existence of the Jiva who is beginningless; who gathers the Karma of good and evil deeds; who enjoys the fruits of such Karma, subtle in form, with attributes like infinite knowledge and infinite wisdom; who can assemble, end and move and take the body he desires or that comes on to him; whose nature enables production and change, but who can radically destroy it if he is minded that way and who is the crest-jewel at the summit of the three worlds.¹ The entire court and king

¹ The contrast between this Jaina concept of Jiva and the conception of Ātman in the orthodox systems may here be noticed; there the Ātman is not an agent or enjoyer, and is immortal essence. The Sāṃkhya, the Vaiśeṣika and the Vedānta have to put themselves to endless trouble in establishing the relationship between Prakṛiti and Puruṣa and the Ātman and the world.

Mahābala closely followed the arguments on both sides, and Swayambuddha was able to persuade and convince the king and all the learned men who had raised the subject and all the audience about the truth and tenability of his position. He concluded by saying to his opponents that what was knowledge to them was learnt through addiction to falsehood, others' women, drink, meat and the intoxications of the body and the mind. "You have whipped up untrue arguments and logic and stated that the soul does not exist; that there is no succession to life, no righteousness, no spiritual world. How can your tongues roll broom-stick like — (a kasakali, a sweeping-brush) — in the court of the king?" He was able, further, to verify the truths of his adduction with illustrations from what he and all of them had seen and heard and experienced.

It is in this context that the story of Jayavarma is brought in. The jewellery that Mahābala was even then wearing could be traced births back to some of the ancestors of the present king and of the lives as python, mongoose, tiger, etc., of persons who did themselves infinite spiritual harm pursuing wrong passions and wrong conduct, and being greedy, selfish, rancorous and revengeful. By about the time of Māhabala, three stages of existence as animal, hell-dweller and human being had already been passed and the Tirthaṅkara-to-be was in the higher grades of living which qualified him for training and they could prepare him definitely and surely for the supreme attainment of the human spirit. In between, the fact is more than once stated that Jina-dharma is the only protection and the final refuge for all living things. The court praised Swayambuddha's skill in argument; and the king acclaimed the total validity of Swayambuddha's refutation of the opponents and the establishment of his own position. A warrant of victory was given by the king to this minister who, thereafter, became his chief counsellor and conscience-keeper. This indicates to us the justness of the king and his partiality for the right. It impresses the king deeply to learn that the life of the passions is unworthy and unfruitful; that it does not bring good and that one should aim high and devote oneself to a life consonant with self-purification so as to make one self worthy of redemption. Yet, for another 36 lakhs of purvas—these periods are usually fabulous—the king lived on in full enjoyment of sensual life. The hostile kings

failed not to tender tributes; his women brought forth children; and the long line of children flourished. His charity, good government and fame spread throughout the land. Even as an old man his kingship was illustrious.

Once it happened that Swayambuddha moved about among the sacred places of the Meru and went to the temple of Paulastya Jina in the Saumanasa forest. Two blessed cāranas, Ādityagati and Arinjaya by name, were descending from the sky, bright and pure and full of the knowledge of the past lives and destinies of men. His one anxiety was about his king. He offered obeisance to Ādityagati, and described to him the condition of his master Māhabala who even at this advanced age did not seem to like to renounce the joys of the flesh. Is he one of the faithful and redeemable or no? Or, he asks, is he still to travel long before he is chosen to belong to the faith?

Abhavyano bhavyano dūrabhavyano?

His youth is over; old age has come in its turn. But the intoxication of sex pleasures and the illusions thereof have clouded his mind. That fills me with sorrow, and you could dispel my doubts—he says—with your power of perceiving things beyond our ken. The saint answers him saying that the king is a bhavya, and that the end of his present life is near. The holy one gives him an account of how the king has, through births, developed this indulgence for pleasure; how he sold the limitless happiness of penance to the petty pleasures of life and been born as son to Atibala. This very day, however, he has had a bad dream in which three of his ministers have thrown him into a well of slime and you have delivered him from it and set him up again on the throne. That experience will appear to him like putting out a fire. This evil dream has filled him with terror and he is waiting for your return. He will live only for a month beyond the time when that fire is quenched. Before he narrates it you had better tell him of the dream. Your words will then establish his confidence in you and he will do what you ask him to; whatever ceremony or purpose you introduce him to he will undertake; and in eight more births¹ will attain to the status

¹ 18 of the Tīrthamkaras have only three births each before attainment of Siddhi; Nemi has 5, Candraprabha 8, Pārśwa and Ādi 10, Śānti 12; whereas Mahāvīra Vardhamāna's are numberless.

of the first Tirthaṅkara; you yourself will be freed from the cycle of births in your third one from now."

Everything happened as prophesied. The minister told the king that it is time he gave up the preoccupations and indulgences of youth; for now he has grown old, he must surely be sated with them; the end is near for which the words of the saints are support. "Think of your spiritual welfare. My suggestion is for your good. May your refuge be the feet of Lord Jina." The words were apt and few. They touched the king. And when an account of his own dream was given to him the king became fully convinced; his heart became rid of the impurities. Remorse filled him that he had not minded the onset of age; that he was thoughtless of the workings of time. "My body and life are entrusted to your care hereafter. Your words will be acted upon. Your wish is mine. Get me out of this ocean of Samsāra as it pleases you. For yours is the only hand of help." The minister naturally was happy. For eight days after the festival of Jina was celebrated, and in full court, Mahābala made his son Atibala king and himself got out of the land and undertook severe austerities as instructed in helpful detail by Swayambuddha. For twenty-two days he was in Veera-sayya unmindful of physical discomforts and uttering only the praise of Jina and finally passed out of that life through Samadhi.

He was born as Lalitānga in the heavenly world called *Iśāna-kalpa*. When he opened his eyes there he saw he was welcomed by a host of heavenly beings who declared he had gained by the grace of Jina all the felicities of heaven, a *vimāna* and all the heavenly beauties who would satisfy every desire of his. For a long time he enjoyed the pleasures of this heaven when a supreme beauty by name *Swayamprabhe* came into his life herself the last of a series of *Swayamprabhes*. With her by his side, the rest of the joy of *Iśāna-kalpa* was as nothing. Rich descriptions of the heaven of pleasures and the bevy of beautiful ladies and especially the beauty of *Swayamprabhe* mark this section of the poem. The second section ends here.

All joys have an end — even those of a heavenly being. Six months before the day set for the end, he saw the indications. The flowers

he wore faded and grew dry. The lustre of his body grew less even as he looked on. The sheen of the jewellery grew dull. He yawned again and again. Anxiety filled his heart. The light in his face faded: sure signs that the end was near. This made him miserable. He was pale with the thought that these joys would no more be his and that he would fall from the heavens. He appealed to the woods, the parks, the bowers, the groups of heavenly damsels that clustered round him for not protesting when death was so about to drag him out. How could they look on indifferently? He calls to Swayamprabhe to ward this off. Were not their two lives one? Now the ender of all life was taking him away from the happiness of living with her. This sounds like the pitiful bleatings of a sheep, as critic 'Sri' puts it. The elderly gods come to console him and tell him that it is not only to him that such a change in condition comes; all the gods are subject to similar fate. Piteous moans and lamentations expose him only to ridicule; for death has no mercy and does not distinguish. How then can the heavenly damsels stand against the onslaught of Time? No man can escape the fire of sorrow caused by birth, death, old age and hindrance to which life on earth subjects all. There can be no other refuge or asylum than Dharma to which one has to yield and commend himself. Offer salutations at the Jina caityas, they said, offer worship with devotion at the feet of the Jina and sing his praises. You are a Bhavya. Why do you get illuded like a common unbeliever and let your mind wander heedlessly? This was timely advice which reconciled him to his fate and also brought him a firm resolve. He worships for six months with a fearless and devoted mind at all the caityas and attains to a higher spiritual status. Who can win a victory over death otherwise than as a foe of sin? As Swayamprabhe and others looked on he vanished from sight.

7

His next birth was as Vajrajangha, son to the king of Utpalakheṭa, Vajrabahu and his queen Vasundhara. In features, learning and prowess he was unsurpassed. They looked uncommon for an ordinary mortal. Something inside him seemed to harken back to an earlier heavenly existence, and he could not be persuaded to

forget Swayamprabhe: a dumb but binding loyalty disinclining him to any other attachment. We notice here that the mind and heart of him who was to become the Ādideva is made to concentrate affection and loyalty on one person. The luxuries among a heavenly multitude and its manifold joys do not distract him any longer. This is steadfastness and devotion and it survives into another birth, chastened, purified and incapable of straying into other regard.

On her side Swayamprabhe who was immobilised as it were at the fateful end of Lalitānga's life soon awoke to her situation and the unbearable sense of separation from him. She was disconsolate and neglected her toilet and decoration; her tresses went without the mandāra flower; there was no drawing of the makarikā on her cheek; no tilaka on the forehead; no pearl necklace to hang on her bosom; no girdle with bells on her waist or anklets on her feet. All the heavens were to her like a forest, void of interest and cheer. The entire Śriprabha-vimāna was filled with gloom because of her distress and lamentation. To her then come the elderly goddesses to speak words of wisdom and consolation. They asked her to steady herself: Surely there is an earlier and a later to everything? This happens to all the couples in the heavens. Why lose heart and wail? You are foolish, child—they said. Let Lord Jina fill your thoughts. Offer worship to him. You will gain your beloved in the next birth. Swayamprabhe acted on their advice. Her time also was luckily near. She soon passed away with the praise of the five gurus on her lips.

Born as daughter to Vajradanta, king of Pundarikini, and his queen Lakshmimati, in east Videha she grew up incomparably lovely. Everyone who looked at her as she grew up felt that she was verily a heavenly creature with but the movement of the eyelids to mark off the difference between the human and the heavenly. The king appointed a famous governess by name Paṇḍite (the learned one) to teach her the arts and supervise her development. Under such care and guidance Śrimati became skilled in the arts and learned.

In the small hours of a certain morning the princess was still on her bed. That was the day when a guru called Yasōdharamuni was to gain Kevala-jñāna, ie., the absolute knowledge, as he per-

formed his austerities in a park in the outskirts of the town. The gods were coming down in their vimānas whose bells, along with the sound of the songs of benediction, fell upon Śrīmati's interested and attentive ears. This was carried to her ears by the fragrant, cool winds which blew over a shower of flowers. She woke up. She felt like the she-swan when it hears the rumble and roar of the thunder of the first rains. She moved on to the roofs of the palace and witnessed the advent of the gods. And what happened? Memories of her earlier life were awakened in her, which meant memory of Lalitānga. She fell into a swoon, calling out his name. All the servants and the establishment woke up at this; and, with much effort, brought her back to consciousness. But none got answer from her as to why she was feeling so distressed. News of this naturally reached the king and queen. One is reminded of what happens in *Kādambari* where Hamsa and Gauri hear of the condition of Mahāśvete and call on her: The king and queen came down and made elaborate enquiries. But the girl spoke no word in answer. Only tears were shed. She seemed to have forgotten even the normal courtesies of a daughter beloved of her parents; and their anxiety at the condition of the daughter was unbearable. Without her happiness, their life would be a burden to them they said. Even this did not release her speech. She was dumb like the cuckoo at the advent of the rains. She sat speechless and let them say what they liked. The king thought of other ways of knowing her mind; so did the queen. She called Paṇḍite alone and directed her to discover the mind of the young thing with every means in her power. She was asked to win her confidence and make her speak.

Luckily at this time and even as a result of the merits of another birth, a double beneficence rewarded the king. His guru Yashōdhara had gained pure knowledge and the supreme weapon Cakra was discovered in his armoury, telling him that he would be Emperor for the trying. When he went to his guru and offered him obeisance he came to know the whole history of his former lives, of the lives of Śrīmati in the past, of how Lalitānga is born as Vajra-jangha now and how the young man was related to himself as a nephew; very soon, the Guru said, Śrīmati will be united with her beloved.

Meanwhile, Paṇḍite too was able to get out of Śrīmati the secret

of her distress. A painting which Śrīmati had finished and which contained the subtle indication of many a secret of her former association with Lalitāṅga was found in her keeping. Paṇḍite promised to bring her lover early wherever he might be. A few more details which the two alone knew and could confirm other evidence were also wormed out of her for identification. Śrīmati said: "Surely Lalitāṅga too must have been born in some part of this land? I shall not be able to endure life without him. No other desire can deflect me from this. I have been silent for so long because my heart's desire cannot be fulfilled any other way. His features and personality and memories and the attachments of our life together dwell too engrossingly in my heart for me to bother about anything else. This picture of his which I have written as record of my love will keep ever with me. I shall cherish it with 'the myrrh and cassia of many tears' and shall spend the rest of my life in maidenhood." Paṇḍite was thus apprised of the depth and firmness of Śrīmati's love and devotion. So she went out in search of the Lalitāṅgadeva of a former birth. She travelled over the land and arrived at the Jaina temple called Mahāputa, spread the painting in a conspicuous place waiting on the chance of catching the attention of the numberless princes and worthies who came there for worship. Many gallants, and some rather vicious ones among them, pretended to fall in love with it, and went back shamefaced as they soon exposed themselves. It was a queer world of imposture.

Vajradanta returned to his kingdom after the conquest of the worlds and reinstalled himself with pomp. He then sent for his daughter and, after mutual exchange of regard and affection, he told her that, within a day or two, she would be united with her husband. He narrated to her a few stories connected with his own and her earlier births and concluded by saying that Lalitāṅga has been born as his nephew, son to his own sister Vasundhara and her husband Vajrabāhu, king of Utpalakheta. "Thus have we travelled together through many births, and our affection in relationships has come to such an intimate pass that your lover is none other than my own nephew; news of it will come to you this very day. Paṇḍite will not fail to bring tidings of joy which you will presently hear." Śrīmati was comforted and was waiting for this to happen.

Pandite came back with success in her mission. Śrīmati waited to hear the details as which lover has not in the history of human love? Have they not asked for such tidings of the cuckoos, the flowers, the bees, and the royal parrots and swans sent by the lovers? Now the very messenger who had been commissioned for the task had brought the glad tidings of how she met the dear one. Pandite narrated to her how pretenders had failed to tell her details of intimacy between themselves and Śrīmati; how, a little later, another prince came there, went round the Jina shrine thrice, took the akṣatas, saw the group of persons hanging round the piece of painting, and felt drawn to it. As he looked on, first the external lines and colours, then the feelings and meanings which the surface expressions of the painting conveyed to him held him (IV. 4) Feeling deepened as he looked on and the features seemed to strike some chords of recognition in his own memory and consciousness. It is not alone the artistry that struck his fancy or roused his sensibilities: a something deeper touched his heart and other levels of consciousness seemed to irrupt then. It amazed him to recognise that the place was the heavenly palace; the surrounding persons in the picture gods and the main lady in it was queen of the chief god. He seemed to be familiar with it all; but where? He looked like remembering, recollecting, comparing, putting together things, like one who does in the morning after a dream, and instantly identified himself with the persons in the scene and his own relationships with them all.

No further proof seemed needed. Pandite was herself moved. She said: for a brief while the young prince spoke a few words of endearment calling out the name of Swayamprabhe and lost consciousness. After aids by his associates, he came back to. Pandite went to him and told him how happy she was for discovering him, the person for whom she had been waiting all along, and at the prospect of the two lovers being now restored to each other. It was clear that Śrīmati and Vajrajangha were none other than Swayamprabhe and Lalitānga. The prince took Śrīmati's painting and in exchange delivered to her one of his own as mark of recognition. Needless to say that Śrīmati was overjoyed on seeing it.

News of this reached the ears of Srimati's father and the father of Vajrajangha. And, like in an ancient Hindu family, Vajrabāhu

sent word to Śrīmati's father at Pundarikīṃi that the hand of his daughter might be given in marriage to his son. Soon the marriage too was celebrated. The bride and the bridegroom could not hide their happiness. Along with other descriptions of the marriage ceremony, the poet describes with tenderness how the young couple looked at each other thrilled and longing with love many births deep. The ceremony of Pāṇigrahaṇa, how their hands clasped each other amidst the luxury and wealth of celebration is described by Pampa even as he does later in his *Bhārata* a similar handclasp of Arjuna and Draupadi in the Swayamvara at the Pancala Capital. While water and milk were poured on their hands, and Śrīmati felt the tender contact of Vajrajanḡha's palm – asoka and mango shoots a certain shyness suffused her face and form and she began to perspire all over at the gentle pressure of his hand. (IV. 49).

After the celebration was over the daughter had to be sent over to her husband's place. And here the fourth Act of Kalidāsa's *Śākuntala* is pressed into service. The father commending the daughter to his son-in-law and the mother Laksmīmati giving her daughter words of advice as to how she should conduct herself in a new home. The farewells were even more tender;—the stanza here is one of the most touching and picturesque and is Pampa's own. Yet the longest farewell must end and Śrīmati had to wrench herself from her parents to live the new life with her lover and lord. They are described as living together very happily, knowing neither sorrow nor frustration, and the joyous relationship of his life was finer, more intense and more full of devotion than in the birth earlier. Love is here a single-minded devotion and is consummate. After this no more distraction of the flesh could afflict the Tirtham-kara-to-be.

The poet describes about this period the spiritual history of a few of his relations some of whom had been born as boars, monkeys, mongooses. In between are descriptions of several kings who renounced the joys and splendours of earthly life and possession realising that life is insubstantial, unworthy and that the greatest joys available here are worse than useless. The sight of a dead bee as it fell out of the blossoming lotus or the disintegration and disappearing from sight of a fascinating structure of clouds—which he wanted to copy for a building of his own—but it was so, so

evanescent—are enough to illumine their minds and inform them that earthly splendours are no better than these. Into all such details and into the sources of helpful wisdom which at such moments become available to them and the glory of the poetry which informs all that we cannot go here.

“Even the love of Śrīmati and Vajrajanḡha had to end. The couple went to sleep of a night in their palace, on a golden cot, clasped in each other’s arms. In a receptacle at a particular corner of the chamber, fragrant cassia and black aloe had been burning emitting smoke and sweet aroma. The waiter in charge of the apartments had inadvertently forgotten to keep open the ventilators in the roof. The thick smoke which issued from it and was there to add to comfort and pleasure gradually enveloped the room, suffocated the sleeping pair and killed them, like a black cobra would with its bite. The joys of the night had made them asleep. The two lovers had not relaxed the arms binding each to the other. Steadfast in death as in life: what privilege, what good fortune!—says the poet. Could love such as is praised on earth ever be more glamorous or more fascinating than this? Are merits and rewards equal to this available elsewhere on earth? (V. 23-25.)

Here too is drawn the moral to this romantic tale. Cassia and its fragrant smoke are usually aids to physical happiness. And these served to kill the lovers whose comforts they were calculated to promote. The pleasures and comforts of Samsāra are more poisonous, verily, than the hood of a cobra:—

Intu samsṛti bhōgangaḷ bhōgibhōgadim viṣamangaḷ.

The poet who dwelt on the tenderness, the sweetness and the passion and with so much sympathy, is the writer of the Purāṇa as well. He enforces the argument by saying that a human couple endowed with such happiness and such luxury came to such a condition in so short a period of time—even as one looked on¹. Why are men insensitive and why do they still have faith in Samsāra? The purpose of life cannot be first and last to desire and achieve the joys and felicities of the flesh. Man should therefore ever strive for Samyaktva. Only that can break the bonds of Karma, with which alone will

1 ‘naḡe nōḡe nōḡe’ is almost a mannerism.

be possible the destruction of the travails and toils of endless birth and death which Samsāra means and entails.

This pair was born again in the land of enjoyment as a result of their large charity. One day they were looking at the beauty of a mango in full blossom, and they saw an airship sailing gloriously in the sky. They remembered their life in an earlier birth. Some saintly spirits came down, and, after the usual courtesies, the couple begged of them to tell them why they felt so much affection for them. The chief muni smiled and said: "I was Swayambuddha when you were Mahābala. After much penance I have become Prīṭhikara in this life." This celestial friend issued special instructions to him on the tenets of the Jaina religion, telling him that its great principles of faith, knowledge and conduct are the ship that will take him safely across the ocean of Samsāra; that he could cross to the other shore without fatigue; and that such and such are the steps on which to climb to the mansion of redemption. The words were spoken with great affection and tenderness and so effective. The prognostications connected with his own and their destinies are full of hope and cheer no doubt; but the determinism which informs it and is implied in it is oppressive. . . . Yet that is how all such knowledge is here constituted and functioning.

8

The following sections are taken up with details of the Jaina religion, and we may not pursue the births of Mahābala as Bhōgabhūmija, Sridharadeva, Suvidhi, Acyutendra, Vajranābhi and Swayamindra. In one of them he learns that one of his ministers during his birth as Mahabala was in the second hell. He goes there and helps him out. In the Suvidhi incarnation he develops much affection for a son who in truth is Śrīmati of an earlier birth. But he takes up the Aṇuvratas and performs some eleven of them in perfect consonance with the injunctions. As Vajranābhi he attains much glory, pleasures unlimited, conquest of the six continents, delights of the flesh. Friends and establishment, he realised, would never bring him real happiness. His desire was for Eternal Śrī: so he took up orders, undertook Mahāvratas etc., and pursued tapas, enduring unflinchingly the most terrible torments. What are

called the Sixteen Bhāvanas are also completed. At the end of his life he became an Ahamindra.

He was at last born as Vṛṣabha, son of the fourteenth Manu, Nābhirāja, and his wife Marudevi, in Ayōdhya. This is the penultimate birth: birth as a human being before the final attainment as Tirthamkara. What we should notice in the earlier births beginning with Jayavarman and Mahābala and ending in the first stage with the death of Vajrajāṅgha is how a human being has to travel from myriad-faced desire or hunger for enjoyment and power, through loyalty and devotion to some one thing in which all desires find fulfilment. Earthly love and desire are themselves then cleansed of dross; and out of the fullness of such concentration makes itself worthy of taking the next leaps forward in self-purification gaining wisdom all along the line, subduing and taming the hungers of the flesh eschewing temptation and the other forces which deflect one from the onward path. The appropriate vratas and penances are then performed. All along the way, or in distress, friends, wise men and saints offer themselves to link the past with the present and the future as before now to clear the path, to elucidate the truth and point to the means of a more righteous existence leading to self conquest. Nothing less than a whole life of progressive fulfilment and culture is thus on view. With his birth as the son of Nābhi, the final stage of this evolution is ushered. And the ushering, as in all Jaina Purāṇas, is made by Indra who himself gets notice of it when the throne on which he is seated and his own seat are ashake (āsanakampa).¹ This is hint and intimation to him that the Tirthamkara-to-be is about to take human birth and that the event should be prepared for and arrangements should be made for the advent.

Though from the point of view of poetry the three or four births before the penultimate one do not call for special mention, there are passages in these sections which describe to us features of development which prepare him as sculpted in granite before the final touches on the statue. Suvīdhi agrees to marry unwillingly and lives the family life perhaps half-heartedly. It does not take him

¹ Āsana Kampa is notice to Indra each time such supreme events are about to happen. He should get busy to celebrate them. What power causes that is not indicated, however.

much time to renounce his kingdom which he hands over to his son after offering his respects to Vimalavāhana Jina. The negative aspects of preparation have by now been passed which consisted in refraining from indulgence and exercise of passions. Positive penances figure more prominently now. The five smaller vratas (anuvratas), the three guṇa-vratas and the four śikṣā-vratas are undertaken and about eleven niyamas; and he takes the vow of cāritra (character and conduct) before giving up his life through samādhi. In the sixteenth level or floor of heaven, as it were, he becomes Acyutendra. Here is further enjoyment of godly pleasures. His passing away with the feet of Jina in contemplation is a concrete picture. As Vajranābhi the events of his physical living are even fewer, less important. Friends of earlier births become faster in affection and are gathered round him.¹ He did not reign long too but handed over his kingdom to his son Vajradanta, and became a sannyasin. And while the coronation of his son was celebrated, his own decision to become a Nirgrantha flashed like the flourish of a sword drawn from the scabbard.

It is at this point that a prose description is given contrasting the installation of the son on the earthly throne that of the father in his yatyāśrama, which, at a later stage, is developed into consummate poetic expression in a similar situation between Purudeva and Bharata. This is also the stage when he undertook the five mahāvratas of renouncing himsā (violence), falsehood, stealing, incontinence or indulgence and parigraha. The five samitis, the three guptis, and the other penances were undertaken. So that he attains to the status of an Ahamindra, the highest point in the four gatis that a Jina-to-be could attain to. One step more, and the final status articulation as the Supreme will be his. All bondage is now overcome, all dirt cleansed, all paint of passion washed and spent and purity is more or less achieved. Nothing can degrade or disintegrate or hamper him any more; for every preparation has been made to make him capable of scaling the heights of Jinatva.

But before that is done, which is the main task of this Purana his birth as the son of Nābhi and Marudevi is described. All along,

¹ Here, incidentally, is a type of prose which gets tedious elaboration, stiff and stylized in later composition and is very meretricious.

almost from the First Canto, where he is born as Mahābala, it has been among the Vidyādharas and their kind noted as much for handsomeness and strength as for opportunities for enjoyment, power and longevity. Obviously, the felicities described there are fashioned after the human: only they are richer, more inclusive and more glamorous than are given to man. The life of the gods is but an enlarged and more romanticised version of the human the limits set on man by age, social status, power and opportunity etc., are removed and life ends only according to a law of Karma which takes these heroes from one birth and condition to another according as their merits constrain and direct them. It is in the human life, therefore, that we find the basis for the imaginative flourishes of passion and joy and power described in the lives of these heroes. How can a poet have knowledge of any other? It is in a human life that the status of the Tīrthaṅkara has to be won. After all the problem of religion is the problem of the human life in its self-criticism and aspiration, in its dissatisfactions and its doubts and in its panting for perfection. When a human being suddenly realizes that these pleasures and enjoyments are valueless or are insatiable, or limited in duration, or incommensurate with the strain, or the fatigue or the attention they involve and that there is something larger and higher and nobler to be compassed, remorse sets in for what has been missed and a groan for the time lost; the desire for reform comes in; a pursuit of what deserves to be sought is born; and the baptism of faith is at the same time a baptism of fire as it is of life-giving waters and the spirit. The problems of ethics and religion are essentially human—at the individual and social levels—and have meaning only for the human being. What—and whether—they are for anybody or anything else man has no means of knowing. And this again: the *other* has no meaning or value except as set against *this*; the eternal and infinite except as set against the fleeting and the finite. Yet what lengths of time, purposing and endeavour, what recurrent failure and rally are needed to reach the goal?

Actually the religious life begins only from such a point; the point at which the dissatisfaction with life lived so far starts and with the desire for better ways of thought, feeling and action. One has to sense that things by which one is surrounded as joy and

sorrow, success and failure, power and frustration do not satisfy the deeper longings of the human heart or, ultimately tenable; and one is brought face to face with destiny and the demands of the fulfilment of one's own soul; it feels like knocking against the Infinite against which one seems pitted. The understanding of this spiritual situation and its demands makes a man forswear all his past, leads him away from every secular inclination of the present, and compels him to change gear and direction—for the spirit is bent on achieving something else which burns him all about—to cleanse him. It is a road of steep ascent, with this burning up as the only means of purification: this fire that burns also purifies (Pāvaka); it is tapasyā.

Once the goal is set there is no looking back, except to measure what still remains to do. The urgency of the spirit is there both with a push from below and a pull from above. Human life, grounded in instinct, interest, passion and ignorance, strives through intelligence and reason to compass creative achievement and sees that its power has dried up and will not yield the better and itself gets into a blind alley. The saving faith of what he is, in the largest meaning of the term Religion, insinuates itself or is whispered, howsoever it comes or is heard. The demand is total. It can come from a friend or well-wisher or as a result of review, retrospection and an assessment of one's own past. It is the only force which helps to change status and direction and the adventure into creativity. The unfolding of the spirit becomes then the one absorbing preoccupation for the rest of one's life. Life may be rooted in the earth; but it always aspires to heaven; and there is no limit ever to the reaches of the Spirit. Time and space, culture and station, obligation and right, relationships and illusions—all wither into insignificance against the call of the eternal and its compulsions. And on the wreckage of all secular passion the quest of the conqueror builds new life. Yet all along, the life of religion is essentially, first and last, a human quest, even as it is the fulfilment of each individual aspiration and preference. Each has to live it through; and no one else can do it for him or her. The whole process of one such fulfilment is envisaged in the Jaina doctrine. We are taken to the beginning of the final phase in this Tīrthaṅkara's evolution.

A Jaina purana not only describes the principal events of the hero's life but also the cosmogony, the development of culture and the birth of law and knowledge which great lawgivers who are also protectors and leaders of the race provide. Nābhi, the father of Ādideva, is among such, the fourteenth lawgiver in this Jambūdvīpa. Before him thirteen others beginning with Pratiśruti had come and gone. The first is described as dispelling fear of his subjects when the sun and moon first appeared.¹ Others explained the sunrise and the sunset and the stars, the catching and domestication of wild animals, discipline and punishing of wicked spirits, settling boundary disputes, creating vehicles and transport or teaching people how tenderly to look on a son just born; or on how to name things. Others had taught the world how to amuse and play with children, how to build forts and castles and scale them in conquest and reduce island-fortresses deploying naval craft. Another, how to overcome old age; and so on. Nābhi gets his name because he seems to have taught people the art of cutting the umbilical cord, to separate the mother from the child.²

This short account gives us an idea as to how the whole history of human culture is subsumed and worked into a purana. The poet has to accommodate all this lore—substantially non-literary matter—and take it smoothly in his stride.

Nābhi's acts are very beneficent. He teaches people how to make food out of corn when they come to him wailing with hunger. He tells them that what they fancied as grasses are grains which will cook into good food and dishes. They were told that since the kalpa-vṛkṣās had ceased to yield fruit, fruits like mango are nutritious edibles in this age. He told them how to process grains,

1 VI—52 is a Queer fantastic description: the two looked like two bells with the sky which elephant was decked or two swellings of the submarine fire in the ocean of the sky. Incidentally one notices how artificial and learned still is the fancy of the poet.

2 Other kinds of instruction are detailed in the lives of Nābhi, Vṛṣabha and Bharata and it is an interesting peep into one section of the Indian mind as it sought to review the build-up of human civilization. Nābhi and Vṛṣabha find mention in the *Bhāgavata* where there is a record of their quality and achievements. (V 4-14)

vegetables, fruits and roots into food. He taught them medicine too. In his private life Nābhi lived happily with his queen Marudevi. In the description of her beauty the poet uses many a pretty stanza, one of them saying that the lotus resembled her face, the lily her eye, the tail of a peacock the cluster of her hair, the Ketaka flower her sharp and shapely finger-nails, Cupid's bow her brow, the pearls the rows of her teeth. These folded their hands in adoration of her. Else he would be a fool who sought to describe this lovely lady by comparing her features to such things as a lotus and the rest: which has become a *locus classicus* of our rhetoric, everywhere; though at least as good descriptions of a similar kind can be found from the days of Kalidāsa if not from Vālmiki himself and in all Saṃskṛt and Prakṛt poetry. This is the first time we get it in a major, full work in Kannada.

Indra learns that the first Tīrthaṃkara was to be born as son to these lucky parents. Six months before the advent into the mother's womb, he rigs up beauty in the city of Ayōdhya and directs that wealth and grace be showered on it. He also sends a number of elderly ladies from the heavenly kingdom to prepare the mother's womb for the advent and to render the mother every service then. When on the auspicious day Ahamindra comes down to be born as the Tīrthaṃkara the mother has sixteen auspicious dreams. They were recounted by the queen to her husband the next morning and Nābhi explains to her that the Tīrthaṃkara would be born to her as son. The queen is naturally happy and proud. He is described as having descended into her womb like the orb of the moon; and her face shone with such lustre. The normal signs of pregnancy were however not there nor pain. Indra's women were astonished at this. The descent into the womb was on the second of Āṣāḍha Bahula and in the early hours of the day presided over by the constellation Uttarāṣāḍha.

It is customary for the purāṇa writers to describe five auspicious occasions connected with the life of a Tīrthaṃkara making several stages. The first stage is the festival of the descent into the womb (Garbhāvatarāṇa). The entire palace and the city of Ayōdhya felt happy at the event and the tidings of its significance. When the time came for delivery, the same Uttarāṣāḍha was regnant, to the accompaniment of what is called Brahmayoga, on the ninth day of

the dark half of Caitra, the queen was delivered of the child. This news reached Indra with the usual shaking of the seat, and he rose up from his seat in honour of the birth of the great world teacher. Immediately, this Saudharmendra sent his queen Saci to Ayōdhya. Saci, in her turn, went round the delivery chamber thrice as mark of reverence before she entered invisibly. The divine agencies induced Marudevi to sleep, substituted the infant Jina with an unreal one in the cradle and handed the real infant over to Indra. Indra took it in procession on his Āirāvata, the celestial elephant, to the Mandara hill with the heavenly hosts following him and on what is called the Pāṇḍuka stone; seated the child on a throne and, with great pomp, offered worship to and proclaimed it. Then, after the rituals connected with the worship of the Jina-to-be, the whole procession moved down back to the palace at Ayōdhya and the birth celebrations were performed. Indra danced in joy (Ānandanartana). This is the second Kalyāṇa, called Janmābhiṣēka. They named the child Vṛṣabhaswāmi or Purudeva because he would be able to increase the growth of the faithful through raining the nectar of Dharma on earth.

The child grew into a man famed for handsomeness, wisdom power and benevolence of the highest kind. The childhood, boyhood and the attainment of youth, the delights of sport and the parental regard associated with each stage are all described tenderly, lovingly, colourfully all along, and when, in spite of the fullness of his youth the son showed no sign or desire for reigning or of anything else in which a youth would be interested, Nābhi wanted him to get married. He spoke to him words of persuasion, knowing that it was not his part or worthiness that he should venture to suggest such things to one who knew everything. Yet, presuming on his status as a parent, he made bold to suggest to him marriage. Even he, the Jagadguru who was to be engaged in working for the weal of the world, might persuade himself to marry and have children. For on such acceptance of social obligation depends the good of creation itself. O peaceful one, marry and carry on the virtues and duties of a family man; when that is done and the children of your own blood are established, the line of the faithful who follow you will be established (VIII: 9-15).

Vṛṣabha agreed and presently accepted two beautiful women in marriage: sisters to the ruling princes of Kaccha and Māhakaccha

(modern Cutch and Broach). One was called Yaśaswati the other, Sunanda. For some time Vṛṣabha lived happily with them and was father of many children, chief of whom were Bharata and Brāhmi from queen Yaśaswati and Bāhubali and Saundari from queen Sunanda. All children were educated by Purudeva himself. An interesting point may be noted here. On a certain day when the daughters came to him he took them both tenderly on his lap and spoke to them words of affection: "You daughters, with your age, beauty, character and graciousness will become the purer, yea, the purifying ones when education enhances these merits. No one can be greater than the daughter well educated and accomplished."* He then initiated them in the arts of reading and writing and arithmetic. Then comes elaborate education for the sons according to needs. The golden age is inaugurated. (VIII: 62-66). Soon Vṛṣabha was crowned king also. Indra came down to build great buildings, towns, fortresses and temples for Jina. And Vṛṣabha as a Brahma created the three castes, the Ksatriya, the Vanik and the Sudra, assigned them their tasks and ordained marriages etc., among their own sections; he added a number of items like agriculture, crafts, writing, the sciences, commerce, engineering etc., to the accomplishment of his people. A new slant was given to the *Puruṣa-sūkta* description of the genesis of the four castes in VIII: 73.

One day the lord of the gods realised that the time for the great renunciation was near and came down with a group of dancers and singers to entertain Purudeva. The description of the music and dance recitals leading on to the grand renunciation is one of the most memorable and sublime episodes in *Ādipurāṇa* and in all Kannada literature. The kingly court and the gods were about to witness a great dance recital produced by Indra. He asked Purudeva what he would like to have as the theme of the recital. He was told to choose any subject that pleased him. The instruments began to play and the voices of the heavenly singers joined in. To the accompaniment of such music came out the most lovely dancer that human eyes had seen or could behold, called Nilanjāne dressed with fascinating finery and decked with the loveliest jewellery. She was the reigning dancer in Indra's court. Art, song, instrumental music and dance adorned her and no one excelled her. She was as

it were the crest-jewel among the danseuses in the heaven. She came on to the platform like the flower-arrow of Manmatha flashing and flying sharp from the sugarcane-bow of Madana. She got straight into the hearts of all the people assembled as she entered the stage. It looked as if all the flavours stood there spreading wide and deep and in her stance she was like the moving creeper of the god of love. First, under cover of the curtain, half-revealed as she stood, she looked like a streak of lightning behind a cloud. And when she came on, and as flowers were scattered honouring the audience, it looked as if Madana's arrows were shot all round. Her figure and movements were reflected in the pearl and diamond necklaces of all the princes of the court, indicating that she got into their hearts.

The instruments played. The dance was soon on. Tuned to melody and time, in full expression, from top to toe, every part of her body, every detail of every gesture and movement was in consonance with the prevailing Rasa. And hers was not merely a human or heavenly form. She looked like the spirit of Dance itself. The gesture, the flavour, the moods, the entry, the movement, the grace, the technique—all seemed totally new; and newer each time and each succeeding movement. It is not necessary to go into the details of the dance as she developed the theme described by the poet. The smile and the grace and her lively entry and movement about the stage, the way she captured the hearts of all, each time she presented a grace in special display of art and beauty were unique. The percussion instruments appeared unable to keep up with the subtleties of her movement and the surpassing craft of her dance. When the drummer failed or was confused about the calculation of time, her brow indicated the correct beat and rhythm. She moved, and to the rhythm of that movement the brow moved in a hundred thousand displays of meaning and suggestion. Spectators were lost in this play and flourish of beauty and art. For a minute even the Supreme One (himself) seemed intensely taken up. But that was like the colour that flashes on the polished crystal: it just showed up against it without touching or affecting it. Yet some little of the effect of the dance registered on his mind also. This moment was the peak of the dance.

And as the fates would have it, this was also the time of her end. For, all on a sudden, the beauty and the form went out like a flash

from the stage. Indra was smitten with a sense that the flow and flavour of the recital would be disturbed or destroyed and the illusion so successfully created broken. So, with his special power, he instantly created another figure exactly like Nīlānjane and no one in the audience seemed to notice the trick, i.e., the substitution: it was so quick.

None, except Purudeva. As quickly as the flash he caught and understood the difference and was struck with the sense of impermanence in all living things human and divine. Indeed, the event became symbolic laden with a meaning larger than that simple event. Nīlānjane was just a piece of machinery! Beautiful, really; but as one looked on did her figure not melt away? How insubstantial saṁsāra is, I shall renounce it, he thought. This danseuse who presented a display of myriad fascinations has disappeared; she is no longer alive. This girl of the heavens has exposed to me completely the drama of earthly life (samsṛti nāṭakaman) in indelible light. The fascination of the body, the beauty of form, the flourish of skill, youth, wealth and good fortune are but a flash of illumination of a piece of forked lightning; the shadow of a cloud; the blow of a bubble; the empty space of the sky stretching all about. The whole process of life with its travails, temptations and illusions comes into his memory, and he remembers the sorrows and joys and the flourishes of all the passions in his own former lives. He immediately resolves not to have anything more to do with what necessarily and incessantly brings the sorrows of the four gatis. How pitiful is life! Never satisfied, never consoled; ever panting and thirsting for the things which yield pleasure.

What strikes him as special about human desire is that it is never satisfied with what is had and ever desirous of what cannot be or got. In the series of births he has passed through, he has taken up numberless types of body, cast away as many of them and has simmered and boiled with the fire of passion in its endless wildernesses. In all of them he has had mother, father, brother, wife, sons and relations. Is there an end to remembering them and bestowing attention on them? The jewellery one wears is a burden on the body. Unguents and perfumes are dirt. Song is mourning. Dance is, well, laughter-worthy. These seem only madness and intoxication with no pith or substance in them. The fire of physical passion

is not quenched in the company of heavenly women; hunger is not subdued with feeding on Amṛta; the desire for pleasure and hunger only increase. Can they be sated? Can the women of the earth and the food cooked by men ever bring them down? I have drunk the waters of many oceans in the heavens. The enjoyments of men are like drops of water hanging on blades of grass. Can thirst be slaked by licking the drops? Many great emperors of the past gave up position, power, wealth and the joys of life, climbed into the boat of Dharma and were able to save themselves. Some among them forgot themselves, indulged in pleasures, fell from the boat and were utterly lost again in the ocean of samsāra. It is enough that I have passed these endless years in such vain desires. I cannot wander any more in this sea of birth and death.*(IX: 15-57).

The friends of the spirit and all those presences 'which tend on mortal thought' who then were around him felt happy at this decision of the king. Indeed Indra had planned it all to happen that way. The eight gods called the Lōkāntika-devas showered flowers of the heavens on him and felicitated him on his decision. They also told him that though he had naturally earned the highest condition attainable by man, he should help mankind elucidating the principles of Dharma, which is the task waiting for a long time. At this moment of renunciation Indra and all the godly hosts celebrate the third Kalyāna called Pariniṣkramaṇa. Bharata and Bāhubali are invested with kingly power and the status of second in succession (Yuvarāja, prince regent) heir to it. He made Ayōdhya the capital of Bharata, and conferred Paudana on Bāhubali. The other children were given other suitable shares in the kingdom.

The formal coronation of Bharata as king created great joy in the palace while the gods delighted in the spiritual attainment associated with the Pariniṣkramaṇa. The poet describes in six beautiful stanzas (66-72) the simultaneous and parallel celebration of two such attainments: so significant and grand yet so different and contrasted. One is of a position and rank on earth and the other a status associated with the highest spiritual liberation and achievement. The contrasts are vividly and colourfully realised. They are dramatic. For just a moment, men and women in the palace were unable to grasp exactly the import of the king's decision; soon the queens were dumbfounded; for they understood the drift

and logic of things. The last farewells were soon made. A number of kings and relations offered to follow him to tapas, in duty bound as they thought. The king went to the Siddhārtha woods and in a suitable place sat down with his face to the east and ripped himself of clothes and jewellery, pulled out the hair on his head and with a severe vow decided that he will go without food for six months, nor raise his hand. He was, at will, able to stand four fingers' high above on the heel and half a foot at the toe. The followers felt unequal to such tasks, meaning the austerities, and to such achievements. The contrast between the real purpose of a disciplined mind almost at the culminating point of a process spread over births and the declarations made by those unable or unequal to carry them out is here brought out effectively.

The poet derives great amusement here. The poet's sense of fun is in the contrast which sets up against the sublimity of Purudeva's penance and the shallow pretensions of the rest. Purudeva, with his powers of yōga, stood motionless and had all his powers of endurance and knowledge of all its mysteries to support him. Heat and cold and rain did not deflect or affect him. Inside of him he was quietly muttering some words of prayer and the sound was like the echo of a cataract in the interior of a cave. His brow did not quiver; his eyes were steady; his look was fixed; his face was lit up with knowledge and control. When for three months this went on, it became discomfoting to the followers. Here is a sample of what the poet says they generally felt (89-92 and prose) "It would be easy and natural to stand stiff if necessary for a day or two or three. Three months have now passed. Has there been ever a person who unbored would stand thus like Śani? We came here in loyal courtesy and as a gesture of obligation. We cannot bear this any longer. Our bodies have dried up. How can we sustain them without help or hope of food and drink? One could come here and stay after one has had his bath, his food, his drink. What comforts have we here? Nothing is gained by staying hungry baking inside and out for so many hours. What special reward do we gain? Is this an art or a skill included in statecraft or is it one among the Six Royal Gunas? What ethic is involved in getting into a forest and staying without protection or armoury? We came when he came. He walked and we walked.

He sat and we sat, rose when he got up. Since he was our king when he came to settle in the forest we moved with him and stayed with him—so long and until now. It should be impossible to carry on further.”* So thinking, they put themselves to many shifts and hoped that some time soon the king would break his fast, conclude the penance and with raised hands return to his kingdom. They would surely be subject to Bharata’s derision if they went to the capital earlier than the Bhaṭṭāraka. This is how they thought and dwelt on in the forest, ate the fruits which the forest trees gave them and drank the water from their own palm-cups. But eat and drink they did. The contrast is between the true and the false, or at least between the great one who knows his mind and the method and the others who had no knowledge of what heroic declaration would lead men to, with no will or ability to carry them through: between steadfast purpose and thin formality.

Meanwhile the Ādideva’s penance goes on, and at the end of a year he goes to Hastināpura where Śrēyāmsa—who had learnt from a dream of his coming—welcomes him and makes him stay with him for a while. Śrēyāmsa is Śrīmati of an earlier birth and son in another, and with great devotion the prince gives him a handful of cane-juice to break the fast (Ādidāna tīrtha). The five classical miracles are now described as happening: a shower of heavenly flowers; rain of gold on the city; the gandharvas cry out: ‘Behold the event. And the worthiness of the giver and the gift.’ The trumpets and drums of the heavens beat in token of the occasion. The muni blessed him by saying that the fruits of such dāna will bring him eternal benefit. This happened on an Akṣa tṛtīya day which is observed as sacred in the Jaina calendar. [A Purāṇa has to speak among other things of such events and days, of sacred places and attainments.]

Soon another height of achievement is scaled. The Bhaṭṭāraka gets absolute knowledge (Kevala Bodha). A great occasion is made of this naturally; for it represents attainment. Arrangements are made for the Tīrthaṅkara to expound the wisdom of the Faith for the benefit of mankind. A splendid Samavasaraṇa—there are different versions of it in other works—pandal is constructed by Kubera at the behest of Indra. The Dharma preached here is the basis for all the Jaina lore that later gets written down

enlarged and propagated. The person who is first initiated is Bharata's next younger brother Vṛṣabhasena: who becomes the first Gaṇadhara.

News of the Kalyāna and of the birth of a son to his principal queen, and the discovery of the Cakra in his armoury, are announced to Bharata. This is a three-fold happiness. Bharata proceeds to the seat of the Master, offers his devotion, listens to the sermon, and returns to the capital greatly enlightened.

10

The story of the world-conquest by Bharata is the next on record. The king travels about with his army all over the continent conquering (Bhū-digvijaya) with his might and establishing overlordship. In three of the early chapters of this section the poet takes opportunity to describe the queens of the royal household and the other women at hand, their sports, amusements and delights, the pleasant ramping in the woods, enjoying the flowers and the loveliness of the wood-land, the water sports, the beauty of the spreading moonlight, the sights and sounds and talk and every kind of sport and amusement. The rainy season had been just over and the clear skies of the sarat had set in, making the journey and the campaigns easy for the movement of the entire camp of Bharata among hills and dales and lakes and forests. Almost the entire harem of the king was in joyous movement—though one does not hear of it after a point.¹ The warmth of the season had created discomfort among the womenfolk and they were grateful that they had come to the banks of the Ganges whose cool waters and outlying woods could yield to them the charms and delights of wood and water sports. The description of the Ganges, of the shoots and flowers of the numberless trees where the wealth of all the seasons seemed simultaneously to be on, provides an occasion for the poet to describe the famous flowers, creepers and plants in the literary calendar. The description particularly of the mango and the mallika is exceptionally good; for they were the favourites

¹ Even as one does not hear about the Pāṇḍava women after Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna went out for a stroll before the Khāṇḍava episode. They must have gone back home.

of Pampa personally. Our poets seem to get drunk over the charm and magnificence of the mango in shoot and blossom; it perhaps does deserve the importance: though none ever seems to notice the innumerable shapes and colours of the mango shoots and flowers; nor deal with individual feature of any variety of the mango. The fault, as ever, is in the preference for the general than to the particular: almost a besetting sin of our literature. Yet in many a context, Pampa's descriptions are marked by a concreteness seldom found elsewhere. The winds that gently blow over the woods, the honey that drips from the clusters of leaves and the buds, and the swarms of bees humming around such fragrance or mistaking the features or parts of the beautiful women incidentally are the sources of pleasing, sweet poetic cherishment. The parrots that come crowding add chirp, soft sound and colour and winged movement to the delights of sense. If the grandeur or the luxuriance of the campaka, kuravaka or karnikāra, the gojjagi, the pādari makes the atmosphere rich and various, the singular beauty of a surahonne flower is individuated as much for description as for aesthetic realisation of shape and make. What of the mango and the mallika themselves? The god of love and the king of spring seem to have married the mallika to the mango—an ancient motif—and install them as the king and the queen of the season in the woods. The essence of all the natural and conventional description of nature in such a situation is fully on show and it is difficult to render the stanzas in translation. All the love of flower that our poet is gifted with is pressed into service in some of the happiest stanzas descriptive of nature in Kannada. Only Pampa can refine or improve on them—as he does in his *Bhārata*.

Bharata then leads his mighty army, east and south and west and north, accepting tributes and surrenders and establishing his suzerainty over all the then known kingdoms. The occasional shows of force as against the Magadha king etc., and the conquest of the Mleccha kingdoms in the west and north-west and the conquest of the entire Himalayan region is all a 'glorious pageant of verse and doing.

One incident however deserves mention. Many methods have been used in reducing recalcitrant or difficult kings; ways and sources of help have not always been straight. When he comes to

the centre of the northernmost mountain ranges of India, to Vṛṣa-bhādri, Bharata desires to have the praise of his prowess inscribed on the vast-stretching surface of stone in commemoration of his total victory. A surprise awaited him: the discovery on the stone of countless similar inscriptions celebrating the prowess, the fame, the persistence and the liberality of innumerable emperors of the past ages who were similar conquerors of the earth. Bharata had thought that his was the first such conquest and that the space would be blank, virginal—a clean slate—to inscribe his greatness on as the first on record. The upsurge of pride and the swell of self-importance inside him suffered immediate deflation at sight and thought of this. He felt almost ashamed. Yet he got a portion of the commemoration script of the earlier emperors erased with the edge of his mace and had the praise of his own valour graven on it so as to last while earth and life endure! In the course of his march he touched at Kailāsa also, offered worship at the feet of the Arhat. The eight stanzas which speak of his praise and regard for the Arhat are famous among such (XIII: 83–90). The establishment of the Dharma-cakravartitva of the father was followed and paralleled by the secular imperium of the Dig-Vijaya of Bharata.

* * *

A remarkable incident is narrated at almost the very end of this campaign of conquest in the establishment of Bharata's overlordship: fulfilling the promise of the advent of the Cakra. This Wheel functions like the challenge-horse in a Vaidic Aśwamedha. The returning army was about to enter the capital city of Ayōdhya. At this point, instead of moving forward the Cakra makes a dead stop at the gates. Bharata is surprised at the halt and refers the matter to his ministers; and the Purohit tells him that the conquest was no doubt complete so far as the kings and foes outside the family were concerned but that the brothers of the emperor had yet to be subdued and their allegiance secured. This point had not struck Bharata even for a while. He was flushed with victory and did not think twice before directing his brothers also to accept his supremacy bringing him tribute as their overlord as well.

These brothers were as much sons of Purudeva as Bharata was and the same pride and valour distinguished them. They had

accepted the award of their father and were peacefully enjoying the lands as share of the kingdom bestowed on them. Since they had accepted Bharata as the ruling king and did not want to stand up to him and fight they felt embarrassed when they received this directive. Rather than submit to the claim, all but one of them forswore their royalty and took orders and went away to the penance grove. The one that was angry and decided to resist Bharata's claim was the crown prince Bāhubali.

Bāhubali had followed the course of his brother's campaign and knew its lights and shadows. When the king, who was swollen with pride of world conquest was told by his ministers that unless he subjugated his powerful brother Bāhubali his victory would be incomplete he sent a special messenger to him—a competent, wily one—with a message which though couched in soft and polite language called upon him to come to the emperor to pay him allegiance. Bāhubali was not prepared to accept this relationship of master and servant between himself and his brother. He would have willingly bowed to him as an elder, a guru, the equal of a father; but this call was hard and humiliating. His share of the kingdom was given to him by the grace of the same father. His brother derived blood and spirit as both did the right to kingship from the same source. He should not now claim service and knee-worship from his brother deeming himself superior and master. If he accepted the insolent claim of Bharata it would be like what his brothers felt-equal to bartering the rice received from a father for refuse—food vouchsafed to him by another (*Akkigoṭṭu maḍagūḷ uṅbandam*). “In soul he swept the indignity away”—and decided to resist the command implied in the message. He sent word to Bharata that he would sustain his claim for equality and independence with all his might on the field of battle. Bharata could not be expected to stand such insubordination from his own brother. Here was a dead-set. A fight became inevitable.

The two came at the head of their forces and were ready to charge against each other and try conclusions. The elders in the clan and the state were gravely concerned with the drift of events and saw in this trial by arms a portent of total disaster. Neither could be persuaded to yield: the one in claiming to enforce; the other resisting the demand. Seeing no way of dissuading them from

engaging in an act of massive destruction, the ministers on both sides took counsel together to arrive at a decision. And what a decision! They knew that these brothers were both in their penultimate human lives (Carama-dōhigaḷ) in spiritual development and war between them would be cruel like that between two planetary bodies—involving enormous loss of life. War and Victory mean the deployment of all the four kinds of military might: armour and soldiery. Nothing good for anybody would result from such engagement. Of what use is war which is sure to kill all men? It is best that the fight between the two should be a Dharma-yuddha and not a war between two armies. After all the *casum bellum* is a personal affront and they must digest it and not resort to a method of destroying mankind. Decision by such duels is not uncommon in world history—c. p. Sohrab-Rustum—in the past, but the orientation and method here are unique.

So first they went to Bharata and advised him to eschew massive war, and instead try conclusions with his brother in less harmful forms of challenge such as *dr̥ṣṭiyuddha*, *jalayuddha* and *malla-yuddha*,—a trial by outstaring each other, outsplashing water against each other and in main wrestling: whoever was victor in these would settle into supremacy. Unwilling though he was to deny himself a decision by armed might Bharata acceded to their request. The elders now went to Bāhubali and made a similar proposal. He too had been preparing indeed, spoiling for a fight against the army of an imperious brother deemed unconquerable by men: even if it were to show that there was one who could defy it and then, if need be, to engage in a Dharma-yuddha also. He was depressed at the thought that there should be no war; and, so, was hard to dissuade. The elders made a final appeal by saying that spitefulness and petty considerations of *amour-propre* would be unrighteous in a son of Purudeva; that he should rise equal to considering patiently and graciously their suggestion; he should not be in two minds; but, for once, accept their counsel—the wisdom of the elders (Mudugaṅgaḷ). Bāhubali finally accepted the arrangement.

The brothers drew up against each other while the armies on both sides and the elders looked on. Worthy princes from both sides were assigned the task of umpiring—*madhyastha*—between them. The brothers stood against each other like the Nīla and the Niṣadha

hills and stared hard and like red fire against each other without batting an eyelid. Bāhubali had a gentle face. Eyelids unmoving, steady of pupil, motionless in body, he looked into his brother's eye like he would suck the life out of him. Bharata lost the first fight. Then they got into the lake and made terrible splashes of water against each other. Bāhubali was far, far taller than Bharata and had naturally a greater reach and range. What water Bharata splashed did not rise higher than Bāhubali's chest. While the arms of Bāhubali were like the mighty trunk of an elephant, the volumes of water he splashed against Bharata struck his face relentlessly and his face fell. This was the second defeat. The third trial was by main force. When the trumpets blared forth, 'Victory for prince Bāhubali' Bharata could not stand it; he rushed at his brother. The gods, Vidyādharas and men looked on this encounter anxious and tense. Advantage was even this time the share of Bāhubali who caught his brother by the arm lifted and swung him above his head; the lustre of the diamonds in his crown flashing a thousand rainbows: the sight is likened to an emerald hill holding up the golden mountain Meru. Bāhubali flourished him above his head but was unwilling to throw him down out of deference for the person who was king in the land of Bharata—guru, elder brother, emperor, and say what else one will, great in quality: it should not be worthy of him to throw him down on the ground. No, he would not do that. Rather, Bharata was brought down gently.¹ The drums, trumpets and horns sounded the victory, while the two armies were excited: Bharata's was depressed, Bāhubali's was flushed with joy. This was the biggest humiliation for Bharata who had by then established himself as the overlord of the universe. He lost control over himself. A wrong thought entered his head. Stung by his defeat in the eye of both the armies, and in great rage spitting rancour, he called to his Cakra to fetch him the head of Bāhubali.

The spectators stood anxious; paralysed. With a view to sobering and calming them and bringing down the maleficence of such an act the gods and elders offered prayers and worship to the Sarvajña Bimbāvali that the evil may blow over. More surprise

¹ *Ikāvalade cyyanāpāśe acāśat.*

was in store for them. The Cakra which until then had carried out every behest of Bharata as the final instrument of his prowess and authority refused to do this bidding. It went round Bāhubali thrice in token of regard for him, and without hurting him, stayed by his right shoulder¹ There was no end of celebration of this event. Joy and acclamation flowed from all sides. The earth and the heavens joined in it. Heaven's flowers were showered on Bāhubali.

What happened soon after raises the situation to heights of sublimity establishing the human worth and spiritual dignity of Bāhubali. Bāhubali did not seem to enjoy the situation. Contrary. Even as Bharata was hanging his head down in shame that he did something unworthy of himself, Bāhubali saw the Cakra and was sorry that his brother thought fit to abuse his strength. In a moment he realised how difficult it is for men to rid themselves of the temptations of kingship where lust for rule can so deflect from righteousness a person like the supreme representative of Manu's race. How could common kings ever be able to resist them? The Goddess of Fortune is a vicious jade he thought. She sets up brother against brother, son against son in anger and revenge. Fortune is fickle. It is not worthy of me, to get into her toils or into those of earthly life and power again. The world is ever deluding mankind, rushing men into cycles of birth and death, enticing them with false pleasures of the sense: sweet at first while really destructive of true welfare. They are no better than drops of poison which work our death. How human brutes lose themselves in the indulgence of the joys of the senses: Should not one get to the joys which transcend those of sound, touch, form, flavour and smell which the senses bring to us? This body suffers destruction. The glories of State are bound to fail. I feel a revulsion in entertaining talk or thought of it. I shall make haste, take up the Jaina initiation immediately and attain to a status to which the gods will offer worship. Such was the train of his thought.

It did not take him more than a minute to decide on his course of action. He advanced towards his brother and told him: "O my

¹ Would that the multi-megaton bombs and rockets so behaved and the Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles refused to carry out the behests of their masters today!

emperor brother, there is no need to feel humiliated. Give up your anger. It would not be great of you to be angry with an younger brother. Your weapon could not hurt me. Give up your silence and sense of failure. Let the overlordship of the six continents be yours and adorn your bosom. All the lands and the kingdom which our father gave me I am handing over to you. I have no desire for kingship or ruling. I ought to have regarded you as an elder and was guilty of a fault in not considering my relation to you. That fault I shall wash off in penance. Pray clear yourself of anger against me. Forgive and forget what I have done through wrong purposing.”

Bharata was borne down by this turn of the events. He saw clearly the resolve of his younger brother to renounce the world. His affection burst all unworthy considerations—all his earlier resentment. The cloud that had enveloped his heart and vision vanished. He realised how wrong his own conduct was towards his brother. Calmed and sobered and melting into tenderness, he said: “You are the only one left to me now, the last of my brothers, and you are the crest-jewel of the Manu race. Forswear your intent to renounce, dear one. I should be the one to throw away the kingship. If you go to the penance forest, who will be left to whom I could display the glory of my empire?”* This episode is one of the peaks of poetic expression in Kannada. If the Dharmic episodes of the Ādi Puraṇa are great in their special moments, this combines the elements of heroism in full flourish and shows up the heights to which character, dignity, and fundamental human worth can rise, this side of Jinatva.

Bāhubali had made up his mind. The tears of Bharata which bathed his feet were answered by the tears of affection which fell from his own eyes: the poet likens this to the pouring of sacred water on Bharata’s imperial crown. For Bharata will now be the undisputed master of the worlds. Bāhubali persuaded his brother to assent to his decision and went to the seat where his father the Ādibhaṭṭāraka was and got himself accepted. He who had formerly granted to him a prince regent’s estate conferred on him the spiritual estate. The picture which Bāhubali presented as he stood with his hands folded and his face and heart expanding is a lovely realization (137).

Fierce penance occupied him. We are give an idea how anthills grew up around him as he stood immovable; serpents bursting out of them, filling the atmosphere about with hot breath; creepers grew around him and climbed up his body almost so as to hide him completely. But the damsels of the heavenly kingdom daily arranged to clear them. This picture of penance is concentrated and it is this that is carved in stone on the hill of Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷḷ with the figure of Gommaṭa stretching tall and great against anthills and snakes and creepers—raising earth to heaven, in the penance of one who was the embodiment of self-conquest and grace.

The world was astonished at the fury of the tapas performed by Bāhubali. Knowing the strength of his will and the nature of his penance which was inflexible. It passed the understanding of Bharata that his brother did not attain yet to Kevala-jñāna. So he approached Vṛṣabhanātha and asked him the reason for the delay. The answer came that Bahubali was established in tapas all right; but that a limiting taint of self-regard lurked in the muni owing to a feeling that he had to be still standing on a piece of land which belonged to Bharata. If Bharata would go and bow at his feet, Bāhubali would gain Kevala-jñāna.

That was as much message as command. Bharata went to the muni's presence, offered worship at the feet of this king of munis and said: "Lofty one: This earth is what has been cast away by you. It is your gift to me. You should think only of yourself and of nothing else:" That instant almost the last vestiges of self-regard which might have remained in Bāhubali's mind vanished and he gained the condition of Kevala-bōdha which enabled him to see as before him the infinite universe and the stretch of all time past, present and future. There was rejoicing on earth and heaven. Bāhubali then moved about the country speaking to men enlightening them on the principles of religion; and finally gained Jinatva by the side of his father.

Bharata was now unquestioned master of the world. With imperial authority and wisdom he organised the kingdom and settled the status and functions of the several sections of the Indian community. Other acts of public good advanced the happiness of his people. On a certain day he had a number of dreams which he took for explication to his father; and, like in any purāṇa, the

future of the castes in the Kali age was explained to him, among other things. Much is spoken of the disintegration in the Jaina religion itself and of the fall in virtue of the very elite in society, though as historical fact it was some time away yet. Bharata also learns of the twenty-three other Tirthaṅkaras who would follow the first, closing the line with Mahāvīra. What is beyond the ken of a Tirthaṅkara? All Time in all Time series is open and visible to him in full process, integrally. Bharata returned home and set up dormitories and places of worship and he is described as getting made the statues of all the twenty-four Tirthaṅkaras, whom he names the Māṇikya-devas, and composes a praise called "*Vandana-māla*" which, today, is extant among the Jains.¹

The time now draws near to the passing way of Vṛṣabhanātha and the brothers of Bharata. The Gandharvas and other kings of the time get premonition of it in dreams. The elders say that the time for that event has come. In Māgha on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight, in the Abhijin-muhūrta, Purudeva yielded up his earthly coils. This liberation was celebrated with great rejoicing by all the four kinds of gods as Purudeva's Parinirvāṇa-mahākalyāṇa, which is the fifth and last Kalyāṇa in a Tirthaṅkara's life. The dance of joy of Indra and the other gods is then described. When the cremation was over they smeared themselves with the ashes of the Lord wishing a similar Kalyāṇa for themselves. Only Bharata was sad at heart that he had lost his father. The intensity of his grief was such that it had to be brought down with the words of consolation spoken to him by Vṛṣabhasēna-gaṇāgrāṇi: "Your father has destroyed all the eight kinds of evil Karma; has crossed over to the other shore of the ocean of samsāra and has found a permanent abode and status of happiness. You see before you the godly hosts along with Indra rejoicing at it. Here is a situation where you should yourself rejoice. It is improper for an emperor of the worlds to lament like common men the passing of such a father. Vṛṣabhēśwara was till now available to you as object of sight physically. He will hereafter live established right in your heart and mind. Will he not thus be nearer to you than before? Today, some of us bear this penultimate human life. Even to us,

¹ Pampa changes over to neat Saṅskṛt in all the stanzas celebrating them.

is not the status attained by Puru-paramēśvara the condition we aspire for—the supreme condition we are due to get into? No other goal exists for men. He is now an object of regard for Indra himself.” These words clear Bharata’s mind and when the leaders narrate to him the entire Bhavāvali, i.e., life-sequences of many of them near and dear, the scales fall from his eyes like a hill whose forests have caught fire is cooled with fresh waters from the clouds. Bharata is calmed and consoled by the words of the Gaṇanātha. He is restored to a sense of his own imperfections. He returns to Ayōdhya fully reconciled in spirit.

One day, in his turn, he caught sight of a streak of grey hair on his cheek. That a streak of silver hair should have marked Atibala’s renunciation of Kingdom and earthly position and power at the earliest part of the Ādi Puraṇa and of Bharata’s at the end is not without its meaning in the unity of a work of art. It appeared to him like a messenger sent by Puru-paramēśvara from his seat beyond the worlds. A mirror confirmed it. It was time now therefore for him to hand over the kingdom to his son Arkakīrti. He took to the way of tapas and soon progressed through Avadhijñāna and Manahparyaya-jñāna to Kevala-jñāna; and he who was esteemed by men became an object of worship both for gods and men. The poet concludes the work with the realisation of the highest spiritual status by Bharata himself, and the work is gathered up with a statement that the leaders of the gaṇas and the remaining children of Puru gained similar blessedness.

11

This work is narrated as completed in the Śaka year 863 (941/42 A.D.) in the year Plava on Sunday the fifth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Kārtika. Two or three stanzas speak of the significance of the work which is the history of Ādideva worshipped and sung by the gods. Commanded by learned men to write so that it might be like nectar to the ears of the faithful, the poet says, it helps to lead men to heaven and to liberation; and it is a Vastukṛti made to shine by using both the Mārga (the classical, scholarly) and the Deśi (the native) styles; a Vākya-māṇikya-kōśa, containing within it thought and emotion and the life-sustaining Dharma; it

can rid the sorrows which accompany Samsāra; and bring joy to all who have a Dharmic bent of mind, the while it gives them literary flavour and knowledge and enlightenment. The stamp of Saraswati is on it; the sixteen cantos here represent the sixteen bhāvanas which lead the faithful to contemplate on and strive to realize the Tīrthamkaratva siddhi which is the theme this work has undertaken to present and complete.

CHAPTER III

THE BHĀRATA

1

Normally, the progress of a great poet's composition takes a broadening, deepening and heightening course. It would also be expected that the progress would be from the secular to the religious and the reflective, from delights in the petty and the beautiful to the great and the sublime. It is a logical or rational expectation, the presumption that one gains experience and depth of soul and wisdom as one grows and is enabled the better to contemplate life and its situations, its striving and achievement. But we have nothing else but these two items to the credit of Pampa. His work should be deemed as coming from him fully made. He had, as one might speak, fully developed by then. His experiments, apprenticeship and growth in poetic progress and expression cannot be traced. This is almost a reigning feature of many poets in this land. Non-age bits do not figure in the accounts. Only what the poets deemed as successes or worthy of presentation was usually launched.

The second work of Pampa does not present to us a passage from immaturity to ripeness. Nor is this a lesser glory. Only it deals with the ways of great men of the earth: men of two ages, the epic and the historical, seen in juxtaposition and identity, historical persons being likened to the heroes of the Mahābhārata owing to the presence in them and the flourish essentially of similar virtues, emotions and character. There is no diminution in the ability of Pampa's sensing of life or composition; he can see as steadily and whole as before. We have a greater sense of economy and a more masterly art everywhere. His power shows no sign of languor or want of adequacy.

The poet's mind could function at any level of need or expression. Clarity, criticism and judgment informed it. The study of his subject in the A.P. demanded mastery of religious doctrine and insight into all the processes involved in the evolution of a perfect man as that age and one religious community conceived it; and his powers were harnessed to that purpose. To the writing of

the Mahābhārata story a different element in his nature, make-up and poetical ability was required. Into the fullness and efficiency of that nature flowed the brilliant competence of a poet who could give us a variegated picture of life distinguished for valour and character. It was more familiar ground, more truly human than the other. The same blood is coursing in his veins and the same religious convictions can be felt informing and orienting episode and outlook. But his purpose being the writing of an epic or heroic poem, he brought all the resources of poetry and knowledge of men and things as they lived their lives on earth in his time. In the epic Mahābhārata the size is larger than the life of common men. But Pampa feels that his historical hero, is equal in worth and character to the epic ideal and is as much exemplar as the ones there. Howsoever that be, we get in the *Vikramārjuna Vijaya* pictures of great men of different kinds and the reference is more definitely to items and events of earthly importance and dignity¹ more than to things which go to the debit or credit of a soul in evolution which was subject matter of a Dharma-kāvya. The bias, there was other-worldly. All its resources are here devoted to realizing a hundred episodes of the *Mahābhārata* of the first ten or eleven parvas. For naturalness, variety, richness, sympathy, understanding and for what may be called the 'altogetherness' there is nothing to equal this other work of Pampa in Kannada. Possibly it is the one work which can compare with any classic anywhere.²

The presentation of the whole story of the Mahābhārata had not so far been undertaken for poetic exposition till Pampa was entrusted with the task. What other episodes had been presented by then is not known now or available. That there must have been a few works is evident by implication and statements by Pampa himself and as yielding the quotations for anthologies. The larger task was now set to him. Pampa had earned the regard of the men of letters of his time with the writing of his *Adipurana*. His experience as man, as counsellor, as soldier and companion to the prince and his intimate

1 Contrast the monotony of the same types in *Adipurāna*.

2 In a different kind Naranappa's *Bhārata* of the 15th century is such another. If economy and terseness distinguish Pampa, abundance even exuberance marks the later writer. Vigour and vitality are features of both.

knowledge of life in the royal court, of dalliance and sport and of the field of battle would be match to his powers of expression and poetic ability. For once, the voice and the need and the power equalled one another. Anyone less able and less sensitive at many levels of living would have botched the work. The likening of a Cālukya prince of the 10th century to the epic Arjuna of the Mahābhārata—perhaps the cleanest of the characters there as well—and sustaining it through fourteen āśvāsas would have been almost impossible; though it is sad that even here there is some clumsiness and bathos. The initial disadvantage would be the having to handle the Draupadi episode which is the groundwork of much of the blood-and-fury motif of the epic subject-matter. For, more than the story of all the Pāṇḍavas, the drive of the Mahābhārata story, in one sense, is round the three personalities of Draupadi, Bhīma and Duryōdhana, with Yudhiṣṭhira, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa at second levels and the other heroes as accessories, instrumentalities or decoratives or merely as background. But in Pampa's Bhārata Yudhiṣṭhira is not the hero; Bhīma's is not the importance; Kṛṣṇa is but aid; Draupadi is not wife to all the Pāṇḍavas—Arjuna wins her and keeps her. And, as a critic has remarked, she is more Vijaya-srī (the Lady of Victory) than wife or mere woman. Pampa has to soft-pedal or even cast aside some episodes of the Mahābhārata and palliate the consequence of many incidents connected with her being the wife of all the five brothers. One can see how he must have been embarrassed, if not even squirming, when he has to manage the indignity heaped upon Draupadi in the Sabhāparva; in managing the episode of Kīcaka in the Virāṭaparva; and in celebration of the bloody triumph of Bhīma in the final episode with Duśśāsana. The original Mahābhārata story insists on being there and almost wreaks its vengeance on the poet and his purpose in the two latter episodes. Yet the skill, the sensitiveness and the culture which the poet brings to the accomplishment of this purpose are such that he gets past the episodes with not much damage to his overall intention or to his total insight.

2

The *Mahābhārata* is the largest single epic in the world even as epics go. It has been deemed a fifth Veda in India, a work on

Dharma; and some treat it as a *purāṇa* if not even as a compendium of information dealing with almost everything in Indian culture and civilization. Along with the main story are the *Upākhyānas* which represent stratas of civilization earlier than the *Mahābhārata*. There are elements of folktale, animal and bird myth. Many stories in illustration of a situation,—often with a moral—make the work look like a conglomeration rather than like an order; bits of religion and metaphysics, statecraft, manners and vignettes and patches of life: diverse and many-directioned. Events, institutions, customs and manners which seem to need explanation or are embarrassing are glossed and slurred over or referred backward and forward by curses and boons which function like cement to hold together and connect the fabric.

If the Śiva and Indra legends offer one strand of presence, the Kṛṣṇa legend and stories connected with the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra*, picking out Kṛṣṇa's special domination almost to the point of making him the super-hero of the *Mahabharata*, are an important element as the *Mahābhārata* story is extant. Since Kṛṣṇa's participation in the main story seems to be substantive, it will be difficult to reject some portions of it as mere legend or sectional faith. It is part of the fabric. That the epic Kṛṣṇa must have been a great, powerful, influential hero of the time, friend to the Pāṇḍavas, counsellor and guide and engineer of their victory is part of the main story. The details and the miracles may not all be acceptable for the effectiveness of the main issue and the reality of Kṛṣṇa's greatness does not suffer. But the superstructure built on, into and about the main story makes the elements of the Kṛṣṇa parts function all through it.

The more purely Kṛṣṇa sections like his relationship with Kunti, the mother of the Pāṇḍavas, and his conflicts with Śiśupāla and Jarāsandha contribute indirectly in the progress of the main events of the *Mahābhārata* story. They relate him to the context fairly organically as well. The recognition of his influence and importance as friend or foe is felt over considerable parts of it which makes it necessary for Duryōdhana himself to seek his aid in the war with the Pāṇḍavas that was to ensue. In the Kṛṣṇa family itself, loyalty is divided between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, the Baladeva group preferring the Kauravas and Kṛṣṇa's the Pāṇḍavas. The situation is exploited to neutralize the affiliation of the strength

of the possible support of Balarāma to Duryōdhana. The sending of the Nārāyani division of the Yādava army is not up to much as help to the Kauravas; for Kṛṣṇa stood on the other side. On the social and political level as on the personal and the human, Kṛṣṇa's assent to the marriage of Arjuna and Subhadra was, to say the least, adroit: really far-seeing. It helps to create and cement a relationship which Kṛṣṇa desired and valued. If it was primarily a love-match between the two, it was a political event of major importance; for, from then onwards, a bit of Yādava life was personally and once and for all part and parcel of the Kṛṣṇa-Pāṇḍava and therefore of Yādava-Pāṇḍava relationship.

After a very elaborate presentation of the love at first sight between and desire for each other of Subhadra and Arjuna and through the luxuries of pining and yearning on both sides, the two young persons are made to meet in a mādHAVI bower to which Subhadra had retired and to which wishfully and hopefully Arjuna had gone. Kṛṣṇa must have got news of this 'going on' between Subhadra and Arjuna and he drops in just after the two have met. They were naturally not at first feeling comfortable at this surprise, but he calmed their fears and shyness and straight told Arjuna that Baladeva was intending to hand over Subhadra to Duryōdhana; and that, personally, he was not in favour of it. His own desire was to give her in marriage to Arjuna. Now that Brahma himself seems to have brought the two together with this love for each other, it will not be wise for them to stay longer in Dvāraka. So, without delay, Subhadra may be taken away—was the advice given. "If Baladeva sent his army in pursuit, you would be enough to shoot your way through" On this side he could settle the rest of the matter. Kṛṣṇa's readiness and connivance enabled the lovers to gain each other. Within a short time Kṛṣṇa is able to persuade Balarāma that Arjuna was, by birth, prowess, character and in every other way worthy of Subhadra. Was he not stronger in strength of arm than Balarāma himself—Dōrvaladol . . . ninagam balasthan—Rather straight talk this. So he need not pursue Arjuna with any animus or anger any longer. It is really no crime; and if it was a matter for punishment or other kind of management Kṛṣṇa could be commissioned with it.

The Pāṇḍava brothers are naturally happy that a new link has

been forged to strengthen the relationship between themselves and Kṛṣṇa.

3

From the moment Kṛṣṇa—alone in the assembly—discovered the Pāṇḍavas in the Pāncāla assembly and recognized the winner of Draupadi's hand as Arjuna, almost to the end of the Mahābhārata war he continued to be his companion and guide, protector and reserve of strength, as good for counsel as for concrete help: never far, ever ready and reliable; stay, succour and Providence in one. At the time of the burning of the Khāṇḍava, the two friends swear friendship and loyalty to each other in the presence of the fire they have started as an act of public service accomplished. It is not without significance that the story is narrated, that Kṛṣṇa got his Cakra then and Arjuna his chariot—with the monkey flag on it all ready—and, the Gāṇḍiva. The overwhelming superiority of Kṛṣṇa for valour, prowess, wisdom, resourcefulness, knowledge of human character, assessment of situation, statecraft and strategy made him a formidable foe and the largest single external cause of success for the Pāṇḍavas in addition to their own sense of justice and royalty and individual ability. So strong was the feeling of Kṛṣṇa's greatness that almost supernatural powers were imputed to him from the very beginning. That he was able to stand up to Śiśupāla's challenge in the last stage of the Rājasūya and quell the turbulence that was stirred up against him by Śiśupāla's partisans it was able to strike down Śiśupāla in open assembly established him as the most powerful and dominating personality of the time in India. Bhīṣma and the other great elders of the Duryōdhana camp and to the old king Dhṛtarāṣṭra—were awed and respectful towards him. When the stories of the Avatāra were woven round him and he was described as god Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa himself, an element of Bhakti was added to the regard for an epic hero.

This main atmosphere of the *Mahābhārata* had formed long before the tenth century and had become part of the life-tradition and belief of the orthodox Dharma in the country. When the Jains had to handle themes associated with Kṛṣṇa it was not easy for them to neglect or sweep away his greatness. And here was an extra problem for Pampa, a Jaina who desired to compare his

royal patron Arikesari with Arjuna. Personally a Śiva or a Viṣṇu did not mean much to the poet. Though the orthodox Brahmin blood in him—could not totally have been drained away by his father's conversion to the Jaina faith a generation back. His patron was a Śaiva and held Śiva and Viṣṇu in regard as gods. Pampa had to put himself into the position of his master and bring it off. It could not have been difficult for him, because it was part of his blood as well.

He never can forget too that he is a Jaina. When Arjuna is born, Kunti is described almost as a Jina-janani and the celebrations are the nearest in orthodox environment to the description of a Janmā-bhiṣēka-kalyāṇa of a Tīrthamkara. The childhood sport of Arjuna was like that of Murāri, it is said. When Arjuna goes on his wanderings, he is described as remembering events of his life when he was Rāma, and the poet cannot totally relegate him to the rank of a mere Vāsudeva of the Jaina Calendar. He cannot play him down nor deny him supernatural powers of which he seems to be fully aware. Memories and associations of births, as Nara and Nārāyaṇa, are accepted and Kṛṣṇa's mention of having destroyed Kālanemi and others in other births are recounted. That he was a Parama-Puruṣa is accepted. The accent and preference are underlined in terms like Ajita, Ādideva, Ananta given to him: as more natural affiliations with the Jaina faith. The *Bhagavad-Gīta* portion is jumped over clean within two lines of a four-line stanza. This cannot be merely due to the need for economy or the exigencies of speed—almost a whole section is devoted to the Subhadra affair, and fairly large accommodation is made for the hunt. The whole thing had to be compassed by Arjuna as a function and the fulfilment of his valour. Aid he could receive, advice he could take, but the achievement was to be distinctly if not even surpassingly his. The poet could not afford to make his Arjuna dependent on or subordinate even to Kṛṣṇa, howsoever great he be. If the *Bhagavad-Gīta* hypothesis were once accepted, it would have to be accepting the inferiority of Arjuna and playing up Kṛṣṇa. Since both as a Jaina and as a poet he wanted to celebrate the sole prowess of his master and hero Pampa did not like to rob him of singular excellence. So that if the constant presence and guiding through difficulty by Kṛṣṇa is there it is only as of one at the elbow, and help.

These statements have had to be made because they define the atmosphere and almost form the texture of the story as handled by Pampa. His narration is coloured by considerations like these and has in it the accents marked on it by the religion of the poet, the contemporary historical colour and situation and the adaptation of the epic episodes so as to be congruent or consistent with this secular and religious condition in the poem. Beyond this, all else can be assessed for poetry and narrative and descriptive purpose.

4

After the usual invocations to Nārāyana, Ísvara, the Sun God, Manmatha, Sarasvati, Pārvati, Vināyaka, etc., the poet comes straight down to his composition, its premises and promises. He speaks of his own merits and humility, of the task that he is setting himself to. He talks of the king whose fame he is celebrating. The subject, the king and the hero are matched and worthy of a poet's undertaking to speak about together. The story is big, but he promises not to let the substance of the story be hurt or in essence cut down. It will be a Samasta-Bhārata. He knows that he is not so insolent as to say he will or can swim across the ocean of nectar which the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa is verily, nor to boast that he is another Vyāsa. Only the goodness of Guṇārṇava—i.e. Arjuna (or Arikesari)—has taken possession of him. For the sheer virtue of his patron-king induces him in affection to compare Guṇārṇava Arikesari with the Kirīṭi of the Pāṇḍavas. He traces next the genealogy of Arikesari from the Cālukya Yuddhamalla and brings it down to Narasimha and Jākabbe, the parents of Arikesari. The line as he describes compares satisfactorily with the succession lists in the Cālukya history.

Even as the child which is to be Jina in a Tīrthamkara Purāṇa is made to cradle in the arms of Indra, this child of a Sāmanta-cūdāmaṇi is made to be cherished and cradled in the arms of a Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor of that name. The transition to the main events of the *Mahābhārata* is then made and a beautiful description of Kurujāṅgaṇa is given to us at this point. He is describing the Kannada land indirectly, though he is telling us that the land is nearabouts modern Delhi.

About the end of the work, the poet summarizes the episodes he recounts in the story of the Mahābhārata. No one has scope to stray from its main events howsoever poetically rich a quarry might be the secondary episodes in the work. The Mahābhārata is by no means single-centred. The main stream is teased into flowing between the banks. His is no doubt a campu work and in the fourteen Āśvāsas of about a hundred stanzas on the average per canto, it should be difficult for him to essay a larger task or compass more than he does. He has to move with breathless speed from episode to episode. A few stanzas hit off a whole episode and one Kanda or part often condenses a goodly part of the subject-matter that has to go in of it. In the campu of a later time there is very much more attention to its description undertaken for its own sake impeding the main current of the story. Except again for the obvious disproportion in the Subhadra episode (and the moonlight revelries which are part of it)—and once only in the description of hunting and water sports with women in the spring—no disproportionate attention is given to any other element than what advances the main theme. Love and dalliance, hunting and pleasures in nature's wilds are always deemed necessary elements in a campu; and even Pampa could not resist the temptation of indulging in a bit of it when such a golden opportunity was offering—with his hero involved in it all. The love episode between Arjuna and Subhadra had a counterpart in Arikesari's life and politically was as significant as the link which connected the Yādava and Pāṇḍava lines in the epic story. She was to be established in the affections of Arjuna and at the end of the story be crowned queen with him; and, the son of her son was to continue the line.

5

The cantos as Pampa builds them do not conform to the Parva division in the *Mahābhārata*.

Each canto stops at a point which directly or indirectly marks some important event connected with Arjuna's life; and each new canto opens with a praise of him for some special quality associated with him. Attention to the hero is never once deflected though the poet allows himself to be overcome by the greatness of a character like Karṇa or an event like the scene of the sabha where Draupadi is

subjected to indignity—where Arjuna's role is practically nil. But no opportunity is missed to stress the prerogative and special worth of his hero. Differential advantage is always given to him.

6

Even as the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravās are born a note is struck about the special virtue of the children of Pāṇḍu on one side as distinguished from those of Gāndhāri. Gāndhāri has obtained a boon for a hundred sons from Parāśara. Before she is delivered of children, Kunti has given birth to Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma. When news of this reaches Gāndhāri she feels frustrated and jealous. She is represented as violently squeezing her womb which forced out the matter from her body. They were about to throw away the stuff when Vyāsa-Bhaṭṭāraka chides her and says he was vexed with her; for he had intended to bless her with a hundred children together; she had spoilt everything by premature squeezing of the womb. He proceeds to collect the hundred bits in a pot of ghee and keep them in condition till they developed into separate full shapes. One of them developed extraordinarily strong and was born almost fully adult. Evil omens were seen at his birth, portending disaster. Statuary shook and dolls cried out all abouts, fires blazed out; ghosts moved about; foxes wailed from some of the most beautiful places. Vidura was quick to discern the meaning of this phenomenon and told his brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra that this boy was going to be the evil star of the clan; else these omens would not have happened; that he may therefore be thrown away—the other children would be enough for the line* Fondness

* *If Bhīṣma had agreed to rule much of the misery could have been avoided. But one has then to do with the inflexibilities of character. If he had accepted Ambe the Śikhandi episode would not have had meaning. If he had married when his step-mother begged of him to do so and taken the reins of administration all the misery and mishap of the later period could have been obviated. Bhīṣma's is an example of a principle of life hardening into a conviction which in its turn becomes a sentence for life. A negative virtue where loftiness of character is counterweighted by sterility and waste. But it has its heroic aspect. If Drōṇa had not wreaked his vengeance on Drupada the Draupadi and Dṛṣṭadyumna events would have been shorn of their validity. But speculating with it is an impiety.*

for the son comes in the way of the parents forswearing the child; and this is the crucial point in shaping the fortunes of the family. Dhṛtarāṣṭra's fondness for the son Duryōdhana makes him as blind in the head as in physical sight. So that we see here the essential character of the three persons, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura and Duryōdhana, as they will figure and function all through.

On the other hand, when as a result of Indra's blessing Kunti conceived Arjuna, the parents are described as worshipping Śiva, undergoing fasts and other austerities for a whole year. She desired a son like him and so one was granted who would be hard as the Kulagiris, with the firmness and stability of the earth, the burning glory of the sun, the soft light of the moon, the handsomeness of Manmatha, the liberality of the wish-fulfilling tree of the heavens, the ruling power of Īśvara, the prowess of Yama, the heroism of a lion,—qualities taken out of each one of them by Indra and integrated into the son that was to be born of Kunti. And when he was born, happy auguries marked him out as an exceptionally great man and a beloved of the gods. The heavenly drums beat and there were cries of victory from the heavens. All the gods, with Devendra at their head, came down to Śataśṛṅga hill. Flowers dropped from the skies. Hiraṇyagarbha and Brahma and the ten heavenly Ṛṣis like Vyāsa and Kaśyapa came. The eleven Rudras, the twelve Ādityās, the eight Vasus, the Aśvinis—all assembled to bless the parents and celebrated the birth. Festivity like that usual at the birth of a Tīrthamkara is described here as happening. Brahma looked on happily. Amarendra caressed the child. The Apsarases danced in joy and when they proceeded to give a name to the child, they gave him a hundred and eight names, more than three dozens of which are listed here. At the end of each canto or at the beginning of the next or where a special mention of a quality has to be made, one or another of these names is used to designate him in praise suitable to the occasion.

With this birth and naming of Arjuna ends the first Āśvāsa. The closing prose of the canto speaks of the author as Jinapadāmbhojavaraprasādōtpanna, Prasanna-gambhīra-vacana-racana-catura Kavītā-guṇārnava etc.

Another fateful if cognate event is narrated earlier than the birth of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavās; and that is the birth of the star-crossed Karṇa as son to Kuntī: As well born as any of the other Pāṇḍava or Kaurava heroes of his generation earlier than them he had the misfortune of being thrown away by his mother and brought up as Vasuṣeṇa or foster-child of a fisherman and his wife Rādhā. His character and quality are distinguished even from the beginning with liberality and heroism—ever his traits. Indra becomes jealous of the relative advantage of Karṇa against Arjuna, for he goes in disguise to Karṇa to beg of him the armour and ear-jewel with which he was born—like Athene with helmet, armour and shield. Karṇa cuts them from his body and hands them over as gift. Did he ever send a beggar away or ever say ‘no’? Or tell one who begged of him to ask for something else? Or said he was in pain? He said: “Do not mind, take this.” That was the measure of his heroism; the liberality of his mind.*

The incident connected with his learning archery from Paraśurāma and the parting curse of the master that the supreme astra called Brahmāstra—the use of which had been taught him would not avail him in the last resort is also narrated. And all for what? For his endurance of pain and considerateness to the preceptor, whose sleep on his lap he would not disturb. But the guru said it is penalty for gaining admission and confidence under false pretences. Here again was a stroke of fate. The terms of the *Mahābhārata* story are part of all the rigidities of framework and character. Boon and curse and relationships as between the favoured of the gods and the enemies, the disturbers of the ethical order are yet another set of factors. What develops in the course of the future sections can be seen in this first glimpse of sprout and promise of harvest.

Forces and agencies outside the normal secular situation are also found to be functioning affecting the fortunes and destinies of men and things. The partialities and the prejudices of the Gods are clear from the start with the dice loaded in favour of one party, the Pāṇḍavas, and against the Kauravas, and they cut to pattern. The traditional purposing was there, even as the presuppositions of the Jaina persuasion of the poet were in.

Before the next canto is over, Pāṇḍu is dead as the working out of a curse and the orphan children of Kunti and Mādri are taken to Hastinapura . The children receive training in archery under Drona whom Bhīṣma appoints as tutor to them. Hatred between the Duryōdhana group of brothers and Bhīma has formed definitely owing to jealousy and the further animus that he does not die whatever they do; so does that between Karṇa and Arjuna; and thus, the mutual animosities and rivalries are set. Judging by the set of motivation and character they can drive only to doom.

8

We shall just dwell on the Mādri-Pāṇḍu episode as handled by the poet. The poetry and wealth of colour and intensity in *Pampa Bhārata* also deserve notice.

Pāṇḍu had given up the kingdom and was living in the Śataśṛṅga hills as a hermit. He was under a curse that if he touched woman, or had to do with his wives, that would bring on him death. It must have been a difficult condition for both the husband and the wives. Yet the wives took care to see that they protected the life of their husband and never once was either of them alone with him. Pāṇḍu could not have been happy under such constraint, such oppression of mind. The children were growing up and when everything seemed to be shaping well within the limitations of the hermitage there was the usual onset of spring, with all its riot and onslaught of colour, its fresh beauty and quickening of blood: bird, flower and bee and gentle breeze moved comfortably all about the woods and the hillside. Mādri moved about the woodland. She was young, proud of her beauty and was of a playful disposition. She gathered affectionately whatever wild flower caught her fancy, and at the bed of a Bakula tree sat and shaped wristlets, flower necklaces, ear ornaments and others, fastened them with the fibre of the lotus, decked herself with them, and looked as she moved about slowly proudly, luxuriously like the genius of the season. The sight would fascinate anyone*. It was compelling; 'saint-seducing'.

Pāṇḍu sighted her as she moved about and was disturbed in mind. Fascination fell full on him. He rushed up and clasped her in an embrace, regardless of the curse that was on him, like as he would

clasp Death or, like even Vyāsa puts it, *Sākṣāt kāla vimōhitah*. Almost immediately he felt the langour of approaching death. It was like clasping a poison-creeper, this clasp of the soft, tender arms of his own beloved wife. It did not take much time for his hold to loosen, for his face to fade, his glad eyes to close and his breath to harden. He got into a swoon. Mādri cried out not knowing what else to do, not knowing whether he was dead or alive, feeling anxious, undone. His breath soon died out and the body became cold: a confirmation of death. There was no end to her sorrow that she allowed him to touch her, aware as she was of the curse that lay on him; and,—without helping him to protect himself. That she was not able to save him but let him make love to her and brought this fate on him and on herself cast her into anguish.

The wail she set up calling on the wood spirits to witness her grief reached the ears of Kunti. The latter felt apprehensive when the cry of Mādri came from the same direction as the one at which she knew Pāṇḍu was moving about. She rushed to the spot with children crying in sympathy with her and running behind her, her hair dishevelled trembling all over, all tears and feeling lost. She saw Mādri lamenting over the body of their lord Pandu with his body held close to her and saying she was resolved to die with him. Kunti was herself sunk in grief. The situation was hard and heartrending. Though he had left her without a word, leaving her and the children behind, she could not think of living without him. She called upon Mādri to take charge of the children and hand over the husband to her so that she might die with him. But Mādri said that the husband had given her the day's turn in affection and she would not hand over the rights and privileges of that turn to her sister. "You take charge of the children," she said, and enjoined on her to think of other things. At last, with the permission of all those in the penance-grove and the wood spirits she committed herself to flames with Pāṇḍu's body: matchless in the purity of her family and in resolution and with none to equal her in worth and loyalty.

It took a lot to console Kunti. They spoke to her that sorrow for the dead and the dying with and for them were unavailing; for it solved no problem; The dead would not anyway come back to life; what is

left for the living is the pursuit of Dharma. Worrying, helplessness, wailing and the pains of sorrow achieve nothing. The tears shed by those left behind torment the spirits of the dead. She must control herself and devote herself to the children. The temper here bears almost a Jaina accent which in essence is the true traditional mode as well. (cf. Rati's situation in Kālidāsa and Mahasvete's in Kadambari) Sorrow for the dead has to stop, for that is what those ignorant of the nature of Samsāra would be yielding to. When they were able somewhat to calm and pacify Kunti they took her and the children to Nāgapura and narrated to Bhīṣma, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Vidura what had happened; and, handing over their charge, they returned to their hermitages. The Pāṇḍu-Mādri episode has been very tenderly handled by Pampa and has lyrical intensity.

9

Almost every incident which lies between this return of the Pāṇḍava children to Hastināpura and the performance of Rājasūya by Yudhiṣṭhira is tellingly handled by the poet. The burning of the lac mansion, the killing of Hidimba and Baka by Bhīma, the marriage at the Swayamvara in the Pāncāla court with Draupadi, the crowning of Yudhiṣṭhira, the travel and adventures of Arjuna, the love and romance with Subhadra, the conflagration of the Khāṇḍava forest, the setting up of the miraculous palace by Maya, the undertaking of the Rājasūya and the slaying of Jarāsandha as later of Śiśupāla which marks its completion—all are realized beautifully and adequately.

We only take up the episodes of Khāṇḍava-dahana and Śiśupāla-vadha.

Arjuna's wanderings over the country which spread over a period of twelve months years according to another reading ended with a joyous return of the hero with a precious and beautiful bride. Arjuna and Subhadra spend joyous time together. Some time passes. Festivities are arranged in Indraprastha. Baladeva and the Yādavas are invited and he is won over. Abhimanyu is born. Another spring is on. Its description is again a successful score. A huntsman comes to invite Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna for a hunt. The hunt is accomplished in perhaps the most beautiful series of

pictures of animal-hunting we have. The different kinds of hunt called Pervēṅṅe, (the big hunt,) the Dīva kind (the snare or track hunt), and the Kiruvēṅṅe (the minor kind) are all described with technical details which are hardly intelligible today; and so are the types of hounds used in a boar hunt. Then the men and women go out for a spree to the Yamuna river and enjoy themselves with every sort of sport. One gets an idea of a royal household in its romp, colour and luxury when it is bent on enjoying itself. Well-fed, toileted and perfumed, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna dress up and go out for a little stroll. Kṛṣṇa narrates to Arjuna all his early adventures and exploits and points out the places associated with them. As they moved about, a certain person with hair like red fire and complexion like that of burning gold (V: 69), a flame-coloured Brahmin whose hunger seemed to be blazing like the fire inside him—stands before them. Arjuna thinks that this might provide him an opportunity for bestowing gifts on a worthy person who came to him with a request, thus to free himself from sin and earn merit. The Brahmin looked like one devoted to tapas and a rigid regulation of life. But, strange to say, after blessing the heroes with white durva grass-bits and akṣata, the Brahmin said, in response to Arjuna's offer, that he did not desire jewellery or gold or any valuable thing, but that he was badly hungry and wanted enough food to eat. Arjuna said it should not be difficult to provide that if he would only tell him what he wanted as food.

Kṛṣṇa seems to recognize Agni, the God of Fire, in the Brahmin, and tells Arjuna what he has let himself into by making such a promise as feeding this false one. He seems to know what he was asking for; tells him that he should desist from granting that fellow's request for what he wanted as food was the entire Khāṇḍava forest; he was Fire. Arjuna promptly replied: This poor fellow, being hungry, asks for food. I have granted him his request and there is no going back on it. But Kṛṣṇa puts Arjuna in mind of how in earlier times Agni had set the kings of the earth against Indra because of their attempts to set fire to this same Khāṇḍava which was Indra's reserve-forest. Indra was so jealous about it that he would not let Indrāṅṅi herself touch a shoot or flower in it. This man was no mere Brahmin, but a tiger with a goat's face. He

is a cheat. Kṛṣṇa questioned the wisdom of Arjuna in granting such a request. This was a challenge to Arjuna who replied: The person requesting the gift is no less than the fire-god; the great one who may have to be fought is the God of the Heavens; the place where the gift is promised is the bank of the river Yamuna; and it is done in your presence. I have given my word earnestly; the one who is asking for it is a Brahmin. Do not, therefore, say a second word. Such merit is not accessible every day, surely?*

The stanza the poet writes in support of Arjuna's resolve to let fire burn up the Khāṇḍava forest as food is famous for its heroic value. He who does not root out the bands of enemies who face and press against him; who does not protect a person seeking asylum with him; or give out largess in aid—is only like the worm inside a country fig, and not a man.* The world of Brahma's creation is compared to a country fig and the unworthy man to such a worm in it.

This was final answer; and, was Kṛṣṇa glad? He agreed to assist him in undertaking and finishing the job which essayed to give to the fullest limits of Arjuna's affording and courage. The one who provokes you may be mighty; the thing a person begs of you may be more precious than the golden Mēru; what of that? While life lasts, one must give to the limit!

At this point Agni goes out and fetches a special chariot drawn by special horses, the Gāṇḍīva bow and the quivers which for ever are full and never fail to supply arrows. The succeeding description of the burning of the Khāṇḍava is one of the most vivid and powerful passages in Kannada poetry. Of course one has to swallow and inhibit the pities of a situation where shoot, flower, rabbit and fawn are all as thoroughly and ruthlessly destroyed as the wild beasts and the wicked spirits dwelling in the forest. The Kinnara lovers who get burnt in each other's arms (C.p.A.P.) are as fully described as the snakes and the tigers and the lions, and the demons infesting the forest. It is a total act and the demand of the fire was that not a single living thing should be let pass or be excepted.

The desire was fulfilled, but for two events, each of which develops relationships with later sections of the Māhabhārata story: (1) the escape from the fire of a snake by name Aśvasēna with half his body cut, swearing vengeance against Arjuna and finding refuge

as a sarpāstra in the quiver of Karna; and (2) the surrender of Maya, a Dānava architect, while the three forces, that of the cakra of Kṛṣṇa, the arrow shot by Arjuna and the enveloping licking flame of Agni pressed round him. And when he said that he sought refuge in Arjuna, commending himself to his mercy, the three destructive forces withdrew automatically. The grateful Maya, later, builds for Yudhiṣṭhira a marvel of an audience chamber which makes the world and with it the Kauravas, jealous of the Pāṇḍavas. He brings it fully fashioned from the heavens.

Another incident which shows up the greatness of Arjuna is his miraculous power covering the entire forest with a roof of arrows when Indra's clouds burst with terrific downpour of rain to bring down the fire. Nothing daunted, Indra comes at the head of an army against the two heroes, not recking that one of them was his son and the other the preceptor of the three worlds. When Brahma notices his march for a destructive battle with them, he stops Indra saying: If your desire is to protect the forest, it has already been destroyed. If your intention is hostility to Arjuna, he is your son. If the ache in your heart be against Acyuta, it is improper; for he is one of Us Three. This is what I say: Give Guṇārṇava the fruits of victory. This shall be your only effort and purpose. Indra appreciates these remarks and accordingly calls down a shower of heaven's flowers on Arjuna, takes out the crown from on his own head and decks Arjuna with it, giving him the name Kirīṭi. Another name Kṛṣṇa also is given to him, because he was covered over with the black smoke of the burning Khāṇḍava forest and with the smoke of the hiss of the great serpents in the woods and with the blackness of the scar on his wrist left by the impact of the bow-string on him as endlessly the arrows were shot. Brahma declared that he might live as long as Brahma lives, and Īśvara that (because he was Udāra-Mahēśvara) there was no difference between himself and Arjuna.

This is one of the early sections of the Mahābhārata story which shows to us the promise of final Pāṇḍava success on one side. More particularly, it shows the growing familiarity, companionship, mutual understanding and joint purposing and planning of enterprise that developed between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna: which is going to be the decisive factor in shaping the fortunes of the Pāṇḍavas.

And when this generation passes, the life of Abhimanyu's son has to be preserved as the only true scion of the race. Abhimanyu was Arjuna's son by Subhadrā. Among the Pāṇḍavas themselves, Kṛṣṇa's friend par excellence is Arjuna. It was personal regard and friendship between kindred spirits. That is the basic fact. He is the dearest of his friends among this group of brothers even as in the Yādava camp Kṛṣṇa seems to have chosen Sātyaki for favour.

10

With great pomp the Rājasūya is celebrated and the challenge of Śiśupāla comes at the end of the Rājasūya context. There were both personal and public reasons for Śiśupāla's hostility to Kṛṣṇa. Legends speak of the ugly physical features and the harsh voice of little Śiśupāla vanishing at the touch of Kṛṣṇa when Kṛṣṇa's aunt, Śiśupāla's mother, let him hold the child; for that indicated that Śiśupāla would meet his death at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. Śiśupāla was in league with Jarāsandha as almost one of his army officers; the slaying of Jarāsandha and the interminable feuds earlier at Mathura before Kṛṣṇa changed over to Dvāraka could have only added to hatred. Jarāsandha was the mightiest king of the time, of the order of an emperor; and without destroying him, there could be no Rājasūya for Yudhiṣṭhira. Some ruling chiefs who for various reasons were jealous of the Pāṇḍavas or disliked Kṛṣṇa considered that Jarāsandha had been killed by a trick and that Kṛṣṇa even if he had resisted and beaten back Jarāsandha earlier, had not pursued the fight or was winner. The growing importance and fame of Kṛṣṇa after Kamsa was destroyed had been the cause of discomfort and grievance to some. They thought that Kṛṣṇa carried his personal feud with Jarāsandha (who was father-in-law to his uncle Kamsa) and that he engineered the trick by which Jarāsandha was killed in his own palace in single combat with Bhīma. The feuds and conflicts were, so far as Kṛṣṇa was concerned, in the earlier phase personal and private. But when Yudhiṣṭhira had to perform Rājasūya, Jarāsandha had to be eliminated. He was holding a number of Yādava princes prisoners. It had been also ordained that he should die at the hands of Bhīma. This became doubly a public cause for Kṛṣṇa. Seeing that there was no other way of destroying an oppressor

of men who had a mighty army to deploy, Kṛṣṇa made use of this method of challenging him to a mortal combat in his own palace. The disentangling of the private and public motives and purposes is hard in any context; and in a situation like the Rājasūya the best of a bad choice had to be made; for it was reckless daring for enemies to pierce into Jarāsandha's citadel and challenge him for a fight. But it was great and sportsmanlike of Jarāsandha to accept it. What complaint he did not care to make need not be raised by others as objection to his motive or the procedure adopted. The terms and premises of existence then were different from the later and modern ones. Śiśupāla had another cause of bitterness. Kṛṣṇa had more or less carried off Rukmiṇi, his own bride-to-be on an appeal from her almost at the point of marriage.

All these combined to rouse his anger when Bhīṣma suggested the name of Kṛṣṇa for Agrapūja—'the first honour. Śiśupāla and a number of his associates challenged the choice. Bitter complaint was made. Argument ensued. All the kings of the country were assembled there and it was testing-ground for worth. He who won now won his place at the top. When Gāngeya declared that Kṛṣṇa was supreme among men and enforced his argument describing him as the one who had subdued Bali; who through conquering prowess raised the earth from the spheres down below; who on another day in the form of Narasimha tore into shreds the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu and who, at the beginning of the churning of the ocean of milk brought the Mandara hill—surely he was the only person worthy of such honour! One may notice that such praise by Bhīṣma refers to the incarnations of Viṣṇu; and to Kṛṣṇa by implication there and then as the same person. Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the statement and was about to offer arghya to him.

This was more than Śiśupāla could bear. He raved and contemptuously asked them to stop further proceedings of the kind. He was surprised, he said, that anyone who was so old in age, so gray of hair with such a big paunch, Devavrata for name, and so famous, could speak like Bhīṣma now was doing. This assembly trusted him as the eldest member of the Kuru family and of the whole clan and as son to Gangā, but he had spoken unworthily. And if he spoke disregarding the proprieties it certainly was not right of Yudhiṣṭhira to act on it. If you have personal regard for Kṛṣṇa,

he said, offer such worship inside your homes. In a public yajna and in the assembly where so many crowned heads were assembled one should not think of a vicious person like Kṛṣṇa as deserving of the first honours. He is a base-born wretch: a raw, brash cowherd. By making him great, you have brought discredit and blame on so many kings assembled here. Out of consideration for you I am here, who have brought the gods to my feet,* and have brought down all the mighty men of the world with my prowess. When I am right before you, will you offer the highest pūja to a cowherd? The yajna which offers such arghya to Kṛṣṇa without knowing the proprieties and values is like defiling the mouth after drinking nectar to one's heart's content. I am surprised to see how undeserving is the greatness of him who suggested the offer, of the one who came forward to give it and of the other who would take the thing offered. Well, let the offer be made and the fellow who would give it, give. We shall see who will be hero enough to presume to have the foolhardiness to receive the offer.

Then he turned to Kṛṣṇa himself and addressed to him words of the rankest abuse, mocked him, showered on him vilification for deeds done and undone. Frankly he is now designating himself as a Danuja. The poet describes Kṛṣṇa as Asurāri (the enemy of the Asuras) and Śiśupāla as Gīrvāṇāri (the enemy of the gods). Śiśupāla arraigned Kṛṣṇa and told him that he did not deserve Agrapūja before so many kings who were of pure royal descent. Such honour, while he was there, was equal to calling down a stroke of lightning, death and poison. The title Danujāntaka cannot be sustained by Kṛṣṇa (as it was won) when no one like himself was alive to challenge it and it could not be sustained now when he was resisting it. He threatened to kill him and drink his heart's blood for having accepted the offer of Arghya in an assembly where he was present. "Say that you do this not knowing better," he said, "ask me to put up with your ignorance. And in this open assembly fall at my feet; bow. I shall then not kill you." He was the very picture of fret and fury. The assembly was speechless and looked like a cowardly person on whom a serpent had climbed.

Kṛṣṇa now told him and the assembly why he put up with all this nonsense for so long. "I could not rise to punish you imme-

* No one knows when.

diātely, Śiśupāla, for I gave my word of promise to your mother Satvati that I shall not get angry with you too quickly; and forgive a hundred faults of yours. Bhīṣma, Drōṇa, the Pāṇḍavas, Duryōdhana, Kṛpa and Karṇa are aware of this and bear witness to the limits now reached. Even my patience cannot hold longer." Thus saying, he took in anger the plate on which the arghya was offered to him and struck Śiśupāla full with it. Śiśupāla's head was cut, circled about severed from its trunk; and got into the centre of the plate. There was a leer on its face still, indicating thereby that when Śiśupāla was dead, the mockery was still on. It perhaps was also a sign of triumph and release for Śiśupāla since the history of enmity with Viṣṇu for the Jaya-Vijayas was now ended with this third birth. And with this death of Śiśupāla they should be able to get back to their place of service in the heavens. The leer on the face of Śiśupāla can be made to mean anything. That Śiśupāla was destroyed was the crowning secular act of the Rājasūya. It concluded the yāga and established not only the political suzerainty of the Pāṇḍavas but also Kṛṣṇa's ability and character in the public life of his time. From that day onwards Kṛṣṇa's help and partisanship counted for very much in the life and the power politics of India. This is also the high-water mark of Pāṇḍava fortune in the Mahābhārata.

11

Now begins a set of events which leads to misery and humiliation and ultimately to revenge and war. Duryōdhana is green with envy. This time again he plots suffering and destruction of the Pāṇḍavas. In spite of the warning, the dissuasion and counsel of the elders Duryōdhana inveigles Yudhiṣṭhira into a game of dice at which Śakuni wins for him all that belonged to the Pāṇḍavas. One of the terms of the stake was that if Yudhiṣṭhira lost the game the Pāṇḍavas would have to live as exiles in the forest for twelve years and an extra year hiding; and, if they were discovered within that period, they would be subjected to a further term of exile for twelve years. Duryōdhana knew definitely that he would win. Śakuni, his uncle, had seen to it that the dice were loaded against the Pāṇḍavas. Not only the kingdom and all the belongings

of the Pāṇḍava brothers, even the persons of the brothers and of Draupadi were staked and lost, jointly and severally. And when, in exercise of the rights he has won Duryōdhana commanded his brother to fetch Draupadi into open court, and Duśśāsana caught hold of her by the forelocks and dragged her into the court, all but the wicked ones were hurt and cried out against the wrong. Bound by the consequences and legalities of the situation, the Pāṇḍavas stood looking on helplessly. Bhīṣma, Kṛpa and Drōṇa called upon the evildoer to desist. But Duśśāsana called to her as a servant to go in and render service like one; (toḷte toḷtu vesa kai; Pōupōgu nīn) used hard, wrong language, and almost essayed to catch hold of the clothes she wore. ("Uṭṭuduvaram—up to the point of pulling off her wear - 'Kai tandu' stretching his hand") and, like a person trying to bring down death on himself, grasped her by the braid. When her braid got loose and fell about her shoulder he stood like an idiot all sweat and confusion, like one who had caught a black cobra; Duryōdhana, the while, looked on with smiling satisfaction.

Bhīma looked with bloodshot eyes and mounting rage. It was difficult for him to control himself. Bhīma presents a terrible picture (VI:7) as he held the mace in his hand almost ready to strike; and Gāṇḍīvi held his Gāṇḍīva ready; the Mādreyas got into similar rage and readiness. It almost looked to Yudhiṣṭhira that his four brothers were thinking of disobeying him and breaking the words of a promise he had given and the terms of the stake he had lost. A firm look at them stayed their hands and cooled their resolves. A stanza (IX:7) proclaims their virtue saying that the great ones never break a command.

Draupadi took in the situation. Hers was the worst humiliation: that Duśśāsana caught her by the hair in open assembly. She strained against the leash and said: "My sorrow is great. But above the sorrow I speak these words of mine. I shall have the person slain who has caught me by the hair and pulled it and will have this hair of mine tied up again only with the coils of the intestines of this wicked man. Till then I shall keep the hair loose and untied." This broke the bonds of Bhīma's restraint. Already he was uncertain in mind whether to obey the implied behest of his brother; and his anger had not cooled. The words of Draupadi came ringing and inflamed him as incense would fire. He thundered out: "The words, Draupadi,

which you have uttered in anger are enough. Who shall say that it shall not be as you wish? I shall strike the wicked Duśśāsana on the field of battle, smash his belly, take out the fibres and with them tie your hair. I shall break open the heart of this wicked Duśśāsana and drink his red blood; so too will I break both the thighs of Duryōdhana with my club and break into a thousand pieces the jewel crown on his head. My eyes emit sparks of fire as I look on the faces of these enemies of ours. Trust my words; if the heads of these Kauravas are still level on their shoulders, the reason is that we have to honour the words and terms of our brother. But Bhīma will not rest until they roll to the ground.” (VII: 12-14) And he vowed before Bhīṣma and others that he will kill all the hundred Kauravas. He shouted the words of doom that his will be the arms that will churn the ocean of the enemy armies and destroy all the hundred Kauravas in insolent flourish now. But none of these words of anger and revenge and none of the words of wisdom spoken by the elders like Bhīṣma and Vidura was any use. Bhīṣma feels that this event would surely destroy the line which had come down from Bharata, Yayāti, Kutsa, Purukutsa and Purūrava. It was like the fire that starts from inside the axle of a chariot. “Dhṛtarāṣṭra, this fire that blazes from your son is bound to burn up everything and no one will be able to ward it off or extinguish it.” (VII: 16)

Nothing was able to change the situation. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was weak and far too fond of his son not to indulge in his triumph. And even if he had tried he would not have been successful in dissuading Duryōdhana. The latter had won a total success with the help of uncle Śakuni who had played a knavish trick on the Pāṇḍavas; just for such an outcome. Those among the people who heard of the events were full of sympathy for the Pāṇḍavas and sorrow at what Fate brought them to. Many spoke of the certain doom that the Kauravas have sown for themselves. Duryōdhana is compared to a cat who at the sight of the world won through gambling was but seeing the milk for his drink and not the stick hanging on his head. They said that the Kauravas will have to pay a heavy price for this trick with the dice and for manhandling Draupadi publicly. Duśśāsana and Śakuni are both blamed as the sure cause of destruction. But words break no bones nor was public criticism strong and effective. They could not thwart or compel.

The brothers with Draupadi bade farewell to friends and elders and proceeded to the forest to carry out the agreement. Kunti was left behind with Vidura. Subhadrā and Abhimanyu were sent to Dvārāvati. Life during the twelve years of exile in the forest and the thirteenth in hiding was sure to be beset with danger and hardship caused by nature, beast and man. And the enemy would naturally be busy creating trouble. "But you will come out of them all," the elders said, "to happy victory." With affection and tears the farewell was made.

12

What befell them during the twelve years of exile—the first five in Kāmyakavana and the rest in Dvaitavana—is briefly narrated in the work. The poet takes occasion to describe the onset of the clouds and the rains (VII: 22-25). The concreteness of the details makes Pampa's description picturesque and real. The slaying of Kimmīra removes a hurdle; and, strangely enough, when the forest folk create for them a few facilities and the tapōdhanas become fine companions, the poet describes that in the middle of the forest the Pāṇḍavas discovered for themselves a substitute kingdom to the riches and luxuries of Indraprastha (VII: 28-29) which they have lost.

On a certain day Jayadratha, the only brother-in-law of Duryōdhana, looked for an opportunity when the Pāṇḍavas were all out hunting he laid hands on and carried off Draupadi. When the Pāṇḍavas discovered it they pursued him, broke his chariot into a thousand bits, bound him hand and foot and brought him to their brother. Yudhiṣṭhira chaffed him on his unworthiness, warned him and sent him away in disgrace. On another day, Duryōdhana came with pomp and luxury to spite the Pāṇḍavas and with the evil intention of seeing the pale shrunk faces of his cousins who were wandering in the forest like common huntsmen. His desire was to make them look at and envy him in his glory—he considered these two the sweetest fruit of samsāra—and along with all his friends camped near the forest-dwelling of the Pāṇḍavas. But, as misfortune should have it, a Gandharva by name Citrāngada, enemy to Duryōdhana in a former birth caught hold of the two brothers, Duryō-

dhana and Duśśāsana* like in a monkey-knot and carried them off. Bhīṣma, Karṇa and others looked on helplessly while the princes were being carried away through the skies. Here the poet has some fun: that they looked on like the ancestors of poor descendants who wait desperately for an offering of food and water which does not materialize; or, those that have to eat what is left over: heads bent, with their bows stretched before them, and absolutely dazed.

The condition of Bhānumati wife of Duryōdhana however, is pitiful as she comes and falls at the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and begs of him forgiveness and generosity and prays him to rescue her husband. Yudhiṣṭhira was sad to hear of what had happened and came forth with his promise of aid, speaking words which have come down to us through time: that the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas are five against a hundred between themselves, but a hundred and six against a common enemy and in pursuit of fame. He immediately turns to Arjuna—designated as Sāhasābharāṇa at this point—and assigns to him the task of rescuing his brother Suyōdhana saying that it is not proper for them to treat lightly an affront like that to the family. Arjuna assented immediately, without a word, took it as command and promised to bring back the brothers from wheresoever they were taken to. To enable him to see where the Gandharva army was moving, he availed himself of a technique called Cākṣuṣi which a demoness had given him when he had visited Himavān during his wanderings, and treated his eyes with it. He at once sighted the Gandharva army, shot his arrows quick and strong in an unending series which enveloped them completely and killed fourteen thousand of them! Citrāngada was frightened and handed over the dear, precious prisoners. Arjuna is described as bringing the princes down safely and painlessly making steps to the skies with his arrows, and without untying the bonds brought them to Dharmaputra. Pāncāli did not lose a chance of nagging. She could not control herself or her glee. “Poor dear! Where now have disappeared the exploits you organized when you dragged us in open assembly? You are fatigued now, dear brother-in-law” she said., “You have now seen your prowess. That you should have come to such grief!” These words sounded as bad as death and she untied the bonds which bound the brothers and delivered to Bhānu-

* This inclusion of Duśśāsana is an addition.

mati her husband and brother-in-law. Duryōdhana could not speak a word. Like a serpent whose fangs are removed, like an elephant whose tusks are broken he felt deflated; and ashamed to look into the faces of the Pāṇḍavas he returned to Hastināpura in chagrin.*

13

On a certain day news came that Duryōdhana was prosperous and ruled his kingdom efficiently and well; he was not sleeping but awake. Draupadi raised the subject of their own helpless condition in the wilds as contrast to the glory of Duryōdhana. "A woman's mind is not normally equal perhaps to the etiquette or discussion of political affairs. Yet, you belong to the lunar race and what has happened to it? Something that shouldn't have! Howsoever much I wish to be silent, I cannot refrain from speaking when I think of this degrading condition. The countless offendings of the Kaurava princes force me to speak. What is the plight of Bhīma? He has to wander endlessly from forest to forest for fruit and food; and you do not seem to be affected by it. Arjuna brought for you the golden threads from the Suparva hill; he is now reduced to the drudgery of going among the hills to bring forest-fibres with which you might have clothes to wear. And this does not disturb you! You are a truthful man and do not mind physical hardship. These twins Nakula and Sahadeva pluck nuts, berries and fruit of the forest to relieve their hunger and stand loyal by your side and in no way do they cause you pain. You do not also think of the indignity which Duśśāsana heaped upon me or of my being clad in bark and skin. This does not concern you! You may not recollect in your mind the distresses to which the five of us have been exposed. Are you at least thinking of your own condition hiding in dense forests, unthoughtful of everything else? Peace and penance are the occupations of a muni; not of a king. Bows and arrows and prowess are what will embellish a king. Your enemies have done you wrong; they deserve punishment." (VII: 45-52)

*Yudhiṣṭhira is pleased with the serices of his brother and is described as taking him on to his but and giving him the betel he was chewing, a habit which seems to have been current even in the days of Bānas Kādambari. (toḥeyan ēṛisikanḍu bayol tambulam coṭṭan.)

When Draupadi stopped Bhīma was quick to speak in support of her. He added his own words of anger and complaint. "The kingly arts you learnt; you did not learn how not to lose your domains. Is it any greatness to change over from kingly robes to bark garments? The whole world is twitting you and us that for truthfulness you have handed over the world you ruled over to your cousins. Your enemies have taken over forcibly from you your kingdom, and you are pining broken in fortune in the forest. The Kauravas, as it were, caught hold of our valour by the forelock when they pulled Draupadi by the hair and this is disgrace for one and twenty generations. They were burning words of shame we heard that day in the assembly when, drunk with insolence that cad of a Duśśāsana pulled out the braid of Draupadi. Our fingers and hands were tied. Their taunts stung us and mocked our worthlessness. They forced out gracious Pāncāli from the ladies' chambers and in open assembly laid violent hands on her like on a cow. I tightened my jaw and endured the insult. I have borne all that till now, to sustain your truthfulness. But I am thirsting to drink the blood of Duśśāsana welling from his chest and am impatient" (VII:52-59). Bhīma seemed to march in the direction of the enemy with such intent in mind, his terrible mace supported on his shoulder. Dharmaputra tried soft words to bring down the anger of Bhīmasena.

14

About this time Vyāsa, son of Parāśara paid the Pāṇḍavas a visit: a little like Nārada did earlier when the Rājasūya had to be undertaken. The picture is slightly different here. His matted hair with its golden colour, looked like forked lightning, and the lustre of his body with its cloud-black colour smeared with ashes looked like the white clouds of the autumn which cover the Anjana hill; (whereas the picture of Nārada was immaculate white:) the white clouds covering the whole stretch of the sky in all richness, and the bees drunk with the fragrance of the paddy fields. The brothers and Draupadi welcomed him and offered him regard and hospitality. They asked of him the way to overcome their present distressing condition. Vyāsa was sympathetic and told them that they were dear to him for their virtue. "The twelve years' limit is almost

about to end. Your enemy will not hand back the kingdom to you. War is impending. And you know that Duryōdhana is spiteful and unyielding. Your enemies are supported by the heroism and strength of Bhīṣma, Drōṇa and Karna. They will be difficult to match and conquer and can be overcome only by Arjuna. I have therefore come here to tell him to earn Divyāstras and the way to get them. I shall initiate him into some mantras." At his thought a Guhyaka came down and was assigned the task of taking Arjuna to the Indrakīla hill in the Himālayas. Arjuna took the permission of his elders and was about to go. Pāncāli whetted his purpose by saying: "Do not think of the comforts of your body. Think of the exaltation of your foes. Think in your heart of my vow. Think of the mantra that Vyāsamuni has initiated you into. May things happen as you desire them to shape and happen." Her tears and expressions of affection and his understanding her heart and mind tighten his resolve to work to purpose.*

The Guhyaka took him to the Indrakīla mountain as instructed. On the way our poet describes the burst of the autumn season here in characteristically fine lines, one of which speaks of the sky as taking on the hue of a sword-blade washed with some citric juice; and Śarada came as if the world got its eyes. The poet very naturally leads on to the sighting of Himācala as it stood like a collection of all the Śarada clouds, white and great and spreading full before him.

Arjuna's penance was severe. Indra felt his throne shaking and his heart trembling and sent a host of Apsarasas and all the six seasons and the Gandharvas under Kāmadeva's command to disturb him and upset his tapas. Many were the stinging valiant words spoken by each of these disturbers of the tapas; they were confident of gaining victory over him. All about Arjuna beauty, song and dance spread out soft and bewitching with a view to wean him from his concentration (VII: 81-91). The luxury and lusciousness of these beauties of heaven as they strove to weave their fascination on Arjuna are a splendid dish, sensuous and compelling. A heavy wreath of mallika with which Urvaśi had tied up her hair was rendered more fragrant with musk water sprinkled on it. The buds of the mallika wreath opened out prettily all around and it

* Compare Bharavi's *Kirātārjunīya*, where Draupadi's words have a harder ring.

looked as if Rāhu was spitting out the moon whom he had swallowed up. The dance and song of Rambhā and Tilottamā and the several damsels of paradise build up an environment full of beauty, music and enchantment.

This, however, did not work. This lord of men in his tapas remained undisturbed. Not only did they fail in their attempt; but they fell for him—who was in figure a sahaja-manōja—and for his manly grace. They then took to indirect ways and upbraided him for fruitless tapas: “Ashes and matted hair are features of tapas. How do the bow and arrow become consonant with it? it is like lacing pearls with pepper. What sort of tapas is yours? What does one wish to gain from severe penance? Not heaven? Why do you not speak? Is not happiness the fruit of heaven? Who does not opt for such happiness? Who among women are equal to us? We come on our own and clasp your feet. Ours are verily soft limbs dear. Wash off your ashes. These voices are sweeter than soft strains of the cuckoo; a twirl and twitch of the brows of these beauties can yield the most exquisite happiness such as that of heaven.”

But all words of desire, of temptation and fondness, of love's prattle, of gibe, mockery and anger and the sharpest darts of oblique reference failed of effect. They suffered a total defeat, and went back shamefacedly to report failure to Indra (VII: 87). The face of Kāma wore the figure of a sneeze!

Indra himself now came down in the guise of a Brahmin and stood before Arjuna as a guest and felt tenderly towards his son as he looked on him. He asked the princely tapasvi who he was, how he came to undertake such severe austerity and how surprising it was that he sat there for penance equipped so incompatibly with a bow and arrows. Could he be so ignorant as all that? Arjuna accepts the incongruence and says his aim is not final liberation but the fulfilment of an earthly purpose. He would not vex such a guest with a lie: it would not be worthy. “I am the son of king Pāṇḍu, Gāṇḍīvi by name. Our kingdom has got into the hands of a cousin in gambling. We have entered the forest, obedient to our elder brother. Parāśara came and assigned to me the task of worshipping Śamkara, and until he shows up I shall continue my tapas. I am using a boon given by Indra as aid in this task.” Needless to say Indra was definitely pleased. The elderly Brahmin

suddenly transformed himself into Indra and clasped Arjuna in affection and urged him to continue the tapas till he attained his object, both with a view to gain the favour of Śiva and for victory over the enemy. Then he vanished.

Arjuna continued his tapas. Its flame spread unbearably all around and disturbed the other performers who went, on a deputation to Śiva and described to him how a singular, heroic person had come to perform tapas at their place and how its ferocity spread round and burned like wildfire. "Our penances are burnt up. Tell us where else we could go for ours. He is equipped with a bow and arrows and wears a coat of mail. He has furnished himself with a pair of quivers. He is not like anybody else, but resembles you as you stood accoutred when you stood out to destroy the Three Cities." Śiva heard all this and with his special powers divined who it was that was being described and what the situation was. As he half closed his eyes in meditation to find out who it was the poet describes Śiva almost in the language of Kālidāsa and Vālmīki: He looked like the unstirred deep of a lake with a fish asleep under it. (Maredu kendida minam poltadirardira maḍuvan pōltam). He realized the situation and thought that it was time for him to act, promised them to do all that was necessary to relive their condition and decided to appear before Arjuna in disguise.

A little before then Indra seems to have requested him to rid the havoc caused by the demon Mūka who moved about there in the form of the Ādivarāha. He would go there as a hunter he thought, have the boar slain by Arjuna, pick a quarrel with him, test his prowess and then reward him for it. The entire host of Kailāsa marched as a hunter army. Pārvati rigged herself up as a huntress and Guhā became the commander of the Kirāta hosts. The bhūtas constituted the army which stormed the forest like a burst of disaster. The boar Ādivarāha was roused and the hunt was on. It moved about causing fright and destruction all around, and with the hunter-chief running in pursuit. Arjuna saw the boar rushing straight in front of him. He took out an arrow and shot at it straight and tight through the mouth. The arrow passed through the tail. Meanwhile Śiva shot another arrow which split the boar in two; and, it fell dead. Arjuna proceeded to collect his arrow, washed it in the nearby lake and resumed tapas standing on one leg. Guhā

now came to him in behalf of Śiva asking for the return of his master's arrow, and used language which Arjuna deemed hurtful to his dignity. "You are a strange tapasvi to carry bows, arrows and quivers for tapas. The two do not agree. Howsoever that be, you have collected my master's arrow without fear of him. It is possible you may not know what you have done. I have come to ask for its return in behalf of him. If you knowingly have taken something which belongs to another the like of you cannot exist on earth. Return the shaft to the owner and through me." The messenger of the Kirāta seemed to be hurling insult at Arjuna and Arjuna naturally was angry. The "weapon for a hunter", he said, "could be a wooden staff with which to hunt an animal. My sharp astra can shake the worlds. How can he call my astra his? The villain your master does not know the measure of his or my prowess. You are taking advantage of a shooting to use wrong language to me and, adding to it injury threaten a fight and speak words of strength and force. Such sounds are harsh and unpleasant to my ears and will not avail with me. Desist, hunter, do not ask for the arrow. It is mine. If in spite of it you would pursue the matter of a fight with exchange of arrows ask your master to come; and welcome" (VIII:19-20).

The messenger went back and delivered the answer to Śiva exactly in the words of Arjuna. The fake hunter rushed his army at Arjuna. A terrible fighting ensued and the two protagonists rushed at each other like one mad elephant at another. Then they threw down arms and wrestled with each other. Each gave the other a number of wounds. The gods soon gathered to look on and saw how at one turn Śiva beat Pārtha down and at another Arjuna downed the destroyer of the Three Cities. Finally, like a crest-jewel to his victory, Arjuna, i.e. Arjuna, hurled Śiva down and pressed tight on his body. His feet were planted firmly on Śiva's neck.*

*This sounds impious and is certainly not the issue either in the *Mahābhārata* or in *Kirātārjuniya* where Śiva is able to humble Arjuna. Pampa wants to show up Arjuna, his hero, as more powerful than Śiva himself and so Arjuna is made to throw Śiva down and plant his feet on his neck. Himself being a Jaina, no piety or reverence could inhibit Pampa here.

This episode evokes a later writer, Nemicandra (twelfth century), to sing of the extraordinary powers of poets to describe as events what are almost impossible.

(contd.)

At this point, with a tender grace and affection, Śiva discovered to Arjuna the third eye in his forehead—with none of its fire and destructive power, but opened in favour and appreciation. Snakes played down his chest. The bow Pināka was in his hand. In his matted lock was the Ganga; and, by its side the moon; On the white neck was a dark streak. There was no doubt any longer as to who the fallen adversary was. Arjuna jumped off and fell at Mṛḍa's feet. "O divine Śiva, at whose feet demons, men and Indra fall in obeisance, I did not know in the least that it was you. Tell me now how I can expiate the wrong I have done."

Śiva was happy to see the humility and contrition in such a victor, and asked him to tell him what he could confer upon him as boon. Arjuna was happy himself and said that he did not ask for anything else, but begged only for the Pāśupatāstra. Śiva gave it to him. Having given it to him, he told him that his enemies will all be destroyed. Śiva did not mind the trouble to which he had been put but was all grace and kindness to him. Gauri was equally gracious to this Śiva-compeller, and gave Arjuna an astra called Anjalika. The thirty-three gods gave their favourite astras. Arjuna felt really blessed.

It was now time for Śiva to go and Indra descended to felicitate his son on his achievement. He took him to his capital city so that he might have rest and recuperation after such hardship. With great pomp and celebration Arjuna was installed in Amarāvati where it was a feast of the homecoming of a son.

15

An incident that happened here is well known. Rambha* fell for him on hearing the resonant fame of Arjuna's heroism and saw

Kaṭṭuge Kaṭṭadirke kaḍalam kapisantati; vāmana kramam
Muṭṭuge muṭṭadirke mugilam; haranam Naranotti gaṇṭalam
Meṭṭuge meṭṭadirke; kavigal kṛti-bandhadolḷ alte kaṭṭidar,
Muṭṭidar, otti meṭṭidar; adénaḷavaggaḷamo kavīndrarā.

"The monkeys may or may not have bound the sea; Vāmana's feet may or may not have touched the sky; Nara may or may not have trampled on and pressed the neck of Hara; but in poetic work poets so bound, touched and pressed them. How powerful are the works of the poets!"

*Not Urvasi as described elsewhere.

his masculine form. Quietly and alone, she went and offered herself to him. Arjuna could not of course accept the overtures. "You are the lady of Purandara's choice and are therefore like a mother to me. Do not speak words of love, you may please go," he said. In her failure and frustration she cursed him: "You had better be sexless for a year." Arjuna was not sorry but glad that this would enable him to spend a year's time in disguise as woman among women during the thirteenth year of the exile. Not such an evil fate, after all! Even a curse helps.

The brothers were anxious about Arjuna who had been now out far longer than they had expected. When he came back successfully, with honours laden and such joyful news, it was the turn of Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira to have some special achievements to their credit. Bhīma brought the golden lotus of the Saugandhikā, and killed the demon Jaṭāsura and gained the favour of Hanumān who agreed to stay on Arjuna's chariot guarding the flag on its top. Yudhiṣṭhira, with his wisdom and patient self restraint, was able to bring back the Araṇi (i.e. the stick with which the Ṛsis make sacrificial fire) and, incidentally to save the lives of all his four brothers who had been laid low for not heeding the words of the Yakṣa guardian of the Waters. Very soon they came to know that the Yakṣa was none other than Yama himself, the Dharmadeva, father to Yudhiṣṭhira, who had so arranged the events that an evil spirit called Kīrtigē let loose on the Pāṇḍavas by Kanaka, (priest to Duryōdhana) did not kill them. This was a ruse to save their lives he said, from the malevolent spirit who had been set the task of devouring all the five of them.

16

This incident brings to an end the twelve years of forest-dwelling for the Pāṇḍavas. The brothers took counsel together to spend the year of hiding in the Matsya (modern Bharatpur) country where king Virāta was enemy to their own enemies and therefore countable as friend. There were other reasons, too, for choosing the Matsya country. No other place could be better suited in every respect to spend the rest of the time hiding. A pretty stanza describes its attractions (VIII-35). The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadi went into the

palace severally, sought and gained service there. Dharmarāja became Kankabhāṭṭa, counsellor, companion, learned in the Vedas and one who could help the king to beguile an hour with dice. Bhīma went followed by a boy carrying a ladle and kitchen apparatus, and got service as a cook. Virāṭa asked him what his qualifications were; Bhīma's answer is interesting and characteristic: "If you eat the food cooked by me, sire, you will get no gray hair. I shall give you satisfaction in the flavour and taste of the dishes I dress for you, and you will like them. And this again: whosoever challenges me as a wrestler, I shall beat down. I am Valala by name." Nakula was assigned the charge of horses and Sahadeva of the cattle. Arjuna became Bṛhandalē in the queen's quarters—even as Viṣṇu in ages past became a boar to resurrect the Earth from the hands of a demon. Pāncāli got into queen Sudēṣṇa's service as toilet-maid and as masseuse.

The beauty and figure of Pāncāli struck as extraordinary to Sudēṣṇa. "You look so uncommon. Who are you?" she asked her. "I am proficient in the making of many types of fragrant unguents which are superior in aroma to fresh musk. Sairandhri is my name" said Draupadi. "I am not accustomed to petty service. There is a gandharva guard to protect me. If you take me into service, I shall render all the services commanded by you."

Sudēṣṇa the queen had a brother by name Kīcaka who was mighty and wilful. His might was defence to Matsya against the Kauravas. He and his gang of brothers and friends were a reserve of strength to Matsya and he was the sort that would not be denied anything. One day when he visited his sister his eyes fell on Sairandhri and he was smitten with intense desire for her. The description (VIII:59–63) of how she appeared to him and his reactions to her beauty are memorable and present a picture of vulgar desire and passion in contrast to the descriptions of Śṛṅgāra and love in episodes like those of Arjuna and Subhadṛā and in some of those in the *Ādipurāṇa*. He devours her physical features in passion and promises himself a feast of enjoyment possessing her. He does not know whether she is a family woman or one who could be bought.*

* The change-over to Mallikāmālē metre at this point is singularly appropriate and expresses the summariness of his resolution. Its syllable feet frisk and romp like mora feet and the effect is striking.

He does not care a rap who she was; nor recked losing his head that very day; and all that he knew was that even if destruction should come upon him, he would by every possible means have her.

He enquires of his sister who she is. When the latter catching his intent indirectly tells him that she is not an ordinary woman but a Gandharva lady—whatever that may mean—she is just transferring the caution Draupadi herself had mentioned at the time of her employment,—and is just serving for love of her. Kīcaka goes home and finding that the words of his sister in themselves caused further intensity of desire, he directs his sister to send him scents and special unguents with her perfume-maid. The queen feels constrained to carry out his wishes. Innocent of what was in wait for her, Sairandhri carried the perfumes to Kīcaka's place. When she stood before him, he made advances and told her how he was hot with passion for her and promised her food, clothes, position—anything she desired. Her embarrassed look when he first saw her during the day, he says, had burnt into him. He offered her every luxury. Brahma, he says, has created her for him. Many were the words of lust and seduction he spoke. He was abject in his appeal. He advanced to take hold of her. She forbade him and said he should not speak to her words of such mean desire; that she was not the sort of person who would be tempted into falling for him. “Unhand me,” she said, and desired to withdraw from his presence. This angered Kīcaka. He said: “I shall not let you go. Let your Gandharva guardians protect you”—and viciously hit her. (Poydam durātmaṃ). This was too much for Pāncālī to bear. She was speechless and felt unable to do anything. Humiliation burnt into her and her sorrow doubled. Trembling all over, she went to Vṛkōdara in dead privacy and said: “I have all along been in distress at your condition, lodging in servants' quarters, accepting food doled out as charity to you by a stranger. You have fallen low in measure. I have got into new sorrow now. Kīcaka has lost his heart for me and, without any cause, has been vexing me; has laid hands on me. How shall I describe to you his insolence? You know best what to do in a situation like this. You have to relieve me of this humiliation.”

The pain caused to Bhīmasena made him beside himself. “This is likely another cousin of Duśśāsana,” he said, “but don't mind.

My anger first is against the Kauravas and on the battle-field will I gratify my desire to destroy them. Here is an interim cause for anger—in your behalf. I shall remove the cause of your sorrow. Let me set hands on him.” He directed her to fix up a tryst in the royal theatre building and wait there for him about the set of the sun, making Kīcaka believe that she will be amenable to his desire and that when the villain has been lured thereto, he would know what to do.

Draupadi was glad. The next day again she took the perfumes sent by the queen to him. She said: “I pained you yesterday through ignorance. You may say today what you would like to say to me.” Kīcaka was more than happy to hear of her ready compliance. The fool said gallantly: “If in love you are so willing, am I unwilling?” The rendezvous was fixed and Bhīma was duly informed of the arrangements. He got ready for a wrestling bout, made up his hair as befits a warrior dressed man-wise but threw an upper cloth which covered his body up to his toes, made Draupadi keep out of the door, got into the chamber and waited for Kīcaka like a śarabha which waits for a lion. The lusty knave Kīcaka had been miserable all day vexed that the sun did not set a whole age and was trying to cool himself rolling in fire and water. And when the day died into the night he felt like having gained a kingdom. His mind was filled with joy and he felt expansive. He got into the theatre building and, like a flash of lightning, rushed to where Bhīma was lying, mistaking him for his love. He complained against her silence, for her not showing him her face and spoke other words in fond endearment. When he took out the wrap which covered the body, Bhīma leaped up and caught him in a death-grip.

This was no doubt a sudden onslaught. But Kīcaka himself was no mean match. A stiff struggle ensued. Many were the blows given and taken and the fight was on for some good time. Finally Bhīma threw him down, trampled on him, broke him into a hundred pieces like an elephant trampling on a heap of bangles, took his body and struck it against pillars and walls. Blood, fat, flesh, bone, marrow—all poured out into his hands and only the skin seemed to remain. Kīcaka’s body looked then like the emptying of what had been a full knapsack. Bhīma is said to have killed him in every joint, though he was reputed to have had the strength of

a thousand lions; and without strain! Kīcaka was thus finished. Bhīma had so thoroughly broken him up that the blood that was spilt and the bits of flesh scattered about looked like an offering of blood flowers to the God of Death. After having done this he quietly returned to the kitchen and set about his daily routine as if nothing had happened.

The immediate consequences need not be detailed. The followers of Kīcaka were mad with anger and when they heard Sairandhri crying out that her Gandharva protectors had destroyed Kīcaka who dared to make love to her and brought an evil fate upon himself bringing on her discredit for the deed, they seized her and bundled her off to cremate her along with the body of Kīcaka. The noise, the curse and the groan and the tumult aroused reached the ears of Bhīma. He changed dress and issued out of the town. There he rushed suddenly against the members of the procession, smiting them left and right and made deadly havoc. The destruction of the Upakīcakas was complete; the next morning dawned with the news and sight of this phenomenally dread event. News of the death of Kīcaka and the others filled Matsya with consternation. Kīcaka was like a tower of strength to the king. But the people of the city felt that nothing better could happen to a person who was unclean and libidinous desiring others' women. Yet now that he was dead, the right arm of Matsya was broken. But they could not speak out. Virāṭa's queen felt coward-like. She did not know what to say, felt ashamed, was taken up with dumb sorrow and kept silent.

17

Scouts carried this news to the ears of Suyōdhana in Hastināvati. This was welcome for one reason: it was a piece of good fortune for the Kīcakas had fought against the Kauravas in whose way they were obstacles. But the surprise was that Kīcaka was killed. It did not make reason; could not add up. It was extra-ordinary, unbelievable, impossible, unthinkable. None who was not Bhīma could kill Kīcaka whose reputed strength was that of a lion. Kīcaka, Bhīma, Śalya and Baladeva were the only equals in strength. To no other is such an enterprise possible. That is the indication. The

Pāṇḍavas must be in the Matsya capital and they must be exposed; a further term of exile must be imposed on them, thought Duryōdhana. He said to Sindhurāja—his brother-in-law – that Virāṭa's kingdom would also get into their hands. The words of elders like Bhīṣma and Drōṇa were, as usual, again not heeded. Karṇa spoke words of valour and suggested a fight. Duryōdhana decided that they must find out first where the Pāṇḍavas were hiding and bring them on to the battlefield. The means of drawing out the Pāṇḍavas would be to capture the cattleherds of Virāṭa. Since capture of cattle and women is the surest challenge to a Kṣatriya, the Pāṇḍavas will come out. (This was a live cause in the 10th Century as well).

In two stages the cattle are laid on, at the north and south of the kingdom. The southern attack was led by the king of Trigarta, a cousin of Virāṭa who reached with four thousand chariots. But he was beaten by Virāṭa and captured. By this time the limit of the year when the Pāṇḍavas had to be in disguise had been completed. All except Arjuna had gone to the battlefield while Arjuna was the reserve guard behind. When this assault failed, Suyōdhana came north with a full army and captured the cattle. Many cowherds and brave men died in the Virāṭa army. Protecting the cattle and fighting against an enemy who laid hands on them and dying, if need be, in such cause was considered worthy conduct for men. Death in protecting them, they believed, would bring them merit. But the horse-army of Duryōdhana was more than a match to them.

News of the failure of arms of the Virāṭa army was brought by one cowherd. Uttara the son of king Virāṭa heard of it. He was angry and declared he would proceed to the battlefield if only he had a suitable charioteer.* Arjuna offered to be that; got at his Gāndīva and equipment from the Śami tree where it had been hanging tied up for a year; calmed the fright of Uttara when he sighted a real army; he broke the bangles on his wrist like he would the rings round the necks of his enemies. A terrific battle ensued when he charged on the Duryōdhana army. When Duryōdhana tried to lead away the cattle-herd and other warriors interposed between

* The episode of Uttara's cowardice and verbal heroics is a classic elsewhere; Pampa does not spend time over this.

them, Arjuna stopped Suyōdhana from running away with his booty, killing a large part of the army. Suyōdhana soon took to flight. Arjuna turned back the cattle-herd towards the Matsya capital.*

The rest of a short time was taken up with the rout of the Kaurava army. Karṇa and his son Vikarṇa rushed to the front and offered fight. Arjuna aimed one sharp arrow at Karṇa's heart and with another killed Vikarṇa. The world, witnessing this terrific fight, said the whole Bhārata wore off on this occasion of cattle-lifting. When the other warriors saw the pain of Karṇa and the death of Vikarṇa, they pressed forward for a fight, but could not stand against the sharp shooting by Arjuna, nor confront him for even a part of a day. Arjuna took pity upon the elders and, with an arrow, brought them all to the ground, lulling them as it were to sleep, capturing their flags and banners. All through this episode, we see the fury and press of Arjuna's valour and his undaunted careering for victory. If anything was required as proof of Arjuna's excellence as warrior, this was it—more than a foretaste of what would befall the Kauravas in any formal battle howsoever it might build up.

But right until the final meeting between Karṇa and Arjuna (Canto XII) we do not get much which is primarily occupied with Arjuna's valour. A few bits of the meeting between him and Bhīṣma and the slaying of Jayadratha in the Droṇa Parva is not much of a tally, which it could have become had the poet had more time and space to deal with them or if he was primarily rendering the *Māhābhārata* story elaborating each episode—as Nāraṇappa later did in Kannada and Tikkana in Telugu: the only two poets who can compare in any way with him.

18

There was natural rejoicing at the recapture of the cattle, at the flight of the Kaurava army and at the victory that was won for Vīrāṭa by Uttara's charioteer Bṛhandale. Soon after this the Pāṇḍavas declared themselves and Vīrāṭa felt happy and grateful that he had

*A stanza here is like a piece of miniature painting of black cows running in all directions full of fear, raising their horns, with their udders pressed and tails raised up.

been given a chance of granting asylum to the great Pāṇḍava heroes. He apologised for any discourtesies or discomforts to which they might have been exposed during their stay in disguise. The queen was very much more apprehensive first—remembering what her brother was guilty of—and fell at Draupadi's feet and begged pardon of her. Virāṭa expressed to Yudhiṣṭhira how his kingship itself was blessed and honoured by the partiality shown to him of all the kings. He offered his daughter Uttarē in marriage to Abhimanyu as a cementing of relationship between the families. This is a double bond in that it indirectly links up with Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas through Subhadrā. Kṛṣṇa, Subhadrā and Abhimanyu are sent for and the marriage is celebrated with pomp and rejoicing.

19

A little after this the brothers sit in council together and think of ways and means of regaining their lost fortune; for the time limit set against them was over. The end had not come to their enemies. "It is not right for us to keep quiet now," they think. "Duryōdhana is vicious and can make white look like black (Śvēta kṛṣṇa kārakam). He might try to get Kṛṣṇa to fight on his side. Before he does that we must get kṛṣṇa for ourselves. That is what waits first to be done." A decision was taken and Arjuna was assigned the task of winning Kṛṣṇa over. Arjuna made quick journey to Dvārāvati and waited upon Kṛṣṇa in his palace at the foot of his bed; Kṛṣṇa was asleep when he arrived there and he did not want to disturb him. Duryōdhana too came there almost about the same time, and he sat at Kṛṣṇa's head. In a short while Kṛṣṇa woke up. He first caught sight of Arjuna who was pressing his feet in service and saw Duryōdhana a little after. They offered obeisance to him. He blessed them both and enquired what had brought them both to him and how their families were faring. They had the same wish that he should take them on hand and help them win on the battlefield. Kṛṣṇa said that both of them were equally worthy of his courtesy. "But since I saw Vijaya* first, I give myself to him and to you, Pannagaketana, my four-

* The term may be noted, for victory is indicated and is near possibly the original title of the *Mahābhārata* also, the prototype of all the Vijayagranthas.

fold army." The decision is summarily made by Kṛṣṇa himself. The sides are now declared. Events drive inveterately to a military solution of the differences and nothing seems able to alter their course. Not that at any time before then there was any doubt about it either.

20

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna come to Virāṭapura, and the six of them, like the six attributes of kingship gather in conclave to consider the steps to be taken to achieve their object. The five Pāṇḍavas seek the protection of Kṛṣṇa and his help in gaining back the kingdom: even as the five organs of sense and action seek the aid of the mind in gaining the desires that bring pleasure to them. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the Padmōdara, as the one who raised the earth from the depths to which it had been stolen, as one who holds the three worlds in his womb and protects it from evil. Their present situation is described to him and they feel that Duryōdhana does not seem to be willing to give them back their kingdom without a fight. How shall we set about it? We depend upon your advice and help in gaining the object of our desire. Pampa has said that in this work of his, men might learn the courtesies and principles that should guide mankind (Laukikaman). "Policy and political ethic are known to you," Kṛṣṇa says to Yudhiṣṭhira. Things happen as men undertake and advance them. But listen to what is the right principle of conduct as I shall place before you: Gentleness can overcome might. You will gain the praise of the worlds through it. And that is also the right thing to do. An adviser is no adviser who does not press the claims of negotiation before he counsels war without heeding the consequences. That has been the principle of my life. That is how I begged the earth of Bali in the guise of Vāmana. It did not take away merit from me. I got the earth. The demon is still in bondage. You too had better send an agent who would request for you a return of your kingdom. If Duryōdhana's reaction is insolent and he does not give the kingdom back, you may then, of course, fight and the world will applaud you."

Bhīma was roused when he listened to talk of negotiation with the Kauravas and burst into anger. He called back to recollection

all the iniquities and crimes they were guilty of: the poisoned food, the snake-bite, the effort at arson at the lac palace and other incidents. How can there be peaceful living with such men? And he had the vows to carry out which he had proclaimed in open assembly. These words of peace and policy-making ask him to deal with them equably. Kṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira had sympathy for him. It took some persuasion and sweet words to calm him down. The others as well as Kṛṣṇa seem to know also that relentlessly the doom is working itself out on the Kauravas and that the time for the exercise of Bhīma's prowess is certain to arrive. Yudhiṣṭhira tells Nārāyaṇa —the term is deliberately used by Pampa— "You shall be witness to the evil done by the king.* You will find out, in all subtle ways, what he will or will not give. If he does not give me my share of the kingdom, is not this pillar-like right arm of mine enough to kill?*" (Enna avanīrakṣana dakṣa dakṣiṇa bhujastambham kolal sālādē?) (IX:26)—Unique words spoken by Yudhiṣṭhira in any version of the Bhārata story. Kṛṣṇa was requested to be the able and friendly agent who should accomplish this task for the Pāṇḍavas. Kṛṣṇa undertook it and journeyed to Hastināpura to Duryōdhana (who, again, in the same tell-tale way, is designated as the king of kings).

21

Kṛṣṇa goes straight to Vidura, for he is the one friendly to the Pāṇḍavas and to righteousness from the beginning, and meets Kunti there. He tells her that her sons are keeping well and desirous of a come-back. Pampa has to shed the refinements of the political situation. Accepting Duryōdhana as the reigning king and the principal person to be tackled, he simplifies the situation and the issue. Legally established as one or not, he is *de facto* ruler at Hastināpura. Vidura takes the news of Kṛṣṇa's coming to Suyō-

* A part of the contemporary political context seems here to make the poet refer to Duryōdhana as king. He must have been thinking of perhaps the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor Govinda as against Baddega (Amōghavarṣa); for else Duryōdhana could not be recognized or designated as Avanīnātha.

* The heroic age of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and the Cālukya kingdoms can speak only words of valour.

dhana. The king of kings did not seem to attach much value to the news, smiled lightly and directed him to 'present' Kṛṣṇa at the court the following day.

The next day dawned and Kṛṣṇa got ready to go. Meanwhile the audience-chamber of the king was specially set for a reception which was meant to impress Kṛṣṇa with its power and pomp. The elders, the associate and subordinate chieftains sat in proper places. The women of the palace sat in two rows on both sides. The hundred brothers sat immediately behind while the hundred sons were seated in front. The darling brother Duśśāsana and the beloved warrior Karṇa were made to sit on either side of the king pressed knee-close to him. Music was on. The cavalry showed up in rich colour. The attendant at the entrance announced that Kṛṣṇa had arrived at the third door. Duryōdhana looked at Bhīṣma and said to him: "I am feeling happy at the honour done me by Kṛṣṇa's coming to me on a mission. He is verily the preceptor of the world equipped with conch, discus and the mace and distinguished by his four arms. Who can now be equal to me in greatness?" And without waiting for an answer, he directed the door-keeper, to tell him to come in. Presently Kṛṣṇa moved in like the Anjanā hill. Duryōdhana saw him and slowly, like one who was not quite well, got up somehow and with seeming difficulty clasped him from the edge of his own throne, bowed to him, gave him a high seat reserved for him, offered him arghya and himself sat down after Kṛṣṇa was seated. Then he looked at the face of Kṛṣṇa now described as the enemy of Madhu and Kaiṭabha* and said: "I am really blessed by your coming. I feel now that there is no one with merit like mine on earth. With the dust of your feet I feel my body purified. What brings you here and to me? This is extraordinary. What have you come to command me to do? I deem myself great by your arrival."

Kṛṣṇa was equally gracious. He was quick to compliment Duryōdhana on his wealth, his courtesy and his prowess. "Your self-control has made your refinement and prowess the support for the growth of your wealth. And this victory over your senses has

* Until now he had been called Aja, Ananta or Ambujōdara—softer names—the first two common between the Jaina and the Sanātana traditions, and the third Hindu.

received praise in the three worlds. Can such great men be? You are lofty every way and your words honour truth; your strength has conquering power; your discernment and humility advance your sense of respect. These enable you to recognize and honour the worthy elders. How good you are amidst such great wealth!" This was the brief if courteous introduction, —the grace before the heat! "There is just one want in this greatness of yours, O king, in that it keeps away the Pāṇḍavas who are so closely related to you. It is like the moon who shines over the whole world gladdening and illuminating it, yet excluding the lily which is and should be the natural object of its delight.* Some cause of misunderstanding has kept the two of you separate. There cannot be real anger between you two. Hot water cannot burn down a house. There cannot be any enmity or opposition or any hidden cause of hostility against you in the world if you can but have them as friends. They are the first claimants to the throne and warriors on the battlefield. Grant them the rule of the kingdom they ruled over once before. Send them word of it and get them here. When such men are your brothers what can be impossible for you? They do not ask from you all the land they formerly ruled over, nor that they are cousins and should have a share of the property. They do not dispute with you on anything. They will consider enough what you grant them out of your favour. They will speak the words which you speak. For a long time now they have suffered the fatigue and travail of wandering among the wilds. That will not lighten until you extend kindness to them. Do not listen to the words of those who speak pleasant, illusory and deceitful words. Who can be to you what the Pāṇḍavas will and can be? They do not stand on any contracts. Nothing hangs heavy on them when you confer on them a benefit out of your kindness. If you cannot give them anything else or more, give them, so that your own goodness might flourish and endure, five villages—Kānchi, Vāraṇāsi, Kākandi, Kurusthala and Vṛkasthala so that they might reside and live there" (IX.35–43).

It is difficult for any prose to render the words given and taken between Kṛṣṇa and Duryōdhana at this fateful moment and in the succeeding episode; and in a foreign language it is almost

* The term *kuvalaya* means both the world and the lily.

impossible; the idiom is so tense and concrete and so much a part of live usage. The words and stanzas spit spark and fire and roll like peals of thunder; the bolt bursts threatening and dangerous. Duryōdhana straight accuses Kṛṣṇa of hypocrisy and deceit and pretence of negotiation while his real intent is to march on to the battlefield for victory in favour of the Pāṇḍavas. Personal insolence against Kṛṣṇa's own habitual and well-known behaviour of trick and soft-seeming conduct, obviously alludes to the Bali episode. Duryōdhana says he is not the one to be cheated by such tricks and shows; for he too has learnt them in the same school. The kingdom is his and enjoyed as sole possession. He will not be the one to accept again into friendship and favour those whom once he has cut out and got rid of. No. He would be guilty of no such foolishness. "You need not weary us with more of such talk, return the way you have come, Murāntaka." Kṛṣṇa was roused too. He drew himself up and, like the Destroyer himself, prophesied doom on Duryōdhana if he persisted so in the matter of giving the Pāṇḍavas their share in the kingdom. He enforced it with lurid words which describe the valour and victory which distinguish the Pāṇḍava brothers. Yudhiṣṭhira and the twins, Bhīma and Arjuna are praised for powers which will bring them sure victory: a half stanza each is devoted to Yudhiṣṭhira and the twins, one whole to Bhīma, and while he speaks of Arjuna more than half a page of prose and five stanzas of taut and stinging challenge, declaring that Arjuna alone would accomplish their destruction—his and his army's. Has not his arm been put to proof against Śiva in Indrakīla, against Indra in the Khāṇḍava, in liberating Duryōdhana himself from the Gandharva Citrāṅgada and in defeating the Kaurava army in the cattle-lifting campaign while all the heroes and warriors in the Kaurava army looked on helpless? If any or all of them had so soon forgotten such a recent failure, it did not matter: "You will be done by the Pāṇḍavas. (Pāṇḍavara Kaiḷe ninna nisekam āgadē?) and will surely hear the twang of Arjuna's bowstring presently; who can survive the impact of the arrows that will speed from his bow?"

This was more than affront. It drove Duryōdhana mad. In agitation and in blind fury he asked Kṛṣṇa to clear out, saying that it is not permissible to get angry with the words of a messenger

and a fool. He took occasion to insult Vidura as the son of a low-born woman whose food must have rendered Kṛṣṇa that insolent. This naturally put Vidura out. Surely that was gratuitous. It would appear he was reserving a bow to use against the mace of Bhīma when the latter rushed to smash Duryōdhana's thigh. He said he would no longer hold it so in reserve, and broke it into bits in open assembly. Suyōdhana felt ashamed with having provoked him and as if an arm of his was broken. He bared his sword and rushed against Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa stood up, like the god that he was, presenting a picture of the entire universe in his body and form, taking on the shape which he presented when as Trivikrama he stood before Bali and with the form of the Time Spirit when all the three worlds would be totally swallowed up—the form more terrible than all these. And his Vaiṣṇava power fascinated all those who looked on. Dhṛtarāṣṭra went up to him with many a praise and prayer. Kṛṣṇa gifted him with special sight for the nonce to enable him to look on his cosmic form.

Then, relapsing into his usual human shape, got out of the assembly hall. He took Aśvatthāma's hand as he went out, and to him spoke words of inducement in favour of himself and the Pāṇḍavas. The division between friends began, one sees, almost immediately. He came back to his camp at Vidura's place and alone to Kunti he said: "Drōṇa, Kṛpa, Śalya and Bhīṣma are favourable to us. Aśvatthāma has come on to us now in essence. The one who is versed in all the astras and unvanquishable, the one who will not so come to our side is Karṇa. Valour blazes out of him; the fame of his open-hearted generosity resounds through all the worlds. He cut out his natural armour and earring when Indra begged him for them. Indra himself was amazed at such self-denying generosity and in admiration of it gave him a special instrument of destruction to which no task is impossible. I shall try to divide his mind in all ways and means. You go to that eldest son of yours on your own on a Sunday and achieve your purpose."

So organizing he took her blessing, got on to his chariot, drew in front of Karṇa's mansion and pressed upon him to go with

him some distance. A little further, he halted and spoke to him words which divided Karṇa's heart and mind. The words were like black fate to him as to the Kaurava cause. "Do not think that we say this to divide you. Hear what I say and forbear, Karṇa. Kunti is your real mother. Your father is the god of the day. The sons of Pāṇḍu are brothers and I am brother-in-law. Why speak other words? The whole earth is yours. So is the kingship yours. When you are there, others cannot be kings of men* When Kunti handed you over to Ganga a Sūta found you and took you to his wife Rādha. You became Rādheya ever afterwards,—and son of a Sūta. No others know the true secret of your birth. I know. Sahadeva knows. Duryōdhana knows it too. And your parents Kunti and the Sun God naturally know it. Duryōdhana has trust in you. Do you know why? Once the two of you went ahunting on the banks of the Ganges. There was a hermitage where one who could divine all truth performed tapas, Satyamtapa by name.* Both of you prostrated before him. He blessed you both. But he first got a seat for you to sit. Suyōdhana was in distress and was feeling dceply hurt. So he sent you out on some errand for a brief while and asked the hermit: "While I am before you, why did you favour this son of a fisherman?" The truth of your birth and lineage was narrated to him. The king believed in the truth of this virgin birth. He thought he might use a thorn to pluck out another thorn, and with that object in view raised you in particular favour and in affection ate with you that day forward as an equal." (IX:64-7).

Karṇa heard these cold, bitter words and tears flowed from his eyes while the news thrilled him. "Why did you tell me this now? Suyōdhana has done me nothing but good all along and helped to bring me fame and praise. If I should set aside all that, my fame, sure, will fade. If as a relation I now ask to get included as a Pāṇḍava, won't you yourself have contempt for me? How shall I forget the friendship and confidence, the intimacy and affection that my king and master has showered on me? I could give you one example. Once it so happened that a game of dice was being played. Bhānumati the queen lost the game. She was teased for handing over her pearl-necklace which was the stake in the game.

* An anecdote not found elsewhere in the main tradition.

When she was pressed for handing it over, the necklace was broken and the pearls spilled all over the ground. I was in distress and anxiety. But without feeling the least embarrassment the king who was looking on said: 'Never mind the pearls. Shall I collect them for you?' How can I renounce such a master and king and come over to your side to be one of you? I should be a barbarian if I did."* (IX:69).

The words convinced Kṛṣṇa that Karna would not be agreeable to change over. So he permitted him to go and himself journeyed forward. The Anga king (Karna) came back home and felt overwhelmed with grief at what had transpired. The earth was yielding under his feet.

This really is the beginning of the final phase of the Kaurava power, though it is not yet the beginning of the war on the field of Kurukṣetra. For Karna was almost the mainstay of Duryōdhana's might and trust. Great warriors as others were, the affection of Bhīṣma, Drōṇa and the others was not total affection or regard for the king. They had all counselled against war. And they knew too that Duryōdhana's cause was unrighteous, and that the Pāṇḍavas were worthy men, men of character and men of extraordinary valour. The world believed them to be unconquerable. The men had stayed with Duryōdhana only owing to a sense of loyalty to him as king and for having received maintenance in his establishment. Karna's attitude was different. For long years Duryōdhana and Karna lived as friends fast devoted to each other and Karna had received many marks of regard from a master who would not deny him anything; who had rescued him from obscurity and humiliation; made him a king and held him nearer his heart than he did his brothers or sons. Karna was almost his alter-ego. Karna was open and generous to a fault. Gods and men knew that. For truth, valour and liberality, there was no match to him on earth. And at this late hour, when, no one could doubt his loyalty and steadfastness of purpose, this news is given to him that he is the first among the sons of Kunti, son of the Sun-God, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, with the first prescriptive right to the throne,

* This stanza has been subject of much controversy in. The use of the past perfect and the ambiguous pronouns and ellipses yield differences of meaning who played with whom is in issue.

a conflict entered his soul and divided his affections. It was a tragic conflict. Howsoever firm he may be in his resolve to serve Duryōdhana and win victory for him, this news given to him by Kṛṣṇa definitely disrupted him. More particularly the information of the episode in the Satyamtapa hermitage which, alone, among the writers, Pampa puts in to make his appeal more effective. That would be sure to make Karṇa feel that whatever might be the development of the later regard and intimacy between him and Duryōdhana, it was tainted at the source. Karṇa knew the strength of Arjuna on the battlefield. He had taste of it on the Matsya field. With Kṛṣṇa as charioteer it would now be a formidable combination. Kṛṣṇa's personality, character and ability and the esteem in which he was held as a god on earth was as well known to him as to others. Whatever else this news did or not, it shook Karṇa's faith in himself and in his cause and it drew him in kinship to the enemy. This also more than anything else, it did: it washed off all feeling of inferiority arising out of birth. Kṛṣṇa on another purposing "sowed the seeds of fear in his ear" (Kiviyoḷu bittidanu bhayava) as Nāraṇappa put it later. Not common fear, but about his cause.

He is now convinced that the stars and the gods were against the Kurupati; for the other leaders of his army were shallow in their declarations about fighting for Duryōdhana on the battlefield. "The master trusted me and nursed me in regard with ever greater marks of affection. Those who fight against me are my own brothers. How can I look on them with such feeling inside me and proceed to kill them? No. That cannot be. I cannot bring my mind to destroy the Pāṇḍavas. And I cannot play false to a king who has absolute confidence in me and cherishes for me the greatest affection. So I shall destroy as much of the enemy army as lies in my power and cast my body on the field before anything happens to my master." Such was his final resolve, and this will tell us that the Mahābhārata war was fought and lost – ere it began.

The next Sunday Karṇa went to the Ganges, had his bath and offered his salutations to the Sun in whom he now recognized his father. When he had completed the three rounds of movement

before prostrating he saw mother Kunti standing before him. Love for the mother welled from his heart, and he fell full length on the ground in token of it. The mother took him in her arms and blessed him. It is new-found motherhood even for her. She gets a chance for the first time of holding her son in her arms feeling like having given birth to him again. It was like getting an eye on her forehead.—Nosala Kaṇ petta vol.—While the mother and the son discovered each other in filial recognition Ganga appeared before them and told Kunti that she was handing back the son whom Kunti had trusted to her care long years ago. Another thing happened. The Sun God came out of his orb. Karṇa bowed to him and received his blessing. The Sun felt sad at heart and said: “Foolish son! you did not regard me once before but handed over your natural armour to Indra. I shall not speak of that now. Kunti is no doubt your mother. She has come to you under counsel from Kṛṣṇa, striving to safeguard her other children. Do not give her away the special astra she asks for, howsoever she may coax you.” Then he vanished from sight.

Karṇa addressed his mother and asked her what had brought her to him, like a merit coming down. “Resoluteness, liberality, strength, valour and birth have come and established themselves within my body now that you have come so kindly to me and called me son. The parents bring the body and life into the world which therefore belong really to them. Handing back their gift is no task. You need not feel the least concern or have reservations. Command me the service you will ask me to render.”

“Son”, said Kunti, “without reservation you have given and I have received. Let your brothers render you service and you, child, may take up the reins of the kingdom and rule the earth. You should not behave like a servant, with the love of Duryōdhana for argument. The kingship rightfully belongs to you. They are brothers on both sides of you. Do not feel any qualms; persuade yourself to accept it.” Karṇa smiled on hearing these words. “It should not be right, mother, to do anything out of fear or desire. Nor is it proper conduct to forget all the good that my master and king has conferred on me. I cannot fail him in service disregarding the corn he has measured out to me as food and the corn lands he has bestowed on me in this moment of his need. I should be unworthy

to fail of promise. Mine has been a name for loyalty and friendship. This body itself, mother, tell me, does it last to the end of time? Even when I was deemed a fisherman's son I did not stray from quality or virtue. I am now your son; can I cease to have regard for them? Have no further hope of my deserting his cause; give up your feelings of concern for me."

Kunti was naturally broken of heart. "I understand you, son, she said, "how hard and harsh you speak right off! I consider the lunar race is today destroyed. Where now is my desire to live? I give up all thought of the life of the other sons of mine also." Sorrow overcame Karṇa too. "Do not worry, mother," he said, "I shall not use the special astra I have even if Arjuna strikes at me; and I shall not slay the other sons of yours even if they march against me. I shall gain fame on the field of battle and die on it. Pray, go now."

This closes the episode of the meeting of Karṇa and Kunti which, together with the other meeting with Kṛṣṇa, sets the seal of fate on him who from the moment of birth is star-crossed, dogged by chance and circumstance, and driven to a doom not of his seeking or making. Perhaps the one person who, with the best reason for success and recognition, was sacrificed by adverse fate in the feuds which culminated in the field of Kurukṣetra—the one on which Citrāngada fought and fell, on which Bhīṣma and Paraśu-rāma had met in the challenge for Ambā, and that on which the fortunes of the entire lunar race were to set in the forthcoming Mahābhārata war.

24

We need not go through the details of the battle, the challenge, the fury, the destruction on both sides, from the time Bhīṣma is chosen to be the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces and Śveta on the Pāṇḍava side. The battle raged on for ten out of the eighteen days with Bhīṣma in charge of the Kaurava army. He was invincible as a hero and had to be brought down with a modus of his own suggestion so that he may remove himself from carnage. Karṇa had expressed dissatisfaction at the selection of a dotard like Bhīṣma who could never be expected to kill the Pāṇḍavas and he refused to fight while the old man was chief.

He sulked and walked away; but not before extracting from old Bhīṣma the vow that he would force Kṛṣṇa to break his promise not to wield the Cakra* and contribute other acts of heroism. The next in command was the preceptor Drōṇācārya. For five more days the battle raged on under him. Abhimanyu fell on the Pāṇḍava side and the vengeance of Arjuna was wreaked against the dastardly act of all the warrior chiefs against a lone boy-fighter who had penetrated into the Kaurava army set in the form of a discus. Arjuna killed Jayadratha before the sunset the next day as he vowed he would. Drōṇa too was tired and fell by a trick. The following two days Karṇa fought being selected as chief while Aśvatthāma cried himself off from the battlefield feeling slighted and superseded. These were two of the bitterest days on the field. The death of Ghaṭotkaca and the almost ghoulish episode on the death of Duśśāsana mark this phase of the Twelfth Canto. The final meet between Karṇa and Arjuna is the high-water mark of description of a fight that only Pampa knows how to mount and present. All along single fights between the heroes, between the elephant-armies, between the charioteers, the cavalrymen and the mass fights between the forces are presented. The words of warriors ring in our ears above the tumult and the hurtling of the arrows and the flying javelins, the skills of give and take in swordsmanship; the mace fights where men hit as destructively against each other as the elephants are beaten down by them. Or Bhīma is seen picking up one elephant to smash another. And when from the Anjalika shaft from the Gandiva bow Karṇa is brought down, the other heroes seem to be blacked out; only Karṇa's praise fills the scene. The words in which the poet pictures and realizes for us the assessment of Karṇa's fall are memorable.

Others have dominated the field with Bhīma taking honours on many an occasion. Once or twice Arjuna encountered Bhīṣma but neither would hurt the other. Only in the Jayadratha-vadha episode is Arjuna's valour rising and showing temper or tempo. The full force and vigour of Arjuna are brought into play only against Karṇa, for they are the rivals for fame as archers from the beginning; and without the exit of Karṇa the war could not be won for the Pāṇḍavas. That it will be won for them has been engineered

* Not stated any time before in the Pampa Bhārata.

and is a foregone conclusion. The rent in the heart of Karṇa has been made. The mother has received the promise; Yudhiṣṭhira has ragged; Arjuna has vowed; Kṛṣṇa is ready with ability to manage at every point, suggesting, directing and compassing the result; Dread, all-consuming fate is hurrying the event. What is more, Pampa's Arjuna should find nothing difficult of accomplishment. Alone and unaided, he is the one to achieve all ends. That is the premiss of the poem.

25

Just before this, Vṛṣasena had been killed by Arjuna and Bhīma had made mincemeat of Duśśāsana, beating him down, disemboweling him, smearing Draupadi's hair with his blood and combing it with the enemy's teeth, drinking his blood and dancing in the company of Hiḍimbā in celebration of the fulfilment of one of his vows, calling out to everybody to stop him if they dared or could. Karṇa had seen the agony and the depression on the face of Duryōdhana. Memory of all this rankled. Misery and anger were aflame inside him as in a oven, and Karṇa asked Śalya to speed the chariot against Arjuna.

During the sixteen or seventeen days of the battle fought so far, Karṇa and Arjuna had met a few times no doubt in small skirmishing and give-and-take or hit-and-thrust. But today was the day of days. Even as Karṇa had decided to try conclusions with Arjuna, Arjuna had vowed that he would finish Karṇa before that evening. He had been stung into pain and shame through the innuendoes of Yudhiṣṭhira who had gone so far as to mock at his skill in arms, and by the sight of Bhīma who had been beaten black and blue by Karṇa. The world expected a mighty event. The surviving forces looked on. All the gods seemed to have gathered in the sky to witness this meet. Brahma, Śiva with Girisutê, Nārada, the serpent King, Indra and the Sun God, along with the heavenly hosts had collected as spectators. There was thick partisanship between the Sun God and Indra. For their sons were ranged against each other. The quarrel between the parents had to be quieted by Śiva who snubbed the Sun by saying that Karṇa had no chance against an Arjuna who was stronger than himself.

Against such a background, the two warriors sped against each other. Words of scorn and challenge were first uttered by Arjuna—an echo, if more elaborate, of what had happened when Karna had first challenged him long years ago. The answer by Karna was as fierce and recalcitrant; and in addition, Karna derided Arjuna by nagging at the exile and the helpless beggarliness to which the Pāṇḍavas had been exposed and at Arjuna's condition as a desexed Br̥handale among Virāta's women. But, beyond it, Karna's words spoke sad wisdom. Obviously they came from the depth of his heart, not alone perhaps by his sorrow and a dogging, unequal fortune. Arjuna had told him that he might meet him and his arrows and try if he can survive and see that he did not measure up to less than he was famed about: No man could expect to live for two hundred years. Karna spoke with a smile on his face. Body and life are alike liable to decay and death. Fame alone is indestructible. You are speaking small words unnecessarily.

He said this too: One is born as fate decides; for on the day of birth is decided that such and such is a person's food; such the good that will come to him; such the fun and amusement; such the form or mode of death; such the fame; such the enterprise—all that has been ordained before. Who can intervene to alter that or mar or make or give? Why use bad language? Lay on.

This note raises the meeting to a different level altogether. Arjuna and Karna are both fearless warriors. But while Arjuna has throughout been consistently successful and lucky, with no sorrow or shame or failure to cloud his courage and mood, Karna has suffered frustration, humiliation and gratuitous insult and injustice from the start. His own magnanimity has betrayed him into evil outcome and to the benefit of his opponent. The gods have sought to cheat him. The very thing that could have protected him—his natural defences—has been cut away by others who have exploited him to weaken him against this very enemy. The 'Śakti' had been expended. This tone of voice is but expression of conscious fatalism. He was in no mood to waste words.

The warriors struck against each other; and when the fight seemed interminable, Śalya the charioteer of Karna advised him to hasten and use the special arrows in his possession. Śalya had been forced against his own will to drive Karna's chariot. He who

had advised mildness against the twins a trifle earlier—they were Śalya's nephews—urges Karṇa to strike the fatal blow against this other brother. Karṇa took out a terrible shaft, fixed it tight to the string and was about to shoot at Arjuna's head. Śalya saw the aim and chaffed him that he did not aim it at the chest, for then it would hit him more surely, bringing victory and kingship to Suyōdhana. Karṇa knew what he was doing. What Śalya said was true also and no doubt about it. But if I kill Arjuna, Dharmaputra will die and I will have broken the promise I gave to mother Kunti. Truth and valour are to be held fast to. The Pāṇḍavas do not know yet how I am related to them. I have enjoined on Kṛṣṇa not to tell them anything about it. My mother believes that I shall keep true to the words I spoke in behalf of her other sons. I shall carry out my promise faithfully and with love, and yet no one shall speak wrong things about my valour. So thought Karṇa.

Karṇa answered forthwith: "I have taken aim once and at the head. The world will laugh at me if I changed to take a lower aim fearing that I might not hit the higher." He refused to aim differently. Kṛṣṇa saw the arrow coming, bursting like a thunderbolt. He pressed his own chariot down by the length of eight fingers dexterously. The shaft now hit the crown on Arjuna's head. Indra was smitten with fear. Īśvara himself felt deeply concerned without knowing the truth of what had happened! The entire Kaurava army yelled in joy waving their upper cloths while the precious stones of Arjuna's crown threw about in all directions like meteors.

What happened immediately after need not detain us. It was a serpent shaft charged additionally by the personal animosity of Aśvasena of the Khāṇḍava episode. When it failed to take the life of Arjuna the serpent came back to Karṇa insisting on being used again. Karṇa disdained it. The serpent rushed on its own on Arjuna - and to death; for it was shot down in a trice.

Śalya was thoroughly dissatisfied. He threw down his reins and said he would no longer drive the chariot of one who had such a single-track mind; so obstinate. He got out. Karṇa was left alone. Undaunted, he continued the fight. Against the raining arrows of Arjuna, the only help he had was his own arm and his bow. He managed the horses and the chariot himself, and fought, shooting arrows with a roar accompanying each issue. The firm earth seemed

to be angry with him now; it was wet with so much blood that the wheels of his chariot got stuck. He got down from the chariot to raise the wheels. Kṛṣṇa saw the chance that if he was not struck down then Arjuna could not win at all. Arjuna felt disgust at this suggestion and spoke to Kṛṣṇa thus: "Karna is alone and naked almost. He has no charioteer, no armour. How can I shoot at him in this condition? See now, Kṛṣṇa, my hand does not rise to shoot. I know not why. Some affection overcomes me. What shall I do? I now forget all the feeling of enmity I used to feel against him before now. How do you explain that?" (XII:2-8).

By this time Karna had pulled out the wheel; while the earth trembled, he climbed back into his chariot with wide-open, staring eyes. He drove towards Arjuna's chariot spitting anger and spite speaking words of mockery, and Arjuna struck at Karna's flag. When the flag fell, with valour undiminished and so as to answer and equalize it, Karna struck against Kṛṣṇa's chest and the ears of Arjuna's bow. The lustre of Karna looked like the glory of the sunset. Kṛṣṇa felt hurt and struck him with his Cakra. Karna parried it. Arjuna now drew out the Anjalika shaft which he had received as a favour from Gauri, invoked the spirit of Vidhi—i.e. Brahma—and as he fixed it to the bowstring the poet says the earth shook; the ground felt breaking up; the seven seas shrank; such was the power of the shaft which seemed to be capable of destroying the entire earth if it was so purposed. He pulled the string up to the ear to put an end to Karna.* The shaft sped like the final fire of destruction, sparking profusely all along, blazing increasingly as it sped, and struck Karna sure and full. The head of Karna threw up into the sky, blood gushing up in heavy strains before it fell down to earth (XII:213). For a brief while there was life and lustre on Karna's face; for life seemed reluctant to go out of a body which was so much the home of liberality, truth and valour. Soon a luminous form got out of it and, as men looked on, it moved towards the Sun and disappeared into his orb.

At this point the poet seems almost to forget his main purpose, the victory of his hero and the point that the person who had died was the enemy of his hero. He is possessed only by the greatness

* *Ākarṣāntam* meaning 'till the edge of the ear' and also 'the end of Karna'.

of the event and the character of him who fell. Even his master Arikesari would perhaps have had no objection to this self-forgetting in the celebration of the greatness of such a mighty warrior as Karṇa. Inconsistency should not be deemed vice in a poet when occasion so seizes him. Pampa asks: Did he use the special shaft? Speak a second or alternate word? Did he shake? He stuck to his purpose with persistence and died in his valour; the heavenly hosts in one voice sang the praise of the manliness of this son of the Sun-God. The next stanza (XII:217) does one better. The poet says: Remember no other in the Bhārata. If with one mind you would remember any one remember Karṇa. Who is Karṇa's peer? Karṇa's puissance and striking power, Karṇa's inveterate truthfulness, Karṇa's prowess, the extreme liberality of Karṇa and speech,—these fill the Bhārata, making it a Karṇa balsam, a Karṇa salad.*

The Pāṇḍava army rejoiced in the event; the heavenly drums beat in praise; heaven's flowers came showering down, Nārada celebrated it with joy and appreciation and in praise of 'Ariga' he tied up an extra piece of loin cloth to the tip of his staff and waved it in victory. And the sun set for the day, unfurling and bringing down his flag. He asked his lame charioteer (Aruṇa) to drive away, almost unconscious with the excess of sorrow at the death of his son; and he got into the western sea like he would for a bath. King Duryōdhana was no less grieved. He threw himself into his golden chariot, and got into a deep swoon. Arjuna, laden with honour and victory, with the heavenly flower-petals raining on him and bees humming about them, with the blessing of Brahma and Śiva, with his heart full of joy that Karṇa was slain got back to the royal camp in Kṛṣṇa's company.

26

With the death of Karṇa, the fate of the Kauravas was sealed. What was left to the Kaurava army was unequal to the task of winning a victory against the Pāṇḍavas who were intact, firm in their resolve to win, flushed with victory; and with Kṛṣṇa by their side to lead them to its completion. If that is certain end, it intro-

* Ear and name

duces a note in the poem which converts the erstwhile vicious Duryōdhana —deadly in his hate and rancour and uncompromising at every turn— into an object of compassion, one might even say of sympathy. For bereft of all the sure aids to success, he still essays to stand up to the enemy whatever the cost. The picture of this resolve in the face of death and destruction and certain failure makes him almost heroic. Here is as much tragedy as there has been in the fateful career of Karṇa—not so large or grand, perhaps, yet tragic in its smaller way. We now see Duryōdhana down and conscious of true values for a brief while and with sorrow overwhelming him with the thought of Karṇa dead in his cause. He no longer has hope in any one else. He does not desire to live long separated from his friend, and so would follow him close on the heels; —only after slaying those who had killed him. How could he live on without doing that? And in a world which does not contain Karṇa any longer? What condition of mind he is now in and what steps he takes to wreak his vengeance on Arjuna and Bhīma and how he fails in his purpose up to the last moment of his death is intense drama and poetry in one. And the more than hard outlines of this situation and fulfilment are worked up in detail by a later writer Ranna. For essential strength Pampa is still the master. In substance and power as in insight into character and situation, in spaciousness of vision what we get here is pure gold—not a mere lead nugget, but wrought into great, live shape. The poetic power which achieves this is hardly equalled in Kannada. Others who make use of his insight do but record how much they are his beneficiaries.

There is no end to the sorrow and remorse Duryōdhana feels. He is involved in more than one sense in the death of Angarāja. The world used to say that in two bodies they lived really a single life: which is now made false. When at the sharp arrows of Kirīṭi Karṇa's life is gone, shameless life still continues in him. How can there be the affection and friendship which the world had declared as so bound up? As mark of his own love for Karṇa, Duryōdhana now is smitten with remorse: he alone of the Kauravas had knowledge of the truth about Karṇa's birth which earlier Kṛṣṇa had whispered into the ears of Karṇa. The son of Dharma was even now ignorant that Karṇa was his brother. I have known it, says

Duryōdhana, and yet did not give him the kingship that rightly belonged to him; did not even intimate the truth to him, but used him in pursuit of a selfish purpose, pretending friendship. I really am the one who killed you, he says, for my passion, for my profit; it is not the Kaunteyas. It ought to have been my duty to hand over the kingdom to you and receive your gifts as favours. But I minded only my chances. The battle that I set ablaze and the anger of Bhīma (?) against you became the cause of your destruction. (XIII:3-6)

27

While Duryōdhana was thus mourning, his blind parents came in with a view to consoling their son. He was ashamed to see their faces: I ought to shrink from looking at them, he thought, for the three of us—Duśśāsana, Karṇa and myself went and bade farewell to them when marching to the battlefield. How can I look at them now? Duśśāsana fell at the hands of Bhīma. Gāṇḍivi killed Karṇa. How shall I fight the Pāṇḍavas and win? This is my only thought now. But fate seems ever to force me to listen to the words of those who ask me to conclude peace with the enemy.

It is a sad meeting between the parents and the son. As expected they speak to him words of persuasion to agree to split the kingdom—even at this late hour—and live in peace and friendship with the Pāṇḍavas. They were confident that they could negotiate it, being sure of the Pāṇḍavas' regard for them. All their other sons are lost. They could reconcile themselves to that loss if they could keep Duryōdhana alive. You are like the sun which makes the day, they said; and when that day is on, it does not matter whether a hundred other lights burn or no. The father begged and importuned; mother Gāndhāri supported his words. Her appeal was naturally a little more tender, a little more personal, like a mother's words always are: All the others among my children are dead, she said. You have survived so far like a single tree of merit. You have no one else left to fight for you fast and strong. We may be old and blind. Let not that be an argument for not heeding us. Do as your father says. But nothing that either of them said or did could change his resolve. He could not have rest or peace or other thought till he killed Bhīma, the wicked one who

drank the blood of Duṣṣāṣana. There was no chance of peace with the Pāṇḍavas for him till Bhīma and Arjuna were killed. The treacherous earth that caught and impeded the movement of Karṇa's chariot could give him no joy. I shall fight for my anger. And this is the point: even if I won, I shall not rule over it as king. I am sick of it, says Duryōdhana. This is where the Jaina in Pampa tinctures the theme lightly, in addition to poetic sensing of a sublimity. I was the cause of all the hatred, the rivalry and the conflict. I started them with the game of dice. With my exit all that will disappear; and, as you and all of us know, Dharmanandana will be son to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri as well. After Karṇa, there cannot be talk of peace and friendship with the Pāṇḍavas nor rule over the kingdom without him. With my good arm and mace, I shall pursue my purpose to the death. There is no need for fear knowing that there is pain; and beyond that, the doom written by fate on one's forehead cannot be warded off. I have decided on fighting the enemy. (XIII:19). With due observance of courtesies due to the parents, he requests them to go.

At this point again Pampa says that Duryōdhana knew how lacking in essence life on earth is, for he was a Mahāsattva, magnanimous. He consoled and pulled himself up; and, refreshing himself he held consultation with his surviving friends. We may pass by the hard words spoken between himself and Aśvatthāma when the latter charged him with unwise partiality for Karṇa and was rebuked summarily for it. Śalya is made the commander of what army is now left. Yudhiṣṭhira is set up as the Pāṇḍava leader to fight him. Both Yudhiṣṭhira's desire and Kṛṣṇa's suggestion meet here and a mighty fight takes place that day. Śalya was strong and powerful. The contending chiefs jump down their chariots and fight sword in hand. In an unfavourable moment Śalya struck Yudhiṣṭhira who fell. Śalya saw his nephew down and looked on him with pity. He was perhaps himself sick to death of the situation. I cannot die till I make this king angry; I shall make him angry, he thought, and kicked him in the chest. Yudhiṣṭhira became indignant and looked with anger in his eyes like Īśvara did when he looked at Manmatha; the fire in the look burnt Śalya to ashes!

After Śalya's death, Duryōdhana was left but with his own self. He decided to rely on the thunderbolt of his own mace. Sanjaya,

the friend, advised him not to rush to the battlefield, but to put it off a little and rest. He was severely dealt with when he designated Duryōdhana as lone, and was answered: the lion with its claws and teeth and the puissant elephant in rut are sufficiently armed and equipped; they cannot be called single. But Sanjaya made him cool down, advising him to consult Bhīṣma before he took the next step. Duryōdhana agreed to this. The battlefield littered with corpses and broken weapons and with ghoulish creatures feeding on dead bodies was a fearful sight. The meeting with the unearthly vampire spirits introduces an element of terror and fatefulness and gives us a further insight into the mind of Duryōdhana which even in the worst situation of mockery and challenge can smile and make a detached observation on his own situation. He passed the bodies of Drōṇa and Duśśāsana and Karṇa; and at each point felt drawn closer to those dear ones who had fallen in his cause; they steel his resolution to fight in revenge. The two stanzas (XIII:59-60) in behalf of Karṇa are a testament of friendly regard. Sanjaya takes him to where Bhīṣma lay and the picture of this meeting in such circumstances between Bhīṣma and Duryōdhana has elements of the highest power even as it has, at the human level, depth of regard and warm human feeling.

28

Bhīṣma was lying on a bed of arrows which had pierced his body with wounds all over. His mind was taken up with thought of Śiva.* Yet, dividing this meditation and the pain which must have been there was thought of Duryōdhana. Great yōgi that he was, he still felt a fondness for the king. Sound of approaching feet was heard and he spoke even as the pain of his wounds hurt him: "Who comes there?" Sanjaya went near, bent to his ear and in a low tone of voice said that the moon of the Kaurava race had come. With great difficulty Bhīṣma opened his eyes red with the tint of the petals of a half-open red lotus. He could infer the fortunes of the battle in this lone coming of the Kaurava without his white umbrella and the mighty army. Tears welled from his eyes

* Ranna seems inferior in realizing this scene. His imagination is less than great, and the details of Bhīṣma's condition and behaviour are crude.

and he said: "This coming of yours gives me news of the battle. What do you propose doing now? What are your plans?" He soon learnt that Duryōdhana came to him only to offer his prostrations to him before a final stand against the enemy. Bhīṣma was struck with the unflinching heroism and integrity of Duryōdhana. He knew that fortune was against him and he could not win. Then there was the curse of the Ṛṣi Maitreya and if he would not at all be persuaded to stop hostilities or listen to words of peace and negotiation, he should at least hide and avoid the fray for a day—that day. This again grants the time limits for a tragic encounter—and to delay the meeting with the enemy. For the next day Balarāma would be joining him as aid and Kṛpa and Aśvatthāma would also be able to join him. They were seeking him everywhere on the field. "So listen to me and wait this day" Bhīṣma said. He initiated him by whispering into his ear a mantra by which he could hide under the waters of the Vaiśampāyana lake and come out refreshed the next day to fight and win.

Duryōdhana did as he was told, went to the lake whose water and fowl seemed to forbid him, afraid themselves of destruction for granting him asylum. The descriptions (XIII:71–73) are poetically extremely charged.* But as he went along, Duryōdhana had to cross the field reeking with nasty smells. The poet compares the getting into the water of Duryōdhana to the set of the Sun in the western sea. He emphasizes once again that it is given to no one to break the ordinance of fate.

29

Meanwhile, Yudhiṣṭhira and the Pāṇḍava army were puzzled and concerned with the sudden absence and the indiscoverability of Duryōdhana. They were exercised about it. Kṛṣṇa knew that if Duryōdhana was not felled before the set of the sun that day, he would be invincible after that: for Balarāma would join him the next day and all that had been achieved so far would be undone. Bhīma was profoundly disturbed. It is almost his business to find Duryōdhana and accomplish his killing. Characteristically, he says he would drink up the oceans and break the fangs of Śeṣa if

* And, as some make it, laden—as what cannot be?—with cosmic symbolism.

he has entered Pātāla; wring the neck of Brahma if he was anywhere in Brahmāṇḍa. There cannot be any other place for Duryōdhana to hide in the three worlds. It sounded as if it was not merely poetic extravagance. For one with his ardent nature and his powers even that might be possible.* With him, to feel was to say and to say was to do. Or, there was simultaneity between the processes. Bhīma was earnest. If such things could happen, he was the one to realize them.

Just then, a hunter scout, Vindhya by name, brought news that he seemed to find imperial signs in the footsteps that led to the Vaiśampāyana lake. Kṛṣṇa interpreted it and advised them to lay siege to it and rouse Duryōdhana out of the waters where he must be hiding, under instructions likely from Bhīṣma. The rouse was quick and Kṛṣṇa's instinct and inference spoke true. Bhīma spoke stinging words and called to Duryōdhana to come out to meet his death,—and not be a coward. Duryōdhana could not endure the taunts of Bhīma. His concentration was broken; Bhīma's words for him were the limit.* He rose like a lion would when he hears the trumpeting of an elephant. All the mantra which Bhīṣma had initiated him into broke like illusion. If he remained hiding under water while his deadliest enemy raved defying him and he remained deaf, Duryōdhana thought his sense of self-esteem, his very manliness was lost. Breaking the bonds of constraint, he got up from the water. The precious stones in his crown shot up rainbows of light all over the lake as he rose up. He seemed to rise both while he beat the water with his mace and to the sound of Bhīma's striking his own arms in challenge. He rose up like Kālākūṭa when the milk ocean was churned—and told the Pāṇḍavas that he was ready to meet them in combat singly or in a body. There was neither fear nor apology. He was unflinching and set. Dharmaputra saw this mighty stand and spoke to him words of persuasion. "Cast away spite, at least now," he said, "we shall divide the kingdom and rule. What comes from rancour and hatred? Do not be evil-minded and stubborn. Or

* Almost the premises of the story.

* Ranna uses a brilliant image here, by saying that the one with the serpent flag (i. e., Duryōdhana) perspired even under water. (Nīroḷagiridum bemartan uraga-patākan.)

you rule, with all the five of us rendering you service. There is nothing worthier than brotherliness. I implore you to accept my request."

Kṛṣṇa added his words: "All this evil consequence has come about since you were unwilling to give even five villages to the five brothers. Is not the son of Dharma behaving righteously towards you? Listen to his words. Be good to them and have no enmity, Phaṅketana." The appeals fell on deaf ears. Duryōdhana chose combat.

Just then Balarāma arrived like longevity itself. Duryōdhana bowed to him in regard. Balarāma was overwhelmed on sight of the condition to which Duryōdhana had been reduced. Feeling choked his voice. He would not bless or wish well either the Pāṇḍavas or Kṛṣṇa but simply asked them; "What is this you have done?" Kṛṣṇa understood the anger that had welled up in his brother and showing in his face. This is how he explains the situation: "Get angry after hearing what has happened, he said. Suyōdhana would not for any reason give the Pāṇḍavas back the kingdom they formerly ruled over; and in his hatred and insolence he has rushed all his forces and got them destroyed. He is even now unwilling for an agreement on friendly terms and is still aggressive. Ask him yourself, he will not lie." Halāyudha looked at Duryōdhana and asked him why he did such a foolish thing. Duryōdhana did not hide a thing or prevaricate. "What Hari has spoken is the truth," he said. "The sons of Pāṇḍu are innocent. When this is the truth, will I speak differently on the battlefield? I am burning inside of me with sorrow for the death of my relations and friends. Let me alone to get at these my enemy princes. I shall destroy them with blows from my mace." Here is confession of the enormities of which he was guilty. For it is a realization of the truth. All is now condensed in this final statement against the Pāṇḍavas. The fury and the hate are unabatable; they are the driving force. Undeterred he would drive on. Macbeth at least said:

I am in blood
Stept in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

He considered the other course and rejected it. Duryōdhana had no qualms. He was inflexible. Truth but stiffened his neck. This was the last ditch and he stood there to fight and win; or fight and die: inveterate to the end. Balarāma understood the strength and firmness of his feeling and said: "Here is no chance for me or any one to speak differently. So we shall get ready to witness a decent fight. One among you, Dharmaputra, shall fight with him. If you be defeated, Duryōdhana reigns. The other four will do his bidding. Which of you will fight?" Bhīmasena made reply straightway: "Set us two against each other. I am the enemy of the Kaurava king. He has no such anger against the others as he has against me. I am also the one who has undertaken the vow to smash him. The ground shall be prepared, and no second word need be spoken." These words were uttered and accepted in courtesy. And so the final meet was prepared.

30

Bhīma cleared some ground littered over with the carcasses of elephants and horses and the bodies of the dead and other such wreckage of the battle. The protagonists stood against each other. Both were strong and powerful, dead set against each other, longing for the meeting. Duryōdhana had trained himself specially in the skill of the mace-fight. If one had the memory of wrongs endured and vows of vengeance to weak, the other had instinctive hatred for Bhīma and had to strike on behalf of all the brothers whom Bhīma had destroyed. The curse of Maitreya was on him too. It is veritably the drive of doom and the fight was fought to a finish. That was natural and necessary. They spoke harsh and spiteful words against each other as they used every trick of the mace-fight. Blows were given and taken, dealt and parried, for they were equally well versed in every detail of the technique. Between them lay the bitterness and enmity the worst in the Mahābhārata. It presented a terrible sight. At one point Duryōdhana, as he possessed knowledge of the Vidyādhara warfare, leaped into the sky and burst upon Bhīma like a thunderbolt, bringing down on him his terrific mace, and with a loud cry struck him with it. Bhīma fell like the blue hill. It was a dramatic

moment, and caused much excitement and concern. Duryōdhana behaved as greatly and worthily as true hero of the epics; for when he found Bhīma unconscious and immobile, stunned by the hit, he refused to strike one who had fallen; and, from the sky, yet from near, swept the air with his mace. Bhīma was brought back to consciousness by the gust of wind set in motion by Suyōdana's mace. He groped and grasped his own club which was lying on the floor and got into ready position. Kṛṣṇa wanted to put heart into him. He called the attention of Bhīma in the name of his father, and struck himself on his thigh. Bhīma understood the indication. He wondered how he had not known that Duryōdhana's thighs were his vulnerable points. He brandished his club and held it ready, studying each movement and alert, and as Duryōdhana swooped down on him again from above, he struck at both his thighs, and broke them into a hundred pieces. Duryōdhana fell to the ground. A stanza (XIII:97) celebrates Duryōdhana's unwavering purpose: "He went to the logical extent of what he spoke and stuck to what he said he would hold to and do. Until the last moment of his life he carried out his bitter resolve, was not afraid, nor did swerve. Nor to the last moment did he ever weaken or slacken. How rich in self-regard is Suyōdhana!"

When Bhīma saw the enemy sticking closely to the earth in unconsciousness, seeming almost unwilling, though near dead, to give up the land, he advanced to where he lay and unheeding the prohibitions of Baladeva not to dishonour the king of kings, lord of the eleven divisions, he kicked off the crown on Duryōdhana's head saying, in uncontrollable anger: "It was with this that he was anointed; this is the one that cooled under the shadow of the imperial peacock umbrella. Is this not the head that did not care to bend to anyone on earth through flourish of insolent superiority?" The precious stones studding the crown were scattered all about the ground. This act was indeed ungracious: particularly as compared with the haughty sportsmanship which characterized Duryōdhana just a moment ago when he desisted from smiting a fallen foe. That man who for a whole lifetime had pursued Bhīma and his brothers with spite and hatred and murderous rancour, driving them from pillar to post, mocking them and exposing them

to every shame and hardship won at the last moment on a technical point and by a *hauteur* which was akin to generosity; while Bhīma had every reason to punish a wrongdoer who deservedly met his fate, lost his self-control and was guilty of an act of ungraciousness. Right and wrong cannot be too nicely balanced at a moment like this perhaps when a whole life's purpose fulfils itself; but one has a grudging sympathy for Duryōdhana now whose fall is glorious, howsoever relentless and great the justice of the consequence which he had called down upon himself. The enormity of Bhīma's action will have to be forgiven him, perhaps, seeing that he was the man most wronged by Duryōdhana of all the Pāṇḍava brothers; and he had vowed in open assembly that he would do all this. If the swearing was just, the doing should exonerate him. That was deemed Kṣatriya duty in those days.

Balarāma could not bear to see the condition of Duryōdhana when he was so kicked by Bhīma. Not wishing to hurt the feelings of his brother and himself profoundly disappointed and frustrated he returned to Dvārāvati.

31

With the fall of Duryōdhana, the three vows of Bhīma—the tying up of Draupadi's braid, the breaking of Duryōdhana's thigh and the shattering of the crown—were all fulfilled.* Kṛṣṇa praised Bhīma for deeds fully accomplished. And being aware of evil consequences which might emanate from Aśvatthāma on behalf of Duryōdhana, he took the five brothers to the blue hills. He sent Dhṛṣṭadyumna, and a few surviving leaders and the Pāṇḍava sons to the camp, enjoining on them watchfulness and guarding both themselves and the camp. It was more than a preventive warning—for his insight into character and purpose was unerring. He smelt the revenge that Aśvatthāma would wreak and could divine how that wayward and wilful man might act.

What ensued bore out the apprehensions of Kṛṣṇa. For, Kṛpa, Kṛtavarma and Aśvatthāma came in search of their master. Not finding him anywhere on the battlefield, they enquired of Bhīma where he might be found and reached the Vaiśampāyana

* In none of which Arjuna has share.

lake. Here the poet brings in the picture of Rājyalakṣmi, the Spirit of Royalty, who was now preparing to go from Duryōdhana to the Pāṇḍavas, now that they were the victors. It is a pretty picture—more aesthetic and symbolic than real—of the Goddess of Royalty as she gives up her ministry to Duryōdhana and proceeds at the behest of her lord, the Lord of the Universe, to go and reside with the Pāṇḍavas. Aśvatthāma would not let her do this: for as long as one loyal warrior was left to fight for Duryōdhana, his cause was not finally lost or the victory of the Pāṇḍavas fully won. He directed her to go back for service at Duryōdhana's side. As long as he lived, royalty resided in the Kaurava; Nārāyaṇa himself cannot be lord over her. Led by her, the three go where Duryōdhana lay. Great sorrow overcame Aśvatthāma at the sight, and he vowed that he would kill the Pāṇḍavas if only Duryōdhana, even now, commanded him to do so. Duryōdhana's eyes were sticking with blood which streamed from his head. He opened them and looked at Aśvatthāma's face and spoke these words: "This condition has come to me at fate's ordinance. Do not lament it. The ancient Puruṣa, Murāri, is by their side, no victory can be won over the Pāṇḍavas. Yet, if you can kill them, shall I be the one to stop or forbid you? Destroy the enemy and come back while yet I live." Deathless unforgiveness! Aśvatthāma made answer: "I shall return to you with the glad tidings that Pāṇḍavas are all destroyed." He directed Lakṣmi to continue her ministrations to the king and with Kṛpa and Kṛtavarma issued out. As characteristically as he has done on other occasions, the poet makes the Sun-God feel that this passing away of the master of his son Karṇa makes the sorrow of his son's loss double. So he decides to get into the water, and, like an orphan, the lord of the lotus sank in the western sky. The last sunset Duryōdhana could witness.

Aśvatthāma proceeded to the Pāṇḍava camp and raided it. He called the Pāṇḍavas by name and, mistaking the sons for the senior Pāṇḍavas, killed them all. With the bleeding heads of the five Upa-Pāṇḍavas, he returned at dawn to where Duryōdhana lay. "Here," he said, "take these heads of your precious Pāṇḍavas." Duryōdhana looked at them and his heart gave out when he realized the truth. "Like one who plucks little lotus buds from the

lake, you have brought to me, O Aśvatthāma, the heads of the five Pāṇḍava children. However can you be redeemed from the sin of slaying children?" The stark simplicity of Duryōdhana's utterance is overwhelming. Aśvatthāma could not at first understand what Duryōdhana was meaning and asked him to explain himself. "These are not the heads of the five Pāṇḍavas," said Duryōdhana, "but of the sons of the five brothers." Aśvatthāma and his friends hung down their heads, and asked Duryōdhana what they should do thereafter. The two Brahmins were advised to go to the Himālayas for expiation. They were also told that his end had come. Kṛtavarma went back to Dvārāvati after Duryōdhana breathed his last. In a beautiful Piriakkara—a native seven-foot metre—the poet concludes the canto with the proclamation that kingship came to Arjuna.

The last canto opens with Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna having a stroll on the battlefield where victory was won. The other Pāṇḍava brothers were also there. Viewing the destruction that had been caused by him Arjuna looked up at the face of Kṛṣṇa who praised him for the successful way in which he had wielded his weapon to achieve the annihilation of the enemy army. Just then Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri approached them. Bhānumati, the wife of Duryōdhana, and other queens were behind them. So were the wives of the major leaders of the Kaurava army. They had wandered over the battlefield seeking the remains of their husbands and looking forlorn, helpless, faded. The braids they wore were loose and lashed on their sides and tears poured down heavily from their eyes; endlessly they struck their bodies in agony and heavy marks of fingers showed on them; they wailed overcome with grief; they were all fatigued and their bodies were hanging weak and loose. Their beautiful faces were stricken with burning grief and their eyes wandered without sense or direction: a picture of grief to anyone who saw them. (XIV:5) The king's women came down calling for pity. Dharmaputra bowed to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri. "It is a pity," he said, "that whatever we did, your son would not give us even a single share of the kingdom even after you commanded him so to do. He did all this and perished. Do not mourn for this, sire; all enmity passes with him. I shall be to you a greater son and render service as if born of your flesh. N

words need be spoken. Pray do what I say, without overmuch grieving." Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: "It is not a hundred sons I had; they are a hundred griefs which cannot be warded off. I shall not think of them. But this is the business now on which I come to you. Their husbands have to be given back to these women." The scene in the Iliad where old Priam goes into the camp of Achilles to beg of him the body of his son Hector is at least matched by this situation of the old and blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra who has lost all his children and who with the daughters-in-law proceeds to the battlefield and begs of the victors for the mortal remains of their dear ones. That he is verily the father of a hundred sorrows and not of sons, that he will now not think of them but only these young women whose situation is instinct with grief all the greater for its being subdued and for the brevity and the terseness of its expression within the confines of a kanda—is an example of that economy in expression for which Pampa is famous. Yudhiṣṭhira replied that it is not wrong to ask for it or to give it. He would himself stand by and have proper obsequies performed for them all.

A surprise to them all was the sight of Kunti rushing towards the corpse of Karṇa and clasping it to her heart. She sent for the Pāṇḍavas and, pointing to Karṇa, said that he was their eldest brother, her first-born. "I am a great sinner," she cried, "I brought all this on him out of fondness and partiality for you." The reaction of the Pāṇḍavas was spontaneous. They said: "No one told us this that you, Karṇa, were our brother. If we had known it, we should have handed over to you the kingship and the earth; given up all our anger and hatred for the chief of the Kauravas and carried out your behests, rendering you dutiful service by accepting what you gave as favour or refuse." It is now finally the part of Kṛṣṇa-Nārāyana to speak words of wisdom and consolation. "The killer, the killing and the dead are features of life on earth common to the world, They happen according to the will of the Lord." (Īsvaraniccheyinde negaḷgum) He brought down the sorrows of all those present. They were calmed and consoled. They went round the field of battle, got the remains of those they sought, and with due ceremony cremated the remains of the

Kaurava princes and Karṇa.* When the ceremonies were duly completed, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī offered to go to a hermitage for penance. Kunti too asked for permission to go, being overcome with the sorrow caused by the death of Karṇa.

This over, Dharmanandana said to Kṛṣṇa: "The burden and responsibility of winning a victory and the lightening the load of the earth on the dreadful field of battle has happened by the efforts of the two of you. I have now no rival claimants or cousins. This esteem is enough for me. I shall have nothing more to do with kingship. We shall with enthusiasm set up Arjuna on the throne and crown him king. We shall journey today to Hastināpura." Kṛṣṇā agreed saying that no other would be able to support the burden of such a responsibility: which just means that Bhīma is passed over. With flourish of trumpets and beat of drums, the pageant moved to the park at the edge of Hastināpura. The bee, the cuckoo and the southern wind welcomed them warmly.

33

The rest of the last canto, is taken up with how they got into the town welcomed by the citizens and how Yudhiṣṭhira offered the kingship formally to Arjuna, telling him only age is our qualification, but in the destruction of the enemy and in prowess, in the achieved equality with Indra: "Your greatness settles thick and fast all about you; without saying 'no' by shaking your head or refusing this kingship on earth, it is for you to accept and rule over it for long, long years." In this request Bhīma joined. After the coronation, Subhadrā was declared his principal queen. The two of them, the new king and queen, got themselves weighed against their weight in gold and it was distributed among the poor, amidst great rejoicing and acclamation. The other brothers and Yuyutsu were each given kingdoms and wealth so that they might live happily. The rest of this Mahābhārata story is filled with the chanting of the strength, the courage and achievements of Vijaya who is both Arjuna and Arikesari. Yudhiṣṭhira decided to live ever after like a Mumukṣu. Great thanks were rendered to

* A separate funeral was arranged for Karṇa. That spot became a place of pilgrimage called Karṇasthali.

Kṛṣṇa for it was he who had enabled them to destroy the enemy and gain the kingdom for them.* Kṛṣṇa then went with Sātyaki to Dvārāvati with great gifts and marks of affection and respect from the brothers. A prose section celebrates and elaborates the identity of the epic Arjuna with this hero of the contemporary. Cālukya Arikesari. Guṇārṇava reigned over this land with sovereign, unshared greatness and success (XIV-39).

The work is brought to a close with a narration of how Arikesari ruled the kingdom and how he commissioned the poet to write this Mahābhārata in Kannada; and here in detail is the history of the poet's own family. It is here that we get an account of what the poet purposed to do and tried to achieve as an account of himself and the work.

In between two stanzas of benediction, one stanza describes how this Bhārata work of his becomes worship-worthy by the world, depicting as it does the ruthless spite of Duryōdhana, the truthfulness of Karṇa, the manliness of Bhīma, the strength of Śalya, the supreme loftiness of Bhīṣma, the supremacy in archery of Drōṇa, the greatness of enterprise of Arjuna, the clean righteousness of Dharmaputra. A brief consideration of each of these will next be taken up.

* This is a crucial stanza throwing light on the importance of Kṛṣṇa in the *Pampa Bhārata*, For it (XIV-37) is spoken by Arjuna, and is not mere courtesy but a deserved, true tribute.

CHAPTER IV

THE PANEL OF THE WORTHIES

1. DURYŌDHANA

THE story of the Mahābhārata is full of episodes which show up the quality and achievement of many heroes each one of whom has contributed to the final victory of the Pāṇḍavas even as many of them have contributed to the disunity, defeat and death of the Kauravas. It is interesting to see how Pampa singles out eight heroes in his poem, five of whom belong to the Kaurava side. The motive force behind the development of the story and the sorrows and misfortunes of the Pāṇḍavas is found in the bitter spitefulness and jealousy of Duryōdhana: cala. The poet makes every effort to show that it started with the feeling of frustration in his own mother for the delay in the delivery of her children while Kunti, by then already had become mother to two sons. The auguries and omens at the time of his birth had indicated that he would be the death of the line. This eldest son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri grows up with fatal fondness from the parents. The father, deprived of the kingdom because of his blindness had already a feeling of inferiority; and when a jealous Duryōdhana spoke to him of the Kaurava handicaps set against the success, the fame and the popularity of the cousins, this sense of inferiority and loss made him mentally and morally blind as well. He acceded to every one of the requests and suggestions of his son, and was gladly, fully privy to almost every plot against the Pāṇḍavas.

Duryōdhana and his brothers pursued the Pāṇḍavas with hate and grudged their existence. But whatever the Kaurava did the Pāṇḍavas came out scatheless, with fame and popular goodwill and with strength and character enhanced. His special rancour was against Bhīma; his spite against Draupadi was second only to that; for she had eluded his desire in the Svayamvara assembly. His anger against Arjuna was because he had won in the shooting of the fish-target and inflicted defeat on him and the other princely hosts on that occasion in the Pāncāla kingdom.

An equal reason was the fame of Arjuna as the greatest archer of the time and the interminable praise of him that he was unconquerable. Kṛṣṇa's partiality for him; and his own partisanship for Karṇa whom he cherished as the one most likely to defeat Arjuna on the battlefield added to it. Yudhiṣṭhira and the twins escaped his ire. When he found that the Pāṇḍavas eluded him and he did not know how else to ruin them, he clutched at the suggestion of his uncle that they could exploit the weakness of Yudhiṣṭhira for gambling; and, in spite of the best efforts of the elders to prevent it, brought about their failure and loss. His behaviour in the court, if disgraceful and inhuman, is a form which his cala, spite and rancour took: a sort of compensation for his own lacks and failure. And he did not care what would happen to him in future so long as he could see the distress and humiliation now of his foes. Even during the time of the sojourn of the Pāṇḍavas in the forests he devised ways and means of putting them to loss and shame and pursued then with hate. In each case the efforts boomeranged on him. Jayadratha was beaten back when he tried to abduct Draupadi; he himself had to be released from the hands of Chitrāṅgada and he owed his rescue to the chivalry and all-forgiving righteousness of Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira; the evil consequences of the efforts of his priest Kanaka who let loose the demon Kīrtigē on the Pāṇḍavas devoured the priest himself. His efforts to discover their hiding-place failed at first and when he ordered the enterprise of cattle-lifting at Virāṭanagara and the Pāṇḍavas came out the term of exile had been completed and he and his army received a thrashing which was a foretaste of what would come on him on the Kurukṣetra field. His treatment of Kṛṣṇa who went to him on a mission of peace, goodwill and compromise showed the malice and unforgiving bitterness against the Pāṇḍavas and his unwillingness to concede any merit to the cause of Kṛṣṇa though he had himself earlier gone to him seeking help. Perhaps the only loyal and resolute friend single-minded in devotion to him and the surest pillar of his strength was Karṇa; and him he was prepared to sacrifice in pursuit of his desire to destroy the enemy. That is why he kept him ignorant of his birth and title to the throne. But this must be said in his favour, the friendship that developed

between the two of them was however of exceptional intimacy and trust. How he harnessed the great Bhīṣma and his own ācāryas and how he inveigled Śalya to fight for him rather than on the side of the Pāṇḍavas and how at every point he nagged, prodded, harried and hurried his commanders on the battlefield is recorded in stinging words.

Only when almost all was lost he possibly realized how yellow he had been in his heart and the recognition of the virtue and merits of his opponents. But his was not the nature to repent.

Vanity is extreme self-love but at the last moment it ripened in him into a principle of conduct which wrings admiration and respect from others than his friends; for it had become in him an element of character, making him stand up to the Pāṇḍavas alone, unaided, totally broken in fortune though he was. That is what made him feel that after the death of Karṇa he alone could lead the Kaurava army to victory. 'Abhimāna-dhana' the one whose wealth was his pride is the phrase used very much in this context. That was roused in defence of Karṇa when Asvatthāma spoke against his master's partiality for the fisherman's son a repetition of what he began with on the occasion of the display of skill in bowmanship long years ago. He who could not let anyone speak against Karṇa or come between them when the latter was alive, would he let another malign Karṇa now when he was dead? His reaction to Aśvatthāma's words was fierce. Even when Aśvatthāma offered loyal allegiance, he said: "I shall reject the overlordship of the three worlds got through you. You are lucky to get away with your life after speaking ill of Karṇa. Others should not have survived it. My friend would feel pained and distressed in the heavens if he knew that I was giving ear to slander against him." (XIII-27). It is the same cast of mind that makes him again and again reject the advice to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.* Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Bhīṣma, both pressed claims to achieve a peaceful compromise even at

* One does not know, though, if he could have been cured of some part of his jealousy if the elders each time did not nag him on his worthlessness and played up the merits of the Pāṇḍavas. Psychologically this was tackling him wrongly. Yet it was a part of all the crassness of the situation and the drive to doom.

the last hour. But before, during and after his meetings with them, his one grief was that he was put to listening to such a proposition. If the parents spoke the words in hope to rescue their last surviving son from death, the words of Bhīṣma were spoken as much to save him as to preserve the principal scion of one branch of the family. Both were certain that they could persuade the Pāṇḍavas to heed them and accept terms. The answer that Duryōdhana gives to Bhīṣma convinced him of his sense of inveterate purpose. There was something titanic in such dread resolve to fight and meet his fate in spite of the odds against him. And the sorrow for the loss of all that he held dear steeled his resolve. When the taunts of the Pāṇḍavas and more especially those of Bhīma made him come out from the pool of water where he was resting and trying to dodge the day and its consequences, it is the same integrity that made him challenge any one or all the Pāṇḍavas for a fight, rejecting in disdain the terms of friendship offered by Yudhiṣṭhira. When Balarāma asks him if Kṛṣṇa's version of events was true he accepts each word of it. His pride made him upright and truthful. Kṛṣṇa himself knew the essential truthfulness of Duryōdhana. A sense of overweening arrogance more than any regard for Bhīma restrained him from hitting the fallen foe. Rather, he fanned him back to consciousness with continuous waving from his mace. At a lesser level and moment it would be cynicism. The moment was so grim that it raised such behaviour to heights of worthiness making it sublime.

The closing scene is a crowning picture of this feature of his character. Though he knew that fortune was against him and that when Kṛṣṇa befriended the Pāṇḍavas there was no hope of their destruction, he let Aśvatthāma try. "If you can kill, I shall not be the one to say 'don't' Yet, all his sensibilities and feeling for himself, his cause and his friends could not make him blind during the last moment of his life to realize how dastardly was the deed of Aśvatthāma who in blind devotion, ignorance and passion had slaughtered the innocent little ones mistaking them for their betters. There was nothing more to it but to say "you had better expiate for it through penance,"—while he himself passed away in full realization of what he was and did. This

inflexibility stands out in heroic proportion and gives him a stature epic in dignity.

2. KARṆA

Truthfulness -Nanni- in the sense of readiness and willingness to carry out what he said and promised is designated as the distinguishing feature of Karṇa's character. He is, of course, valiant and no one was a patch on him for liberality. Yet these two seem to strengthen his main dāēmon. Pampa does not elaborate the episodes where Karṇa said and did wrong things, sometimes goaded by a sense of rivalry against Arjuna or in partisanship of his master and friend or as one among 'the four evil ones' that thought and wrought the misfortune of the Pāṇḍavas. The poet has a golden regard for Karṇa and loses himself in admiration of him. When all is said he appears to be 'more sinned against than sinning.' Though he was born exactly like the other Pāṇḍava brothers and was a son of Sūryadeva, the fact that he was the son of a maiden made mother Kunti cast him away into the Ganges. A combination of fear and sense of impropriety and social guilt brought this misfortune on the newborn child. When the fisherman picked him up and fostered him as son he had to grow up like a low-born person. The gods were participants against him. We are asked to believe—and, what is not possible for a poet and a god like Indra! that Indra divined that Karṇa would be set against his son—to be born long after this!—in single combat, and so wanted to deprive him of the natural protection. He appears before him like a Bṛhmacāri and begs him for a gift of the armour and ear-ring. Even as a young man, his fame had spread for valour and liberality. This tempted Indra. Karṇa cuts them with his sword-blade and hands over. At such an early age, he had thrown away his best physical defence.

When at the feet of Paraśurāma he learnt all that the great teacher could teach, his fate again came in the way—this time too Indra interfered. He came like a beetle and stung Karṇa in the lap which supported the sleeping master's head. His very sensitiveness and considerateness, which should have pleaded like an angel worked against

him; for he had broken the rule of birth which conditioned his acceptance of one as pupil, and so forfeited the efficacy of the Bṛhmāstra in the final moment of need. When in the display of arms and skill in archery he challenged Arjuna he was put to humiliation for daring the princes of the royal household, forgetting his own birth and place!

His loyalty to Duryōdhana made him sometimes blind to right and wrong and an executor of his will in everything—both in the Draupadi-svayamvara episode and in the assembly hall where the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadi were humiliated. He stood by and aided his master in the wrong things done and refrained from doing the right.

Only when Kṛṣṇa spoke to him the truth about his origin conflict entered his heart: for the one thing that was rankling in him was the feeling of inferiority due to low birth with which he was charged and twitted many a time to his disadvantage. He was at least free from it now in his heart of hearts; possibly he felt too the game was up. Though his regard for Duryōdhana and faithfulness to him did not suffer a jot his faith in the cause not only but faith in his motive was disturbed. He could not, however, desert a friend and benefactor who had treated him like an equal and permitted him privileges and intimacies beyond the bounds of expectation and possibility. The feeling that Kunti was his mother—thus confirming the words of Kṛṣṇa and supported by the witness borne by Ganga and Suryadeva themselves—made him a new man giving him a status which redeemed him in his own eye; that was enough rehabilitation but it brought on him considerations, ties of affection and brotherliness which restricted his total usefulness to his master. The integrity of his heart broke up. Hereafter only a sense of duty and loyalty bound him to Duryodhana. It was noble of him—if foolish and disloyal—to make that promise to his mother who did such grievous wrong so far as he was concerned.* though it meant certain doom to him. Very nobly he requested Kṛṣṇa not

* And, could she or any girl have braved public scandal at her age, in her time or later? Fear and shame inhibit larger human feeling ever. Society should organize aid in all such cases. Since Kaṇvas, Janakas and Drupadas are all too few to pick them up and foster.

to divulge this news to Arjuna or to the other Pāṇḍavas. Noblest of all, that he allowed the elders and the ācārya group lightly to get away with taunting him with low birth at the time Bhīṣma is installed as the first generalissimo of the forces. He does not in the least produce the impression that he knows that Bhīṣma is as much grandfather to him as the old man is to the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. Character and sense of order and propriety assert themselves in one of lofty spirit. He suggested that Drōṇa should succeed Bhīṣma as commander of the Kaurava forces. When he approached Bhīṣma before his own installation—both to beg forgiveness for his unworthy behaviour at the time of Bhīṣma's installation and for invoking his blessing now,—there is a singular appropriateness in the word spoken by Bhīṣma to him that Karṇa is to him a grandson in the same way the children of Kunti and Gāndhāri are. Or, did the old man have a suspicion or knowledge of it, even as Kṛṣṇa did? Yet Kṛṣṇa did not include his name in the list of persons who knew.

His behaviour on the field in the final stand against Arjuna is noble and heroic. Even before then, he had been taking care to see that he did not severely hurt either Yudhiṣṭhira or Bhīma, or the twins. Yudhiṣṭhira could not stand up against him. He had been given a stiff beating and was taken back to the camp, prostrate and groaning to say that the woman who mothered Karṇa was verily a heroic mother. Though he had every ground for the sake of his master to destroy Bhīma, on account of the orgies on the occasion of the slaughter of Duśśāsana and other incidents,—he had pulled him away from his path with the ear and edge of his bow after beating him down. A more interesting episode is of the chance he had against the twins. Surely they were no match to him. When they were at his mercy, he looked at Śalya and consulted him about what he should do. Śalya naturally could not bear to see his own nephews slain, and therefore advised Karṇa to let such small fish go and concentrate on the main quarry. When it was Arjuna who had to be shot with the special arrow and Śalya urged him to change aim and shoot at his heart Karṇa knew Śalya had not the same qualms now. It was now his turn to remember the promise he had made to his mother and so he did not aim or shoot to kill as advised.

Word had been passed and he would keep to it to the bitter end though it would lead to his own death. He had taken aim once and would not for shame change it as not worthy of an archer as great as himself.

Throughout the poem, this magnanimity about him raises him above the run of common men and makes him truly original, the first and last of a whole species. All the poets of the Mahābhārata story have fallen under the spell of his personality and given us an immortal character. Never once did he fail of purpose nor break a promise made whatever the consequences to himself or to others; but joined to the fortunes on the Kaurava side as it was it brought on him certain destruction.

3. BHĪMA

The third character selected by the poet for praise is Bhīma and his distinction is manliness. His physical strength is phenomenal, for which from birth he distinguished himself. As a child he rode on lions. The early episodes in sport of how he shook a whole tree bringing down all the Kaurava children to the ground bruised and broken when they teased him overmuch and eluded him, brought upon him jealousy and hate. Their poison did not kill him; he could not be drowned in the Ganges with a huge stone round his neck. He rescued the mother and brothers from the lac palace, literally carrying them on his shoulders, starting the fire with the room in which the evil Purōcana was sleeping and 'hoisting him with his own petard.' The first burst of tenderness at the plight and sight of his brothers and mother also comes to and from him.

He begins a whole series of killing of Rākṣasas with easy facility when he killed Hiḍimbā who desired to make a feast of all the six—(aḍu. .tinbam)—who had come within his pale. Five full hefty fellows have come here on their own and are resting under the banyan tree. Bring them in and cook them into a special dish which the two of us shall eat—was the direction of the brother to the sister. Among such exploits Baka, Kimmīra, Jaṭa and the villainous Kīcaka—all tasted the strength of his arms; his technique in handling them was more or less the same. The slaying of

Jarāsandha was of a special kind, fruitful of consequence: for without that the Rājasūya could not be undertaken. This indirectly led to the destruction of Śiśupāla on the one side and the rousing of jealousy and malevolence of the Kauravas on the other, resulting in the exile for thirteen years.

If anybody could be uncontrollable it was he. He was perhaps the most natural man of the group and, of the earth earthy. Human nature asserted itself in him with the force of a full-blooded human being, with instinct and interest and passion being ever the basis and guide to action never caring to rise higher than the common level. He among men and Draupadi among women on the Pāṇḍava side are the truest exemplars of average humanity, only with abilities and virtue articulated at an epic level. While the dice play was on, it was he who first warned Yudhiṣṭhira that gambling was a coward's game and its temptations were no better than those of a whore. When Draupadi was forcibly brought into the assembly in a difficult period of her life and exposed to humiliation and all felt bound by the legalities of a pledge that Yudhiṣṭhira had given, he was the one who felt the utmost discomfort. Law or no law, certain things should not be done or permitted. This is the level of a pre-legal morality deriving from a natural sense of justice and human regard. Possibly it is valid in purer quality at higher moments of expression as well. The disgraced and humiliated Draupadi saw the mockery, and the glee and cried out that she would not tie up her braid until Duśāsana paid for it in blood. Something had to start Bhīma; and this vow of Draupadi did it. Bhīma burst the bonds of restraint and he vowed before the stunned assembly—that he will break the thighs of Duryōdhana and destroy all the Kauravas*. There was no mistaking him. Bhīma's strength is elemental: not alone Rākṣasas nor men like Jarāsandha and Kīcaka, but huge elephants like Supratīka he disposed of saying they were no more than mere swine. When he was told to keep off the Dikkari he said that its father—a 'Kannadaism' to indicate a better—meant nothing to him and he would not mind it,

* There is not enough cause in *Pampa Bhārata* for this precise term in the vow, though there is in the *Mahābhārata*.

It was again Bhima who reinforced the complaint of Draupadi about the closing years of the twelve-year exile in the forest. He was for no compromise with the Kauravas when Kṛṣṇa was asked to negotiate with Duryōdhana.

What happened on the battlefield is well known: it was he that destroyed all the principal Kauravas.

Yet the outstanding feature of Bhīma's character is his sense of discipline, his willingness to be bound by loyalty to an elder brother and the principles of worthy conduct which his status in society enjoined and the relationships imposed on him. The sight of Duśśāsana when Bhīma brings him down and all its ghoulishness and insane horror was part of what he called fulfilling a vow literally.*

The last fight with Duryōdhana is no doubt winning for him fulfilment and victory and makes him carry out the vow of vengeance against Duryōdhana of Ūrubhanga and Kirīṭabhanga. It is said that it was technically wrong; but all had heard his vow thirteen years ago and it was an all-in all-out war. Part of the odium against him is due to confusing the smash of the thigh with the foulness in boxing behaviour of a later time and clime. This blackens his character to a modern audience and makes him lose virtue if not even 'caste'. Set however against the whole history of rancour, hate and spite, of passion, and reeking, rankling wrong, it has its attenuation. Bhīma's conduct looks natural and necessary, and was perhaps justice as well. Yet in the larger sense, the moral victory is not his. That marks him down. The extravagance at that moment seems unnecessary.

He is not considered at all for the succession, poor dear! When Yudhiṣṭhira abdicates, he is nowhere in the offing. Heavy is the price he and Draupadi have to pay in the final rewarding. Draupadi is left out without mention, Bhīma has to feel gratified with some rich subahs as his portion—a gift from Pārtha on the recommendation of Yudhisthira! And, he is the one who has borne the brunt of the feuds; she, the hardships and the humiliations.

* Backing and celebration of what is called the heroic often leads to such monstrosities.

4. ŚALYA

That Śalya's name should have come in for special mention at all in the galaxy of great men is surprising. For he does not do much. He must have been an important factor in Mahābhārata politics. He was brother to Mādri, the second wife of Pāṇḍu and so uncle to the twins Nakula and Sahadeva. Naturally his affiliations should have been more to the Pāṇḍavas. But Duryōdhana exploited a delicate moment of courtesy and persuaded him to join forces with him against the Pāṇḍavas. His partisanship could at best have been half-hearted. He could not bring himself to be the charioteer to 'the base-born' Karṇa, himself being of the bluest royal blood of the time: and he did not hide his grouse from Duryōdhana. He blames the prerogative of kings—which on the battlefield, cannot be gainsaid at all. What cannot a king do? he says: A coward is made a hero; a hero a coward; a worthy person is reduced to the position of a low and dirty one; a low one is raised to esteem. The all-pervading sense of unwisdom in a king makes him flashy and shifting. It is difficult to serve a king (here an overlord) and he forgets that he is a king himself! Loose vent to wild thoughts.

But in the battlefield a suggestion from Duryōdhana is royal command. He must have been highly skilled in managing horses to be deemed the equal of Kṛṣṇa. That was the suggestion made by the great Bhīṣma himself. Though he helped to save the lives of the twins, he did not want Karṇa to desist from taking a surer aim at Arjuna. His loyalty to the archer leader and his master both demand this of him. Pampa has no time to develop the hardness of feeling, the incompatibilities and the gross bickering between him and Karṇa; and so the 'Śalya-sārathya' which has become a byword in India for a sort of sabotage does not figure much here.

He is praised by Pampa for strength: Bala. He was obviously very strong. When news of the slaying of Kīcaka reaches the Kauravas, they speak of Balarāma, Bhīma, Śalya and Kīcaka as equal in strength to one another and infer that it must be the doing of Bhīma. But Bhīma had given him a drubbing at the time of Draupadi's wedding. Beyond that, there is not much

else of importance which shows him in exploit. His command of the Kaurava army lasted less than half a day. Kṛṣṇa suggests that Yudhiṣṭhira should head the Pāṇḍava forces that day: an elder set against another elder; and Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the pairing. Finally Śalya decides to die—the sorry decision of all the principal Kaurava generals; and, at the hands of Yudhisthira.

5. BHĪṢMA

Altogether the noblest, the loftiest person—with Attyunnati—in the Mahābhārata is Bhīṣma who, with Vyāsa the direct progenitor of the race and half-brother to him, is the eldest of the race then living. His birth was like the birth of standards, valour, knowledge and enterprise to the world. From the moment he persuaded Satyawati's father to let her marry his father by promising that he will not ever reign as king, her children would be heirs to the throne and that he himself will not marry—began a life of dedication, self-denial and guardianship which distinguished his long life. He was born earlier than the other heroes of the Bhārata and lasted till the battle's fortunes are lost and won. The promise he made about his bachelorhood made him 'Bhīṣma' the one with his formidable vow,—while it won for him a blessing that he could choose the time of his death.

A term 'Puruṣavrata' is mentioned in connection with him. When Citrāṅgada is dead, he brings three princesses from a svayamvara and gets two of them Ambikā and Ambālikā married to Vicitravīrya. When Amba, the eldest of the three, refuses to marry Vicitravīrya and instead asks Bhīṣma to marry her—as the one who won her—his resolution not to touch woman is again in exercise. Ambā, frustrated, returns to Śālvala to whom she was betrothed. She is rejected by him because he was defeated by the superior might of Bhīṣma in a svayamvara, contest and she takes a complaint against Bhīṣma to his guru Paraśurāma. Ambā notices the inability of Paraśurāma himself to force Bhīṣma to accept her, and commits herself to flames, vowing that she will be born as one who would cause his death. Śikhandi, who indirectly caused Bhīṣma's fall on the tenth day of the Mahābhārata war is this Ambā in the next birth.

His vrata is illustrated again. Vicitravīrya dies issueless. Mother Satyawati is sad at heart that the line is broken. She says that she will release him from the vow and, as the best scion of the race he should agree to rule over the kingdom. Bhīṣma is inflexible. The two—mother and brother—prevail upon Vyāsa to confer a son upon each of the two queens of Vicitravīrya; Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu are born; one blind and the other all white. Since Bhīṣma had to help continue the race he undertook to bring up the children and look after their interests. He arranges for their proper education and in due time gets them married and sees to it that because the elder Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind Pāṇḍu is installed king. Here was the seat and spring of the jealousy, hidden and unexpressed, in Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Both the princes were married happily, but neither had a child until Pāṇḍu renounced his kingship and went to Śataśṛnga to live there as a hermit; for he had got under a curse that if he touched a woman he will die. The circumstances under which both the princes became parents, one by the boon of Vyasa for a hundred children and the other as a result of the boon granted by Durvāsa to Kunti need not be gone into. Obviously, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his children grew up in the capital and the young ones were being groomed for kingship. When at the death of Pāṇḍu and Mādri, Kunti and the Pāṇḍavas were brought to Hastināpur to be handed over to the elders of the family, Bhīṣma was happy.

Bhīṣma did not discriminate between the two sets of children in his affection. No one could withhold partiality for these orphans who were also stronger every way than the Kauravas and the better in virtue and character. Kṛpācārya first and Drōṇa next were entrusted with their education. Unfortunately rivalries developed between the two sets of them both on the training-ground and outside; Bhīṣma noticed with sorrow the growing hostility and jealousy against the Pāṇḍavas and when, at the instance of Duryōdhana and his friends, Dhṛtarāṣṭra sent the Pāṇḍavas away to Vāraṇāvata so that cause of strife and friction might not develop further between them with evil consequences, he could not have been happy. All the while Bhīṣma had to reconcile himself and settle down to the build up of strength and position by the Kauravas;—for they now were the line of his father.

He must have gradually loosened his grip over affairs which now were more and more managed between Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryōdhana.

When the Pāṇḍavas had to be welcomed back, after the Pāncāli svayamvara, to the chagrin of the Kauravas and the joy of Vidura, Bhīṣma and Droṇa, and when Bhīṣma wanted to divide the kingdom between the two Duryōdhana would not agree to it. Bhīṣma had to be firm and tell Duryōdhana that he should know his place. The Kingship and succession, he said, rightfully belong to me and I will do as I like; and I should like to see who dares to obstruct me in carrying out my will to give the Pāṇḍavas the share of kingdom which Pāṇḍu won as king and as a mark of my own fostering them and affection for them; Duryōdhana should know the principles governing succession, accept what is given to him and live with his brothers with good feeling. "The Pāṇḍavas show me the same regard and obedience that they rendered to Pāṇḍu and will not transgress my words. So I shall install them on the throne by dividing the kingdom, and I shall see who will dare impugne my will." (*IV 5-7et seq.*)

This was more than what Duryōdhana could face: he was duly awed and silenced; and said he would abide by Bhīṣma's decision.

This is, perhaps, the last time when Bhīṣma expressed and had his will in Hastināpura with Duryōdhana and his father. After this point Bhīṣma seems to have resigned himself to let Duryōdhana develop as he liked. Off and on he protested and advised. But when he was not heeded he does not seem to have pressed them to conclusion. It is likely that he accepted Duryōdhana as ruling king; and when he himself did not and would not rule, he should not materially interfere with the ruler. So gradually, he let be.

The next time we see Bhīṣma is in the Rājasūya when he recommended Kṛṣṇa for the first honour -Agrapūja- at the end of the sacrifice. Bhīṣma seems to have knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's ability and character and of some quality else which distinguished him above the earthly: Bhīṣma protested, again, about the gambling plot and warned Dhṛtarāṣṭra against its evil consequences both for the line and for the kingdom. And even at the time of the public insults to which the Pāṇḍavas were exposed,

his protests were unavailing. The Kauravas were strong in power; strict legalities and prim, conventional modes of behaviour perhaps made it difficult for the elders more effectively to interfere with the course of events. The moral stand they took and the human appeal—alas, that it ever is so!—were not strong enough to dissuade the Kauravas. All that Bhīṣma could do was to warn and prophesy doom. The dearest dream of his life about the continuity of the line was being destroyed by Duryōdhana: that was his harrowing sorrow. Virtue here becomes negative and parasitical.

Not until the Virāta Parva episode does Bhīṣma appear again on the scene. After the Kaurava army is routed and it is discovered that the defeat was caused by the Pāṇḍava brothers, Bhīṣma again advised the handing back of the Pāṇḍavas' share of the kingdom to them according to the terms of the agreement. This time again the advice was not heeded. War became inevitable, and Bhīṣma fatefully is chosen as the first generalissimo of the forces. He has no choice. The real conflict in the old man's mind makes him deeply sad at heart. But he never once makes a secret of his esteem for the righteousness of the Pāṇḍavas and dissatisfaction with Duryōdhana for the wrong stand he has taken. Only he would not desert the one whom he had accepted as his king in his need. He knew he could not—and would not even if he could—kill Arjuna and or Kṛṣṇa, but he would fight loyally and lay down his life on the battlefield. Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira were amazed at the ineffectiveness of Kṛṣṇa's Cakra, and were told that Bhīṣma had with him an invisible Vaiṣṇava astra which he himself had given him at an earlier age when Bhīṣma sided him against the demon Mura thus revealing other vistas of relationship.

Bhīṣma had done so much to preserve the line but he had to see its disintegration and destruction. And he could not help it. When it came to a desperate position and Yudhiṣṭhira went to him for aid, he had to suggest to him the modus of his fall. Only, Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira that Arjuna should not be informed of the trick.

His reaction to Karṇa's distemper at such an old man as himself being selected the general-in-chief, one so openly partial to the Pāṇḍavas, while younger, more resolute and surer warriors were

available making the choice laughter-worthy to the enemy was dignified and full of forbearance and wisdom. Bhīṣma could understand the impatience of the young warrior and his line of thought. What really did Karṇa say? He was so ancient a man and one in the position of a preceptor. To expose him would be wrong and futile. It would be a most foolish illusion to think that he would strike the enemy down with his frail, reed-like bow. Old, hard of sight, partial to the enemies—how could he be expected to break the bone of the enemy? Karṇa asked for the assignment of the task to himself.

Bhīṣma answered Karṇa with great restraint. "I do not have, Karṇa, the ebullition of heroism, the lust of youth, the trust and confidence of the master and the strength of arms such as you enjoy. But this fight is the Bhārata war; the enemy is Arjuna. You need not be unduly exercised. You will get your turn on the field of battle; — all of you will. Perhaps my old man's bowmanship and strength of fight is as you say. It may also be little. Yet listen to what I say: I shall force Cakri who has promised not to wield the Chakra¹ to call the Chakra to aid causing dread to the world; push back Arjuna's chariot eight leagues from the Kurukṣetra and every day destroy ten thousand among the enemy warriors."

What Karṇa had said and done in a flush of passion must have rankled in his heart and grieved him when sobered down.

But that removed Karṇa from the battlefield for the first full ten days of the battle before he came back into it at the installation of Droṇa. The second meeting of Karṇa and Bhīṣma is a record of greatness and generosity on both sides when the younger man approaches the wounded old warrior to ask forgiveness for his intransigence and sulking at the beginning of the war and to beg a blessing from him, now that he is to be the chief. Bhīṣma's response is noble and totally free from animus. Bhīṣma's words were characteristic: "I know you spoke out of regard and loyalty for your master; and for no other reason. Even then, I said, you would get your turn. It has come now. You had the same preceptor to learn from in Bhārgavarāma that I had and so

1 Where, in the *Pampa Bhārata*?

we are related to each other. You are a grandson to me in the same reckoning as the children of Kunti and Gandhāri (a tell-tale phrase yet no more than that). Duryōdhana is relying on you. The entire enemy army is in dread of your arrows and bowmanship. The field is waiting for you. With Śalya as charioteer go on to the battlefield. Fight and win for yourself renown." There was no feeling of rancour nor any memory of the hurt given and taken. In his experience of men and things he could understand an expression and attitude such as Karṇa's.

How Duryōdhana approached Bhīṣma in the last stages of the war and what happened between them has been described already. A part of his mind seemed still taken up with concern for Duryōdhana. He was ever earnest in saving that line of the family as well. When Sanjaya whispered into his ear that the Kaurava emperor had come to him, his sorrow was great to realize the desolation and loneliness of Duryōdhana whom he would even now like to save by persuading. And when he heard the resolute words of Duryōdhana he could understand as only a Kṣatriya hero could admiring the steel in the resolution; inveterate but sad to contemplate in its vicissitude of broken fortune. He would like to help him to survive and win, if fortune favoured him. The Pāṇḍavas did not need his help or counsel: they were essentially good men, men of character and discipline; they had the good fortune of having a person of Yudhiṣṭhira's quality for elder brother, and the guidance and guardianship of a superman like Kṛṣṇa in all that they did and did not. It was not perhaps easy for him to live in Hastinapura with the wicked plotters of Pāṇḍavas' ruin like the quartet. Hastinapura was his home-town. He had undertaken to watch over the life and interest of his father's land. The Pāṇḍavas had more or less always been on the move though for no fault of theirs. And if he could not help a situation always successfully, he might at least prevent worse evil from happening at home.

In his strength as well as in his affections Bhīṣma stands out great and large and wise so as to make him larger in size than anything else in his time.¹ One would give anything to be able

1 A modern person would accuse him of want of firmness in his dealing with Duryōdhana, most of all in the assembly scene; he should have been happier if Bhīṣma had refused to fight on the unrighteous side. But it would

so overhear if not even listen to a conversation between him and Kᅇᅇᅇᅇ any time during the second five Parvas in the *Mahābhārata* or earlier. No poet, however, vouchsafes to us the favour. For if they had met, it should have been possible for them to compare notes based on their own sensing of the background, the history, the process, the fulfilment of one type of composite destiny, in the working out of which each and both had their different shares. The world would have ben grateful for such a meeting. The *Mahābhārata* is an epic and will give us only what events and episodes it cares to present. It is not oversensitive, nor curious; nor too sickly in sentiment; nor too prone to be analytical.

6. DROᅇA

Droᅇa comes in here for praise and regard on account of his consummate mastery in bowmanship—Cāpavidyā Pariᅇati. He is among the ācāryas and elders: among Kᅇᅇᅇᅇ and Vidura a person next only to Bhīᅇma in weight and prestige. When he came of age, his father put him into the charge of another Brahmarᅇi by name Yajnasena to learn bowmanship. Obviously the father detected special aptitude in him for this technical art. Along with the prince of Pāncāla, Drupada, son of Praᅇata, Drōᅇa acquired the highest skill in the use of bow and arrows and in the techniques of warfare. Both the pupils are described as having become the foremost archers of the time. Falling into poverty, Droᅇa moved about the land with his son in search of wealth and position. He came to Paraᅇurāma for help. The latter was preparing to retire to a tapovana after giving away all he had in a sacrifice called Sarvanivedaka. Since he had no golden vessel from which to offer water, he poured water from an earthen vessel. A person learned in the Vedas was now begging him for aid. He did not know what to do to gladden him. So he told him that only his bow and heavenly arrows were

be asking for a different person: whom we accept for strength for weakness. He is the type of person with whom a principle becomes a conviction; and that really convicts for life without release or redemption. But cleanliness of character and selflessness such as his is an oasis anywhere!

left with him for the taking. Drōṇa said that learning was wealth and therefore he might be taught the secret of the divine shafts. Paraśurāma gave him superior astras like the Vāruṇa, Vāyavya, Āgneya, Paurandara etc.

He bade farewell to Paraśurāma and wanted to try his fortune at his friend Drupada's court in Chatravati, capital of Pāncāla. He sent word to the king that an old friend, a Brahmin by name Drōṇa, desired to see him. Drupada obviously was not in a mood either to remember or to recognize a Brahmin as a boyhood friend of his. "It is fantastic. Drōṇa? A Brahmin? A friend of mine? Throw him out," he said. The messenger reported the event exactly as he was asked to do. This stung Drōṇa. He forced his way into the court and in open assembly asked Drupada if he did not know him or had not seen him before. "What sort of friendship could there be between a lord of the earth and a twice-born one? How could men be so shameless as to speak such things?" These words hurt and humiliated Drōṇa. The two stanzas which describe his mood give us the measure of his capacity for answering insolence. "Such ever is the talk and behaviour of those drunk with power," he said; "he could understand now how wealth and drink were said to be born together; he could then and there punish Drupada but it would be beneath his prowess to exercise it on such an unworthy person; nor would he care to kill one with whom he learnt at the feet of the same master. As punishment for this humiliation in an open assembly, he would have his pupils get Drupada bound hand and foot and brought to him. Else he did not deserve to wear his moustache!"

Then he came to Hastinapura and lived with Kṛpa, his brother-in-law, for some time. One day he let his son pick up for the sporting princes a leather stag tōlvullē by shooting at it a chain series of arrows: a method which he had taught his boy. The royal children who looked on were amazed at such skill in archery and duly intimated Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāṅgeya this incident. Drōṇa was sent for and was requested to take on hand the work of giving instruction to the hundred and six princes in the military arts. A number of elephants, horses, very rich villages and other gifts were made to him in token of appreciation and regard. Drōṇa who had been disappointed at the Pāncāla

court and had seen pettiness in a small king was more than satisfied with the spaciousness of royal largesse at this court.

News reached the world of the ability of Drōṇa as a teacher. Many princes from other parts of the country came to learn the military arts at his hands. Karṇa was among those who came to learn.

The children were all taught the skills necessary. But partisanship and rivalry grew up among Duryōdhana and Bhīma developing into spite and hostility; and also between Karṇa and Arjuna. When Karṇa came he is described as life coming to the Kauravas. The rancour between Duryōdhana and Bhīma seemed indeed like the persistence of enmity of an earlier birth and he learnt mace fight to spite and fight Bhīma. Karṇa learnt archery as if practising enmity with Arjuna.

Thus Drōṇa seemed to be training and finishing the characters and personalities and factors for the real battlefield of the Mahabharata to come. He seemed to be stage-manager of that show in preparation; its rehearsal and anticipation.

Drōṇa set Arjuna, whom he considered the best of his pupils, to fetch Drupada bound hand and foot. The other princes failed to come up to expectation but Arjuna beat down all opposition, marched against Drupada and brought him to his Guru as commanded. Drōṇa ordered him to be tied up to the legs of his cot and planted his own foot on the prisoner, taunting him on the language he had used in his court and on his behaviour then; he went one step further: he administered a kick—which he could have refrained from. "This is enough disgrace," he said. "I shall not kill you. If you are killed now I shall be accused of killing an enemy whom, people may say, I fear." So saying, he untied his bonds and asked him to go. Drupada got out, swearing that he would have a son who would kill Drōṇa and a daughter worthy of being wife to Vikramārjuna. With penance and worship he became father to Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Draupadi.

Here is the basis of much that happened later in the Mahabharata war. The picture of Drōṇa as he stood out as the organizer of the passing-out parade of the young princes shows him in special finery.

The time for exhibiting his own prowess arrived with the war on the Kurukṣetra. It is as teacher first and organizer later of the fight that Drōṇa sets his mark on the Māhabhārata story. He has directly contributed the training of some of the bravest and best among the warriors on both the sides. His insight into character and ability to assess relative merit were high.

It was a pity that his was the voice which snubbed Karṇa at least twice with taunts on birth; and on both occasions it aggravated a situation. During the first Karṇa was put to distress and had to be salvaged by Duryōdhana. During the second Karṇa actually went out of the field to the hurt of the Kaurava cause for the first ten days of the war. The occasion is the selection of the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces. Duryōdhana is sneering and cynical about the leaders on the other side. "Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna is a wee water-snake. Drupada is a rabbit. Matsya is a big camel. The master of all that force is a Dharmajna!" Drōṇa reacts to it by saying: "However that be, you have taken their land and indicated the field of battle making fight unavoidable. They have come with full equipment of arms, Powerful men and arms are on their side. Divine help assists them. Forbear from foolish talk. Fight as Bhīṣma directs." Accordingly Duryōdhana approaches and persuades Bhīṣma to accept the leadership of the Kaurava army.

When Bhīṣma fell the next in command was to be Drōṇa himself and it was Karṇa who suggested Drōṇa for command. Great havoc was caused during his leadership on both sides. If Bhagadatta was killed on their side, Abhimanyu was killed on the other. The cakravyūha in which the young hero was killed was his devising. The death of Abhimanyu provokes the anger of Arjuna who vows that before the sunset next day he will destroy Jayadratha who was responsible for it.

News of this reaches the Kaurava camp. Duryodhana's only sister, Duśśalā, begs of Duryōdhana to see that her husband (*i.e.* her fortune as wife with earrings, bangle and tāḷi) is saved. Brother and sister go to Drōṇa and apprise him of the situation. On an earlier day, as on many other such days, Drōṇa had been able to speak the truth about the impossibility of thwarting or bringing down Arjuna's prowess. That is what he had said when

Duryōdhana had nagged the Guru on the death of Bhagadatta and his elephant Supratika. He had said then: "Not only to me is Vijaya impossible to subdue; he is that for anyone on earth. Give up talk of your winning a victory over him. If tomorrow Arjuna does not impede us, I shall destroy a major warrior on the other side and bind Yudhiṣṭhira. Think of no other enterprise." That promise he fulfilled. He could not speak as frankly today, for Duśśalē was with him. All that he could promise was that he will be prepared to meet the same fate that Sindhurāja meets.

This means that Drōṇa is preparing for death. Just at this time, Yudhiṣṭhira urged by Kṛṣṇa approaches Drōṇa in the darkness of the night and says there was no hope of life for the Pāṇḍavas if Drōṇa became fierce. They knew his ability, but themselves deserved consideration. The tenderness of the Guru flowed out in favour of him. He blessed Yudhiṣṭhira wishing him victory and bade him do as Kṛṣṇa directed. Howsoever tightly Jayadratha was guarded or fiercely the battle waged it was not possible for either Drōṇa or the other warriors to prevent the slaying of Jayadratha that evening. Every effort had been made to prevent the penetration of the Kaurava army by Arjuna. At the gate of the defence disposition stood Drōṇa himself to prevent his ingress. Arjuna extended great courtesy, went round him, and offering prostrations moved on, while Drōṇa bade him stay and fight. When Drōṇa asked him why he was afraid of fighting with him a characteristic reply was made by Arjuna: "Fear and awe of you have been a habit with me from my boyhood days; and if I were not afraid of you would I be equal to putting terror into three worlds in war?" This disarmed the master who let him pass with a blessing.

The night closed in; but Drona arranged that the battle should, unusually, carry into the night. There was a torch-fight and Ghaṭotkaca was assigned the task of bringing it off from the Pāṇḍava side. The special śakti which Karṇa had—which alone had the power to bring down Arjuna—was used up, thus depriving the Kaurava of the only means of victory left with Karṇa. The next day the situation was desperate for the armies. On the advice of Kṛṣṇa a few elephants from the Pāṇḍya kingdom were ranged against

the enemy and one by name *Aśvatthāma* is struck. *Yudhiṣṭhira* cried out that *Aśvatthāma*¹ was killed, meaning the elephant. This was like a stroke of lightning when it fell on the ears of the old father *Drōṇa*. Calling out the name of his son he let drop his bow and proceeded to where *Yudhiṣṭhira* stood to ask him for the truth of the matter. And when the truth was learnt he was loth to pick up a weapon he had thrown down in the gaze of the entire army. He retired to his chariot and through meditation and *samādhi* gave up his life.

7. ARJUNA

The trait that is said to distinguish *Phalguṇa* the hero of this *Bharata* is the greatness of enterprise-*Sāhasada mahimē*-a quality that makes him greater than any or all of his brothers or contemporaries. It is natural for *Pampa* to weave a garland of flowers round the neck of his hero at every turn. Even in the *Mahābhārata* the birth of *Arjuna* has larger colour and space and importance given to it. This also: almost every other person among the heroes is sullied at some point or other and no one seems to come out clean and whole. Except in the episode where *Arjuna* rails against his brother *Yudhiṣṭhira* and is calmed by *Kṛṣṇa* there is no episode which makes him cast a dark or ugly shadow. He is the one who wins *Pāncāli* and wins final victory by killing *Karṇa*. When all is felt as lost he marches to save a situation rescuing now *Bhīma* now the twins and others in the field. He puts the entire *Kaurava* army to rout in the *Gograhaṇa*. He is described as challenging the might of gods like *Indra* and *Ívara* and coming out successful. He is the one chosen specially by *Kṛiṣṇa* as friend and as husband to sister *Subhadra*. *Arjuna*'s skill in archery, his valour, the readiness with which he answers *Drōṇa* that he will do whatever the *acārya* asks him to do, and doing it by bringing the *Pāncāla* king bound hand and foot are unique. The fearless dignity with which he answers a foe like *Karṇa* at first in the display of archery when they were young as when they met in the final stand between them; his self-control at

¹ There is no double think or double speak here.

the time when at the sight of Pāncāli being manhandled Bhīma bursts out vowing revenge—his hands automatically held tighter the bow and finger were at the ready; the way he went out to rescue the son of a Brahmin from the jaws of death; the unnagging dignity with which he set upon the task of delivering the Kaurava brothers from Citrāngada; the penance he performed to gain the Pāśupata from Śiva where he broke every effort at deflecting him from his purpose even when it was engineered by the gods themselves so sweetly, so temptingly, with all the enchantments of art and beauty that heavenly spirits could devise; the trial of strength between Śiva and himself; his sense of regard and courtesy in relation to Bhīṣma and of chivalry towards his bitterest opponent when he was down—all speak of a person who is sure of himself and capable of achieving anything that man desires or deserves to. He never failed in a courtesy. In vengeance he is terrible and implacable.

Such qualities make him quieten the anxiety and concern of Drupada when the hosts of Kings who had failed to shoot the target threatened to punish Drupada. Single-handed he was able to quell the riot. The same dauntless courage that made him say to Kṛṣṇa who apprised him of the magnitude and the dangerousness of the task he had undertaken made him say that he would be less than himself if he did not carry out his promise at the Khāṇḍava. Whatever the cost, howsoever hard it was, he would stick to Kṣatriya virtue. His sense of discipline did not permit him to grouse against the elder brother Yudhiṣṭhira or ever to show marks of open defiance. Karna himself has respect for his character, his nobility and strength of arms, for he knows that he should not be able to defeat him. He had asked Kṛṣṇa not to intimate Arjuna the fact of his being the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas; even as Bhīṣma instructed Yudhiṣṭhira that Śikhandi had to be set up against him, without Arjuna getting to know this, for Arjuna would never agree to a mean trick like that.

He was tender in regard and was most considerate to all. When he was chafing at the sloth and wanted to go away in search of enterprise, he would not hurt the feelings of Draupadi. "If I inform the dear one of my going out her mind will surely be oppressed; her eyes will overflow with tears; her words of affection will try to deflect me; she will bind my feet and beg of me to desist. My journey will be spoiled. A wife is a fetter though sweet and compel-

ling." (IV-12.) In the dead of the night he released himself gently from her arms, removed the ornaments he had been wearing, fastened the quivers and with his bow in his hands he sallied out. His regard for Draupadi was great. When later in the Dvaitavana, with tears in her eyes, affection in her heart, earnestness in her intent, she enjoined on him single-minded devotion to the winning of the Pāśupata, he was gentle and affectionate and could sympathize with her. And this understanding spoke of his respect for her feelings and condition. When in the heavenly capital Amarāvati Rambhā threw herself on him, he rejected her out of deference to her position as Indra's woman. It was only in regard to Subhadra that he very nearly lost control of himself and sighed and yearned; that he broke off from the company of Kṛṣṇa, dodged his eye, was in night-long vigil wandering about Dvāraka's streets, drowning his own thoughts, witnessing scenes of love-making, the sophistry, the lewdness and lust, and the goings-on between professional lovers; Waking the next morning he went out seeking his lady-love on a desperate chance to meet her somewhere perhaps as love-lorn for him as he was for her. And was it a happiness when he saw Subhadra smitten with similar torment! When, to crown all, getting wind of it Kṛṣṇa arrived at the spot, discovered their mutual longing and helped them to elope! It is not as if Arjuna had not known women and love and beauty before this. Something now seemed to overpower him with a passion he had not felt before. Other women came to and fell for him. He desired Subhadra; was overwhelmed with her beauty; and he could not be himself till he got her... So the whole poem through, Arjuna is pictured as a great warrior, generous and firm, clean and noble, a great human being, a great lover and friend, loved by friends, feared by enemies and wringing respect from all. Bhīma asks Hanumān to adorn his brother's chariot on the battlefield; he possibly lived in dotting regard for Arjuna's valour. It confirmed Arjuna in his own power to destroy the enemy. Bhīma acts as if he knew that it was Arjuna that deserved more of everything.

Even in his knowledge of the heart and the ways of the courtesans as in his knowledge of the moods and movements of wild animals, Arjuna is described as superior to the rest of mankind. His comments in the Veśyāvāṭi are critical of female sophistication and

are a comment of a decent person against the fall, the falsities and the degradations of men and women subject to drink and weakness. How Arjuna is able to kill the stags which escaped Kṛṣṇa marks his superior skill as a hunter.

His is a charmed life and an astra like the one given to Jayadratha by Śiva excepts him in its effectiveness; so that the person who has vowed to kill him before the sunset on a day is beyond its power to bring down.

To Pampa his hero is a paragon of life and conduct; there is almost no weakness which he will convict him with. The only two persons he will defer to in his camp are Kṛṣṇa and Yudhiṣṭhira and in the other camp Bhīṣma and Drōṇa. Of course Śiva is lord of the gods and his devotion to him for winning the Pāśupata and compunction on knowing of his discourtesy to him are marks in his favour. He is himself Nara to Kṛṣṇa-Nārāyaṇa and accepts all that assumption without comment. All these add a new dimension to his stature.

8. DHARMAPUTRA

The last for special mention is Dharmaputra. He is praised for a clean mind (Nirmala Citta) and for his Dharma. He was certainly the best versed in the Dharma of the land. The parents expressed their preference for virtue when they decided to have Dharmadeva to sponsor their first child. All through his life, the softer and the more humane attitudes were cultivated by him. He would not be guilty of any cruelty or injustice, nor would he wilfully hurt. The word used by Pampa is also Ajāta-Śatru.¹ Even Duryōdhana had regard for his integrity and goodness; so were Bhīṣma and Dhṛatarāṣṭra. All knew that he could be depended upon to behave in the worthiest way even when it would cost him dear. The only weakness he had was for dice-playing which was exploited by Śakuni and Duryōdhana: a non-violent if a wicked and fraudulent way of depriving the Pāṇḍavas of their kingdom. Though he could understand the niceties and implications of every point and situation, he did not stiffen in his own behaviour; was

1 A mercy that he was not Ajāta-mitra also!

tolerant, forgiving and courteous under the most provoking circumstances. When Dhṛtarāṣṭra spoke to him that the cousins had better live apart in their own interests, he was not dissatisfied. The reference in an indirect word of advice given by Vidura at the time of parting—that they might be watchful against the enemy, fire etc.,—kept him alert. It was he who first recognized in the mansion built by Purōcana smell of inflammable stuff with none of the usual building material—like brick, stone or timber in its structure. When he was drawn into the game of dice, though unwillingly, and the lust of the game deepened he lost control, no doubt, and would not desist from or stay the game in spite of the grouse of Bhīma and the criticism by elders, chiefly by Bhīṣma. He was not himself then.

The other occasion was when he made unworthy moans against Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. He praised the valour of Karṇa in a way to hurt the feelings of the two warriors. His authority and moral prestige were such that strong and turbulent brothers, each one of whom could have destroyed the earth, deferred to him and behaved. At a look from him they controlled themselves. That he had brothers like these four younger ones and that they had an elder brother like him was an asset and good fortune which held them together. All the elders from Bhīṣma down trusted him and his judgment. He would never decide on any important act without consulting his brothers or seeking the advice of Kṛṣṇa or without asking for the suggestion of Vyāsa or Bhīṣma. Even when Bhīṣma and Drōṇa had to be removed finally from the enemy ranks, he acted under their advice and suggestion! and before the battle began he marched to where Bhīṣma and Drōṇa were, and sought their blessing for victory which to the moderns appears funny.¹ But as courtesy to the elders, it is traditionally great conduct, showing also how simple and straight the wars were during those days. While coming back to his own ranks he picked up Yuyutsu as the best among Kaurava youths fit to survive when the Kauravas lost the battle. He seems to be so definite about it.

¹ It should not have been asked and should not have been given. And were there no intelligence men in the Kaurava army and was there no comment on it, if known?

When he committed a fault he knew what he had done. He knew that he was the cause of the exile and the hardship and the humiliation of his brothers and Draupadi. When Bhīma and Draupadi speak strongly—hard and in criticism—he realizes the truth of their feeling, and never once pleads for himself. His generosity is as great as his sense for forgetting a wrong. For when Bhānumati begs of him to arrange for the rescue of her husband, in a situation where that husband has come to gloat over the misfortune of his causing, he does not hesitate a moment but calls upon Arjuna to deliver the brothers from Citrāngada. And without so much as a demur Arjuna carries out the behest: a compliment to both the brothers.

When in the last moment Duryōdhana is roused from the Vaiśampāyana lake and is pitted against the enemy, his offer of peace and division of land was genuine, even at such an extremity. And in the last sections where he accedes to the request of Dhṛtarāṣṭra in handing over the bodies of the dead to the wailing widows and in his offer of joining them in the performance of the obsequies, and in the expression of sorrow for the death of Karṇa at the realization that he was the first-born of Kunti and so the eldest of six brothers, he showed a regard which was free from all malice and cramping limitation.

We never discover him unmindful of proper conduct or viciously aggressive. His circumspection and self restraint—indeed his wisdom—helped to resurrect his brothers in the lake episode. When the last moment came, he wouldn't be king, but handed it over to whom he considered the best of the five brothers, viz., Arjuna. When he chose his role in the Virāṭa kingdom he chose the position of the Brahmin adviser, as one versed in the Vedas and in playing dice: And in the episode at the end of the Virāṭa Parva, when Kṛṣṇa was called in to counsel about what next to be done to get back their legitimate share of the kingdom, he opted firmly for negotiation before war. Kṛṣṇa was right in advising sandhāna (negotiation) before an arbitrament with the sword; Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the suggestion as proper conduct, despite the express dissatisfaction of Draupadi and Bhīma.—that war would be certain. Yudhiṣṭhira is able to calm the misgivings of Bhīma by saying that the time will come when Bhīma will be afforded ample opportunity for venting his ire against the offending Kauravas. The heroic

Pampa puts words of heroism into the mouth of Yudhiṣṭhira himself—rather an unexpected note in one so incurably pacifist—often represented as almost a worm; willing to wound and afraid to strike.

On the whole, weaknesses notwithstanding, Yudhiṣṭhira from beginning to end is good, helpful, just, humane and forgiving. There is nothing like inflexibility in his character. If anything, his righteousness makes him a little too flexible. It is almost the archetypal Hindu character, minus a pugnacity and obstinacy.

9. KRṢṆA

There has been much speculation as to why Kṛṣṇa's name has not been included among the names of heroes mentioned here specially as making the Bhārata lōkapūjya. A few points have already been made about this point. Surely Pampa knew of the importance of Kṛṣṇa? The development of the story almost at every point from the moment he figures, shows that his presence is felt and his word and deed are decisive. Direct and indirect references of his being greater than man precede his physical advent on the scene. Not a word is spoken about his being inferior to Arjuna or about his ability to achieve all things. Through the Khāṇḍava days and companionship develops a very intimate regard for Arjuna and the Pāṇḍavas. After telling Yudhiṣṭhira the perils of a Rājasūya he suggests ways out and helps him to eliminate Jarāsandha and get through the situation by presiding over it and destroying the final obstacle to its termination by killing Śiśupāla, the obstructor. He had said that in earlier ages he had had to destroy Kālanemi and others after similar Rājasūyas. Later he chooses Arjuna's side both when the cousins seek his aid equally and when, on behalf of the Pāṇḍavas he undertakes the task of negotiation and mediation as a last effort at peaceful settlement. The words he speaks in answer to Duryōdhana's bad manners are perhaps as brash as anything, and lack the reserve, the restraint and the wisdom which the *Mahābhārata* (or even Tikkana's Telugu Bhārata) presents. Those poets were older and wiser men; Pampa was comparatively young. And there was a need to hurry. But in the power to achieve results Pampa's Kṛṣṇa is second to none.

When negotiation fails Kṛṣṇa tries to win over Karna and sets Kunti to tackle him. From the first day of the war onwards when with initiation into the truth and mystery of cosmic life he sets at rest all doubts of Arjuna and confirms him in the resolution to fight to the last moment of destroying the Kauravas and winning for the Pāṇḍavas the throne, at every point it is his advice, his dynamism, his knowledge of means and ends, his discovery of others' weaknesses and lacks, and his insurance against failure that saves the Pāṇḍava heroes and helps to destroy all the leaders of the Kaurava army. He knows why his Cakra is ineffective against Bhīṣma; when the pike is used by Bhagadatta against him and it comes gently and proceeds to deck his neck ornament he could explain to Arjuna that it is a weapon Bhagadatta got as gift from his grandmother Earth whom he had retrieved in his incarnation as the Boar. So that the link-up with eternity is always made by Kṛṣṇa. And that is the secret of his omniscience. There does not seem to be anything that he does not know or cannot achieve. We know how high Bhīṣma's estimate of him is when he suggests Kṛṣṇa's name for Agrapūja. He knows all the gods as they know all about him i.e., as one of the supreme three.

He paralyzes the Vaiṣṇavāstra directed against the Pāṇḍavas and saves them from what otherwise would have been certain destruction. By skill in the management of the horses and driving the chariot, he enables Arjuna to win the war. There is no questioning him when he speaks to Karna about his birth or when Kunti is told that she should apply to her eldest-born son for special safeguards.¹ How did he himself know? The question seems unnecessary. He is so easily the master everywhere. He knows everything. He quietly gives out the news of Abhimanyu's death to Arjuna and makes it sound in the ears of the father as if some disembodied voice spoke it to him. He takes him to Kailāsa to learn the grasp and hold—i.e., the technique—of the Pāsupata when it was to be used against Jayadratha on the day of the fiercest battle of the war. And without his aid in pressing down the chariot, Karna's shaft might surely have finished Arjuna. The war would not have been won for the Pāṇḍavas. Arjuna knew it too, perhaps

¹ Until Kṛṣṇa mentions it we do not know that she knew it.

as partly his endowment even as Duryōdhana realized it from the beginning.

Indeed all knew Kṛṣṇa to be bigger than mere man. They seem to remember that he is the First, the Most Ancient Man. They associate him with the one who was Vāmana and Trivikrama; that he killed the Rakṣasa Mura, Kālanemi and others; he is referred to as Mukunda, Ajāta, Ananta, more as Narāyana than as Kṛṣṇa, etc. When he is on, no others have a chance. Bhīṣma knows him as the greatest and the most worthy among men. Śiśupāla, when most he is scornful, spites him on being a Danujāri. Before he comes out of Duryōdhana's court he has overwhelmed them all with his Vaiṣṇava māya and granted special sight to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. When as Mukunda he discovers to Arjuna his divine character, he says, "You aid my purpose in killing this enemy army," (*enna kajjadol esagu*) and teaches him the mystery of the earliest Veda: Arjuna would be aiding divine purpose by fighting this battle against the Kauravas and this would rob Arjuna as it were of his own task and purpose. He is thoughtout Puruṣottama and the Purāṇa-puruṣa. And Kṛṣṇa has not made a secret of it also. He has told Arjuna that the two of them are companions through many births.

So that the level of reference to him throughout is something superhuman. Pampa accepts this when he calls him Narāyana and when the opening stanza begins with an invocation to Cālukyānārāyaṇa. Without his aid the war would be hard of winning even by one who was as strong as Arjuna; though that is not said specifically anywhere; that would be a lessening of Arjuna's worth.

There are occasions in the *Pampa Bhārata* where Arjuna is made to remember that he was Rāma of an earlier incarnation. If he was Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, according to the Jaina tradition, should have to be Vāsudeva, less evolved than Rāma, inferior to him in spiritual development. This comes of Pampa's toying with the Jaina purāṇa versions in comparing Arjuna with Rāma. If such comparison may heighten the level of existence for Arjuna, there is no evidence in the whole of this Bhārata work that Kṛṣṇa here is anywhere near the level of a mere Vasudeva of the Jaina tradition of the Śatākā-puruṣas. His insight and wisdom and his ability to inspire, dominate and win were everywhere apparent and accepted.

Pampa seems to be particular about saying that it is not much of a celebration of the valour of his hero to say that he achieved greatness through the help of another. In all that he did it was his sole virtue that worked out his fame and prosperity and success. This is evident from stanza (XIV: 39) where his greatness, his doing, his prowess, his fame reverberate throughout the three worlds; where he prevailed over everything else. That statement is too near to this panel stanza which contains the list of eight names; and if Kṛṣṇa's name were mentioned he could not have said that the aid of Kṛṣṇa was any less than what Arjuna himself had contributed to the victory. Pampa was not just interested in mentioning his name. Kṛṣṇa, obviously, is a class apart and need not be included among those who make Bhārata lōka-pūjya. He is one of the presences, the essences and Prime verities like Śiva and Brahma,—only now in this form.

It is indeed difficult definitely to assign a reason for the exclusion of Kṛṣṇa's name in the list of the worthies. The possibility is open. What the poet did not do, he did not. And, speculation cannot do more than speculate.

COLOUR AND TEXTURE

I

The poet meant to make the *Ādipurāṇa* the vehicle at once of Jina-dharma and Kavya-dharma, and some sort of concordance between the two for quality and elements is here attempted. Pampa had to give an account of his mastery of the Jaina religion as illustrated in individual destiny and had to put in details connected with each level of it in proper order. He notes them all carefully. In doing that one finds that prose descriptions have to be resorted to a little more frequently than in a purely literary or secular work. And it has to be technical. To a non-Jaina outsider reading the work for pleasure, it might at such points appear wearisome and full of jargon. Yet since a poet was dealing with it, even there one finds flashes which illumine a level of life and conduct otherwise dry as dust. Comparing this purāṇa with either the *Sāntipurāṇa* of Ponna or the *Ajitapurāṇa* of Ranna—one who was a contemporary and the other a later poet—we find that this work practically contains very much more than both of them of essential details connected with a Jaina purāṇa work, and is intrinsically a more spacious and human document. It becomes exemplar for later literary works going under the name of literary Purāṇās. The poet has energy, enthusiasm, faith and regard for true spiritual greatness. And he hits off sublimity which inspires as much awe for a realization which has taken so much to shape and to become as for a strength and striving which it requires to be. Both in Vṛṣabha's life and in Bāhubali's life he has pictured to us the greatness of that achievement.

When essentially human levels have got to be sensed and depicted Pampa does that marvellously. Love and hate, parental affection, social life, its concerns and relationships; enjoyment and suffering; jealousy, selfishness and cupidity; imperfection of all kinds and littlenesses and delusious of the human spirit, stark abjectness or obtuseness; kingship and ambition; arrogance; education and refinement; nature and art; beneficence—when any of these are

the subject-matter, his insight is true and unerring and his poetic ability is more than equal to the need. Occasionally one sees the lumber of scholastic learning, nursed on rhetoric and the practice of predecessors. But he knows his ground when it is nature, love and war and court life; the passion and attachment and the love and romance round about them are memorable; and there is nothing quite like them with us. The loyalty of the minister Svayambuddha whose earnestness and devotion to his master set him on the path of virtue and true spiritual growth and his concern for him in later births as well is a study in its own way of friendship and affectionate regard. Such friendly aid is almost providential. So is the call of companionship as between Suvidhi and Keśava and Vṛṣabha and Śreyāmsa. Nābhi's life and the way he brings up the son, and the early life of Purudeva himself and the way the latter in his turn brings up his own children and educates them are beautiful human records. The responsibility that these kings feel for men and society and for the promotion of culture marks them out as true leaders and benefactors of men and establishes them immortally in the memory of whole communities. When the time comes for them to renounce kingship and opt for a life of penance it is done as graciously and with as much firmness as the need requires. What human culture has done through the ages to create a secondary environment and aid for man is fascinating history. The episode which deals with the transformation is intensely lyrical, dramatic and beautiful. Bharata's life as emperor, his campaigns for world conquest and conceit are representative of similar efforts of all who want to be Cakravartins. In the scene on the Ganges the poet gets an opportunity—he could not get it earlier—to bring off poetic descriptions of the kind dear to the writers of the mahākāvyas as to all poets who love nature. The conquest describes to us heroism, resistance and subjugation with forces, the edge of pain and the frustration which Bharata felt when history had recorded innumerable similar achievements in the past—are bright pictures.

The clash of wills and ambition between the brothers Bāhubali and Bharata is another type of the human situation where pride and love of liberty resist an authoritarian insolence and renounces its victory in the moment of its highest expression, choosing instead

the nobler, the greater life of humanity and the spirit. The quality of feeling and the attitude behind it are one of the finest on record. Other versions of the Bharata-Bāhubali story¹ soften, gloss over or even alter the main fortunes of the meeting. In the later work *Bharatēśa-vaibhava* by Ratnākaravarṇi Bharata is the hero. Pampa's, being the earlier, may be the more authentic version and for poetry the more powerful. The lives of the principal persons soften and sublimate; and the whole *Ādipurāṇa* presents to us a process of ripening and fulfilment as a true poet senses and shapes it. The nature of enjoyment and power, the nature of ambition, the mood and moment of realization, the sorrows on separation and death, the consolations that need to be offered even to those who should naturally be expected to know human nature and life better—are all presented in this work as heights that characterise a great literary work. Dharma is really what sustains life and the universe. It has to be worked into the fabric of life, in each life differently—and in all lives,—before one can progress towards spiritual consummation. That only a few lives among the countless that figure in this work attain to this state is tribute to the greatness of those who achieve it even as it is a transcription of how difficult it is for the countless others who are minded about the process, who strive in different ways and who are still labouring at levels far yet from the peak. To present such succession of scenes and levels of sensing and achievement adequately requires poetic talents of a high order.

Ādipurāṇa has one main atmosphere, characterized by spiritual striving and moves round the life and development of one person and of those related to him. Every other rasa or flavour is but means to that end which is *Śānta*. Love and power have to be transcended, even rejected totally for that higher fulfilment which is characterized by renunciation and penance, cleanliness, self-control, concentration and meditation on the ultimate —altogether frightening if it was not also challenging to the human spirit. In *Śānta* all passions are subjugated. All that constitutes normal human and divine life, its sweetnesses and ills, its desires and joys, aches and illusions, the best and the highest of them appear as 'paltry, winking tapers'—or, not even that—before these pillars of

¹ e.g. in *Hastinalla* (c 13th century) and in *Ratnākaravarṇi* (16th century).

light; and as Pampa in the Jina stuti puts it, the place where the Jina stands is the height of Meru, the limitless expanse of the skies; the depths of the oceans; sun and the moon and stars shine weakly about the middle heights against the stature reached by a Jina.

2

The Mahābhārata is a different dish. It is human, and has God's plenty in it. It is full of all the colours of secular living, where every level of feeling, thinking, speaking and doing is clearly intelligible; palpable. No character or event is beyond the ken of man. The Gods are glorified heroes. There are no depths or heights or mysteries which cannot be grasped. Ancient India and the contemporary India of Pampa's period are held together making two periods of time live like and in one. A thousand years after, today, life is basically the same though values, perspectives and tests may have changed. There are as many types of strength and weakness as there are men and women in it. We distinguish the peaks and are helped to scale them. A poet with gifts like Pampa's can move about freely in this world and display every colour, tone, nuance and shadow, with confidence and artistry.

But he has to draw the main outlines of and stick to the original story and that extracts its price. Pampa had to telescope into it the lives and characters and events near to him, of his time and place — this was a different secular purpose — and he had to condense the whole story not neglecting any principal event i.e. to deal with at least fifty major items. For he calls his work Samasta-Bhārata-Sāra and it is doubly sensed. The main characters and events, or the Mahābhārata story, fight on many fronts and cannot be dodged. Their load of doings is part of its luggage. They wreak their revenge when anybody lays wrong hands on them; or tries to force them to suit or promote a different purpose. When Pampa wanted to reorient the story giving main importance to Arjuna a twist was rendered necessary. Then the Mahābhārata fights back at him and his work wears heavy scars of the wounds caused in the process. Success has not always been his in spite of all that idolatry might say. To make matters worse he desires to compare his king and master (who was not master of the whole of Āryāvarta nor even of the south-

ern Rāṣṭrakūta empire but a mere Sāmanta-cūḍāmaṇi (subordinate chief) with an epic hero. His chief is a prince at Lembulapāṭaka in the Vengi land is made to correspond to the Arjuna of the Māhābhārata. Arikesari may feel proud and happy to be compared with Arjuna and credited with exploits and accomplishments such as those of Pārtha. But could Pārtha, son not even of Pāṇḍu but of Kunti and Indra, ever feel gratified at being made the son of Narasinga and Jākabbe? Also, Kṛṣṇa is a factor of the Mahābhārata story; Draupadi was wife of all the Pāṇḍavas; these do not really fit in with a purpose to make Arjuna Excelsior. Above all Bhīma insists on accommodation. His is a weight which matters.

A third circumstance limited Pampa: he was a Jaina by faith and his master a follower of the traditional Hindu faith with Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahma as gods and believed in the incarnations of Viṣṇu. The master's calendar of saints was different from the poet's. This occasionally plays havoc, makes the story tintured if not tainted by the presence of a still more alien purpose than that of the original Mahābhārata. The ideals of life and beliefs current in Pampa's heroic age were not necessarily the ideals of the earlier epic period. There would be reticences, embarrassments and real discomforts in the tenth century which perhaps were not current at the time of the main strand of the Mahābhārata story which took polyandry for granted, or at least accepted could be consoled with the function of boons and curses; accepted Niyōga and the social order which made the Kṣatriya and the Brāhmaṇa purposes prevail over others.

One or two points about the consequences of these limiting conditions may be noticed. Pampa did not translate the *Mahābhārata* original. He had to condense into about fourteen cantos of some 1,600 stanzas and some bits of prose of the vast material of the main story. Naturally much colour and detail has had to be omitted. And Pampa's is more truly a poetic purpose which *Mahābhārata's* was not. The pace of the *Mahābhārata* reckes not time or length. Pampa has to hurry at breathless speed; and except at two or three points, where, for a literary or personal purpose, he became extravagant and disproportionate, he never slackened his speed. The story contained in the first ten parvas of the *Mahābhārata* was crammed into this work. Not unoften a whole episode is condensed

into a single full or half stanza. Though no special effort is made directly to identify all the contemporary heroes of that day with the heroes of the Kaurava and the Pāṇḍava army, the poet tries to make his readers and listeners catch the striking references to the events and personalities in the contemporary setting. Draupadi was won only for Arjuna, and her relationship with the others could not show up in a work where his king was hero. This introduces difficulties in anointing her as the queen of Yudhiṣṭhira in the Rājasūya. It almost knocks away the right of Yudhiṣṭhira to pledge his brother's wife at the game of dice. The right could only be that of a king and that of the eldest of brothers! The crying out, the swearing of vengeance by Bhīma that he will achieve the fulfilment of her vow while Arjuna looked on without joining in becomes hard of believing. Let alone the episode of Jayadratha carrying her off; the incident with Kīcaka when Draupadi goes to Bhīma in the privacy of the night to apprise him of the shame and evil that have fallen on her through the wickedness of Kīcaka becomes difficult to explain. Most of all the calling out to Draupadi by Bhīma when he had killed Duśśāsana to come on to the battlefield and perform her toilet, himself helping her to dress her hair and tie it up in fulfilment of the vow that both had made more than thirteen years ago. The explaining away Draupadi as Rajya Śrī, Vijaya Śrī or Vira Śrī is no solution. She is a real, solid woman.

All the elaborate arguments which make the Sabha episode such a portentous event in the *Mahābhārata* are condensed into one main situation. The legality of her being dragged into the public assembly and of Yudhiṣṭhira pledging her as pawn after he had lost his own and his brothers' freedoms is presented in the *Mahābhārata* as the main issue which becomes a difficult point for the elders of the assembly to solve while Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the process of events without demur. And the by-play of Karṇa's taunts or the lewd gestures of Duryōdhana himself cannot be mentioned making it necessary for Bhīma to vow that he will break his thigh. Either because that section is a later interpolation or because the poet found no need to make Draupadi appeal in thought or speech to an outside aid like Kṛṣṇa's,¹ it does not figure at all even by suggestion.

¹ A big episode in later Kṛṣṇa-bhakti kāvyas, in national memory and in our song-lore.

Duśśāsana began to tire and sweat when Draupadi's braid was loosened at his grip, and he seems to have almost offered to catch at the clothes she wore! The events drive with quick pace through the swearing of Draupadi and the supporting vows of Bhīma.

The entire episode of Kṛṣṇa's negotiation in the Udyōga Parva has had to be condensed also. The *Mahābhārata* does not give the main prominence to Duryōdhana while Dhṛtarāṣṭra was in the hall. The elaborate act of Kṛṣṇa's presenting the case for the Pāṇḍavas there is a document of great importance and presents a scene of outstanding effect, while the conversation between Vidura and Kṛṣṇa in the dead of night in Vidura's house as described in the *Mahābhārata* cannot be brought in to add depth and dimension to the understanding of Kṛṣṇa's own mind and function.¹ In the *Pampa Bhārata* the whole thing is condensed into a meeting between Duryōdhana the king and Kṛṣṇa the Pāṇḍava agent. Duryōdhana who had sought the help of Kṛṣṇa in an earlier passage is now intolerant and flares up summarily. Harsh words and vile abuse are exchanged and Kṛṣṇa overawes everybody by enveloping all with Vaiṣṇava mōha, and leaves the hall, taking Aśvatthāma along with him. Though what it loses in range and levels of meaning it gains in intensity of effect Kṛṣṇa strikes us here as the creation of a poet who if he had been older and maturer in political experience would perhaps have taken the meeting in an easier, larger stride. Once again the argument will partly at least be that he was not translating; that he had not the time and space to go into detail or present other dimensions; that he thought of the main events and concentrated on the principal characters. Anyway the spaciousness of the *Mahābhārata* seems to suffer a hurt in this burst and exchange of bad temper.

One incident may be taken to illustrate the difference between the epic atmosphere of the *Mahābhārata*, the summary disposal of it by Pampa and its elaboration at the hands of Nāraṇappa of about the fifteenth century, who lived in the Bhakti age.

1 That episode has been neglected somehow. A total revaluation of Kṛṣṇa's character, motive and mode of action will be possible in the light of it and all the nonsense of unscrupulousness charged against him will be met.

The episode is in the early Udyōga Parva. It is connected with Duryōdhana and Arjuna proceeding to Dvāraka to seek the aid of Kṛṣṇa. News had been received by the Pāṇḍavas that Duryōdhana was intending to go to him and so Arjuna was dispatched to Dvāraka to see that Kṛṣṇa was not exploited by Duryōdhana. Duryōdhana went there first and, finding Kṛṣṇa in bed, sat at his head waiting for him to wake up. Then Kirīṭi went and sat by Kṛṣṇa's feet, making proper preliminary courtesies. Kṛṣṇa presently woke up and saw Kirīṭi first. He welcomed both and offered them his regards. He then asked them what had brought them to him. Duryodhana answered with a smile:—

*Vigrahesmin bhavān sāhyam mama dātumihārhati
Samam hi bhavatāh sakhyam mayi caivārjunēpi ca
Tatha sambandhakam tulyam asmākam tvayi mādharma
Aham cābhigatāh pūrvam tvamadya madhusūdana
Pūrvam cābhigatam santo bhajante pūrvasāriṇah
Tvam ca śrēṣṭhatamo loke satāmadya janārdana
Satatam sammatascaiva sadvṛttamanupālaya*

The words with which he opens may be noted: “Vigrahē.” The decision had been made in his mind that the war would be fought; and he is worthy of receiving help from Kṛṣṇa, the reason being that Kṛṣṇa was equally the friend of himself and of Arjuna. And in relationship too they were equal. Duryōdhana had arrived at Kṛṣṇa's place earlier. It is ancient practice that the first come should be served first. Kṛṣṇa has been the best of men always. Therefore he has to respect the principles of proper conduct. The expression “Sadvṛttam anupālaya” is also meaningful. Behaving differently would not be right conduct. Friendship, relationship, traditional etiquette, propriety plead for him. Kṛṣṇa being the best of men is expected to do the correct thing. To this Kṛṣṇa made answer:

*Bhavānabhigatāh pūrvam atra mē nāsti samśayah
Dṛṣṭastu prathamam rājan mayā Pārtho Dhananjayah
Tava pūrvābhigamat pūrvam pūrvam cāpyasya darśanāt
Sāhāyyamubhayōrēva kariṣyāmi Suyōdhanā
Pravāraṇam tu bālānām pūrvam kāryamiti śrutih
Tasmāt pravāraṇam pūrvam arhah pārtho Dhananjayah*

—meaning he has no doubt that Duryōdhana has arrived earlier; but he saw Pārtha first; though Duryōdhana had arrived earlier he was *seen* later. “I shall render help to both. But in such matters the Sruti says—text against text—that the younger person should be served first. Therefore I shall give Pārtha the first choice.” Kṛṣṇa has caught the intention of Duryōdhana and very cleverly counters the argument of propriety with another rule of conduct which is equally mandatory. When equal help is to be given to both the choice as to which among the two parts he desires to have will first be given to Arjuna. It will be, incidentally, a test for himself to discover what is Arjuna’s own preference in the matter. Perhaps he had no doubt in his mind about Arjuna’s choice. Yet this is an extraordinary test. He divided his help into two parts. There was the Yādava army, called the Nārāyaṇa army, an arbuda in number, consisting of warriors all capable of killing him. “On the other side I stand alone. I shall, however, not carry arms and will not fight. The choice has to be made between these alternatives. Whatever pleasures you to choose, the one or the other, it will be for you, Arjuna to choose first.” The son of Kunti chose Keśava who would not fight in the war. Duryōdhana was glad that thousands of thousands of warriors came to him. He was satisfied:—

Kṛṣṇam cāpahṛtam jñātvā samprāpya paramām mudam.

He told Baladēva of what had happened. The news did not please Balarāma who did not like to be separated from Kṛṣṇa under any circumstances nor to set himself against his brother. So he would not be of help either to Pārtha or to Duryōdhana. “You may go and fight as Dharma and Kṣātra dictate to you,” he said. Duryōdhana was sure he had got the better part of Kṛṣṇa’s aid and he would be the victor on the battlefield. He clasped Halāyudha in great joy, bade him farewell and went back to his capital. The Nārāyaṇa army later joined the Kaurava forces, with Kṛtavarma at its head.

So far everything has happened to the satisfaction of the three people. When Duryōdhana had left, Kṛṣṇa asked Kirīṭi as to what prevailed on him to choose him personally who would not fight. The answer of Arjuna is characteristic and its meaning is unmistakable.

*Bhavān samarthān sarvān nihantum nōtra samakayah
 Nihantumahamapyēkah samarthah puruṣōttama
 Bhavānstu kīrtimān lōke tadyaśastvam gamiṣyati
 Yaśasā cāhamapyarthī tasmādasi maya vṛtah
 Sārathyam tu tvayū kāryam iti mē mānasam sadā
 Cirarātrēpsitam kāmam tadbhavān kartumarhati*

The utterance is true to the dignity of a kṣatriya hero of the stature of Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa's, fame for prowess was known to the world. He had established it beyond dispute. Pārtha had yet to prove it, so that the world might know it. Arjuna knows — as the world does — that that entire force could be destroyed by Kṛṣṇa. He is confident that he too can destroy it. But the world does not know it yet. The sort of fame that Kṛṣṇa enjoys he is ambitious to have; and is a candidate for it. That is why he has made his choice. For a long while now Arjuna seems to have been thinking in his mind that if only Kṛṣṇa would be his charioteer he should do the rest. That was the desire through the vigil and thought of many nights and days. Kṛṣṇa should grant to him that aid and accept that assignment. (tvayā kāryam is crisp and concrete). Kṛṣṇa is able to understand the stand of Arjuna as it deserves, and is sport enough to say immediately:

*Upapannamidam pārtha yatspardhēthā mayāsaha
 Sārathyam tē kariṣyāmi kāmah sampādyatām tava*

It is one brave man discovering another brave man and promising to him that he will be true to him. It is a rivalry for Dharma and for Yaśas. He is willing to help Arjuna earn as great a name as he himself enjoys and says: "I shall manage your chariot for you. You gain the object of your desire."

This is the true epic note and the epic atmosphere. The two friends have known each other for some time and know the deepest longings of each other's heart. This is really a kinship of spirit. If Kṛṣṇa fought and his superior might and skill in arms won victory for Arjuna, it is no credit for Arjuna; 'no marvel then'. That is why he chose the friend who would not bear arms and would not fight. On his side Kṛṣṇa was not vexed at all that another man dared to aspire for equality with him in fame. This

is the strand of epic heroism and conduct which distinguishes the *Mahābhārata*.

We have seen how Pampa pictures the episode. The Pāṇḍava brothers are in council. They think they should not be content to be quiet. Duryōdhana is full of guile; he can 'make a white thing black.' And before Duryōdhana takes him over to his side, it will be best to have him as friend on our side. So they send Arjuna to Dvārakā.

Arjuna goes to Dvārakā. He finds Kṛṣṇa sleeping. He sits quietly at his foot, not desirous of waking him. Duryōdhana also comes to him about the same time and sits at his head. Within a short time Kṛṣṇa catches sight of Vijaya, i.e. Arjuna, first and afterwards the king. Both offer obeisance to him and he wishes them well. He asks them to tell him what has brought them both to him and how is everything in their homes. They answer that he should take their side in a war between them and make them win. Kṛṣṇa is here making a summary decision. "Both of you are to me equal in regard. But since I saw Vijaya first, I give myself to him. I give you Duryōdhana, my army." He followed it up by sending ninety-six thousand of the Gopa army consisting of his companions under his brother Kṛatavarma equal in strength to him.

Even here the division of help must be construed as equal. But no choice is given to either of them. Kṛṣṇa decides and he knows what he decides, and why he does so; either because he does not want to put Arjuna to chose or he does not care whether Duryōdhana is satisfied or not. This is how Pampa the poet of the heroic age in Karnataka history renders the episode.

By the time Nāraṇappa came to write his *Bhārata*, (c. 15th century) the Bhakti movement had established itself here and to Nāraṇappa Kṛṣṇa was the hero of the *Mahābhārata* (Bagevoḍidu kṛṣṇarāyana caritḥ"); and the key stanza with which the relevant canto opens says: Kṛṣṇa whose devotees are as the members of his own family showed his preference to Arjuna; affectionately became his charioteer, proving his title that he gives himself to those who believe in him. Duryōdhana was sending for help all over the country so that kings and forces might come to fight for him; and he thought of making Kṛṣṇa side him. In confidence he had spoken of this inten-

tion to a few. The scouts of the Pāṇḍavas brought this information to Yudhiṣṭhira. Yudhiṣṭhira was afraid of the consequences and sent Arjuna quickly to Dvāraka. When Arjuna went to the palace of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa was asleep. Folding his hands and in great awe and devotion the heroic Pārtha sat about the feet of Kṛṣṇa without trying to wake him up. And then Duryōdhana came in and sat at Kṛṣṇa's head. Already the atmosphere is different. When Pārtha settled down at his feet, Pārtha is described: "Mukula karapuṭanāgi, bhayabharabhakutiyaḥ, akuṭila mati etc." And Duryōdhana is "Vikala-Duryōdhana." In a short while Kṛṣṇa awoke and saw Arjuna and a smile played on his face. Then he turned to his side and caught sight of the chief of Kurus in discomfort (*dummānadali*). He took some *pan* and gave it to the two friends. He then inquired what brought them to him; it is such a rare privilege that two such honoured friends should come to his place and together. Kururāya made answer: "Nothing was ever wrong between the Kauravas and the Yādavas. What is the harm in my coming to you? And I don't suffer in prestige by coming to you either. There is dispute between us brothers in the matter of our claims to the ancestral kingdom and we want to fight it out. You must therefore help us both." Kṛṣṇa wants to dissuade Duryōdhana from thought of war saying it would not be proper for the brothers to fight for the kingdom and that it would be best to live together united and in friendship. That would make him happy. Wicked people may set the two parties in strife even as they set up two rams against each other for a fight, and then turn away laughing at both. Both parties come in for a lot of ill fame.

Duryōdhana spoke for both; that he did not come to be lectured on Dharma; they were Kṣatriyas; they were resolved on war. "On both sides you are equally related. We both desire your help." With his mouth full of *pan*, Kṛṣṇa looked at Arjuna and asked him what he had to say. Arjuna bent his head and folding his hands said: "I am minded like Duryōdhana about the war. Your favour will guide our life and conduct. We do not claim any liberties in this matter." "Then," said Kṛṣṇa, "I shall stay on one side but will not fight. A fighting army under Kṛtavarma fights on the other. Between these two you might choose whichever you would like to have," he said to Pārtha. "How can I manage such a large army?"

We are a poor side. Duryōdhana is capable of feeding and supporting a vast Nārāyaṇa army. He is rich. We are wanderers in the forest. You are enough for us. I have heard that you are the friend of the poor and you should extend your favour to us.” Duryōdhana said: “You may gladly revive the Pāṇḍavas and give me in your kindness the Yādava army. There is no use hiding things. Your affection for the Pāṇḍavas is great; and you are partial to Pārtha; you are mutually drawn to each other and in all great work we are, in the end, kept outside. Well, let that be. Remember this, Kṛṣṇa, that you should not fight; nor wield a weapon.”

Kṛṣṇa says that it is true that he performed a number of great exploits in the past; and he mentions a number of them. But today I am immobile and the Cakra is in the armoury. “The strength of youth is now gone. I am today an idle drone.”

Duryōdhana said: “It is all right and done well.” After bidding farewell to Balarāma and others he takes the Yādava army and leaves with Kṛtavarma to his capital. Kṛṣṇa now turns to Arjuna and speaks with a smile on his face: “What is this conduct of yours, Arjuna? Your choice is like picking up the scabbard throwing away the sword. You have rejected the strength of a fighting force as strong as the Yādava army. You are a foolish one in desiring to choose me who does not fight and is bound by a vow. Will not your brothers laugh at you when they hear this?” Arjuna bursts out laughing, and says: “What use pretending? I am your pupil. This play-acting and display of magic will not do with me who am versed in your ways. That, however. Do not my brothers know your greatness and your strength?” Kṛṣṇa says: “I am empty-handed. What is the work I do coming there? I can’t sit idly and in obligation to anyone on the battlefield. You deem me a god. There is not the least godhood in me. I shall not come there. What should I do there?” “Are you god only? You are the god of gods. You are the lord of the gods of gods; the Vedas are not able to bestow enough praise on you. You are the servant of those devoted to you. Protect this servant of yours by becoming my charioteer.” So saying, he fell full length on the ground with his forehead at the feet of Hari. Kṛṣṇa laughed in satisfaction and raised him from the ground, accepting his role as charioteer to Arjuna. “I know nothing about conferring grace. My pride consists in those devoted to me, and I

shall be servant of the five of you; and the management of your chariot, with you as master, will be a task which I shall gladly undertake".

The main items are all here as well. But Duryōdhana speaks for both as if he would not let either Arjuna or Kṛṣṇa demur from his decision of a fight for the kingdom. He is unwilling to be persuaded against fighting by the wise and beneficent words of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa makes the same division in the help that he promises both the parties and in spite of the mild expression of his sense of Kṛṣṇa's personal partiality for the Pāṇḍavas—which can be a joke,—Duryōdhana seems to be glad about his share of the help. But the relationship between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa is not that of the epic age or of the age of Pampa. Kṛṣṇa is god among-above-gods, and his devotion to the cause of those who believe in him is established. The Bhakti attitude definitely makes God a servant in the cause of those who have faith in Him. "Bhṛtyasya bhṛtya paricāraka bhṛtya bhṛtya!" etc., is a phrase which has already established itself. On the side of the devotee surrender and total devotion to God without any choice in action or liberty; on the side of God handing Himself over to serve the interests of people who choose Him as their mainstay and help, and serving them to realize their ends.¹

Roughly this is the sort of difference in atmosphere, in tone and in conduct between the three Bhārata works. Pampa has the added disadvantage of having to rush his narration through. He is not writing a dhārmic work accepting all the premises of the *Mahābhārata*; nor is he called upon to hand over to another all rights over himself and of disposing off Pāṇḍava fortune and directing it and the destiny of the world according as Kṛṣṇa liked: that would lessen the importance of his hero. And, personally, the poet himself is not head over heels in the fervours of devotion to Kṛṣṇa in spite of the fact that Kṛṣṇa has acted throughout as providence, protector and guide from the days of Subhadrāharaṇa onwards.

Almost every major episode of the *Mahābhārata* is dealt with this way by Pampa whether he deals with it at length or pants through it or dismisses briefly. He is able to bring off each of them concrete-

¹ One surprise—and a very interesting—in the Telugu Bhārata is that Arjuna is made to say that he would not care to win against the enemy side, with Kṛṣṇa set against himself. 'Nīkedurai jayambu gonarādu'-it is not proper. Or, is it not possible?

ly and in a memorable way. Not alone the major characters, but incidents connected with the birth of Vyāsa, of Drōṇa and Karṇa, with Drupada and Paraśurāma, in the earlier stages, are brought off vividly; and they are related very definitely to the main course of events. One can picture Drōṇa going to Paraśurāma and asking him for help who had not even a piece of arecanut (ondu aḍakeyum illa) There is the episode of Ambē going to Paraśurāma and of his negotiating Bhīṣma; of Parāśarā meeting Satyavati making overtures to her and getting a son by her; even as there is the wooing of her by Śantanua, who is referred to her father by the coy (!) girl.

If there are patches of clear colour in the earlier part of the story, later events are as brightly realized. One can see Hiḍimba and Hiḍimbe as they decide on making a meal of the Pāṇḍavas; the melting of Hiḍimbe on sight of Bhīma; and after the slaying of Hiḍimba her hospitality to the Pāṇḍavas; the honeymoon and loves of Bhīma and Hiḍimbe are as beautiful and scintillating as any romance; the birth of Ghaṭōtkaca as sixteen-year-old boy, fully developed. Ghaṭōtkaca is later on invoked to fetch the wealth and gifts of gold from the Kubera kingdom to serve the needs of the Rājasūya. He is again assigned the task of meeting Drōṇa's army during the night battle which the old warrior Drōṇa sets ablaze: the physical stature he grows into which is gigantic; the destruction he causes in the Kaurava army that night renders necessary the expenditure of the one sure instrument with which Karṇa could have destroyed Arjuna himself. There are many incidents on the battlefield which bring out Pampa's knowledge of real fighting between men; and if it is not like those in the *Mahābhārata* at points, it is true to the terms of tenth-century life in South India with which the poet was fully conversant.

In spite of all the individual sensing and doing which go to the credit of the several agents on both sides of the conflict both when they are gathering equipment and aid and when fighting, we discover the presence of some force which seems to be fulfilling itself according to its own purpose or volition. The gods are instruments or performers, participating and partial. Ṛsis like Nārada inspire behaviour; Vyāsa comes in at the most opportune moments to caution, aid or counsel; a person like Indra is definitely partisan and a saboteur and if he behaves stupidly as in the early phase of the

Khāṇḍava episode he has a right to. The sides of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas are, on the initial premises, themselves set in hostility. For Pāṇḍavas are born of the gods: some of the most powerful and beneficent; and the finest omens are noticed at the time of their birth; while at the birth of Duryōdhana the omens are such as herald the birth of a rākṣasa. Duryōdhana is likened by Kṛṣṇa himself later to Rāvaṇa, an enemy of the Gods. Vidura is quick to notice them. From that moment onwards, Vidura's one advice is: "Renounce this man or perish." As against this we notice the presence of a phenomenal person like Kṛṣṇa who is definitely of one party. He is one of the leaders of the Yādava tribe and his prestige in the clan itself as even with his elder brother—a sulking genius throughout the Mahābhārata—is accepted as foe and friend by different sets of people; feared and hated by Śisupāla or revered and held in esteem by no less a person than Bhīṣma. His presence as friend and guide of the Pāṇḍavas makes them invulnerable and sure of victory. All seem to know that as long as he is there neither they nor their astras nor their stratagems will avail them. Duryōdhana knows it; Bhīṣma of course knows it. Karṇa knows it; Drōṇa knows it; Śisupāla knows it. Indra, Śiva and Brahma know it too; not to speak of the smaller fry.

But there is another dimension to his stature: he seems to belong to other times as well, indeed to all time, able to remember all that has happened from almost the beginning of creation. The Ādi-Puruṣa, the Parama or Uttama-Puruṣa, the Unborn and Deathless who knows the genesis of everything and can use all that knowledge to advance a cause or purpose which he takes up to foster. From the first moment Kṛṣṇa too seems drawn to Arjuna. He tells him of their relationship as Nārāyaṇa and Nara through time. One does not know whether Arjuna held to the implications of this extra relationship between him and Kṛṣṇa. But nowhere does Arjuna feel uncomfortable, resent or resist it. That might hurt his dignity as a classical or heroic character. But Arjuna is not without a consciousness that he is himself not merely the son of Pāṇḍu or Indra. He who sees longest and deepest and who does not bother about what he does and how he does so long as that has to be done seems to be Kṛṣṇa only, who is bigger than all the others, perhaps bigger than all men of all time. In managing this personality Pampa seems to be

on two levels at the same time: the Jaina and the orthodox Hindu, making the references sometimes incongruous. But it is lucky it is not worked out as a definite principle or element of purpose in the poem with Arjuna as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as Vāsudeva of the Jaina kind of relationship.

A FEW TECHNICAL ELEMENTS

1

When Pampa completed his *Ādipurāṇa*, he had attained to mastery of language and composition. As feature of literature and the arts, past experience ineluctably becomes part and parcel of one's own consciousness and rises irrepressibly when a situation arises needing weight of learning, quality and richness of tone. Or he just has to ring a small change on an original to imprint his genius. Classical doctrine Pampa was familiar with. Less than a hundred years ago Nṛpatunga and his assembly of scholars had more or less codified that in *Kavirājamārga* as applicable to this language. There must have been other writers who had attained to fame as writers of prose and verse in short or long composition. What they were in full length or bulk we have no means now of knowing except by hearsay, praise or blame and in random brief extracts in later anthologies and as illustrations in works like *Kāvyaṅvalōkana* (1145), *Sabdamaṇidarpaṇa* (1245) etc. The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* had almost taken their present form by Pampa's time; and some versions of the *Māhābhārata* in the Jaina *Harivamśa* kathās are mentioned in connection with the Tīrthamkara Nēminātha. A long tradition of Jaina kathās was available to Pampa, notably the *Mahāpurāṇa*, the first and best part of which was written by Jinasēna, preceptor to Nṛpatunga; and the second part by Guṇabhadra, (897) his pupil. The *Mahāpurāṇa* contains the Jaina doctrine and deals with all the sixty-three great ones of the Jaina religion, principally with four Tīrthamkaras. What is interesting is that more deal with the Āditīrthamkara Vṛṣabha. Jinasēna had written 42 sections of it. This part of the work is called the *Pūrvapurāṇa*). In the other, twenty-three Tīrthamkaras are together contained i.e. in less than half the work. Pampa derives largely from the *Pūrvapurāṇa*¹. Some of his stanzas and prose sections seem to be no more than a rendering into Kannada of the original passages,

1 Ponna wrote a *Sāntipurāṇa* but Pampa and Ponna do not mention each other.

though even there the genius of the Kannada poet has selected, condensed and illumined with a flash of his own poetic quality in the very act of translation. The Purāṇa is a big work and selecting from or cutting it naturally to develop the art and practice of effective, meaningful and beautiful condensation of what he deems the essence of the original work is not easy. Being a work on religion the original Purāṇa had necessarily to deal with technicalities of doctrine and dogma, the formal methodological aspects as well as all the details of ritual. Liberty should not normally be taken with them. Without sacrificing the principal points Pampa had to give a full picture of Vṛṣabha as he emerged from birth to birth into full status and articulation as the Jināsiddhā. It is a mighty task and he had vast material to draw from.

If that was material for the *Ādipurāṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* of Vyāsa was there to draw from, select and condense, for the *Vikramārjuna-vijaya*. Often the subject-matter and the theme set the tone and settle the technique and manner of presentation. And when both works of his had such mighty works to supply quarry it is the drawing out of the main outlines organizing the parts and building up the characters, situations and incidents to which the poet had to devote his attention. In the handling of the material he seems to have been constrained in the *Ādipurāṇa* by the doctrinal points very much more than in the episodes where a larger and more poetic humanity could play about. In the Bhārata he had greater freedom of movement. The earlier was also the period when he had to prove to the learned world and the poets of his time that he possessed the wealth of lore and knew all about the principles of composition. *Ādipurāṇa* seems overladen with junk and convention and full of displays of energy, talent and knowledge. Some stanzas and descriptions seem to be definitely en faced to the Pandits of the time for they grind formal ornamentation showing he could do one better than others. It is more full of the conceits and the embellishments which are ever the darlings of the learned; and to that extent it suffers from want of real blood and life and common experience. It is not as easy and simple, as straight and inevitable, as capable of hitting off with a phrase or turn of expression as will come to his aid in the Bhārata work. The nature of the subject-matter also limited his freedom. It was grave and sacred; and he could not frivol with

any aspect or detail because he was himself a Jain and the work was no less than the life-history of the great first Tirthamkara. Much that engaged the lives of the characters dealt no doubt with the pleasures of the flesh and love of fame and power in the earlier cantos; but they had to be renounced in order to attain to spiritual perfection. Enjoyment of love and power and all the wealth and glory leave men unsatisfied and they come to the realization that the attainment of tyāga, vairāgya, śama and Kēvala-jñāna alone will give them permanent happiness and peace. When the poet has themes dealing with essentially human-though in status heavenly-personalities and situations, as in Lalitānga and Svayamprabhê and Śrīmati and Vajrajangha where love flowers forth, tenderly, passionately, greatly and steadfastness and strength and details of domesticity are to be presented Pampa feels happy and is in his element. One sees the affection and the felicity and the knowledge of life that go into such moments. When the stories of greed, jealousy and hatred, or crassness, irredeemable spite and lust are to be presented he is equal to the task. But the rest of the matter in the first seven sections is puranic lore sometimes in arid deserts of prose or repetitive narration. So many characters other than the main ones are brought in several stages of incarnation and development. The poet needs to come to the lives of Nābhi and Marudēvi for his theme to resume a more normal turn. In the picture of Nābhi's kingship and the birth of Vṛṣabha, his growth education and marriage, birth of children to him and assumption of kingship, the benefactions of father and son to the kingdom and the culture of the community, the system of training to the boys and girls we are on an open plateau where every detail is clearly sighted and shaped. One is on surer, because on human ground.

Behind and above all this is the purposing of cosmic forces and the drive to fulfilment of a life that has developed through nine full stages—into that of Purudeva who is due to achieve the end in this penultimate human existence. All the five Kalyāṇas have got to be noted,—inducted and described more by the gods than by the people of Ayodhya. The people are just wonderstruck, and can but be impressed by such superhuman adoration of their own king.

Then comes the central incident of Dēvēndra's production of the

dance recital by Nīlānjanê. Its beauty and fascination captures all. Indra knew what was being done and what was happening. But Purudēva noticed the substitution and the illusion was broken. He decided to renounce the kingdom and the concern with earthly life and to take to a life of austerities needful for the highest attainment possible for a Jīva.

A little earlier the poet rehearsed in the lives of the father Vajrasēna and the son Vajranābhi what was to happen on a more glorious scale between Purudēva and Bharata: i.e. the accession to spiritual status of the father and to the earthly throne of the son. The fulfilment is like; only it is far finer here than in the earlier prose celebration of it. The contrast between the progressive realization of the dharmic imperium which Purudeva established and the succession to secular royal power of Bharata are fully worked. The contrasts are clearer. The career of Bharata made him wade through blood; obedience and subjugation have to be enforced through might. It has to suffer some frustration and humiliation. Finding that innumerable other overlords of the universe had achieved such conquests in the past ages, Bharata had to suffer deflation of pride. He had again to suffer humiliation at the hands of Bāhubali because he was poor in self-control and largeness of spirit. He was puffed with insolence and power, forgetting ties of blood and dictates of culture and humanity. This portion is human again and receives the most superb description, stretching arms to sublimity; and it is as convincing as the description of Bharata's amusements and sports with his women in the woods, on the rivers, in the camps, in moonlight, with song and dance and feasting all round. But some of the details in e.g. the x canto and later of the progressive realization of perfection of Purudēva seem somewhat frozen and comparatively academic. Indeed what strikes one as more moving is the ensuing relationship between the brothers. When Bāhubali retires from the scene, so nobly, Bharata has learnt the lesson of his life and through ripeness and suffering himself qualifies for the final redemption from samsāra which at every stage is a little more human and intelligible than the awesome, unapproachable heights of the Samavasaraṇa, the Kēvalajñāna etc., described about the father. That is so high for grasp by mortal mind. Yet into the projection of this process of Karma and fulfilment Pampa brings all his knowledge, energy and poetic

power, while in the episodes specially mentioned his poetry achieves triumphs of expression.

The description of the debate between the ministers with which the process almost begins is technically an efficient performance if a bit recondite and virtuoso-like. The Panca-kalyānas and the āścaryas, the details of pleasure and passion and the details of penances at various stages are particularly well done. If the warning of old-age given to kings that it is time for them to change over from dalliance is common, it comes to one in the appearance of grey hair; to another as the fading of a flower and of lustre, or of wrinkles on the skin; to a third as sighting the death of a bee which has been imprisoned in a lotus the previous evening; to another as the melting into nothingness of the architectonic of the clouds on which he desired to fashion a palace for himself while he drew with brush and colour.

The shaking of the throne on which Indra is sitting or of his own bottom indicating that something is happening about the Tīrthamkara, to be portending a world event of tremendous importance appears more than once: it is like some summons, and served by a remote control, which has to be obeyed. The services rendered before the advent of the Jina-to-be preparing the womb of the mother and the divine services to her before and after childbirth are full of luxurious detail which are part of the tradition. The teaching by the Jina is technical. The behaviour of the several gods who know and are partly emancipated is also part of the purāṇa detail. The detail of the syllabus on which children—more particularly the sons—were brought up in those days are also given, though the tenderness and the affection with which a Brāhmi and Soundari, daughters of Purudeva, were initiated into their respective accomplishments are especially well done. At other times all women are described conventionally and there is a proneness to luscious description of limbs and general features and the luxuries connected with enjoyment of pleasure between men and women: of physical expectations, dreams, delights, separation, languors and lamentations. When two princesses of Kaccha and Mahākaccha are married to Purudēva, there is common description of both—Sunandê and Yaśasvati—as there is later in the P. B. of Kunti and Mādri—which does not individuate them. That both were beautiful women in the same way is enough statement about them!

The household of an emperor which seemed to move with the heroes both to hunting and to the battlefield enjoy themselves all the delights given to the women of a king. The items are conventional, though Pampa's description of the details of the trees and the flowers and the birds and the beasts, the water sports, the clothing and decoration and the foods served for dinner and the varieties of persons present around him there are all very picturesquely realized. It is there that the love the poet bears to the mango, the mallika—Pampa's two particular favourites—the surahonnê and the karṇikāra of which he was so fond, get description which is a first burst of full natural delight in Kannada. It is here that the Udyānalata and Vanalata comparisons made by Kalidāsa in *Śākuntalam* get showing again; and where the sorrow of the cakravāki at the end of the Fourth Act there seems to get a more understanding and clarificatory interpretation (XI: 63). Nothing is narrated, though, of what happened to the women or the gang after this. Either they have gone back home or nothing more needs to be said about them. Their innings are over. They disappear without a word. In the midst of highly formal and conventional comparisons one sometimes strikes against a very natural comparison like the whiteness of panji (cotton hank (VI: 33) or like hima (snow) appearing like cotton ginned: rare bits of natural comparison. There is nothing to compare when his zest for description in a human situation shines through every artifice and every dictate of the learning in Sāhitya Śāstra. At such moments the poet, the poetry and the subject on hand are equal to one another. These passages of beauty and power are unique in *Ādi-purāṇa*. They have intensity and individuality against a background of spiritual power and striving; and, they shine by contrast. If the strength of this was not so strong, the greatness and the glory of the renunciation and penance could not possibly have been so strikingly superior.

2

The *Bhārata* is frankly a secular work, and to him doubly so. Pampa is here under no obligation to strain his own religious affiliations. Of course his master belongs to the orthodox Śaiva faith and is a believer in the Trimūrtis and all the gods of the Hindu pantheon. If occasionally his Jaina habits of thought and mind peep into colour

or flavour they rarely impinge on the substance of the theme or the situation. Life here is common life and deals with men and women and as life has been lived in India for thousands of years. All the situations are amenable to handling on the human level only except on those occasions when the gods interfere or some miracle is described—This is part of the matrix of life in India and in the consciousness of the Indian people all the centuries through.

The process of events deals with the birth and fortunes of one family predominantly with Śantanu as ancestor.¹ It deals with the efforts of Bhīṣma to keep it going and prosperous. But he has to see the shattering of his hopes owing to his inability to control the march of events set in motion by Duryōdhana and by his vicious jealousy and spite. The strife between the two branches of the family is all too familiar and since it is part of all that is present as experience at all periods of our history, the poet can put into it poetry, warmth and blood. Love and hate, ambition and frustration, revenge and forgiveness, loss and sorrow and joy, piety and irreverence and defiance, self-control and wildness, integrity and character and stark wilfulness, pictures of heroism and war, of bloody ferocity and destructive energy, of helplessness combined with essential goodness, boon and curse and prophecy and fulfilment,—are all in presentation.

The seasons make their presence naturally and are free to be on. The Pāṇḍavas were condemned to the woods and movement from before they started their life's career, and therefore their life was lived in the midst of nature whose objects were often their sole companions and source of joy and consolation. The red, the green, the black and the white colours of the forest scene are repeated more than once in the descriptions of the forests or the floral scenes in this work, or slightly differently as in the description

1 (i) Vyāsa is indirectly related to this family: he is son to Satyavati by Parāśara.

(ii) Satyavati = Śantanu

→ Citrāngada and Vicitra Vīrya

Vyāsa = Ambika → Dhṛtarāṣṭra

= Ambālikē → Pāṇḍu

= Maid → Vidura.

(iii) Śantanu = Ganga

→ Bhīṣma

of Indragōpa insects (VII: 24-5). The season of the rains, of spring or Śarat come in for affectionate descriptions in both works.

The sunrises and sunsets in the *Pampa Bhārata* are beautiful and vitally or significantly connected with the vicissitudes of the Kuru Pāṇḍava fortune as they are shaping in each context. The dress and the habits of life;¹ the svayamvaras and marriages; the desire for children and the delights of parenthood; games and sports; men and women in every mode of living, dress and decoration; assembly and procession; education and training for military and other types of skill; the rivalries and the persecutions; the meeting of enemies privately and on the battlefield;² feats of heroism; the pictures of raids and cattle-lifting; the sights and sounds and preparations in the camps before a battle³ is joined and the actual battles between individuals and masses of men; clashes of horses, elephants and chariots, with the pictures of elephants and horses bleeding and foaming in the mouth and of men as they gird up for a fight or fall valiantly; or of their heads shooting up cut off from their trunks looking like lotuses with their blood streams as stalk; the various stances, the dressing of wounds,⁴ the disposition of armies for battle, the arrows as they pierce every part of a body,

1 E.g., the hunter who comes to Arjuna with his sandal, wooden bow, a belt-like bandage on his forehead, sharp dagger, clean washed clothes etc. (V: 36); or the stance of archers as they stood taut pressing the bow and arrow as far apart from each other as they could; or the picture of Ghaṭotkaca as he moved into the night campaign (XXI:11) so tall that the sea was only up to his knee, the Meru only as high as his chest, his head with no adequate place to settle! Or Bhīṣma pulls up his drooping brows and ties them up with a band to be the better able to see; then he prepares to go to battle. How old he must have been!

2 The various meets between Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīṣma and Droṇa, of Kṛṣṇa and Karṇa, of Kunti and Karṇa may be mentioned.

3 Those on the eve of the first day of the Kurukṣetra battle are full of colour and bustle and enthusiasm all round and in both the camps. Along with the ambitions of the warriors one finds the steadfast devotion of their wives who contain among themselves those who are sure their men will surely come back to them, or who resolve to die the moment their lords are dead or even those who will anticipate them at the heaven, making it impossible for the heavenly harlots to get possession of their beloveds.

4 One passage (prose after XI:3) has a concrete picture of how wounds were dressed, the medical aids and surgery invoked, and the entertainment arranged so as to calm and sweeten the fatigue and pains of the battle etc.

the plucking out of blades from the bodies of warriors with forceps with not so much as a groan from the soldier, or the use of magnets to take out bits of steel; the shrill, fierce, exultant or pitiful cries or groans on the battlefield; the smells of foul stench emanating from decay and death; (“Kanalva Keṇḍada mēlê paḷeya bēvinēneyoḷ toydikkida beḷḷuḷḷiya Kampanānta”). The smell of burning corpses as of garlic soaked in old neem oil and issuing out of bright burning charcoal) and the pictures of horrid unearthly vampirelike creatures moving about the battlefield in search of carrion food are all realized vividly.

The picture of Parāśara getting into a boat and making love to Yōjanagandhi saying that alone he is equal to a thousand in weight; of Śantanu’s accosting Satyavati and proposing marriage to her and her shy answer to him that he might apply to her father for her hand; of bold Ambê going from person to person asking to be accepted; Mādri and Kunti living sad yet loyal lives guarding their husband and finally finding themselves broken and lost at his death; the picture of Hidimbê naively offering herself to Bhīma; the women making up Draupadi for Svayamvara¹ or the boldness of her amazon-like (danḍurumbêgaḷ) friends who exhorted Arjuna to handle her as she deserved; the eyes of Subhadra and Arjuna meeting—he from on the back of an elephant as he is being received and she from the parapet of her rooms as she looked on from a second or third floor and lost her heart to him; the picture made by Nārada as he came down—a picture of white, with a silk (!) loin cloth, the vīṇa and the akṣa mālika in his hand, to speak to Pāṇḍavas of the plight of Pāṇḍu in the heavens and suggest to them the performance of Rājasūya; the hunter chief announcing the season for the hunt and Arjuna’s ability to do one better than Kṛṣṇa himself in deer hunt; the various types of dogs used for hunting of various kinds; the scenes of sport and joy on the banks of the Yamuna of the Yādava and Pāṇḍava women; Arjuna leading his beloved away from too deep waters indicating where the water was knee-deep, chest-deep or shoulder-deep; the picture of Agni consuming the Khāṇḍava with all its blazing realism and train of

¹ Like they did up Srīmati or when Indra’s women helped the toilet in service to Marudevi.

fateful consequences; Aśvasena escaping with half his body cut; Maya coming down at the head of his rākṣasa force, bringing a three-league-square pre-fabricated but gorgeous and fully equipped assembly-hall in grateful service to Arjuna for saving his life; the picture of the sportsmanlike Jarāsandha as he accepts the challenge of Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas and his fight with Bhīma; the gorgeousness and the glory of the Rājasūya, with its conclusion in the derision, the challenge and destruction of Śiśupāla; the plot with gambling and its dire consequences on the fortunes of both the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas; the part played by Vyāsa all along, with a description which contrasts with Nārada's; the lyric enchantments woven by heaven's artistes to deflect Arjuna at Indrakīla; the picture of the lustful Kīcaka as he falls for Draupadi and the crude, insolent efforts he made to win her affections and the deadly fate he brought upon himself and his whole tribe at the hands of Bhīma; the clash of will and purpose between Kṛṣṇa and Duryōdhana at Hastinapura; the hundreds of sights and scenes and incidents during the eighteen days of the war involving the fates of the foremost men and warriors of the time—it is a banquet which Pampa serves for our delectation.

Beyond all this I have said is the incipient purpose which fixes the framework and ground for this process and drive of destiny. The gods participating in the lives of these men; a ṛṣi agreeing to be father to Vicitravīrya's children; a Durvāsa conferring five boons on Kunti as reward for faithful service which make it possible for her later to have Dharma, Vāyu, Indra and the Aśvins as fathers for Pāṇḍava children—all identifying themselves with the promotion of the fortunes of these heroes; Paraśurāma¹ as fruitless aid to Ambê, as preceptor in archery to Bhīṣma and later to Karṇa; the picture of Īśvara and Brahma as they come down to aid the Pāṇḍavas; (Brahma primarily at the Khāṇḍava episode and Śiva to reward Arjuna with the Pāśupata)—and all of them looking on interested in and concerned with the issue of the battle on the field of Kuru-

¹ He is credited with a 'Kevala-Jñāna' as Duryodhana describes Karṇa to Śalya; and there is more than the usual load of meaning in his telling him that Karṇa is not a common person. If he were of low birth, would Paraśurāma give him the divine astras which only the cleanest in lineage can handle? (XII: 96-7).

kṣetra, most of them being aware—like Bhīṣma among the human beings earlier—Kṛṣṇa as Nārāyaṇa himself, one of the Primary Three; Lakṣmi offering to change ministry at the behest of Puruṣōttama Nārāyaṇa as she is preparing to leave Duryōdhana to go to the Pāṇḍavas—this is a fairly phenomenal background of presences, influences and actions.

3

To the realization of each and all these aspects Pampa brings the resources of his mind, experience, knowledge and poetic mastery. Of course there are mannerisms and repetitions, naḍê noḍê noḍê (as one looked on) is physical, nelam mūriviṭṭantê is a comparison, Pandeyam Pāv aḍardantê (As if a snake climbed up a timid person) is another, Śvetakṛṣṇa kārakam is a third; and one or two passages of bathos as when he telescopes the Arjuna-Arikesari relation in reference. But that is an exigency of his purpose and one should not be too requiring when an extra-literary purpose is patently intended and presented. The taste of a later time may be shocked or hurt when the poet shows his zest for and delight in the sophistries, the cloy, the clot and the addictions of the vēśyā-vihāra scenes (the drinks as they are mixed, tasted and served are beautiful description) and when the poet calls himself a jewel worn by an Āndhra or a Gujarata or a Kerala beauty. The needs of a convention might have put him to include as an item of beauty the *bāse* (hair on the navel) and the *tivaḷi* (folds on the belly) of Subhadra.¹ The fervours of the various kinds of professional lovers their conventions and their sweat are not *a la mode* to day. The women who look at Arjuna or Bharata simply cannot hold themselves; and one of them wants to insure herself against the fascination of Arjuna! she who would not value at a pin's fee for Smara or Indra girded herself double-tight. There are luscious descriptions of women who exist only for gratifying the appetites of men as if nothing else needs to be spoken about them,² making them

1 If it may be no discomplement either to the fineness of her beauty or the dress she wore—how long did he see her and from how near?

2 The attention of our poets is said to be towards Rasa and not so much to individuation and character. We get lush Vēśyā Vilāsa and Viṭa Śṛṅgāra.

unique specimens of life and aspiration each centre of her own feeling and behaviour. But what distinguishes all this is a full-bloodedness both in the original *Mahābhārata* and in what seems to be the uninhibited life of Pampa's own time. Love was love and hate was hate. Killing and bloodiness were undertaken as if neither God nor man would have any objection to either. How insensitive to life, how unjust the *Mahābhārata* itself could be—if that be part of the original definitely and not some later interpolation—when a poor *beḍa* mother with her five children were led into false security, fed and left asleep in Purōcana's lac palace to be mistaken for the Pāṇḍava family? And if Bhīma and others knew it a modern time cannot be easy in conscience about the horrid business!

4

Pampa was exemplar of a type of composition which is terse and expressive, powerful and adequate, full of all the beauties of effective writing with *ōjas*, *prasāda* and *kānti* as main qualities: *hita*, *mita*, *madhura*, *prasanna-gambhīra-vacana* are words used by him and others as distinguishing features of his writing. His terseness is such that if one is not particular or nods or rushes or runs, one may not read, receive or feel the force of a meaning or catch the nuance intended. He may miss meaning altogether. He is so much a poet's poet that one is required to be watchful. We have not yet recovered the meaning of all the words he uses in his two works—more particularly those in the *Bhārata* when, for example, he deals with the details of the hunt and the mysteries of cocktail-making, drinking a *Kāmāṅga* as it is called and its rituals and the graces; or, the details of a fight. All that is a rich *dēśi* of his time. He uses simple, small words which can say much in little. The language was still pristine in use and was not corrupted by ignorance or wrongheadedness or misunderstanding of true meaning. Some of the words are precious in the forms in which we find them in his work, as they are nearest to their true derivation. We can definitely recognize cognates and usages in Tamil, and for a few of them in Telugu.

Practically all the important metres that were then current are used by him. Between the two works he uses some twenty-five varieties. The most common is the *kanda* (Sanskṛt *Āryāgīti*,

Prākṛt Skandaka) which is the staple of composition¹. For embellishment and power or even a slight heightening of tone or quickening of movement he uses principally the six most popular akṣara-gaṇa vṛttas (line-lengths in 3-syllable groups), three of which are derived from three others, the derived ones being the more happily accepted and used: the Campakamāla, Mattēbha-vikrīḍita and Mahāsrāghdara deriving respectively from Utpalamāla, Śārdūlavikrīḍita and Srāghdara, each by resolving the initial guru into two laghus in each line. The same principle is observable in his use for special purposes stanza patterns like Pṛthvi, Khacara-pluta, Anavadya, Taraḷa, Hariṇi, Mallikāmālê etc., three of which are derived in almost the same manner as above—Anavadya from Khacarapluta, Taraḷa from Mallikāmālê, Ujvala from one called either Śārṅgi (by Jayakīrti) or Ūrjita (by Hēmacandra). These metres have a quality of adding special colour or singing ease or a rhythmic pattern nearer to the mātra and amśa beats natural to the language. How happy Pṛthvis become when an emotional situation opens out in a few of them (as in the Vajrajangha episode) and when its length breaks up into 3 phrases of 8 matras each composed again of 3 and 5 morae so natural to Kannada. They need to be felt to be enjoyed. They introduce a special effect which comes in happy in contexts like water-sport or gathering flowers or some other lyrical mood. Even a solitary Mandākrānta appears almost as happy as it could be in Kannada, which shows how effective the opening and closing series of longs in each verse can be—sandwiching the frisk of five shorts gathered by a sixth long, or by single shorts followed by two longs etc. Puṣpitāgra and Anuṣṭubh are used also, showing how definitely Samskr̥t their rhythm is and proving how unnative their roll and movement for Kannada is. Both are used when the composition is more or less entirely in Samskr̥t.

But most beautiful and moving of all and genuine as native metre is the use of the Akkaras, the Piriakkara more particularly. There are 13 of them in all (9 Piriakkaras)—a pure seven-foot verse of a special amśa-gaṇa pattern of composition. With normally an

1 It is surprising that, with the use of *ja-gaṇa* (amphibrachys) to which Kannada is allergic, is one of the two necessary at the 6th foot) this metre has won for itself a place of supremacy.

opening Brahma, 5 Viṣṇu and a Rudra foot: These groups are called also Sūrya, Indra, Candra; Ra, La, Dha; and Rati, Madana and Śara. Its native music is one of the glories of our language. It makes us feel what rich prosody we have lost in our efforts to take the classical Samskr̥t patterns and in converting the Samskr̥t-Prākṛt modes as well as our own amśa patterns into mora-feet, making them sterile and dead or monotonous. The Piriakkaras do beautiful work and make us feel how true and sweet and heart warming, this amśa-gaṇa structure can be.

There are three other types of another metre called Ragalê¹ where we get a series of couplet sequences wherein each line is equal to the other and the couplet is garnished either by an end rhyme or a second-letter rhyme or both and even interline rhyme or para-rhyme or rich assonances and equivalence of parts. Most of them are nearer in texture to the amśa composition and with such composition they sound more natural and sweet. One composite pattern of it is here perhaps the richest and the most beautiful structure that has occurred in Kannada, with composite six or eight-mātra feet, with units of 3/3, 2/4, and 3/5 etc., a part length at the cadence being repeated with a small catch as overflow or extension. It is a piece of daring as it is a feat of special metrical assaying. One metre in which practically all our folk song is constructed is Tripadi which seems to be a feature of basic Kannada metrical composition from the earliest times. Two of this kind occur in *Ādipurāṇa* and retain the amśa-gaṇa structure true of its pristineness as a literary mode.

If one indicates the proportion of each metre in distribution, out of 1,609 stanzas in the *Pampa Bhārata* (1630) 738 are Kandas (949); 409 Campakamālas (174); 204 Mattēbha vikṛḍitas (219); 140 Utpalas (36); 37 Mahāsrāgḍharas (108); 7 Śārdula vikṛḍitas (20). (The distribution for the A.P. is given in the brackets.) The distribution in the *Bhārata* work seems to be the more natural preference of the language as it is to the more advanced and happy style of Pampa himself; for he had gained total flexibility and ease when he came to write his *Bhārata* work.

1 "Raghaṭā", used by Hemacandra, is possibly a hyper-Samskr̥tized form of "Ragalê." There is the three-mora foot of Utsāha, the four-mora foot of Mandānala and the five-mora foot of the Lalita varieties.)

There is nothing that Kandas cannot do for the poet. He uses whole sequences of them for narrative, lyrical or descriptive purposes. At one stretch some 45 Kandas manage the Nilānjanê episode and its consequence on Purudêva in *Ādipurāna*; and the bulk of the Śiśupāla episode in the *Bhārata* is in Kandas—more than twenty in number. The dialogue between Duryōdhana and Kṛṣṇa opens with and and, as temper gathers, both burst into vṛttas with but one Kanda punctuation by each. Whole passages in A.P. also are in Kanda. It is exhilarating to see how the poet varies the metres and selects the type of vṛtta to answer a tender, a serious, an angry or a portentous purpose. The converse statement that certain types of metre are always suitable for specific literary purposes may not always be right. After all, it is poetic sensing that achieves effects. Ear and tongue in sensitive control of rhythm, movement and variation guide at passion's need. The way in which the Campakamāla and Mahāsrāghara and mattēbha are used is a revealing experience. Sometimes, e.g. as in indicating the successive stages by which Vajrajanḡha recognizes and identifies the piece of painting written by Śrīmati, himself as Lalitāḡga and the lady of the picture as Svayamprabhê of an earlier birth one is led on by a whole series of Pṛthvis which in some mysterious, if definite way touches the heartchord of the Kannadiga. It is a purely Samskr̥t mode, yet it has been the darling of more than one campu poet in Kannada. Despite again its opening jagana movement if the 3-syllable foot measurement is accepted in principle; but as a segment of 3 mātra feet followed by one of 5 or a composite of 8 however distributed the pattern is nearer the three mātra articulation; normally Kannada is uncomfortable with iambic rhythm in (ja and ya). How Pampa harnesses the metrical pattern to a literary or an emotional need would be a very fruitful source of study and is sure to be inspiring. Vak and Artha i.e., word and meaning, sound and sense are married in eternal felicity in metrical modes like these.

It is a moot point how much the proportion of descriptive and other purposes should bear to narration of the main story in a campu. We might also study the incidence, structure and function of prose and the proportion it bears to verse. The campu is an elaborate, learned type of composition and no one can fix the limits of healthfulness in this distribution. It is all so much a

matter for the genius of the writer that one cannot lay down rules. The prose passages are comparatively more in the *Ādipurāṇa* and very much longer each of them than in the other work; very much more learned, ornate and cast-iron like, more full of abnormally long compounds and riddled with jargon details. The prose in the *Pampa Bhārata* is limited, comparatively, and has the qualities of perspicuity, raciness and natural vigour. The long prose bits appear specially when the Arikēsari-Arjuna telescoping is deliberately on.

The prose in the campu has all the features of verse in content, purpose and function; only, it does not regularly measure and scan, and the rhythm is more heavy footed—it is more consciously mannered and worked than in normal speaking. The embellishments, the tricks of expression, the clever balances and antitheses, the *double entendres* and linked chains of word and meaning structure are as evident in prose as in verse. We however get clearer, less choked, less labyrinthine passages in the *Bhārata* than in the *Ādipurāṇa* where, by and large, each passage helps the purpose on hand and does not very much impede movement. Yet one sees the same desperate effort in changing from verse to prose. One special habit of this change-over in our campu is usual and striking; to repeat the verb with which a stanza closes as the first word in the ensuing prose passage as link.. Though we see the practice in Pampa also, it does not become a hardened mannerism with him as it does a little later. But one is maddened with more than ninety per cent of the prose passages beginning with antu, endu, mattam, āgaḷ, tadanantaram etc., with antu and endu in more than 75% of them. The transition from verse to prose is for anybody and everywhere difficult. The first poets spoke verse better than prose; and if campu prose is inflexible or clumsy, the history of prose shows that it had to travel long and hard and wait for more patient if less poetically charged times and minds to develop it for every secular purpose. For example Eg. simple or linked words, linked for sound or for meaning structure are there; alliterations and assonances galore; clean, short sentences and sequences, or long mazy never-ending ones; a whole dialectic; aphorisms and quotations happily imbedded in perhaps, straight expression, or hard, stilted ones or laden with technical details;-almost every variety of structure is in showing.

The prose e.g. at the end of the 2nd section of P. B. where the Pāṇḍava brothers march through villages and tanks like true-born Kings of men; the passage which deals with the assembly of Duryōdhana; the various aids, medical and diversional provided for the wounded in the battle—are clear and beautiful. The details of the ritual in cocktail making and its atmosphere of sophistication and convention are excellent, concrete prose. That where the royal cousins of Ādideva get uncomfortably caught up in the tapas of the master is fun indeed and masterly.

To compliment a poet of Pampa's eminence on his diction or on the technical excellence of his composition would be impertinent. Almost every grace and conceit of expression which scholarly critics of his, the older or later days could consider features of merit can be illustrated from his short or long passages. Many stanzas could be instanced which have a compelling power. They have been written merely with a view to verbal felicities or charged with concentrated meaning or are neat single pictures of lyrical intensity. Series of stanzas either of the same kind or varied with suitable other kinds rush in breathless narration or dwell affectionately on some scene of loveliness, beauty of nature, pictures of penance or self-purification, intense drama, tenderness and love, or challenge or defiance answered by a summary execution of will or decision. There are whole stanzas in pure Kannada, just as there are whole stanzas and sequences in pure Samskṛt; and there are varying degrees of happy blend. The natural effectiveness of the Kannada language achieves success of a remarkable kind in some. Other poets sometimes have excelled him in softness, smoothness or tenderness and have polished their stanzas better. But Pampa's race, rush, energy and dignity function with an intensity natural and necessary and convince us with their truth and spontaneity. They are admirably suited to purpose and context. Rarely is a thing added merely as a toy or an embellishment, though the poet can show off too when he is minded that way. He had a man's work to do and produced his work in half the time his master gave him to do it in. Nor could he frivol with his responsibility; either in the one work or in the other.

(A few stanzas are given at the end to illustrate the power of his composition.)

5

Right at the heart of the Mahābhārata are three characters: Bhīma, Duryōdhana and Draupadi. Draupadi and Bhīma were exposed to cruel torments and humiliation. That central relationship is brought out with an energy and ferocity that only the poet of a heroic age could put into it. From the first moment Duryōdhana and Bhīma were engaged in strife, and we feel a deadly jealousy and spite is established between the two. Pampa seems to enforce it with a Jaina-like colouration, saying that the hatred of former births was spilling from each other's eyes as they lay on each other mace in hand. Bhīma's anger makes mincemeat of Duśśāsana and Duryōdhana and the whole business would have sounded devilish if it were not merited and poetic justice. One stanza which describes the loose flowing hair of Draupadi as Bhīma held it in his hand before he let her tie it after thirteen years of unkempt hanging is a summit of grandeur and speaks of that hair as an extraordinary world of event and significance. He holds it in his hand and says, "In this cluster of hair was shaken and destroyed the whole world of royalty stretching over the ten directions of the earth under the protection and might of one imperial white umbrella. Here was suppressed—and floated weightlessly—the line of the Kauravas. This inspired the prowess and enterprise of mine own arm. This was the beginning, the main cause of the Mahābhārata war. Tell me, O thou with eyes like lotus petals, is this world of your hanging locks of hair common or commonplace?..." The whole of Māhābhārata and its rancorous spite seems to be condensed into this stanza (XII:156). Rather loud but true.

Illustrative praise and comment can go on endlessly. We are served a feast at almost every stage in this development of the Mahābhārata story; and there is poetry at every level of expression and doing.

6

A few points which the poet has liked to make in connection with poetry and appreciation in general may now be noted as they speak of his literary persuasion and preferences.

Classical poets started with a definite sense of the task before them

and what it would involve before they undertook the works which have survived till our time. A writer like Pampa found it easy to achieve quality; for his mind was formed and his imagination was vital and adequate creatively for any poetic enterprise. He speaks of what he considers the proper business of a poet. For example, a poem should be written with words which are soft and happy in mood and movement. The flavours and emotions should be full and rich. The work should please with its beauty and skill, so that men learned in the literary art should be captivated. He is in favour of fresh, oblique expression. Mere directness cannot please. If the expression cannot win through composition with soft and sweet words and express lofty meaning and is not naturally meaningful, it is as bad as hidden away in the mind of the poet. Those who are conversant with the mystery of poetic quality and expression only can understand and respond to natural poetic beauty. The dull, the foolish and the vicious, without proper insight into its nature cannot.

In the preamble to any ancient work in our literary tradition good poetry and criticism come in for praise. The bad ones receive severe punishment at the hands of each poet. Sometimes it sounds like an insurance against adverse criticism of one's own work. These could also be insinuations against a fellow-writer or answer to some criticism which might have been levelled against him by someone. The critic should know the genius of the language and the special features of poetic creation and not be a mere fault-finder. Only such are capable of providing the true touchstone of merit. Jealousy or prejudice should not enter into valuation or criticism.

A cuckoo is not heeded in a forest. So too, Pampa says, if the world around the poet is like a jungle and full of vicious, dull and impervious people; the finest poetry will be a cry in the wilderness. A common complaint of all poets is against the dry grammarians and logicians and jejune men of letters. It needs the finest men of sensibility to appreciate a work of art. The title that was perhaps current about Pampa was *Sukavi jana manō mānasōttamsa hamsam*. The features of his composition which won the hearts of competent judges were that it was acceptable to those who were conversant with tradition: graceful and pregnant with fine expression and

beauty containing smooth and fine episodes and contexts; ably reflective and observing the highest propriety in the use of words; easy to articulate and pleasant to hear. These were the qualities which learned men associated with and praised in Pampa. Another striking phrase Pampa uses is that his poetry was new like the sea (*idu niccam posatu arṇavambol*),—eternally fresh, dignified and profound. That is how he came to be called a *Kavitā-guṇārṇava*; it brought him great fame, because he dealt with spiritual development (*abhyudaya-prāpti-nimittam*). His work contained the quintessence of worldly life and wisdom and therefore was Dharma. Expounding that as he does, he was *samsāra-sārōdaya*. Possibly when he wrote the *Ādipurāṇa* he was not yet under the patronage of any king. He was intrepid, irrepressible, and not particularly gentle and conforming; not caring to make himself acceptable to the demands of a patron. What normally is deemed the fruit and reward of writing a poem? he asks: Not worship, fame and profit? And when he chose Lord Jina as the subject of his praise, it is the celebration of one who is worshipped by Indra himself; the fame he gets is the praise of the whole world; and the profit is redemption. This can be gained of themselves with no other effort. What can others give? he asks; What can others do? What can come about from others?

When he is choosing this lofty subject, he knows that by concentrating devotion on the poetic accomplishment of such a sublime task his karma series would be destroyed. Here one may find together the Dharma of the poet which brings pleasure to really learned men and the Dharma which will commend itself to all the men of Jaina faith. At the end of the work he specifically says that the story of the *Ādideva* is the object of praise by the gods; and his intention is to make it fall like nectar upon the ears of the devoted followers of the religion. Learned men asked him to write it with such an object in view. It is a *vastu-kṛti* bound to win for him the heavens and heavenly happiness. This is exemplar of the *Mārga* style!—the discipline of the Samskr̥t classics which along with the beauty of the native idiom puts in something like the seal and stamp of *Sarasvati* upon it.

In the *Pampa Bhārata* also we find mention of the qualities of poetic composition which commend themselves to him. The

imagination must be fresh. The composition must be soft and gracious. It must be racy and express the best native grace. The classic, learned manner will make it acceptable to all whose culture is leavened with the knowledge of the masters. Only such a work will be beautiful. It will then be like the young mango tree in the spring whose red shoots and flowers gather in heavy bunches and clusters; full of swarming bees; from which the cuckoos cry intoxicated with the sweetness and beauty of the season. The meaningfulness, the embellishment, the loftiness of style, the presence of merits and quality, the softness and grace of movement, felicity of phrase, fullness of heart—all bring it fame. When a beautiful woman and a poem have special qualities, such as the ones here they make a worthy gift to a patron of beauty, poetic and human, like Arikeseri.¹ Though Pampa knows that poetic grace and accomplishment are features of his writing he is not insolent. His humility is great. He dedicates this work to a worthy person. If pride is a fault affection is not. He is not so insolent as to think that he will swim across the vast ocean of letters of Vyāsa Maharṣi; and he would not care or dare to call himself a Vyāsa—even as before now his humility presented the story of the Āditīrthamkara and dedicated it to his spiritual guru Devendramuni.

A great phrase and conception resonate in our memory as he describes Sarasvati as the Voice and utterance of the Supreme Jinendra (I:9). Sarasvati is no goddess in woman's form. The primal Dharma according to the Jains is uttered by the Tīrthamkaras in a language universal to all mankind, and the Gaṇadharas, the chief disciples, expound and interpret its meaning in different languages. The true religion is therefore one and represents the voice of the supreme master-spirits and the Lord of the gods. It is applicable to all, meant for all, and effective for the cleaning and liberation of all.

In persuasion he seems to belong to the Rasa school with alamkāra, rīti and skill in oblique expression as distinguishing marks of greatness in poetical achievement. Dhvani still is an alamkāra to him. The Rasa-dhvani concept of Ānandavardhana (and later Abhinavagupta)

1 The terms artha, alankṛti, vṛtti, lakṣana, pada, vāksrī, kalākalitatā etc., used here make meaning both in favour of the poem and the beautiful young lady who are to be offered as gifts to the king. This can scandalise the modern.

was still waiting possibly for acceptance or not very much current in the southern country. Mere Desi, the native grace in idiom, is not enough for him. Tilottama's dance was merely Desi and could not awaken Arjuna. In a stanza where the contents are not complimentary to the person in the context (V:64) his commendation is for something which as Desi is renovated and improved by the Mārga: the standard literary manner.

Whatever the theoretical preference, the execution of Pampa is adequate to his purpose and promise. Fellow-poets and the scholars of the time recognized his ability and accomplishment. It is their praise and recognition that made him confident and induced Ari-kesari to entrust to him the writing of the Bhārata work. That gave him courage to complete within six months the work for which a year's time was all too little. The assignment could make a lesser man nervous and anxious. Indeed, even he, he says felt like panting (mei asungolê). Altogether these two works,—each in its kind,—are a high-water mark of classical Kannada composition: the one giving him the name *Purāṇa-kavi* and *Kaviratna* and the other Naḍōja. If the tradition of writing one Dharma-kāvya and another Laukika-kāvya was not actually started by him—for Guṇavarma before him is described as doing such a thing—he still is the first most illustrious exemplar we have. Others who want to distinguish themselves, follow this practice in their dharma-granths celebrating a Tīrthamkara; and in a secular work associating a patron of their own with the hero of an epic. But howsoever all this be, Pampa's work represents the best in the tradition of the land both in the choice of theme and style and in the brilliance of the performance where a balance and harmony are struck between tradition and new achievement: old yet new, vital and refreshing, with energy and skill to enliven it, making it a joy to experience.

CHAPTER VII

VALUES

A word or two may now be spoken about the values enshrined in these two works; values which seem to be dear to the people of his time in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and the Cālukya set-up and referring as much to the private codes of conduct and likes as to public life. Love, war and religion, were the principal substance of what is the Kṣatriya life. In both works the Kṣatriya predominates, and if for religion the practitioners of Jina-dharma are celebrated, in the A.P. Rṣis and gods and the Brahmins find special mention in the *Bhārata*. The Tīrthamkaras were all Kṣatriyas by birth as the Pāṇḍavas, Kauravas and Yādavas were here. Kṛpa, Drōṇa Asvatthāma and Paraśurāma were Brahmins who took to arms for a purpose or for a living. Heroism and liberality are the two ideas that seem to dominate the scene, as is illustrated by both Arjuna and Karṇa. Liberality became a fatal, tragic flaw in the circumstances and character of Karṇa; while it was in Arjuna a feature that enhanced his glory, heroism and beneficence. Fortune favoured the latter as it worked against the other. As we see in the Khāṇḍava episode, not even the discovery of the identity of the Brahmin made Arjuna hesitate in carrying out the promise; and, when reproached by Kṛṣṇa almost for foolhardiness he replies: "It would be unworthy of me to go back on my word. The elements have heard my word of promise. I shall hand over the Khāṇḍava to him as food." The next stanza fully expresses him and his attitude in life and faith as a Kṣatriya. This was the faith by which Arjuna lived, fearless valour, readiness to grant asylum and largeness of heart, — traits praised and illustrated in the lives of two of the foremost characters of this *Bhārata*. Kṛṣṇa immediately compliments Arjuna on such expression of firmness in the pursuit of Kṣatriya qualities which are marks of a born protector of men. The glory of Karṇa's character shows up at its brightest as at the moment of his fall. This preference-trait is discovered in the inscriptions of the later tenth and eleventh centuries as well which shows that these are the qualities which find commendation indicating either that the time found expression in Pampa's voice or that Pampa's celebra-

tion of them created the vogue for praise of such qualities and deeds by the poets of the inscriptions. Anyway the epic age and the heroic age seemed to throb with the same idealism so far as earthly worthiness was concerned in Karnāṭaka.

Men were really devoted to the pursuit of Dharma on one side and of war on the other, and love of life was full-blooded. Other elements of life like love and the preservation of what the time considered dear, such as cattle, honour of women, etc., also engage the attention of the brave men of the day. Everything they did expressed them and their aspirations completely. They did not seem to feel, think or do anything half-heartedly; nor were they as in a later day 'light, half-believers of our casual creeds, each half-living a hundred different lives' a special malady of the modern man with a disintegrated and parcelled personality. They lived through every pore of their skin. When they fought, they fought with all their physical and technical might, enjoying every stroke given and taken—till it was no longer possible to do anything more. Else they gave up everything and put themselves to the wildest extremes of penance. Though almost all the Indian religions stressed the final untenability of samsāra and life's inability to satisfy the cravings of the soul and the mind and put up the value of renunciation and meditation on the Ultimate none did it with the sense of overriding importance and fury that the Jains brought to it. The best of what the earth can give was dismissed as petty and valueless: that was the doctrine.

At the time of Pampa Jainism was still powerful and confident of its strength and did not have to be fanatical or closed in mind. Men of that religion ruled the country and lived full, free lives. We thus find here a poet tolerant and not bothering about yielding a point or two to the joys of life on earth. What feelings Pampa expresses as his own preferences are reflected in one or two of the episodes in even the *Ādipurāṇa*. When a person like Purudeva realized that the thirst for pleasure was not quenched imbibing oceans of it in innumerable lives, he knew what he was saying. He had tasted it all. And so could forthwith decide to free himself from its toils. Pampa, however, never dismisses the human body as an evil or deny all pleasure to life on earth. To Pāṇḍu life with a beautiful woman is of the essence of samsāra.

The human body received its meed of praise from the poet. He valued it in himself and in his master and in those whom he admired. A pretty stanza or two describe Śrīmati (VI:44-5) which reveal his relish of beauty and colour. The colour of her beautiful waist is like that of a tender bamboo; the lustre and fascination of the roots of her arm are likened to the heart of the plantain the colour of his own complexion, as we know. He loved a fight, he loved his women, he loved jewellery and wealth, he loved the mango blossom and the mallika flower. His zest for life is warm. Even when he says that Dharma is primary, he believes that wealth is one of the fruits of Dharma and the juice and flavour of that fruit is desire, Kāma. In daily life he has described the bath, the dress, the decoration, the unguents and the perfumes, the sport, the merriment, the banquets, the drink scenes, wealth and honour, friendship, song and dance and all the joys of group living which bring men and women together in laughter and love. Like the experienced matrons in Drupada's establishment who were set to make up Draupadi he knew what would be fit embellishment for the time or the occasion and the season, what flower, jewellery and make up will enhance particular complexion (III-45).

We may close with a brief consideration of what Pampa deemed the beauty of a country or a town, and what kind of life he deemed happy, pleasant and valuable; in other words, what constituted the utmost joy in living the secular life. And, if these were the delights and fruits of samsāra, and one liked to possess them, how would one like to die? i.e. what does it mean to live well and die well? Pampa gives his prescription and receipt. It is almost a confession of faith. In his description of Ayōdhya in the *Ādipurāṇa* and of the Kurujāṅgaṇa in the *Bhārata* and in the glimpses of Indraprastha, the Pāncāla country, Dvāraka, and of the capital of the Virāṭa country patches of colour and light and wealth and magnificence are given to us. The beauty and wealth of Ayōdhya present rich culture of what men would do to build for themselves a prosperous, busy city with its magnificent layout, and its many-faceted equipment and pleasures.

It is in the descriptions of Kurujāṅgaṇa most of all that the five or six famous stanzas occur which describe to us what constitutes the beauty of a land. Wherever one went one could see small

runnels of water bubbling and flowing softly forward; in these little currents of water fresh lilies bloomed. To the spreading fragrance of the fresh blooming lily the heavy red sheaf of paddy put forth its grain, and, to this grain swarms of parrots came flocking. These were the fields looked on with tender care and blessed by Siri. Such were the paddy fields as they grew up bent with the burden of corn. Surrounding them were stretches of water on which every variety of water-lily and lotus bloomed. Around these was park and woodland with all kinds of plant. Covering them were the busy swarms of bees humming and roaming all about, making it look like the braid of twisted hair of the Lady of the Land.

What then of the crops, the woods and the land? The woods were no doubt full of tender, beautiful and various leaves and fruits and flowers. But their special contribution was the rutting elephant. The fields had the gods for mother who sent them timely rain and made them yield fresh, fine, fragrant rice. The lovely gardens and parks promoted love and love-sport the desire of lovers for each other and the sweet pangs of separation. Such was the yield of the land and such the yield of the forest.

If one just plucked it with one's fingers the sugarcane yielded juice. With the sweet fragrance of one bud that opened the bee paled in face and felt unequal to the impact. The parrots got indigestion imbibing the juice of one fruit. Neither flower nor fruit failed in that land. Nor mallika, nor the sweet mango. What else is the consummate essence of all the joys of earthly life? Who or how could one describe the beauty and variety of such a land? The poet may not have seen Kurujāngana. He definitely knew and loved the heartland of Karnātaka. Puligerê in the modern Dharwar and Banavāsi of the Karwar districts. These in truth, he described, claiming to describe another.

This is followed by the description of Hastinapura and its colour is fascinating as its picture is woven in one of the finest ragalês in our language. The poet concludes by saying that the creator concentrated there the beauty of all the three worlds. This may sound like conventional description, but the details seem to intoxicate him as he recounts them.

If Pampa belonged to a family whose roots were in Vengi near the Eastern seacoast in what is today and possibly even then partly

Telugu land, and he was the favourite poet of a prince who say ruled over the Vengi from near Karimnagar in modern Hyderabad, the poet must have known and lived for some time perhaps in the heartland of Karnāṭaka which comprised the area between the western sea and the present districts of Dhārwar, Bijāpur and Belgaum. It is the language of that part of the country that he calls pure, 'the well of language undefiled', that in which he tried to write and in which the finest grace and idiom of the language are enshrined. If that is the language current among the cultured ones in his time, it surely was a wealth; for finish, delicacy, expressiveness and power nothing has ever come near it again.

But Pampa's special affection is reserved, as it seems, to Banavāsi which, even before the Christian era, was the seat of many kingdoms and known then as now for beauty, natural and human, virtue, valour and achievement. Arjuna passed through this land during the twelve years' journey round the land shoring memories, friendships, relationships and conquests. He is said to touch Gokarṇa where he worshipped Gokarṇeśvara associated with the worship of Rāvaṇa and the spot where the mythical Jīmūtavāhana¹ offered his life to Garuḍa in exchange for the lives of the serpents he desired to save. Banavāsi is described after this. And all this before he went to Dvāraka. This Aryan prince, whose main seat is 1,800 miles away in the north nearer the Himalayas, says he has fallen for Banavāsi.

And what a land! Wherever one looks are the beautiful mango trees laden with blossom, with numberless creepers climbing on them. The jasmine and the campaka are always in bloom. The cuckoo cries out loud and high from tree-tops, the bees hum and sing, the bright beautiful faces of the lovers, laughter playing on them, flash against each other in sport, and contact each other gently, tenderly: such are the sights on all the hills, in all the woodland and in the parks of this Banavāsi. Whom can we call men really? he asks. Only those who know and are the home of every nuance and sweetness of tyāga, bhōga, letters, song, group-living and love. It is difficult to be born as such full men and women. It would be luck indeed if if one could be at least born as a tiny bee or as a little cuckoo in

1 Arikesari is Abhinava Jīmūtavāhana.

the woodlands of Banavāsi! The last stanza speaks thus: the sweetness of the love play in Banavāsi tastes like rinsing nectar; the lilt of a song as it comes on us, the cluster of men who have learnt to speak and write and engage in intelligent discussion; the attraction of the beauty of speech of the clever and skilled speakers; and the cool bunches of flower and shoots and of fresh leaf pandals and all the pleasure that the human body can experience have made permanent dwelling-place in his mind. Even if some one struck me with a pike for doing so, I should still remember the Banavāsi land. All this seems to be the aching, panting, exquisite memory of the poet himself. He is perhaps now separated from this land and lives at some place far to the north or east, and so dwells fondly and lovingly on these memories of sight, sound and joy intimately associated with his own life. These are the joys with which a warm-hearted man sensitive to beauty and love and art would like to fill himself with which make life worth living: life certainly not one wholly overhung with Fate or with call to its total rejection and calling imprecations on it.

If these are the desires in life, what would one desire to die like? Bharata is described as making a pilgrimage to where his father has attained to Kēvala-jnāna. The Jināṣṭaka in the Ādipurāna (X: 50) is one of the finest in the language. A ninth stanza expresses to us the ultimate desire of this devotee. The Jainas believed in many Indras, each lord of some heaven and each the last word for some unique power, possession or quality. All render homage to a Tirthamkara. Men normally ask for the joys of life or the pleasures and happinesses of the heavens or desire to attain to Indrahood. The status of Jina is far higher than these. Everything else on earth can be counted and measured and weighed. But the quality of a Jina is beyond measure. The Indras feel it impossible to reach him or praise him fittingly. The substance, the form, the quality of the Jina are beyond sensing and description of him is beyond the powers of the illustrious Vāsuki himself. Life on earth is full of care and restlessness. Except in the seat of the Arhat Bharata is not able to see in all the three worlds a place of rest or peace or joy. He desires redemption and a place at the feet of the Jina. He will not forget the feet and thoughts of Jina for so much as the time taken by one atom crossing another. And

as he comes to the end of his adoration he expresses himself thus: The lofty height of Amarendra, the pomp and wealth of Khecarendra the enjoyment and happiness of Bhogindra, the supreme riches of Mahendra—these are what men commonly aspire for and are dazzled with. All these are inconstant. I am not fool enough to ask for them. May the discipline of initiation, the death by samādhi, the decay and destruction of Karma and the gaining of enlightenment be, without fail, my lot, dear lord of the Dame of Liberation.

Here one finds the rejection of the very highest achievements that life on earth and the heavens can give men and the gods, for which the bulk of mankind has always striven. But the liberated soul, the Jina, has a place higher than all these worlds, surpassing in wisdom and power and status. If one could aspire to it the true direction will have been sensed. None but the person who has turned from the earthly to the truly religious life could opt or even think of it, let alone strive for or win it. We know all that has happened in the spiritual history of Purudeva from Jayavarma's stage onwards and found fulfilment. Pampa is able to value aspiration and achievement properly and all that which sets in motion the impulses and currents which through successive stages of development and purification culminate in the self-conquest now celebrated. Bharata is already a highly evolved soul. He is desirous of a similar felicity. May that be part of the fulfilment of every life! Such aspiration, the desire for such liberation, the poet thinks, should be the thought of every bhavya in every moment of his life.

Great pictures of life and aspiration have been presented to us in the Bhārata work also though he does not there go into the essentials of any faith or pattern of spiritual striving and fulfilment.

Many poets have sung Pampa's praise, and have tried to follow him; have built up independent kavyas based on his episodes here and there. A poet Nāgarāja by name has spoken of the uniqueness of his position as one without a second—the overlordship in Kannada poetry of Pampa. Madhura uses a conceit. Those who were hostile tried to read his name backward to spite him. He remained Pampa nonetheless! Nāgacandra showed his reverence to him by calling himself 'Abhinava Pampa', anew Pampa. Ranna, a kavi-cakravarti himself, and one of the three ratnas, offered

tribute to his *Ādipurāṇa* by saying that it is the most inclusive work in the language about the Purāṇa Dharma; and for his own second work took up the essential stanzas of the Gadāyuddha section in Pampa and its succeeding episodes and built up his own great work *Gadāyuddha* or *Sāhasa-bhīma-vijaya*, where, Bhīma his master—Irivabedanga is the hero.

Pampa was himself called 'Nādoja' ('Upādhyāya' > 'Uvajjha' > 'Ojha' > 'Jha' or Ovaja > Oja etc) of the land. It is a singular good fortune of the Kannada people that their first great poet happens also to be the greatest poet in the language for a thousand years and more.

ILLUSTRATIVE

Beḷaguvenilli laukikamaṇ, alli Jināgamamaṇ samasta bhū
talakê samasta Bhāratamum Ādipurāṇamum endu meyyasum
golūtirê pūṇdu pūṇda teṇadê ondarutingaḷol ondu mūṇu tin
gaḷolê samāptiyādudênê baṇṇisidaṇ Kavitāguṇārṇavam.

P.B. XIV-60

Śakra śaśānka sūrya pavamānarum ātana hōma mantra ca
kra kramakakke aṇam miḍukal āgaḍê śāpaman īgum endê dik
cakramum anji berci besakeyvudu adalladê agurvu parvê sar
vakratu yājjiyādan, aḷavintuṭu Mādhava Sōmayājjiyā.

P.B. XIV-43

Jātiyoḷellam uttamada jātiya viprakulangê nambal ē-
māto, Jinendra dharmamê valaṇ dorê dharmadoḷ endu nambi, tat
jātiyan uttarōttaramê māḍi negaḷcidan intir ātma vi-
khyātiyan ātan, ātana magam negaḷdam Kavitāguṇārṇavam.

P.B. XIV-48

Pampaṇ dhātrīvaḷaya ni-
ḷimpaṇ, caturanga baḷa bhayaṇkaraṇam, niṣ
kampaṇ, lalitālamkara
ṇam, pancaśaraikarūpan, apagata pāpaṇ.

P.B. XIV-49

Kadalīgarbha śyāmaṇ,
mṛdu kuṭila śirōruhaṇ, sarōruha vadaṇam,
mṛdu madhyama tanu, hita mita
mṛdu vacanaṇ, lalita madhura sundara vēṣam.

A.P. I-29

Kavitê negaḷteyam niṇisê, jōḷada pūḷi nijādhināthanā
havadoḷ arāti nāyakara paṭṭanê pāṇisê, sanda pempu bhū-
bhavanadoḷ āgaḷum beḷagê, mikka abhimānada mātu kīrtiyaṇ
vivarisê sandan, ēm kaliyo, satkaviyō Kavitāguṇārṇavam.

P.B. XIV-50

Pesargonḍa indra narēndra vandyanan oraldu ettānum ōrormê cin
tisidongaṇ pavaṇilla puṇyam enê pūṇdoḷpindam ōrantê bhā
visi, tām tanmayanāgi, tat caritamam kāvyangaḷol kūḍê baṇ
ṇisi pēḷdātana karmanirjarêyan antu intu untu enal barkumē.

A.P. I-37

*Posa naneyoḷ pasurpa alaroḷam ciramallada beḷpu, pallava
prasaradoḷ eydê kaṅgê pasarambaḍedoppuva kempu, tumbiyōḷ
misuguva karpu barcisidavōḷ bagegoḷvinêgaṃ, basantadoḷ
basadiya bāgilam teṛeda mālkeyoḷ irdivu banda māvugaḷ.*

* * *

A.P. I-66

*Bhava vārāṣi nimagnaram dayê damaṃ dānaṃ tapaṃ śīlamem
bivê meyyāgirê sanda dharmamê valam pottu ettugum muktipar
yavasānambaram, ānuṣangikaphalam bhūpēndra dēvēndra rā
jya viḷāsam, peṛataltu, nambu, khacarakṣmāpāla cūḍāmaṇi.*

A.P. II-7

*Oḍaloḷê jīvamirdu gaḍa sancisutirpudu puṇya pāpamaṃ
gaḍa, baḷika atta bēṛê peṛatondoḍaloḷ gaḍa tānê nindu oḍam
baḍipudu dharmakarma phalamam gaḍa, sattanê mattê puṭṭuvam
gaḍa, pusi kāṇa, ḍambam idu, khēcara, nīn idan entu nambidō.*

A.P. II-8

*Talevaṛidu, uṭṭudikki, suralōka sukhamgaḷan uṇbevemba bat
talegara mātu kēḷadiru bālvinam indriya vargada icceyam
salisi, basantadol kaḷikêgarcida kōgileyantê biccatam
nalivudu, kaṇḍar āṛ maṛu bhavangaḷan illi viyat carēsvarā.*

A.P. II-9

*Pusiya, parānganā ratada, madyada, māṃsada, meygoṛalda dur
vyasaniya māḍidōdê nimagê āgamamāgirê, asatyavūdamam
posayisi, jīvanilla, moṛeyilla, aṛanilla, paratreiyilla enal
kasakaḷiyantu nālagê poraḷvudu rājasabhāntarāḷadoḷ.*

* * *

A.P. II-11

*Ninag[ê] orvangalla avasthāntaram, amara janakkellam ipāngê, kāru
ṇya ninādam ninnan ādam nagisugum, eḷedyva antakangilla, dēvān
ganeyar māṛāmparē pēḷ, janana, mṛti, jarātanka śōkāgniyaṇda ā
vanum[ī] samsāradoḷ bēyadan oḷanê, śaraṇ dharmandinda ondum untē.*

* * *

A.P. III-6

*Rasa bhāvangaḷolāda celvu nuḍivanti[ê] ādalkaṛiṃ nōḍuvan
t[ê]usirvant[ê] irdudu, rēkhê kōmaḷatēyam tāḷdittu, varṇakramam
rasavat kāntiyanāntu nindud[u] êsēvī nimnōnatangal virū
jisi celviṃ gēḍēgonḍuvu, intu barēyal brahmaṃgaṃ ēn barkumē.*

A.P. IV-4

*Elē, bageden īgaḷī bareda kalpam īsānaṃ, ī
calalluḷita kētanam sura vimānam ā śrīprabham
salīla vadanāravindam idu deva vṛndam, lasad
vilāsa darahāsa ramyam idu divya kāntū janam.*

A.P. II-6

*Idandu lalitānga dēvanēnē sanda madrūpam ī
madālasa vilōla lōcanē, dal, enna mādēvi tap
padu, ī lalanē tat svayamprabhēyē nōḷpodē ī citramin
tidākeyadē balmē, pēḷ peṛargam intuṇondakkumē.*

A.P. II-7

*Idu līlāndōḷam indōḷada dani, neṛēgoḷvannegam pādālendē
ṛidaḷam tūguttumirda ennaya pariḷ[u] iduvē mādhavī maṇṭapam tōr
pudu idanḷ[u] ēkāntadoḷ nūpura rava viḷasad vāmapāda prahārak
kidāroḷ pakkāgi gōtraskhalanē negaḷē pūmāleyin mōduvēttēm*

* *

A.P. II-9

*Podēvaḍuva, appikoḷva, neneyuttirim emba, samasta vastuvam
kuḍuva, palarmeyiṃ parasi sēseyan ikkuva, buddhivēḷva, kai
eḍē nimagendu oḍambaḍipa, nallaragalkēgē kaṇṇa nīrgaḷam
miḍiva, bahu prakāra jana sankatam oppidudu ā prayāṇadoḷ.*

A.P. IV-57

Prose:

*Ā dampatigaḷ anyōnyānga sparśa sukhōnmīḷita vilōcanar antantē
nidrārasavaśagatarāgirdar; annegaṃ alli muccirda harinīla gavākṣa jāla
kavāṭa puṭamgaḷam teṛeyal maṛedu sūryakāntada dhūpa guṇḍigeyoḷ
aḷavarīyadē sejjevalanikkida kēśasamskāra kāḷāgaru dhūpam*

*Modaloḷ nīḷdu, podaḷdu parbi, padapam kaikoṇḍu, mandaisi mā
ṇadē tannandadoḷ ēḷgegundadē niruddhōcchvāsam appannegam
pudidā dampatiyam pudumgoḷisi lōkāścaryamam māḍi kon
dudu kṛṣṇāgaru dhūpadhūma nivaham kṛṣṇōragaṃ kolvavol.*

A.P. V-23

*Biḍadē pogē suttē tōḷam
saḍilisaḍ[ē] ā prāṇavallabhar prāṇaman an
doḍagaḷēdar; oḷpar oḷparōḷ
oḍa sāyal paḍedar, innavēm saipoḷavē.*

A.P. V-24

Bhögāngamāgiyūṃ kṛṣ
 ṇāgaru dhūpam musunki kondikkidud[u] ā
 bhōgigalan, intu samsṛti
 bhōgamgaḷ bhōgibhōgadiṃ viṣamamgaḷ.

A.P. V-25

Anitu sukhada, anitu bhōgada
 manujayugam nōḍê nōḍê tatkaṣaṇadol tān
 initondu deseyaneydidu
 denê jaḍar ênêndu nambuvar samsṛtiyaṃ.

* * *

A.P. V-26

Mogamaṃ tāvarê, kaṇṇan utpaḷadaḷam, dhammillamaṃ sōgê, seḷ
 ḷuguraṃ kēdagê, purban angajana bil, dantāḷiyam muttu, kai
 mugidu ārādhisī pōltuvennadê, sarōjātādi nissāra vas
 tugaḷoḷ pōlisuvantuṭēm maruḷanē rūpam vicitrāngiyā.

* * *

A.P. VI-85

Ambara bhūṣaṇa mālā
 ḍambarada beḍangan amara nartaki gaḍam ên
 embudo dharaṇāndrangam a
 ḷumbam pogaḷalkê rūpu nīlānjaneyā.

A.P. IX-17

Tāḷada layamaṃ niṛi, nī
 ḷālaka hārada podaḷda muttembivu mum
 mēḷisi kaikoṇḍuvu luḷi
 tāḷaki kaikoṇḍal embudēn accariyē.

A.P. IX-24

Puguva, poṛamaḍuva teṛan erdê
 vuguvaḷ, poṛamaḍuval enisê, posatamardam mē
 gugulḍapaḷ enisê mugulnagê
 nagêmogada beḍang[u] avalḷgadēnoppidudō.

A.P. IX-30

Kuḍupum kayyūṃ jatiyoḷ
 taḍataḍavarê vādakangê purviṃ jatiyam
 toḍaradê nadeyisi, purvadê
 kuḍupenê, nartakiyê sabhêgê vādakiyādaḷ.

A.P. IX-32

*Suragaṇikā nāṭyarasam
paramana cittamuman ê ydê ranjisidudu vi-
sphurita sphaṭikam śuddhān
tarangam ên anya rāgadiṃ ranjisadē.*

A.P. IX-40

*Ā madhurākāralatā
kōmaḷê tanagāgaḷ āyurantaṃ barê, sau
dāminivol bhōnkênê sura
kāmini rangadoḷ adṛśyê yappudum āgaḷ.*

A.P. IX-41

*Rasabhanga bhayadin indram
posatondū ā dorêya pātramam tand[u] anusan
dhisuvudum adan aṇam aṛiyal-
kê surāsura samitig[ê] ādudilla ā kṣaṇadoḷ.*

A.P. IX-42

*Ā nīlānjanê yendê ma
nōnayanōdita vimōhadindirê sabhê vid-
yānilayan aṛid[u] adam dē
hānityatê gintu nāḍê cōdyambattam.*

A.P. IX-43

*Nārīrūpada yantram
cārutaram nōḍê nōḍê karagidud[u] ī sam
sāradanityatê manadoḷ
bērūṛidudīgaḷ, intidam kaḍegaṇipeṃ.*

A.P. IX-44

*Kōṭi teṛadindaṃ êsêvī
nāṭakamaṃ tōṛi māṇḍalillaḷ bagêyoḷ
nāṭuvinaṃ amari samsṛti
nāṭakaman ênagê nereyê tōṛidaḷīgaḷ.*

A.P. IX-45

*Tanu, rūpa, vibhava, yauvana
dhana, saubhāgy[a] āyurādigalḡê eṇê kuḍumin
cina poḷepu, mugila neḷal, in
drana bil, bobbuḷikêy[a] urbu, parbida bhōgam.*

A.P. IX-46

*Kaṣṭam, duḥkhāṇaḷa pari
puṣṭam ciḥ gaticatuṣṭayam prāṇigê sam
tuṣṭateyan êydê paḍedum a
bhīṣṭa sukha pradam adondê muktisthānam.*

A.P. IX-51

*Enitoḍalam tāḷdidudil[la]
ênitotoḍalam bisuṭudilla, viṣayāṇaḷaniṃ
denitenitam maṟugidudill[a]
ananta samsāra gahanadoḷ jīvangaḷ.*

A.P. IX-53

*Tanugê poṟê tuḍugê, navalē
panamê maḷam, gūtam aḷkê, nr̥tyam bageyal
kê nagê, dal, unmatta viḷā
sanam intinitaṟolam ondaṟoḷ puruḷuntē.*

A.P. IX-55

*Enitānum ambunidhigaḷan
anēka nākangaḷalli kuḍidum pōytil
lenagê, narabhōgam embī
panipullam nakkê tṟṣṇê pēḷ pōdapudē.*

* * *

A.P. IX-57

*Bhagavat pariniṣkramaṇa
praguṇīkṛta suramṛdanga ravaṃ ondêḍêyoḷ
negaḷdudu, rājyasamarpaṇa
yugapat pratihatam amanda ravaṃ ondeḍeyoḷ.*

* * *

A.P. IX-66

*Divasaman ondu mēṇ eṟadu mūṟenê nilvudu, mūṟu tingalāy
t[u] avacaṟanintu nindan oḷanê śani nilvavol, illi pāḷigin
nêvaregam irdevu, innêmagê nittarisal neṟavilla, tāṟalā
dovu tanu, kūḷa nīra deseyilladodaḷgaḷan entu tāḷdavam.*

A.P. IX-89

*Mind[u] uṇḍu kuḍidu maguḷdum
bandirpoḍam irpaṃ, initum illadê gurugum
mêndu pasidirdu beda beda
bênd[u] inibar kaṭṭikoḷva kaṇiyēm pēḷim.*

A.P. IX-90

*Idu rājavidyeyolaḡā
vudu vidyēyo, ṣadguṇaṃgaḡolaḡāva guṇaṃ
pudid[u] odavida meygāpil
ladê arañyadol irpud[u] āva nītigal[a] olaḡō.*

A.P. IX-91

*Barê bandu, naḡeyê naḡedu ir
dirê kuḡḡirdu, eḡdodeḡdu, nindoḡê nind[u] ā
ḡarasēnisi negaḡdu banadoḡa
garasam nilê nindêv[u] initu divasam barêgam.*

A.P. IX-92

* * *

*Aḡatêḡê, tūkakkê, eḡikêgam
olaḡāduvu sakaḡavastugaḡ bhuvanajanak
kaḡêyal tūgalk[ê] eḡisal[kê]
aḡumbam ênisiduvu ninna guṇagaṇaṃ arhā.*

A.P. X-53

*Tannirdêḡyadê mēruvi
nunnati, jalanidhiya guṇpu, nabhada vibhutvam,
ninna guṇōnnati sakala ja
gannuta bhuvanāntarāḡamaṃ parbirkum.*

A.P. X-54

*Ākulanēnāgi suliden a
nākulam appēḡeyanaḡasi kāṇēm mūrūṃ
lōkadoḡaṃ ninnirkêyê
lokāgramê santam adanê māḡēnagê arhā.*

A.P. X-55

*Bhava nigalaḡa toḡaram kalê,
bhava jaladhiya taḡigê sārcu, bhava gahanad[a] upa
dravamam kiḡisu, bhavāntaka
bhavanakkuy taḡêyad[ê] ênna nīm bhavamathanā.*

A.P. X-56

*Amarēndrōnnati, khēcarēndra vibhavaṃ, bhōḡindra bhōgaṃ, mahēn
dra mahaiśvaryaṃ, ivēllaṃ adhruvaṃ, ivamaṃ bēḡpantu bēḡḡallēn, ut
tama dīkṣāvidhiyaṃ, samādhimaraṇaṃ, karmakṣayaṃ, bōdhilā
bham amōghaṃ, dorêkoḡyudakkêmagê, muktiśrī manōvallabhā.*

A.P. X-59

*Koḍēyêlēgala tintiṇiyiṭ
têḍēgala kaṭtalēyan irulêgêtt[u] ātmēsam
taḍēdoḍē, narēndra, nōḍ[u] i
naḍuvagalol cakravāka vadhu virahisuvaḷ.*

* * *

A.P. XI-63

*Pariyê pasurpu, belpaḍarê, balmuguḷol porêdōṟê, tembalar
porêvorēyam saḍilcê, naḍupongirê malligēgaḷ vasantadol
biridodê, nallaram nenedu nallara mēllêrdēgaḷ nirantaram
birivuvadento, malligēgê nallara mēllêrdê vēlēgoṇḍudō.*

A.P. XI-110

*Esalgaḷan eydê kaṇḍarisi muttinol, alli suvarṇa cūrṇamam
pasarisi kēsarakṛtiyoḷ alligê karṇikēyandamāgê kī
lisi posatappa māṇikada nuṇbaralam, madhu manmathaṅgê baṇ
ṇisi samedantê tōṟuvudu pūgaḷol ēm surahonnē cennanō.*

* * *

A.P. XI-116

*Piriyaṇṇangê eṟaguvudēm
paribhavavē, kīṟi nettiyoḷ bāḷam nir
neram ūṟi, caladin eṟagisal
irê Bharatangeṟaguva eṟakam anjamê altē.*

A.P. XIV-75

*Bharatam ṣaṭkhaṇḍa bhūvallabhanenê siriyaṁ geṇṭaroḷ kēldu rāgaṁ
berasirpī naṇpê sālgum, karedoḍē besanēn emba, jīyemba, dēvem
b[a] arasemb[a] āḷemba dainyakkêlavo tanuvan ān oḍḍuvantê*

Ādidēvam

Purudēvaṁ Dēvadēvaṁ kuḍê paḍeda nelakkê āroḷam panthamuṇṭē.

A.P. XIV-77

Prose:

*Āgaḷ ubhaya bala mantrimukhaar ivarirbar arasugaḷappoḍê carama
dēha dhārigaḷ, ivara yuddhamembudu atikrūra graha yuddhadantê
sakala prajā vināśakaramalladê peṟataltu; caturanga bala yuddhadol
alladê gella sōlam embudilla; samastajana samharaṇakāraṇam appa
raṇadol ēvandapudu endu tammoḷ samakattī*

XIV after 100

*Jayamaṃ kaikoḷvudu dṛṣṭ
 tiyuddha jaḷayuddha mallayuddhadole jana
 kṣaya karaṇadol ēṃ pāpamuṃ
 ayaśamum appanite dēva, kaḍēgaṇipudu idam.*

A.P. XIV-101

*Manadol muṃ pudidirda kōpamanitum tūḷd[u] āgaḷ ettettagey
 denidam tammanol, embudondu upaśamaṃ kaigaṇmi, nīnorbanai,
 manuvamśakkē lalāmanappa anujanai, bēḍamma, nīnum tapō
 vanamam sārividuṃ ānadārgē meṇevem matprājya sāmṛājyamaṃ.*

* * *

A.P. XIV-132

*Ninagē vṛṣabhēsvaram lō
 canagōcaran innevaregam, īgal nindam
 manukula lalāma, neṭṭanē
 manadol; kaḍu sāreyaltē munnindīgaḷ.*

* * *

A.P. XVI-56

*Bhavavārāśiyol intu jīvanivaham barduttuṃ irkum mahō
 tsavam altē guruvintu dāntidoḍē idam, bēḍa ī viṣādam, niras
 tavivēkambol idēkē mōhisidapai, nīm māṇa, śakrangē vas
 tuvivar ninnavol ūr peṇar bhuvanadol ṣaṭkhaṇḍa dhātrīśvarā.*

A.P. XVI-59

*Enē dāvadagha giri nū
 tana jaḷada jaḷangaḷindam āṅuvavōl bhōn
 kenē bharatanan āṅisidaṃ
 munivinuta gaṇādhinātha vacanāmṛtadiṃ.*

* * *

A.P. XVI-60

Uḍu vaṇi pariyaḍa munnamê
toḍagi calam negalê ripu balanganê paḍal
vaḍisi para balada nettara
kaḍaloḷagaṇa jigulê baleva teradolê baḷedam.

* * *

P. B. I-46

Āgi, tāvu ādigarbhēvsararappuḍarim taḷardu eḍeyeḍeya maramgaḷa
toḗgaḷa bāḍangaḷa pesargaḷam besagoḷuttum, mahāgrahāraṅgaḷa
mahājanangaḷ kottā ponna jannaviraṅgaḷuman avara parakeyumam
kaikoḷuttum, avargê bādhê yāgadantu kāpam niyamisuttum, kālūrgaḷa
gaṇḍara, peḍira naḍeya, uḍiya, nuḍiya, muḍiya gāmpingê mugulnagê
naguttum, alligalligê oḍeda keḗregam aḷida āyatanakkam dhanamanittu
jīrṇōddhāraṅgaḷam māḍisuttum, bīḍu dāṅangaḷoḷ ikkida baḷligāvaṇan
gaḷoḷam naneya jompamgaḷoḷam viramisuttum bandu

* * *

II after 97

Iḍidirê mañjinol tuḗugi tenkaṇa gāḷiyolāda sōnkinol
naḍuguva aśōka vallariya pallavadoḷ nava cūta pallavam
toḍardavol āgê, gharmajaladiṁ naḍupākeya pāṇipallavam
biḍidu beḍangan āḷdudu guṇārṇavanoppuva pāṇipallavam.

* * *

III-75

Caḷadaniḷāhata kṣubhita bhangura tunga taranga māḷikā
vaḷana samuccaḷan maṇigaṇāṭṭa marīcilatā pratāna sam
vaḷayita vidruma druma viḷāsa viśēṣita bāḍavānalā
viḷa jaḷamam manam bayasi nōḍidan arṇavamam Guṇārṇavan.

* * *

IV-25

Prose:

Kāmadēvanemba baḷamardukāḗrana māḍida mardinantê baḷedu,
daḷam baḷedu, mūnūḗraḗvattu jāṭiya kaḷgaḷam mundittu, madhumantra
dim madhudēvategaḷan arcisi, ponna, beḷḷiya, padmarāgada, pacceya,
gīliya, kōgīliya, konceya, anceya, kuntalīkeya māḷkeya sippugaḷoḷ tīvi,
madhu mantrangaḷim mantrisi, neladoḷ eḗedu, taleyoḷ taḷidu, kaḷḷoḷ
boṭṭanittukoṇḍu, keladargellam boṭṭittu, kiḗiyar piḗiar aḗidu poḍa
vaṭṭu, dharmagaḷ kuḍivargellam māsalaḷ kaḷḷan eḗedu, ponna beḷḷiya
sippugaḷoḷ kiḗikiḗidan eḗedu kuḍi bidira kuḍiya māḗvina miḍiya
mārudina, meṇasugaḍaleya puḍiyol aḍasida allavallaṇigeya
cikkaṇamgaḷam savi savidu.

after IV-87

*Madhu sītum kaṭu sīdu pō puḷita kaḷḷaltum karam kaytu bar
pudu, mārīci toḍarpuḷindê saradim kampilla, sorkippalā
raḍu cintāmaṇigê ēvudakka daḷamilla ī kakkarakke intuṭap
pudu kaḷḷappudu tappadendu kuḷidar kāmāngamaṃ kānteyar.*

IV-88

Prose:

*Ondedeyol nāḷvar ayvar gāḷdoltir irdalligê orvan eggam goṭṭigê
vandu, kaṇṇariyadê sōnkeyum, manamariyadê nuḍiyeyum, ātanān
ākegaḷ bāseyoḷ intendar*

after IV-95

*Bhāvakanendoḍam caduran endoḍam ār peṇar āro nīnê nin
nāva guṇaṅgaḷam pogaḷvoḍê ellavaṇim neṇredemmoḷintu sad
bhāvadê goṭṭiral bayasi bandê adīgaḷ idoḷḷitāytu mā
dēvara mundaṇātan enal alladê pēḷ peṇatēnan embudō.*

IV-96

*Korevoḍê betṭugaḷ birivuvu, uṇmuva lāḷeya lōḷeyoḷ ponaḷ
varivuvu, kemmi kummidoḍê tōḷolê jīvaviyōgam appudu en
diradê erdegappudattaḷagam ā narepam nērê andu pongaḷam
surivoḍam āro sairisuvar ātana pallilivāya nātamaṃ.*

* * *

IV-100

*Otti taṇumbi ninda ripu bhūja samājada bērgaḷam nabhak
kettadê, bandu tanna maṇvokkoḍê kāyadê, cāgada oḷpina ac
cottadê, māṇdu bāḷva puḷuvānasan emban ajāṇḍamembudon
dattiya paṇṇolirpa puḷuvalladê mānasanē murāntakā.*

V-75

*Samakattigê oregê ārumilla ariga kēḷ ninnoḷ samam dhātriyōḷ
himakṛt bhūdaradantê ninna guṇa sandōhangalaṃ kāṇalak-
kumê matorvanoḷ āgadu, entenê samastōrvīdharāśeṣa śē
ṣa mahānāga phaṇāmaṇidyutiyan ēm khadyōtadoḷ kāṇbarē.*

* * *

V-76

*Kuḍavēḷyana, kuḍuvana, kuḍê
paḍevana pemp[u] ēm negaḷtê vaḍegumo pēḷvam
kuḍavēḷgema, kuḍuvaṇṇam
kuḍugema, kuḍê koḷva kaliyan aṇiyalkakkum.*

* * *

VI-49

Muḷisindam nuḍidondū nuḍi salge āṛ āgadembar mahā
praḷayōlkōpama mad gadāhatiyin atyugrājiyoḷ munnamī
khaḷa duṣṣāsanānam poraḷci, basiḡam pōḷdikki bambalgaruḷ
gaḷin ānaltē viḷāsadam muḍiyipem pankējapatrēkṣaṇē.

VII-12

Kuḍivem Duṣṣāsanōrusthaḷaman agalē pōḷdārdu kennettaram pok-
kuḍivem pingākṣanūru dvayaman uru gadāghātadim nuccu nūḡā
goḍevem tad ratna raśmi prakāṭa makuṭamam nambu namb[u]
enna kaṇṇim

kiḍiyum keṇḍangaḷum sūsidapuvu ahitaram nōḷi pankējavaktrē.

VII-12

Muḷisam māḍiyum ēvamam paḍedum innī pandegaḷ prāṇadin
doḷar, innum talē mattam aṭṭegaḷa mēlirdappuvu endandē, dal
muḷisilla aṇṇana nanni embudanē pēḷ ēvēḷdum ī kauravar
kaḷan untu innegam urci mukkadē saḍildu ī Bhīman ēṃ māṇḡumē.

* * *

VII-14

Dēsē pasurēṛi pacceyoḷē mucci musunkida māḷkeyādudu, ā
gasam aḷi nīḷa nīḷa gaḷakanṭha tamāḷa vinīḷa nīrada
prasara vibhāsiyādudu, samīran udāra kadamba kētakī
prasara rajasvara prakāṭa pāṃsulamādudu mēgha kāladoḷ.

VII-22

Kariya mugilgaḷim gagana maṇḍalaṃ oppirē, sōgeyim vanān
taraṃ êsedoppē tōrpa moḷevulgaḷin ī dharaṇvibhāgham op
pirē posa vēṭakarāra erdegāḷ, posa kāra poḍarpu gaṇḍu adēṃ
karituvu, adēṃ kalankiduvu, adēṃ kuḷigonḍuvu, adēṃ kanalduvō.

VII-23

Bhava lālāṭa vilōcanāgni sikheyim bendaḷki mattam manō
bhavan eḷcattodē kāmakāntē baḷiyam tannicceyim mecci baṇ
ṇavuram tīvida māḷkēyāytu navilim, kundangalimda indragō
pa viḷāsangalin ālikalla paralim kāroḷ mahīmaṇḍalaṃ.

VII-24

Poḷeva amarēndragōpada, pasurta eḷavulgala, taḷta kār mugil
gaḷa, kiṛugonku konkida ponalgala, kempu, pasurpu, karpu, beḷpu
oḷakolē śakra kār mukā viḷāsaman ēn erdegōṇḍu bēṭad[a] at
taḷagaman unṭumāḍidudo kāmana kār mukadantē kār mukam.

* * *

VII-25

Malemaledu, urki, sorki, sabheyol kulapāmsulan ī śirīṣa kō
malêya vilōla nīla kabarībharamaṃ tegêvāgaḷ, alli key
alêsadadantê patti, beralaccugaḷ acciṛidantê konkugaḷ
talenavir ondi māḍalisuvantevol irduvu namma vīramam.

* *

VII-57

Puḷiyol karcida bāḷa baṇṇamanê pōlva ākāsamaṃ
ḍalamam parvida beḷmugil mugila beḷpoḷpokku taḷpoyyê baḷ
vaḷa nīḷdirda diśāḷi śāḷi vana gandhāndha dvirēphāḷi kaṇ
golisittu ormeyê bandudandu śaradam lōkakkê kaṇ barpinam.

* *

VII-71

Muḍiyam sōgeyê gettu sōgê, naḍeyam pēṇṇancê gettu ancê, mel
nuḍiyam kogilê gettu kōgilê, ghanōttunga stana dvandvadiṭ
ṭeḍeyam kōkamê gettu kōkam, aḷakānīkaṃgaḷam sorkidā
ṛaḍigēttu āṛaḍi suttutum barê banam barpantê bandūkegaḷ

VII-86

Magamagisuttumirpa mṛganābhiya nīr taḷivalli kampanāḷ
duguḷdu alaruttum irpa padadoḷ padavaṭṭu podalḍa tōra mal
ligêya tuṇumbu rāhu tavê nungida candranan oyyanoyyanê an
d[u] uguḷvavol oppiral, baladoḷ urvasi dēsīgê dēsiyāḍidaḷ.

VII-87

Būdi jeḍê lakkaṇam tapa
kāduvu eralḍoṇê śarāsanam kavacam iven
tāduvo muttum melasum
kōdantutê ninna tapada pāngentu gaḍā.

VII-92

Kaḍu tapadindê ninna paḍepāvudo, gavila, saggamaltê pō
nuḍiyavo, mūrkhā, saggada phalam sukhāmalitê? sukhakkê pēḷoḍam
baḍadavarāro, peṇḍirolagê ār peṇṇar, āmê dal, āmê bandu kāl
viḍidapevu, imbukeyvoḍê ivu melladiḷgal gaḍa, karcu būdiyam.

VII-93

Kōkiḷa kuḷa kaḷa gaḷa nina
dākuḷa ravam impanāgaḷum paḍedudu nō
ḍikêgaḷa caḷita luḷita
bhrūkuṭiyē parama sukhada kōṭiyānīgum.

* *

VII-94

*Baka kalahamsa balāka
prakara mṛdu kvaṇita ramyam, idiroḷ tōḡit
tu koḷam, pari vikasita kana
ka, kaṇja, kiṇjalka, puṇja, piṇjarita jaḷam.*

* * *

VIII-38

*Āvaḷapoḍam akkê, pō, taleyindê pōdoḍam indê mā
dēvan ārteḍegoṇḍōdam, layam indê barpodam, ennuram
tīvi taḷtivalī kucaṅgaḷan aḷkarinda amardappi, pō-
gāvupāyadoḷ ādoḍam neredalladê inniren īkeyoḷ.*

* * *

VIII-63

*Aḍaṭara cennapongara sabangala toḷtuḷiyōḷ toḍanki nil
ladê, poḡamaṭṭu tamma manadoḷ migê beccisidantê tōḡuvag
gada niḍugōḍu mēḍum amaruttum, iḡunkida keccalettam et
tida kuḍivālam andesêyê, karbasugaḷ parigoṇḍuvu ājiyoḷ.*

* * *

VIII-104

*Munnina nelanam kuḍugema
gennar, dāyigarêṃ ennar, antalt[u] intal
tennar, karuṇisi dayeyiṃ
dinnittudê sālḡum embar, embudan embar.*

IX-42

*Kari kaḷabha pracanda mṛgarāja kiśōra kaṭhōra ghōra hūm
karaṇa bhayamkarāṭaviyoḷ innevaram nelasirda sēdê, nīm
karuṇisidāgaḷalladê avargāradu, kemmagê nāḍa callavat
tara nuḍigoḷḷadir, ninagê pāṇḍavar appudan ārum apparē.*

* * *

IX-42

*Kulamaneḷ mannam uggāḍipirēm gaḷa nimma kulangaḷ āntu mār
malêvavanan aṭṭi timbuve? kulam kulamaltu; calam kulam; guṇam
kulam; abhimānam ondê kulam; aṇmu kulam; bagêvāgaḷ īgaḷī
kalahadoḷaṇṇa, nimma kulam ākulamaṃ nimaguṇṭumāḍugum.*

* * *

X-21

*Kalitanadurku, javvanada sorku, nijēsana naccu, mikka tōḷ
valada poḍarpu, karna, ninaguḷḷanitu ēn enaguṇṭê? Bhāratam
kalaham, idircuvam harigan appoḍê mokkaḷamēkê nīn paḷan
caledapeyaṇṇa, sūḷ paḍêyalappudu kāṇa mahājirangadoḷ.*

* * *

X-23

*Nenê yadiranna Bhāratadol in peṇarāruman; ondê cittadim
nenê vodê karṇanam neneya; karṇanoḷ ār dorê, karṇaneṇu, kar
ṇana kaḍunanni, karṇana aḷavu, ankada karṇana cāgam, endu kar
ṇana paḍê mātinol pudidu, Karṇarasūyanam altê Bhāratam.*

* * *

XII-217

*Nuḍidudan eydê tutta tudi eyduvinam nuḍidam calam, calam
biḍidudan eydê mum piḍidudam piḍidam, salê pūṇda pūṅkê nēr
paḍê naḍevannegam naḍedan alkadê baḷkadê, tannoḍal paḍal
vaḍuvinagam aṇmugundanê, dal, ēn abhimānadhanam suyōdhanam.*

* * *

XIII-97

*Pasadanam āvudu āva ṛtuying[ê] amardoppugum āva poḷtu adā
vesakadol ondugum vinayam āvedegê āvudu āvudu celvuvettu ran
jisugum, adarkê adam samari, niccalum ā biyam, ā vinōdam, ā
pasadanam, ā viḷasadol oḍambadê bhōgisidam Guṇārṇavam.*

XIV-38

*Pasarisi nīḷda tanna jasadol peṇanorvana kīrti taḷtu ram
isê negaḷḍātan ēn negaḷdan emba calam migê, tanna pempu, tan
nesakamê, tanna vikramamê, tanna negaḷteyê, tanna mātê tan
nesêva jagatrayakk[ê] enisi pālisidam nelanam Guṇārṇavam.*

* * *

XIV-38

*Caladol Duryōdhanam, nanniyol Inatanayam, gaṇḍinol Bhīmasēnam,
baladol Madreṣam, atyunnatiyol Amarasindhūdbhavam, cāpavidyā
baladol Kumbhōdbhvam, sāhasada mahimêyol Phalguṇam,
dharmadol nir
malacittam Dharmaputram migil ivargaḷin ī Bhāratam lōkapūjyam.*

* * *

XIV-64

Suyodhana to Aswatthama

*Ninnindam tribhuvana rā
jyōnnati bandenagê sārgum appoḍam ollen;
nīn nuḍidu bardukidai, peṇar
ennidirol nuḍidu karṇanam bardukuvarē.*

* * *

XIII-27

*Nuđi ninagam dinēśatanayangam adennaya pakkadōdođam
miđukadê kēlven alli samanirvarum; n̄tan atītanāda pim
bađinol adēntu pēl paliyê kēlveno, kēldodê ciḥ peṛam peṛam
nuđidodê kēldan endēnagê nōyanê saggadolirdinātmajam.*

* * *

XIII-28

Picture of the women

*Iṛiva piṇil, teraldoreva kaṇbani, māṇadê mōdê, śōkadac
ciṛidavolirda bāsulinol aḷdu, kanaldu, baḷaldu, jōlda mey,
maṛuguva bēgadoḷmogam aṇam desegāṇada nōṭam ārumam
maṛugisê, bandudandu karuṇam barê vairi nṛpāṅganā janam.*

* * *

XIV-5

*Piḍiyêṃ cakraman emba cakriyan iḷācakram bhayamgoḷvinam
piḍiyippem karacakramam, nara ratham tūḷdu ā Kurukṣētradim
paḍuvenṅāvudu pōgê pōgaḍisuvem, niccam dharādhīśaram
paḍalittantirê mālpen, ovadê payinchāsirvaram yuddhadol.*

* * *

x-25

*Ām mātariyadê muḷidum
nimmaḍiyam nōyê nuḍiden uṛadê ēḷisalēn
emmalavê, maṛevud[u] ā mana
dummacaram ajja, nimman erēyalê bandem.*

XII-54

*Dhuradol n̄nmaḍiyum gela
lariyavu māpāṇḍusutaran emmandigar ac
cariyaltê gelvarembudu
Hariganol iṛidu entum enna calamanê meṛeven.*

* * *

XII-55

*Piḍi key tīvida kūrganê,
maḍakālvaram aleva kaccê, niḍiyasiyore, kar
piḍida paṇêgaṭṭu, keypodê
beḍangan olaḷolê, dhanurdharar peṇedeccar.*

x-71

*Ittal cradum paḍeya nāyakar aḷiyê nonda tammāḷgaḷa koṇḍāṭada ānê
gaḷa, naccina kudurêgaḷa, puṅgaḷan uḍiyalum, ôvalum, mardubejjaru
man aṭṭuttum, ikkida sannaṅgaḷam geldu kaṅakêñê pōgurci tamma
meyyol uḍida aṅbugalumam elvam naṭṭuḍida bāḷa kakkadeya uḍigaḷu
man ayaskāntamam tōṅi tegeyisuttum, vajramuṣṭiya poyloḷam
bāḷa kōḷoḷam uccaḷisida kapūlada ôḍugalum gangêgê aṭṭuttum—*

Prose after XI-2

*Unnata mastaka sthaḷadoḷ aṅbugaḷ aḷdu uḍidirdodê attamit
tannerê tandu, bal dadigar ilḷuḷinoḷ kilê nondênennadê, aḷa
ennadê, aṅam mogam muriyadê, aḷkadê, bēñêgaḷoḷ mogamgaḷam
binnagê māḍadirdar, aḷavaccariyāgê kelar mahārathar.*

* * *

XI-3

*Aḍi toḍê, porkuḷum, tegalê, kai, kaṅakāl, koral embivum, beral
naḍu vura, ben, basiṅ, toḷaku, karcarê, muyvu, musumbu, mūgu, per
doḍê, kaṭi, mummaḍam, paraḍu, sandi, nosal, paṅê, kaṅ,*

kadamp[u] ivem

beḍeyanê naṭṭuvu, urciduvu, nērduvu, sīḷuvu, Pārthanāṅbugaḷ.

* * *

XI-136

*Mahā praḷaya bhairava kṣubhita puṣkaḷāvartamā
mahōgra ripu bhūbhujā śramaṇa bhairavāḍambaram
guhā gahana gahvarodara viśīrṇam ādandu adēm
muhūḷ prakāṭam ādud[u] ā Ravitanūbhava jyāraṅam.*

* * *

XII-136

*Bidi vasadindê puṭṭuvudu, puṭṭisuvam bidi, puṭṭidandivam
gidu biyam, oḷpivangidu, vinōdamivamgidu, sāva pāngivam
gidu, paḍemātivamgidu, parākramam embudanella māḷkeyim
bidi samakāṭṭi koṭṭodê eḍeyol kiḍisal, kuḍisal, samartharār?*

* * *

XII-182

Embudum kurupitāmahan aharpati sutanan intendam:

*Nuḍivudam patibhaktiya pempim nīm nuḍidai peratandadim
nuḍideyaltê, madāyam amōgham sūḷvaḍeyalkenagakkumin
neḍeyoḷendem adendudadēn tappādudê? nammovajar jasam
baḍeda Bhārgavar appudaṅindam nantārum Anga mahīpatī.*

XII-56

*Adalladeyum nīn emagê Kuntiya Gāndhāriya makkaḷa lekkadê
mommanai*

•••

*Antemban ārgê piṛidum
bhrāntu dal, ēm Drōṇan emban ēn pārvanê pēḷ
ēntēnagê keḷeyanē nūn
k[u] antappanan aṛiyen endu sabheyol nuḍidam.*

II-47

*Nuḍi tadavappudondu, mogadoḷ muṟukam dorêkoḷvudondu, nāṇ
geḍēguḍadirpudondu, nuḍigaḷ moṟeyam maṟeyippudondu, kaḷ
kuḍidavarandam intu, siri sārtarê sārvudu, adarkê sandeyam
baḍadê jalakkan[ê] īgalaṟidem siri kaḷ oḍavuttitembudam.*

*Khaḷa noḷavingê kuppevaram embavol āmbaram unṭê ninnadon
daḷavu, oḍanōdidondu beragingê kolalkênagāgad[u] ī sabhā
vaḷayadoḷ ennan ēḷisida ninnan anākuḷam enna caṭṭarim
taḷavelagāgê kaṭṭisadê māṇdodê kemmanê mīsê vottenē.*

II-50

Piriyakkara (½)—

*Totta tuḍugêgaḷ kaustubha ratnaman ōrondê masuḷiṣê pālgaḍaloḷ
putti dāneya nānêgaḷ gēlēvarê kuduregaḷ kudureyam kīlmāḍê*

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P.B. V-26

Tripadi— c

*Surayiyol giḷi maguḷ varagiḷi birayigê
morêvantê moreva maṟidumbi: taḷirol
parabhṛtam maguḷva parabhṛtam.*

A.P. VI-100

Ragales—

(1) *Adara poravoḷala viśāla: kanaka kṛtaka girigaḷim
phaḷaparakīrṇa tarugaḷim
nanêya konêya taḷira muguḷa vana latā nikuñjadim
prasūna rajada puñjadim*

- (2) *Alli sogayisuva kṛtaka girigaḷim
kalpa tarugalanê pōlva maragaḷim.*
- (3) *Eyduvudum tat puradupavanangaḷ | aviraḷa maḷayānila
kampitangaḷ
aviraḷa kusumāvali kampuvīrê | sogayipa kirumidi gaḷoḷoppi tōrê*
- (4) *Śrīgê kulasadanamēnê toḷapa maṇi bhavanadoḷ
rāgarasamodavê sara siruha sama vadanadoḷ*
- (5) *Sphuritēndra nīla maṇikhacita bhūmi
celuvingadu nettanê janma bhūmi.*

* * *

*Bagê posatappudāgi mṛdu bandhadol onduvudu; ondi dēsiyol
duguvudu, pokka mārgadolê talvudu, taltoḷê kāvyabandhamop
pugum, eḷamāvu kendaḷira pūvina biṇpoṛeyim baḷaldu tum
bigalinê tumbi kōgilēyê baggisê, suggiyol oppuvantevōl.*

P.B. I-8

*Parama jinēndra vāṇiyê sarasvati, bēṛadu peṇṇa rūpamam
dhariyisi nindudaltu; aduvê bhāvisi oḷuva kēḷva pūjip[a]
ādarisuva bhavya kōṭigê nirantara saukhyaman īvudu, ānadar
kêrêdapen ā sarasvatiyê mālḷkemaḡilliyê vāḡviḷāsamaṃ.*

A.P. I-9

*Kavitēyol āsegeyva phalam ēvudo, pūjê, negaḷtê, lābham em
bivê valam, Indra pūjê, bhuvanastutamappa negaḷtê, mukti sam
bhavisuva lābham, embivê Jinēndra guṇastutiyindê tāmê sā
ravê? peṛar īvudēm, peṛara māḍuvudēm, peṛarindam appudēm.*

A.P. I-36

*Laḷita vicitra patra phala puṣpayutāṭavi sorkidāneyam
beḷevudu, dēva matrīkam enippa polam nava gandhaśāḷiyam
beḷevudu, ramya nandana vanāḷi viyōgijanakkê bēṭamam
baḷevudu, nāḍa kāḍa beḷasu ī beḷasu ā viṣayāntarāḷadol.*

P.B. I-54

*Miḍidodê tani garvu rasam
biḍuvuvu, biridondu muguḷa kampinolê mogam
giḍuvuvu tumbigal, aḷkamê
vaḍuvuvu kuḍida ondu paṇṇa rasadolê giḷigal.*

P.B. I-55

*Āvalarum paṇṇum bī
tōvavu gaḍa, bīyavalli mailigêgalum im
māvugaḷum endoḍinnu peṇa
tāvudu samsāra sāra sarvasva phalam.*

P.B. I-56

*Sogayisi banda māmaranê, taḷtelêvaḷiyê, pūta jāti sam
pagêyê, kukilva kōgilêyê, pāḍuva tumbiyê, nallarolmogam
nagê mogadol palancalêyê kūḍuva nallarê, nōḷpoḍāva beḷ
ṭugaḷoḷam, āva nandana vanangaḷoḷam Banavāsi dēśadol.*

P.B. IV-28

*Cāgada, bhōgada, akkarada, gēyada, goṭṭiya, alampin[a] impugaḷg[ê]
āgaramāda mānasarê mānasar, antavarāgi puṭṭalē
nāgiyumēno tīrdapudê, tīradoḍam maṇidumbiyāgi, mēṇ
kōgilêyāgi puṭṭuvudu nandanadol Banavāsi dēśadol.*

P.B. IV-29

*Tenkaṇagāḷi sōnkidoḍam, oḷnuḍigēldoḍam, impanālda gē
yam kivivokkoḍam, birida malligêgaṇḍoḍam, āda kend[u] alam
pam geḍêgonḍoḍam, madhu mahōtsava vādoḍam, ēnan emben, ār
ankusamittōḍam nēnēvudu enna manam Banavāsi dēśamam.*

P.B. IV-30

*Amardam mukkuḷipantuṭappa susila ondimpum, taguḷda ondu gē
yamum, āda akkara goṭṭiyum, cadurar[a] oḷvātum, kuḷir kōḷpa jom
pamum ēvēḷpudanuḷḷa meysukamum, intēnnam karam nōḍi nā
ḍê manamgonḍirê tenkanāda maṇeyalk[ê] innēm manam barkumē.*

P.B. IV-31

*Idarol śvētātapatra sthagita daśadiśā maṇḍalam rājacakram
pudidaḷkāḍittu, aḍangittu idarolê Kururājānvayam, matprātāpak
kidarindam, nōḍu, agurvurvidudu, iduvê Mahābhāratakkādiyāytu ab
ja dalākṣi pēḷa sāmānyamê, bagêyê, bhavat kēśapāśa prapañcam.*

P.B. XII-156

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