

## CHAPTER-III

### A GENERAL OUTLINE OF VEṆĪSAMĦĀRA

This chapter deals with the drama *VeṇīsamĦāra* which contains six acts. The drama is essentially a heroic play. It belongs to the class of “*Nāṭakas*”. The plot is mainly taken from *Mahābhārata* and covers the period which elapses between the return of the *Pāndavas* to *Indraprastha* after their 13 years’ exile, and *Yudhiṣṭhira*’s accession to the throne after the Great War. Here all the six acts are discussed below.

In the first (Act-I) of the drama *VeṇīsamĦāra*, we find that the play starts with the speech of *Sūtradhāra*. Here *Sūtradhāra* remembers Lord *Śri Kṛṣṇa* as well as Lord *Śri Hari* and wishes that the drama would obtain a grand success by captivating the mind of the audience. In the front of the audience, he declares that he remember the sinless *Kṛṣṇadvaiṇyaṇa* (*Vedavyāsa*).

Then behind the scenes somebody says that the Sir should make haste. These persons at the behest of the reverd *Vindra* announces to all the actors that all the musical instrument should be played in full swing. Because Lord *Śri Kṛṣṇa* accompanied by *Vyāsadeva*, *Nārada*, *Tumbaru*, *Paraśurāma* and others are entering in to the stage. On hearing the announcement the *Sūtradhāra* becomes glad. Behind the scene, it is again requested to play all the music.

Then enters *Parī* (Assistant) and assures the stage Manager to be cool-minded. After that both of them returns back from the stage.

After that enters angry *Bhīmasena* followed by *Sahadeva* in the stage and out of rage curses *Sūtradhāra* for expressing such wish that *Kṛṣṇa* has undertaken to act as a mediator between the *Kauravas* and *Pāndavas*. *Bhīma* became angry and expresses his strong disapproval of the negotiation set on foot by *Kṛṣṇa* and of the policy meant to be pursued by his elder brother, *Yudhiṣṭhira* , *Sahadeva* tries to console *Bhīma* and to follow the path of his

elder brother but on the contrary, the latter blames the former and his other brothers to decide the insult both physical and mental created by the *Kauravas*. He opines that he would not be satisfied if *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* would success in bringing peace for them. On the other hand he announces that he would disobey the order of his elder brother once his life and would take revenge against *Kauravas* for misbehaving with *Draupadī*. He was so angry that he even forgot the path to enter into the arsenal and out of mistake he enters into the mansion of *Draupadī*. *Sahadeva* points out the mistake and both of them enter the mansion and waits till the arrival of *Draupadī*. In the meantime enters *Draupadī* along with a Maid - servant. The maid servant consoles *Draupadī* saying that *Bhīma* would remove her sorrowness. Both of them move on and *Draupadī* orders the maid to convey the news of her arrival. Without hearing this, *Bhīma* recites in wrath ‘that magnanimous’ etc. Both *Draupadī* and the maid try to understand the situation and do thus. Again with full of rage *Bhīmasena* addresses *Sahadeva* regarding peace with five villages. He also adds that whether he would not destroy the *Kauravas* in war through rage; whether he will not drink blood from the chest of *Duśāsana* and whether he would not proud with his make the thighs of *Duryadhana*, *Bhīma* wishes that the king would agree on any of the conditions cited by him. *Draupadī* becomes glad on hearing this but *Sahadeva* tries again and again to console *Bhīma* which becomes almost fruitless. Thereafter *Bhīma* enquires of the cause of grief of *Draupadī*, his wife. In her reply the maid tells him that a fresh affront was offered to her by *Duryodhana’s* wife with a sarcastic comment on her dishevelled hair and the proposed of the *Pāṇdavas* to be content with the grant of five villages. *Bhīma* consoles his wife and vows to kill *Duryadhana* and to tie up her hair with his hand wet with his blood. Then a messenger arrives and fells the party that *Kṛṣṇa’s* embassy has failed and that he could effect his return only by using his divine power. The war dream then beaten and all chiefs asked to prepare for battle on heaving the summons, *Bhīma* and *Sahadeva* take leave of *Draupadī* and depart to take part in the battle.

The second act starts with the entrance with the chamberlain who is ordered by Duryodhana says that *Vinayandhara* (Chamberkin of *Kauravas*) should go before long and search for Queen *Bhānumatī* and find out if she has come back or not after touching the feet of the mother. For after seeing her, he has to go to the battle-field and congratulate *Rādheya* (*i.e. Karṇa*) of Jayadratha and other commanders of their army who have killed *Abhimanyu*, so he has to go quickly. He becomes surprise regarding the high mindedness of the king as because he is old but he has his dignity in the haven. He thinks that there is no reason to neglect of his old age on the other hand, he consider it as the official Customary.

Though he has his wide eyes, he never saw to his satisfaction enough; though hearing, he heard not; though strong enough, he resorted to official stuff since it was so prescribed; always giving his thought to stumbling everywhere, he never walked erect.

The chamberlain moves observing in the sky, enquires the condition of *Bhānumatī*, The queen. And he comes to learn that *Bhānumatī* has performed the salutation to the feet of the elder *i.e. Gāndharī* with a desive to success of his husband. Hence, he requests the good lady to do her own duty and wants to tell the king that *Bhānumatī* is staying there. Here it is also wished that the gods will do good for them. Then ends the prelude.

Then enters Queen *Bhānumatī* seated on a seat and also as friend and a maid. The friend wants to know from *Bhānumatī* that being a beloved wife of *Duryodhana*, why she repenting regarding the dream seem by her in the sleep and the maid also supports the former. But Queen *Bhānumatī* cannot control herself and decides to perform religious activities to get rid of the evil effects of the dream.

Then enters Duryodhana along with chamberlain and says that if has been well said by somebody. An injury to the enemies, great or small, inflicted covertly or directly, by oneself or by another Yields great pleasure. He also

become too much happy for the slaying of *Abhimanyu*. The chamberlain does not consider it a matter of Praise. But the king disagree with him and does not hesitate to call bad names such as ‘Idiot’. He also adds, the sons of *Pāndu* got appreciation by killing the old-age *Bhīṣma* in front of *Sikhandi*; which would happen in case of them.

In embarrassment, chamberlain praises Duryodhana for his success in all spheres. Duryodhana supports him and says that the *Pāndus* will kill servants, friends, sons, younger along with him (Duryodhana). There after he himself repents for such speech and blames himself for this opposite speech spoken by him. Due to the absence of *Bhānumatī* his mind becomes upset and he does not understand what he is going to say and request the chamberlain to direct him to the place where she is. After that king *Duryodhana* with the aid of chamberlain search to find out *Bhānumatī*; who is busy in discussion with *Suvadana* and *Taralikā*. The king out of curiosity begin to hear the discussion. *Duryodhana* does not find the cause of grief of *Bhānumatī*; he thinks that he could not contact with *Bhānumatī* which may be the cause of her grif. *Bhānumatī* discusses with the maid that her mind became distracted on seeing the *Nakula* (Mongoose) and she, at once left the place. Duryodhana doubts his wife considering the fact that *Bhānumatī* at last fell in love with *Nakula*, the son of Madri, Out of range he considers her as most sinful as well as Characterless woman.

*Bhānumatī* describes that the *Nakula* followed her when she left the place. After a few moment, Duryodhana understands that the *Nakula*, here is a mongoose and not the son of *Madrī*. *Bhānumatī* wishes to worship Lord Sun to get rid of the evil effects of such bad dream. The king join the discussion *Bhānumatī* wants to take permission to do worship in the hope of success and safety of the *Kauravas* on hearing this, the proudly king addresses the queen as a timid lady and says that being the wife of *Duryodhana* the lord of lions, cosily reposed in the shade of the wood of the arms of his hundred brothers; need not to fear. *Bhānumatī* politely says that as long as he is near to her, there

is indeed no source of anxiety to her. But she becomes delighted in the fulfilling the desire of her noble lord.

Then everybody listen a hue and cry behind the scenes. *Bhānumatī* out of fear embraces the king and request to protect her. The king tells *Bhānumatī* not worry about; as it is only the wind, terrible in its working, that has scattered helter skelter in all quarter's branches of trees that has in the mid region a whirling column of dust bristling with blades of grass, that is attended on the roads by a hissing noise and is charged with sand particles that is smoky on account of robbing of the branches of trees against one another, and that has a deep and rumbling sound like the thundering of a very fresh cloud, that is blowing in all directions. So, there is nothing to fear about it. The female friend requests the king to enter into the place on the wooden hill as the terrible wind was creating great troubles for them. But the king out of joy declares that it is a beneficial situation for *Suyodhana* created by the whirl-wind. At last the king follows the suggestions of female friend and began to proceed towards the palace of wooden hill along with all. The two friends request the king to sit on, as *Bhānumatī* in not standing up due to her pain in the pair of thighs. Looking at the queen, the king opines that not a little harms is done to her by the whirl-wind, it has rather make the queen more beautiful than before. All of them sit on the hard slab of stone.

After that enters Chamberlain in hurry, throwing off the curtain and tells the king that something is broken. Both the king and the queen enquire of it and come to learn that the flag of the chariot is broken and fall on by the strong wind. The king repents for breaking of his flag of his chariot, when *Bhānumatī* suggests the king that let this counteracted by the chant of *Vedas* recited by the Brahmins propitiated and which is performed accordingly, though the king was not so interested in performing that.

Then enters embarrassed mother of *Jayadratha* and also *Duhsalā* and both fall on *Duryodhanas* feet. And with anxiety mother expresses that *Arjuna* (the holder of *Gandiva*) enraged by the slaughter of his son has taken up a vow

to kill him before the sun sets. Hearing this king replies smiling that it is the cause of grief of both mother and *Duhsalā*. He advises both the women not to worry for *Arjuna* who can do nothing for him. The women again repeats her weakness that *Arjuna* along with others would kill the *Kauravas* in the battle. But the king does not give much weight on the speech of mother; on the contrary he criticise the matter. Mother says that *Arjuna* has avowed self-immolation if his mighty vow is left unfulfilled. He accepts the matter for pleasure and opines that *Yudhiṣṭhira* together with his yonger brothers is now uprooted. Moreover, he assures mother, what power has *Danañjaya* or anyone else to utter even name of her son, whose greatness is enhanced by a circle of a hundred *Kuruvs*, and whose unrestricted valour is doubled by the prowess of such great chariot fighters as *Kṛpa*, *Karṇa*, *Drona*, *Aśvatthāmā* and the son of *Dharma* i.e. *Yudhiṣṭhira* and the twins (i.e. *Nakula* and *Sahadeva*) there can be no talk at all ( as being possible rivals of *Jayadratha*). Out of *Vṛkodara* and *Kiritabhṛt* (i.e. *Bhīma* and *Arjuna*) which one is able per force to attack the king of the *Sindhus* whose long drawn bow is flashing in the rim?

*Bhānumatī* tells the king, though it is so, yet he is, indeed, a source of fear since the responsibility of the vow taken by *Arjuna* is heavy. Mother agrees with *Bhānumatī* on this point. But the king does not bother regarding the matter. He, on the contrary says that *Bhānumatī* knows well regarding the powers of *Pāndavas*. He says that the vow of high spirited *Pāndavas* for the slaughter of *Jayadratha* should be understood as being on a par with their vow for the drinking of the blood from *Duhsāsana*'s heart and that for the breaking of the thigh of *Duryadhana* with a mace.

Thereafter, the king announces to get ready his victorious car so that by merely protecting *Jayadratha*, he will teach that haughty *Pāndava* a death bought about in disgrace due to the frustration of his vow, a death unconcentrated by weapons. Then enters Chamberlain with the gorgeous chariots and offers it to the king. Thus ends the second Act.

The third Act starts with the entrance of *Rākṣasī* in an odious dressed, prays to last the battle for a hundred years. She began to dance saying that if *Arjuna* takes up the engagement in the battle everyday as on the day in which the king of *Sindhu* was slain, her home will have its store-rooms stocked up with flesh and blood in plenty. Then enters *Rākṣasa*, *Rdhirapriya* and becomes very happy after having found a plenty of flesh and blood. Regarding their Queen *Hidimbā*, whose heart is sorrowing at the loss of her son *Ghatotkaca*. In a query by Demoness (*Rākṣasī*), Demon (*Rākṣasa*) gives the news of slaying of *Dronācārya* by *Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna* with a sword. The Demoness invites the Demon to drink the blood of *Droṇa*, *Rākṣasa* out of fear, refuses to drink the blood of *Brāhmaṇa*, as it may cause of burn in his throat.

Therefore, a bustle behind the scenes is heard. Both of them go away from the stage.

Then enters *Aśvatthāmā* with a drawn sword, hearing the bustle. He very proudly explains the valour of his father, *Droṇa*. He hopes, certainly his father, the devourer of enemies, is commenced that activity which is worthy of the espousal of the cause of *Duryodhana*, which is befitting his wielding of arms, which is commensurable with the Prowess, mighty owing to all the missiles being obtained from *Rāma* (*i.e. Parśurāma*) and which is appropriate to the wrath of the over-lord of all the bow-wielders in the world. Looking back, announces to bring his chariot, at the same time feels no necessity of chariot rather he wants to joint the battle with his strong and shiny sword. His left eye throbs, which he imagines a obstacle in going to the battle, in spite of which he does not stop him to attend the battle. He hears the bustle of people and sees that the great warriors like *Karṇa*, *Kṛpa*, *etc.* are flying away from the battle. But he does not loss his heart as *Aśvatthāmān* is over confident regarding his father's valour. And comes to learn the bad news of death of his father from the charioteer of his father. He becomes fainted. When regains sense, he laments for his beloved father and knows the reason of his father's death is *Yudhiṣṭhira*. He also cries for his deceased father. The charioteer and others try to console

him. He blames his maternal uncle *Kṛpa* and wants to follow the path of his father i.e. to die. *Aśvatthāmān* again and again remembers his loving father, *Droṇa* and blames all other warriors who were present in the battle. He criticises the truthful *Yudhishthira* the head of the *Pāṇdavas* for the death of his father, because of the pronunciation of the word “*Gaja*” in a very low voice by *Yudhishthira*. *Aśvatthāmān* decides to take charge of the Head of the Army.

At the same time enter both *Karṇa* and Duryodhana. The later repents for *Droṇa* and considers that it were not appropriate on the part of *Droṇa* to leave his arms on the battle just on hearing the death news of *Aśvatthāmā* from *Yudhishthira*. At last Duryodhana opined that due to *Yudhishthira*, his father choosed the path of death. On hearing this *Aśvatthāmā* could not but burst out with tears.

After that the quarrel starts between *Karṇa* and *Aśvatthāmā* as who amongst two would be the Head of the Army or *Senāpati*. *Aśvatthāmā* out of proud and grief insults *Karṇa* in different ways in different times during the time of discussion in front of Duryodhana and *Kṛpa*. Even, once he out of rage insulted *Karṇa* sayin that he is nothing but the son of a charioteer. *Karṇa* becomes too much angry with the words uttered by *Aśvatthāmā* and he also lags no far behind to say that a charioteer or the son of a charioteer, who-so-ever he may be. Birth in a family is dependent on destiny; but dependent on him is valour.

Prody *Aśvatthāmā* addresses *Karṇa* as low, idiot etc. He makes up his mind to step his left foot on the head of *Karṇa*. Both *Kṛpa* and Duryodhana prevents him to do so. Under this circumstances, *Karṇa* also cannot control himself and addresse *Aśvatthāmān* as wretched *Brāhmaṇa*, self-boaster etc. He adds that by caste, *Aśvatthāmā* is not to be killed. But this leg raised by him he would see fallen on the ground eat off by this sword of him (*Karṇa*). And *Aśvatthāmā* wrathfully throws away his caste by cutting off his sacred thread. Then both draw out their swords and prepare to strike one another. Again, *Kṛpa* and Duryodhana prevent them. But both *Karṇa* and *Aśvatthāmā* do not stop to



excite one another by their speech. Both, again wants to strike each other but they were prevented by *Kṛpa* and *Duryodhana*.

Next to above, behind the curtain it is heard by all that someone announces saying that the human beast by whom the daughter of the king of *Pāñcālas* was dragged by the hair, by whom her cloth too was removed in the presence of kings and elders and from whose chest he has taken the vow to drink the wine of blood he has fallen into the cage of his arms. The *Kauravas* are invited to save him.

On hearing this *Aśvatthāmā* suggest *Karṇa*, commander-in-chief, *Parsurama's* pupil to protect *Duśāsana* from *Bhīma*. *Karṇa* assures the king that he would be able to save *Duśāsana* and exits. *Duryodhana* also exits saying that nothing would be able to do harm of *Duśāsana*.

The Fourth Act begins with the entrance of *Duryodhana* laid unconscious by injuries received in battle on a car driver by his charioteer. Behind the scenes somebody announces that the *Kaurava* warriors running away from the war, with their weapons dropping through fright at the sight of *Vrkodara* i.e. *Bhīma* whose dress is hideous due to its being bathed with the blood left after drinking, of *Duśāsana* killed by him. The charioteer observes that *Kṛpachārya* approaching towards *Karṇa* and *Arjuna* who were engaged in battle. The charioteer hopes that their army would get help in battle.

Behind the curtain, *Bhīma* announces that he would kill *Duśāsana* and drink his blood from his board chest. He also assures *Pāndavas* not to be afraid of. announces not to be afraid of. But at the same time he declares that in the front of king *Duryodhana*, *Karṇa* as well as *Salya* who (*Duśāsana*) once dragged the hair and the garment of the wife of *Pāndavas*, today has *Bhīma* drunk the warm blood of *Duśāsana* from the chest, torn asunder with sharp nail. On hearing the speech of *Bhīma* the charioteer becomes afraid of him and replaces the chariot in another place. He takes away the king under an banian tree. And opines that the promise of *Bhīma* is going to be completed.

*Duryodhana* slowly regains consciousness, says as long as he is alive it is almost impossible for the *Bhīma*, the son of *Pāndava* to fulfill his promise. He orders his charioteer to take him where *Duśāsana* exists. The charioteer prevents *Duryodhana* not to proceed further and adds that *Bhīma* is perhaps going to fulfill his promise. On hearing this *Duryodhana* fell down of on the ground and began to mourn for *Duśāsana*. He becomes fainted again. After regaining consciousness, he lament for his deceased brother, *Duśāsana*. He feels no necessity to win in the battle, as because he has lost his kith and kins in the battle.

Then enters wounded *Sundaraka* searching the king. He searches again and again and at last finds the Lord of *Kauravs* seated on the ground. The armies on the both the sides were blinded by the darkness that was being spread out by the mass of herbs of various elephants thrown about (there) and by the mass of dust arising from the infantry, cavalry and elephants of both the armies clashing against one another. Not indeed, the surface of the sky could be seen. *Sundaraka* also explains that there ensued a rainy-day in the form of war between the two, having showers of thousands of volleys of shooting arrows, with the clouds in the form of bows rumbling deeply, flashing with flashes of lighting in the form the spark of fire arising from of the armours struck with various weapons discharged on all sides. *Arjuna* in the mean while apprehending danger to his elder brother, drove his eminent chariot in a hurry to that place, with the big moneky seated at the top of its flag shouting high and low like falls of thunderbolts, conspicuous by the four staff-like arms-marked by the couch, discus, sword and mace of *Vāsudeva* engaged in driving the horses, and filling the cavities of the ten distant extremities with the loud echos of the two couches blown, viz, *Pañcajañya* and *Devadatta*. Then, Prince *Vrshsena* on seeing his father attacked by *Bhīmasena* and *Arjuna*, in a hurry came to that spot. Thus *Duryodhana* again and again enquires of different matters related to the battle to *Sundaraka*. The sometimes becomes happy and sometimes becomes sad on hearing the speech from the mouth of *Sandaraka*. *Sandaraka* describes that *Vrsasena* then attacks *Arjuna* by his missiles. *Arjuna*

criticizes the prince, *Vrsasena* for his child like behaviour. Thereafter the fight began between *Vrsasena* and *Arjuna* and both the *Pāndavas* and the *Kauravas* began to enjoy the fight. *Arjuna* began to throw his powerful missiles towards *Vrsasena*. Even *Bhīma* and *Karṇa* began to witness the fight of the above two. The helpless boy *Abhīmanyu* was killed by the *Kauravas*. *Arjuna* out of rage declares that he would kill the boy, *Vrsasena* in front of them and take his arm in his hand. Then *Arjuna* began to throw missiles aiming at the two chariots of *Angarāja* and *Vrsasena* respectively. Nothing was visible due to the throwing of missiles from the both sides. Consequently *Vrsasena* was killed in the battle. *Duryodhana* laments for the prince. The charioteer tries to console the king. On seeing the death of the son, eyes full of tears *Angaraja* started to fight with *Arjuna* whose chariot was surrounded by *Bhīma*, *Nakula*, *Sahadeva* and *Pāñcālarāja* and others. *Duryodhana* in this way, hearing the distress of *Karṇa* wants to join the battle. The charioteer makes ready by the chariot by the order of *Duryodhana*. There after, *Duryodhana* hears the news of the arrival of his Parents. The charioteer requests the king to meet his parents who were seated in the chariot of *Sañjaya*. The shameless king feels necessity to meet his parents.

The fifth Act of the drama starts with the entrance of *Gāndharī*, *Sañjaya* and *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* enquires of his son, *Duryodhana*. In his reply *Sañjaya* says that *Duryodhana* is seated under the shadow of a banyan tree. Both *Gāndarī* and *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* go there and embraces their son, *Duryodhana*. *Duryodhana* out of shame and sorrow does not want to speak to his parents as he has lost all his brothers along with kith and kins. *Gāndarī* consoles the king (son) wishing his long life. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* says *Duryodhana* that if he does not speak to them, let *Duhśāsana* or some one else speak. *Duryodhana* considers himself an ill born son of the stainless *Bharata* family. But *Gāndarī* enough of lamentation expresses that *Duryodhana* is the only guide the blind couple. What is the good of kingdom or victory to her? *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* also suggests *Duryodhana* to console them. They wants *Duryodhana* to abstain from war with his cousins like *Arjuna*, *Bhīma*, etc. and so on. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* wants that

Duryodhana should at least make peace with *Yudiṣṭhira* on terms desirable to him. Thus all of the three tries to console Duryodhana in different ways. But Duryodhana does not agree with them on their points. He says to his father that when he has all his hundred brothers, inact, he discarded the peace move on the part of *Vāsudeva*. Now how possibly can Duryodhana simply out of affection for his mere body make with the *pāndavas* peace which is shameful to the noble man. Thus, a crucial discussion continues amongst the three and a situation arises when all of them began to weep. *Saṅjaya*, shedding his tears requests both father and mother to compose themselves.

Thereafter a great din is heard behind the curtain. *Gāndarī* becomes frightened on hearing the great blast of trumpets mingled with lamentations. Duryodhana understands that fate, indeed, is not in favour of them. He tries to console his father. He opines to fight with *Pandavas* in an open way. But *Gāndarī* says that he is alone. In his reply he adds that if fate does not go against to him, he alone, will make the earth void of *Pāndavas*. All of a sudden enters the depressed charioteer and says that they are undone. All of them including Duryodhana comes to learn that *Karṇa* is no more in this world. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* becomes upset on hearing the bad news of death of *Karṇa* as he was the only strength of *Duryodhana*, Duryodhana becomes fainted and after a while regains consciousness, feel himself ashamed of it. Both *Gāndarī* and *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* console him. Having embraced Duryodhana, *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* began to cry and say that his heart also melts at the thought of the ferocious *Bhīma*. Duryodhana, on the other hand says that let his arrows immediately fall on him who sinful as he is, has killed *Karṇa*. He orders the charioteer to get ready his chariot without any haste. He makes himself self-styled head of the army in spite of *Aśvatthamān* or. Duryodhana orders *Saṅjaya* to help his parents to get into the chariot and start for their camp.

After a while enters both *Bhīma* and *Arjuna* with a chariot. *Bhīma* announces where is that *Duryodhana*, the perpetrator of the deceit in gambling, the igniter of the lac-made house, that extremely proud man, that

wind to scatter and drag the hair and garment of *Kṛiṣṇa*, to whom the *Pāṇdavas* are only slaves, the king, the elder brother of a hundred younger brothers, beginning with *Duśāsana*, the friend of the *Aṅga* King? Tell Not with wrath are we come to see him.”

Duryodhana orders *Saiñjaya* to tell that he is seated there to tell the same to *Bhīma* and *Arjuṇa*. Both of them go to the said place and bow Bhima down to *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* who does not happy with the polite activities shown to him and on the other hand he addresses *Bhīma* as a wicked – souled one. *Arjuṇa* becomes angry with *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*. *Bhīma* does not feel the necessity of angry. Then a hot discussion took place amongst *Bhīma*, *Arjuṇa* and Duryodhana. Once wrathfully Duryodhana says *Bhīma* that he is the son of wind, why he is thus boasting of his consurable deed before the old king. He also adds that in his court, *Yudhiṣṭhira*, *Nakula*, *Sahadeva* and *Draupadī* were once insulted by him. So, is it the cause of the killing of *Kauravas* by them. *Bhīma* acts wrathfully in front of all and addresses Duryodhana as a bolt on the family of *Bharata*. Duryodhana addresses *Bhīma* as wicked souled, the wretch of the family of *Bharata*, the brute of *Pāṇdava*, he is (the former) not clever enough to indulge in boast like him (*Bhīma*). *Bhīma* laughs at and, says if so *Duryadhana* is not worthy of belief.

Next to above, behind the curtain it is announced pointing to both *Bhīma* and *Arjuṇa* that the glorious *Yudhiṣṭhira* is free from enemies. They awaits for the order of *Yudhiṣṭhira*. Again, behind the scenes, *Yudhiṣṭhira* orders *Bhīma* and *Arjuṇa* to burn the dead bodies who were killed in the battle. Both honours the order and exit.

*Dhṛtarāṣṭra* orders Duryodhana that *Aśvaṭṭhāman* who possessed of a prowess even superior to his father’s well-trained and resembling a god, should be honoured at least by rising up in reception. *Gāndhari*, also agrees with his husband. Duryodhana feels no necessity of *Aśvaṭṭhāman*. Then enters *Aśvaṭṭhāman* wishing the victory of the king. He says the king that he has come to joining the battle. Duryodhana hesitates to accept *Aśvaṭṭhāman*. *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*

suggests *Saṅjaya* to tell *Aśvatthāman* that he would not mind by the words uttered by *Duryodhana*. *Saṅjaya* carries out the order. And moving about all exuent.

In the Sixth Act of the Drama there enters *Yudhiṣṭhira*, seated *Draupadī*, a maid and a man. *Yudhiṣṭhira* thinks that after the great ocean in the form of *Bhīṣma* has been crossed, the fire in the form of *Droṇa* is somehow extinguished, the poisonous cobra in the form of *Karṇa* is quelled, and *Śalya* had gone to heaven, and when victory was as good as won, they all (*Pāṇdavas*) here have been thrown into speech by Bhima, who is fond of adventures. *Draupadī* imagines that the speech of *Yudhiṣṭhira* is only for her. *Yudhiṣṭhira* opines that fro the wrath and promise of *Bhīma*, the king orders to search *Duryodhana* and find out him by any means from any place for which the founder would be rewrded in the form of wealth and honour. They carries the order. He also adds that *Sahadeva* should make aware pf the fact. The man carries the order and exits. Then, again enters the man with *Pancālaka*. *Pancalaka* whises the victory of the king and wants to communicate a good news to the king and the queen. And the news is that the wicked souled *Duryodhana* is found. *Yudhiṣṭhira* enquired of *Duryodhana* that how he was found and where he fled away. The *Pañchalakā* began to give information all about *Duryodhana*.

Prima facie, *Pañchalakā* says that when *Kṛpa*, *Karṇa* and *Aśvatthāmān* had disappeared, coming to know that vow of *Bhīma* which was not remain unfulfilled overnight, it is not known where that wicked souled wretch of a *Kaurava* lay hidden. And then prince *Bhīma* and *Arjuna*, mounted in a chariot guided by *Vāsudeva*, began wandering about in *Samantapanca* and could not find him out. On the bank of a great lake there are two tracks of foot-prints having their impression clearly imprinted. And going to the bank of the lake and found the track where the marks of *Suyodhana's* feet were perceptible. Hearing the speech of that younger brother of *Balarāma*, prince *Vrkodara* agitated the water so violently that the water overflowed the banks, filling the

bowers in all quarters. In another query by Yudhisthira, the Pancala says that *Vṛkadara* got down and stirred up that huge tank all around in the force of fury with club in hand such that the banks were over flown all on a sudden, lotous plants destroyed, with the sheet of water turned round with a terrific noise as a result *Duryadhana* quit the water in a hurry and rose up playfully with an outburst of the fire of rage emitting sparks of poison as the *Kālakuta* prison from the mil-ocean at its churning. *Yudhiṣṭhira* appreciated *Bhīma* for his heroic ded. Then *Draupadī* asks *Pāñcālaka* whether any fight took place or not. In his reply the later says that Duryodhana comes out of the lake terrible mace with his hands and summons *Bhīma* that he is not afraid of them, he is ready to fight. In the meantime, *Vāsudeva* and *Kiritin* managed Duryodhana to get to dry land. Both *Bhīma* and Duryodhana, who had started the Duryodhana terrific duel with an altercation of harsh words fall of angry taunts at each other and whose club-like arms were shining bright with the mace brandished all around in varied ways, began to move about in circles. Then the Divine wielder of the discuss in hand and the son of *Devakī* sends him to *Yudhiṣṭhira* says that the entire earth has been free from all enemies. And let ceremonies proper for such prosperous events be commenced and continued without break.

*Draupadī* also doubts about the matter. *Yudhiṣṭhira* orders that out of quest respect for the Divine son of *Devakī*, let proper festivities be commenced for celebrating the auspicious victory of his dear brother, *Bhīma*. The chamberlain was ordered to please *Pançalaka* with a reward.

Thereafter centers a thirsty demon in the guise of hermit who is Carvaka by name in the hope of misguiding both *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* and others. The demon in course of his discussion gives the news of fighting among *Arjuna* and Duryodhana in front of them he added that Duryodhana took revenge against *Bhīmasena*. On hearing this both *Draupadī* and *Yudhiṣṭhira* lost their conscious. After regaining consciousness, he learnt from the demon the bad news of death of *Arjuna*. *Yudhiṣṭhira* blames his fate. They laments for

*Arjuna* and *Bhīma*. Out of grief, both *Draupadī* and *Yudhiṣṭhira* make them ready to enter in the lightened pyre and dedicated their lives. The demon exits.

Suddenly a bustle is heard behind the scenes which *Draupadī* took for another bad news for them. She suggests the Chamberlain to do something in their absence *i.e.* after their death. The chamberlain leaves the place crying and crying. A fire was lightened. Looking at the fire, joyful *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* get them ready to enter into the fire. But before that *Yudhiṣṭhira* advised the chamberlain that if *Arjuna* survives, he should not angry with *Balarāma*, the brother of his friend *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* if he is the really cause of death of *Bhīma*. Before his death, *Yudhiṣṭhira* wants to do some heavenly deeds for his ancestors and others.

In the meantime, a bustle is heard behind the curtain. It is heard that Duryodhana whose body is covered with blood is approaching towards *Draupadī* with mace in his hand. Both *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* become fainted. After regaining consciousness *Yudhiṣṭhira* makes up his mind to kill the wicked souled Duryodhana with his bow. At the same time enters *Bhīmasena*, mace in hand, with whole body sprinkled with blood. He announces aggressively that there is no cause of fear as he is not a demon, not a ghost, only his body is sprinkled with the blood of his enemy; he only a angry *Kṣatriya* crossed the difficult ocean of promise kept by him earlier. He enquires of *Pāñcālī*. The chamberlain suggests *Draupadī* to bind the disheveled hair as she has to go near the fire. But *Yudhiṣṭhira* prevents her to do so until the wicked souled *Duryadhana* is killed. Again, *Bhīmasena* tells *Draupadī* so far as *Bhīma* is alive, she would not bind her hair disarranged by *Duhśāsana*. He also assures her saying that he would personally tie it up. Then *Yudhiṣṭhira* with full strength embraces *Bhīma* considering his great foe *Duryadhana* but later on he comes to know through chamberlain that the embraced person is no other than his beloved brother *Bhīma sena*. *Draupadī*, also does not believe that *Bhīma*, her husband is still alive who is in a mood to fulfill his promise by tying up hair.



After a while, both *Draupadī* and *Yudhiṣṭhira* came to recognize *Bhīma*, *Yudhiṣṭhira* with full affection embraces *Bhīma*, his favourite younger brother. *Bhīma*, then request *Draupadī* to tie up her hair but the later opines that she has forgotten to do it. There after the hair of *Draupadi* was tied up by *Bhīma*. Behind the scenes it is heard that the killing of subjects should be stopped and wished well of the kingdom.

At last enter *Vāsudeva* and *Arjuna*. *Kṛṣṇa* (*Vāsudeva*) approaching *Yudhiṣṭhira* wishes that *Yudhiṣṭhira* together with his brothers, with all the circle of enemies killed, be victorious. *Arjuna* also wishes victory of his elder brother. *Yudhiṣṭhira* embraces *Arjuna*. They discuss how they were deceived by the demon, *Carvaka*, *Bhīma* becomes very angry with the demon who misguided and created a sorrowful situation for his holy elder brother. *Bhimasena* shaking *Draupadī's* braid disheveled by *Duśāsana* tied up. *Kṛṣṇa* says that learning the trouble created by *Carvaka*, he together with *Arjuna* comes to *Yudhiṣṭhira's* place before long. *Bhīma* wrathfully wants to kill the wicked demon. But he learns from *Kṛṣṇa* that the demon is captured by *Nakula* and punished. *Yudhiṣṭhira* becomes happy upon *Kṛṣṇa* for his activities. After the usual manner the play ends with the *Bharatvakya*. *Vāsudeva* wished well and all exit.

**VENĪSAMHĀRA AS A DRAMA:** The *Nāndī* and *Prastāvanā* of *Veṅṛisamhāra* is short and to the point. The *Prastāvanā* gives us the name of the play and also of the author together with his title *Kavimrgaraja* (*Kavisingha*, the best of poets). It catches the attention of the spectators by holding out hopes of music. But ultimately with the peculiar device of *Kāku*, *Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa* has succeeded in introducing the main point of the plot viz. that *Kauravas* have gravely insulted the *Pāndavas* – particularly their wife *Draupadī* – for which they are going to meet destruction at the hands of *Bhīma*. Before the spectator is aware of it he is told that Lord *Kṛṣṇa* has undertaken embassy for bringing negotiation if possible and avoid war; and also that *Bhīma* ever smarting under the past insults is out for revenge and hence is openly against this attempt

of negotiation. The *Prasṭāvanā* is brought to a close by *Bhīmasena* coming on the stage repeating the words of the *Sūtradhāra* with a modulation of voice. The *Prasṭhābanā* of the *Veṅīsamhāra* is *Prayagatisaya*. It has served its purpose quite well by introducing the main character on the stage in a striking manner and thus catching the attention of the spectator and rousing his curiosity. It has at the same time supplied the back-ground which is expected to enable the spectator to follow the forthcoming incidents with ease and interest.

The drama starts with the exilement the *Pāndavas* is over and *Yudhiṣṭhira*, as a last attempt, has sent *Kṛṣṇa* to negotiate peace with five villages. The idea is not liked by *Bhīma* who would rather break off with *Yudhiṣṭhira* and avenge all the insults heaped on *Draupadī* in particular by *Duhśāsana* and *Duryadhana* than agree to the peace. *Sahadeva*'s exposition of the peace proposal is simply ridiculous and foolish in his opinion. The news of a fresh insult given to *Draupadī* by *Duryadhana*'s wife, *Bhānumatī*, adds fuel to the fire and *Bhīma* avows to batter *Duryadhana*'s thighs and tie *Draupadī*'s hair with his hands gory with *Duryadhana*'s blood. *Draupadī* is not sure about *Yudhiṣṭhira*. But just then peace negotiations break off; *Duryadhana* attempts to captivate *Kṛṣṇa* who escapes with a miracle and *Yudhiṣṭhira*'s wrath is roused. War is declared with the beating of a drum and *Bhīma* assures *Draupadī* that he could see her only after completely annihilating the *Kauravas*.

War has progressed for a few days and *Bhīma* and *Abhimanyu* are slain. Then one morning *Duryadhana* is distracted to find his wife gone away from the chamber without taking his leave as usual. He sends the *Kaṅcukin* to see where she is and when he comes up scolds him for expressing his disapproval of *Abhimanyu* and makes a solemn declaration which by a slip of tongue meant just the opposite of what he actually wanted to say. He then asks *Kaṅcukin* to lead him to where *Bhānumatī* was. On going there he finds her conversing with her friend and miffed and, therefore, makes up his mind to overhear them. The talk was about some evil dream that *Bhānumatī* had that morning in

pacification of which she was observing a Religious fasting (*Vrata*) from the same day. Owing to the double meaning words in the talk and his ignorance of the context, *Duryadhana* misunderstood the whole talk and accused his wife of infidelity and incest with *Nakula*. Fortunately, however, he did not act on his impulse at this stage and was glad to realize that it was all a dream that she was talking about. At this stage *Bhānumatī* realises that *Duryadhana* was there; she is confused and *Duryadhana* tries to coax her and alleviate her misgivings. He answers all her arguments in favour of her Religious fasting (*Vrata*) and ultimately suggests that the *Manostapatti* for which she wants to observe the Religious fasting (*Vrata*) depends on her only. The amorous suggestion would not have been readily granted by *Bhānumatī*, but for the sudden violent storm which frightened her and shattered her ideas of the religious fasting (*Vrata*). Then they go to the *Daruparvataprasada* where again *Duryadhana* suggests that *Bhānumatī* should occupy his thing, when *Kancukin* comes with the word *Bhagnam Bhagnam*. This is ominous again and the news brought by *Kaṅcukin* – Thousands of warriors on either side are killed, principal among them being – *Dhṛitarāshtra*, *Ghatotkacha*, *Bhagadutta*, *Drupada*, *Somdutta*, *Hidimbha* (*Bhīma* 's wife) has ordered that a *Rākṣasa* is to be constantly with *Bhīma*, who has vowed to drink *Duḥśāsana*'s blood. The *Rākṣasa* is to enter *Bhīma*'s body and drink it for him. All this information is conveyed through the interlude at the end of which we are told that *Droṇa* is being killed by *Dhṛstadyumna* and that *Aśvathāmān* is coming up with his sword drawn.

*Aśvathāmān* learns the news of his father's murder on the battle-field and how he himself was at the root of it. He breaks out in lamentations first and then avows destruction of all concerned. At *Kripa*'s suggestion he goes to *Duryodhana*'s ears are already poisoned by *Karṇa* against *Droṇa* (and *Aśvathāmān*) and he repudiates *Aśvathāmān*'s proposal saying that the post has been already bestowed on *Karṇa*. Then there ensues some scuffle between *Karṇa* and *Aśvathāmān*. From words they come to blows. But they are prevented from actual fight by *Kṛpa* and *Duryodhana*. *Aśvathāmān* then leaves off his *weapon* vowing not to hold it as long as *Karṇa* was alive. Just then is

heard from behind the curtain *Bhīma*'s challenge to all *Kaurava* warriors to save *Duhśāsana* who was now in his clutches. *Karṇa* at once hastens there. *Aśvathāmān* asks Duryodhana to go there personally, and himself is about to take up his *weapon*; but is prevented from doing so by some Devine speech, *Aśvathāmān* curses himself for his leaving of weapons and asks *Kṛpa* to go the *Duryodhana*'s help, and himself goes to the camp.

After that it, shows Duryodhana in swoon on his chariot being led away by his charioteer to some suitable place, while behind the curtain, *Bhīma* announces that he is drinking the warm blood of *Duhśāsana*, charioteer afraid that *Bhīma* will slay Duryodhana also. Duryodhana recovers and asks charioteer to take his chariot to where *Duhśāsana* is and is informed by the former about *Duhśāsana*'s fate, of course suggestively. Duryodhana again laments, falls in a swoon, blames the Suta for having brought him away from the field and lastly expresses his desire that he should not die at in hands of *Vrkadar*. At this stage *Sundaraka* (*Karṇa*'s man) after pretty long search comes to *Duryodhana*, and in a long narration intercepted several times by suitable remarks or questions of Duryodhana narrates how fight ensued between *Bhima* and *Karna*, how *Arjuna* & *Vrsasena* (*Karṇa*'s son) hastened to their help, how *Vrsasena* showed excellent skill, how *Vrsasena* was slain by *Arjuna*'s power, and how *Karṇa* changed his chariot (the former having its axel broken) and has sent a message in his own blood to Duryodhana before recommencing war, prepared for the worst. Duryodhana at once prepares to go to *Karṇa*'s aid, but has to wait because of the arrival of his parents whom, of course he could not evade (though he would very much have liked to do so).

It is taken up mostly by *Dṛitarāshtra* and *Gāndarī* pleading in various ways in favour of *negotiation* and Duryodhana showing how it was impossible, unbecoming, and dishonourable. Duryodhana pleads in favour of war in grim and pathetic arguments. In the meanwhile comes the news of *Shalya* returning in the *chariot* without *Karṇa*, a news which is shocking to *Dṛitarāshtra* for fear of his son's fate, but equally shocking to Duryodhana out of his deep friendship

for *Karṇa*. On learning the details of *Karṇa*'s death *Duryadhana* tells his parents that now he would prefer war to the pangs of *Karṇa*'s separation and avenge his death rather than that of *Duḥśāsana*. *Duryodhana* asks his charioteer to bring his chariot. In the meanwhile the old parents ask him who would be his next *Senāpati* and are told that he himself would be the Head of the Army. At this stage *Bhīma* and *Arjuna* come in search of *Duryodhana* and on knowing that *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* scolds *Bhīma* who also gives a good retort. *Duryodhana* asks *Bhīma* how he could be so insolent unless he vanquishes him, the doer of the insult. Then ensues a wordy tussel between them when, it being evening, the war is declared to have stopped for the day. Just then comes up *Aśvathāmān* reviling *Karṇa* before *Duryodhana* and offering his help. But *Duryadhana* sharply rejects it saying he may wait till his own death. When he had left, *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* on his own behalf sends *Charioteer* to pacify *Aśvathāmān* and requests him to do his best. They all leave for *Shalya*'s camp.

Thereafter the drama opens with the appearance of *Yudhiṣṭhira* worrying over *Bhīma*'s promise for battering *Duryadhana*'s thighs the same day, and sending orders for a close search for *Duryodhana*. Just then comes *Pancalaka* who in details narrates how *Duryodhana*, who on the strength of water miracle lay hidden in a lake, how he was found out, and how he has chosen to fight a macedual with *Bhīma*. He then delivered the message of *Kṛṣṇa* that preparations be made for the Coronation; adding that it is his order. *Yudhiṣṭhira* orders festivity accordingly and while he is explaining to *Draupadī* why *Duryodhana* was given choice, a sage (he is really *Duryodhana*'s friend *Charvaka*, a *Rākṣasa*) comes up. He, after some rest, tells that *Duryadhana*'s duel with *Bhīma* is over and that now he is having it with *Arjuna*. He then adds that *Balarāma* helped *Duryodhana* against *Bhīma* by dropping a hint and has now taken away *Kṛṣṇa* leaving *Arjuna* to his fate which was certain. *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* lament and blame *Balarām*; and *Draupadī* ultimately thinks of burning herself, asking *Yudhiṣṭhira* to follow Religion of *Kṣatriya* (*Kṣātradharmā*). *Yudhiṣṭhira* would better die and *Rākṣasa* suggests

that he also should burn himself in that case. He then leaves the place and secretly kindles the fire. *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* send their last messages to all and finding the fire kindled prepare to throw themselves into it together. *Yudhiṣṭhira* offers libations to all. *Draupadī* offers water to *Bhīma*. Here *Yudhiṣṭhira*'s right eye throbs and *Kancukin* comes in declaring that Duryodhana has come in search of *Draupadī*. He also suggests that she should immediately throw herself into the fire. At this stage *Bhīma* (mistaken by all for *Duryodhana*) comes up and, assuring all that they have no reason to be afraid, goes to *Draupadī* and tries to hold her hair, when *Yudhiṣṭhira* catches him fast and declares that he would kill him there and then. *Bhīma* then knows what has happened, the misunderstanding is cleared up, and the *Beṇī* is tied up by *Bhīma* and appreciated by all. Then come up *Arjuna* and *Kṛiṣṇa*. The latter announces the arrival of all for *Yudhishtira*'s Coronation (*Rājyābhiṣheka*). The *Rākṣasa* is exposed and is punished by *Nakula* and after the usual manner the play ends with the *Bharatvākya*.

Characterization is not a strong point of *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa*. He can hardly be said to have depicted any character quite successfully. In fact he does not seem to have bestowed much care on this point, a greater part of his attention being taken up by the management of the vast plot of the great *Bharat* a war which he had to mould in a dramatic form. This does not, however, mean that he has not the capacity to paint characters. We see that he has given us bold touches of some of his characters from different angles.

Let us take up Duryodhana who has actually appeared in Acts II, III, IV and V and is mentioned in Acts I and VI. In act II we see his sensuous aspect combined with haughtiness, conceit, arrogance and fearlessness in the face of grave danger amounting to foolhardiness. In Act III he comes as a king, courteous in his manners and talk inspite of whatever is going on in his mind and at the same time easily carried away by the views of others. The fourth and the fifth acts show him as a dauntless warrior, a very staunch friend, a very loving brother, a fierce enemy, a dutiful son and a clever arguer. In Act VI we

are given another aspect of his character when he is reported to have explained why he hid in the lake and also when we are told that he chose to fight with *Bhīma* – the most formidable *Pāndava* – inspite of the choice given to him. From all this it is easy to see that *Duryodhana*, a disciple of *Balarama* in the mace was, of course, the main root of the insult heaped on *Draupadī* which he owns and for which he is not sorry. As man he is proud of his strength and insolent in his behaviour and would do any thing in his haughtiness; even try to captivate *Kṛṣṇa*, the peace ambassador if not *Bhagavāna*. As son he was very dutiful and showed due respect to his parents, but his love for friend was greater, greater than even love for his brothers. Dutiful as a brother he risked his own life for news of *Karṇa*'s death which filled his mind with thoughts of revenge for *Karṇa*. For friend's sake he was ready to lose any thing or any one and would not have any thing to do with one who reviled his friend. As husband he was loving and amorous, but easily falling a prey to suspicion. This circumstance takes away much from his love of his wife. As warrior he was brave and dauntless and was so sure of his strength that he would not care to stop for even his Chariot (*Rata*) or Charioteer (*Sārathī*). His *Gadā* was enough for him. But the most admirable point that we notice in him is the he has maintained the same spirited attitude from the beginning to the end inspite of the heavy odds facing him. It is only in a weak moment that we find him uttering “*Api nama bhavenmrtyurna ca hanta Vrkadara:|*”

Next we come to *Bhīma* who is on the stage in Acts I, V and VI, while he is referred to in Acts III and IV. In Act II the idea that *Bhīma* would shatter *Duryodhana*'s thighs is suggested in the *Patākāsthana* where the word ‘*Bhimen*’ is used (but in a different sense). From the beginning we see *Bhīma* filled with the thought of, revenge to such an extent that the mere idea of peace negotiations or mere suggestion of the happiness and well-being of the *Kauravas* is enough to upset him. Revenge is the ruling word with him and for that he is ready may be for a day-to break off with his elder brother. His idea of revenge also is very bloody. We really shudder at the boastful challenge which *Bhīma* gives to all on the battle-field to save *Duśāsana* from his clutches as he

would drink the warm blood from his chest. Even *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* – possibly out of religious considerations-could not stand the idea and had to invent the novel idea of *Rākṣhasa* entering his body and drinking it. About *Bhīma*'s Herculean strength there is no doubt. That he has shown several times, particularly, at the *Jatugrhadaha* incident. He is very rash with his tongue also. He does not hesitate to insult *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* to his face and in the presence of *Duryodhana*. In the last act he appears in that hideous form all blood-smeared and is mistaken by all for *Duryodhana*. Even then his only thought was to fulfil his promise viz. tying up *Draupadī*'s hair with his hands gory with *Duryodhana*'s blood. But to indulge in that blood-stained condition smacks insavoury. As already noted above we might say Revenge, *thy name is Bhīma*. Act IV contains a reference to *Bhīma*'s war exploits. But there is hardly any other aspect of *Bhīma*'s character depicted in this play.

*Aśvathāmān*, a compeer of *Bhīma* so far as the idea of revenge (and also to some extent boasting) is concerned, appears yet in better lights, though he has come on the stage only in Acts III and V. In Acts III we see him as a brave man, a dutiful and loving son, a manly warrior conscious of his strength, a simple straight-forward man, bitter with his tongue and ever ready to return an insult. We also see his softness of heart – particularly for his king and friend-when for his sake he is even ready to falsify his promise. Act V shows him again ready to help his king, but ignorant of good manners. Thus in Act III from words he comes to blows with *Karṇa* and cuts off his sacred thread, to show that he does not require his caste to defend him. In Act V he reviles *Karṇa* who is dead and gone, and that too before *Duryadhana* a fast friend of his. This comes surely in bad taste. But he is after all a mere soldier even like *Bhīma*. He would not care for anything else and would try to solve every dispute by force of arms.

*Karṇa* combines in him the soldier and the politician. On the stage he appears only in Act III; in Act IV his war feats are described and his message to *Duryodhana* is delivered; while in Act V is reported his death. From his



short presence on the stage we see how he is like a venomous cobra, poisoning *Duryodhana's* mind and ultimately leading to the non-co-operation of a good warrior like *Aśvathāmān*. He is, however, a dauntless warrior and a true friend for whose cause he in firm determination sacrifices his life. His message to Duryodhana is pathetic indeed and shows that he has some soft feeling at least for a friend as, we know, he has for his son.

*Dhṛtarāṣṭra* appears only in Act V and is a very loving father trying to save the life of his son dissuading him from war. He presents a true picture of a father struck with the sorrow of the death of 99 sons of his and this explains his great anxiety to effect peace on any conditions whatever. It is rather below the dignity of a *Kṣatriya* no doubt to go begging for peace, particularly when one is losing fast. Like an old man he is patient as well as cautious and is shrewd enough to manage the situation when *Aśvathāmān* went away insulted. All his entreaties were, however, of little consequence and he had to witness with a flutter of heart the result of what he had witnessed with clam indifference thirteen years ago.

Among the female characters *Gāndārī* is painted as a loving mother with her love of all the dead sons now concentrated on the one that was alive. She is a dutiful wife who has blind-folded herself in view of the blindness of her husband.

*Bhānumatī* is depicted as a very loving wife caring with all her heart for the good of her husband. Dutiful to her elders, she was also of a religious bent of mind and was easily susceptible to fears. For her husband's sake she would undertake any religious fasting (*Vrata*) and would always advise him to remedy the evil portents by religious observance. She is a fine Hindu lady. She has committed one sin in asking that insulting question to *Draupadī* for which she has very heavily to pay.

*Draupadī*, on the other hand, is more thinking of her own insult than of any thing else. She is so much upset with the idea of revenge that she even

speaks disparagingly of her other husbands. She is quite one with *Bhīma* with his idea of revenge but is afraid that the brothers of *Bhīma* (particularly *Yudhiṣṭhira*) would not agree to it. She appears to have had a poor opinion of *Nakula* and *Sahadeva* as warriors (of course, as compared with *Duryodhana*) as is shown by her question to *Yudhiṣṭhira* as a softness of heart. When war is declared and *Bhīma* declares that he would not see her before exterminating the *Kauravas* she expresses her anxiety and requests that they all should take care of themselves. She was also loving wife as is clear from the fact that she prepared to throw herself into the fire when *Bhīma* and *Arjuna* are heard to have died. Her message to *Subhadra* shows her as a loving cowife also.

*Cārvāka*, the demon friend of *Duryodhana*, appears only in the last act. He has done his best to bring *Yudhiṣṭhira* and *Draupadī* to burn themselves, apparently at nobody's instance. He has succeeded quite well in his ambition almost to the last moment when the revelation of *Bhīma*'s identity alone saved the situation. The one noticeable point in connection with this *Carvaka* is the fact that he refuses to receive any hospitality from *Yudhiṣṭhira*. Can it be, because he intends doing harm to *Yudhiṣṭhira* and as such does not want to make him his benefactor in the slightest degree?

*Yudhiṣṭhira* has appeared on the stage only in the last act and is mentioned in the first and the third. Even when he is on the stage he has allowed himself to be misled by sage (*Muni*) and the too after receiving a message-nay an order-from *Kṛṣṇa* the Lord, *Adideva* as he was in his opinion! He has shown his self control while dealing with his enemies, but when overpowered with grief he loses all his grip, and seems to fall too low. His lamentations in the last act could have evoked greater sympathies of the spectators if he had been depicted on the stage as a great personality. Though we know much about him from the *Mahābhārata*, yet so far as the play is concerned we hardly get any view of this eldest *Pāndava* to form a very high opinion about him and thus be ready to have sympathy for him in his adversity. He is perhaps the most neglected character of this play.

Under these circumstances the question as to who is the hero of the *Veṅṅisamhāra* becomes quite puzzling-nay tantalizing. To have a play with so many characters, a play dealing with the great *Bharata* war and not to find any one who can be easily accepted by all its hero is a strange occurrence indeed! But such is the fact with the *Veṅṅisamhāra* if plainly stated. The only course open to a critic to solve this problem is to fall back on the theory of Sanskrit drama and find out what ancient writers on dramaturgy have to say on this point and in that light to find out what view *Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa* might have possibly held. Doing this we find Sanskrit critics declaring that ‘A hero is one who is the recipient of the ultimate fruit or result (of the whole action of the play)’ of *Adhikāra: Phalswamyamadhikari ca tatprabhu*]. But the question is as to how we can determine what the actual result is and who actually has received it in the opinion of the play-wright. For this again there is one indication or clue given by the author. The last *Sāndhi* of every Sanskrit *drama* has at the end two *Aṅga*’s called *Kavyasamhāra* shows that the person who is asked that question has already received the fruit; and more often than not in his reply also that person actually declares that he has had the fruit. This shows that the person who is thus addressed in the *Kāvya-samhāra* and who gives a reply to it is, according to the play-wright, the actual recipient of the fruit, and hence the hero. If this test is applied we find that the question in the end is addressed to *Yudhiṣṭhira* and it is he who actually recounts what fortune he has had upto that point. This should suggest that according to *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa*’s view the hero of the *Veṅṅisamhāra* is *Yudhiṣṭhira* - a view which is supported by Sanskrit writers like *Viśvanātha*.

Coming now to the source of the play we have to note the various omissions, additions and alternations that *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has introduced in the original story of the *Mahābhārata* war as found in the *Mahābhārata* itself. Looking to the incidents that he has chosen for representation on the stage we can easily conclude that he has an eye for the right choice. We also see his skill in omitting various details and thus bringing the whole story within the compass of his six acts. But the real skill of the playwright lies in the way in

which he introduces several incidents that he cannot represent on the stage and more particularly still in the innovations in the form of additions and alterations that he introduces in the original.

Comparing the plot of the *Veṅṅisamhāra* with the *Mahābhārata* story, it is easy to see that *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has introduced several innovations of both these varieties. As for the additions we may note that *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has invented the character *Bhānumatī*, (Act I) and the *Rākṣasa* couple in the interlude to Act III, not to mention others like *Sundaraka* (Act IV), *Pañcalaka* (Act VI) and the minor characters like the *Kaṅcukin*, the *Ceti* and Female friend. Among incidents and scenes thus invented by *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* must be mentioned the insulting question put to *Draupadī* by *Bhānumatī* and the dream of the latter, almost the whole of Act II, particularly the storm and the amorous scene between Duryodhana and *Bhānumatī*, the whole of Act V again, particularly the discussion between Duryodhana and his parents and the message from *Karṇa*. The dramatic importance and interest of all these can hardly be exaggerated. We have only to remember how the small insulting question put to *Draupadī* by *Bhānumatī* added fuel to *Bhīma*'s fury and worked havoc; or how the dream of *Bhānumatī* was saved threadbare from having a disastrous effect; or how the storm gives a sudden turn to events and in more ways than one portends evil in store for Duryodhana who ironically enough thinks otherwise; or how the conversation between Duryodhana and his parents serves to bring out some salient traits in the characters of these persons or how the receipt of the message of *Karṇa* brings out *Duryodhana*'s friendship into relief and how the arrival of the parents, just as he is to start, prevents him from going to *Karṇa*'s help and thus paves the way for his death on the battlefield.

Not are alterations in the original story wanting. Some of the important alterations are: combining the details of the two attempts at peace into one, giving quite a different motif to the quarrel between *Karṇa* and *Aśvathāmān*, altering the details of the failure of the negotiations and *Visvarupadarsana*, and

making *Cārvāka* play his role (of course altered according to *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa*'s plan) before the Coronation. The *Pañcagrāmaprārthanā* is connected with the peace negotiations through *Sañjaya* while the other details are connected with *Kṛṣṇa*'s embassy. By combining these *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has secured not only economy but at the same time ground for the *Upapatti* and also a means to expose some traits in the characters of *Yudhiṣṭhira*, *Duryodhana* and *Bhīma* also to some extent. The attempt to captivate *Kṛṣṇa* and its frustration by *Viśvarupadarsana* are highly dramatic in effect. But this our author has perhaps borrowed from *Bhāsa*. The quarrel in the *Mahābhārata* starts with *Karṇa* passing some remark against *Kṛpā*, and *Aśvathāmān* taking cudgels for him; and all this takes place before *Droṇa*'s death *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has placed it after *Droṇa*'s death and based it on the nasty remarks of *Karṇa* against *Droṇa*. Shifting of *Carvaka*'s mischief to an earlier stage has served to cause suspense and helped the play to come to a close with the mention of coronation.

It may now be confidently said that *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* though he has drawn the plot from the *Mahābhārata*, has shown good skill in using it for the purpose of dramatization and has succeeded in presenting the whole of the *Bhārata* war with its plethora of details in the short space of six acts in an interesting manner.

Let us now pass on to a few peculiar devices used by *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* in this play. The most striking among these is the use of 'Nepathye' (behind curtain). Here we may only remark that it is this device in the main that has worked in *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa*'s hand at a measure of economy (which otherwise it would have been impossible to achieve) and a principal means to push the plot further. There is hardly a play in Sanskrit literature where this stage direction has been so much utilized. Next we come to the various devices *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has used in obedience to the exigencies of the stage and used them without marring verisimilitude. Thus *Bhīma*'s turning away his face in wrath (Act I), *Aśvathāman* falling in swoon (Act III), or *Duryodhana* sitting in despondency in his chariot (Act IV) very well account for the silence of these

characters and at the same time give scope to some other scene, speech or speeches with which they are not concerned. Thirdly we may note the bifocal scenes in Act I where *Draupadī* and her maid over-hear *Bhīma*'s talk to *Sahadeva* and in Act II where the talk of *Bhānumatī* with her friend and maid is heard by Duryodhana.

In spite of these excellences shown by him, however, *Bhaṭṭanarayana* fails to attain the height of *Bhavabhūti* or *Kālidāsa* whom he seems to have imitated occasionally. The reason for this appears to be that his is a conscious, a laboured art as he himself admits in the prologue. But the most serious defect that he is guilty of is his grave neglect of character-painting. As we have already seen there is hardly any character who can be said to tower above all and who can inspire us with awe and respect. At least *Bhīma* and *Draupadī* who are directly connected with the *Veṅṅisamhāra* should have been carefully painted; and more attention should have been given to *Yudhiṣṭhira* if he was to play the role assigned to him in the last act. Strangely enough *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* appears to have laboured more on Duryodhana who appears on the stage longer than any other character, longer than even *Bhīma*. It is this circumstance that detracts much from the value of the *Veṅṅisamhāra* as a drama. The same to some extent may be said about the *Rasas*. *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* has, no doubt, brought in all the *Rasas* on different occasions. But he has failed to keep up a proper proportion among them. The main topic of the play and also the title require the Heroic sentiment (*Virarasa*) to predominate in the play. Actually, however, it is found that *Karuṇa* is vying with *Vīra* to such an extent that it has actually been posed as the main sentiment of the play. This discrepancy between the main topic and the dominant sentiment in the play is not a little responsible for disturbing the general effect of the play. The whole of Act IV again is a blemish on the workmanship of *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa* as a playwright. He has no doubt tried to break the monotony of the narration by intercepting *Sundaraka*'s speech at several places. But that is too mechanical a device and can't save the scene for being undramatic.

In fine it may be said that the king *Yudhiṣṭhira* who is the hero according to the strict convention of poetics is generally known to be a *Dhīrodatta* though very many of his traits as such do not appear depicted in this play. The dominant emotion brought out in this play is *Vīra*, the heroic. Hence *Veṅṣamhāra* satisfies all the requirements laid down by rhetoricians for a *Nāṭaka*. It may also be observed that most of the *Sandhyangas* or essential ingredients in the plot of a drama are woven into this play in scrupulous compliance with the rules of dramaturgy as will be apparent from the profuse quotations in *Dasarūpaka* from this play in illustration of the same.

Some critical remarks of scholars are placed here regarding the play:

1. “The play is on the whole undramatic, for the action is choked by narrative, and the vast abundance of detail served up in this form confuses and destroys interest. Yet the characterization is good..... Horror and pathos are not lacking, but the love interest is certainly not effective. The style of the play is clear and not lacking in force or dignity. We find in *Bhaṭṭa Narayana* many of the defects of *Bhavabhūti*, in special the fondness for long compounds both in *Prakṛt* and in Sanskrit prose and the same straining after effect which gives such a description of the battle as that vouchsafed to *Draupadī* by *Bhīma*, when she warns him not to be overrash in battle.” Prof. A.B. Keith.

2. “There is much good writing in the piece although the style is rather powerful than polished; there is also poetry in the thoughts but it is the poetry rather of passion than fancy, and the pathos and horror in which its delights are relieved by no brilliancy of illustration: both too are overdone, and the pathos becomes tiresome and the horror disgusting. The chief merit of the drama is individuality of character; the ferocity of *Bhīma*, the pride of *Karṇa*, the fiery but kindly temperament of *Aśvathāmā* and the selfish arrogance of *Duryadhana* are well delineated.” Prof. Wilson.