CHAPTER V

SUCCESSORS OF KĀLIDĀSA IN PROSE AND DRAMA

1. The Prose Kāvyas of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa

   a. General Remarks

   The peculiar type of prose narrative, which the Sanskrit theory includes under the category of Kathā and Ākhyāyikā, but which, on a broader interpretation, has been styled Prose Romance or Kunstroman, first makes its appearance, in this period, in a fully developed form in the works of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa. But the origin of this species of literature is shrouded in greater obscurity than that of the Kāvya itself, of which it is presumed to be a sub-division. We know at least of Aśvaghoṣa as a predecessor who heralded the poetic maturity of Kālidāsa, but of the forerunners of Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa we have little information. The antiquity of this literature is undoubted, but no previous works, which might have explained the finished results diversely attained by these authors, have come down to us. We have seen that the Ākhyāyikā is specifically mentioned by Kātyāyana in his Vārttika; and Patañjali, commenting on it, gives the names of three Ākhyāyikās known to him, namely, Vāsavadattā, Sumanottarā and Bhaimarathi; but we know nothing about the form and content of these early works. The very title of the Brhatkathā and the designation Kathā applied to the individual tales of the Pañcatantra, one of whose versions is also called Tantrākhyāyikā, indicate an early familiarity with the words Kathā and Ākhyāyikā, but the terms are apparently used to signify a tale in general, without any specific technical connotation.¹ We know nothing, again, of the Cārumati of Vararuci,

¹ The Kathā and the Ākhyāyikā are mentioned in Mahābhārata ii. 11.38 (Bomb. Ed.), but Winternitz has shown (JRAS, 1903, pp. 571-72) that the stanza is interpolated.—The Sanskrit Ākhyāyikā, as we know it, has no similarity to Oldenberg’s hypothetical Vedic Ākhyāna;
from which a stanza is quoted in Bhoja’s Šrīngāra-prakāśa, nor of the Śūdrama-kathā (if it is a Kathā) of Kālidāsa’s predecessor Somila (and Rāmila), nor of the Tarāṅgavatī of Śripālittā,¹ who is mentioned and praised in Dhanapāla’s Tilakamañjarī and Abhinanda’s Rāma-carita as a contemporary of Hāla-Sātavāhana. Bāṇa himself alludes to the two classes of prose composition, called respectively the Kathā and the Ākhyāyika, clearly intimating that his Harṣa-carita is intended to be an Ākhyāyikā and his Kādambarī a Kathā. He also offers a tribute of praise to writers of the Ākhyāyika who preceded him, and refers, as Subandhu also does,² to its division into chapters called Ucchvāsas and to the occurrence of Vaktra metres as two of its distinguishing characteristics. Bāṇa even mentions Bhaṭṭāra Haricandra, to us only a name, as the author of a prose composition of high merit; to this testimony the Prakrit poet Vākpati, in the 9th century, subscribes by mentioning Haricandra along with Kālidāsa, Subandhu and Bāṇa.³

It seems clear, therefore, that Bāṇa is no innovator, nor is Haricandra the creator of the Prose Kāvya, which must have gradually evolved, with the narrative material of the folk-tale, under the obvious influence of the poetic Kāvya during a considerable period of time. But an effort⁴ has been made to prove,

for in the Ākhyāyikā the prose is essential and the verse negligible. See Keith in JRAS, 1911, p. 979 for full discussion and references.

¹ This is obviously the Dharma-kathā or Jaina religious story, called Tarāṅgavatī, of Śrī-pādalipta or Sīri-pālittā, who is already mentioned as Tarāṅgavatikāra in the Aśvogadāra, and therefore must have flourished before the 5th century A.D. The scene of the story is laid at Śrāvakastā in the time of Udayana; but the work is lost. Its romantic love-story, however, is preserved in the Tarāṅgalolā, composed in Prakrit verse in 1643 A.D. According to E. Leumann, who has translated the Tarāṅgalolā (München 1921), Śrī-pādalipta lived as early as the 2nd or 3rd century A.D. There is a tradition that he lived in the time of Śālavāhana. A MS of the Prakrit work is noticed in the Descriptive Cat. of MSS in the Jaina Bhandar at Pātān by L. B. Gandhi (GOS, Baroda 1937), introd., p. 58.

² Ed. F. Hall, p. 184.

by adducing parallels of incident, motif and literary device, that
the Sanskrit romance was directly derived from the Greek. Even
admitting some of the parallels, the presumption is not excluded
that they might have developed independently, while the acutal
divergence between the two types, in form and spirit, is so great
as to render any theory of borrowing no more than a groundless
conjecture. The Sanskrit romance, deriving its inspiration
directly from the Kāvyā, to which it is approximated both by
theory and practice, is hardly an exotic; it is differentiated from
the Greek romance by its comparative lack of interest in the
narrative, which is a marked quality of the Greek romance, as
well as by its ornate elaboration of form and expression,¹ which
is absent in the naivete and simplicity of the Greek stories. It
is true that the fact of difference need not exclude the possibility
of borrowing; but, as in the case of the drama, no substantial
fact has yet been adduced, which would demonstrate the positive
fact of borrowing by Sanskrit.

( So far as the works of the rhetoricians are concerned, the
earliest forms of the Kathā and the Ākhyāyikā are those noticed
by Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin.² ) In the Ākhyāyikā, according to
Bhāmaha, the subject-matter gives facts of actual experience, the
narrator being the hero himself; the story is told in pleasing
prose, divided into chapters called Ucchvāsas and containing
metrical pieces in Vaktra and Aparavaktra metre, indicative of
future happening of incidents; scope may be allowed to poetic in-
vention, and the theme may embrace subjects like the abduction
of a maiden (Kanyā-haraṇa), fighting, separation and final
triumph of the hero; and it should be composed in Sanskrit. In the

¹ The Greek romance has, no doubt, a few specific instances of rhetorical ornaments,
such as homoileutea, parasisis, alliteration and strained compounds, but they are not com-
parable to those in the Sanskrit romance, which essentially depends on them. There is
hardly anything in Greek corresponding to the picaresque type of story which we find in
Daṇḍin.

² See, on this question, S. K. De, The Ākhyāyikā and the Kathā in Classical Sanskrit in
BSOS, III, 1925, p. 507-17; also J. Nobel, op. cit., p. 156 f.
Kathā, on the other hand, the subject-matter is generally an invented story, the narrator being some one other than the hero; there is no division into Ucchvāsas, no Vaktra or Aparavaktra verses; and it may be composed either in Sanskrit or in Apabhramśa. It will be seen at once that the prototypes of this analysis are, strictly, not the two prose narratives of Bāna, nor those of Daṇḍin and Subandhu, but some other works which have not come down to us. It is worth noting, however, that the older and more rigid distinctions, embodied by Bhāmaha, were perhaps being obliterated by the innovations of bolder poets; and we find a spirit of destructive criticism in the Kāvyādārśa of Daṇḍin, who considers these refinements not as essential, but as more or less formal requirements. Accordingly, Daṇḍin does not insist upon the person of the narrator, nor the kind of metre, nor the heading of the chapter, nor the limitations of the linguistic form as fundamental marks of difference. This is apparently in view of current poetical usage, in which both the types were perhaps converging under the same class of prose narrative, with only a superficial difference in nomenclature. It must have been a period of uncertain transition, and Daṇḍin's negative criticism (as also Vāmana's brushing aside of the whole controversy) implies that no fixed rules had yet been evolved to regulate the fluctuating theory or practice relating to them.

'It is clear that the uncertain ideas of early theorists, as well as the extremely small number of specimens that have survived, does not give us much guidance in definitely fixing the nomenclature and original character of the Sanskrit Prose Kāvya.' Nevertheless, the whole controversy shows that the two kinds of prose narrative were differentiated at least in one important characteristic. Apart from merely formal requirements, the Ākhyāyikā was conceived, more or less, as a serious composition dealing generally with facts of experience and having an autobiographical, traditional or semi-historical interest; while the Kathā was essentially a fictitious narrative, which may sometimes (as Daṇḍin contends) be recounted in the first person, but whose
chief interest resides in its invention. These older types appear
to have been modified in course of time; and the modification
was chiefly on the lines of the model popularised by Bāṇa in his
two prose Kāvyas. Accordingly we find Rudraṭa doing nothing
more than generalising the chief features of Bāṇa’s works into
rules of universal application. In the Ākhyāyikā, therefore,
Rudraṭa authorises the formula that the narrator need not be the
hero himself, that the Ucchvāsas (except the first) should open with
two stanzas, preferably in the Āryā metre, indicating the tenor
of the chapter in question, and that there should be a metrical
introduction of a literary character. All these injunctions are in
conformity with what we actually find in Bāṇa’s Harṣa-carita.
The Kathā was less touched by change in form and substance,
but the erotic character of the story, consisting of the winning
of a maiden (Kanyā-lābha), and not abduction (Kanyā-haraṇa)
of the earlier theorists, was expressly recognised; while,
in accordance with the prevalent model of the Kādambari, a
metrical introduction, containing a statement of the author’s
family and motives of authorship, is also required. This
practically stereotypes the two kinds in Sanskrit literature. It is
noteworthy, however, that later rhetoricians do not expressly
speak of the essential distinction based upon tradition and fancy,
although they emphasise the softer character of the Kathā by
insisting that its main issue is Kanyā-lābha, which would give
free scope to the delineation of the erotic sentiment.

It is obvious that the prescriptions of the theorists are in-
teresting historical indications of later developments, but they do
not throw much light upon the origin and early history of the
Sanskrit Prose Kāvya. In the absence of older material, the
problem is difficult and does not admit of a precise determination.
There can hardly be any affinity with the beast-fable of the
Pañcatantra type, which is clearly distinguishable in form,

1 The old lexicon of Amara also accepts (i. 5. 5-6) this distinction when it says: ākhyā-
yikopaladbhārtā, and prabandhakalpanā kathā.
content and spirit; but it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that there was an early connexion with the popular tale of heroes and heroines, including the fairy tale of magic and marvel. This appears to be indicated by the very designation of the Brhatkathā as a Kathā and the express mention of this work as a Kathā by Daṇḍin; and the indication is supported by the suggestion that this early collection was drawn upon by Daṇḍin, Subandhu and Bāṇa. If this is granted, a distinction should, at the same time, be made; for the Brhatkathā, in conception and expression, was apparently a composition of a different type. The available evidence makes it more than probable that the popular tale never attained any of the refinement and elaboration which we find in the prose romance from its beginning,—in a less degree in Daṇḍin and in more extravagant manner in Subandhu and Bāṇa. From this point of view, the prose romance cannot be directly traced back to the popular tale represented by Guṇāḍhya’s work; its immediate ancestor is the ornate Kāvya itself, whose graces were transferred from verse to prose for the purpose of rehandling and elaborating the popular tale. It is not known whether the new form was applied first to the historical story and then employed to embellish the folk-tale, as the basis of the distinction between the Ākhyāyikā and the Kathā seems to imply; but it is evident that the prose romance was evolved out of the artistic Kāvya and influenced by it throughout its history. The theorists, unequivocally and from the beginning, include the prose romance in the category of the Kāvya and regard it as a kind of transformed Kāvya in almost every respect, while the popular tale and the beast-fable are not even tardily recognised and given that status.

It seems probable, therefore, that the prose romance had a twofold origin. It draws freely upon the narrative material of the folk-tale, rehandles some of its natural and supernatural incidents and motifs, adopts its peculiar emboxing arrangement of tales and its contrivance of *deux ex machina*, and, in fact, utilises all that is the common stock-in-trade of the Indian story-teller. But its form and method of
story-telling are different, and are derived essentially from the Kāvyā. Obviously written for a cultured audience, the prose romance has not only the same elevated and heavily ornamented diction, but it has also the same enormous development of the art of description. In fact, the existing specimens combine a legendary content with the form and spirit of a literary tour de force. The use of unwieldy compounds, incessant and elaborate puns, alliterations and assonances, recondite allusions and other literary devices, favourite to the Kāvyā, receive greater freedom in prose; but stress is also laid on a minute description of nature and on an appreciation of mental, moral and physical qualities of men and women. From the Kāvyā also comes its love-motif, as well as its inclination towards erotic digressions. Not only is the swift and simple narrative of the tale clothed lavishly with all the resources of learning and fancy, but we find (except in Daṇḍin’s Daśakumāra-carita) that the least part of the romance is the narrative, and nothing is treated as really important but the description and embellishment. From this point of view, it would be better to call these works Prose Kāvyas or poetical compositions in prose, than use the alien nomenclature Prose Romances, which has a connotation not wholly applicable.!

The evolution of the peculiar type of the Prose Kāvyā from the Metrical Kāvyā, with the intermediary of the folk-tale, need not have been a difficult process in view of the fact that the term Kāvyā includes any imaginative work of a literary character and refuses to make verse an essential. The medium is immaterial; the poetical manner of expression becomes important both in prose and verse. If this is a far-off anticipation of Wordsworth’s famous dictum that there is no essential distinction between verse and prose, the direction is not towards simplicity but towards elaborateness. In the absence of early specimens of imaginative Sanskrit prose, it is not possible to decide whether the very example of the Prose Kāvyā is responsible for this attitude, or is itself the result of the attitude; but the approximation of the Prose Kāvyā to the Metrical Kāvyā appears to have
been facilitated by the obliteration of any vital distinction between literary compositions in verse and in prose. But for the peculiar type of expository or argumentative prose found in technical works and commentaries, verse remains throughout the history of Sanskrit literature the normal medium of expression, while prose retains its conscious character as something which has to compete with verse and share its rhythm and refinement. At no period prose takes a prominence and claims a larger place; it is entirely subordinated to poetry and its art. The simple, clear and yet elegant prose of the Pañcatantra is considered too jejune, and never receives its proper development; for poetry appears to have invaded very early, as the inscriptions records show, the domain of descriptive, romantic and narrative prose. An average prose-of-all-work never emerges, and even in technical treatises pedestrian verse takes the place of prose.

b. Daṇḍin

The Daśakumāra-carita\(^1\) of Daṇḍin illustrates some of the peculiarities of the Sanskrit Prose Kaśya mentioned above, but it does not conform strictly to all the requirements of the theorists. This disregard of convention in practice may, with plausibility, be urged as an argument in support of the identity of our Daṇḍin with Daṇḍin, author of the Kavyādarśa, who, as we have seen above, also advocates in theory a levelling of distinctions. But from the rhetorician's negative account no conclusive inference

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is possible, and the romancer may be creating a new genre without consciously concerning himself with the views of the theorists. The problem of identity cannot be solved on this slender basis alone; and there is, so far, no unanimity nor impregnable evidence on the question. Some critics are satisfied with the traditional ascription of both the works to one Daṇḍin,¹ and industriously search for points to support it. However good the position is, errors in traditional ascription are not rare and need not be final. On the other hand, the name Daṇḍin itself, employed to designate a religious mendicant of a certain order, may be taken as a title capable of being applied to more than one person, and therefore does not exclude the possibility of more than one Daṇḍin. A very strong ground for denying identity of authorship is also made out² by not a negligible amount of instances in which Daṇḍin the prose-poet offends against the prescriptions of Daṇḍin the rhetorician. It is a poor defence to say that a man need not practise what he teaches; for the question is more vital than mere mechanical adherence to rules, but touches upon niceties of diction and taste and general outlook. The presumption that the Daśakumāra belongs to the juvenilia of Daṇḍin and the Kāvyādarśa is the product of more mature judgment is ingenious, but there is nothing immature in either work. The general exaltation of the Vaidarbha Mārga in the Kāvyādarśa and its supposed illustration in the Daśakumāra supply at best a vague argument, which need not be considered seriously. That both the authors were Southerners is suggested, but not proved; for while the indications in the Kāvyādarśa are inconclusive, there is nothing to show that, apart from conventional geography,³ the author of the romance knows familiarly the eighteen different countries.

¹ The attribution of three works to Daṇḍin by Rājaśekhara and the needless conjectures about them are no longer of much value; see S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics, I, p. 62 note and p. 72.

² Agashe, op. cit., pp. xxv-xxxv.

mentioned in the course of the narrative. The geographical items of the Daśakumāra only reveal a state of things which existed probably in a period anterior to the date of Harṣavardhana's empire,¹ and suggest for the work a date much earlier than what is possible to assign to the Kāvyādārśa. It is true that the time of both the works is unknown; but while the date of the Kāvyādārśa is approximated to the beginning of the 8th century,² there is nothing to show that the Daśakumāra cannot be placed much earlier.³ The use of rare words, grammatical solecisms and stylistic peculiarities of the Daśakumāra again, on which stress is sometimes laid for a comparatively late date, admit of an entirely opposite, but more reasonable, explanation of an early date, which is also suggested by the fact that the romance has certainly none of the affected prose and developed form of those of Subandhu and Bāṇa. The picture of the so-called degenerate society painted by Daṇḍin is also no argument for a late date; for it would apply equally well to the Mṛchakaṭīka and the Caturbhāṇi, the earliness of which cannot be doubted and to which the Daśakumāra bears a more than superficial resemblance in spirit, style and diction.⁴

¹ Mark Collins, op. cit., p. 9 f.
² S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics, I, p. 58 f., in spite of Keith's advocacy (Indian Studies in honour of Lanman, Cambridge Mass., 1929, p. 167 f.) of an earlier date for the Kāvyādārśa on the ground of Daṇḍin's priority to Bhāmaha. This is not the place to enter into the reopened question, but there is still reason to believe that the presumption of Bhāmaha's priority will survive Keith's strenuous onslaught.
³ The alleged relation of Bhāravi to Daṇḍin of the Daśakumāra⁵ (see S. K. De in IHQ, I, p. 31 f.; III, p. 395-96) G.; Harihara Sastri in ibid, III, pp. 169-71), would place him towards the close of the 7th and beginning of the 8th century A.D.,—a date which is near enough to that of Daṇḍin of the Kāvyādārśa; but the reliability of the account is not beyond question (see Keith, HSL, preface, p. xvi).
⁴ Weber (Indische Streifen, Berlin 1868, pp. 311-15, 353), Meyer (op. cit., pp. 120-27) and Collins (op. cit., p. 48) would place Daśakumāra⁶ some time before 585 A.D. In discussing the question, however, it is better not to confuse the issue by presuming beforehand the identity of the romantic and the rhetorician. Agashe's impossible dating at the 11th or 12th century is based on deductions from very slender and uncertain data. The fact that the Daśakumāra is not quoted in the anthological literature before the 11th century or that adaptations in the vernacular were not produced before the 13th, are arguments from silence which do not prove much. Agashe, however, does not rightly accept the worthless
The Daśakumāra-carita, in its present form, shows, with Bāṇa's two romances, the peculiarity of having been left unfinished, but it also lacks an authentic beginning. The end is usually supplied by a Supplement in four Ucchvāsas, called Uttara-piṭhikā or Śeṣa, which is now known to be the work of a comparatively modern Deccan writer named Cakrapāṇi Dīkṣita,¹ son of Candramauli Dīkṣita; but a ninth or concluding Ucchvāsa by Padmanābha² and a continuation by Mahārājā-dhirāja Gopinātha³ are also known to exist. The beginning is found similarly in a Prelude, called Pūrva-piṭhikā,⁴ in five Ucchvāsas, which is believed on good grounds to be the work of some other hand than that of Daṇḍin. The title Daśakumāra-carita suggests that we are to expect accounts of the adventures of ten princes, but the present extent of Daṇḍin’s work proper contains, with an abrupt commencement, eight of these in eight Ucchvāsas. The Pūrva-piṭhikā was, therefore, obviously intended to supply not only the framework of the stories but also the missing stories of two more princes; while the Uttara-piṭhikā undertakes to conclude the story of Viśruta left incomplete in the last chapter of Daṇḍin’s work. Like the Uttara-piṭhikā, the Pūrva-piṭhikā, which was apparently not accorded general acceptance, exists in various forms,⁵ and the details of the tales

legend, relied upon by Wilson, which makes Daṇḍin an ornament of the court of Bhoja. The reference to Bhoja-vaṃśa in Ullāsa viii (ed. Agashe, p. 129) does not support this hypothesis, for Kālidāsa also uses the name Bhoja, referring probably to the rulers of Vidarbha. 

³ Wilson, introd., p. 30; Eggeling, *op. cit.*, vii, no. 4070/1850, p. 1554.
⁴ Some MSS (e.g., India Office MS. no. 4059/2694; Eggeling, *op. cit.*, vii, p. 1551) and some early editions (e.g., the Calcutta ed. of Madan Mohan Tarkalamkar, 1849) do not contain the Pūrva-piṭhikā. The ed. of Wilson and others include it. Wilson ventured the conjecture that the Prelude is the work of one of Daṇḍin's disciples; but in view of the various forms in which it is now known to exist, and also because it is missing in some MSS, this conjecture must be discarded. Some of the versions are also obviously late productions.
⁵ The version, which begins with the solitary benedictory stanza brahmaṇa-ecatra-daṇḍa⁶ and narrates, in five Ucchvāsas, the missing stories of the two princes Puppodbhava and Somadatta, along with that of the missing part of the story of Rājavāhana and his lady-love
do not agree in all versions nor with the body of Dāṇḍin’s genuine text.

So far as Dāṇḍin’s own narrative goes, each of the seven princes, who are the friends and associates of the chief hero, Rājavāhana, recounts his adventure, in the course of which each carves out his own career and secures a princely spouse. But the work opens abruptly with an account of Rājavāhana, made captive and led in an expedition against Campā, where in the course of a turmoil he finds all the rest of his companions. By his desire they severally relate their adventures, which are comprised in each of the remaining seven chapters. The rather complex story of Apahāraravman, which comes in the second Ucchvāsa, is one of the longest and best in the collection, being rich in varied incidents and interesting characters. The seduction practised on the ascetic Marici by the accomplished courtesan, Kāmamaṇjari, who also deceives the merchant Vastupāla, strips him to the loin-cloth and turns him into a Jaina monk; the adventure in the gambling house; the ancient art of thieving in which the hero is proficient; the punishing of the old misers of Campā who are taught that the goods of the world are perishable; the motif of the inexhaustible purse; all these, described with considerable humour and vividness, are woven cleverly into this tale of the Indian Robin Hood,

Avantisundari is the usually accepted Prelude, found in most MSS. and printed editions. Its spurious character has been shown by Agashe. It is remarkable that the usual metrical beginning required by theory at the outset of a Kathā or Ākhyaṅkā is missing here. The benedictory stanza however, is quoted anonymously in Bhoja’s Saravati-karṣṭāṅkhaṅgara (ed. Borooah, 1884, p. 114); the fact would indicate that this Prelude must have been prefixed at least before 11th century. Another Prelude by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is given in App. to Agashe’s ed., while still another in verse by Vināyaka in three chapters is noticed by Eggeling, op. cit., vi, no. 40671/586a, p. 1553. M. R. Kavi published (Madras 1924) a fragmentary Avantisundari-kathā in prose (with a metrical summary called ६Kathā-sāra), which is ascribed to Dāṇḍin as the lost Pūrva-piṅkīkā of his romance, but this is quite implausible; see S. K. De in IHQ I, p. 31 f. and III, p. 394 f.

1 On the art of thieving, see Bloomfield in Amer. Journ. of Philology, XLIV, 1923, pp. 97-123, 193-229 and Proc. of the Amer. Philosophical Soc., LII, pp. 616-50. On burglary as a literary theme, see L. H. Gray in WZKM, XVIII, 1904, pp. 50-51. Śārvilaka in the Mrčchakatika is also a scientific thief, with his paraphernalia, like Apahāraravman.
who plunders the rich to pay the poor, unites lovers and reinstates unfortunate victims of meanness and treachery. The next tale of Upahāravarman is not equally interesting, but it is not devoid of incident and character; it is the story of the recovery of the lost kingdom of the hero’s father by means of a trick, including the winning of the queen’s favour, murder and pretended transformation\(^1\) by power of magic into the dissolute king who had usurped. The succeeding story of Arthapāla is very similar in its theme of resuscitation of his father’s lost rank as the disgraced minister of the king of Kāśi, and incidental winning of Princess Mañikarṇikā, but it has nothing very striking except the pretended use of the device of snake-charm. The fifth story of Pramati introduces the common motif of a dream-vision of the Princess Navamālikā of Śrāvasti, and describes how the hero, in the dress of a woman, contrives (by the trick of being left as a deposit) to enter the royal apartments and have access to the princess; but it also gives an incidental account of the somewhat unconventional watching of a cock-fight by a Brahman! The sixth story of Mitragupta, who wins Princess Kandukavatī of Dāmalāpta in the Suhma country, is varied by introducing adventures on the high seas and on a distant island, and by enclosing, after the manner of the \textit{Vetāla-pancavaniśati}, four ingenious tales, recounted in reply to the question of a demon, namely, those of Bhūmini, Gomini, Nimbavatī and Nitambavatī, all of which illustrate the maxim that cunning alone is the way to success. The seventh tale of Mantragupta is a literary \textit{tour de force}, in which no labial letters are used by the narrator, because his lips have been made sore by the passionate kisses of his beloved. It begins with the episode of a weird ascetic and his two ministering goblins, repeats the device of pretended transformation through magic into a murdered man, and places the incidents on the seacoast of Kaliṅga and Andhra. The last incomplete narrative of

\(^1\) On the art of entering another’s body as a fiction-motif, see M. Bloomfield in \textit{Proc., American Philosophical Soc.}, LVI, 1917, pp. 1-43.
Viśruta relates the restoration of the hero’s protégé, a young prince of Vidarbha, to power by a similar clever, but not over-scrupulous, contrivance, including the ingenious spreading of a false rumour, the use of a poisoned chaplet and the employment of a successful fraud in the name and presence of the image of Durgā; but the arguments defending idle pleasures, which speak the language of the profligate of all ages, as well as the introduction of dancers and jugglers and their amusing sleight of hand, are interesting touches.

It will be seen at once that Daṇḍin’s work differs remarkably from such normal specimens of the Prose Kāvya as those of Subandhu and Bāṇa; and it is no wonder that its unconventionality is not favoured by theorists, in whose rhetorical treatises Daṇḍin is not cited till the 11th century A.D. The Daśakumāra-carita is rightly described as a romance of roguery. In this respect, it is comparable, to a certain extent, to the Mṛcchakatika, which is also a drama full of rascals, and to the four old Bhāṇas, ascribed to Śyāmilaka, Īśvaradatta and others; but rascality is not the main topic of interest in Śūdraka’s drama, nor is the Bhāṇa, as a class of composition, debarred by theory from dealing with low characters and themes of love, revelry and gambling. Daṇḍin’s work, on the other hand, derives its supreme flavour from the vivid and picturesque exposition of such characters and themes. Although the romantic interest is not altogether wanting, and marvel and magic and winning of maidens find a place, it is concerned primarily with the adventures of clever tricksters. Daṇḍin deliberately violates the prescription that the Prose Kāvya, being a sub-division of the Kāvya in general, should have a good subject (Sādāśraya) and that the hero should be noble and high-souled. Gambling, burglary, cunning, fraud, violence, murder, impersonation, abduction and illicit love form, jointly and severally, the predominating incidents in every story; and Mantragupta’s definition of love as the determination to possess—de l’audace in Danton’s famous phrase—is indeed typical of its erotic situations. Wilson, with his mid-Victorian
sense of propriety, speaks of the loose principles and lax morals of the work, and the opinion has been repeated in a modified form by some modern critics; but the point is overlooked that immorality, rather than morality, is its deliberate theme. The Daśakumāra is imaginative fiction, but it approaches in spirit to the picaresque romance of modern Europe, which gives a lively picture of rakes and ruffians of great cities. It is not an open satire, but the whole trend is remarkably satirical in utilising, with no small power of observation and caricature, the amusing possibilities of incorrigible rakes, unscrupulous rogues, hypocritical ascetics, fraudulent priests, light-hearted idlers, fervent lovers, cunning bawds, unfaithful wives and heartless courtesans, who jostle with each other within the small compass of the swift and racy narratives. The scenes are accordingly laid in cosmopolitan cities where the scum and refuse of all countries and societies meet. Even the higher world of gods, princes and Brahmans is regarded with little respect. The gods are brought in to justify disgraceful deeds in which the princes engage themselves; the Buddhist nuns act as procuresses; the teaching of the Jina is declared by a Jaina monk to be nothing but a swindle; and the Brahman's greed of gold and love of cock-fights are held up to ridicule. Two chief motives which actuate the princes of wild deeds are the desire for delights of love and for the possession of a realm, but they are not at all fastidious about the means they employ to gain their ends. Their frankness often borders on cynicism and, if not on a lack of morality, on fundamental non-morality.

It is a strange world in which we move, life-like, no doubt, in its skilful portraiture, but in a sense unreal, being sublimated with marvel and magic, which are seldom dissociated from folklore. We hear of a collyrium which produces invisibility, of a captive's chains transformed deliciously into a beautiful nymph, of burglar's art which turns beggars into millionaires, and of magician's charms which spirit away maidens. This trait appears to have been inherited from the popular tale, and Daṇḍin's
indebtedness to the Bhātakathā has been industriously traced. But the treatment undoubtedly is Daṇḍin’s own. He is successful in further developing the lively elements of the popular tale, to which he judiciously applies the literary polish and sensibility of the Kāvya; but the one is never allowed to overpower the other. The brier of realism and the rose of romance are cleverly combined in a unique literary form. In the laboured compositions of Subandhu and Bāṇa the exclusive tendency towards the sentimental and the erotic leads to a diminishing of interest in the narrative or in its comic possibilities. The impression that one receives from Daṇḍin’s work, on the other hand, is that it delights to caricature and satirise certain aspects of contemporary society in an interesting period. Its power of vivid characterisation realises this object by presenting, not a limited number of types, but a large variety of individuals, including minor characters not altogether devoid of reality and interest. There can be little doubt that most of these are studies from life, heightened indeed, but faithful; not wholly agreeable, but free from the touch alike of mawkishness and affectation. It is remarkable that in these pictures the realistic does not quench the artistic, but the merely finical gives way to the vividly authentic. We pass from pageantry to conduct, from convention to impression, from abstraction to fact. There are abundant instances of the author’s sense of humour, his wit and polite banter, his power of gentle satire and caricature, which effectively contribute to the realism of his outlook. For the first time, these qualities, rare enough in the normal Sanskrit writing, reveal themselves in a literary form, and make Daṇḍin’s delightfully unethical romancero picaresco, not a conventional Prose Kāvya, but a distinct literary creation of a new type in Sanskrit.

There is more matter, but the manner has no difficulty in joining hands with it. Daṇḍin’s work avoids the extended scale and leisurely manner of proceeding, the elaborate descriptive and

1 Agashe, op. cit., p. xli f.
sentimental divagations, the eccentricities of taste and extravagance of diction, which are derived from the tradition of the regular Kāvya and developed to its utmost possibilities or impossibilities in the imaginative romances of Subandhu and Bāṇa. The arrangement of the tales is judicious, and the comparatively swift and easy narrative is never overloaded by constant and enormous digressions. The episodic method is old and forms a striking feature of Indian story-telling, but in the Daśakumāra the subsidiary stories never beat out, hamper nor hold up the course of the main narrative. Even the four clever stories in the sixth Ucchvāsa are properly emboxed, and we are spared the endless confusion of curses and changing personalities and stories within stories.

Not only Daṇḍin’s treatment, but also his style and diction are saved from the fatal fault of over-elaboration by his sense of proportion and restraint. He is by no means an easy writer, but there are no fatiguing complexities in his diction; it is energetic and yet elegantly articulated. It is not marked by any inordinate love for disproportionate compounds and sesquipedalian sentences, nor by a weakness for far-fetched allusions, complex puns and jingling of meaningless sounds. The advantage of such a style, free from ponderous construction and wearisome embellishment, is obvious for the graphic dressing up of its unconventional subjects of a cheat, a hypocrite, an amoret or a braggadacio; and the Kāvya-refinements would have been wholly out of place. Occasionally indeed Daṇḍin indulges in florid descriptions, such as we find in the pictures of the sleeping Ambālikā or the dancing Kandukavati, but even in these cases he keeps within the limits of a few long sentences or only one printed page. There is an attempt at a literary feat in the avoidance of labial sounds in the seventh Ucchvāsa, but it is adequately motivated; and Daṇḍin wisely confines himself to a sparing use of such verbal ingenuity. It is not suggested that Daṇḍin makes no pretension to ornament, but, in the main, his use of it is effective, limited and pretty, and not recondite, incessant and tiresome.
The highest praise goes to Daṇḍin as the master of vigorous and elegant Sanskrit prose; and his work, in its artistic and social challenges, is undoubtedly a unique masterpiece, the merits of which need not be reluctantly recognised by modern taste for not conforming to the normal model.

c. Subandhu

In theory and accepted practice, the normal type of the Prose Kāvya is illustrated, not by the work of Daṇḍin, but by those of Subandhu and Bāṇa. In these typical Prose Kāvyas, however, there is less exuberance of life, the descriptions are more abundant and elaborate, the narrative is reduced to a mere skeleton, learning loads the wings of fancy, and the style and treatment lack ease and naturalness. They have no Russian heroes, nor dubious adventures, but deal with chaste and noble, if somewhat sentimental and bookish, characters. They employ all the romantic devices, derived from folk-tale, of reborn heroes and transformed personages in a dreamland of marvellous but softer adventure, and present them in a gorgeous vehicle of elaborately poetical, but artificial, style.

The date of Subandhu, author of the Vāsavadattā,¹ is not exactly known. Attempts have been made to establish its upper and the lower terminus, respectively, by Subandhu’s punning allusion, on the one hand, to the Uddyotakara² and a supposed work of Dharmakīrti,³ belonging at least to the middle of the

¹ Ed. F. Hall, Bibl. Ind., with comm. of Śivarāma Tripiṭhīn, Calcutta 1859, reprinted almost verbatim by J. Vidyasagar, Calcutta 1874, 3rd ed. 1907; ed. R. V. Krishnamachariar with his own comm., Śrī Vāṇi-vilāsa Press, Srirangam 1906; ed. Louis H. Gray, in roman characters, Columbia University Press, New York 1913. Śivarāma belongs to the 18th century; see S. K. De, Sanskrit Poetics, 1, p. 318. There is also an earlier comm. of Jagaddhara which deserves publication.


³ bauddha-samgatim (v. 1. sat-kavi-kāvya-racanām) iśālaṃkāra-bhūṣitaṁ, loc. cit. It is remarkable that the reading is not found in all Mss (Hall, p. 236), and no work of Dharmakīrti’s called Baudhāsāṃgatīya-lāṃkāra has yet been found. Lévi (Bulletin de l’Ecole Francais d’Extême-Orient, 1903, p. 18) denies that Subandhu alludes to Dharmakīrti’s literary activity.
sixth century A.D., and, on the other, by Bāṇa’s allusion to a Vāsavadattā, which is supposed to be the same as Subandhu’s work of that name, in the preface to his Harṣa-carita, composed early in the seventh century. But it must be recognised that the question is not free from difficulty. Neither the date of Dharmakīrti nor that of the Uddyotakara can be taken as conclusively settled; nor is it beyond question, in the absence of the author’s name, that Bāṇa really alludes to Subandhu’s work. Even if the early part of the 7th century is taken to be the date of Dharmakīrti and the Uddyotakara, it would make Subandhu a contemporary of Bāṇa. The traditional view that Bāṇa wrote his romance to surpass that of Subandhu probably arose from Bāṇa’s qualification of his own Kādambarī (st. 20) by the epithet ati-dvayī ‘surpassing the two,’ these two being, according to the very late commentator, Subandhu’s Vāsavadattā and Guṇāḍhya’s Brhatkathā. But the doubt expressed, though later abandoned, by Peterson has been lately revived. Since the arguments on both sides of the question proceed chiefly on the

1 Stanza 11. The argument that Bāṇa, by the use of Śleṣa in this stanza, means to imply Subandhu’s fondness for it, is weak; for Bāṇa uses Śleṣa also in the stanzas on Bhāsa and the Brhatkathā.

2 Among other literary or historical allusions made by Subandhu, the reference to Vikramādiya and Kanka in the tenth introductory stanza has been made the basis of entirely problematic conjectures by Hall (p.6), Hoernle (JRAI, 1903, p. 545 f.) and B. C. Mazumdar (JRAI, 1907, p. 406 f.); see L. H. Gray, introd., p. 8f. The description of Kusumapura and Subandhu’s practice of the Gauḍī Riti may suggest that he was an eastern writer, but the geography of the work is too conventional and the argument on Riti too indefinite to be decisive. There are two other punning allusions by Subandhu, apparently to a Gaṇa-kārīkā with a Vṛtti by Surapāla (ed. Srijanam, p. 314) and an obscurely mentioned work by Kamalākara-bhikṣu (p. 319); but these have not yet been sufficiently recognised and traced.

3 Bhāṇudatta, the commentator, belong to the 16th century. But the phrase atidvayī is not grammatically correct, and the reading appears to be doubtful. Possibly it is a graphical scribal error for aniddhayā (qualifying dhiyā) read by other commentators (cf. OLD, IV, no. 2, 1941, p. 7).

4 Introd. to Kādambari, pp. 71-73.
5 Introd. to Sbhū, p. 133.
6 See Kane, introd. to Harṣa-carita, p. xii; Weber, Indische Streifen, Berlin 1868, I, pp. 369-86; Telang in JBRAS XVIII, 1891, p. 147 f.; W. Cartellieri in WZKM, I, 1887, pp. 115-32; F. W. Thomas in WZKM, XII, 1898, pp. 21-33, also in JRAI, 1920, pp. 386-87; Mankowski in WZKM, XV, 1901, p. 246f. Keith in JRAI, 1914 (arguing that Subandhu cannot be safely ascribed to a period substantially
debatable grounds of the standard of taste and morals, and of style and diction, it is scarcely possible to express a final opinion without being dogmatic. The only one characteristic difference of Subandhu’s prose from that of Bāṇa, apart from its being uninspiring, is the excessive, but self-imposed, use of paronomasia (Śleṣa); but this argues neither for priority nor posteriority, but only suggests the greater currency of this figure of speech in this period. The only certain point about Subandhu’s date is the fact that in the first half of the 8th century, Vākpati in his Prakrit poem Gauḍavaho (st. 800) connects Subandhu’s name with those of Bhāsa, Kālidāsa and Haricandra, and a little later in the same century, Vāmana quotes anonymously1 a passage which occurs, with a slight variation, in Subandhu’s Vāsavatattā.2

With the Vāsavatattā of the Udayana legend, made famous by various poets in Sanskrit literature, Subandhu’s romance has nothing common except the name; and since the story, as told by Subandhu, does not occur elsewhere in any form, it appears to be entirely invented and embellished by our poet. But the plot is neither rich nor striking. The handsome prince Kandarpaketu,

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1 Kāvyālaṃkāra i. 3. 25 (kulīṣa-sikhara-khara-nakha5) = Vāsavatattā, ed. Srirangam, p. 331 and ed. Hall, p. 226.

2 For other references to Subandhu and his work see Gray, pp. 3-4. Gray is right in thinking that the reference in the Daśakumāra6 to Vāsavatattā clearly alludes to the story of Udayana and Vāsavatattā, and not to Vāsavatattā of Subandhu’s romance.

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son of Cintāmaṇi, beholds in a dream a lovely maiden; and, setting out with his friend Makaranda in search of the unknown beloved and resting at night in the Vindhya hills under a tree, he overhears the conversation of a couple of parrots that princess Vāsavatā of Pātaliputra, having similarly dreamt of Kandarpaketu, has sent her pet parrot, Tamālikā, to find him. With the help of the kindly bird, the lovers unite; but as Śrīngāraśekhara, father of the princess, plans her marriage with a Vidyādhara chief, the lovers elope on a magic steed to the Vindhya hills. Early in the morning, while Kandarpaketu is still asleep, Vāsavatā, straying into the forest, is chased by two gangs of Kirātas; but as they fall out and fight for her, she eludes them but trespasses into a hermitage, where she is turned into stone by the curse of the unchivalrous ascetic. Kandarpaketu, deterred from self-destruction by a voice from the sky, finds her after a long search, and at his touch the curse terminates.

It will be seen that the central argument of such tales is weak and almost insignificant. The general scheme appears to consist of the falling in love of a passionate hero with a heroine of the fair and frail type, and their final union after a series of romantic adventures, in which all the narrative motifs\(^1\) of dream-vision, talking parrots, magic steed, curse, transformation and voice in the air are utilised. But the interest of the story-telling lies not in incident, but in minute portraiture of the personal beauty of the lovers and their generous qualities, their ardent, if sentimental, longing for each other, the misfortune obstructing the fulfilment of their desires, their pangs of thwarted love, and the preservation of their love through all trials and difficulties until their final union. All this is eked out lavishly by the romantic commonplaces of the Kāvya, by highly flavoured descriptions of cities, battles, oceans, mountains, seasons, sunset, moonrise and the like, and by the display of enormous Śāstric

\(^1\) A list of these are made out by Cartellieri, \textit{op. cit.}, For a study of these motifs as literary devices see Gray in \textit{WZKM}, XVIII, 1904, p. 39 f.
learning and technical skill. Subandhu's poverty of invention and characterisation, therefore, is not surprising; and criticism has been, not unjustly, levelled against the absurdities and inconsistencies of his story. But the slenderness of the theme is not so much a matter of importance to Subandhu as the manner of developing or over-developing it. Stress has been rightly laid on his undoubted, if somewhat conventional, descriptive power; but the more than occasional descriptive digressions, forming the inseparable accessory of the Kāvyā, constitute the bulk of his work, and are made merely the means of displaying his luxuriant rhetorical skill and multifarious learning. The attractiveness of the lady of Kandarpaketu's vision, for instance, is outlined in a brief sentence of some one hundred and twenty lines only! The wise censure of Ānandavardhana¹ that the poets are often regardless of theme and sentiment and exceedingly engrossed in verbal tricks is more than just in its application to the Prose Kāvyā of this type.

It must, however, be said to Subandhu's credit that he is not overfond of long rolling compounds, and even when they occur, they are not altogether devoid of majesty and melody. When he has no need for a long sentence, he can write short ones, and this occurs notably in the brief dialogues. The sound-effects are not always tedious, nor his use of words always atrocious. What becomes wearisome in its abundance is Subandhu's constant search for conceits, epithets and similes expressed in endless strings of paronomasia (Śleṣa) and apparent incongruity (Virodhābhāsa). For this reason, even his really coruscating ideas and images become more brilliant than luminous. When we are told that a lady is rakta-pāda like a grammatical treatise, her feet being painted with red lacquer as sections of grammar with red lines, or that the rising sun is blood-coloured, because the lion of dawn clawed the elephant of the night, we are taken to the verge of ludicrous fancy; but

¹ Dvanyāloka, ed. NSP, Bombay 1911, p. 151.
such instances abound from page to page.\footnote{Krishnamachariar has given (op. cit., p. xixf) an almost exhaustive list of instances of Subandhu's verbal accomplishment.} In a stanza, the genuineness of which, however, is doubted, Subandhu describes his own work as a treasure-house of literary dexterity, and declares that he had woven a pun in every syllable of his composition. We have indeed the dictum of the Kāvyādarśa (ii. 362) that paronomasia generally enhances the charm of all poetic figures, and the extraordinary resources of Sanskrit permit its effective use, but the rhetorician probably never means that the paronomasia should overshadow everything. The richness of Subandhu's fancy and his ingenuity in this direction is indeed astonishing and justifies his boasting; but it cannot be said that he has used this figure with judgment or with the sense of visualisation which makes this, as well as other, figures a means of beautiful expression. Subandhu's paronomasias are often far-fetched and phantas-magoric, adduced only for the sake of cleverness, and involve much straining and even torturing of the language. It is true that in the stringing together of puns Subandhu does not stand alone. Bāṇa also makes much use of it, and refers to this habit of the Kathā when he describes it as nirantara-śleṣa-ghana. But Bāṇa never indulges in unceasing fireworks of puns and other devices, and his poetic imagination and power of picturesque description make ample amends for all his weakness for literary adornment. Subandhu, on the other hand, lacks these saving graces; nor does he command the humour, vigour and variety of Daṇḍin. He becomes, therefore, a willing victim of the cult of style, which believes that nothing great can be produced in the ordinary way.

In order to appreciate Subandhu's literary accomplishment this fact should be borne in mind; and it is as unnecessary as it is hypercritical either to depreciate or exaggerate his merits unduly. It should be conceded that, in spite of its fancy, pathos and sentiment, Subandhu's work is characterised by an element
of mere trick which certainly impairs its literary value; but it should not be assumed that it is a stupendous trifle, which enjoyed a fame and influence disproportionate to its worth. Bāṇa is doubtless a greater poet and can wield a wonderful spell of language, but Subandhu’s method and manner of story-telling do not differ much from those of Bāṇa, and conform to the general scheme of the Prose Kāvya. But for his excessive fondness for paronomasia, Subandhu’s style and diction are no more tyrannically mannered than those of Bāṇa; and parallelisms in words and ideas have been found in the respective works of the two poets. It is true that Subandhu’s glittering, but somewhat cold, fancy occupies itself more with the rhetorical, rather than with the poetical, possibilities of his subject; but making allowance for individual traits, one must recognise the same technique and paraphernalia in both Subandhu and Bāṇa. They deal with the self-same commodities; and if richness of vocabulary, wealth of description, profusion of epithets, similes and conceits, and frequency of learned allusions are distinctive of Subandhu, they are also found in Bāṇa. Whatever difference there is between the two romancers, it is one not in kind but in degree.

It would appear, therefore, that both Subandhu and Bāṇa exhibit in their works certain features of the Sanskrit prose narrative which, being of the same character, must have belonged to the general literary tendency of the time. The tendency is not so apparent in Daṇḍin, but in Subandhu and Bāṇa it is carried to its extreme; and we find, more or less, a similar phenomenon in poetry, as we pass from Bhāravi to Māgha. It is, however, a facile explanation which puts it down to incompetence, bad taste or queer mentality; the question has a deeper historical significance, perhaps more in prose than in poetry. Louis H. Gray calls attention to certain stylistic similarities between Subandhu’s Vāsavadattā and Lyly’s Eupheus; but if there is any point in drawing a parallel, it lies precisely in the fact that the work of the Sanskrit stylist, like that of the Elizabethan mannerist, is a deliberate attempt to achieve a rich,
variegated and imaginative prose style, although like all deliberate attempts it is carried to fantastic excess. The ornate and fanciful style tends to the florid and extravagant, and needs to be restrained and tamed; but the plain style inclines equally towards the slipshod and jejune, and needs to be raised and inspired. The plain style, evidenced in the Pañcatantra, is indeed well proportioned, clear and sane, and is suitable for a variety of literary purpose, but it is ill fitted for fanciful, gorgeous or passionate expression; it is constantly liable, when not used with something more than ordinary scholarship and taste, to degenerate into commonness or insipidity. Neither Subandhu nor Bāṇa may have evolved a properly ornate style, suitable for counteracting these perils and for elevated imaginative writing, but their inclination certainly points to this direction. It is not the rhetorical habit in these writers which annoys, but their use of rhetoric, not in proportion, but out of proportion, to their narrative, description, idea or feeling. Perhaps in their horror of the commonplace and in their eagerness to avoid the danger of being dull, they proceed to the opposite extreme of too heavy ornamentation, and thereby lose raciness, vigour and even sanity; but for this reason the worthiness of their motive and the measure of success which they achieved should not be missed. We have an interesting illustration here of what occurs everywhere, namely the constantly recurring struggle between the plain and the ornate style; but in trying to avoid plainness, these well-meaning but unbalanced writers practically swamp it with meaningless ornamentation, by applying to prose the ill-fitting graces and refinements of poetry. The gorgeous standard, which they set up, is neither faultless nor easy to follow, but it is curious that it is never questioned for centuries. It is a pity that their successors never realise their literary motive, but only exaggerate their literary mannerisms. It was for the later writers to normalise the style by cutting down its early exuberant excesses, but it is strange that they never attempted to do so. Perhaps they fell under the fascination of its poetical magnificence, and were
actuated by the theory which approximated prose to poetry and affiliated the prose Kāvyā to the metrical. There has never been, therefore, in the later history of Sanskrit prose style, a real ebb and flow, a real flux between maxima and minima. It is for this reason perhaps that the perfect prose style, which keeps the golden mean between the plain and the ornate, never developed in Sanskrit.

There is, thus, no essential difference of literary inspiration between Subandhu and Bāṇa; only, Subandhu's gifts are often rendered ineffectual by the mediocrity of his poetic powers. There is the sameness of characteristics and of ideas of workmanship; but while Subandhu often plods, Bāṇa can often soar. The extreme excellence, as well as the extreme defect, of the literary tendency, which both of them represent in their individual way, are, however, better mirrored in Bāṇa's works, which reach the utmost limit of the peculiar type of the Sanskrit prose narrative.

d. Bāṇabhaṭṭa

In the first two and a half chapters of his Harṣa-carita and in the introductory stanzas of his Kādambarī, Bāṇabhaṭṭa gives an account of himself and his family as prelude to that of his royal patron. He was a Brahman of the Vātsyāyana-gotra, his ancestry being traced to Vatsa, of whom a mythological account is given as the cousin of Śāradvata, son of Sarasvatī and Dadhica. In the family was born Kubera, who was honoured by many Gupta kings, and whose youngest son was Pāśupata. Pāśupata's son was Arthapati; and among the many sons of Arthapati, Citrabhānu was Bāṇa's father. They lived in a place called Pritikuṭa on the banks of the Hiranyabāhu, otherwise known

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1 The accounts agree, except in one omission, namely, the name of Bāṇa's great-grandfather, Pāśupata, is not found in the Kādambarī. For a recent summary of all relevant questions regarding Bāṇa and his works, as well as for a full bibliography, see A. A. Maria Sharpe, Bāṇa's Kādambarī (Diss., N. V. de Vlaamsche, Leuven 1937), pp. 1-108, which also contains Dutch trs. of work, with indices and concordances.
as the river Śoṇa. Bāṇa’s mother Rājyadevi died while he was yet young, but his father took tender care of him. When he was about fourteen, his father died; and in the unsettled life which followed, Bāṇa wandered about from place to place, mixed in dubious company, acquired evil repute as well as rich experience, returned home and lived a life of quiet study. He was summoned to the presence of king Harṣavardhana, ostensibly for being taken to task for his misspent youth, at his camp near the town of Maṇitārā on the Ajiravati. He was at first received with coldness, but afterwards with much favour.1 After some time, on a visit home, Bāṇa was requested by his relatives to speak of the great king. He began his narrative, after having warned his audience of his inability to do full justice to his theme. The story is told in the remaining five Ucchvāsas, but it is left unfinished. It was possibly never his intention to offer a complete account; for he tells us that even in a hundred lives he cannot hope to recount the whole story of Harṣa’s mighty deeds, and asks his audience if they would be content to hear a part.2

We have already spoken of the value of the important metrical preface to the Harṣa-carita,3 which speaks of the famous literary predecessors of Bāṇa. The story begins with a description of Sthāṇvīśvara and of the glorious kings, sprung from

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1 It is not known at what stage of Harṣa’s career Bāṇa met him. It is assumed that Bāṇa was fairly young when Harṣa in his greatness patronised him, and that there is no reason to presume that Bāṇa wrote in the early part of Harṣa’s reign, which ended in 647 A.D. Bāṇa never alludes to troubles of poverty among other troubles he mentions in Ucchvāsa i, and we are also told that he inherited wealth from his ancestors. He acknowledges gifts from his patron, but there is nothing to support the legend that he sold some of his literary works to Harṣa.

2 The earliest quotation from Bāṇa, though anonymous, occurs in Vāmana’s Kāṇyālaṃkāra (2nd half of the 8th century) v. 2. 44, anukaroti bhagavato nārāyaṇaya (=Kādambari, ed. Peterson, p. 6). In the middle of the 9th century, Bāṇa and his two works are mentioned by Ānandavardhana in his Dhvanyāloka (ed. NSP, pp. 87, 100, 101, 127).

3 Ed. A. A. Führer, with comm. of Sāṃkara, Bomb. Skt. Ser., 1909; ed. K. P. Parab, with same comm., NSP, Bombay 1892 (5th ed. 1925); ed. P. V. Kane (without comm. but with notes etc.), Bombay 1918. Trs. into English by E. B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas, London 1907.
Puspabhūti, from whom is descended Harṣavardhana's father, Prabhākaravardhana. Harṣa's elder brother is Rājyavardhana; and his sister Rājyaśrī is married to Grahavarman of the Maukhari family of Kānyakubja. Then we have a more brilliant than pathetic picture of the illness and death of Prabhākara-vardhana, whose queen Yasomati also ascends the funeral pyre, of the return of Rājyavardhana from his successful campaign against the Hūnas, and of his reluctance to ascend the throne. But before Harṣa could be installed, news reaches that the king of Mālava is slain Grahavarman and imprisoned Rājyaśrī. Rājyavardhana succeeds in defeating the Mālava king, but he is treacherously killed by the king of Gauḍa. Harṣa's expedition to save his sister follows, but in the meantime she escapes from prison and is rescued by a Buddhist sage. The story abruptly ends with the meeting of Harṣa and Rājyaśrī while the tale of her recovery is being told. The work gives us nothing about the later career of Harṣa, nor any information regarding the later stages of Bāṇa's own life.

The Harṣa-carita has the distinction of being the first attempt at writing a Prose Kāvya on an historical theme.¹ Subandhu's Vāsavadattā, as well as Bāṇa's other prose narrative, the Kādambari, deals with legendary fiction, and everything is viewed in these works through a highly imaginative atmosphere. The Harṣa-carita is no less imaginative, but the author takes his own sovereign as his hero and weaves the story out of some actual events of his career. In this respect it supplies a contemporary picture, which, in the paucity of other records, is indeed valuable; but its importance as an historical document should not be overrated. The sum-total of the story, lavishly embellished as it is, is no more than an incident in Harṣa's career; and it cannot be said that the picture is either full or satisfactory from the historical point of view. Many points in the narrative, especially the position, action and identity of the Mālava

¹ See below, ch. VI, under Poems with Historical Themes.

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and the Gauḍa kings, are left obscure; and the gorgeously
descriptive and ornamental style leaves little room for the poor
thread of actual history. Even if the work supplies picturesque
accounts, into which the historian may profitably delve, of the
actualities of life in camp and court, in monastery and village
retreat, of military expeditions, and of social and religious
observances and practices, we learn very little indeed of the
political facts of the great emperor’s reign as a whole.

It is clear that Bāna writes his Harṣa-carita more as a
romantic story than as a sober history of the king’s life, and stops
when he is satisfied that his Muse has taken a sufficiently long
flight. The term ‘Historical Kāvya,’ which is often applied to
this and other works of the same kind, is hardly expressive;
for, in all essential, the work is a Prose Kāvya, and the fact of
its having an historical theme does not make it historical in
style, spirit and treatment. The reproach that India had little
history and historical sense is perhaps not entirely just, but
India was little interested in historical incident as such, and
never took seriously to chronicling, much less to what is known
as history in modern times. The uncertainties of pre-history,
therefore, continue in India to a comparatively late period; and
it is also important to note that the idea of evolution is, in the
same way, scarcely recognised in the sphere of thought and
speculation. Perhaps the explanation is to be sought in the
psychology of the Indian mind, which takes the world of
imagination to be more real than the world of fact; perhaps we
in modern times attach too much importance to fact or incident
and make a fetish of history or evolution. In any case, history
had little place in the Kāvya, which apparently considered the
mythological heroes to be more interesting than the actual
rulers of the day. Even when a real personage is taken for
treatment, as in the case of Harṣa, he is elevated and invested
with all the glory and some of the fiction of the mythological
hero. The Sanskrit theory of art also, in its emphasis on
imaginative and impersonalised creation, encouraged abstraction,
admitted belief in fate and miracle, and had little feeling for the concrete facts and forces of human nature and human life. The same spirit, which tended against the creation of a vigorous and sensitive drama, stood also in the way of clear and critical historiography. The poets who, like Bāṇa, write on historical themes, never claim merit as historians, but conceive their duty to be that of a poet. It would not be proper, therefore, to attach the qualification ‘historical’ to what is essentially a Kāvya.

The imposition of keeping even within the semblance of fact is absent in the Kādambarī, which is an entirely imaginative creation, but which like the Harṣa-carita, is also left unfinished. It was, however, death which, cut off the work; and we are told by Bāṇa’s son, Bhūṣaṇa,¹ that he wrote the latter part, not out of literary ostentation, but as a task of filial duty. We do not know in what way Bāṇa himself would have rounded off the inherent difficulties of the remainder of the plot, but the inferiority of the supplement is generally admitted. It gives the impression of introducing complexities, but there is also an anxiety of bringing the story to a somewhat hurried close. The command over the ornate style and diction is undoubted, and the son possesses some of the excellences of the father; but to the mannerisms of the father, which are often exaggerated, are added a few peculiar to the son.

The story of the Kādambarī,² which deals with the lives and loves of two heroes, each of whom is reborn twice, is too well known to require a detailed summary here. But it is noteworthy that Bāṇa’s portion of the composition stops even

¹ In some MSS (e.g., Stein, Jammu Cat., Bombay 1894, p. 299), he is called Pulina or Pulinda. Dhanapāla in his Tilaka-maṇjarī (Pref. verse 26) seems to suggest that Pulinda was the name.
² Ed. P. Peterson, Bomb. Skt. Ser., 1883; ed. P. V. Kane, Bombay 1911, 1920; (3rd ed. 1921, Pūrvaḥāga only); ed. K. P. Parab, with comm. of Bhānucandra and Siddhacandra, NSP, Bombay 1890 (7th ed., revised by V. L. Panthikar 1928). Engl. trs. (with occasional omissions) C. M. Ridding, London 1896. Summaries of the story will be found in these editions.
before the theme is properly developed. It introduces the Caṇḍāla maiden and her speaking parrot into the court of Śūdraka and puts the entire narrative in the mouth of the parrot.\(^1\) Apart from absurdity of the device, it is noteworthy that the old method of emboxing tale within tale is also retained; for the parrot’s tale includes that of the sage Jābāli concerning Candrāpiḍa and Vaiśampāyana, along with the story told by Mahāśvetā of her love for Puṇḍarīka. After the meeting of Candrāpiḍa with Kādambarī, whose entrance into the story is too long delayed, and his hurried return to Ujjayinī, Bāṇa’s work ends abruptly with the welcome news which Patralekhā brings to him of Kādambarī’s assurance of love. It is clear that, like Spenser, Bāṇa conceived of too large a plan and never lived to finish it. The plot is only begun but hardly unfolded. It is completed ingeniously enough by his son, but we have no means, except from scattered and uncertain hints in the narrative itself, of knowing whether Bāṇa wanted to develop it with all its later bewildering turn and confusion of curses and changing personalities of reborn heroes. Half-told as the tale is by him, we cannot be sure if he meant Śūdraka, the hearer of the story, but a redundant figure at the outset, is to become the real hero in the end as the reborn Candrāpiḍa, who in his turn is to be the moon-god in his former birth, or whether Vaiśampāyana is to turn out as the transformed parrot itself recounting the tale; for these elaborate intricacies occur in the second part of the work. This important fact is ignored when one criticises Bāṇa for his highly complex plot, and charges him with deficiency of constructive power. The striking parallelism of the story of the Kādambarī to the much humbler one of King Sumanas (or Sumānasa), narrated in the two Kashmirian versions of the Brhatkathā,\(^2\) may suggest that Bāṇa may have

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\(^1\) On the rôle of the Parrot in story literature, see L. H. Gray in WZKM, XVIII, 1904, p. 42.

\(^2\) Somadeva’s \textit{Kathā-sarit-sāgara}, x. 3 (Tawney’s trs., Calcutta 1884, ii, p. 17 f.; the whole passage is reproduced in Peterson’s introd. to the \textit{Kādambarī}, pp. 84-96); Kṣemendra’s \textit{Brhatkathā-mahājāri}, xvi, 185 f.
wanted to utilise the motif of curse and rebirth, but it is useless to speculate whether he would have done it in the same way as we have it now. The complications of the plot, as developed in Bhūṣaṇa’s supplement, can hardly be inferred from the dry bones of the much simpler and less refined original, occurring in the versions of the Brhatkathā, which has a somewhat different denouement and which attaches degrading forms of birth to the heroine Mandārikā and her father, on the rather frivolous ground of a curse proceeding from wild grief in the one case and repentance for pronouncing the curse in the other.

That the method of emboxing tales can be carried to a confusing extent is seen in the arrangement of Somadeva’s Kathāsarit-sāgara, where, often with an insignificant framework, we have A’s account of B’s report of C’s recounting of D’s relating of what E said, and so forth, until we have the disentangling of the entire intricate progression, or reversion to the main story, which the reader in the meantime probably forgets. The form is not ill suited to a succession of disconnected tales, as in the Pañcalantra, where they are narrated generally by the characters of the frame-story or of the inset stories. There is further improvement in the Daśakumāra-carita, where their several experiences are narrated, with a semblance of realism, by the princes themselves in the first person, and in the Vetāla-pañca-vimśati, where all the separate tales are connected to serve one main purpose. In the Kādambari, the old machinery is adapted, with a clever plan, to the conditions of the complex narrative. The device of first-hand narration is made an essence of the form; for the inset stories explain matters which the main narrator could not himself know and which each subsidiary narrator is allowed to describe as coming within the scope of personal experience. The main narrative here is not recounted by the hero, but in effect by the sage Jābāli, who is supposed by his insight to know vividly what he relates, and who can describe freely and objectively; but each of the minor narratives, like that of Mahāśvetā, gives effective expression to intimate knowledge
and feeling, and is made essential to the development of the plot.

The denouement, as developed by Bhūṣaṇa, is sometimes criticised as flat. To a certain extent, this is true; but, making allowance for the device of curse and rebirth common enough in folk-tale,¹ one should admit that there is an element of surprise in the discovery at the end that Śūdraka, who is only the listener to the story, is himself the real hero, who had loved in vain in two lives, and whose listening to the story is a necessary condition of the reawakening of his love for Kādambarī and of bringing his second life to an end by his revived longing for reunion. As a rule, the romance-writers, like the poets, are rather poor inventors of plot, and make use of all the paraphernalia of conventional story-telling, as well as of the fantastic ornateness of an overworked diction; but there is more arrangement, progress and interest in Bāṇa’s narrative than in Subandhu’s; and, in spite of the complexes of past and present lives, there cannot be much doubt that the threads of the stories of the loves of the two maidens, which form his main theme, are skilfully interlaced.

(The chief obstacle to our appreciation of Bāṇa’s constructive gift, however, is his weakness for elaborating the tales, by dwelling too much on details, in a style which draws prose and poetry together in an unnatural alliance. The lack of proportion is due partly to largeness of handling, and partly to a prodigal imagination which prefers lawless splendour to decent insipidity. But the sense of proportion is the very foundation of style and treatment. There is no need, for instance, to lose sight of the narrative in a lavish description of Ujjayini, of Śukanāsa’s palace, of the Vindhyā forest and hermitage, of the temple of

¹ For a study of these motifs as literary devices, see L. H. Gray in *WZKM*, XVIII, 1904, pp. 53-54. Gray cites an instance from the story of Arthapāla in *Dasakumāra*, where there is a hint not fully developed, of a very complex scheme of three incarnations involving six persons. It is noteworthy, however, that it is Bāṇa’s heroes, and not his heroines, who undergo three rebirths each.
Cañḍikā, of night and moonrise, all of which give us wonderful word-pictures, no doubt, but most of which are certainly overdone. Bāna's power of observation and picturesque description, his love of nature, his eye for colour and ear for music, the richness of his fancy and his wealth of words, are excellences which are unquestioned; but they are seldom kept within moderate bounds. His choice of subject may be good, but his choice of scale is fatal. The readiness of his resources is truly astonishing, but the exaggeration often swamps the reality of his pictures. The description of Ujjayini, for instance, is too extravagant in its terms to give us a vivid notion of what it actually was in his time. The delineation of Mahāśvetā's beauty is too undiscriminating in its heaping of metaphors and epithets to present a convincing visual picture. Nor are absurdities excluded in matters of detail. The physician, a youth of eighteen, who attends upon the dying Prabhākaravardhana, is so fanatically attached to his king that he must also burn himself on the funeral pyre on his patron's death. (It is not that Bāna's imageries lack visualisation and proper phrasing; Bāna can be forcible and direct when he chooses; the sense of humour is not altogether wanting in his picture, for example, of the Drāviḍa ascetic, or in his description of Skandagupta as having a nose as long as his sovereign's pedigree; the advantage of contrast is utilised in the characterisation of the pairs of lovers; all this and more is admitted. But the censure is just that Bāna allows no topic to pass until he can squeeze no more out of it. Whether in description or in speeches of lamentation and exhortation, no possible detail is missed, no existing variety of synonymous epithets omitted, no romantic symbolism and conceit overlooked, nor any brilliant rhetorical device ignored.)

It is clear that Bāna's evident relish in this extended and over-ostentatious method is a hindrance not only to vigorous narrative, but also to the realities of sentiment and character. Comments have been made, not unjustly, on the shadowy nature of his personages, some in their second and even third birth, and
their exaggerated sentiments. But, making allowance for aberrations inevitable in a rich and exuberant talent, it must be said that Bāṇa’s power of characterisation or delineation of sentiment is not entirely divorced from reality. The world he depicts is removed in time and character, but not in appreciation and sympathy, from our own. The tale is strange, as also its manner of telling, but the element of marvel and magic is a recognised concomitant of the popular tale and need not of itself diminish its value as a romance, any more than the imaginative character of Spenser’s Faery Queene impairs its interest as a poem. The scene is laid as much in Kādambarī’s home, situated beyond the Himalayas and peopled by Gandharvas and Kinnaras, as in Ujjayini where Candrapida’s very human father Tārāpiḍa and his practical minister Śukanāsa hold court in royal splendour. The world of fancy is conceived as vividly as the world of humanity; but the whole unreal machinery fades away when we are brought face to face with a tale of human love and sorrow, set forth in its idyllic charm as well as in its depth of pathos. It cannot be denied indeed that these old-time romancers are not always good at assessing the fine shades of human conduct; they see life as an affair in which black is black and white is white, black and white seldom merge in dubious grey. Bāṇa attempts to infuse some diversity of colouring into his Patralekhā and his Śukanāsa, but they are too fine to be life-like. His two heroes are endowed with nobility, courtesy, devotion and charm, but they give the impression, more or less, of broad types of character; they are hardly human beings. All this must be frankly admitted. But it must also be admitted that Bāṇa possesses a wonderful insight into the currents of youthful passion and virgin modesty, in their varying impulses of joy and grief, hope and despair; and this forms the pith of his work in its surrounding embroidery. It is perhaps for this reason that he is more successful in delineating his two heroines. The maidenly love of Kādambarī, with its timid balancing of the new-born longing and cherished filial duty, is finely set off by the pathetic fidelity of
the lovelorn Mahāśvetā, awaiting her lover for long years on the shores of the Acchoda lake. If they are overdressed children of Bāṇa’s poetic imagination, his romantic ideas of love find in them a vivid and effective embodiment; they are no less brilliant types, but they are at the same time individualised by the sharpness of the impression.

Indeed, the chief value of Bāṇa’s unique romance lies, not in its narrative, not in its characterisation, nor in its presentation, but in its sentiment and poetry. In this extraordinary tale Bāṇa gives us a poetic treatment, in two different ways, of youthful love, having its root not only in the spontaneous emotion of this life, but in the recollective affection of cycles of existence, in what Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti describe as friendships of former births firmly rooted in the heart. It is a study of the poetic possibilities of the belief in transmigration; it conceives of a longer existence which links the forgotten past and the living present in bonds of tender and unswerving memories. If love in this romance moves in a strange and fantastic atmosphere of myth and folk-tale, the unreality of the dream-pageant acquires a vitality and interest from the graceful and poetic treatment of the depth and tenderness of human love, chastened by sorrow and death, enlivened by abiding hope and faith, and heightened by the touch of an intrepid idealism. And the extravagance of its luxuriant diction is perhaps a fit vehicle for this extravagantly romantic tale of love.

There are some critics, however, who on formal grounds would deny to Bāṇa a high rank as a prose writer; and the classic onslaught of Weber¹ has been repeatedly quoted. The charge, in brief, is that Bāṇa’s style and diction suffer from the vices of an unduly laboured vocabulary, syntax and ornamentation. His prose has been compared to an Indian jungle, where progress is rendered impossible by luxuriant undergrowths,

¹ In ZDMG, 1853, quoted by Peterson, op. cit., introd., p. 38. On this romance, see Weber, Indische Streifen, i. pp. 308-86.

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until the traveller cuts out a path for himself, and where wild beasts lie in wait for him in the shape of recondite words, far-fetched allusions, vast sentences, undiscriminated epithets upon epithets in a multitude of aggressive compounds and of a whole battalion of puns, similes, hyperboles, alliterations and assonances. His erudition, it is complained, is heavy in its outrageous tendency to overloading and subtlety; his sense of proportion is faulty in its excessive use of literary embellishments and in the construction of really enormous sentences, in which the verb or the subject is held over to the second, third, nay, even to the sixth page of print, all the interval being filled with more dazzling than illuminating series of phrases and phrases upon phrases; his weakness for play upon thought or word is incessant and irritating; he is dominated by the perverse desire of producing the graces of poetry in prose; the grandeur of his style is ponderous and affected and often falls into the grandiose,—in fact, he has all the worst faults of verbal and mental bombast which can characterise a prose writer. While some measure of imperfect sympathy may be suspected in this unqualified denunciation, there is a great deal in this view which is justifiable. But it should not be forgotten that richness of vocabulary, wealth of description, frequency of rhetorical ornaments, length of compounds and elaborateness of sentences, a grandiose pitch of sound and sense are common features of the Prose Kāvyā; and in this respect Bāṇa is perhaps less reprehensible than Subandhu, whose unimaginative stolidity aggravate, rather than lessen, the enormity of the blemishes. The author of the Kāvyādārśa asserts that a profusion of compact compounds is the very life of Sanskrit prose, and that paronomasia is the very soul of poetic figures; this dictum is exemplified only too well by these writings. Whether Bāṇa felt himself fettered by the literary canons of the rhetoricians, or whether these fetters themselves were forged on the model of the works composed by himself and his compeers, is a question which need not be discussed here; but it must be admitted at once that in Bāṇa's romance,
floridity, subtlety and horror of the obvious gets altogether the upper hand, as compared with succinctness, simplicity and directness. That Bāṇa can write with force and beauty and achieve considerable diversity of style has been pointed out by his apologists, but this cannot be taken as his general practice. He can seldom write without elegancies, and his manner has a tendency to generate into mannerism. He is often unable to concentrate in a terse phrase the force of pathos and passion, but reduces its strength by diffusing it into gracefully elaborated sentences. All this and even more cannot be denied. Bāṇa is not faultless; he is indeed very faulty. But all this should not lead us to compare his works with those of Daṇḍin, which are differently conceived and executed, nor emphasise points in which he is obviously deficient. We should judge him on his own merits, and not by any standard which he does not profess to follow. It is useless to expect things which he does not aim at, but it is necessary to find out in what he is truly efficient.

It seems strange that one should be capable of denying the splendour of Bāṇa’s prose at its best. It is eccentric, excessive and even wasteful, but its organ-voice is majestic in movement and magnificent in volume and melody. It would often seem that the nobly wrought diction moves along in its royal dignity and its panorama of beautiful pictures, while the poor story lags behind in the entourage and the humble sentiment hobbles along as best as it can. But it should not be forgotten that it is mainly by its wonderful spell of language and picturesqueness of imagery that Bāṇa’s luxuriant romances retain their hold on the imagination, and it is precisely in this that their charm lies. It is an atmosphere of gracious lunar rainbows rather than that of strong sunlight. No one denies that Bāṇa’s prose is useless for average purposes, but the question is whether it suits the purpose for which it is intended, whether the high-flown style is able to shape the rough stones of popular literature into gems of romantic beauty. It may be said that a more terse and simple style would have been appropriate for his account of king Harṣa, but the
work, as we have already said, should be taken more as a Prose Kāvyā than as an historical production, more as a stupendous panegyric than as a real biography. Still more should the Kādambarī be taken as a gorgeous and meandering tapestry work, in which an over-fertile fancy weaves endless patterns of great but fantastic beauty. It is conceded that prose in its normal proportion is hardly Bāṇa’s natural organ of speech, nor is poetry, if one is to judge from his Caṇḍī-śataka; but he affects a kind of prose-poetry in which he is unique. If he is swayed by the rhetorical passion of the Sanskrit poets, he is not merely rhetorical; if he writes long sentences, his sentences are seldom obscure; if he has a fondness for epithets and compounds, they are not always devoid of vividness, harmony and stateliness. Bāṇa is neither an imaginative recluse, nor a lover of the abstruse and the difficult, but he has an undoubted gift for the picturesque, the tender and the pathetic. He has a rare mastery over a certain gamut of feeling and fancy, but his prettiness or succulence never lack dignity nor become namby-pamby. In spite of their long-drawn-out brilliance and overwhelming profusion, his elaborate sentence-pictures are seldom wanting in the variety, swing and cadence of balanced phrase. Bāṇa has an amazing command over words and an irrepressible talent for melodious and majestic phrase; but he is not so much a creator of words and phrases as an architect of sentences and paragraphs. (In the combination of pictorial effect with the elegance and splendour of word-music, they form an unparalleled series of vignettes of astonishing lavishness. He would be monotonous and tiresome to one who determines to plod doggedly through the whole work, but he is attractive if attention is confined at a time to the marvellous richness of his fancy revealed in one or two of his delightful episodes and descriptions. Bāṇa pours out the whole farrago of his ideas, and has a provoking, and sometimes meaningless, habit of heaping them up in the enormous mass of a single sentence. He is verbose, not in the sense that he takes many words to express an idea, but in the sense that he gives
expression to a multitude of ideas where a few would suffice. He is always in the danger of being smothered by his own luxuriance. Indeed, Bāna’s work impresses us by its unfailing and unrestrained wealth of power; we have here not an abundance, but a riot. It is useless to seek a motive behind his work or sobriety of judgment and workmanship; what we have here is the sheer delight of voluminous expression, the largeness of tumultuous fancy, and the love of all that is grand and glorious in fact or fiction."

2. The Drama from Śūdraκa to Bhavabhūti

As in poetry, so in the drama, the period which followed Kālidāsa is still an expansive age in which stagnation has not yet set in. Unfortunately, only a limited number of dramatic works has survived; but, fortunately, they show greater elasticity, variety and vitality than the poetical works of this period. With the exception of Amaru and Bhartṛhari, we have, on the one hand, Bṛāvṛti, Bhaṭṭi, Mayūra, Kumāradāsa and Māgha, who do nothing more than work variations in the same tradition of poetry; but we have, on the other hand, Śūdraka, the writers of four early Bṛāṇas, Harśa, Viśākhadatta, Mahendrapriyakrama, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and Bhavabhūti, each of whom represents a different and interesting type of the drama.

a. Śūdraka

'In the long and varied history of the Sanskrit drama the Mṛcchakaṭika1 of Śūdraka occupies a unique place. It is some-

1 Ed. A. F. Stenzler, Bonn 1847; ed. N. B. Godabole, with comm. of Lalla Dikṣita and Prthvīdhara, Bombay Skt. Ser., 1896; ed. K. P. Parab, with comm. of Prthvīdhara, NSP, Bombay 1900, 3rd revised ed. 1909, 5th ed. 1922. Trs. into English by A. W. Ryder, Harvard Orient. Ser., Cambridge Mass., 1905; also by R. P. Oliver, Univ. of Illinois, U.S.A., 1938. The work has been translated several times into German and French, and also in other languages. For fuller bibliography see Sten Konow, op. cit., p. 59.—For fuller bibliographies of dramatic writings dealt with in the following pages, one should consult, besides Sten Konow, M. Schuyler's Bibliography of the Sanskrit Drama, New
times taken as one of the oldest extant Sanskrit dramas, and
sometimes as a mere recast and continuation, by a clever but
anonymous playwright, of the fragmentary Cārudatta ascribed
to Bhāsa. But we have no exact knowledge of its date, origin
and authorship, nor of its relation to the Cārudatta. The work
has been variously assigned to periods ranging from the 2nd
century B.C. to the 6th century A.D.,¹ but even if none of the
opinions advanced carries complete conviction, there can hardly
be any doubt that it is a fairly old work. In spite of the
number of legends which have gathered round the name of
Śūdraka, its reputed author, nothing is known of him beyond
the somewhat fanciful account² given in the Prologue of the
play. We are told in this eulogistic reference that the author
was a great Brahman king³ of the name of Śūdraka; and among
the curious details of his excellences, we find that he was
proficient in the Rgveda and the Sāmaveda, in mathematics,
in the art concerning the courtesan and in the lore of
elephants,—statements which it is not impossible to support, to a
limited extent, from the knowledge betrayed in the drama
itself. The royal author is also said to have obtained the grace

¹ The various opinions are summarised by Sten Konow, Ind. Drama, p. 57, which
see for references; also K. C. Mehendale in Bhandarkar Comm. Vol., Poona 1917, p. 367 f.
Sten Konow himself would identify Śūdraka with the Ābhira king Śivadatta (about 250 A.D.),
while Jolly shows (Hindu Law of Partition, Inheritance and Adoption, Tagore Law Lectures,
Calcutta 1883, p. 68 f.) that the knowledge of legal procedure evidenced in act ix follows
what we find in the law books belonging to the 6th and 7th centuries. Jacobi (Bhavisattva-
kaha, Munich 1918, p. 83 note), on the astrological data in act iv, believes that the drama
could not have been written before the 4th century A.D. Sten Konow’s view is effectively
criticised by J. Charpentier in JRAS, 1923, p. 595 f., who discusses the question in some
detail.

² The use of the perfect tense, indicative of an event long past, in stanzas 3, 4, and 7
of the prologue is significant; but it need not imply that the information is not based upon
tradition or is not trustworthy.

³ See Charpentier, loc cit.
of Śiva; and after performing the horse-sacrifice and placing his son on the throne, he died by entering the fire at the astonishing age of a hundred years and ten days.

Whether all this describes an historical or a mythical king is not certain; and Śūdraka’s identity and authorship must yet be regarded as unsolved problems. The fact that Kālidāsa’s predecessor, Somila (with Rāmila) wrote a Śūdraka-kathā perhaps indicates Śūdraka’s legendary character accepted even before Kālidāsa’s time; and to later authors like Daṇḍin, Bāṇa, Kalhana (iii. 343) and Somadeva he is already a figure of romance,¹ associated with Vidiśā, Pratiṣṭhāna, Vardhamāna and other places. Late legends connect him with the Andhrabhṛtyas and Sātavāhana (or Śālivāhana), but to melt down the legends and recin historic truth from them, when they bear upon their very face the stamp of myth, is possible but not convincing. Some facts may have been drawn into the legends, and probably real incidents and names of real persons occur, but the attempt to separate the real from the unreal is, more or less, a pastime of ingenuity. The external evidence failing, the internal is equally elusive. Even assuming that the Mrčchakaṭṭika is a réchauffé or recension of the Cārudatta, there is yet no decisive evidence rearding Bhāsa’s authorship of the drama; and even if the ascription is correct, it is insufficient to suggest a definite date for either of the two works. As royal authors in historic times were not averse to having works written for themselves, it has been maintained by those who believe in an historical Śūdraka that the real author, like a wise and grateful courtier, ascribed his work to his royal patron and allowed his own name to perish. This suggestion, wholly lacking proof, stands on a par with the equally fanciful

¹ A later romance called Śūdraka-vadha (!), is quoted by Rāyamukuta (ZDMG, xxviii, p. 117) and a drama entitled Vikrānta-śūdraka is quoted in Bhoja’s Sarvasatī-kaṇṭhā-bharaṇa (p. 376) and Śrīgāra-prakāśa; both the authors apparently make Śūdraka the hero. Hemacandra in his Kāvyāmśāsana (ed. NSP, Bombay 1901, p. 335) mentions a Śūdram-kathā by Pañcasikha, which is also cited by Bhoja in his Śrīgāra-prakāśa (see S. K. De in BSOS, IV, 1926, p. 281).
presumption that some late but skilful author composed this drama on the basis of the Cārūdatta, or revised a recension of the original on which the Cārūdatta itself was based, and concealed his identity by passing off his work under the far-off famous name of Śūdraka. Much less convincing, for want of proof, again, is the hypothesis of an early date based upon some accidental similarities with the New Greek Comedy. We are, therefore, left to no more than impressions. But even on this ground, however inadequate, it is not possible to assign a very late date to the Mṛcchakātika. Vāmana already in the 8th century refers (iii. 2. 4.) to a composition by Śūdraka, and also quotes two passages anonymously, one of which occurs also in the Cārūdatta, but the other does not.

1 In Cārūdatta the total number of verses in the four acts is 55, of which 13 are not found in the Mṛcchā, the remaining 42 being identical; but the total number of verses in the first four acts of Śūdraka’s play is 129.—See above, under Bhaṣa. Belvark shows by an examination, chiefly of incident and expression, that the Cārūdatta could not have been an abridgment or adaptation of Śūdraka’s drama. Sukthankar adds a critical review of the technique, Prakrit, verification, dramatic incident (especially with regard to time-scheme) of the two plays and furnishes prima facie reasons for holding that “the Cārūdatta version is, on the whole, older than the Mṛcchakātika version, and hence (as a corollary), if our Cārūdatta is not itself the original of the Mṛcchakātika, then, we must assume, it has preserved a great deal of the original upon which the Mṛcchakātika is based.” But C. R. Devadhar, in introd. to his recent ed. Cārūdatta (Poona 1939), expresses the view that the Cārūdatta is abridged from the first four acts of the Mṛcchakātika. He maintains, by adducing the main differences of the two versions, that “the author of the Cārūdatta, whoever he was, wanted to make a pleasing comedy out of the first four acts of the Mṛcchakātika, and hence has avoided reference to the political revolution, to Rohasena and to the law-suit, which is contemplated by the vengeful Śakāra.”


3 Kāvyālaṃkāra, ad. iv. 3. 23, dyūtam hi nāma puṣaṣyaśāśīyaṣaṇam rājiṣya (=Mṛcchā, act. ii, but missing in Cārū); and ad v. 1. 3, the entire stanza, pāśāṃ bālir bhavati (=Mṛcchā, i. 9; Cārū, i. 2).

4 Only one verse from Śūdraka, not traceable in the drama, is quoted in the anthologies, namely, Śkhā, no. 1271. A Bhāṣa is also ascribed to him, for which see below, under Caturbhājina.—Gray (JAOS, XXVII, 1907, p. 419 f.) shows that Śūdraka’s grammar does not conform closely to the norm, a fact which indicates not only his departure from convention but probably also his early date.
Whatever may have been the date and whoever may have been the author, there can be no doubt that the \textit{Mrchakatika} is one of the few Sanskrit dramas in which the dramatist departs from the beaten track and attempts to envisage directly a wider, fuller and deeper life. He has paid for his boldness and originality by the general disregard of his great work by the Sanskrit theorists;\footnote{The earliest quotation in dramaturgic works occur in the \textit{Avaloka} on \textit{Dalarüpaka}, i. 46 (=ii. 4), etc. See Mehendale, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 370.} but he knows that he is writing a drama, and not an elegant series of sentimental verses in accordance with the prescribed mode. It is, thus, not the usual type of a dramatic poem, but possesses distinctly dramatic qualities, which make a greater appeal to modern taste and idea. Apart from the graphic picture it presents of some phases of contemporary life,\footnote{See R. G. Basak in \textit{IHQ}, 1929, p. 229-325.} the work is truly worthy of a great dramatist in its skilful handling of a swift-moving plot of sustained interest,\footnote{The unity of action is questioned by Gray in introd. to histrs. But the criticism is really based on a misconception of acts ii-v, which he thinks to be episodic, forming a sub-plot of little connexion with the main plot. But all these so-called episodes are necessary for characterising Vasantasenā and her love, and therefore essential to the main theme.—It is remarkable that there are six shifting scenes in act i, which take place in Cārudatta’s house and in the street outside,—a difficult feat indeed for the stage-manager! This feature is also noticeable in the \textit{Mudrā-rākṣasa} and probably points to the existence of an enlarged stage.} in its variety of incidents and characters, in its freedom from the usual fault of over- elaboration,\footnote{Except perhaps the elaborate description of Vasantasenā’s house and the Abhisārikā scene.} in its sharpness of characterisation, in its use of direct and homely imageries conveyed in a clear, forcible and unaffected diction, in its skilful employment of a variety of Sanskrit and Prakrit metres,\footnote{It is significant that the Śloka is greatly favoured being apparently suitable for rapidity and directness of style. The four most commonly employed metres, next to the Śloka, are, in their order of frequency, Vasantatilaka, Śārdūlavikṛṣṭi, Āryā, and Indravajrā (including Upajāti); of more unusual metres there are Vidyumnāla and Vaiśvadevi. No other Sanskrit play exhibits such a variety of Prakrits as found in the \textit{Mrchakatika}. On the use of the Prakrits see Pischel, \textit{Grammatik der Prakrit-sprachen} (Strassburg 1900), p. 25 f.; \textit{JRAI}, 1913, p. 882, 1918, p. 513; Keith, \textit{SD}, pp. 140 42. Śauraseni predominates and Māhārāṣṭrī is rare.} in its witty dialogue, in its general
liveliness and dramatic effect, in its mastery of deep pathos and in its rare quality of quiet humour. In spite of its somewhat conventional happy ending, which, however, is adequately developed, it verges almost upon tragedy; and neither the plot nor the characters can be regarded as conventional. All these excellences invest the simple love-story of this ten-act comedy of middle-class life with a charm peculiarly its own; and the remark that it is the most Shakespearian of all Sanskrit plays is, in some respect, not undeserved.

The drama has not only a curious title but an equally curious theme and treatment. The title "The Little Clay-cart" is derived from an episode, which leads to the leaving of the heroine’s jewels in the toy clay-cart of the hero’s little son and gives rise to complications of the plot, which are finally resolved in the denouement; and the episode of the clay-cart also has a psychological significance in the turn of the heroine’s life. What is more remarkable is that in this drama, for the first time, we turn from the stories of kings and queens to a more plebeian atmosphere, from the dramatisation of time-worn legends to a more refreshing plot of everyday life, the scene of

1 It is noteworthy that Śūdraka defies the convention of naming his play after the names of the hero and the heroine, as we have it in Bhavabhūti’s Prakaraṇa, the Mālati-mādhava. In contravention of dramaturgic prescription, Cārudatta does not appear at all in acts ii, iv, vi and viii; while his simple-minded and whole-hearted friend, Maitreyā, with his doglike faithfulness, does not conform to the technical definition and has none of the grosser traits of the typical Vidūṣaka. The presence of shady characters is, obviously, not entirely legitimate, for this makes the author of the Daśarūpaka call it a Saṃkīraṇa Prakaraṇa (cf. Nāṭya-darpāṇa, p. 119) inasmuch as such characters are apparently appropriate to the Bhāga or Prahasana.

2 The Avi-māraka is not as plebeian as it appears.

3 Apart from the question of the relation of the Mṛchhā to the Cārudatta, which work, however, covers the same ground only up to the first four acts, the source of the story is unknown. We cannot be sure that the idea of a courtesan falling in love with a Brahman is derived from the story of Kumudikā and Rūpiṇikā, as we find it in Somadeva’s version of the Bṛhatkathā, for the story may not have occurred in the original; but the example of Madanamaṇḍukā was probably there. The courtesan is also a heroine already of the Central Asian dramatic fragment, of which we have spoken. The sub plot of Gopāla and Pālaka is also known to be an old legend. But all this, as well as the relation of the play to the Cārudatta, does not detract from its originality, which by
which is laid in a cosmopolitan city like Ujjayinī. When we turn from the two masterpieces of Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti to this third great Sanskrit drama, we find ourselves descending, as it were, from a refined atmosphere of poetry and sentiment to the firm rock of grim reality. And yet the drama is not at all shorn of real poetry and sentiment, which flourish no less in the strange world unfolded by the drama,—a world in which thieves, gamblers, rogues, political schemers, mendicants, courtiers, idlers, police constables, housemaids, bawds and courtesans jostle along freely. The love that it depicts is not the sad and romantic love of Duṣṭyanta and his woodland beloved, nor yet the fond and deep conjugal affection idealised in Bhavabhūti’s story of Rāma and Sitā, but simply and curiously, the love of a man about town for a courtesan, which is nevertheless as pure, strong and tender. The strange world supplies a fitting background to this strange love; and an inventive originality\(^1\) is displayed by linking the private affairs of the lovers with a political intrigue which involves the city and the kingdom. Into the ingenious plot are also freely thrown a comedy of errors leading to disaster and an act of burglary leading to happiness, a murder and a court-scene; and considerable fertility of dramatic imagination is displayed in working out the details of the plot, its only serious defect being its great length. The drama is also singular in conceiving a large number of interesting characters, drawn from all grades of society, from the high-souled Brahman to the sneaking thief;

\(^1\) The political background which practically permeates the entire drama, even from its prologue, in which there is a reference to king Pālaka, is entirely absent in the Cārukṛita. Charpentier, however, thinks (\textit{JRAS}, 1925, p. 604 f.) that the episode of Pālaka is loosely connected and adventitious. But the point is missed that it is neither a detached nor a fully developed subplot; and even if it is considered unessential to the main story, it never becomes conspicuous but runs through the thread of the central theme, supplying motives to some of the incidents. What is more important is that the episode is necessary to create the general atmosphere of the bizarre society, in which the whole host of rascals are capable at any moment of all kinds of acts, ranging from stealing a gem-casket to starting a revolution,
they are presented not as types, but as individuals of diversified interest;\(^1\) and it includes, in its broad scope, farce and tragedy, satire and pathos, poetry and wisdom, kindliness and humanity.\(^2\)

In the midst of all the motley assemblage of characters, who are mostly rogues and rascals and are yet true, and not altogether unlovable, gentlemen, stand out prominently the hero and the heroine. The Šakāra Samsthānaka, with his ignorant conceit and brutal lust, presents an excellent contrast, but the author’s power of effective characterisation is best seen in his conception of the two main characters. The noble Cārudatta, a large-hearted Brahman by birth and wealthy merchant by profession, does not represent the typical Nāgaraka, whose whole round of life consists of love and pleasure; for there is nothing of the gilded dandy and dilettante in his refined character, and his chief interest is not gallantry. There is a note of quiet self-control in most of his acts; and even in love most of the courtship is done by Vasantasenā. He is a young man of breeding, culture and uprightness, whose princely liberality wins the admiration of the whole city, but reduces him to lonely poverty. If the change of fortune makes him bitter, it does not make him a misanthrope nor does it debase his mind; it only teaches him to take life at its proper value. Cārudatta is endowed with great qualities, but like the conventional hero he is not made a paragon of virtue. He is by no means austere or self-denying. He is a perfect man of the world, who loves literature, music and art, does not disdain gambling, nor share his friend Maitreya’s bias against the hetaræ. He never assumes a self-righteous attitude; his great virtues are softened by the milk of human kindness. His youth does not exhibit indifference, and the most outstanding feature of his character is his quiet and deep love for Vasantasenā.

\(^1\) Śūdraka’s men are perhaps better individualised than his women.

\(^2\) For a brief appreciation of the play, see S. K. De, Treatment of Love in Sanskrit Literature, Calcutta 1929, pp. 80-87; and for a summary of the story see S. K. De in Tales from Sanskrit Dramatists, Madras 1930, pp. 62-96.
The wrong of this unconventional love disappears in the ideal beauty which gathers round it; and its purity, strength and truth make it escape degradation. Vasantasena has neither the girlish charm of Sakuntala nor the mature womanly dignity of Sitā. Witty and wise, disillusioned and sophisticated, she has seen much of a sordid world; she has yet a heart of romance, and her love is true and deep even in a social status which makes such a feeling difficult. Much wealth and position she has achieved by an obligatory and hereditary calling, but her heart is against it, and it brings her no happiness. Her meeting with Čārudatta affords a way of escape, but she is sad and afraid lest her misfortune of birth and occupation should stand in the way. It is a case of love at first sight, and for the first time she is really in love. The touch of this new emotion quickens rapidly into a pervading flame and burns to ashes her baser self. It is all so strange even to herself. She can yet hardly believe that she, an outcast of society, has been able to win the love of the great Čārudatta, the ornament of Ujjainī, and asks, half incredulously, the morning after her first union with her beloved, if all that is true. She is fascinated by the lovely face of Čārudatta’s little son and stretches out her arms in the great hunger for motherhood which has been denied to her. But the child in his innocence refuses to come to her and take her as his mother, because she wears such fine things and ornaments of gold: a harsh speech from a soft tongue, which makes her take off her ornaments, fill the toy clay-cart of the child and ask him to get a gold cart to play with. Her love makes her realise the emptiness of riches and the fulness of a pure and true affection. When the Śakāra threatens to kill her for not submitting to himself, and taunts her as “an inamorata of a beggarly Brahman,” she is not ashamed but replies: “Delightful words! Pray, proceed, for you speak my praise.” Growing furious, the brutal and cowardly Śakāra takes her by the throat. She does not cry out for succour, but she remembers her beloved Čārudatta and blesses his name. “What, still dost thou repeat
that name,” spits out the Śakāra, blinded by rage, as he strangles her; but on the verge of imminent death the name of Cārudatta is still on her lips, and she murmurs in a struggling voice: *namo cāludattassa*, “My homage be to Cārudatta!”

The dramatic action reaches a natural climax, and the work might have ended here with a tragic note; but the tragedy is converted into a comedy of reunion, which may appear as a weak denouement, but which is logically developed by a skilful handling of the incidents. The happy ending is a convention enforced by theory, but in this drama convention is nowhere respected as mere convention. It is a drama of social and artistic challenges, and the dramatist is perfectly aware of his strength in putting them forth. The *Mrcchakātikā* may not have been, as one of its critics contends, “a transcript from real life,” but its author never sacrifices real life for a stereotyped manipulation of the threadbare sentiment and action. If he really works up the fragmentary Cārudatta, or some previous original, as Shakespeare is said to have reworked old pieces, he succeeds in producing a masterpiece, which stands by itself in its entire conception and execution.

b. *The Authors of the Caturbhāṇī*

Somewhat closely connected with the *Mrcchakātikā* in atmosphere and spirit, but limited in scope and inferior in literary quality, are the four one-act monologue plays, discovered and published in 1922 under the title *Caturbhāṇī,*¹ one of which is actually ascribed to Śūdraka. The four Bhāṇas are: the *Ubbhayābhisārikā*, the *Padma-prabhātaka*, the *Dhūrta-viṣa-saṃvāda* and the *Pāda-tāḍitaka*, ascribed respectively to Vararuci,

Śūdraka, Ṣivaradatta and Śyāmilaka, on the authority chiefly of a traditional verse. Except in Śyāmilaka’s Pāda-tāḍitaka, neither the author’s name nor the occasion of the performance is mentioned in the rudimentary prologue to these plays. The lower limit of the Pāda-tāḍitaka, however, is obtained by the references of Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka and Kṣemendra, all of whom belong to the end of the 10th century; while the lower limits of the date of Padma-prābhṛitaka and Dhūrta-viṭa-samvāda are given by Hemacandra’s quotation and reference in his Kāvyānusāsana at the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th century; but the lower limit of the Udbhābhābhisārikā is not known. Since, however, they exhibit similar characteristics and form a group by themselves, between which and the later specimens of the Bhāṇa (the earliest of which is certainly not earlier than the 13th century) a considerable time must have elapsed, there can be little doubt that the four Bhāṇas belong to the age of the earlier classical dramatists; and, on the strength of facts revealed in the plays themselves, their general atmosphere, the types of men and nations that they deal with, their tone and temper, their lexicographical and stylistic peculiarities, Thomas is perhaps not wrong in placing them, or at least one of the Bhāṇas, “in the time of Harṣa of Kanauj or even that of the later Guptas.” A comparative study of these Bhāṇas with the later specimens, in the light of the prescriptions of the dramaturgists, would also show a method and manner, which would justify the general inference that

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1 There is nothing to show that the play is by Śūdraka, nor anything to dispute the authorship.

2 See the editor’s Preface to the Bhāṇas. The reference occurs in the comm. on Bharata, ch xiv.

3 Ed. S. K. De, Calcutta 1928, i. 111 (=Pāda-tāḍitaka 55) anonymously.

4 Pāda-t. 33, 125 = Ayuṭya-vicāra, ad 16 and Suṇṭita-tilaka, ad ii. 31. The colophon says that Śyāmilaka is an Udīya; the statement is apparently confirmed by these citations by Kashmirian authors.

5 Ed. NSP, p. 339. The identity of Ṣivaradatta with Ṣivarasena (c. 236-239 A.D.), son of the Abhira king Śivadatta, is suggested but not proved.
these Bhānas, as a group, should be assigned to a period later than that of Bharata’s Nāṭya-śāstra, but much earlier than that of the standard work of Dhanañjaya (end of the 10th century).

Compared with later plays of the same type, the Caturbhāṇi presents more variety, greater simplicity, a larger amount of social satire and comic relief, a more convincing power of drawing individuals rather than abstractions, easier and more colloquial style, and some measure of real poetry in spite of certain rough coarseness. Except in the Dhūṛta-viṭa-saṃvāda, the Viṭa is not exactly the “hero”; but, as the friend and emissary of the hero, who never appears, he fills the stage as the sole actor. The plot, of course, in such one-act monologue plays, is slight, but it does not here consist merely of the conventional amorous adventures of the Viṭa and usual reunion at the end; on the contrary, as much variety is introduced as is possible within its narrow scope. In the Padma-prābhrtaka, Karṇīputra Mūladeva,1 in love with Devasenā, sister to his beloved hetaera Devadattā, commissions his friend Śaśa the Viṭa, to ascertain the state of Devasenā’s mind. The Viṭa walks through the streets of Ujjayinī, exchanging imaginary conversation with various kinds of amusing people and taking an interest in their affairs, discharges his commission successfully, and returns with a gift of lotus-flower as a souvenir from Devasenā, from which the play takes its name. In the Dhūṛta-viṭa-saṃvāda, the clever and experienced Viṭa, finding the rainy season too depressing, comes out to spend the day in some amusement. He cannot afford dice and drinking—even his clothes are reduced to one garment—so he wends his way towards

1 The legend of Mūladeva Karṇīsuta, which is alluded to by Bāṇa, probably goes back to the Brhatkathā, Karṇīsuta being regarded traditionally as the author of a manual on theft. In Bāṇa’s reference: karṇīsuta-kathva saṃnītita vipulacalā saśopagata ca (Kadambari ed. Peterson, 1900, p. 19, ll. 16-17), punning allusion is made to Śaśa and Vipula of the story, both of whom occur in this play. On the character and adventures of Mūladeva, see M. Bloomfield in Proc. American Philosophical Soc., LII, 1913, pp. 616-50.
the street where courtesans live, meeting various kinds of people and ultimately reaching the house of the roguish couple Viṣvalaka and Sunandā, where he passes the day in discussing certain knotty problems of Erotics put to him by Viṣvalaka. The title "Dialogue between a Rogue and a Rake," therefore, appropriately describes its content; and it gives an amusing epitome of the aesthetic and erotic laws which govern the life of a rake, and forms a companion volume to such works as Dāmodaragupta’s Kuṭṭani-mata. In the Ubbhayābhisārikā, the Viṭa is requested by his friend Kuberadatta to propitiate his offended lady Nārāyaṇadattā; but when, after the usual series of wayside adventures, he reaches the house of the latter, he finds that the lovers, urged by the witchery of the season, had already set out in search of each other and forestalled him in effecting a reunion. In the Pāda-tāḍītaka, the theme is more interesting and novel, if less edifying. The Viṭa sets out to attend an assembly of rogues and rakes, who have met to consider the question of expiation referred to them by Tauṇḍikoki Viṣṇunāga, the nominal hero, the son of a Mahāmātra, and himself an officer of the king, for the indignity he has suffered by allowing an intoxicated courtesan, a Saurāṣṭra girl, named Madanasenikā, to kick him, in playfulness, on such a sacred spot of his body as his head! Some think that it is not Viṣṇunāga, but the girl herself, who should expiate for setting her foot upon such a beast; others suggest that Viṣṇunāga should rub and shampoo her dishonoured foot; another proposes that he should bathe his head with the water with which she washes her feet, and drink the same; the poet Rudravarman prescribes that his dishonoured head should be shorn; but in the end, it is agreed, on the proposal of the presiding rake, that Madanasenikā should put more sense into her lover by setting her foot on the president’s own head in the sight of Viṣṇunāga!

The scene of action of all these plays is laid in imperial cities like Ujjayinī or Kusumapura; and in one case (Pāda-tāḍītaka) the author probably wants to disguise the name of the
actual city, whose scandals are recorded, by calling it Sārvabhauma-nagara, an imaginary cosmopolitan city somewhere in Western India. Of course, the Viṣṇa takes his usual promenade in the hetaera’s street and carries on imaginary conversations, but the characters are not the conventional types of the man about town and the courtesan; they are sufficiently diversified to keep up the interest of the narrative; and a zest is added, in spite of the erotic theme, by a decided leaning towards satirical and comic portraiture, which is rare in later Bhāṇas entirely engrossed in eroticism. One would seek in vain in later decadent writings for the power of observation and reproduction of the classes of peoples and personages who are described or ridiculed in the Caturbhāṇī. Characters like Sārasvatībhadra, the sky-gazing poet with a verse on the spring recorded on the wall, Dattakalasi the pedantic Pāṇinian with his sesquipedalian affectation and war on the Kātantrikas, Samdhilaka, the Śākya-bhikṣu, who consoles the hetaera Samghadāsikā with words of the Buddha, Mṛdaṅgavāsulaka the decrepit Nāṭaka-viṣṇa, nicknamed “Bhāva Jaradgava,” the thoughtless young rake Śreṣṭhiputra Krṣṇilaka averse to marriage, the penniless impotent Nagna-śramaṇa Viśvalaka and his dried-up mistress Sunandā, Vilāsakauṇḍinī the hypocritical Buddhist Parivrājikā of easy virtue who always quotes the scriptures—to mention only a few—are specimens which are unknown to later Bhāṇas. The Viṣṇa, who is the central figure, is also not altogether a despicable character here, not such a worthless amorist as the later Bhāṇas depict him to be. As a character, he is neglected in the serious drama, but he appears in the Cārudatta and attains considerable development in the Mycchakatikā. In the Bhāṇa he is in all his glory; he appears, no doubt, as an erotic character in these early works, but he is still figured as a poet skilled in the arts, and has not yet become

1 The Buddhist monks and nuns, who figure also in the Bhagavadajjuka and Mattavilāsa, disappear from later Bhāṇa and Prahasana, and their place is taken by absurd Śrotiyas, wicked Paurāṇikas, Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas and Bhāgavatas. The large number of foreigners mentioned and caricatured in the Caturbhāṇī is also a noteworthy feature.
a gallant in the worst sense in which he appears in the later Bhāṇas.\footnote{Bharata lays down that the Bhāṇa should be \textit{dhūrtas-śīrasa-samprayojya}; the Viṣṇu need not be "the hero," as he is not in most of these early Bhāṇas, but he is the only character who fills the stage, and the heroism is naturally transferred to him in later Bhāṇas, in which, however, he becomes a poor shadow of his former self.}

Apart from their naive exuberance of robust grossness, the \textit{Caturbhāṇi} stand unique for their amusing pictures of the lives and adventures, scandals and gossips, of a class of people who infest all imperial cities, and would not be unworthy of the pen of the author of the \textit{Mṛcchakaṭiśka}, to whom one of the Bhāṇas is actually ascribed. The language employed is Sanskrit throughout, with the exception of two short Prakrit passages in the \textit{Pāda-tāḍitaka} (pp. 21, 23); and its racy, well turned and conversational tone, very unlike that of the affected prose of the romances of Subandhu and Bāṇa, is rightly characterised by an appreciative critic as "the veritable ambrosia of Sanskrit speech." The metrical variety is skilful and vigorous, and does not hamper the interest by unnecessary display and profusion. The literary importance of the \textit{Caturbhāṇi}, therefore, cannot be gainsaid. The Bhāṇas in later times become mere literary exercises, devoid of variety and monotonous in their cloying insistence on the erotic sentiment; they subside into a conventional and lifeless form of the art. The \textit{Caturbhāṇi}, on the other hand, have more life and greater freedom of handling and draws upon other legitimate sources of interest than the erotic. Their marked flair for comedy and satire, their natural humour and polite banter, their presentation of a motley group of interesting characters, not elaborately painted but suggested with a few vivid touches of the brush, are characteristics which are not frequently found in Sanskrit literature; and, apart from their being the earliest specimens of a peculiar type of dramatic composition, they possess a real literary quality in their style and treatment, which makes them deserve a place of their own in the history of the Sanskrit drama.
Of the same lively and satirical character, but inferior in scope, treatment and literary quality, is the *Mattā-vilāsa*¹ of Mahendravikrama-varman. The prologue of the play, fortunately, gives the name of the author and describes him as a king of the Pallava dynasty and son of Simhavarman; the scene is laid in Kānci, the modern Conjevaram and the ancient capital of the Pallava kingdom. All this enables us to identify the author with the king of that name, known to us from inscriptions, which mention the *Mattā-vilāsa* as a work of his, and also give him the titles of Guṇabhara, Avanībhājana, Mattavilāsa and Šatrumalla, all found in the play itself. The king ruled in Kānci about 620 A.D., and was thus a contemporary of Harṣavardhana and Bāṇa.

The play is a slight farcical sketch in one act, technically belonging to the category of the Prahasana, which is closely allied to the Bhāṇa. It depicts with some liveliness the drunken revelry of a Śaiva mendicant, bearing a human skull in lieu of alms-bowl and accordingly calling himself a Kapālin, his wandering with his wench through the purlicus of Kānci on his way to a tavern, his scuffle with a hypocritical Buddhist monk² whom he accuses of the theft of the precious bowl which he has lost, his appeal to a degenerate Pāśupata to settle the dispute, and the final recovery of the bowl from a mad-man who had retrieved it from a stray dog. The incident is amusing but trivial, and the

¹ Ed. T. Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum Skt. Ser., 1917. On this drama see L. D. Barnett in *JRAS*, 1919, pp. 233-34, *BSOS*, 1920, I, pt. 3, pp. 36-38. Eng. trs. L. D. Barnett, *BSOS*, V, 1930, pp. 697-710.—Except that the author is named in the prologue, the play shows the same technique of stage-craft and other peculiarities as the plays attributed to Bhāsa. Barnett makes this fact the basis of the suggestion that the Bhāsa dramas are the products of an anonymous playwright of a Southern dramatic school, who composed them at about the same period as that of Mahendravikrama. But since the features are shown also by several other plays of other dramatists of known or unknown dates, the conclusion, we have seen, cannot be justified in the form in which it is stated.

² It is significant that the monk, a frail son of the Church, bears the name of Nāgasena, the famous Buddhist divine and protagonist of the *Milinda-pañha*; and his mumbling of the Śikṣāpada and his inward fretting about restrictions regarding wine and women are interesting touches. On false ascetics and nuns in Indian fiction in general, see M. Bloomfield in *JAOS*, XLIV, 1924, pp. 202-942,
satire caustic but broad. It evinces no distinctive literary characteristics of a high order, but within its limits it shows some power of vivid portraiture in a simple and elegant style, and certainly deserves an indulgent verdict as the earliest known specimen\(^1\) of the Prahasana or farce, which in later times becomes marked by greater vulgarity and less literary skill.

c. Harśa

Three dramas, entitled respectively Priyadarśikā, Ratanāvali and Nāgānanda, have come down to us under the name of Śrī-Harśa; and in spite of some discussions\(^2\) about the identity of the author and ascription of the works, there cannot be much doubt that the dramatist was identical with king Śrī-Harśa-vardhana Śilāditya of Sthāṇviśvara and Kānyakubja, who was the patron of Bāṇabhaṭṭa and of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang, and who reigned in the first half of the 7th century (circa 606-648 A.D.). The authorship of the plays is now assured by abundant evidence, partly external and partly internal. Doubts do not appear to have existed on the subject from the 7th to the 9th century; for Dāmodaragupta, in the 9th century, describes

\(^1\) The Bhagavadajjuka ascribed to Bodhāyana (see below) is probably a much later work.—Although a small farce, as many as nine different metres are employed in the Matta-silāsa; apparently varieties of Prakrit are employed, but the uncertainty of scribes' modifications in South Indian manuscripts precludes any positive inference from such archaic forms as are also found in the Bhāsa dramas.

\(^2\) For a summary of the discussion, see A. V. W. Jackson’s introd. to ed. of Priyadarśikā. Doubts regarding authorship appears to have been raised by the remarks of some scholiasts on an opening passage of the Kāṇya-prakāśa of Mammaṭa (i. 2), in which it is stated that Dhāvaka (v. 1. Bāṇa) and others obtained wealth from Śrīharṣa and the like. In explaining the passage some commentators ascribe the Ratanāvali to Dhāvaka, although allowing that it bears Harṣa’s name; and since the reading Bāṇa, instead of Dhāvaka, is sometimes found in Kashmirian MSS, it is assumed that Bāṇa, who was a protégé and littératour at Harṣa’s court, received recompense for writing some of the dramas which now pass in the king’s name. It must be admitted that the evidence is extremely late and weak, for Mammaṭa’s statement merely refers to Harṣa’s well-known generosity as a patron of letters. Of Dhāvaka we know nothing, and disparity of style would make Bāṇa’s authorship highly implausible.