



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

The So Called Character of Duryodhana, in The Play Urubhangam of Bhasa is Reflected as a Humanitarian Character

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Abstract: 'Urubhangam' is a tragic Sanskrit Play written by Bhasa in the 2nd or 3rd century CE. The play is based on the well-known epic 'Mahabharata' by Vyasa, focused on the story of character Duryodhana during and after his fight with Bhima. Through the outstanding artistic capability of Bhasa's pen an all- new Duryodhana has been created, a Duryodhana that is completely different from the one depicted in the 'Mahabharata'. On the basis of the last phase of the life of Duryodhana, the unbeatable warrior, Bhasa, with great affection and using the elegance of his imagination, has depicted an all new, completely exceptional Duryodhana. In the 'Mahabharata' we see Duryodhana as a tyrant who is also licentious, lascivious, arrogant and sinful. He possesses all the malicious qualities of a tyrant. There is no mercy in his heart. We all feel hatred to see him in the Mahabharata. It was a challenge for Bhasa to turn that tyrannical Duryodhana as describe by Vyasa, into a merciful, magnanimous, heroic Duryodhana and Bhasa has kept the challenge so well with his magnificent skill that we see in this play.

Keywords: Diabolical, Conspicuously, Gesticulation, Obsequies, Perturbed, Licentious, Lascivious, Magnanimous

'Urubhangam' is a one-act tragic play by the famous play Wright Bhasa. The play is based on the well-known epic 'Mahabharata' by Vyasa. The play is written on the basis of 'Godaporbo' which falls under 'Shalyaporbo' at the end of the great war of Kurukshetra related in the 'Mahabharata'. Through the outstanding artistic capability of Bhasa's pen an all- new Duryodhana has been created, a Duryodhana that is completely different from the one depicted in the 'Mahabharata'. On the basis of the last phase of the life of Duryodhana, the unbeatable warrior, Bhasa, with great affection and using the elegance of his imagination, has depicted an all new, completely exceptional Duryodhana. We neither can find this unique Duryodhana in the 'Mahabharata' nor can we find him in any other piece of literary works, except 'Urubhangam', of Sanskrit Literature. The Duryodhana we see in 'Urubhangam' is thoroughly on extra ordinary creation of Bhasa.

The dramatic background of the play is somewhat like this – The 'Kauravas' were all devastated in the diabolical war of Kurukshetra and the brothers to Duryodhana were dead. Only Duryodhana was left behind. On the other hand, the Pandavas were still alive and Lord Krishna was on their side. The battlefield was infested with the parts of the dead bodies of the kings who fought in the war and it looked horrible.

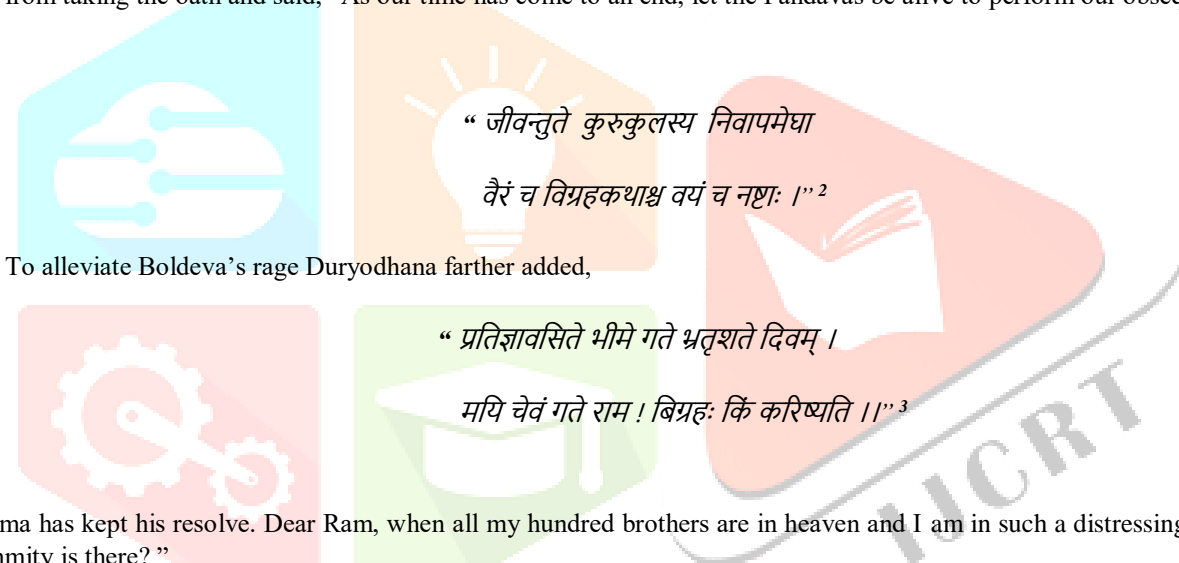
On the eighteen day of the war with his army reduced to himself, Ashwatthama, Kripacharya and Kritavarma, Duryadhana goes to mediate in a lake. When the Pandavas and Krishna eventually find him, Duryadhana tells them that he wants to gift the kingdom to them, and retire to the forest. Yudisthira balks at the offer, telling him that Hastinapur is not Duryadhana's to gift. Instead, he offers that Duryadhana may pick any of the Pandava brothers to fight against one to one with a weapon on his choice, with the winner of the conflict the victor of the war. Despite his proposed advantage over Yudisthira, Arjuna, Nakula or Sahadeva with the gada, Duryadhana picks his nemesis Bhima, Despite Bhima's physical advantage, Duryadhana had the better technique due to his devotion to his craft. Suddenly that diabolical atmosphere got vibrated with a roar. It became known that was the war -cry from the impending

combat between the two great warriors- the resolute Bhima and Duryodhana, furious at the miserable death of his hundred brothers. The combat kept going on in front of the reverend elders; like Vyasa, Boldeva, Lord Krishna, Vidura; of both Kuru and Yadu dynasties. After a long and brutal battle between the two disciples of Boldeva, Duryadhana begins to exhaust Bhima and nearly makes Bhima faint. Each equaled the other in skill in the duel- yet it seemed that Duryodhana possessed more adept hands in the combat than that of mighty Bhima's and all saw the outcome of that shortly. Blood started rolling down from the heat of Bhima at the lethal stroke by Duryodhana, all his body become numb, he collapsed on the ground. Seeing Bhima all exhausted, Duryodhana did not strike him again. Duryodhana rather said to Bhima, "Do not worry; the great never killed the helpless."

“ दीनं वीरो निहन्ति समरेषु भयं त्यजेति ।”¹

Here we can see the humane attitude of Duryodhana conspicuously. At this point Krishna, observing the fight calls out to Bhima and signals him by repeatedly clapping his own thigh with his hand. The next moment at the gesticulation of Lord Krishna, sacrificing all his ethics, principles of a combat Bhima, furious with anger, hit Duryodhana on his thighs and broke them and he was flung on the ground. After having his face insulting kicked by Bhima, Duryadhana bemoans that he was slain by unfair means, give that it was illegal to attack below the waist in a mace fight.

Boldeva could not bear the sight of Duryodhana's distressing state so he closed his eyes. Right at that moment the Pandavas made a circle by holding one another's hand around Bhima and rescued, Boldeva fell into mightily rage and went ahead to the kings who were present on the spot and made them aware of Bhima's conspiracy and the breaking of the principles of duel. Being enraged with Bhima, Boldeva resolved to split Bhima's chest with a plough. But Duryodhana, with his broken thighs, came forward and resisted Boldeva from taking the oath and said, "As our time has come to an end, let the Pandavas be alive to perform our obsequies."



i.e. "Bhima has kept his resolve. Dear Ram, when all my hundred brothers are in heaven and I am in such a distressing condition, what use of enmity is there? "

Lying defeated, Duryadhana boasts to the Pandavas about how he will die a glorious death, about how he got to enjoy Hastinapur while the Pandavas were in exile, and about how he would now spend the afterlife in the company of his friends and relatives. He again eviscerates the Pandavas for all their chicanery during the war and decries their legacy. Venerating his own character, Duryadhana proclaims he will die happily.

However, everyone left the place. Duryodhana was lying on the ground with his broken thighs and his body completely exhausted. Meanwhile Dhritarashtra, Gandhari and the two queens of Duryodhana, Pourabi and Manabi, went out in search of him. Dhritarashtra and Gandhari's grandson Durjay, influenced with habit, went ahead and was ready to get on his father's lap. But Duryodhana was lying there with his broken thighs. He was in a pitiable state. He did not even have the ability to stand up on his legs.

As little Durjaya did not know worldliness, was not aware of what a war was, did not know the wear and tear of war, did not understand the defeat and victory, he went forward to his father to get his affection. He only knew father's affection, loved to hear fairytales from his father and that's why he went to his father to get on his lap. The presence of Durjaya doubles Duryodhana's pain as he loved his son a lot. He was much perturbed at heart. All of a sudden, his pain, mental sickness was gone. He felt a kind of mental peace. Tears of happiness are trickling down from his eyes. He was very happy inwardly. But the present condition of his body does not support his mental happiness. Though he was not broken inwardly, he was broken physically. So, his physical inability stopped him to get his son on his lap.

It has been mentioned earlier that Bhasa's Duryodhana was different from Vyasa's Duryodhana. In the Mahabharata we see Duryodhana as a tyrant who is also licentious, lascivious, arrogant and sinful. He possesses all the malicious qualities of a tyrant. There is no mercy in his heart. We all feel hatred to see him in the Mahabharata. It was a challenge for Bhasa to turn that tyrannical Duryodhana as describe by Vyasa, into a merciful, magnanimous, heroic Duryodhana and Bhasa has kept the challenge so well with his magnificent skill that we see in this play.

The way Duryodhana, an object of hatred in the “Mahabharata” won the heart of the audience is, in a word, extraordinary. And all of it is indicative of the poetic genius of Bhasa. Duryodhana’s affection for his son and his human quality are showed very tactfully through the indomitable characteristic of Duryodhana. According to Duryodhana “ The affection hidden in my heart for my son is afflicting me in all situations.” (“ सर्वविस्थायां हृदयसन्निहित पुत्रस्नेहो मां वहति ।”⁴) In other words–“ The love for my son is troubling me inwardly even in this situation.” (“ अस्यामवस्थायामपि पुत्रस्नेहो हृदयं दहति ।”⁵)

If a child, in its childhood days, is surrounded with fear, hatred, panic, tyranny, bad conduct; it gets affected with them. It also grows up to be indecent, impertinent and revengeful. Duryodhana never wanted his son, his successor, to take revenge of his father’s death. Duryodhana wanted to put an end to the war between the Kurus and the Pandavas. Duryodhana took the Pandavas to be his kind’s men and praised them. He wanted his son to be obedient to his mother Kunti as well as to respect Subhadra and Draupadi, mothers to Abhimanyu, like his own mother. He wanted his son not to bear any revengeful motive towards them.

“ स्पृष्टा चैव युधिष्ठिरस्य विपुलं क्षौमापसव्यं भुजं ।

देयं पाण्डुसूतसत्वया मम समं नामावसाने ज्वलम् ।।”⁶

However, this one-act play bears a completely different test to the Sanskrit literature. It is a successful tragic play. The details, structure, dialogues of the play made it a unique artistic creation.

References:

¹Urubhanga-1/22

²Urubhanga-1/31

³Urubhanga-1/33

⁴Urubhanga-Sanskrit Sahitya Sambhar , P-363

⁵Ibid - P-363

⁶Urubhanga-1/53

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