

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISATION IN VARADĀMBIKĀPARINĀYA CAMPŪ

One of the objectives sought to be achieved by Indian literature, through the theme of depicting the life and achievements of the noble and magnanimous persons, is the inculcation of the four-fold ideals of life. Themes are chosen from the epics Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata by the poets to achieve this end. A theme may also be chosen from the life of a noble person belonging to the time of the poet, like our own poetess, who has depicted the life of the King Achyutarāya, her beloved husband. In the course of the development of the theme, for achieving the main objective of the chosen theme, the poet introduces certain events and incidents, which throw light on the characters such as the hero, the heroine, the anti-hero and also on the minor characters. In order to portray various and varied aspects of life, the poet through these characters, highlights the different ideals of life as well as the vices and follies of human nature. The poet depicts through some characters the virtues which are to

be emulated and through some others the vices of life from which the people should abstain. The study of various characters, therefore, is one of the important aspects in the critical study of a literary work. An attempt is made in this chapter, to study the important characters of Varadāmbikāpariṇayacampū, such as Narasiṃha, Achyutarāya, Varadāmbikā, the Jester and Cīna Veṅkaṭādri. The roles played by the other minor characters are also briefly dealt with.

Tirumalāmbā, as has been already pointed out, has chosen the theme of the marriage of Achyutarāya with Varadāmbikā. Achyutarāya was the husband of the poetess. Those poets who have chosen a theme drawn from the epics are faced with an uphill task of injecting originality and novelty in their works, since the characters they purport to depict are already well-grounded in the minds of Indian people. In the present campū, the poetess does not have such problem to contend with. Her theme is a novel one and it does not have any roots in the epics or Purāṇas. However, she has to face one restraint. Since the theme she has chosen is one from the real life, it has limited her imagination, for she has to be true to the real life too. As a result, there are not

many twists and turns in course of the development of the theme. All the same, it has not restrained altogether the flight of her imagination.

The range of characters in this campū is narrow, as the poetess has chosen them only from royal families. It is natural since her campū concerns only with royal personages. The noble characters are presented by her as the aggregation of all the noble qualities, and consequently, they appear to be more of ideals than of real men of flesh and blood.¹ This will be made amply clear in the following analysis of the different characters:

ACHYUTARĀYA

Achyutarāya is the hero of the present campū. At his birth, he was, says the poetess, radiant like the sun stationed on the summit of the eastern mountain. His father named his son Achyuta meaning 'not fallen, firm' because he knew that the new born prince was not wanting in modesty, political sagacity, discrimination, valour and all other virtues. After the king performed all the rites of the young prince, the latter attained an infinite majesty.

Referring to the learning ability of the prince, the poetess says . "The memory of this steady-minded (prince) easily and quickly retained all the sciences, and all the fine arts taught by the preceptor, like a magnetic needle, which easily and quickly retains (iron) needles".² Thus the prince mastered all the sciences and all the fine arts.

HIS CORONATION:

After the death of his father, he was coronated. By now he had been known as a treasure of admirable and desirable virtues such as modesty and political sagacity. The poetess says that Lord Viṣṇu was dwelling in the heart of this king.

HIS PERSONAL BEAUTY:

Achyutarāya was not lacking in personal beauty. His handsome personality in all its minute details, has been described by the poetess at great length. This has an important bearing on the development of the theme of this campū. Further, the poetess says, "The wise thought of him as a visible quality of statesmanship; hostile kings, as the heroic sentiment

incarnate; friends, as a living desire-granting tree; the subjects, as *dharmā* in a corporeal form; and again the red-lipped damsels, as cupid personified. Thus every body looked at the lord of the earth with delight".³

Again speaking of his character, the poetess concludes thus: "The king was pleasure-house of discriminating knowledge; the confidant of liberality; field of success for the three regal powers; the watery basin (of the tree) of good conduct; support of profundity; refuge of gentlemanliness; an aggregate of noble deeds, a rendezvous of music; fulness of literature; substratum of (the successful employment of the) four political expedients; a market place of meritorious deeds; combination of courage; mass of beauty; all-in-all of good taste, an eternal abode of truthful words; unanimity of purities; residence of heroic exploits; the lying-in-chamber of statesmanship; and consensus of universally acknowledged virtues".⁴

SKILLED HORSEMAN:

Achyutarāya was a skilled horseman. He is adept at various feats of horsemanship. This becomes clear to us when he goes to the race course and watches the vassal princes perform various

feats. Thereafter, he rewards those princes who had shown graceful equestrian feats with suitable remarks. Then mounting now one horse and then the other with greatest ease diverts himself by putting the horses to different paces.

He amused himself by riding so as to show off the five graceful paces of the horses, viz, leaping, trotting, contering, galloping and capering. He showed various other feats. He imitated the skill of Nala, Nakula, and Rēvata. His horse galloped about proudly, as if through anger born of its desire to outstrip the horse in the form of its own shadow which persistently followed it. Comments the poetess that one who can move the entire world requires no extra-ordinary skill to move a horse. After watching the king's flawless sport of horse-riding, the vassal princes were wonder-struck. They had to give up their pride in all sciences even as they had done their kingdoms. Tirumalāmbā has glorified Achyutarāya in the eulogistic stanzas of the bards. The bards says that he is undoubtedly a full incarnation of Viṣṇu; that nobody equals him in valour, that he is the most generous king. However, the poetess says that on hearing the nectar shedding verses from the lips of the bards, the king was filled with intense joy. This does harm to his character by suggesting his vulnerability to sycophancy.

A DEVOTED LOVER:

Achyuta is a devoted lover. He is enamoured of the charms of Varadāmbikā, whom he see in the temple of Kātyāyanī and he falls in love with her. The first sight of Varadāmbikā had an enormous impact on him. Having watched her for long, he with his heart ceasing to function and his sense ceasing to work, stood for a while with unwinking eyes, as if spell-bound. He feels the pangs of separation, when he reaches his palace. He attended to no other business. The intense heat of the fire of her separation was not removed even though he was plunging into the wave of the beauty of Varadāmbikā.

Achyuta loves her from the heart of his hearts. It is not just an infatuation. He remains firm to his love and marries her. He installs her as his chief queen. Thereafter he spent a few days in her company. During those days, the passing away of days and nights etc, was not known. Their mutual love was becoming unique and deep. The king was full of joy, when he came to know that the queen was carrying. Equally overwhelming was his joy at the birth of a son.

At the birth of the son, Achyuta felt great and infinite and he enthusiastically performed numerous ceremonies. He performed Jāta-Karma and other rites. He thought himself to have obtained the fruit of his life.

The childhood sports of the young prince filled the heart of the king with joy. When the prince Cina Veṅkaṭādrī grew up, Achyuta installed him as his heir-apparent. This is all that can be culled out of this campū, regarding Achyuta, the hero of this campū. Sometimes one may doubt whether Achyuta was worthy of the high exaltation and ornate eulogy of the bards and the poetess. There are no incidents which prove his virtues like generosity, compassion, kindness and so on. There are no battles in which his valour could be proved. He is born in a royal family, grows up receiving the education befitting his royal status, has many wives before he falls in love with Varadāmbikā and he marries Varadāmbikā without any difficulty. His life is not eventful. Even a few events that occur in his life do not bring out the best or the exceptional in him.

Varadāmbikā is the heroine of this campū. She was the princess in whom the graces of the youth had attained their climax. She was radiant like the banner of the God of Love. She was visible to the eye like the glory of sovereignty of beauty. She was flawless. Her beauty was indescribable.

DAUGHTER OF A NOBLE FAMILY :

She belonged to a royal family. Her father's name is not given, but from the 'Achyutarāyabhyūdayam' , we learn that she was the daughter of a chief called Salak or Salaga who belonged to the Solar race. Her mother was Trāpāmbikā who was endowed with eminent virtues and was lovely by reason of her noble character and family. Tirumalāmbā is the younger sister of the two prince ministers both called Tirumalarājas. They were known for their generosity and valour. The character of Varadāmbikā is extremely wonderful and pure.

A DEVOTED BELOVED:

Varadāmbikā sees the king Achyuta at the temple of Kātyāyanī, where she had gone to observe the vow of Varaprasādhana i.e., the

attainment of a bride-groom. As soon as she opened her eyes after finishing her meditation, she saw the king who too was beholding her. She is bewitched by the extraordinary handsomeness of Achyuta. Unable to control her senses, she fell a prey to love.

She feels strong pangs of separation, when she returns home, and wants feverishly to be united with her lover. She refused to speak to her friends. Neither she looked at her attendants nor waited on her elders. She stopped all her routine activities. Love is a hard task-master, who would not allow his servants to attend to things other than his own, so long as they are in his service. She gave up her baths and dressed her luxuriant hair only when forced by maid-attendants to do so.

She humbly thinks that she does not have a beauty, worthy of Achyuta, nor the means to obtain him. She was aware that she had abandoned modesty, disregarded the advice of all the elders, and banished shame from her mind. However, she is so shy that untill importunately pressed by her friends, she does not divulge the secret of her heart.

When Achyuta sends a chamberlain to ask for her hand, she is filled with joy. She gladly marries him. She becomes the chief-queen of Achyuta. Thus the character of Varadāmbikā is enchantingly elucidated. She is beautiful, humble and graceful. She believes in vows and is God-fearing. She is fond of music and plays lute. She is the lover of animals like deer, dove, peacock, swans and the king parrot. She is a devoted lover and a faithful wife. She gives the gift of a son to the king. She also is a proud and loving mother.

NARASIMHA:

Narasimha, the father of Achyutarāya, is depicted as a powerful ruler of Vidyāpurī, and a mighty conqueror. Although he is not the hero of this campū, his valour, conquests, and virtues are dealt with at such great lengths that as a consequence, he appears to be equally, or perhaps even more important than the hero himself. In him, one finds a virtuous and bounteous man. He was the son of Īśvara, the pre-eminent among kings, and the noble lady Bukkamāmbā.

He was courteous and eminently brave. He was untiring in making large gifts of gold. He had a strong physique. The Goddess of victory always followed him and he made the entire earth free from thorns in the form of enemies.

AN ABLE KING:

Narasimha was an able and powerful king. He was a great leader like Krtavīrya; glorious like Arjuna; strong like Bhīma; brave like Vikramāṅka, and righteous like Yudhīstira. He resented untruth. He had astonishing political wisdom and sagacity. He was a master of the strategy appropriate to the three constituents of regal power viz., Prabhāva, Utsāha, and mantra-śaktī. He was competent to apply the six expedients of the royal polity viz, sandhi, vighraha, yāna, asana, dvaidha and āsraya. He protected the four infallible means of success viz, sāma, dāna, bhēda and danda.

Among his subjects there was peace and tranquility. There was no suffering among the people. There was no hostility, quarrel or bad blood among them. There was no imprisonment or chaining in case of his people. There were no destitute house-holders among his subjects. People were not contemptuous towards beggars. There was no censor of others, nor deceit, nor fraudulent speeches, nor prison-houses among his subjects. All these point to the ability and efficiency of Narasimha.

A MIGHTY CONQUERER: -

Narasimha was a mighty conquerer. He undertook a march of conquest and at first he conquered the eastern quarter. There

after he overran the Tundīra country. He fought a fierce battle with the Cola king and captured him alive. King Maruva terrified at the approach of Narasimha's army, fled to the sea-coast. In his western campaign, he seized the city of Srirangapaṭṭana. In his northern campaign, he captured the Suratrāna (sultan) Varahapāda, concealed in Mānava-dūrga, "Thus moving from the left to right, he (the lord Indra of the earth) not only conquered the earth, but the triple world also with the host of his virtues, resplendent with the heroic exploits of his arms".⁵ Thus Narasimha annihilated with his prowess and valour, all the hostile kings.

AN EMBODIMENT OF COMPASSION :-

Narasimha's heart is filled with the milk of human kindness. This becomes explicit and obvious during his march of conquest when he entered the Cola country, he orders his commanders of his army thus: "whosoever of my servants afflicts this country, considering it belonging to another, shall receive severe punishment at my hands".

After he defeats and captures the Colāking alive in one of the fiercest battles, he, who was a veritable ocean of compassion, stopped his brave army from continuing the fight. For indeed, the inborn quality of the good is graciousness and not wrath".⁶

When king Mahāvīra of Śrīrangapaṭṭaṇa submits, falls at his feet with his kingdom at his disposal, he feels pity on him and reinstates him. All these acts of kindness and sympathy, proclaim him to be an embodiment of compassion.

HIS DEVOTION TO GOD :

His devotion to God is evident from his act of paying homage to Rāmeśvara and bowing to the God Gokarna. At Gokarna, he offers numerous gifts such as the gift of gold etc., equal to a man's weight. Narasiṃha spends his time in literary, musical and other pursuits. This shows the refinement of his tastes. He marries Ombamāmbā, the daughter of the glorious Rāmāmbikā, and after praying to god Acyuta i.e Viṣṇu begets a son whom he named Acyuta. As a loving father, he looks after the prince, performs various ceremonies and rites, and looks after the education of the prince. He now regards his race as really blessed by the prince, who was endowed with all virtues. Then, after a long time, Narasiṃha dies. Thus, through his military achievements and acts of compassion, and also his refined tastes and pursuits, the character of Narasiṃha leaves behind a memorable impression on the mind of the reader of this campū.

A very brief account of the character of ombamāmbā, who is the wife of Narasimha and the mother of Acyuta, is given in this campū. She is the daughter of Racirāja and Rāmāmbikā. She belongs to the noble solār race. She is beautiful and viruous, she is a faithful wife. She gives birth to Acyuta. Apart from this, she does not have much role to play.

THE JESTER:

It was customary for king to keep in his court, a jester, whose function was to amuse the former with his wit and humour. He also used to enliven the proceedings of the royal court. The jester used to be very intimate friend of the king . Therefore the king could speak his mind without any hesitstion to the jester. In the present campū, the character of jester is, though small, an important one.

The Jester accompanies the king to the garden and there he requests the latter to spend the time of midday heat. The Jester cheers the king with his remarks. He draws the attention of the king towards the beauty of the garden, by discribing it. Though the Jester professes to be an expert in the matter of sounds, he

mistakes the sound of the conversation of maidens for the sweet sound of cuckoos. He awakens the king, who had lost in the love of Varadāmbikā, by announcing that the minister wanted to have an audience with the latter.

The Jester understands the mind of the king as a faithful servant should. On the king's orders, he plays an important role of bringing information about Varadāmbikā. He strengthens the king's love for Varadāmbikā by asserting that he had chosen the right girl. In this way, this character is important from the point of view of the development of the theme.

CINA VENKAṬĀDRĪ:

He is the son of Achyuta and Varadāmbikā. As we have already observed, the present campū, continues beyond the climax of its theme namely the marriage of Achyutarāya with Varadāmbikā. A son is born to them by the favour of a boon granted by the glorious Lord of Venkaṭā hill, i.e, Viṣṇu. Thinking the prince to have been born from a portion of Viṣṇu, the king named him Cina Venkaṭādrī which means 'Viṣṇu, the younger.'⁷

His childhood sports filled his parents with joy. By moving on all four on the floor in the palace, he showed his method of

over-running all the worlds simultaneously. By constantly keeping his fist closed he indicated his firm resolve to protect his refugees.⁸ He grew up under the loving care of his parents. Even in his boy-hood he displayed a unique dignity. He was anointed yuvarāja by the king.

OTHER CHARACTERS

Apart from the above characters, the other minor characters of the Varadāmbikāpariṇayacampū are the ancestors of king Narasiṃha (viz; Moon, Budha, Pururavas, Ayus, and Naḥusā, Yayāti, Truvasu, Timma, and Iśvara) the Colaking, the king Māruva, king Mahavīra of Śrirāṅgapattṇa sultan Varāhapada, the garden keeperess, the chamberlain, the prime-minister, the vassal princes, the female friends of Varādāmbikā (viz, Tamālīka, Mādhavika, Kapālīka, Manjarika, Varārika, Līlāvati and Kusumāvati) and the ladies of the royal harem.

The Moon is the founder of Narasiṃha's dynasty. The moon personifies this king. References in one or two verses are made to the other predecessor of Narasiṃha. The Cola king is a brave enemy, who faces his mighty foe Narasiṃha with his full force and fights until he is captured by the latter. He, due to his

victory over ordinary kings, over-estimates himself and pays heavily for it. A contrast to him is found in the king of Maruva, who is a coward, and who, knowing of Narasiṃha's arrival in his territory, flees out of terror to the sea-coast abandoning his family and kingdom. Narasiṃha loughs at his cowardice.

After initial resistance, king Mahāvīra of Śrīraṅgaṭṭana surrenders and is reinstated by the compassionate Narasiṃha. All the other characters are not very important since they have played very minor roles in this campū.

In the present campū, the poetess, by portraying the female characters as merely the symbols of sex for the enjoyment of men, and as only instruments of giving birth to sons, has not done justice to them. There is hardly any scope for them to display their talent, intelligence and mental resources etc. Even in the description of the personal beauty, the poetess has been partial to male personality. After the two important female characters viz. Ombamāmbā and Varadāmbikā give birth to sons, the focus is only on the joy experienced by the kings. Their mother-hood has not been depicted properly.

Among the male characters, the portrayal of Narasimha is more impressive than that of Achyutarāya, who in fact is the hero of this campū. Achyutarāya is pleased with praise and eulogy of the bards. For personal enjoyment, he entrusts the affairs of the state to his ministers. These things do not show him in good light. The jester's character is not very well groomed.

All the important characters in this campū possess noble and ideal qualities. It sounds away from reality. They do not look like the real men of blood and flesh. They appear to be mere ideal men and women. Such characterisation does not grow upon the heart of the reader. We can conclude by saying that the very briefness of the plot has been a constraint on the poetess.

REFERENCES

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2. धीरस्य धीरस्य गुरूपदिष्टा विधाः समस्ताः सकलाश्च ।
आधारयधलमपास्य सधः सूचीरयस्कान्तशलाकिकेव ।।67।।Ibid. vpc. P. 71.
3. विज्ञैरिक्षणगोचरो नयगुणो वीरो रसो मूर्तिमान्
प्रत्यर्थिक्षितिपैः सुहृद्भिस्सुदयत्राणो नभः पादपः ।
धर्मः संघटिताकृतिः प्रकृतिभिस्ताम्राधराभिः पुनः
साकारः स्मर इत्यपि क्षितिपतिः सर्वैर्मुदाऽगृह्यत ।।76।। vpc. P. 83.
4. विलाससदनं विशेषज्ञताया , विश्वासभूमिर्विश्राणनस्य, सिद्धिक्षेत्रं
शक्तित्रयस्य, आलवालः सुशीलानाम्, आलम्बनं गाम्भीर्यस्य, शरण्यं सौजन्यस्य,
समाजः सुचरितानाम्, संकेतभवनं संगीतस्य, सौहित्यं साहित्यस्य,
अनपायभूमिरूपायानाम् पण्यवीथिका पुण्यानाम्,vpc. line 5-11 P. 83
5. प्रदक्षिणीकृत्य परिभ्रमन्निति
क्षितिं तदा केवलमेव नाजयत् ।
भुजावदानस्फुरितैर्गुणोत्करै
रपि त्रिलोकीमवनीपुरन्दरः ।। 53।। vpc. P. 63
6. गृहीतमात्रे युधि चोलभूपे कृपानिधिः श्रीनरसिंहदेवः ।
स तां न्यषेधत समरात्स्वसेनां सतां प्रसादः सहजे न रोषः ।।46।। vpc. P. 51
7. श्रीवेङ्कटाद्रीशवरप्रसादाज्जातं कुमारं जगतीसुधांशुः ।
अमुं हरेरंशभावं विदित्वानाम्ना व्यतानीच्चिनवेङ्कटाद्रिम् ।।167।। vpc. P. 149
8. भुवि भवान्तरसंचरणेन भुवनचक्र-समात्पिक्रमम्, अनवरत घटित-दृढ
मुष्टितया समाश्रित-त्राणा-दृढ मुष्टिताम-अतिदान-हर्षिर्वसुमती-पतीनामपहसनम्
अत्यन्तारूढ चरण-पाणि किसलयेन उपगत
धरणी-रमण-परित्राणानुरागयोगम्,P. 149. lines 7-10