

Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam vis-à-vis Dhruva-vana-gamanam

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Abstract

Dhruva-vana-gamanam which translates as the departure of Dhruva to the forest is a chapter from the celebrated Hindu mythological text Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. The tale of Dhruva is one of the most famous tales within the Hindu community which consists of the struggles, adversities, and achievements of the legendary prince Dhruva. It is found in two Purāṇas: Vishṇu Purāṇa and Śrimad-Bhāgavatam Mahā-Purāṇa. It is described under four different headings in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam where Dhruva's departure to the forest is the first chapter. Similarly, Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam written by a contemporary Nepali writer is a long narrative poem based on Dhruva's tale in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. There are a total of 8 chapters in this work. This paper tries to explore the originality of Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam and the magnitude of influence the source has exerted on it. Given the sizable volume of the works only initial chapters from either of them have been selected for the purpose.

Keywords: god, myth, Dhruva, legend, penance, forest.

Introduction

Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam is a long narrative poem written by contemporary Nepali poet Bhima-Kanta Panthi. He has based his poem on the tale of Dhruva which is one of the celebrated tales in Hindu mythology. It's found in both Vishṇu Purāṇa and Śrimad-Bhāgavata-Mahā-Purāṇa. Purāṇa is generally a sacred collection of mythical legends and folklore. There are 18 major Purāṇas. Vishṇu Purāṇa is one of them. It's less celebrated than the latter. Śrimad-Bhāgavata Mahā-Purāṇa as its name suggests is held to be a repository of

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Sanskrit wisdom, philosophy, and literature of antiquity. Vishṇu Purāṇa depicts this tale in the 11th chapter of its 1st section while in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam it's narrated from the 8th through 12th chapters in its 4th canto under the title of Dhruva-caritam (Dhruva's account). Each chapter has a distinct title according to its content in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. The beginning 8th chapter is entitled Dhruva-vana-gamanam which translates as Dhruva's departure to the forest in English. It consists of 84 verses. A total of 266 verses constitute the entire Dhruva tale in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam .

The predominant theme of the 8th chapter is Dhruva's departure to the forest. Dhruva was a prince of a powerful monarch plus he was a direct grandson of creator god Brhamā himself. Historically a powerful prince is entitled to unbridled luxury and romance at his royal palace. He will never go to the forest. If ever, he may go to quench his sensual pleasures. Nevertheless, Dhruva went to the forest. When he did he was just 5 years old. So the question of Dhruva's going to the forest, particularly in his childhood is even more perplexing; why Dhruva had to go to the forest, what his purpose of going to the forest was, and what led him to take such a drastic decision on such a tender age, how he left the palace, what happened when he left, who met him on his way and what he occurred next are the question around which the initial 8th chapter revolves. Hence It's entitled Dhruva-vana-gamanam (Dhruva's departure for the forest).

Similarly, the story of Dhruva expands in 8 chapters in Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam in 310 verses. The first chapter contains 48 verses plus a colophon. Unlike Śrimad-Bhāgavatam no chapters are separately subtitled in Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam. A detailed and verse-by-verse comparison which is done below between the source tale and the Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam version will clarify that Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam was adapted not from Vishnu Purāṇa but Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. It will be too large to make such verse by verse comparison of the entire narrative in one single paper. Therefore only beginning chapters from either text have been selected for the purpose. Furthermore, only about half portion of the 8th chapter of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam is what constitutes the first chapter of Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam. The remaining latter half constitutes the content of the second chapter of it. Few verses at the beginning of either text which have no connections to the main narrative at all thus have been omitted in this study. Consequently, it starts from the 6th verse of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam and from 15th of Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam. Evaluative judgments have been supplied in a section called 'comment' underneath the juxtaposed verses below.

English translation of Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam is mine. I have tried to remain faithful to the source. Minor elaborations deemed necessary during the process have been given in parenthesis. Most original texts and their English renderings of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam have been likewise taken from "His Devine Grace A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupāda through the internet portal.

Statement of problems:

A research article presupposes problems since it explores and finds something new out of or underlying existing ones. Similarly, In this research article, the following are taken as issues to be resolved.

1. To what extent the chapters in the question of Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam are influenced by source text? What are the areas and intensities of influence?
2. Can Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam be counted as an independent and original poetic composition? Or it is a banal reproduction by an amateurish poet?
3. Is it a great contribution to Sanskrit literature?

Purpose of the research

The main purpose of this research is to establish the following facts with logical arguments in a support of precise textual evidence.

1. Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam is highly influenced by its source text.
2. It is fairly independent and merits being recognized as original work.
3. Given the dearth of contemporary Nepali poets writing in Sanskrit, it has highly contributed to Sanskrit literature in modernity.

Research method:

Literary research generally involves a qualitative method. Particularly, in the case of textual comparison, it is the most applicable type. Since the objective of this article is to trace similarities and explore differences between the source tale and the new creation of writer Panthi, it juxtaposes verses from both texts containing similar elements and distinguishes those having flashes of poetic imagination.

The scope of the study:

As stated above the purpose of this study is to make a comparison between two texts. Comparison on one hand is a multidimensional concept. It becomes vague unless areas of comparison aren't clearly defined; the narrative of Dhruva on the other is fairly long. It extends from chapter 8 to chapter 12 in 266 verses in Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Similarly, Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam consists

of 320 verses and expands from the beginning to chapter 8. It's almost impossible to compare and contrast the whole of the narratives in a single analytical piece. Hence only initial chapters from both texts have been selected for the purpose. In the process, the primary focus is given to navigating formal analogies between the two as well as narrative techniques employed in them.

Dhruva-vana-gamanam:

The narrative of Dhruva-vana-gamanam is just a tinier bade in the large variegated garland of the Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. It is only a single episode in the series of events connected with the story of Dhruva which is commonly known as Dhruva-caritam. This is described in 8 through 12 chapters in the 4th canto of Śrimad-Bhāgavatam. Thematically common events are grouped under a particular title in each chapter. There are five titles and 5 corresponding chapters. These titles seem varied by the commentator/publisher's choice. In Prabhupāda's version they are given as follows:

Dhruva Maharaja Leaves Home for the Forest:	chapter - 8
Dhruva Maharaja Returns Home:	chapter - 9
Dhruva Maharaja's fights with Yaksas:	chapter- 10
Svayambhu Manu Advises Dhruva Maharaja to Stop Fighting:	chapter - 11
Dhruva Maharaja Goes back to Godhead:	chapter- 12

There are a total of 82 verses in this chapter. However, only about half section of this chapter i.e. 8 through 42 verses constitutes the content of the first chapter in Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam. The remaining 40 verses make up the content of the 2nd chapter in Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam. For the comparison purpose therefore only the former half portion has been selected here.

The chapter begins with sage Maitreya recounting to sage Vidura the genealogy of Evil as its cause of the holocaust/catastrophe that concludes in the 5th verse. The story of Dhruva starts on the 8th. Verses 6 and 7 describe very briefly Dhruva's genealogy.

According to this version of the story, King Uttānapāda had two wives: Suniti and Suruchi. Suruchi was the kings' preferred while Suniti wasn't. Dhruva was Suniti's son and Uttam was Suruchi's. Both were toddlers. Once, the king was holding Uttama in his arms. Dhruva sought paternal affection too. But the king deliberately ignored him. The envious stepmother Sucuci harshly spoke to the child right before his father. The father kept listening without a protest. Dhruva became furious at the snake and ran towards his mother crying. When

the helpless Suniti came to know the reason behind her son's grief she felt frustrated and in frustration, she began to inspire Dhruva to go to the forest and achieve a higher position than the Uttam would provide reference to his forebears who had attained elevated position by gaining the mercy of omnipotent god Viṣṇu. This inspired Dhruva to leave for the forest resolutely. Sage Nārada approached him Nārada and tried to coax him to go back home. In the process he showed his fear of wild animals; the difficulty of the devotional procedure and the probability of failure. He employed every possible means of persuasion only to be persuaded himself. Finally, Nārada began to instruct Dhruva on ways to be undertaken in the forest.

The chapter doesn't end here. It goes on to the description of the miraculous effect of Dhruva's strong penance wherein the breathing is universally suffocated thereby leading the deities to typically seek refuge in the god Viṣṇu. The chapter ends with god Viṣṇu's assurance.

Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam: an overview

Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam which translates as 'The majesty of the lord Viṣṇu' as aforementioned is a story squarely centered on the prince Dhruva. Since the majesty of the lord is mostly implied rather than explicitly expressed in the poem the writer has resolved the apparent contradiction between the theme and the title in its preface.² His arguments for choosing this thematically non-representative title show he was highly devoted to the god Viṣṇu.

Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam starts with a brief account of the cosmic creation. It expands from the 5th to 14th verses following a conventional invocation of the muse. There are a total of 48 verses in this chapter all in Vsanta Tilaka meter except two concluding verses. The writer in this invocatory section hails the supremely powerful formless being (Brahman) in the initial two verses attributing him to the cosmic creation. Then in the next two verses, he pays tribute to his 3 special Gurus including his father. The writer has followed the standard of an epic tale in this work³ although he doesn't claim to be one.

2 अस्मिन् काव्ये स्वायम्भुवमनोः पौत्रस्य, राज्ञ उत्तानपादपुत्रस्य ध्रुवस्य सपत्नमात्रा बहिष्कृतस्य पञ्चमेऽप्यद्देदुष्करं तपः तपस्यतः तत्पसा मासषट्कैनैव सन्तुष्यता भगवता विष्णुना षट्ट्रिंशत्सहस्रवर्षपर्यन्तं राजराजत्ववरप्रदानात् अन्त्ये च वैकुण्ठलोकप्रदानाद् जगदीश्वरैभवम् इति नामकरणं सार्थकं मत्वा तदेव कृतम् ।

(This poetry was entitled as Jagadiśvara-Vaibhavam as the god Vishnu satisfied with Dhruva's 5 month-long rigorous penance blessed him with a 36000-year long rule as a monarch and an eventual consignment to his abode(Vaikuntha); preface, page no. 3

3 उदात्तचरितस्य राज्ञो ध्रुवस्य वर्णनात् तदुदयवर्णनाच्च काव्योक्तलक्षणं संगतमेव ।

(The definition of poetry given above fits well with this work as it describes the rise and life events of the legendary king Dhruva.) ibid. page no. 3

The main story follows 5 conventional invocations of the muse and a mythical account of the creation of the universe and Dhruva's predecessor's reign which is hardly connected to the main story. A summary of both tales is given below.

Sub tale in Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam

The sub-tale begins with the temporal calculation of the mythical creation of the universe. According to it in the primeval period when there was nothing in the entire cosmos, the primordial god Viṣṇu ordered the god Brahma to create one. Brahma tried his best but constantly failed. Then he pleaded to god Viṣṇu for help. Compassionate God Viṣṇu granted him creative powers. Now god Brahma began to create the universe. In the process, he produced some sages who unfortunately remained celibate. Observing his repeated failure god Brahma went into despair and suddenly his body split into two. A male called Svāyambhuva Manu appeared from the right half and a female called Shatarupā appeared from the left half of his body. The Svāyambhuva Manu then went on a river to undertake a centennial penance thereby pleasing god Viṣṇu for gaining powers to continue the halted process. When the devils saw Svāyambhuva Manu taking such a severe measure they approached there to kill him. God Viṣṇu rescued his devotee appearing out of blue and blessed him with his wish and a kingdom called Manvantara. Manu had two sons; Priyavrata and Uttana-pāda. Priya-Vrata who had 10 sons ruled his kingdom for a legendary 11 billion years before leaving for the forest assigning the sons the royal duty.

The main tale in Jagadiśvara-vaibhavam (chapter one):

The story begins with a description of the henpecked husband and king Uttānapāda. King Uttānapāda had got two wives: Suniti and Suruchi. He had two sons Dhruva and Uttam respectively. King didn't like his older wife much while the younger Suniti was his favorite. Once, the two toddlers entered the royal court to play a game. The king was sitting on his throne. Uttama rose merrily to his father's lap. Dhruva as a child attempted the same. The stepmother who was sitting by the king's side abruptly drew him back rebuking harshly. Those words came as thunderbolts for the child. He ran towards his mother sobbing. When she came to know of the unjust treatment meted to Dhruva she felt helpless. She resentfully advised Dhruva to seek the mercy of god Viṣṇu to attain a position higher than him and the ways to achieve it including the tougher one to be undertaken in a forest. Suniti had sought to comfort Dhruva at the

moment. The child took her words seriously. In the evening evading the notice of his mother the child sneaked out of the palace. Sage Nārada encountered him on his way to the forest. He applied various strategies to persuade the child to return home. But determined as he was he wouldn't. Nārada instead gave in to his resolution and began to give instructions to be followed in the forest. Here ends the first chapter.

Juxtaposition

Verses from either text have been juxtaposed below which accompanies a comment. Comments are analyzed based on the comparison. It chiefly analyses how far the JV's presentation of the tale embodied in a particular verse is appropriate to its original version and what are its' negative points. At times the comment points to the anomaly in the description of the source where it's stark. For convenience, Jagadīśvara-vaibhavam is shortened as JV and Dhruva-vana-gamanam as DVG henceforth.

DVG

अथातःकीर्तयेवंशंपुण्यकीर्तेःकुरुद्व्वहः ।
स्वायम्भुवस्यापिमनोहरीरंशाशजन्मनः ॥ ६॥

Maitreya continued: O best of the Kuru dynasty, I shall now describe before you the descendants of Svayambhuva Manu, who was born of the part of the plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

प्रियव्रतोत्तानपादौशतरूपापतेःसुतौ॥
वासुदेवस्यकलयारक्षायांजगतःस्थितौ ॥ ७॥

Svayambhuva Manu had two sons with his wife Satarupā, and the names of the sons were Uttānapāda and Priyavrata. Because both of them were descendants of the plenary expansion of Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they were very competent to rule the universe to maintain and protect the citizens

JV

स्वायम्भुवस्य पुनरन्यतरस्तु पुत्र । उत्तानपाद इति विश्रुत आप्त आसीत् ॥
तस्यैव चाग्रमहिषी ससुता सुनीति । रासीत्परापि सुरूची रूचये नृपाय ॥ १५॥

Swayambhuva sage had another renowned and learned son named Uttānapāda. He had two consorts Suniti and Surchi respectively. The first consort Suniti was a mother of a child while the next Surchi who had no child was dearer to the king.

Comment:

A question comes here naturally that verses 6 and 7 of Dhruva-vana-gamanam have nothing in common with the 15th verse of JV except for Svayambhuva Manu being the progenitor of Uttānapāda there's no point in juxtaposing them. The answer is they indeed have not much in common yet they are placed together to show how Dhruva-vana-gamanam and JV have presented their version of the tale. As mentioned in the sub-tale section above Dhruva-vana-gamanam is straightforward in dealing with the main story while JV is highly digressive. The Dhruva-vana-gamanam describes Dhruva's ancestral line only in the 6th and 7th verses before the main story begins. While JV rambles on it from the 5th to 14th verse which does not by any means contribute to the main story.

JV

दौर्भाग्यतोऽग्रमहिषी रूचये न राज्ञः । प्रासादपश्चिमकुटीरनिवासिताऽऽ सीत् ॥
राज्ञोऽन्तिके सुरुचिरस्ति सुतेन सार्थं राजा सदा स्पृहयते ह्यतिगर्विताऽऽतः ॥ १६

Unfortunately, the elder queen was not the king's favorite. So, she was driven away to a backyard shanty. (On the other hand) Suruchi was much dearer to the king. She always stayed closer to him with her (little) son (in her arms). As a result (of this privilege) she was excessively conceited.

Comment:

Here in this verse writer Panthi's poetic brilliance has become manifest. The added description of the queen's driving off to a backyard shanti has added an extra pathetic effect to the queen's misfortune. Another word 'unfortunately' likewise has purged the king Uttānapāda from his unjust treatment of his elder wife implying that it was simply her destiny to undergo such a miserable condition and the king had nothing to do with it. This invention is something similar to Kalidāsa's celebrated play *Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam* where the protagonist Duṣyanta was discharged from his offense by addition of Durvāsā episode to the main plot.

DVG

जाये उत्तानपादस्य सुनीतिःसुरुचिस्तयोः
सुरुचिःप्रेयसीपत्युर्नेतरासीत् यत्सुतोध्रुवः ॥ ८ ॥

King Uttānapāda had two queens, named Suniti and Suruchi. Suruchi was much dearer to the King; Suniti, who had a son named Dhruva, was not his favorite.

JV

ज्येष्ठःसुनीत्युदरजो ध्रुवनामधेयो - इन्यस्तूत्तमःसुरुचिगर्भभवःकनिष्ठः ॥
बालावुभावपिसमंचरतःस्वपद्भ्यां पञ्चाब्दमीयतुरनेनविजहतुश्च ॥१७॥

The elder son born to Suniti was Dhruva and the younger child from Suruchi was Uttama. Each was a 5-year-old child, who would stand on their feet and play together.

Comment:

The added mention of both princes' age and their playing together has demonstrated their natural sibling love unaffected by their maternal rivalry; instrumental in connecting the contextual sequence between the preceding and succeeding verses here properly.

DVG

एकदा सुरुचेःपुत्रःमङ्कमारोप्य लालयन्
उत्तमं नारूरुक्षन्तं ध्रुवं राजाभ्यनन्दत ॥ ९ ॥

Once upon a time, King Uttānapāda was patting the son of Suruci, Uttama, placing him on his lap. Dhruva Maharaja was also trying to get on his lap, but the King did not very much welcome him.

JV

एवं कदाचन नृपेन्द्रसुतावुभौ तौ क्रीडापरौ जनककोष्ठमवाप्नुवन्तौ ॥
सिंहासने पितरि तिष्ठति चोत्तमस्तु क्रोडे द्रुतं पितुरयात् ध्रुव इक्षमाणे ॥ १८ ॥

Once, both those princely kids while playing together entered the royal court. The kingly father was sitting on the throne, Suddenly Uttama jumped into the father's lap while Dhruva stood away just watching him (jump up to the lap).

Comment:

For parents all their offspring are equal. Preferential treatment by a father is something unnatural. The writer has very ingenuously removed this jarring incident of paternal bias of one son against the other.

DVG:

तथा चिकिर्षमाणं तं सपत्न्यास्तनयं ध्रुवं ॥
सुरुचिःश्रुणवतोराजःसेर्ष्यमाहातिगर्विता ॥१०॥

While the child, Dhruva Maharaja, was trying to get on the lap of his father, Suruci, his stepmother, became very envious of the child, and with great pride, she began to speak to be heard by the King himself.

JV

भ्राता यथाहमपि यामि पितुर्निष्टुग्ग इत्याशयेन पितुरङ्कमथारुरोह ॥
सेर्वं जगाद् सुरुचिर्नृपतेः समीपे सिंहासनाद् ध्रुवमधोऽप्यवरोप्य चैवम् ॥ ११ ॥

When Uttama reached the father's lap so did the Dhruva. Jealous (stepmother) Suruchi (could not tolerate it and) descended Dhruva from the throne of the king (abruptly) and spoke these harsh words right before the king:

Comment :

The original incident of Dhruva following Uttama's act has just been rephrased in this verse. Nothing remarkable is added in this stanza. If the incident of Dhruva's being thrown out of the throne is new it has added nothing significant to the beauty of the poem.

DVG:

न वत्स नृपते र्धिष्यं भवानारोद्गुमर्हति ॥
न गृहीतो मया यत्त्वं कुक्षावपिनृपात्मजः ॥११॥

Queen Suruchi told Dhruva Maharaja: My dear child, you do not deserve to sit on the throne or the lap of the King. Surely you are also the son of the King, but because you did not take your birth in my womb, you are not qualified to sit on your father's lap.

JV:

वत्स त्वया न च ममोदरमन्वभावि सामान्ययोषिदुदरादजनि क्षितीशात् ॥
आरोद्गुमिच्छसि नृपासनमेहि मूढ तप्त्वा तपो ममपुनर्जठ राधिवासम् ॥२०॥

“Dear boy! Although you are a son of the king, you did not get birth from my womb. (So, you don't deserve to sit on the throne) You were born to a common woman. Little blockhead! Therefore, if you wish to ascend the throne (go to the forest and) undertake severe austerities and (get birth) from my womb again.

Comment:

The selection of words here seems far better in the source. Particularly the simultaneous use of contradictory vocatives 'dear boy' and 'idiot' to address Dhruva has maligned the verse in JV. Similarly, a finite verb essential for concluding a statement is missing in the last line.

DVG:

बालोऽसि वत नात्मानमन्यस्त्रीगर्भसम्भृतम्
नूनं न वेद भवान्यस्य दुर्लभेऽर्थे मनोरथः ॥१२॥

My dear child, you are unaware that you were not born in my womb but

were born of another woman. Therefore, you should know that your attempt is doomed to failure. You are trying to fulfill a desire which is impossible to be fulfilled.

तपसाराध्य पुरुषं तस्यैवानुग्रहेण मे ।
गर्भे त्वं साध्यात्मानं यदीच्छसि नृपासनम् ॥ १३

If you at all desire to rise to the throne of the King, then you have to undergo severe austerities. First of all, you must satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, and then, when you are favored by Him because of such worship, you shall have to take your next birth from my womb.

JV

बालोऽस्यपक्वमतिरन्यवधूदरस्थमात्मानमद्य न वेत्सि मनोरथास्ते ॥
स्थातुं नृपासनमपीच्छति दुर्लभं यत्तस्मात्पस्य वनमेहि मनो नियच्छ ॥ २१ ॥

You are a little child. You are not mature enough now to know what you are doing. You are attempting to ascend the throne of a king which is hardly possible (for a commoner like you). If you desire to get it, go to the forest and undertake severe austerities controlling your mind.

Comment:

The concept of rebirth of Dhruva emphasized in the 11th, 12th and 13th verses in DGV has been discarded, and instead, devotion to god is Viṣṇu reinforced to attain the mercy of god Viṣṇu in JV. The conceptual shift on the part of the writer may be ascribed to his temporal modernity.

DVG:

मातुः सपत्न्या स दुरुक्तिविद्धः श्वसन्नृषा दण्डहतो यथाहिः ।
हित्वा मिषन्तं पितरं सन्नवाचं जगाम मातुःप्ररुदन्प्रकोष्ठम् ॥१४

The sage Maitreya continued: My dear Vidura, as a snake, when struck by a stick, breathes very heavily, so Dhruva Maharaja also, being struck by the strong words of his stepmother, began to breathe very heavily because of great anger. When he saw that his father was silent and did not protest, he immediately left the palace and went to his mother.

JV

इत्थं विमातुमुखनिर्गतदुर्वचोऽसौ श्रुत्वा पितुमुखमपश्यदतीवदीनः ॥
पत्नीवशंवदतया जनकेऽप्युदारे दण्डाहतोऽहिरि वरोषवशं जगामः ॥ २२ ॥

After hearing these bitter words from his stepmother, the helpless Dhruva

eagerly looked at his father. But when he found his henpecked father not protesting it the boy grew as furious at his affectionate father as a snake hit by a stick.

Comment:

A child naturally seeks support from his parents when he is mistreated. Here in the JV version of the incident the boy Dhruva has at first sought defense from his father against the offense made by the stepmother but when his father turned a blind eye to this abuse he grew furious. It is an instance of poetic ingenuity. Moreover, the term पत्नीवशंवदतया (being controlled by one's wife) has very effectively captured the irony of a king.

DVG

तं निश्चसन्तं सुनीतिरुत्सङ्गादूह्यबालम् ॥
निशम्यतत्पौरमुखान्नितान्तं सा विव्यथे यद् गदितं सपत्न्या ॥१५॥

When Dhruva Maharaja reached his mother, his lips were trembling in anger, and he was crying very grievously. Queen Suniti immediately lifted her son onto her lap, while the palace residents who had heard all the harsh words of Suruci related everything in detail. Thus, Suniti also became greatly aggrieved.

JV

मातुःसकासमुपगत्यरुददीर्घं पृष्ठस्तयापि गलरुद्धतयैव नोचे ॥
बालं निजाङ्कमुपनीय जगाद माता केनाद्य तेऽप्यकृतं वद मेऽनुगृह्ण ॥ २३॥

The child Dhruva went to his mother and cried bitterly for a long. She asked him why. He couldn't narrate to his mother because the anguish had choked him up. Then the mother took up him in her arms and asked lovingly the cause of his agony.

Comment

In the JV version, the writer has very aptly supplied the reason for Dhruva's not answering his mother i.e. an obstruction of voice caused by his sobbing. In contrast DVG she had taken up him in her arms only when he failed to respond to her which is something natural on part of a mother.

DVG

सोत्सृज्यधैर्यं विललापशोक दावाग्निना दावलतेव बाला ॥
वाक्यं सपत्न्याःस्मरती सरोज-श्रिया दृशा वाष्पकलामुवाह ॥१६॥

This incident was unbearable to Suniti's patience. She began to burn as if in a forest fire, and her grief, she became just like a burnt leaf and so lamented. As she remembered the words of her co-wife, her bright lotus-like face became filled with tears, and thus she spoke:

JV

क्रीडासहायपुरबालकवाक्यतस्तद् वृत्तान्तमस्य नृपपत्न्युदितं निशम्य
दीर्घं नृपस्य महिषी स्वसुतं निरीक्ष्य संस्मृत्य पत्युरवहेलनमत्यरोदीत् ॥२४॥

When the queen came to know in detail what her rival co-wife had told her son (Dhruva) through his playmates in the palace she observed her son and cried for a long recalling the disdain of the king for her.

Comment:

Here JV version is worse than the DVG version. The metaphorical comparison between her grief and forest fire in the first half and between her face and lotus in the last half is missing in the JV version. These figures of speech instilled life in the verse above.

DVG

दीर्घश्वसन्ती वृजिनस्य पार मपश्यती बालकममाह बाला ॥
मा मंगलं तात परेषु मंस्था भुड्कते जनो यत् परदुःखदस्तत् ॥१७॥

She also was breathing very heavily, and she did not know the factual remedy for the painful situation. Not finding any remedy, she said to her son, my dear son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pain upon others suffers from that pain.

JV

अश्रूण्यनारतवहानि कथञ्चिदेव प्रोञ्छयोत्तरीयदशया निजगाद पुत्रम् ॥
दिष्टं ममात्मजसदा विपरीतभूतं तस्मात्वयापि बहुदुःखमहोऽनुभाव्यम् ॥२५॥

Suruchi said to her son somehow wiping the tears incessantly flowing down her cheeks with a shawl. "My dear son! My providence is always hostile to me and because of my fate; you too have to face many troubles".

Comment:

The JV's portrayal of Suniti as crying with her son together has elevated the poem to a higher plane. Each word seems equally powerful to evoke a sense of pity towards Suniti. The writer seems to have very carefully selected words in this verse. The term अनारतवहानि (constantly flowing) for example as a

qualifier of the word अश्रूणि (tears) and the adverbial कथञ्चिदेव (somehow) have enlivened the poem.

DVG

सत्यं सुरुच्यभिहितं भवान्मे यद् दुर्भगायाउदरेगृहीतः ॥
स्तन्येन वृद्धश्च विलज्जते यां भार्येति वोद्धुमिडस्पतिमाम् ॥१८ ॥

Suniti said: My dear boy, whatever has been spoken by Suruci is so, because the King, your father, does not consider me his wife or even his maidservant. He feels ashamed to accept me, so it is a fact that you have taken birth in the womb of an unfortunate woman, and by being fed from her breast you have grown up.

सत्यं जगाद तव तत्र सपत्नमाता दुर्भागिनीजठरजस्त्वमतस्तदाह ॥
स्तन्यं ममैव सहसा भवता निपीतं पत्नीति वक्तुमपि मां लजते महीन्द्रः ॥२६ ॥

Dear son! Whatever your stepmother has told you hold it to be true. You took your birth and breastfed from an unfortunate woman. Now the king feels ashamed to call me even his wife.

Comment:

Nothing worth noting appears in JV's version here save a paraphrasing of the source. However, credit for making an effort to simplify the otherwise compact statement of the DGV may go to the writer.

DVG

आतिष्ठ तत्तात विमत्सरस्त्वम् उक्तं समात्रापि यदव्यलीकम् ॥
आराधयाधोक्षजपादपद्मम् यदीच्छसेऽध्यासनमुत्तमो यथा ॥ १९ ॥

My dear boy, whatever has been spoken by Suruci, your stepmother, although very harsh to hear, is factual. Therefore, if you desire at all to sit on the same throne as your stepbrother Uttama, then give up your envious attitude and immediately try to execute the instructions of your stepmother. Without further delay, you must engage yourself in worshiping the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

JV

सत्यं जगाद सुरुचिर्हि तपस्तपेति किंवा न सिद्ध्यति कृतं तपसां जनानाम् ॥
तस्मात्तपोऽर्जय हरिं हृदये निधाय राज्यं भविष्यति तवोत्तममुत्तमीयात् ॥ २७ ॥

(Dear son!) Suruchi has rightly advised you to undertake austerities. There's nothing impossible for those who undertake austerities (and please the god).

(Because the pleased god bestows them his grace) Therefore, my dear! Meditate on the god in your heart. Once you attained his mercy you will be blessed with a kingdom much larger than that of Uttam.

Comment:

There is nothing new in the JV version here except for a banal wish of his mother to achieve a higher position than that of Uttama.

DVG

यस्याङ्गिपद्मं परिचर्य विश्व विभावनायात्तगुणाभिपत्तेः ॥
अजोऽध्यतिष्ठत्खलु पारमेष्ठयं पदं जितात्मश्वसनाभिवन्द्यम् ॥ २० ॥

Suniti continued: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is so great that simply by worshiping His lotus feet, our great-grandfather Lord Brahmā acquired the necessary qualifications to create this universe. Although he is unborn and is the chief of all living creatures, he was situated in that exalted post because of the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whom even great yogis worship by controlling the mind and regulating the life air.

JV

यत्पादपङ्कजमजोहृदयेऽवधाय दिव्यं सहस्रसममेवतपोऽन्वताप्सीत् ॥
तस्मै हरेहि परमेष्ठीपदं दिदेश स्वाराधनं भगवतःविफलं कथं स्यात् ॥ २८ ॥

Once God Brahma had deeply meditated keeping the lotus feet god Viṣṇu in his heart and undertaking severe austerities for 1000 divine years, the god (Viṣṇu) conferred him the title of 'Parameshti'. How a sincere devotion to god would go in vain?

Comment:

JV has simply paraphrased the verse in rather simple terms here. The use of a figure called Arthantaranyāsa in the last line has added beauty to the otherwise banal statement.

DVG. However, the assertion that the god Brahma did a divine 1000 year-long meditation is something that jars on modern readers' nerves.

DVG

तथा मनुर्वो भगवान् पितामहो यमेकमत्या पुरुदक्षिणैर्मर्खैः
इष्टवाभिपेदे दुरवापमन्यतो भौमं सुखं दिव्यमथापवर्ग्यम् ॥२१॥

Suniti informed her son: Your grandfather, Svayambhu Manu, executed great sacrifices with a distribution of charity, and thereby, with unflinching faith and

devotion, he worshiped and satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By acting in that way he achieved the greatest success in material happiness and afterward achieved liberation, which is impossible to obtain by worshiping the demigods.

यद्वा मनुस्तवपितामह एव पूर्वं तप्त्वातपःशतसमामनुतामवाप ॥
धर्मार्थकाममपिमोक्षमवापतस्मा त्यात्रं बभूव पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयस्य ॥२९॥

Previously, your grandfather earned the title of Manu after he had deeply meditated for 100 years thereby pleasing god Viṣṇu. Thus achieving righteousness, financial prosperity, sensual gratification, and liberation (from the birth cycle) he qualified himself for those four great qualities.

Comment:

Here JV's version is the worst. The initial two lines are rather good but the second half is a complete failure. The fourth line repeated the same content of the third line in the most awkward manner.

DGV

तमेव वत्साश्रय भृत्यवत्सलं मुमुक्षुभिर्मृग्यपदाब्जपद्धतिम्
अनन्यभावे निजधर्मभाविते मनस्यवस्थाप्य भजस्व पूरुषम् ॥२२॥

My dear boy, you also should take shelter from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is very kind to His devotees. Persons who are seeking liberation from the cycle of birth and death always take shelter in the lotus feet of the Lord in devotional service. Becoming purified by executing your allotted occupation, just situate the Supreme Personality of Godhead in your heart, and without deviating for a moment, engage always in His service.

JV

वत्स त्वमप्यहरहर्भजवासुदेवं यद्वा तपस्यसि वनेऽप्युत्बालकोऽसि ॥
योऽनन्यथाहृदिविभावनया सुतुष्टोऽवश्यंप्रदास्यति मनोरथमात्मनीनम् ॥३०॥

So, my dear son! Worship the god Vasudeva all the time. You are too little to undertake (such) austerities in the forest. He would be pleased if worshiped wholeheartedly (in-home too) and would certainly fulfill your desires.

Comment:

Unlike DVG in JV's version of the narration, the mother has taken notice of her son's age and thus has suggested worshiping the god through meditation at home.

नान्यं ततः पद्मपलाशलोचनाद् दुःखच्छिदं ते मृगयामि कंचन ॥

यो मृग्यते हस्तगृहीतपद्मया श्रियेतरैरङ्ग विमृग्यमाणया ॥२३॥

My dear Dhruva, as far as I am concerned, I do not find anyone who can mitigate your distressing condition but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose eyes are like lotus petals. Many demigods such as Lord Brahmā and others seek the pleasure of the goddess of fortune, but the goddess of fortune herself, with a lotus flower in her hand, is always ready to render service to the Supreme Lord.

नान्यं सुरं तव सुदुःखहरं विजाने विष्णुं विहाय स्वजनाभयदं शरण्यम् ॥

यो नक्रवक्त्रगिलिताङ्गिगजेन्द्रमोक्षमारुद्ध्यताक्ष्यमबिलम्बमहो ! चकार ॥ ३१ ॥

There's no mighty god beyond the almighty god Viṣṇu who once reached the lake in no time on his Eagle rescued wonderfully the Elephant caught by a crocodile on his leg. Only he could extricate you from miseries. There is no god beyond Visnu who potentially protects those who seek to refuse in him.

Comment:

Unlike DVG in the second half of the verse, JV has given a mythical reference that fits its assumption made in the first half. If Dhruva is to be assured that god Viṣṇu will safeguard his devotees he must be given evidence that would convince him. Here in JV Suniti has appropriately given Dhruva a pertinent example of the Elephant being saved. Thus in this verse writer Panthi's poetic brilliance is illuminated.

DVG

एवं संजलितं मातुराकर्ण्यर्थागमं वचः ॥

संनियम्यात्मनात्मानं निश्चक्राम पितुः पुरात् ॥२४॥

The great sage Maitreya continued: The instruction of Dhruva Maharaja's mother, Suniti, was meant for fulfilling his desired objective. Therefore, after deliberate consideration and with intelligence and fixed determination, he left his father's house.

JV

इत्थं सपत्न्युपरि रोषवशेन राजी बालत्वमप्यविगणय्य तपो निदेश्य ॥

कुत्रापि कर्मणि जगाम सुतस्तुपुर्या स्तप्तुं तपो वनमगान्मनुजैरदृष्टः ॥३२॥

Thus, the queen out of hatred of her co-wife advised her son (Dhruva) to go to the forest and undertake austerities without considering his son's young

age. When she was busy with household chores the son sneaked out of the city evading the notices of folks.

Comment:

The JV version has shown here how seriously children take their parent's advice. In a way, it has captured child psychology. Suniti while relating her son's ways to attain the mercy of almighty god Viṣṇu didn't mean him to go to the forest but she didn't care that he is not mature enough to be advised for such measures, as a result, the boy set off. It may be taken as yet another brilliance the writer Panthi has brought to the fore in his version.

DGV

नारदस्तदुपाकर्ण्य ज्ञात्वा तस्य चिकिर्षितम् ॥

स्पृष्ट्वा मूर्धन्यघनेन पाणिना प्राह विस्मितः ॥२५॥

The great sage Nārada overheard this news, and understanding all the activities of Dhruva Maharaja, he was struck with wonder. He approached Dhruva, and touching his head with his all-virtuous hand, he spoke as follows.

JV

देवर्षिणा पथि बभूव समागमोऽपि बाल! क्वयासि विजने वदकानने त्वम् ॥

इत्थंमुनौपरिपृच्छति बालकोऽपि सर्वं सपत्नजननीकृतमाह वृत्तम् ॥३३॥

Celestial sage Nārada was encountered on his way to the forest. The sage asked: 'Where are you going in this desolate forest dear? The child narrated all that his stepmother had said to him.

Comment:

It is logical for someone to be cognizant of someone else's situation only after being related. In JV Unlike in DVG Nārada has been related to Dhruva's story by Dhruva himself. Another defect that writer Panthi has removed in his version is the use of a useless semantic filler 'अनन्जेन' (with the virtuous).

DVG

अहो तेजः क्षत्रियाणां मानभङ्गममृष्यताम् ॥

बालोऽप्ययं हृदा धत्ते यत्समातुरसद्वचः ॥२६

How wonderful are the powerful Kshatriyas. They cannot tolerate even a slight infringement of their prestige. Just imagine! This boy is only a small child, yet harsh words from his stepmother proved unbearable to him.

JV

श्रुत्वा नृपात्मजनुषस्त्वतिधीरवाक्यम् तुष्टो मुनिःस्वगतमाहनृपस्य तेजः ॥
बालोऽपि भूपतिसुतो निजमानभंगं मात्राकृतं न सहते यदहो विचित्रम् ॥३४॥

After hearing the profundity in the voice of the prince sage Nārada was impressed. He wondered in himself how a prince even though a child can't tolerate an insult done by his mother herself.

Comment:

Apparently, in pursuit of making his work outstanding, writer Panthi has irrationally replaced the stepmother of DVG with mother in his JV. Dhruva was offended by his stepmother's words, not the mother his own.

DVG

नाधुनाप्यवमानं ते सम्मानं वापि पुत्रक ॥
लक्ष्यामि कुमारस्य सक्तस्य क्रीडनादिषु ॥२७

The great sage Nārada told Dhruva: My dear boy, you are only a little boy whose attachment is to sports and other frivolities. Why are you so affected by words insulting your honor?

JV

ज्ञात्वा भक्तस्य तपसि प्रतिपन्नचित्तं संस्पृश्य मूर्ध्नि करेण जगाद हर्षात् ॥
बालोऽसि वत्स ! तवदैवकृतंसमस्तं मानापमानभवदुःखसुखे न किञ्चिद् ॥३५॥

Convinced of the child's resolution to undertake severe austerities the sage touching his forehead said to him thus: "My dear! You don't know that your actions are preordained. There's nothing in honor or disgrace, pleasure or pain. (They are merely an illusion).

Comment

Here DVG version seems rather logical compared to that of JV. There is indeed no point in preaching to a 5-year-old child of the metaphysical ontology and epistemology. It is their time of playing games and make fun.

DVG

विकल्पविद्यानेऽपि नद्यसन्तोषहेतवः ।
पुंसो मोहमृते भिन्ना यल्लोके निजकर्मभिः ॥ २८

My dear Dhruva, if you feel that your sense of honor has been insulted, you still have no cause for dissatisfaction. This kind of dissatisfaction is another feature of illusory energy; every living entity is controlled by his previous

actions, and therefore there are different varieties of life for enjoying or suffering.

JV

बालस्य यत्परवशस्य दुरन्तदुःखं क्रीडापरस्य न तथा भवति क्षणान्ते ॥
तच्चापि दैववशतः क्वचिदेति नेति श्रेयः सुखं पुनरनाग्रह एव तस्मिन् ॥३६ ॥

A child forgets he acutely felt pain moments after he gets a chance to have fun. Similarly, rise and fall are preordained. Nobody should be bent on possessing one.

Comment:

The content in JV is lucid and cogent whereas in DVG it is highly compact or even unintelligible without context. DVG has failed to express what it meant in this verse through its incoherently assorted idioms.

परितुष्येत् ततस्तातः तावन्मात्रेण पुरुषः ।
दैवोपसादितं यावदीक्ष्येश्वरगतिं ब्रुधः ॥२९

The process of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very wonderful. Intelligent one should accept that process and be satisfied with whatever comes, favorable or unfavorable, by His supreme will.

Comment:

There is no corresponding verse in JV of this verse.

DVG

अथ मात्रोपदिष्टेन योगेनावरूपत्ससि ॥
यत्प्रसादं स वै पुंसां दुराराध्यो मतो मम ॥३०

Now you have decided to undertake the mystic process of meditation under the instruction of your mother, just to achieve the mercy of the Lord, but in my opinion, such austerities are not possible for any ordinary man. It is very difficult to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

मुनयः पदवीं यस्य निःसंगेनोर्जन्मभिः ।
न विदुर्मृग्यन्तोऽपि तीव्रयोगसमाधिना ॥ ३१

After trying this process for many, many births and remaining unattached to material contamination, placing themselves continually in trance and executing many types of austerities, many mystic yogīs were unable to find the end of the path of God's realization.

JV

मात्रोपदिष्टिमिति ते तपसिप्रवृत्ति राराधनं भगवतोऽप्यतिदुष्करं हि ॥
आजन्ममृत्युवधियोगसमाधिनापि नैवाप्नुयन्तिमुनयःकिमुमानवास्तु ॥३७॥

Surely, your decision for penance has stemmed from your mother's advice. But the meditation on God is something very hard. Even sages undertaking severe austerities and yogic meditations throughout their life have failed to attain it.

Comment

The content of the 30th and 31st of DVG has been incorporated in a single 37th verse in JV. Moreover in DVG Nārada has indirectly implied that the process of attaining god's mercy is extremely difficult for human beings by contrast however in JV it has been explicitly stated as if to deter Dhruva even more.

DVG

अतो निवर्ततामेष निर्बन्धस्तव निष्फलः ॥
यतिष्यति भवान् काले श्रेयसां समुपस्थिते ॥३२

For this reason, my dear boy, you should not endeavor for this; it will not be successful. It is better that you go home. When you are grown up, by the mercy of the Lord you will get a chance for these mystic performances. At that time you may execute this function.

JV

स त्वं निवृत्य गृहमेहि न तेऽधुनायां कालः पुनःस्वसमये नियमांश्चरेथाः ॥
कुर्वन्ति केऽपि नियमान्विपिनाधिवासं स्वस्यायुषःचरमभागमुपेत्य तप्तुम् ॥३८

So, you return home. Yours is not age to take such severe measures. You may follow these rules when you are old enough. Only a few humans in their final stage of life follow such rules living in the forest.

Comment

The one noteworthy contrast between DVG and JV here is that Dhruva is bluntly discouraged from pursuing his mission at that time in DVG while in JV he is tactfully encouraged to return home.

DVG

यस्य यद्वैविहितं स तेन सुखदुःखयोः ।
आत्मानं तोषयन्देही तमसः पारमृच्छति । ३३

One should try to keep himself satisfied in any condition of life—whether

distress or happiness—which is offered by the supreme will. A person who endures in this way can cross over the darkness of nescience very easily.

DVG

गुणाधिकान्मुदं लिप्सेदनुक्रोशं गुणाधमात् ।
मैत्री समानादन्विच्छेन्न तापैरभिभूयते ॥ ३४

Every man should act like this: when he meets a person more qualified than himself, he should be very pleased; when he meets someone less qualified than himself, he should be compassionate toward him; and when he meets someone equal to himself, he should make friendship with him. In this way, one is never affected by the threefold miseries of this material world.

Comment

Verese 33 and 34 of DVG preach about something Dhruva gave that his child age certainly can't understand. Writer Panthi has aptly removed such impractical verses in his version.

DVG

सोऽयं शमो भगवता सुखदुःखहतात्मनाम् ॥
दर्शितः कृपया पुंसां दुर्दुशोऽस्मद्विधैस्तु यः ॥ ३५

Dhruva Maharaja said: My dear Lord Nārada, for a person whose heart is disturbed by the material conditions of happiness and distress, whatever you have so kindly explained for the attainment of peace of mind is certainly a very good instruction. But as far as I am concerned, I am covered by ignorance, and this kind of philosophy does not touch my heart.

JV

श्रुत्वा मुनेर्वचनमाह तदा ध्रुवोऽपि योऽयं त्वया मयि निर्दर्शितशान्तिमार्गः ॥
वैराग्ययुक्तमनसां भवता समानां नास्मादृशां यदविनीतहृदर्भकाणाम् ॥ ३९

Having heard the advice of the sage (Nārada) Dhruva began “(Honorable sage!) Whatever you have recommended so far leads to the path of peace appropriate for the specific yogis like you who are detached from the worldly affair. It is not for a stubborn child like me.

Comment:

Narrative poetry consists of a narrator. The narrator in DVG is mentioned at the outset of narration separately while in JV it's incorporated within the verse. This is what is worth noting in the JV beyond an uninspired rewording of the DVG.

DVG

अथापि मेऽविनीतस्य क्षात्रं घोरमुपेयुषः ॥
सुरुच्या दुर्वचोबाणैर्भिन्ने श्रयते हृदि ॥३६

My dear lord, I am very impudent for not accepting your instructions, but this is not my fault. It is due to my being born in a Kshatriya family. My stepmother, Suruchi, has pierced my heart with her harsh words. Therefore your valuable instruction does not stand in my heart.

JV

साधो त्वया कथितमप्यधिकं हितं हि वैमातुकोक्तिशरदीर्णहृदि प्रयुक्तम् ॥
स्थातुं न चाप्यविलतःस्वतेकथञ्चित् तस्मान्निरोद्धुमिहनार्हसि मां सुरर्षे ॥ ४०

Honorable sage! Whatever you have said is undoubtedly for my own sake. Yet my heart has been shattered by the arrows of words of my stepmother. Everything dribbles from the shattered holes. It can't hold anything any longer. So kindly don't stop me.

Comment:

JV's version is worth appreciating here. Dhruva's address to Nārada and his request not to stop him from his mission is compelling. It seems writer Panthi judiciously selected highly affective words to convey the same stale thing.

DVG

पदं त्रिभुवनोत्कृष्टं जिगीषोः साधु वर्त्म मे ॥
ब्रह्मस्मतिपृथिव्रह्मनन्यैरप्यनधिष्ठितम् ॥ ३७

Oh learned Brahma!, I want to occupy a position more exalted than any yet achieved within the three worlds by anyone, even by my fathers and grandfathers. If you will oblige, kindly advise me of an honest path to follow by which I can achieve the goal of my life.

JV

अस्मतिपृथृतिभिस्त्वनधिष्ठितं य
त्विष्णोःपदं त्रिभुवनादपि चोच्छितं स्यात् ॥
लब्धुं समिच्छति मनो मम तस्य मार्गं
सम्यक् प्रदर्शयितुमहसि मेऽनुकम्पय ॥ ४१

I wish to attain the elevated position of Viṣṇupada which is far higher than anything in the three worlds and which has been achieved by nobody in my whole clan ever. So be kind enough to guide me through the right path.

Comment

Dhruva has wished for something different in JV's version here. He wants to gain a place called Viṣṇupada. Viṣṇupada. It is a fantastic world where one will be emancipated from having to undergo the awful and unending cycle of birth and death. He has not wished for military powers (to rule over a larger territory) or creative powers (to fill the universe with florae and faunae) as his predecessors did. Let alone other petty material wishes. That's a marked difference between the two.

DVG

नूनं भवान् भगवतो योऽङ्गजः परमेष्ठिनः ॥
वितुदन्नटते वीणां हिताय जगतोऽकर्वत् ॥३८

My dear lord, you are a worthy son of Lord Brahma, and you travel, playing on your musical instrument, the Viṇā for the welfare of the entire universe. You are like the sun, which rotates in the universe for the benefit of other living beings.

JV

सूर्यो यथा जनहितार्थमुदेतिनित्यं तद्वद् भवानपि चरत्यचिरेण सत्यम् ॥
ब्रह्मात्मजोऽसि महतीं रणयन्नभीक्षणं बालस्य मे शरणदो भव भोः सुरर्षे ॥४२

Oh, great sage! As the sun rises for the sake of others each day. In the same way, you constantly move around playing your Viṇā for the benefit of others. You are a descendant of the god Brahma. Have mercy upon me. Take me to your refuge.

Comment

The JV version has both merit and demerit here. The merit is that unlike DVG Dhruva's praising of Nārada is conclusive in JV. That is, the purpose of the exaltation of Nārada by Dhruva is obviously to obtain sage Nārada's proper guidance on his mission. The syntactic expectation of the verse as a whole concludes in the phrase शरणदो भव (be my refuge) which is a metonymic expression of "Please be my guide". The demerit is that it fails to supply the proper object (Viṇā) in the third line of the verse which is a must for a sentence to be semantically complete and grammatically correct.

DVG

मैत्रेय उवाच इत्युदाहृतमाकर्ण्य भगवान्नारदस्तदा ।
प्रीतः प्रत्याह तं बालं सद्वाक्यमनुकम्पया ॥ ३९

The sage Maitreya continued: The great personality Nārada Muni, upon hearing the words of Dhruva Mahārāja, became very compassionate toward him, and to show him his causeless mercy, he gave him the following expert advice.

DVG

नारद उवाच

जनन्याभिहितं पन्थाः स वै निःश्रेयसस्य ते ।

भगवान् वासुदेवस्तं भज तत्प्रवणात्मना ॥ ४०

The great sage Nārada told Dhruva Mahārāja: The instruction given by your mother, Seniti, to follow the path of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is just suitable for you. You should therefore completely absorb yourself in the devotional service of the Lord.

DVG

श्रुत्वा मुनिकुमारवचोक्तिमिष्टं

प्रत्याह तं करुणयाद्र्द्रृढा प्रशस्य ॥

सत्यं यदाह जननी तव तद्विताय

निश्रेयसाय न हरेश्वरणौ विहाय ॥ ४३

The sage was deeply moved by the boy's engaging arguments. His heart became filled with compassion, and thus he spoke: "Whatever your mother told you holds the truth. There is no other supreme being beyond Hari who would grant happiness to you.

Comment

The content of the 39th and 40th verses of DVG has been included in the 43rd verse of JV. What is special in JV's version is the phraseology in its concluding line: "निश्रेयसाय न हरेश्वरणौ विहाय" | my rendering of it as happiness can't possibly have captured the semantic nuances of the original.

DVG

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां य इच्छेच्छ्रेय आत्मनः

एकं ह्येव हरेस्तत्र कारणं पादसेवनम् ॥ ४१

Any person who desires the fruits of the four principles of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and, in the end, liberation, should engage himself in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead because worship of His lotus feet yields the fulfillment of all of these.

JV

धर्मो हरेश्वरणसेवनया समैति मोक्षोऽपि तद्विवेचनयैव लभ्यः ॥

प्राप्ते द्वये सति परौ किमुतार्थकामौ ॥ तत्पादलीनमनसा भज वासुदेवम् ॥४४॥

Righteousness is achieved through devotion to God Hari and liberation through contemplation of his virtues. Sensual gratification and financial success never equal these merits. So, be submerged in his devotion.

Comment:

The JV version has emphasized the latter two aims of the conventional four. It shows writer Panthi himself was a great devotee of the god Viṣṇu.

DVG

तत्तात गच्छ भद्रं ते यमुनायास्तर्तं शुचिः ।

पुण्यं मधुवनं यत्र सान्निध्यं नित्यदा हरेः ॥ ४२

My dear boy, therefore I wish all good fortune for you. You should go to the bank of the Yamunā, there is a virtuous forest named Madhuvana, and there be purified. Just by going there, one draws nearer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who always lives there.

JV

तद् गच्छ वत्स यमुनातटवर्तिनि त्वं वृन्दावनं मधुवनाभिधकृष्णाधाम्नि ॥

नित्यं हरेभवति यत्र विहारलीला कृष्णस्य तत्र विरहो न कदापि भाव्यः ॥४५

Therefore, dear boy! Go to the shrine of lord Krishna in Vrindavana on the bank of the Yamuna River known also as Madhuvana. The Lila (divine sports) of the god is held there regularly. Undoubtedly, he never deserts that place.

Comment

The JV version contains nothing noteworthy in this verse. It is just a paraphrasing of its source.

Textual analysis:

For a textual study undertaken to gauge the degree of influence of the source on the derived text, a mere juxtaposition between the two is sufficient to demonstrate it. Yet a criticism accompanying a juxtaposition illuminates both the intensity of influence and literary inventiveness of the writer.

The comments supplied right below each of the juxtaposed verses above should have illustrated the strength and weaknesses of JV's version of the Dhurva tale. However, a brief evaluative analysis is offered below.

As we saw the narrative of Dhruva begins from the 15th verse in JV and the 6th in DVG. It starts with the king having two rival consorts Suniti and Suruci. It notes that Suniti is elder. She is a mother of a child. Likewise, Suruchi is younger, and the king's favorite. Verse 16 immediately below, however, contradicts the first statement. It states (unfortunately first wife is not preferred by the king and was exiled to a faraway hut.) His favorite younger wife stays always closer to the king who surprisingly has a child too. This anomaly could have been avoided by poetic intervention. The 19th verse of DVG has slightly been altered in JV to show that the hate of a stepmother is more repulsive to a child. The incident of Suruchi shoving Dhruva off the throne in JV is more poignant than just preventing him from getting access to his father as in DVG. Verse 20 and 21, in JV, are just a paraphrase of verse 11 of DVG. Verse 22 is significant. It has captured the imagination of a furious snake from the DVG with such perfection that it leaves readers awestruck. Verse 23 contains more poignancy compared to that of the original. Particularly the clause 'his voice became choked' has added that effect. In the 16th verse of the original text, the images of forest fire, burnt leaves, and lotus face are more appealing than the plain description of the same thing on JV. Wretched Suniti's helplessness in verse 25 is moving. Particularly the expression of "somehow wiping the tears flowing down her eyes" and "holding herself guilty for her son's misfortune" is touching. The selection of words here is more effective in JV compared to that of DVG. Verse 26 is just a rephrasing of verse 18 of DVG. The 27th verse in JV seems to flow somewhat naturally compared to verse 19 of DVG. The last line of the 29th verse of JV is ornate. The concluding line of "How a devoted worship of the god would be fruitless?" has embellished the verse. Verse 29 and 30 of JV are just rewording of 21 and 22 of DVG. Verse 31 has a remarkable rhythmic pattern in its second half which appeals to the ears. Particularly alliterative tra sound is pleasing. Verse 32 depicted Dhruva's leaving home more elegantly than its counterpart 24th of DVG. Suniti didn't think that her son would take her words seriously and leave for the forest. She had uttered those words just to solace herself. Similarly, it sounds natural for a child to sneak out of home secretly evading notices of others rather than to leave it as a mature adult without caring for others as described in DVG. Unlike the 25th of DVG verse 33 of JV has linked the sequence of events more closely. An unnatural and abrupt appearance of Narada as mentioned in the 25th verse of DVG has been altered in JV with a more likely encounter. After encountering Dhruva Narada has asked him his

reasons for leaving home which is starkly missing in DVG. Verse 34 in JV is notable in the sense of replication. It has copied the figure of speech ("A son of a king can't tolerate an infringement on his right") the same as it is in DVG. Verses 35 and 36 are an elaboration of verse 27 of DVG. The last line (Rise and fall are preordained. Nobody should take it seriously) in verse 36 has added beauty to the expression. Verse 37 is a paraphrasing of verses 30 and 31 of DVG. Similarly. Verse 38 is a rephrasing of verse 32 in DVG. The metaphoric expression of the sun rising for the sake of others and an analogy between sage Narada and the benevolent sun is particularly exclusive in Shola 42 of JV. Verses 39, 40, 41, 44, and 45 are an elaboration of the contents of verses 35, 36, 37, 41, and 42 respectively in DVG. Nevertheless, the elaboration in JV is fairly refined compared to the direct and drab account of the event in DVG. The final 46, 46, and 48 verses including colophon are added by the writer to conclude this chapter. They have no correspondence with the original.

Conclusion:

Before making a definitive conclusion about a literary work many factors must be taken into account. JV's version of the tale if judged by a modern standard of literary criticism may seem like a sterile reproduction of the original work. But such a judgment would be unfair even biased. The primary factor to be considered is the writer's exposure to the literary types and his socio-cultural background. Writer Panthi in question belonged to the Brahmin caste. Across the Indian sub-continent, this particular cast was supposed to possess a scholarship on Sanskrit literature. The scholarship of Sanskrit was something linked to its native identity. More or less this practice continues within the community to date. The writer in the preface of his work refers to the 11th-century eminent poet Mammata⁴ And accordingly, he has molded his work in the framework of a court epic laid down in the theory of poetics by Mammata. Early Sanskrit poets including Mammata have prescribed principles so rigorously that a poet is hardly free enough to pursue his imagination. Even more surprising is the fact that the dramaturgical model remains dominant

4 सर्गबन्धो महाकाव्यं तत्रैको नायकःसुरः ॥३१५॥

सद्वंशः क्षत्रियो वापि धीरोदात्तगुणान्वितः ।

एकवंशभवा भूपा: कुलजा बहवोऽपि वा ॥३१६॥

शृङ्गारवीरशान्तामेकोऽङ्गी रस इत्थर्ते । सा.द., षष्ठ परिच्छेद

A court epic should be chaptered, its character should be one of divine, noble origin, or royal with noble qualities. Multiple characters belonging to a single royal dynasty or noble class as well are allowed. One stable emotion among the erotic, heroic, and peaceful should be its chief emotion.

in the prescription of poetic composition. It dictates everything from the introduction of the work, selecting characters, plot, chapters, verse-number, and meters to the conclusion thereof. Something similar to an algebraic equation where every step is calculated and fixed. One is hardly allowed to deviate from the norm in any way. A counter-question may arise about how can give these restrictions in poetic composition celebrated poets like Kalidāsa, Śriharṣa, and Bhavabhuti could have produced their masterpieces. Thus the poetic theories shouldn't be blamed for an insipid work. The answer to this question is obvious. They were indeed called masterpieces because they were tested by the same standard. If they are to be measured against the modern theoretical scales they will probably score far below the average. Nevertheless, they by no means are implied to be inferiors. Everything has its significance based on its temporal and spatial values. It would be unfair to take JV as an anachronistic work devoid of literary merit. It is manifest that in many cases the JV's version is much more colorful than that of the greyish source text. Admittedly, the linear presentation of the source tale and insertion of impertinent sub-tale have eclipsed JV.

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