

ŚŪDRAKA

***THE LITTLE
CLAY CART***

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Śūdraka

The Little Clay Cart

Mṛcchakaṭika

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EDITED
WITH THE COÖPERATION OF VARIOUS SCHOLARS
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Volume Nine

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NOTE BY THE EDITOR

WITH *the battle of the Sea of Japan another turning-point in the brief course of recorded human history has been reached. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations for peace, one thing is sure: for better, for worse, and whether we will or no, the West must know the East, and the East must know the West. With that knowledge will inevitably come an interchange of potent influences, of influences that will affect profoundly the religion and morals, the philosophy, the literature, the art, in short, all the elements that make up the civilizations of the two hemispheres. It is a part of the responsibility resting upon the molders and leaders of the thought and life of our time, and upon our Universities in particular, to see to it that these new forces, mighty for good or for evil, are directed aright.*

The fruitfulness of those scions of Western civilization which the Japanese have grafted upon their own stock is to-day the admiration of the world. In our wonder, let us not forget that that stock is the growth of centuries, and that it is rooted in a soil of racial character informed by ethical ideals which we are wont to regard, with arrogant self-complacency, as exclusively proper to Christianity, but which were, in fact, inculcated twenty-four centuries ago through precept and example by Gotama the Enlightened, or, as the Hindus called him, Gotama the Buddha. It has often been said that India has never influenced the development of humanity as a whole. Be that as it may, it now seems no less probable than strange that she is yet

destined to do so, on the one hand, indirectly, through the influence of Indian Buddhism upon Japan, and, on the other, directly, by the diffusion in the West of a knowledge of her sacred writings, especially those of Vedantism and Buddhism. To judge the East aright, we must know not only what she is, but also how she has become what she is; know, in short, some of the principal phases of her spiritual history as they are reflected in her ancient literature, especially that of India. To interpret to the West the thought of the East, to bring her best and noblest achievements to bear upon our life,—that is today the problem of Oriental philology.

The Harvard Oriental Series embodies an attempt to present to Western scholars, in trustworthy texts and translations, some of the greatest works of the Hindu literature and philosophy and religion, together with certain instruments, such as the Vedic Concordance or the History of the Beast-fable, for their critical study or elucidation. Some account of the volumes completed or in progress may be found at the end of this book. Dr. Ryder, passing by for the present the more momentous themes of religion and philosophy, has in this volume attempted to show what the Indian genius, in its strength and in its weakness, could do in the field of literature pure and simple. The timeliness of the Series as a whole is an eloquent tribute to the discernment of my loved and unforgotten pupil and friend, Henry Clarke Warren. In him were united not only the will and the ability to establish such a publication as this, but also the learning and insight which enabled him to forecast in a general way its

possibilities of usefulness. He knew that the East had many a lesson to teach the West; but whether the lesson be repose of spirit or hygiene of the soldier in the field, whether it be the divine immanence or simplicity of life or the overcoming of evil with good, he knew that the first lesson to be taught us was the teachable habit of mind.

C. R. L.

June, 1905

PREFACE

THE text chosen as the basis of this translation is that given in the edition of Parab,^[1] and I have chosen it for the following reasons. Parab's edition is the most recent, and its editor is a most admirable Sanskrit scholar, who, it seems to me, has in several places understood the real meaning of the text better than his predecessors. This edition contains the comment of Pr̥thvīdhara; it is far freer from misprints than many texts printed in India, and, in respect to arrangement and typography, it is clear and convenient. Besides, it is easily obtainable and very cheap. This last consideration may prove to be of importance, if the present translation should be found helpful in the class-room. For the sake of cataloguers, I note that the proper transliteration of the Sanskrit names of this title according to the rules laid down by the American Library Association in its Journal for 1885, is as follows: Mṛcchakaṭīka; Āṇḍraka; Pr̥thvīdhara; Kācīnātha Pāṇḍuraṅga Parab; Nirṇaya-Sāgara.

The verse-numeration of each act follows the edition of Parab; fortunately, it is almost identical with the numeration in the editions of Godabole and Jīvānanda. For the convenience of those who may desire to consult this book in connection with Stenzler's edition, I have added references at the top of the page to that edition as well as to the edition of Parab. In these references, the letter P. stands for Parab, the letter S. for Stenzler.

There are a few passages in which I have deviated from Parab's text. A list of such passages is given on page 177.

From this list I have omitted a few minor matters, such as slight misprints and what seem to me to be errors in the *chāyā*; these matters, and the passages of unusual interest or difficulty, I shall treat in a series of notes on the play, which I hope soon to publish in the Journal of the American Oriental Society. It is hardly necessary to give reasons for the omission of the passage inserted by Nīlakaṇṭha in the tenth act (Parab, 288.3-292.9). This passage is explicitly declared by tradition to be an interpolation by another hand, and it is clearly shown to be such by internal evidence. It will be noticed that the omission of this passage causes a break in the verse-numeration of the tenth act, where the verse-number 54 is followed by the number 58.

Of the books which have been useful to me in the present work, I desire to mention especially the editions of Stenzler, Godabole, Jīvānanda Vidyāsāgara, and Parab; the commentaries of Pṛthvīdhara, Lallādīkṣita, and Jīvānanda; further, the translations of Wilson, Regnaud, and Böhtlingk.

A number of friends were kind enough to read my manuscript, and each contributed something. I wish to mention especially my friend and pupil, Mr. Walter E. Clark, of Harvard University, whose careful reading of both text and translation was fruitful of many good suggestions.

But by far my greatest personal indebtedness is to Professor Lanman, whose generous interest in my work has never flagged from the day when I began the study of Sanskrit under his guidance. He has criticized this translation with the utmost rigor; indeed, the pages are few which have not witnessed some improvement from his

hand. It is to him also that I owe the accuracy and beauty which characterize the printed book; nothing has been hard enough to weary him, nothing small enough to escape him. And more than all else, I am grateful to him for the opportunity of publishing in the Harvard Oriental Series; for this series is that enterprise which, since the death of Professor Whitney, most honorably upholds in this country the standards of accurate scholarship set by the greatest of American Sanskritists.

ARTHUR W. RYDER

Harvard University

May 23, 1905

1. ↑ The Mṛichchhakaṭika of Śūdraka with the commentary of Pṛithvīdhara. Edited by Kāshi- nāth Pāṇḍurang Parab. Bombay: Nirṇaya-Sāgar Press. 1900. Price 1 Rupee. It may be had of O. Harrassowitz in Leipzig for 2½ Marks.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE AUTHOR AND THE PLAY

CONCERNING the life, the date, and the very identity^[1] of King Shūdraka, the reputed author of The Little Clay Cart, we are curiously ignorant. No other work is ascribed to him, and we have no direct information about him, beyond the somewhat fanciful statements of the Prologue to this play. There are, to be sure, many tales which cluster about the name of King Shūdraka, but none of them represents him as an author. Yet our very lack of information may prove, to some extent at least, a disguised blessing. For our ignorance of external fact compels a closer study of the text, if we would find out what manner of man it was who wrote the play. And the case of King Shūdraka is by no means unique in India; in regard to every great Sanskrit writer,—so bare is Sanskrit literature of biography,—we are forced to concentrate attention on the man as he reveals himself in his works. First, however, it may be worth while to compare Shūdraka with two other great dramatists of India, and thus to discover, if we may, in what ways he excels them or is excelled by them.

Kālidāsa, Shūdraka, Bhavabhūti—assuredly, these are the greatest names in the history of the Indian drama. So different are these men, and so great, that it is not possible to assert for any one of them such supremacy as Shakspeare holds in the English drama. It is true that Kālidāsa's dramatic masterpiece, the Shakuntalā, is the most widely

known of the Indian plays. It is true that the tender and elegant Kālidāsa has been called, with a not wholly fortunate enthusiasm, the "Shakspeare of India." But this rather exclusive admiration of the Shakuntalā results from lack of information about the other great Indian dramas. Indeed, it is partly due to the accident that only the Shakuntalā became known in translation at a time when romantic Europe was in full sympathy with the literature of India.

Bhavabhūti, too, is far less widely known than Kālidāsa; and for this the reason is deeper-seated. The austerity of Bhavabhūti's style, his lack of humor, his insistent grandeur, are qualities which prevent his being a truly popular poet. With reference to Kālidāsa, he holds a position such as Aeschylus holds with reference to Euripides. He will always seem to minds that sympathize with his grandeur^[2] the greatest of Indian poets; while by other equally discerning minds of another order he will be admired, but not passionately loved.

Yet however great the difference between Kālidāsa, "the grace of poetry,"^[3] and Bhavabhūti, "the master of eloquence,"^[4] these two authors are far more intimately allied in spirit than is either of them with the author of The Little Clay Cart. Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti are Hindus of the Hindus; the Shakuntalā and the Latter Acts of Rāma could have been written nowhere save in India: but Shūdraka, alone in the long line of Indian dramatists, has a cosmopolitan character. Shakuntalā is a Hindu maid, Mādhava is a Hindu hero; but Sansthānaka and Maitreya and Madanikā are citizens of the world. In some of the

more striking characteristics of Sanskrit literature—in its fondness for system, its elaboration of style, its love of epigram—Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti are far truer to their native land than is Shūdraka. In Shūdraka we find few of those splendid phrases in which, as the Chinese^[5] say, "it is only the words which stop, the sense goes on,"—phrases like Kālidāsa's^[6] "there are doors of the inevitable everywhere," or Bhavabhūti's^[7] "for causeless love there is no remedy." As regards the predominance of swift-moving action over the poetical expression of great truths, *The Little Clay Cart* stands related to the *Latter Acts of Rāma* as *Macbeth* does to *Hamlet*. Again, Shūdraka's style is simple and direct, a rare quality in a Hindu; and although this style, in the passages of higher emotion, is of an exquisite simplicity, yet Shūdraka cannot infuse into mere language the charm which we find in Kālidāsa or the majesty which we find in Bhavabhūti.

Yet Shūdraka's limitations in regard to stylistic power are not without their compensation. For love of style slowly strangled originality and enterprise in Indian poets, and ultimately proved the death of Sanskrit literature. Now just at this point, where other Hindu writers are weak, Shūdraka stands forth preeminent. Nowhere else in the hundreds of Sanskrit dramas do we find such variety, and such drawing of character, as in *The Little Clay Cart*; and nowhere else, in the drama at least, is there such humor. Let us consider, a little more in detail, these three characteristics of our author; his variety, his skill in the drawing of character, his humor.

To gain a rough idea of Shūdraka's variety, we have only to recall the names of the acts of the play. Here The Shampooer who Gambled and The Hole in the Wall are shortly followed by The Storm; and The Swapping of the Bullock-carts is closely succeeded by The Strangling of Vasantasenā. From farce to tragedy, from satire to pathos, runs the story, with a breadth truly Shaksperian. Here we have philosophy:

The lack of money is the root of all evil. (i. 14)

And pathos:

*My body wet by tear-drops falling, falling;
My limbs polluted by the clinging mud;
Flowers from the graveyard torn, my wreath appalling;
For ghastly sacrifice hoarse ravens calling,
And for the fragrant incense of my blood.* (x. 3)

And nature description:

*But mistress, do not scold the lightning. She is your friend,
This golden cord that trembles on the breast
Of great Airāvata; upon the crest
Of rocky hills this banner all ablaze;
This lamp in Indra's palace; but most blest
As telling where your most beloved stays.* (v. 33)

And genuine bitterness:

*Pride and tricks and lies and fraud
Are in your face;
False playground of the lustful god,
Such is your face;
The wench's stock in trade, in fine,
Epitome of joys divine,
I mean your face—
For sale! the price is courtesy.
I trust you'll find a man to buy
Your face.* (v. 36)

It is natural that Shūdraka should choose for the expression of matters so diverse that type of drama which gives the greatest scope to the author's creative power.

This type is the so-called "drama of invention,"^[8] a category curiously subordinated in India to the heroic drama, the plot of which is drawn from history or mythology. Indeed, The Little Clay Cart is the only extant drama which fulfils the spirit of the drama of invention, as defined by the Sanskrit canons of dramaturgy. The plot of the "Mālatī and Mādhava," or of the "Mallikā and Māruta," is in no true sense the invention of the author; and The Little Clay Cart is the only drama of invention which is "full of rascals."^[9]

But a spirit so powerful as that of King Shūdraka could not be confined within the strait-jacket of the minute, and sometimes puerile, rules of the technical works. In the very title of the drama, he has disregarded the rule^[10] that the name of a drama of invention should be formed by compounding the names of heroine and hero.^[11] Again, the books prescribe^[12] that the hero shall appear in every act; yet Chārudatta does not appear in acts ii., iv., vi., and viii. And further, various characters, Vasantasenā, Maitreya, the courtier, and others, have vastly gained because they do not conform too closely to the technical definitions.

The characters of The Little Clay Cart are living men and women. Even when the type makes no strong appeal to Western minds, as in the case of Chārudatta, the character lives, in a sense in which Dushyanta^[13] or even Rāma^[14] can hardly be said to live. Shūdraka's men are better individualized than his women; this fact alone differentiates him sharply from other Indian dramatists. He draws on every class of society, from the high-souled Brahman to the executioner and the housemaid.

His greatest character is unquestionably Sansthānaka, this combination of ignorant conceit, brutal lust, and cunning, this greater than Cloten, who, after strangling an innocent woman, can say:^[15] "Oh, come! Let's go and play in the pond." Most attractive characters are the five^[16] conspirators, men whose home is "east of Suez and the ten commandments." They live from hand to mouth, ready at any moment to steal a gem-casket or to take part in a revolution, and preserving through it all their character as gentlemen and their irresistible conceit. And side by side with them moves the hero Chārudatta, the Buddhist beau-ideal of manhood,

*A tree of life to them whose sorrows grow,
Beneath its fruit of virtue bending low.* (i. 48)

To him, life itself is not dear, but only honor.^[17] He values wealth only as it supplies him with the means of serving others. We may, with some justice, compare him with Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*. There is some inconsistency, from our point of view, in making such a character the hero of a love-drama; and indeed, it is Vasantasenā who does most of the love-making.^[18]

Vasantasenā is a character with neither the girlish charm of Shakuntalā^[19] nor the mature womanly dignity of Sītā.^[20] She is more admirable than lovable. Witty and wise she is, and in her love as true as steel; this too, in a social position which makes such constancy difficult. Yet she cannot be called a great character; she does not seem so true to life as her clever maid, Madanikā. In making the heroine of his play a courtesan, Shūdraka follows a suggestion of the technical works on the drama; he does not thereby cast any imputation of ill on Vasantasenā's

character. The courtesan class in India corresponded roughly to the *hetærae* of ancient Greece or the geishas of Japan; it was possible to be a courtesan and retain one's self-respect. Yet the inherited^[21] way of life proves distasteful to Vasantasenā; her one desire is to escape its limitations and its dangers by becoming a legal wife.^[22]

In Maitreya, the *Vidūshaka*, we find an instance of our author's masterly skill in giving life to the dry bones of a rhetorical definition. The *Vidūshaka* is a stock character who has something in common with a jester; and in Maitreya the essential traits of the character—eagerness for good food and other creature comforts, and blundering devotion to his friend—are retained, to be sure, but clarified and elevated by his quaint humor and his readiness to follow Chārudatta even in death. The grosser traits of the typical *Vidūshaka* are lacking. Maitreya is neither a glutton nor a fool, but a simple-minded, whole-hearted friend.

The courtier is another character suggested by the technical works, and transformed by the genius of Shūdraka. He is a man not only of education and social refinement, but also of real nobility of nature. But he is in a false position from the first, this true gentleman at the wretched court of King Pālaka; at last he finds the courage to break away, and risks life, and all that makes life attractive, by backing Aryaka. Of all the conspirators, it is he who runs the greatest risk. To his protection of Vasantasenā is added a touch of infinite pathos when we remember that he was himself in love with her.^[23] Only when Vasantasenā leaves him^[24] without a thought, to

enter Chārudatta's house, does he realize how much he loves her; then, indeed, he breaks forth in words of the most passionate jealousy. We need not linger over the other characters, except to observe that each has his marked individuality, and that each helps to make vivid this picture of a society that seems at first so remote.

Shūdraka's humor is the third of his vitally distinguishing qualities. This humor has an American flavor, both in its puns and in its situations. The plays on words can seldom be adequately reproduced in translation, but the situations are independent of language. And Shūdraka's humor runs the whole gamut, from grim to farcical, from satirical to quaint. Its variety and keenness are such that King Shūdraka need not fear a comparison with the greatest of Occidental writers of comedies.

It remains to say a word about the construction of the play. Obviously, it is too long. More than this, the main action halts through acts ii. to v., and during these episodic acts we almost forget that the main plot concerns the love of Vasantasenā and Chārudatta. Indeed, we have in The Little Clay Cart the material for two plays. The larger part of act i. forms with acts vi. to x. a consistent and ingenious plot; while the remainder of act i. might be combined with acts iii. to v. to make a pleasing comedy of lighter tone. The second act, clever as it is, has little real connection either with the main plot or with the story of the gems. The breadth of treatment which is observable in this play is found in many other specimens of the Sanskrit drama, which has set itself an ideal different from that of our own drama. The lack of dramatic unity and consistency is often

compensated, indeed, by lyrical beauty and charms of style; but it suggests the question whether we might not more justly speak of the Sanskrit plays as dramatic poems than as dramas. In *The Little Clay Cart*, at any rate, we could ill afford to spare a single scene, even though the very richness and variety of the play remove it from the class of the world's greatest dramas.

1. ↑ For an illuminating discussion of these matters, the reader is referred to Sylvain Lévi's admirable work, *Le Théâtre Indien*, Paris, 1890, pages 196-211.
2. ↑ In his *Mālatīmādhava*, i. 8, he says: "Whoever they may be who now proclaim their contempt for me,—they know something, but *this* work was not for them. Yet there will arise a man of nature like mine own; for time is endless, and the world is wide." This seems prophetic of John Milton.
3. ↑ *Prasannarāghava*, i. 22.
4. ↑ *Mahāvīracarita*, i. 4.
5. ↑ *History of Chinese Literature*, by H. A. Giles, pages 145-146.
6. ↑ *Shakuntalā*, i. 15.
7. ↑ *Latter Acts of Rāma*, v. 17.
8. ↑ *Prakaraṇa*.
9. ↑ *Dhūrtasaṁkula*: *Daçarūpa*, iii. 38.
10. ↑ *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, 428.
11. ↑ As in *Mālatī-mādhava*.
12. ↑ *Daçarūpa*, iii. 33.
13. ↑ In Kālidāsa's *Shakuntalā*.
14. ↑ In Bhavabhūti's *Latter Acts of Rāma*.
15. ↑ See page 128.
16. ↑ *Aryaka*, *Darduraka*, *Chandanaka*, *Sharvilaka*, and the courtier.
17. ↑ See x. 27.
18. ↑ See v. 46 and the following stage-direction.
19. ↑ In Kālidāsa's play of that name.
20. ↑ In Bhavabhūti's *Latter Acts of Rāma*.
21. ↑ See viii. 43.
22. ↑ See pages 65-66 and page 174.

23. ↑ See viii. 38; and compare the words, "Yet love bids me prattle," on page 86.
24. ↑ Page 87.

II. THE TRANSLATION

THE following translation is sufficiently different from previous translations of Indian plays to require a word of explanation. The difference consists chiefly in the manner in which I have endeavored to preserve the form of the original. The Indian plays are written in mingled prose and verse; and the verse portion forms so large a part of the whole that the manner in which it is rendered is of much importance. Now this verse is not analogous to the iambic trimeter of Sophocles or the blank verse of Shakspeare, but roughly corresponds to the Greek choruses or the occasional rhymed songs of the Elizabethan stage. In other words, the verse portion of a Sanskrit drama is not narrative; it is sometimes descriptive, but more commonly lyrical: each stanza sums up the emotional impression which the preceding action or dialogue has made upon one of the actors. Such matter is in English cast into the form of the rhymed stanza; and so, although rhymed verse is very rarely employed in classical Sanskrit, it seems the most appropriate vehicle for the translation of the stanzas of a Sanskrit drama. It is true that we occasionally find stanzas which might fitly be rendered in English blank verse, and, more frequently, stanzas which are so prosaic as not to deserve a rendering in English verse at all.^[1] But, as the present translation may be regarded as in some sort an experiment, I have preferred to hold rigidly to the

distinction found in the original between simple prose and types of stanza which seem to me to correspond to English rhymed verse.

It is obvious that a translation into verse, and especially into rhymed verse, cannot be as literal as a translation into prose; this disadvantage I have used my best pains to minimize. I hope it may be said that nothing of real moment has been omitted from the verses; and where lack of metrical skill has compelled expansion, I have striven to make the additions as insignificant as possible.

There is another point, however, in which it is hardly feasible to imitate the original; this is the difference in the dialects used by the various characters. In *The Little Clay Cart*, as in other Indian dramas, some of the characters speak Sanskrit, others Prākṛit. Now Prākṛit is the generic name for a number of dialects derived from the Sanskrit and closely akin to it. The inferior personages of an Indian play, and, with rare exceptions, all the women, speak one or another of these Prākṛits. Of the thirty characters of this play, for example, only five (Chārudatta, the courtier, Aryaka, Sharvilaka, and the judge) speak Sanskrit;^[2] the others speak various Prākṛit dialects. Only in the case of Sansthānaka have I made a rude attempt to suggest the dialect by substituting *sh* for *s* as he does. And the grandiloquence of Sharvilaka's Sanskrit in the satirical portion of the third act I have endeavored to imitate.

Whenever the language of the original is at all technical, the translator labors under peculiar difficulty. Thus the legal terms found in the ninth act are inadequately rendered, and, to some extent at least, inevitably so; for the

legal forms, or lack of forms, pictured there were never contemplated by the makers of the English legal vocabulary. It may be added here that in rendering from a literature so artificial as the Sanskrit, one must lose not only the sensuous beauty of the verse, but also many plays on words.

In regard to the not infrequent repetitions found in the text, I have used my best judgment. Such repetitions have been given in full where it seemed to me that the force or unity of the passage gained by such treatment, or where the original repeats in full, as in the case of v. 7, which is identical with iii. 29. Elsewhere, I have merely indicated the repetition after the manner of the original.

The reader will notice that there was little effort to attain realism in the presentation of an Indian play. He need not be surprised therefore to find (page 145) that Viraka leaves the courtroom, mounts a horse, rides to the suburbs, makes an investigation and returns—all within the limits of a stage-direction. The simplicity of presentation also makes possible sudden shifts of scene. In the first act, for example, there are six scenes, which take place alternately in Chārudatta's house and in the street outside. In those cases where a character enters "seated" or "asleep," I have substituted the verb "appear" for the verb "enter"; yet I am not sure that this concession to realism is wise.

The system of transliteration which I have adopted is intended to render the pronunciation of proper names as simple as may be to the English reader. The consonants are to be pronounced as in English,^[3] the vowels as in Italian.