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NEVĀRĪGĪTIMAÑJARĪ

Religious and Secular Poetry of the Nevars of the
Kathmandu Valley

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A serious disease came to the kingdom of King Duṣprasaha. (The people) contracted that disease. In order to stop the disease, (the King) sent out (five Brahmans) to beg King Maṇicūḍa for his jewel. (25)

The Brahmans arrived and requested King Maṇicūḍa to give (them) the jewel. "Receive the jewel, since I wish to obtain liberation from *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*¹", he said. (26)

Taking up a saw, the Brahmans (now) cut open the King's forehead. At this time the earth quaked and (all) the Gods shouted. (27)

(The Brahmans) took the jewel (out of his forehead), washed it and sprinkled² water on (it). The body of King Maṇicūḍa became pure through the power of *dharma*. (28)

84

During the work of the *sihnājjyā* the Nevars sing narrative poems which are sometimes of considerable length. The following ballad tells us the story of King Mādhava's search for the beautiful Princess Sulocanā and all the vicissitudes connected with it. The individual motifs are familiar enough, but the whole gives a rather fresh and somehow modern impression. In Ancient India for a woman to disguise herself as a man (see v. 28 ff.) was practically impossible, since both sexes were bare to the waist. As to the story, the song appears to be a contamination of various episodes taken from the *Kuśajātaka* whose hero and heroine have here been named Mādhava (= Kuśa) and Sulocanā (= Sudarśanā); cf. introductory remarks to number 77. Kuśa's wife is called Sulocanā (Śu°) in the inscriptions below the *Kuśajātaka*-scenes surrounding the Maṇḍala of the 'Aṣṭamīvrata Paṭa' (British Museum, London), illustrations of which have been published by R. O. Meisezahl in *Amoghapāśa — Some Nepalese Representations and Their Vajrayānic Aspects*, Monumenta Serica XXVI (1957), p. 455 ff. Meisezahl seems, however, not to have noticed this fact, and refers to Sulocanā as Sudarśanā.

(She³) saw (him⁴), when (he) was bathing in the holy Ganges. (R)

Having returned home, I invoked the Gandharva, (for it was my) desire to obtain Princess Sulocanā. Crossing the river Ganges and looking towards her country, I was given shelter in the house of the gardener's wife⁵. (1) King Mādhava, staying at the house of gardener's wife, talked about various (things). While staying at the house of the gardener's wife, he had various talks necessary⁶ for love and the enjoyment of love⁷. (2)

¹ The MS seems to confuse *kāma* and *kāmanā*.

² Objects are ritually purified by sprinkling water upon them.

³ Princess Sulocanā.

⁴ King Mādhava, cf. v. 48 f.

⁵ A female gardener or a gardener's wife.

⁶ *mārako*, *māko*; cf. v. 4, 15 and 58.

⁷ The translation above interprets *rasabasa* as an Ew. meaning "love (*rasa*) and

Having taken the King's garment, his shield and his sword, the thief ran away¹. (23)

(Now the wicked servant), (who) had lifted (Sulocanā) on to the horse's back and put (Bhadrava) into a gallop, took (Sulocanā) into a forest. After he had descended from the horse and looked the Princess in the face, he thought, "I shall make (her my) wife!" (24)

When the Princess saw the servant, she thought², "I shall try (to find a way out)!" Handing her garland of jewels³ to the servant, she said, "Buy (me some) cakes (and bring them to me)!" (25)

(While he was doing so), Sulocanā mounted the horse and fled⁴ quickly. At this very moment the thief ran towards her. He was ready to kill Princess Sulocanā. (26)

Sulocanā, using many tricks, threw the thief down a well. (Then) she took the thief's clothes, put them⁴ on, girded on the shield and sword and went off. (27)

Having assumed the guise of a man, Sulocanā departed quickly on horseback⁵. (Then) a tigress⁶, who had seen her, came speedily rushing forward with the intention of devouring Sulocanā. (28)

When she saw the tigress approaching, Sulocanā was frightened. Hastily seizing her *dhupa*⁷, she stabbed the tigress to death. After (the *dhupa*) had passed through her mouth and emerged at her buttocks, the tigress, seized with convulsions, rolled (on the ground). (29)

Having killed the tigress, (Sulocanā), who had assumed the shape of a man, entered the town and looked (around). Sitting on horseback and setting spurs to her horse, she moved through the very centre of the city. (30)

The people of that town said, "Who killed the tigress? A handsome man has come here on horseback. It is he who killed (her)." (31)

The (King's) officers and the noblemen of the city said, "There he goes. Come, oh Kājī⁸!" — The Princess in man's disguise said, "I wish to do this town⁹ service." (32)

¹ Lit., "ran away to one side or direction", "went a different way".

² Lit., "said".

³ Which was to be used instead of money.

⁴ Lit., "those clothes".

⁵ The text has *sala gase*, "mounting the horse".

⁶ Cf. v. 30: *byāghranī*.

⁷ A sort of dagger or bayonet.

⁸ As to the rank and office of a Kājī see AKN, p. 197 and 199 f.

⁹ Lit., "in this town".

“What are you capable of¹? What knowledge and (other) merits have you? Tell us what you possess²!” — “I can accomplish what others could not do. My name is Mahāvīra”. (33)

Having heard these words, the courtiers and nobleman took (Sulocanā) to the King. (There) the Princess in man’s disguise made obeisance and stood³ in the (august) presence of the King. (34)

“A rhinoceros is causing trouble in this country. The King and my people have not (yet) been able to capture (this) rhinoceros”, the King, addressing Mahāvīra, told her (about that). (35)

When she heard the King’s words, she said, “I shall go”, and, having taken various weapons, she departed. Mounted on horseback and setting spurs to her horse, she departed to slay the rhinoceros. (36)

Placing a group of soldiers⁴ at one place and going forward herself quite alone, she approached the rhinoceros. As soon as it saw her, the rhinoceros rushed speedily forward in order to kill Mahāvīra. (37)

Seeing the rhinoceros coming, Mahāvīra was alarmed and ascended a tree. The rhinoceros, (however), approached quickly and, waiting under the tree, (repeatedly) opened its mouth wide. (38)

Seeing the rhinoceros waiting, Mahāvīra was alarmed. The *dhupa* she had seized slipped (out of her hand), (and) as the *dhupa* fell down and struck its neck, the rhinoceros, seized by convulsions, rolled (on the ground). (39)

Seeing this, she descended quickly and with her sword cut (the rhinoceros) into pieces. When they saw that the rhinoceros had been killed, (some) Apsaras’s appeared and danced. (40)

Seeing this, the Princess in man’s disguise was surprised⁵. She called her soldiers and when they had seen that the rhinoceros was dead, she departed gladly on horseback. (41)

When he heard that the rhinoceros had been killed, the King was very much pleased. He ordered (his subjects) to play music and (beat) drums and dance, and he led her in a procession⁶. (42)

Seeing Mahāvīra, the King was very much pleased and gave her his own

¹ Lit., “what is your ability (*puruṣārtha*)”.

² Lit., “This (much) is there, tell (us)”.

³ *salām yānāva evaṇa*, “made obeisance and stayed on”.

⁴ *saine*, Skt. *sainya*.

⁵ *kautuka cāyāo kena*, “showed herself surprised”.

⁶ *sindūrajātrā*, lit. “vermilion procession”, thus called because in such processions the elephants’ foreheads were beautifully painted with vermilion.

daughter in marriage. The Princess in man's disguise, not knowing what to do, accepted (his daughter) on her shield and sword. (43)

When (the) Svayaṃvara was over, the King gave her half the kingdom and made Mahāvīra stay in his country. Having assembled some local chiefs, (the King) felt very happy and gladly established both (Sulocanā and his daughter) in his house. (44)

(Sulocanā) placed a guard on the bank of the river in that country. "Bring me anybody who, for whatever reason it may be, comes to die near the river!" (45)

(Because) he had not seen Sulocanā (any more), the wicked servant (suddenly) turned up¹ in order to die near the river. The guard discovered him, seized him and, leading him away, handed him over to Mahāvīra. (46)

As he had not obtained Sulocanā, Guṇākara (too) came to die near the river. The guard saw him, took him away and lead him into Mahāvīra's audience-hall. (47)

Not having found Sulocanā even after ten years, he² felt (the pangs of) separation in his heart: as he had not found Sulocanā (yet), King Mādhava (also) turned up¹ in order to die (there) of (the pangs of) separation. (48)

King Mādhava, distressed with extreme pain, came to die near the river. The guard saw him, took him away and lead him into Mahāvīra's audience hall. (49)

One day King Mahāvīra carefully questioned each of them separately. King Mādhava was (then) taken upstairs, and (Sulocanā and Mādhava) had private talks with each other. (50)

When she saw the servant, the Princess in man's disguise grew very angry. She called a Caṇḍāla, handed the servant over to him, and she said, "Kill him by piercing him with a *chuli*³!" (51)

When this had been done, she questioned King Mādhava and listened to the circumstances in detail. She spoke to King Mādhava in the character⁴ of King Mahāvīra⁵. (52)

¹ Lit., "came".

² I.e., King Mādhava.

³ Hi. *churī*, a very sharp knife.

⁴ Lit., "as if (by) order of".

⁵ King Mādhava did not recognize Sulocanā, but thought he was conversing with King Mahāvīra.