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THE BUDDHIST LEGEND OF  
JÎMÛTAVÂHANA  
AND THE  
NÂGÂNANDA



Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut  
animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.

St. John xv. 13.

From the *Gospel for the Vigil of an Apostle.*



THE  
BUDDHIST LEGEND  
OF  
JÎMÛTAVÂHANA

FROM THE KATHÂ-SARIT-SÂGARA  
[THE OCEAN-RIVER OF STORY]

DRAMATIZED IN THE  
NÂGÂNANDA

[THE JOY OF THE WORLD OF SERPENTS]

A BUDDHIST DRAMA BY ŚRĪ HARSHA DEVA

TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT

BY THE REVEREND

B. HALE WORTHAM, B.A.

TRIN. COLL., OXON.

RECTOR OF DUNTON WAYLETT

**Translator of the Śatakas of Bhartrihari, the Hitopadeśa,  
The Śuka Saptati (70 tales of a parrot), etc., etc.**

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# INTRODUCTION

THE Buddhist legend of Jîmûtavâhana is related twice in the course of the Kathâsaritsâgara, in the 22nd and 90th chapters, and is dramatised in a play called the Nâgânanda. The first of these works, the title of which means the “ Ocean-river of Story,” is a production of the 10th or 11th century A.D. It is entirely in verse, founded by its author, Somadeva, on an earlier collection of existing legends related in a work called Vrihat Kathâ, which goes back to the 2nd century A.D. The drama, the Nâgânanda, follows the line of the legend very closely, as given in the 22nd chapter of the Kathâsaritsâgara. Nâgânanda signifies “ The joy of the world of serpents,” and refers to the hero Jîmûtavâhana, who is the centre of the drama. The authorship is uncertain, though all duly qualified judges assign the 7th century A.D. as the date of its composition. The editor of the drama in the original Sanskrit, published at Bombay in 1892, Śrinivas Govind Bhânup

(from whose edition the following translation has been made) attributes it to King Śrī Harsha, and is of opinion that it is by the same author as a drama called the Ratnâvali. He justifies this by the similarity (or more than similarity) between certain expressions and situations in the two dramas, and which would be the most barefaced plagiarism, unless they were the work of the same author. Professor Cowell (the late learned Sanskrit professor at Cambridge), on the other hand, thinks that the difference of religious tone between the two dramas makes it quite impossible that they can be by the same author. Whoever might have been the real author, it is quite possible that the play was attributed to King Śrī Harsha, out of compliment to him, since it was brought out by his order and under his patronage, though he might have had nothing to do with its composition.

The interesting point about the drama is its religious atmosphere. It is a practical exposition of the doctrines and practices of Buddhism. The play itself is a mixture of Buddhism and Hindûism. It opens, as usual, with a benediction, but the benediction is



addressed to the Buddha, and is in this respect unique. The worship of Gaûri, however, is represented as still existing, and the heroine pays homage to her in her temple. The hero is a confirmed Buddhist. He has apparently no leanings to Brâhmanism, and makes little or no reference to worship, sacrifice, or to any of the Hindû deities. His whole religious attitude is distinctly subjective. He lives under an entirely different religious condition from that of the other characters in the play. He is the exponent of a very exalted system of morality, which he puts into practice. At the same time he stands alone, and finds no sympathy for his tenets, in those by whom he is surrounded. In fact, it is pretty clear, as his wife's brother Mitrâvasu sees, that his doctrines, if carried into practice, must lead to political and social chaos. The drama finally concludes with the introduction of the goddess Gauri, who displays her divine and miraculous power in raising the hero to life. In this particular conjunction the Buddhist Jîmûta-vâhana does pay her something like worship : perhaps we may take it that while he does not think the national worship of any par-

ticular consequence, he has no objection to pay a certain amount of respect to the deities of his forefathers. The play, with its Buddhist and Hindû religious element running side by side, represents, perhaps, what existed (or what was intended to exist) under the liberal and tolerant rule of Śrî Harsha. The Buddhist and the Hindû agree to bury the feuds of a thousand years, and live together in peace and harmony, the beliefs and practices of each going on side by side.

The drama is highly sensational, and the characters are well worked out. The character on which the whole action turns, that of Jîmûtavâhana, is, of course, the most carefully elaborated. In fact, the whole interest of the drama centres on him, all the other characters being entirely subordinate. The subject would be an interesting one at any time or place, but to the audience who saw it for the first time it must have been absolutely entrancing, as emotional (to use the word in no invidious sense) as the *Œdipus Rex* of the Greek stage, or the Passion play at Ober-Ammergau. The editor of the Sanskrit original (to whom I have referred) thinks that the style of the drama (except in



a few places) does not rise to the dignity of the subject, and is wanting in literary finish and grace, and that as a work of art it cannot be considered on a level with the great masterpieces of the Hindû stage. Be this as it may, and no doubt the editor is a very good judge, in spite of its deficiencies, the dignity of the subject itself must remain, nor could it altogether be destroyed, however imperfect its expression.

The character of Jîmûtavâhana (as has been said) is carefully drawn and is worth studying. In the beginning of the first act he is introduced to us, calmly setting forth his sentiments and his principles, founded on obedience to his father's will and self-renunciation. Next, he is shown us on his human side. Self-renunciation is clearly not a natural, but an acquired virtue. He is perfectly human both in his courtship and in the scene with Malayavatî, the princess whom he marries ; and then, at last, after this episode, he comes before us again carrying out his principles to their farthest point and in their highest perfection. He has a human side, as well as a divine side, and the divine side is eventually victorious. The position

of Jîmûtavâhana at the beginning of the drama is that which Buddhists call a “ Bodhisat,” one who has passed through all the births necessary to attain perfection but one, and the next birth is to place him on a level with the Supreme Buddha, and he will attain to Nirvana. In the case of Jîmûtavâhana this is not what happens, as we might have expected. His self-sacrifice ought to have brought him to Nirvana, but it does not. After his death he returns to earth in his former position, only much more glorious and magnificent, raised to life again by the famous Gaurî, the “ Brilliant ” goddess, the wife of Śiva, who stands at the head of the Hindû Pantheon. And here it seems as if we had an example of the compromise between Buddhism and Hindûism, and which, as I have already suggested, seems to be formulated by this drama.

The story, one of singular interest and beauty, is a strange echo from the world of Christianity. Not that I suggest the influence of Christianity, as might be supposed from the verse of St. John’s Gospel which stands at the head of this book. Nor is it necessary to suppose anything of the kind.



All that need be said is, that there is a coincidence between certain lines of thought and action. The play is many centuries later than Christianity, though the legend is no doubt some centuries older. The truth is that we have here an exemplification of St. Paul's words, when he says, speaking of the Gentiles, that "He left not Himself without witness."

That the Buddha was a saint after his manner and in his own time is undoubted. We may go farther, and say that he would have been a saint at any time, or any place, in the world's history. The same Light and Spirit which led him as far as it did in the times when he lived, would no doubt have led him still farther if he had lived under the more perfect Revelation. His advanced morality and his spiritual enlightenment not only placed him far above all his fellows, but made him the founder of a great religious system ; and his fame for sanctity has raised him to such an exalted position that, as some tell us, the Buddha has been enrolled under the name of " St. Josaphat " among the Saints of the Catholic Church.









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Jîmûtavâhana. As time went on  
 The youth increased in stature, while the love  
 Which filled his inmost nature, step by step,  
 Grew with his outward form. At last, the prince,  
 Proclaimed Successor to his father's crown,  
 Filled with compassion for all living things  
 That move upon this earth, in secret spoke,  
 And thus addressed his father, who with joy  
 Heard his son's words. ' Surely I know full well  
 That all things perish : nothing on the earth  
 Has an abiding place ; one thing alone,—  
 The glory of the virtuous, replete  
 With purity,—though countless ages pass,  
 Shall never fail. If men of noble mind  
 Have gained renown by showering kindnesses  
 On others, more than life, far more than wealth,  
 They value that fair glory. As for us—  
 If our good fortune—our prosperity—  
 Be for ourselves alone, nor overflow  
 On the less fortunate, then like a flash  
 Of lightning shall our fortune pass away,  
 And vanish into air. This " Wishing tree "   
 Grants all that we desire ; if, then, we pray  
 The tree to pour its blessings o'er the world,  
 Nor keep them selfishly,—then shall its fruit  
 Be ours indeed. So let me supplicate  
 The wishing tree that by its boundless wealth  
 The multitudes of men, who pass their lives  
 In poverty, may be relieved.' Thus spoke  
 Jîmûtavâhana : gladly his sire  
 Assented, and the youth invoked the tree.  
 ' O Bounteous tree ! The giver of all good

To us ; fulfil this day our earnest prayer ;  
 Banish from earth all want and poverty.  
 Hail to thee ! friendly one ! Thou hast been sent  
 To bless the world with wealth, therefore I pray  
 Bestow on men the wealth that they desire.'

In answer to Jîmûtavâhana

The self-denying one, the tree sent down  
 Gold in abundant showers on the earth,  
 While all mankind rejoiced. Who could have  
 bent

The wishing tree to carry out his will  
 And rain down plenty, even though he were  
 Incarnate Wisdom, but the glorious  
 Jîmûtavâhana ? Therefore to him  
 Were all the regions of the earth fast bound  
 By ties of gratitude, and o'er the heav'n  
 His spotless fame extended far and wide.

Then the relations of the King uprose,—  
 Even of King Jîmûtaketu,—full  
 Of hatred, since the throne was firmly fixed  
 By his son's glory ; and their minds they set  
 To seize upon that place wherein the tree,  
 The giver of all blessings, grew,—a place  
 Unfortified, easy to be o'ercome.

Therefore they met together, fully bent  
 On war. Then said Jîmûtavâhana,  
 Calm and composed, ' Father ! this life of ours  
 Is even as a bubble on the stream.

Why should we then desire prosperity ?  
 For even as a lamp, whose tongue of flame  
 Flickers before the wind, so among men  
 Is fortune. Who could ever hope to gain ]



(If he were wise at least) prosperity  
 From other's harm or death ? I will not fight  
 With kinsmen ; I will rather leave my realm  
 And dwell within the forest. Let them be !  
 We will not slay these miserable men,  
 Our brothers and our kin.' His father said,  
 Firmly resolved in mind : ' I, too, my son !  
 Will go with you, for I am old and grey,  
 And how should love for power abide in me  
 Since thou, all young and vigorous, hast cast  
 Thy realm aside, as though it were but straw,  
 Through love and pity ? ' Thus the King  
 approved

Jîmûtavâhana's advice, and left  
 His realm, departing with his wife and son  
 To Mount Malaya. There the youth abode  
 Within a grove, the Siddha's dwelling-place,  
 Where trees of sandal shadowed o'er the brooks,  
 Making his father's life his chiefest care.  
 And while he sojourned there, the Siddha prince.  
 Mitrâvasu, accepted as a friend,  
 The youth, whose sister in a former birth  
 Had loved Jîmûtavâhana. He saw,  
 And filled with perfect wisdom knew again  
 The damsel he had loved. Their mutual glance,  
 Like the frail meshes of the net which holds  
 The captive deer, ensnared each other's souls.

One day the Siddha prince, his countenance  
 Beaming with joy, in sudden thought addressed  
 Jîmûtavâhana, whom the three worlds  
 Adored : ' A younger sister dwells with me,  
 Called Malayavatî : to thee I give

The maiden ; O ! do not refuse my gift ! '  
 Then spoke Jîmûtavâhana, and said :  
 ' Prince ! in a former birth she was my wife,  
 Thou too my friend, even as dear to me  
 As my own heart ; to me is given the power  
 Of calling back to mind births past and gone.'  
 Mitrâvasu replied : ' Tell me, I pray,  
 The story of thy former births, I long  
 To hear it.' And Jîmûtavâhana,  
 Loving towards all creatures, answeréd :  
 ' Hear then my tale : Once in a former birth  
 As a Vidyâdhara, flying through space,  
 I passed Himâlaya, whose lofty peaks  
 Shone forth beneath me, and I was beheld  
 By Śiva, sporting with his spouse, The god  
 Enraged, because my towering flight  
 Bore me above him, with a curse pronounced  
 This sentence on me : " In the world of men  
 In mortal guise thou shalt be born : a wife  
 From the Vidyâdharas thou shalt obtain.  
 Thou shalt appoint thy son to occupy  
 Thy room, and then once more remembering  
 Thy former birth, thou shalt again be born  
 As a Vidyâdhara." Thus Śiva spoke,  
 Yet while he cursed, foretelling too the end  
 Of his Anathema, and disappeared.  
 Soon after, in a merchant's family  
 I entered human form, and lived the son  
 Of a rich trader in a city named  
 Vallabhî : Vasudatta was the name  
 Bestowed on me. Time passed ; to manhood  
 grown,



My father sent me forth, a retinue  
 Of servants following, to some far land  
 To traffic. On my journey, I was seized  
 By robbers in a forest ; stripped of all  
 My merchandise, they loaded me with chains  
 And dragged me to their village, to the shrine  
 Of Durgâ, where a silken banner waved,  
 Crimson and long, like to the very tongue  
 Of Death, all eagerness to lick the blood  
 Of living things. Then to Pulindaka,  
 Their chief, they brought me, who was wor-  
 shipping

Before the goddess, that within her shrine  
 I might be offered as a sacrifice.

And when he saw me, lo ! the Savara chief,  
 Though but a savage, felt his inmost heart  
 Melt with compassion : for a causeless love  
 Which seems to spring unbidden in the heart  
 Tells us of friendship in a former birth.  
 Thus was I saved from slaughter by the King,  
 Who, still intent upon the sacrifice,  
 Prepared to make the offering of himself,  
 And so complete the rite. But while he thought  
 Thereon, a voice from heaven said : ‘ ‘ O king !  
 Hurt not thyself ! Ask of me what thou wilt,  
 It shall be granted thee, for thou hast been  
 Approved of me.’ ’ Then filled with joy the king  
 Replied : ‘ ‘ Since thou, O goddess, hast approved  
 My deeds, what should I further need ? but yet—  
 One thing I ask of thee : in births to come,  
 May love between me and the merchant’s son  
 Ever remain unchanged.’ ’ ‘ ‘ It shall be so ’’,

Answered the goddess. Then the Savara prince  
Restored me to my home loaded with wealth.  
My father, seeing that I had returned  
From a far-distant land, the jaws of death  
Barely escaped, held a great festival  
To do me honour. Then I saw again  
After some time had passed the Savara chief  
Led in a prisoner before the king  
For sentence and for punishment : his crime  
The plunder of a caravan. Straightway  
I told my father, and I prayed the king  
To spare the Savara. So my prayer was heard  
And with a mighty sum of gold I saved  
The Savara chief from death. Thus I repaid  
His benefits, and to my own abode  
I brought him home, and long I tended him  
With loving care. After a time he turned  
Departing to his village, while his heart  
Tender with love was fixed upon me still.  
And then he roamed the earth, seeking a gift  
Worthy the kindnesses which I had showed  
Towards him. As he wandered here and there,  
He saw a lake before him, on its banks  
A woman riding on a lion, young  
And beautiful. The Savara chief, amazed,  
Thought thus within himself. " Who may this  
be ?

Is she a mortal ? How then does she ride  
Upon a lion ? Can she be divine ?  
But if a goddess, how should such as I  
Behold her ? Surely clad in human form  
I see her as the merit which I gained



In former births. Oh ! could I only win  
 Her for my friend in marriage,—then indeed  
 I should bestow on him a just reward  
 For all his benefits.” ✓ The Savara chief,  
 Thus thinking in himself, respectfully  
 Advanced to greet the maiden, who returned  
 His salutation. “ Who art thou ? ” she said.  
 “ Why hast thou come to this far-distant  
 land ? ”

“ I am a Savara prince,” he made reply,  
 “ Lo ! I am seeking treasure in this wood,  
 And at the sight of thee I called to mind  
 The friend who saved my life, the merchant’s  
 son.

Matchless is he in youth and comeliness,  
 A very fount of nectar to the world,  
 Even as thou art. Fortunate the lot  
 Of that fair maid who shall bestow her hand  
 On one so full of generosity,  
 So full of love, of patience, of compassion.  
 If this surpassing lovely form of thine  
 Should fail of such a destiny, Alas !  
 Then Kâma bears indeed his bow in vain.”  
 The maiden’s mind by these enticing words  
 Was borne away, as though the spells of love  
 Bewildered her. “ Where is this friend of  
 thine ? ”

She said, under love’s prompting, “ Bring him  
 here !

That I may see him.” “ Even so,” replied  
 The Savara prince, and full of joy returned  
 To seek his friend, thinking his object gained.





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Resting upon an autumn cloud, drew near.  
 As she approached, my mind at every step  
 Flew as it were to meet her, and the prince,  
 Advancing tow'rds her, said in courteous tones :  
 " Goddess ! I offer thee my dearest friend,  
 Accept him as thy bridegroom." " Bring thy  
 friend

Hither ", she answered, and with eyes of love  
 She glanced at me approaching her, and said,  
 " This friend of thine must surely be a god !  
 No mortal has so beautiful a form."

" Fair one ! I am a mortal ", I replied.

" A merchant's son, who dwells in Vallabhî.  
 My father by the favour of the god  
 Who wears upon his head the crescent moon  
 Received me as his son." Then said the maid,  
 Her eyes cast down through modesty, " The god  
 Hath now fulfilled his promise ; for he deigned  
 To tell me in a dream, ' To-morrow's sun  
 Shall show thy spouse to thee.' Lo ! here I find  
 In thee my husband," Thus she charmed my  
 mind

With speech of nectar sweetness. Then the  
 wood

We quitted, journeying homewards that the  
 rites

Of marriage might be duly solemnized ;  
 And mounted on the lion, in my arms  
 Holding the maiden, we reached Vallabhî.  
 Then lo ! with wonder filled, the people ran  
 To tell my father ; marvelling, he came  
 To greet me. When he saw the gracefulness

And beauty of the maiden, and perceived  
How fitly I had chosen her, his heart  
Rejoiced, and to our marriage feast he called  
Our friends and relatives. Thus she became  
My spouse, and all my life was filled with peace  
And happiness, blessed with a virtuous wife.  
At length, as time went by, old age crept on,  
And I, feeling disgust for earthly things  
And weariness of life, I made my son  
The ruler of my house, and then I turned,  
Away, leaving domestic cares, and went  
Into the forest. There intense desire  
To leave this mortal frame possessed my mind.  
Therefore I fixed my thought on things divine,  
And from the mountain side I threw myself  
Down headlong. So I quitted life. Now born  
Again into the world, thou seest me  
Jîmûtavâhana. To me belongs  
The recollection of my former births.  
Mitrâvasu thou art the Savara prince,  
And this thy sister, Malayavatî,  
Is that same damsel born again, whom I,  
The merchant's son, chose in my former birth  
To be my bride. Therefore 'tis right and good  
That I should marry her. First do thou go  
And tell my parents : then will I accept  
Thy gift.' And when Mitrâvasu had heard  
The story of Jîmûtavâhana,  
He told his parents, who were filled with joy,  
And gave their daughter Malayavatî  
In marriage to Jîmûtavâhana,  
And the pair dwelt in great prosperity



And happiness upon Malaya's mount.

Once on a time Jîmûtavâhana  
 Was wandering amid the woods that gird  
 The shore ; and in that place he saw a man  
 Fearful and trembling ; and with loud lament  
 His mother followed, while the man would turn  
 And bid his mother leave him, but with tears  
 She never ceased to follow him. Behind  
 The pair there followed one in soldier's garb,  
 Who led the man up to a lofty rock  
 And left him. Then Jîmûtavâhana  
 Spoke to the man and said, ' Tell me, I pray,  
 Who art thou ? Why does this thy mother weep  
 For thee.' Then said the man, ' In bygone times  
 Kadrû and Vinatâ, Kâsyapa's wives,  
 Held a dispute. The horses of the sun  
 Were black ', so one declared,—the other said  
 That they were white. The one who erred should  
 serve

The other as a slave. Thus each agreed.  
 The subtle-minded Kadrû, fully bent  
 On victory, induced her sons the snakes  
 To send forth showers of venom o'er the steeds ;  
 And then she showed them all defiled and black  
 To Vinatâ. So by an artifice  
 Was Vinatâ o'ercome and made a slave.  
 How terrible is woman's spite which wreaks  
 Vengeance upon its kind. Then came the son  
 Of Vinatâ, Garuḍa, and he begged  
 His mother. Then the sons of Kadrû said,  
 " Garuḍa ! lo ! the gods have now begun  
 To churn the sea of milk. If thou wilt bring

The nectar from that sea, O mighty chief,  
And give it us, thou shalt indeed redeem  
Thy mother from her bonds of slavery.”

Then to the sea of milk Garuḍa went,  
And showed his mighty power, if by that means  
He might obtain the nectar. Vishnu, pleased  
With that display of might, exclaimed “ Indeed  
Thou hast delighted me ! Ask what thou wilt,  
And I will give it thee.” Garuḍa, wroth,  
Because his mother had been made a slave,  
Replied, “ I pray thee may the snakes become  
My food.” The god assented. So he gained  
The nectar by his valour, and a boon  
From Vishnu. As Garuḍa turned to go,  
There met him Indra. “ King of birds ! ” he  
said,

“ I know thine errand ; may thy power and  
might

Restrain these foolish snakes lest they consume  
The nectar, and enable me to take  
It from them.” When Garuḍa heard these  
words,

He willingly complied, and to the snakes  
Bearing the nectar in his hand he went,  
Rejoicing in the thought of Vishṇu’s boon ;  
Then standing at a distance, he addressed  
The snakes, filled with alarm at Vishnu’s gift :—  
“ Here is the nectar, lo ! I bring it you,  
Take it,—release my mother ; if you fear  
My power, I will place it on a bed  
Of Darbha grass ; and when you have restored  
My mother I will go, and you can take



The nectar thence.” All willingly the snakes  
 Assented, and upon a sacred bed  
 Of Kuśa grass, Garuḍa placed the bowl  
 Of nectar, and departed, having freed  
 His mother. Then the snakes approached to  
 taste

The nectar, but with sudden swoop from heaven  
 The mighty Indra fell, and bore away  
 The nectar from its bed of Darbha grass.  
 Then in despair the serpents licked the grass,  
 One single drop of nectar may remain  
 (They thought) upon the grass ; and thus their  
 tongues

Were split, and they became all double-tongued,  
 Nor gained aught. What can the greedy hope  
 To gain but ridicule ? And so the snakes  
 Failed to obtain the nectar, while their foe,  
 Garuḍa, fell upon them, and began,  
 Strong in the gift of Vishnu, to devour  
 Them up. And all the snakes in Pâtâla  
 Were dead with fear, the females cast their  
 young,

Over the serpent race destruction seemed  
 To hang. Then Vâsuki, the serpent King,  
 Seeing his enemy come day by day,  
 Foresaw the ruin of the serpent world,  
 And as a suppliant to Garuḍa said :

“ O mighty one ! whose power and majesty  
 Are past resisting, as each day goes by  
 One serpent will I send thee, king of birds,  
 And on that sandy hill, hard by the sea,  
 My offering shalt thou find : nor enter thou

Pâtâla day by day, destroying all  
 The serpent race ; for then thy life  
 Will lose its object." Thus spoke Vâsuki.  
 Garuḍa to his words assented. In this place  
 Each day he eats the snake Vâsuki sends.  
 So have innumerable serpents met  
 Their death. I am a serpent too. My name  
 Is Śankachûḍa, and my time is come  
 To furnish forth a meal. The serpent King  
 Has therefore sent me to this rock of death,  
 Whither my mother follows me with tears  
 And lamentations sore.' Then grief possessed  
 Jîmûtavâhana, and thus he spoke :  
 ' Ah ! but a coward is that king of thine !  
 He offers to his enemy as food  
 The people of his realm ! Why did he not  
 First offer up himself ? Oh, base thy King !  
 Since he the overthrow of all his race  
 Unmoved can witness. Ah ! how great a sin !  
 Garuḍa too commits. Lo ! mighty sins  
 Do even mighty men commit, impelled  
 By selfish greediness. Cheer up, my friend !  
 I will deliver thee, surrendering  
 My body to Garuḍa.' ' Mighty one ! '  
 Responded Śankachûḍa ; ' This be far  
 From thee ! Thou wouldest not destroy a gem  
 To save a bit of glass. Never will I  
 Endure that foul disgrace through me should  
 fall  
 Upon my race.' Thus tried he to dissuade  
 Jîmûtavâhana, and to the shrine  
 Of Śiva went, thinking his time was come,



To offer adoration to the god.

And then indeed Jîmûtavâhana,

Of pity and compassion, as it were,

The very treasure house—thought that the  
chance

Had come, by offering of himself, to save

The serpent's life. Therefore he quickly sent

Mitrâvasu away, on some pretence.

Then came Garuḍa, and immediately

The earth began to tremble at the wind

Of his advancing wings, as though it shook

In wonder at the steadfast bravery

Of the great-minded one. Then rose in haste

Jîmûtavâhana, and filled with love

For living things, mounted upon the rock

Of death, knowing the quaking earth foretold

The advent of Garuḍa. Then swooped down

The serpent's enemy—the heavens grew dark

At his dread shadow, and he bore away

Jîmûtavâhana, while drops of blood

Flowed from the hero, and his jewelled crest

Fell to the ground, torn by Garuḍa's beak.

And flying to the topmost mountain peak,

The king of birds began to eat his prey.

Then instantly there fell from heaven a rain

Of flowers, while Garuḍa at the sight

Was filled with wonder. Soon this snake re-  
turned

Fresh from Gokarṇa's shrine, and when he saw

The rock of death wet with the drops of blood,

' Surely the mighty-minded one, (he thought)

Has offered up his life to ransom mine.





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Was clear before Garuḍa, and he knew  
 His prey was not a serpent, but the king  
 Of the Vidyâdharas. Then deepest pain  
 Possessed his mind. ' Alas I my cruelty ! '  
 He said ; ' What sin has that brought forth in  
 me !

How easily does sin lay hold on those  
 Who follow after sin ! This noble one  
 Who for another's good has sacrificed  
 Himself, despising this illusive world,  
 Nor fears my power—all honour be to him,  
 And praise unceasing ! ' Then the king of birds,  
 To purify himself, into the flames  
 Was rushing headlong. ' King of birds ', ex-  
 claimed

Jîmûtavâhana, ' Do not despair !  
 If thou wouldst truly turn from guilt—repent I  
 Slay no more serpents for thy food—repent  
 Of those which thou didst eat in times gone by ;  
 So shalt thou find a remedy for guilt,  
 None other may avail.' The king of birds  
 Heard and rejoiced, determined to repent,  
 Obedient to Jîmûtavâhana

As to a ghostly father. Then to heaven  
 He went to bring down nectar, to revive  
 The wounded prince, and to restore to life  
 The serpents who had perished, and whose  
 bones

Alone were left. Then Gaurî came from heaven  
 In human form, and on the mighty one  
 She poured forth showers of nectar : and his  
 limbs,

Renewed in greater beauty than before,  
 Were given back to him, while through the sky  
 The heavenly music rang, and all the gods  
 Rejoiced. Garuḍa, too, returned from heaven,  
 Bearing the nectar ; and along the shore  
 He sprinkled the life-giving drops. And lo !  
 The serpents that had perished, once again  
 Rose up, clothed with the forms that they had  
 worn

In life, and filled that forest by the shore—  
 Crowds upon crowds of serpents pressing on ;—  
 It seemed even as though the serpent world,  
 Forgetting their dread enemy, had come  
 To see and honour their deliverer.

And round Jîmûtavâhana his friends,  
 His wife, his parents, clustered, and they praised  
 Him for his glory, and undying fame.  
 Could aught but triumph reign in word or  
 thought

Since joy had banished pain. Then to his home,  
 Together with his wife, and friend, and son,  
 Jîmûtavâhana, compassionate  
 Towards all living things, departing, reigned  
 The sovereign lord of the Vidyâdharas.



NÂGÂNANDA

NÂGÂNANDA

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JÎMÛTAVÂHANA : Prince of the Vidyâdharas.

JÎMÛTAKETU : King of the Vidyâdharas, father to Jîmûtavâhana.

VIŚVÂVASU : King of the Siddhas.

MITRÂVASU : Son of Viśvâvasu.

ŠANKHACHÛDA : Prince of the Nâgâs.

GARUḌA : King of the Birds.

ÂTREYA : a Brâhman, the King's confidant (The Vidûshaka).

SEKHARAKA : a hanger-on.

THE MESSENGER.

THE CHAMBERLAIN.

THE GODDESS, GAURÎ.

THE QUEEN OF THE VIDYÂDHARAS : Mother to Jîmûtavâhana.

MALAYAVATÎ : daughter to Viśvâvasu.

CHATURIKÂ : her attendant.

ŠANKHACHÛDA'S MOTHER.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS.



# NÂGÂNANDA

## ACT I

*(Opening Benediction)*

‘ ON whom dost thou pretend to meditate,—  
Thine eyes fast closed ? Just for one moment  
gaze

On us, afflicted through the shafts of love.

Ah ! Thou art called a saviour ! ’Tis a name  
To which thou hast no right : for thou art  
false.

Thou hast no pity. Ah ! What cruelty  
Can equal thine ? ’

May the enlightened one  
The conqueror, addressed by Mara’s nymphs  
In jealous wrath, protect you ! May the lord  
Of all the ancient sages be your guard !  
For he, tempted by Kâma with his bow  
Drawn to the full—tempted in frantic dance  
By Kâma’s followers with resounding drums,—  
Tempted by Siddhas too, with heads bent low  
In homage—by the Nymphs with quivering eyes  
From which shot forth the glance of wrath, or  
scorn,

Or jest :—Yet he, with heavenly wisdom filled,  
And wrapped in meditation, cast aside



Their wiles, while Indra gazed, in wonder lost,  
To see such constancy.

*End of Benediction.*

*Enter JÎMÛTAVÂHANA and ÂTREYA.*

JÎMÛT. My dearest friend ! Youth is indeed  
the time

Wherein the fruit is gained of all delights,  
'Twixt right and wrong it knows no difference.  
A time to be despised ! but yet perchance  
Ev'n from this hated time, if I subserve  
My parents' will in all things, I may gain  
Some profit.

ÂTREYA (*angrily*). No wonder you are so un-  
happy ! Here you are devoting yourself to two  
old people, who are as good as dead ! What's  
the use of it all ? Now take my advice. Give  
up all this slavery, and enjoy all the pleasures  
of sovereignty as you ought !

JÎMÛT. My friend ! You speak not well.  
What glory is there in a monarch's throne  
Compared to waiting on a father's will ?  
To be the ruler of submissive kings  
Is nought to one who makes his earthly aim  
To satisfy his father's every want.  
How can the sovereignty of all the worlds  
Be weighed against the duty that a son  
Owes to his father. Oh, my friend !  
Where is that happiness you speak of.

ÂTREYA (*aside*). What a nuisance all this  
'duty' is that he owes to his father ! (*considering*)  
Well ! never mind ! I will put it in this way.





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We go.

ÂTREYA. So be it, as your Highness wishes.

*(As they walk on)*

O feel you not, my lord, the scented breeze  
That blows from Malaya ? How sweet ! How  
cool !

Chasing away the trav'ler's weariness  
Like the embrace of some fair loving spouse  
Who welcomes his return. See how the spray  
Borne on the wind, caught up from the cascade  
That falls in broken foam upon the rocks  
Scented with juice of fragrant sandal, thrills  
Our inmost being !

JîMÛT.

Ah, my dearest friend !

This is indeed Malaya's hill. O what delight !  
How sweet the fragrant odours from the groves !  
For from the tree pierced by the elephants,  
Thrusting their tusks in frenzy through the  
bark,

The scented juice pours forth ; the caves re-  
sound,

Lashed by the ocean waves : the pearly rocks  
Stained by the crimson dye that decks the feet  
Of beauteous women passing to and fro.

Alas ! Such sights recall my mind to earth  
And earthly things. Come, let us choose some  
spot

Where we may dwell in peace !

ÂTREYA. As your highness wishes.

JîMÛT. *(starting)*. My right eye seems to  
throb ! What may this mean ?

I have no unfulfilled desire, nor wish

Ungratified, but what the sign portends  
 The wise have told us: can their words be false?  
 What think you means this omen?

ÂTREYA. It means that you are on the point  
 of meeting some beloved object.

JÎMÛT. (*reflecting*). It must be so!

ÂTREYA. Sir! Look! Look! Surely this  
 must be a grove in which ascetics dwell. Here  
 are trees throwing a dense shade—the animals  
 lying down peacefully without fear of being  
 harmed—while the smoke ascends from the  
 sacrifices laden with scent.

JÎMUT. Yes! You are right! This is a sacred  
 grove!

Here are the trees—their bark stripped off to  
 serve

As clothing! yet the strips are not too wide  
 In pity for the trees; and there the pots  
 Broken and old shine through the water's  
 depth,

And worn-out girdles of the sacred grass—  
 Cast off—lie here and there—A Parrot chants  
 A verse of Sacred Scripture—learnt by heart  
 From hearing it repeated o'er and o'er.  
 Come, let us enter! (*They enter.*) O the tranquil  
 charm!

This is indeed a hermit grove: the trees  
 Are tended by the daughters of the Saints,  
 From time to time the fuel freshly cut,  
 That feeds the fires burning in the shrines,  
 By their disciples, while the Saints delight  
 To teach the mysteries of sacred lore.



Even the trees, their heads bowed down by  
fruit,

Seem to pay homage to the coming guest,  
And rain their flowers upon me, while the bees  
Utter a hum of welcome. Ah ! this grove—  
Peaceful and calm—shall be our dwelling-place.  
Here find we rest from toil.

*[Sounds heard of music and singing.]*

But what is this ?

ÂTREYA. Even the deer prick up their ears,  
and listen to the strain with their eyes closed,  
while from their mouths falls the half-chewed  
grass.

JÎMÛT.

'Tis even so !

The antelopes bend forward eagerly  
To catch the sounds—a sweet melodious song  
Joined with the plaintive lute, whose murmur-  
ing strings

Are as the hum of bees.

ÂTREYA. Who is this then singing in the  
sacred grove ?

JÎMÛT. Such is the sweetness of the heavenly  
strain

It must be that a goddess sings and plays !

ÂTREYA. Come then ! your highness ! let us  
enter !

JÎMÛT.

Yes !

My friend, you counsel well ! So let us go !

Within and worship. Stay ! but let me think !

Perhaps we are not fit to cast our eyes

On such a holy sight : so let us hide

Behind this tree, and on the vision gaze,

Ourselves unseen.

[*They see MALAYAVATÎ and an Attendant.*

MALAYAVATÎ (*sings*)—

Goddess adored ! thy lovely form

Outshines the lily's radiant hue :

O grant me by thy mighty power

My heart's desire, for which I sue.

JÎMÛT. (*to ÂTREYA*). My dearest friend ! O

what a lovely strain !

So clear ! so perfectly harmonious !

ATTENDANT (*to MALAYA*). Your highness ! you must indeed be tired ! you have been playing and singing for a long while !

MALAYA. How should I be tired ? You forget that I have been singing before the goddess Gaurî !

ATTENDANT. And what is the use of your highness attempting to conciliate this implacable goddess ? You have been trying to gain her favour in every conceivable way : and all in vain.

ÂTREYA. Well ! after all it is only a girl. Why shouldn't we have a look at her ?

JÎMÛT. (*doubtfully*). Why not ? What is the harm ? After all there is no sin in looking at a damsel. But then if she caught sight of us, she might be alarmed and run away. So after all I think perhaps we had better stay where we are.

ÂTREYA. Very well, be it so ! (*after a moment*) Oh, your highness, what an entrancing sight ! Her beauty is as great as her skill ! Surely she



must be a goddess, or a Nâgâ—or perhaps she is a Vidyâdhara or a Siddha princess.

JÎMÛT. My friend ! Who she may be I know not—

But this I know ! If her abode be heav'n,  
Then Hari's hundred eyes have all they need,  
In gazing on her beauty. If she be  
A Nâgâ—then the lowest depths of hell  
Are lightened by her brilliancy, as though  
The moon shone forth. If the Vidyâdharas  
Claim her—then shall our family surpass  
All others in renown. If she be born  
Of Siddhas—then their glory shall prevail ;  
Over the world.

ÂTREYA (*looking at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA, aside*).  
Here is a piece of good luck ! At last he is fallen  
into the power of love—or rather, perhaps, I  
ought to say he has fallen into *my* power.  
However, he has been a long time about it !

ATTEND. Your highness ! I say again, why  
play before this unrelenting goddess ?

[*Throws down the lute.*]

MALAYA. Don't show disrespect to the divine  
Gaurî ! She has been very kind to me lately.

ATTEND. Very kind ! In what form has she  
shown her favour, your highness ?

MALAYA. She has indeed been very kind to  
me ! To-day I was playing the lute. After a  
while I fell asleep, and the adorable Gaurî  
appeared to me in a dream, and said : My  
child ! The sweet strains of your lute, and  
your devotion to me, please me exceedingly :



as a reward you shall gain a prince of the Vidyâdharas for your husband.

ATTEND. Why do you call this a dream ? Surely the goddess has given you your heart's desire——

ÂTREYA (*overhearing all this*). Surely the time has come for us to make ourselves known to the princess ! Let us go into the temple.

JÎMÛT. No ! I will not !

ÂTREYA (*goes in and drags JÎMÛTAVÂHANA after him*) (*to the Princess*). Your highness ! I salute you ! What Chaturikâ says is perfectly true ! Here is the husband promised by the goddess !

MALAYA. (*looking bashfully at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA, to her Attendant*). And, pray, who is this ?

ATTEND. (*looking at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*). From his exceeding beauty I think he must be the husband that the goddess promised you.

[MALAYAVATÎ *looks shyly at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*.

JÎMÛT. (*to the Princess*)——

Lady ! thy panting breast, thy drooping form——

Display thy weariness : O beauteous one.

Fear not ! my presence shall not pain thee.

MALAYA. (*aside to Attendant*). Oh ! I am filled with alarm ! I cannot stand here face to face with him (*turns away*).

ATTEND. Princess ! what means this behaviour ?

MALAYA. I will not remain here in the presence of this man ! Let us go elsewhere.

[*Makes as if to rise.*



ÂTREYA. Ah ! she is really frightened ! Shall I try and keep her for a moment, as long at any rate as I contrive to keep in my head anything I have had to learn ?

JÎMÛT. Well ! I don't know that there would be any harm in that !

ÂTREYA (*to MALAYA.*). May I ask your ladyship why you don't give the strangers a word of welcome ?

ATTEND. (*looking at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA aside*). She looks pleased at his salutation. (*To MALAYAVATÎ*). Madam ! The Brâhman speaks very reasonably. Guests should always be greeted respectfully. Why do you stand there lacking in decent civility to such a noble-looking person. Well ! you may do as you like ! I shall certainly go and speak to him. (*To JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*). Sir ! Your Highness ! I offer you my salutations ! Will you honour me by taking a seat ?

ÂTREYA (*to JÎMÛT.*). O my dear friend ! she speaks admirably ! Let us sit down and rest ourselves. (*They sit down.*)

MALAYA. (*to the Attendant*). May I ask you not to be so forward ? Some one of the Ascetics of the grove might come by, and he would think me ill-behaved.

*Enter an Ascetic.*

ASCETIC. To-day obedient to his father's will  
The Siddha prince, Mitrâvasu, has gone  
In haste to seek Jîmûtavâhana—  
The future King of the Vidyâdharas,





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JîMÛT. (*preparing to rise*). Sir ! I bow  
Myself before you !

ASCETIC. Sit ! I pray you sit !  
“ The guest is the superior of all.”  
Such are our master’s words, You are the guest,  
And therefore worthy of our reverence  
Rise not, I beg of you, but let us give  
To you our homage while you rest.

MALAYA. (*to the Ascetic*). Accept  
My humble duty, Father !

ASCETIC. Ah ! my child !  
A worthy husband be your lot ! But stay—  
I have commands for you. The time is  
near

For offering up the midday sacrifice,  
Therefore our Lord bids your attendance.  
Come !

MALAYA. Sir ! I obey ! Ah ! I am torn in  
twain !  
My spiritual Father bids me come,  
My heart bids me remain : remain and gaze  
Upon my future husband.

[*Goes out looking back at JîMÛTAVÂHANA.*

JîMÛT. (*sighing and looking after MALAYA-*  
VATî). She may go !  
But still she leaves imprinted on my heart  
Her beauteous image !

ÂTREYA. Well ! You have seen all you  
wanted to see ! You have heard all you  
wanted to hear ! I suppose you are satisfied.  
As far as I am concerned, I am possessed with  
a raging hunger :



So let us go and see what these reverend fathers  
have got for us to eat.

JÎMÛT. Above our heads the lordly sun  
Has reached the very summit of the heav'n,  
And with his thousand rays burns up the earth.  
See, like a fading tree, the elephant  
Hardly endures the heat, and would assuage  
His fever with the sandal juice : his ears,  
Like fans, stir up the breeze around his face,  
And with his trunk, he pours upon his breast  
Water in plenteous streams. Let us depart.  
[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT I



## ACT II

*Enter one of the Princess MALAYAVATÎ's Attendants.*

ATTENDANT. The Princess Malayavatî has sent me to try and find her brother Mitrâvasu. He ought to have been here to-day, and she wants to know what has become of him. Here is someone coming in a great hurry ! Why, it is Chaturikâ ! (*Going up to CHATURIKÂ*). Hullo ! where are you going in such a hurry ? Do you want to cut me ?

CHATURIKÂ. Oh ! not at all—but her highness sent me to put this sandal-creeper arbour in order ; she says she is burnt up with fever through the heat, and wants to go and sit there ; so I am going back to tell her that it is ready.

ATTEND. Well, go and tell her ! I hope it may do her good.

CHAT. Oh ! I don't know much about that ! I don't think it will do her 'fever,' as she calls it, much good : probably make it a good deal worse. That's my opinion. However, I must go and tell her that I have carried out her bidding.

*Enter MALAYAVATÎ with an Attendant.*

MALAYA. Oh ! my heart ! Thou madest me



dumb when I was in my lover's presence, and now thou art gone out to him of thine own accord ! Alas ! for thy selfishness. (*To CHATURIKÂ*). Show me the way to Gaurî's temple.

CHAT. Your highness ! are you not going to the sandal bower ?

MALAYA. (*confused*). Oh, yes ! You have well reminded me ! Come, let us go !

CHAT. (*aside*). What an absentminded state she is in ! She can't get the goddesses' temple out of her head ! (*To MALAYA*). Madam ! Here we are at the sandal bower ! Perhaps it may do you good to go and sit in it.

MALAYA. (*entering, aside*)—

Lord of the darts whose tips are armed with flowers !

Thou work'st no ill on him whose beauty far  
Surpasses thine : but thou art not ashamed  
To strike at me, who am a helpless girl.  
(*To CHATURIKÂ*). Tell me ! why is it that this  
bower of sandal creeper, though its shades keep  
off the burning rays of the sun, does not allay  
my fever ?

CHAT. Yes ! Your highness ! I know the cause of your fever ; but I suppose you would not admit it.

MALAYA. (*aside*). Ah ! she has found me out !  
(*Aloud*) Well ! what is the cause ? What is it that I would not admit ?

CHAT. The cause is the man that you have in your heart.



MALAYA. (*going forward joyously*). The man ? Where is he ? Where is he ?

CHAT. 'He !' what 'he' do you mean ?

[MALAYAVATÎ *sits down and hangs her head in silence.*

CHAT. Well, I will tell you ! The man in your heart is the one that was given you in a dream by the goddess, and whom you saw immediately after. He is as beautiful as Kâma, and he is the cause of your 'fever.' Believe me, the sandal arbour will not take it away.

MALAYA. (*aside*). Ah ! she certainly has found me out ! (*Aloud.*) Chaturikâ is a very good name for you, for you are so clever that it is impossible to hide anything from you ; so I will tell you everything.

CHAT. You need not do that ; I know everything already. You need not get into a state of 'fever,' for as sure as my name is Chaturikâ, you may depend on it that he who has once seen you will not know a moment's happiness without you. This is what I have found out.

MALAYA. (*in tears*). And what right have I to such happiness ?

CHAT. Your highness ! don't say that ! Surely you know even Vishnu himself is not perfectly happy separated from Lakshmî.

MALAYA. Oh ! You are very kind and flattering ! But my fever rages the more because I recollect that I never spoke a word



of welcome to him ; and he will think me so awkward and ungainly. (*Weeps.*)

CHAT. Your highness ! do not weep. (*Aside.*) But how can she help it ? The fever of her heart afflicts her so that she cannot but weep.

(*Takes a plaintain leaf and fans her.*)

MALAYA. (*stops her*). Oh ! stop ! Even the air from the plaintain leaf is hot.

CHAT. Madam ! don't lay the blame on the plaintain leaf ! It is the fever of your sight which makes the air from the plaintain leaf warm.

MALAYA. (*with tears*). O my dear Chaturikâ ! it is all of no use ! Nothing will give me any peace.

CHAT. Yes, there is something that would ! Suppose ' *he* ' were to come here.

*Enter JÎMÛTAVÂHANA and ÂTREYA.*

JÎMÛT. O flower-armed god ! Why am I still  
thine aim ?

Have mercy on my heart already pierced  
By arrows numberless. For as she gazed  
On me, though for a moment, lo ! her glance  
Lit up the hermit grove, and made the trees  
Shine out, all dappled with the rays of light,  
Like skins of fleckéd antelopes.

ÂTREYA. My friend !  
How has thy constancy departed !

JÎMÛT. What !  
My constancy ! are not my heart and mind  
Beyond imagination calm and firm ?



Have I not gazed upon the brilliant moon  
 Night after night ? enjoyed the scented breath  
 Of lotuses ? Has not the evening breeze  
 Been welcomed by me, loaded with perfume  
 Of jasmin flow'rs ? Have I not heard the hum  
 Of bees that hover o'er the lotus beds ?  
 O why reproach me in this hopeless state  
 With want of firmness ? (*Reflects.*) Let me  
 think again !

Is it not true ? and my excuses false ?  
 Else could I bear the darts against me aimed  
 By Kâma ! You are right ! How can I say—  
 My mind is firm and stedfast ?

ÂTREYA (*aside*). This unfortunate reference  
 of mine to his want of firmness has quite upset  
 him. I must change the subject. (*To Jîmûr.*)  
 Sir ! How is it that you have forgotten all  
 about your parents and have come here ?

Jîmûr. And who should have a better right  
 than thou

To ask the question ? Therefore I will speak.  
 I had a dream, and in the dream I saw  
 Her whom I love, seated upon the slab  
 Of moonstone in this arbour : and her face,  
 All pale and wan, rested upon her hand.  
 She wept, and from her came reproaching  
 words,

Because her love found no response in me.  
 Therefore this bower shall be my resting-place  
 To-day, the bower wherein I saw my love.

CHAT. (*listening anxiously*). Your highness !  
 I hear footsteps ! Some one is coming this way.





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Her love for me, with quivering lip ! My friend !  
Let us recline upon the moonstone seat.

MALAY. (*reflecting*). Of whom is he talking ?  
It seems as if it were someone with whom he  
has had a lover's quarrel.

CHAT. I don't know ! let us listen and find  
out.

ÂTREYA (*aside*). My friend seems to like this  
kind of talk ; I will try a little more of it.  
(*Aloud.*) Well ! Sir ! and what did you say  
to the beautiful damsel of your dream ?

JÎMÛT. I said :  
This moonstone seat, besprinkled with thy tears,  
Is as if shedding dew, thy beauteous face  
Mistaken for the rising moon.

MALAY. (*angrily*). Chaturikâ ! what nonsense  
is this ? Let us be off !

CHAT. (*seizing her hand*). Your highness !  
don't say that ! It is *you* whom he saw in his  
dream : no one else would give him any  
pleasure.

MALAY. Well ! I am not convinced ! but  
I will stay and see what more he has to say  
about it.

JÎMÛT. Âtreya ! Ah ! a thought has crossed  
my mind,  
I cannot see my love, so will I draw  
Her lovely face upon this moonstone slab !  
Go to the mountain side, fetch me some chalk !

ÂTREYA. Certainly, your highness ! (*Returns.*)  
Sir ! here is the chalk ! You asked me for one  
colour, and I have brought you five !



JÎMÛT. My friend ! I thank you.

[*Draws on the stone.*

The face of my beloved on the stone  
Fills me with pleasure, while I gaze on her.  
Her face in radiant glory, like the moon  
Feasting the eyes.

ÂTREYA. Wonderful ! How can you draw  
the likeness of one whom you cannot see ?

JÎMÛT. Nothing to wonder at ! Her lovely  
form

Is always in my mind ! What wonder, then,  
That I can draw her likeness ?

MALAYA. (*in tears*). O Chaturikâ ! It is quite  
clear what the end of the story is going to be.  
Let us go and see where Mitrâvasu is gone.

CHAT. (*aside*). Her impatience will surely  
lead to her own destruction. (*To MALAYA.*)  
Madam ! Manoharâ has already gone to look  
for Prince Mitrâvasu ; perhaps he may be even  
now on the way.

*Enter* MITRÂVASU.

MITRÂ. My father bids me find  
The noble prince Jîmûtavâhana :  
My father knows him for a virtuous prince—  
A worthy son-in-law ; for he has lived  
Close by upon this mount. Therefore to him  
He gives his daughter Malayavatî  
In marriage. As for me, affection holds  
Me bound to her so strongly that to think  
I know not what. Jîmûtavâhana  
Is a Vidyâhdara by birth, indeed  
Clever and brave and wise.



Sought after by the good, of handsome form,  
 Modest withal. But on the other hand  
 His heart so full of pity, he would give  
 His life itself for any living thing.  
 Therefore I hesitate, my mind is full  
 Of doubt. When I behold the *noble prince*,  
 I give my sister up to him with joy.  
 But when I see the *man* all pitiful,  
 Then I repent ! Jîmûtavâhana  
 Is in the sandal bower—so I am told.  
 Let me go in and speak with him.

[*Enters.*

ÂTREYA (*sees him ; hastily*). Sir ! Here is  
 Mitrâvasu ! Make haste ! Cover up the  
 picture you have been drawing. Perhaps he  
 may see it.

[JÎMÛTAVÂHANA *places a plaintain leaf on it.*

MÎTRÂ. (*enters*). Sir ! I salute you !

JÎMÛT. Mitrâvasu, I bid you welcome.

CHAT. Your highness ! Prince Mitrâvasu has  
 arrived !

MALAYA. Oh ! what joyful news.

JÎMÛT. I trust that Viśvâvasu, the noble  
 King of the Siddhas, is well ?,

MÎTRÂ. He is well. I am here by my father's  
 command.

JÎMÛT. What says his Majesty ?

MALAYA. (*aside*). Now I shall hear what my  
 father's orders are.

MÎTRÂ. King Viśvâvasu offers you his  
 daughter Malayavatî in marriage. She is the  
 life and soul of the family.



CHAT. (*smiling*). Well, your highness ! are you still angry ?

MALAY. (*smiling*). Have you forgotten ? His heart is set on another.

JÎMÛT. (*aside to ÂTREYA*). My good friend ! now we are in a difficulty.

ÂTREYA (*aside to JÎMÛT.*). Of course I know very well there is only one you care for. You had better dismiss the prince as politely as you can.

JÎMÛT. Sir ! who would not desire the honour of being allied with the noble family of your highness ? But, unfortunately, my heart is already engaged.

[MALAYA. *faints*.

ÂTREYA (*to MITRÂVASU*). What is the good of asking *him* whether he will or no ? Go to his parents and ask *them*.

MITRÂ. (*aside*). This seems reasonable enough ! Jîmûtavâhana will hardly refuse to listen to his parents. So I will go and put the matter before them, and get them to accept Malayavatî for him. (*Aloud to JÎMÛT.*). Well ! So be it, your highness ! We have made you our offer, and you have refused it.

MALAYA. (*coming to herself angrily*). What ! Mitrâvasu still talking with him, after he has insulted us by his refusal ?

[Exit MITRÂVASU.

MALAYA. (*aside with tears*).

What profit is my life, possessed by ill—  
Filled with intolerable woe. This tree  
Shall put an end to all my hopeless grief.



A creeper branch around my neck. [to Chatu-rikâ] Go ! see—

See if Mitrâvasu has gone, for I  
Would fain myself depart.

CHAT. (*aside*). What is the meaning of this ?  
She has some hidden object in view. I will  
pretend to go, and hide myself where I can see  
what it all means.

MALAYA. (*taking the creeper branch into her  
hand*).

Mistress Divine ! Thy promises are vain,  
Nor hast thou giv'n thy child her heart's desire.  
Grant me that happiness in other worlds  
Denied to me in this.

CHAT. (*seeing it in terror*). Help ! Help !  
Her highness is hanging herself.

JÎMÛT. (*coming forward hurriedly*). Where ?  
Where is she ?

CHAT. Under the Aśoka tree.

JÎMÛT Here is the very object of my love !  
[*Takes MALAYAVATÎ by the hand and untwines  
the creeper.*

O lovely one ! forbear ! nor harm thyself !  
Remove this creeper from thy hand, which vies  
With it in beauty, barely strong enough  
To pluck a flow'r. How should that hand perform  
A deed so violent !

MALAYA. (*angrily*). Sir ! who are you ?  
Let go, let go my hand ! Do you presume  
To stay my purpose ? Must I be your slave  
Even in death ?

JÎMÛT. Why should I loose your hand



Caught in the guilty act ! For you would place  
The deadly noose round that fair neck of yours,  
A neck that should be graced by strings of pearls.

ÂTREYA. What is the meaning of all this ?  
Why should the princess try to hang herself ?

CHAT. (*to* ÂTREYA). Cannot you see that  
your friend here is the cause of it ?

JÎMÛT. I am the cause ? I understand you  
not !

ÂTREYA (*to* CHAT.). What do you mean ?  
Speak out plainly.

CHAT. Well, the truth is this. Your friend  
drew on the moonstone seat the picture of  
someone or other with whom he is in love, and  
then declined to accept the Princess, even  
when Mitrâvasu offered her to him. So in a  
fit of jealousy her highness determined to put  
an end to her life.

JÎMÛT. (*joyfully*). Ah ! who is this ? Is this  
indeed the child  
Of Viśvavâsu, Malayavatî ?

Except from ocean depths, how could there rise  
A vision of such perfect loveliness,  
From which the moon sprang forth. Ah, how  
my mind  
Has cheated me !

ÂTREYA. I think you won't find any more  
fault with my friend now ! Madam ! your  
highness ! If you don't believe me, go and  
look at the drawing on the moonstone seat !

[MALAYA. *bashfully tries to draw away her  
hand from JÎMÛTAVÂHANA.*



JÎMÛT. (*smiling*). No ! I will not release you till you see

My love depicted on the moonstone seat.

[*They enter the arbour.*

ÂTREYA (*taking the plaintain leaf off the moonstone seat*). See ! your highness ! here is the picture of the desire of his heart.

MALAYA. (*smiling*). Why ! Chaturikâ. It looks exactly as if it were my likeness.

CHAT. 'Looks,' indeed ! How can you say it 'looks' as if it were your likeness, when it *is* your likeness ?

MALAYA. Well ! he has made me feel ashamed of myself and my foolishness.

ÂTREYA. Now, sir ! you may loose her hand, for your marriage according to the Gandharva rites has been completed. (*Looking off.*) Who is this coming in such a hurry ?

[MESSENGER *enters*.

MESSENGER. Your highness ! let me offer you my congratulations ! You are accepted by the parents of Jîmûtavâhana as his bride.

ÂTREYA (*dancing with delight*). Now, my dear friend's desires are accomplished, as well as Malayavatî's ; and something more than this, I shall very soon get what I want, and that is something to eat.

MESSENGER (*to MALAYA.*). The Crown Prince Mitrâvasu bids me to conduct your highness at once to the place for the performance of the marriage rites.

ÂTREYA. You low-born slave ! and when you





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## ACT III

### SCENE *the Flower Garden.*

*Enter ŚEKHARAKA drunk, with a cup in his hand, and his garment in confusion, followed by a Slave carrying a vessel full of wine on his shoulder.*

ŚEKHARAKA. There are only two gods I know anything about—one is Baladeva, and the other Kâmadeva. One is always drinking, and the other making love. (*Reels about.*) Ah ! I am in luck, indeed ! Here I am ! I have my sweetheart with me, I am full of first-rate wine, and I have a garland on my head ! What more could I want ? (*Stumbles.*) Hullo ! Someone is pushing up against me ! Who is it ? It isn't Navamâlikâ, is it ?

SLAVE. No, sir ! She hasn't come yet.

ŚEKHARAKA (*angrily*). Then why hasn't she, I should like to know. Malayavatî was married early this morning, so she has had plenty of time to come. (*Reflecting.*) Oh ! I suppose the Vidyâdharas and the Siddhas are all drinking somewhere about in the garden along with their friends and relations in honour of this wedding. Perhaps Navamâlikâ is waiting for me there. So I will go and see if I can find her. What is Śekharaka without Navamâlikâ ?

[*Staggers about.*



*Enter ÂTREYA carrying a couple of female garments.*

ÂTREYA. Well, my dear friend has now gained his highest wishes. Probably he on his way here. (*The bees attack him.*) Hulloi what's the meaning of this? Why do these villainous bees attack me? Oh! I see what it is! I have been dressed out and perfumed as the bridegroom's best man, and I have a garland of flowers on my head: what was intended as a mark of respect has simply become an annoyance. What shall I do? Perhaps I had better put on these crimson garments by way of a disguise which I have brought with me, and see what these rascally bees will do then. [*Puts on the garments.*]

ŚEKHARAKA (*observing him*). Hullo! Well, here's Navamâlikâ! she has been long enough coming. I suppose she thinks I am angry, so she puts on her veil and turns away her head. Well, I will see if I can pacify her.

[*Goes up laughing, embraces ÂTREYA, and tries to put some betel in his mouth.*]

ÂTREYA (*perceives the smell of wine, and turns his face away, holding his nose*). Pah! how disgusting! Well, I have escaped one nuisance only to fall in with another.

*Enter NAVAMÂLIKÂ.*

NAVA. The Queen has ordered me to tell the keeper of the garden to prepare the Tamala bower with especial care, for the bride and



bridegroom are going there. So as I have carried out Her Majesty's command, I will now go and see if I can find my sweetheart Śekharaka. I haven't seen him for the last twelve hours, so he will be all the more pleased to see me. (*Sees him with ÂTREYA.*) Hullo ! What's all this ? He is making love to someone else. I will just wait here and see what it all means.

ŚEKHARAKA. Śekharaka is far too proud to bow down to Śiva, or Vishnu, or Brahma ; but falls at the feet of Navamâlikâ.

*[Falls at his feet.]*

ÂTREYA. You drunken scoundrel ! Where do you think Navamâlikâ is ?

NAVA. (*laughing*). Here is a joke ! Śekharaka is too drunk to know the difference between me and Âtreya, and is making love to him. I will pretend to be angry, and make game of both.

SLAVE (*shaking Śekharaka*). This isn't Navamâlikâ ! Here she is just coming up in a regular fury.

NAVA. Well, Śekharaka ! and pray who are you making love to now ?

ÂTREYA (*dropping the veil*). It is only I—and I am a Brâhman.

ŚEKHARA. (*recognizing ÂTREYA*). Hullo ! you ape ! you don't take me in. Catch hold of him, Slave, while I pacify Navamâlikâ.

SLAVE. As you command, sir !

ŚEKHARA. (*lets go ÂTREYA, and falls at the*



*feet of NAVAMÂLIKÂ*). Navamâlikâ ! I pray you to forgive me !

ÂTREYA (*aside*). Now is the time to make off. (*Tries to escape. The Slave seizes him by his sacred cord, and it gets broken.*)

SLAVE. Ah ! you ape ! You would run away, would you ! (*Seizes him round the neck*).

ÂTREYA. O Navamâlikâ ! pray stand my friend and make him let me go.

NAVA. (*laughing*). Yes ! if you will fall before me and touch the ground with your head !

ÂTREYA (*with anger*). A likely thing, indeed, that I, a Brâhman, and the friend of princes, should fall at the feet of a slave like you !

NAVA. (*laughing*). Oh, never mind ! I will make you bow before I have done with you ! Now, my dear Śekharaka ! I am quite satisfied ; get up. (*Embraces him.*) But you see you have been insulting the bridegroom's greatest friend, and if Mitrâvasu, your master, hears of it, he will be very angry. You had better apologise at once.

ŚEKHARA. Madam ! your word is law ! (*Embraces ÂTREYA.*) Sir ! pray excuse me ! it was only a joke : I thought you were one of my relations. (*Reels about.*) Where am I ? Who am I ? Am I Śekharaka, or am I not ? Am I a drunkard, or am I not ?

ÂTREYA (*hastily*). Certainly not ! You are perfectly sober !



ŚEKHARA. Well, then, after all it is a joke. (*Takes off his upper garment and rolls it up, and offers it to ÂTREYA for a seat.*) Pray be seated, my new-found relation !

ÂTREYA. Heaven be praised ! He is getting quieter ! (*Sits down.*)

ŚEKHARA. Now, Navamâlikâ ! do you sit down on the other side of me, so that I can pay my respects to both of you at once !

[NAVA. *sits down.*

ŚEKHARA. Here, Slave, fill up this cup with wine. (*Takes the cup, and putting some flowers into the wine from the garland on his head, offers it kneeling to NAVAMÂLIKA.*) Madam ! I pray you take it, and pass it on.

NAVA. Certainly ! with pleasure ! (*Takes the cup and gives it back.*)

ŚEKHARA. (*offers the cup of wine to ÂTREYA.*) This cup of wine has been sweetened by the touch of Navamâlikâ's lips. Let me offer it to you. It is the greatest honour I can pay you.

ÂTREYA. Śekharaka ! you must excuse me ! I am a Brâhman.

ŚEKHARA. Well, then, if you are, where is your sacred cord ?

ÂTREYA. Oh ! that was torn off in the struggle with your servant.

NAVA. Suppose you say some verses of the Veda, then !

ÂTREYA. No, I may not recite the Vedas so long as the scent of wine and perfume



remains about. But I cannot argue with you. The Brâhman falls at your feet.

NAVA. (*stopping him hastily*). Oh, sir ! you must not do that ! Śekharaka, go away, go away ! This really is a Brâhman. (*Falls down before ÂTREYA.*) Most Reverend Sir ! do not be angry. This was only a joke !

ŚEKHARA. (*aside*). I think I had better make some sort of apology. (*Falls before ÂTREYA.*) Sir ! Pray forgive me ! I was under the influence of drink. Now I will be off with Nava-mâlikâ.

ÂTREYA. Pray don't distress yourselves ! You have my free pardon.

[*Exeunt ŚEKHARA., NAVA., and SLAVE.*

ÂTREYA. Well ! after all, the Brâhman has escaped an untimely end. But I am defiled by contact with the drunken fellow, so I must go and bathe. [*Exit.*

*Enter JÎMÛTAVÂHANA and MALAYAVATÎ dressed in wedding garments, with Attendants.*

JÎMÛT. (*looking intently at MALAYAVATÎ*)—  
I look on her with loving glance : her eyes  
Down to the ground she casts. I speak to her,  
She answers not. She shrinks from my embrace  
With trembling. She would fly me, and would  
go

With her old friends. My newly married bride—  
Perverse—unreasoning, shy, becomes to me  
More and more charming. (*To MALAYA.*)

My beloved bride !



A vow of silence held me, wont to speak  
 In haughty tones. The fiery sun by day—  
 The moon by night—the raging forest fires  
 Scorched up my body: and my mind was  
 turned

Away from all distractions. Such a vow  
 Was on me many days and nights—and now  
 At last, I reap the fruit of all my penance—  
 I behold thy face.

MALAYA. (*approaching*). How beautiful  
 His form! His words how flattering!

CHAT. Flattering! No! There is no flattery  
 about it! It is all absolutely true.

JÎMÛT. Chaturikâ! lead the way to the flower  
 garden.

(*Addressing MALAYAVATÎ.*) Come, my princess!  
 Thy fragile form, bowed down  
 With weariness, how should it bear the weight  
 Of these thy ornaments—the jewelled band  
 That circles round thy waist. Thy tender feet—  
 Scarce able to support thee—can they bear  
 Thy anklets? Ah! though unadorned, thy  
 form

Is beautiful beyond comparison!  
 Why load thyself with wearying gold and gems!

[*They reach the flower garden.*]

How sweet this pleasaunce! See the juice that  
 falls

In scented showers from the sandal trees—  
 O how it cools the tessellated floor

That paves the arbour! See the peacocks  
 dance





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Joined with the Siddhas, see they drink the  
wine,

Just tasted by their wives.

ÂTREYA (*to MALAYAVATÎ*). Madam ! your  
highness seems fatigued ! Will you not rest  
upon this crystal seat ?

JÎMÛT. My friend ! You speak with thought-  
ful care !

The face of my beloved, once so cool  
And fair as moonlight ray, now emulates  
The lotus blossom reddening in the sun !  
Let us sit down and rest.

MALAYA.

I am content !

I will obey my husband's lightest wish !

JÎMÛT. (*raising up MALAYAVATÎ's face and  
looking at it*)— My love !

Alas ! how I have wearied thee in vain.

What need is there of flowers for thy face ?

Of lovely hue—its eyebrows as the shoots

Of creepers, and thy budlike lower lip—

Is as the garden of Elysium.

All else is but a forest !

CHAT. (*to ÂTREYA*). You have heard how  
he paints her highness. Now let me paint  
you.

ÂTREYA. Chaturikâ ! You must not make me  
conceited ! There is only *one* person here who  
is worth looking at !

CHAT. Well ! never mind ! I should like to  
paint you !

ÂTREYA. Paint me, then ! only do it so  
as to carry out your character for skill, and



then, perhaps, I shan't be called an 'ape' again by Śekharaka.

CHAT. You looked just lovely this morning, when you stood with your eyes half shut ! Stand like that for a moment, and let me paint you !  
[ÂTREYA *does as he is asked.*

[CHATURIKÂ *takes a tâmala shoot, squeezes it, and blackens his face. JÎMÛTAVÂHANA and MALAYAVATÎ look at ÂTREYA in amusement.*

JÎMÛT. Well ! you are lucky to be painted like this with us for spectators.

(*Turns to MALAYAVATÎ.*)

My lovely one ! thy smiling lower lip  
Is as a *blossom* : but the *fruit* is seen  
In these my eyes which gaze upon thee.

ÂTREYA (*to* CHAT.). What have you been doing ?

CHAT. Have I not painted you ?

ÂTREYA (*rubbing his face with his hand, and, seeing the black, raises his stick*). You daughter of a slave ! What have you been about ? And here in the presence of the Prince and Princess too ! You have indeed made my face black ! Well ! it is of no good my staying here. I must be off. [Exit.

CHAT. Oh, dear ! ÂTREYA is angry ! I must go and pacify him.

MALAYA. You are not going, are you ? What shall I do all alone ?

CHAT. Alone, your highness ! (*looking at*



JÎMÛTAVÂHANA *and smiling*). May you be alone for a long while. *[Exit.*

JÎMÛT. (*looking at MALAYAVATÎ*)—  
The rosy flush that mantles o'er thy face,  
As though it were a crimson lotus flow'r  
Touched by the sun's fierce ray : thy pearly  
teeth  
Like filaments, all white and radiant—  
Why should the bee not sip his honey-dew  
From such a face as thine ?

*Enter ATTENDANT hurriedly.*

Sir ! The noble Prince Mitrâvasu desires to see your highness on important business.

JÎMÛT. My dearest one ! Mitrâvasu demands My presence ! Go within ! I will rejoin You presently.

*Enter MITRÂVASU.*

MITRÂ. (*aside*). The foe still lives ! How shall I without shame—

Seeing I have not slain him—tell the Prince Such evil news ? ' The enemy has seized Upon your kingdom ! ' Can I speak the words ? Yet I must tell him—then I will depart.

(*To JÎMÛT.*). Mitrâvasu salutes you ! Noble Prince !

JÎMÛT. Welcome, Mitrâvasu ! (*looking at him*). But how is this ?  
You seem cast down and vexed !

MITRÂ. And who should not,  
With such a despicable foe in life  
As vile Matanga ?



JÎMÛT. Well ! what has he done ?

MITRÂ. He has attacked your kingdom : but  
the end

Must be his own destruction !

JÎMÛT. (*joyfully*). Were it true,  
This would be joyous news !

MITRÂ. Therefore, my lord,  
Send forth your orders ! and the force arrayed  
In martial panoply, their myriad hosts  
Clouding the sun, with chariots that trace  
Their course through highest heav'n, as though  
the sky

Were dark with storm, shall once again restore  
Peace and prosperity to this your realm !  
But yet, what need of armies ? I alone,  
Girt with my flashing sword, will smite the foe  
Matanga, as a lion springs unseen  
Upon a mighty elephant !

JÎMÛT. (*closing his ears*). Alas !  
How cruel are his words ! I will not heed  
His angry threats ! (*To MITRÂVASU*) Quite  
possible, my friend !

And even more than this with your strong arm  
And your resistless might ! But how should I—  
I who would give unasked my very self  
To save another—How should I consent  
Even to keep my realm at such a price—  
An act of fiendish cruelty ? My friend !  
There are no enemies but those within—  
The vices which continually war  
Against the soul ! If you would please me, then,  
Show pity to the miserable wretch



'Who, covetous of pow'r, has sold himself  
A slave to vice !

MITRÂ. (*angrily*). Pity, indeed ! for one  
So worthy of compassion—who has wrought  
Such good to us.

JIMÛT. Alas ! I cannot turn  
His wrath aside ! It must be so. (*To MITRÂ.*)

My friend !  
Come in with me, I pray ! hear my advice.  
The day is over ; see, the lordly sun,  
Whose toil is all for others, who alone  
Is to be worshippèd : who with his rays  
Fills all the universe with light and life,  
Waking the new-born lotus buds from sleep,  
Nor stays his course through weariness !

Behold !

He goes to rest behind the Western Mount,  
Meanwhile, the Siddhas loudly chant his praise.  
[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III



## ACT IV

*Enter a Chamberlain carrying a pair of crimson garments, followed by a Messenger.*

CHAMBERLAIN. I am supposed to be the ruler of the King's ladies ; and I am always trying to catch them out tripping ! Now here I am, become so old and feeble, that I am obliged to use a stick. So you see I am exactly like a King, for he bears a staff in the shape of a sceptre.

MESSENGER. And pray, where is your honour going ?

CHAMBERLAIN. Well ! The Queen has sent me to take some crimson garments as a present to Malayavatî and her son-in-law. The Princess is staying with her father-in-law, and I daresay you know Prince Jîmûtavâhana has gone to the sea-coast. Now the question is this, Am I to take these things to the Queen's daughter or to her son-in-law ?

MESSENGER. I should think the simplest course will be to take the garments to Malayavatî. Probably the Prince has reached the sea-coast by this time.

CHAMBERLAIN. Well ! Perhaps it would ! But may I ask you, whither are you bound ?

MESSENGER. I have been sent to remind



Mitrâvasu that a present must be given on the approaching festival of the New Year to the bride and bridegroom. So I am going to see what I can find suitable for the occasion.

[*Exeunt.*

*The Seashore. Enter JÎMÛTAVÂHANA and MITRÂVASU.*

JÎMÛT. My couch the fresh green grass : my seat a stone :

The branching trees my dwelling-place : my drink

The cooling water from the rill : my food

The roots : deer my companions. Such is life

Within the forest glade ! But something lacks—

There is no need to ask, for all things give

Of their freewill : nor are there those who want

My help. Therefore my life is spent in vain.

MITRÂ. (*looking up*). The tide is flowing,  
Prince !

JÎMÛT.

Yes ! you are right !

I hear the sounds of monsters that emerge

From ocean wave, making the caves resound

With blows as they come forth all terrible.

The tide is rising, white with countless shells

Thrown up along the shore !

MITRÂ.

O look ! the sea

Comes in resplendent, as though set with gems,

The water scented with the shoots of clove

Chewed and spit out by monsters of the deep.

Let us ascend the cliff, before the tide

Come in and cut us off.

[*They ascend the cliff.*





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Will vanish off the earth. Therefore each day  
A serpent shall be set apart for you, the food  
For which you long. So may your highness  
cease

To terrify my subjects."

JÎMÛT. (*with contempt*). Noble King !  
Well hast thou guarded thy defenceless realm !  
Was there not one of all thy thousand tongues  
To say, " Take me ! I offer up my life  
To save my people " ?

MITRÂ. So the Nâga king  
Agreed to satisfy the king of birds.  
Since then the Nâga bones, in whitening heaps,  
Keep on increasing. Yes ! and will increase !  
For every day the ruthless King of birds  
Seizes a helpless Nâga as his prey.

JÎMÛT. O horrible ! And so will fools commit  
Sins for their body's sake : a body worth  
No more than dried-up grass : a body full  
Of all impurity ! Surely will fall  
A judgment for the crime ! Ah ! could I give  
My life to save—were it but only one  
Of these unhappy serpents.

*The Messenger enters.*

MESSENGER. Well ! I have reached the  
mountain peak at last : now I must try and  
find Prince Mitrâvasu. Oh ! here he is with  
the bridegroom. (*Approaching.*) Your high-  
nesses ! I offer you my salutations.

MITRÂ. What is your errand ?

[Messenger *whispers to* MITRÂ.



MITRÂ. Prince ! my father sends for me !

JÎMÛT. Farewell ! You must obey his orders.

MITRÂ. Jîmûtavâhana ! ere I depart,  
Let me entreat you ! leave this loathsome place,  
A place of evil omen ! [Exit.

JÎMÛT. I will go  
Down to the sea, and walk along the shore.  
[Descends.

*Voice behind the scenes.*

My son ! how can I bear to see thee slain  
A sacrifice !

JÎMÛT. Ah ! what is that I hear—  
A cry of agony ! a woman's voice !  
What fears she ? I would know !

*Enter ŚANKHACHÛDA, a Nâga, followed by an old  
woman and a servant carrying a crimson  
robe.*

OLD WOMAN (*weeping*). Alas !  
My son ! How can I bear to see thee slain  
A sacrifice to-day ! Deprived of thee  
Darkness will fall upon the Nâga world.  
ŚANKH. Mother ! why weep ? why add to  
my distress  
By tears ?

OLD WOMAN (*stroking his limbs*). Alas ! My  
son ! The King of birds,  
All pitiless, will tear thy tender limbs.  
[Embraces him, weeping.

ŚANKH. Mother ! enough of tears ! Fate  
leads us on,  
Ev'n like a nurse, clasping the new-born babe



Close to her bosom from its very birth.  
 The mother is but second : for our lot  
 Is all decreed. How should you weep ?

[*Makes as if going away.*

OLD WOMAN. My son !  
 Stay for one moment ! Let me see thy face  
 Once more, I pray !

SERVANT. Prince Śankhachûda come !  
 Surely through grief thy mother has forgot  
 The king's decree ! We may not stay !

ŚANKH. I come !

SERVANT (*aside*). Here is the fatal rock !  
 Here he must stand  
 Wearing the badge of death !

JÎMÛT. (*sees them*). Ah ! now I see  
 The woman and the son whose voices reached  
 My ear. Why does she weep ? I see no cause  
 For all this grief and fear. Shall I approach  
 And ask them what it means ? No ! I will stay  
 And hear unseen their converse.

SERVANT (*making an obeisance*). Noble Prince !  
 The king's decree must be obeyed.

ŚANKH. Say on !

SERVANT. The Nâga king commands—

ŚANKH. My lord's commands  
 Shall be obeyed !

SERVANT. —“ Upon the fatal rock  
 Clothed with this badge of death—the crimson  
 robe—

Take up your place, and there await your fate.  
 You are Garuḍa's prey.”

JÎMÛT. And does the king



Desert his subjects thus ?

SERVANT.

Here is the robe !

Prince ! take it—put it on !

ŚANKH. (*respectfully*).

Give it to me !

[*Puts it on.*

So I obey my lord !

OLD WOMAN (*seeing her son clothed in the robe*). My life is gone !

The thunderbolt has fallen !

[*Faints.*

ŚANKH.

Mother ! revive !

SERVANT. The time is passing fast. The King  
of birds

Ere long will come to claim his destined prey.

[*Exit.*

OLD WOMAN (*coming to herself*)—

My child ! my son ! Son of a hundred vows !  
When shall I see thee more ? Thy beauteous  
form

Doomed to destruction !

JîMÛT.

Ah ! how pitiless

The King of birds ! Indeed, of adamant  
Must be his heart. Can he behold this child  
Laid in his mother's lap, and turn away  
Deaf to her tears and cries ?

ŚANKH.

O mother ! cease

Thy lamentations ! There is none to heed !

All who would show compassion—all whose  
minds

Are more for others' good than for their own—  
All who would mourn with us : all—all have  
gone



Into oblivion. Ah ! none are left to show  
Pity on us !

[*Wipes away his mother's tears.*]

JÎMÛT. (*compassionately*). Unless I save from  
death

One who has been abandoned by his lord—  
What virtue is there in me ? I will go  
And speak to them !

ŚANKH. Mother, be comforted !

OLD WOMAN. Comfort for me, indeed ! Ah !  
there is none !

Thy king and guardian has cast thee off.  
Who will protect thee ?

JÎMÛT. (*coming forward*). Who ? Why should  
not I ?

OLD WOMAN (*mistaking him for GARUḌA, in  
terror*)—

O son of Vinatâ ! The Nâga king  
Has destined *me* for death ! I am your food !

JÎMÛT. (*with tears*). Behold her love ! Even  
the Nâgas' foe,

Seeing such grief and love—though pitiless—  
Will show some pity !

ŚANKH. Mother ! calm your fear !

He has no likeness to the King of birds.  
Can you not see this man of gentle mien—  
How has he aught in common with the son  
Of Vinatâ, whose savage curving beak  
Drips with the blood of Nâgas ?

OLD WOMAN. Ah ! my fear  
Peoples the world with foes !

JÎMÛT. Mother ! fear not !



I, a Vidyâdhara, have come to guard  
Thy much-loved son !

OLD WOMAN (*to* JÎMÛT.). My son ! what  
welcome words !

I pray you, say them once again !

JÎMÛT. What need  
Of promises ? My deeds shall prove their truth !  
Give me the robe, that I may put it on,  
Marking myself for death ; so will I give  
My body as an off'ring to the son  
Of Vinatâ, and save your child !

OLD WOMAN. Ah ! no,  
Such must not be ! Surely thou art a son  
To me as Śankhachûda ; even more—  
For thou hast freely given thyself—thy life—  
To save my son, deserted by his kin.

ŚANKH. O noble man ! how different his mind  
From that of worldly men ! He casts away  
His life, as though it were but straw, to save  
Another's life. And yet in times gone by  
The wise Viśvâmitra all humbly took  
Dog's flesh at a Chandâla's hand, to save  
Himself from starving. Gautama, the sage,  
Slew Nâdijangha, though to him he owed  
A kindness : and Garuḍa daily feasts  
Upon the Nâgas. Even so the wise—  
The great—the good—value their own lives  
most.

(*To* JÎMÛT.) But thou—far in advance of these  
—hast shown

Pity unasked for me, for thou hast giv'n  
Thy life for mine. I pray ! Do not insist !



Bethink you ! beings of no account are born—  
 And live their lives, and die, and leave no trace  
 Behind—and such am I : but virtuous men  
 Who think not of themselves, but sacrifice  
 Their lives for others—such indeed art thou—  
 How come they into being ! Be content !  
 Do not insist on death ! Cease thy resolve !

Jîmûr. O Śankhachûda ! put no obstacle  
 To my desire's fulfilment ! Now at last  
 Have I attained my wish : for I have gained  
 The long-sought opportunity for good  
 That I have prayed for : so no argument  
 Shall change my will ! Give me the crimson  
 robe—

The badge of death.

ŚANKH. I pray you, force me not !  
 I cannot yield ! O how should I defile  
 My family of pure, unsullied fame  
 By such a deed ? Devise some other plan,  
 If we are worthy of your love, to save  
 My mother's life !

Jîmûr. A plan ! Devise a plan !  
 What plan but this ! Your mother lives with  
 you,  
 And dies with you. My life shall ransom yours  
 From death ! Give me the crimson robe you  
 bear,

And I will mount the rock of sacrifice.  
 Do you depart at once, and leave this home  
 Of death, and let your mother be your charge  
 Beyond all other things, nor let her look  
 Upon the rock of slaughter, lest she die





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There is a sacred place close by : full soon  
Will I return.

[*Exeunt ŚANKHACHŪDA, carrying the crimson robe with him.*]

JĪMŪT. Fortune is mine, my wish  
Is gained at last !

*Enter Chamberlain carrying some red garments.*

CHAMBERLAIN. Your highness ! pray accept  
My salutations ! See, the Queen has sent  
These garments as a present.

JĪMŪT. (*aside*). Give them me !  
My union with Malayavatī  
Has borne good fruit indeed. (*To CHAM.*)  
Salute the Queen  
From me. Farewell. [*Exit Chamberlain.*  
(*Putting on the red garments*)—

This is indeed a gift  
In season ; and it fills me with delight.  
For I can give myself, arrayed in these,  
A ransom for another. Lo ! the wind  
Rises in violence ! It shakes the mass  
Of Mount Malaya. See ! Garuḍa comes !  
The sky is darkened by his mighty wings,  
As though the clouds that usher in the end  
Were spread abroad. The elephants that bear  
The quarters of the earth tremble and quake.  
His radiant form lights up the universe,  
As with the glory of a dozen suns.  
I will await him on the fatal rock  
In Śankhachūda's place. [*Mounts the stone.*]



My body thrills  
 With rapture as I mount the rock. The touch  
 Of Malayavatî, perfumed with juice  
 Of sandal, does not give me one tenth part  
 Of all the joy I feel, when I embrace  
 The rock of sacrifice. Why should I speak  
 Of her, my bride ? Even a child, who sleeps  
 Upon his mother's lap in careless ease,  
 Feels nought of my contentment, as I lie  
 Upon the rock.

*Enter* GARUḌA.

GARUḌA. I come to seize my prey,  
 My flight through space all swift and terrible.  
 I flew along—I saw the full round moon—  
 And thought of Śesha, curling up himself  
 Into a circle, through his fear of me.  
 I met the Dawn, the eldest of our race,  
 He greeted me with joy : and as I passed  
 The steeds which drew the chariot of the Sun  
 Started aside in terror. On I flew,  
 My wings, vast as they are, more widely still  
 Stretch out extended ; from their farthest ends  
 Hang down, as though in dusky wreath, the  
 clouds.

JÎMÛT. (*to himself*)—  
 From this, the sacrifice I gladly make,  
 More and more merit may I still obtain,  
 And win in after births, for others' good,  
 A body to be sacrificed again.

GARUḌA (*sees JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*)—  
 Now I am come, and here upon the rock



I see the Nâga victim, offered up  
 To save his fellows ; in the crimson robe  
 He lies, as if his heart, broken through fear  
 Of me, had dyed his garments red with blood.  
 I will swoop down, and with my curving beak,  
 Fiercer than any thunderbolt, will tear  
 His breast in twain !

*[Flowers rain down and drums are heard]*

O wonderful ! Why falls

This rain of fragrant flowers, at which the bees  
 Rejoice ? Why do the echoing drums resound  
 Along the sky ? (*Smiling.*) The tree of Paradise  
 Surely is shaken by the furious wind .  
 My wings stir up, and casts her flowers down  
 To earth : the clouds give forth their sullen roar,  
 To herald in destruction to the world !

JÎMÛT. O happy that I am ! I have attained  
 My heart's desire !

GARUḌA (*seizes JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*). But how is  
 this ? He seems  
 Unlike a Nâga ! Still he will assuage  
 My greed for serpents' flesh. So I will bear  
 Him off to Mount Malaya's topmost peak,  
 And there my hunger he shall satiate.

*[Exeunt.]*

END OF ACT IV



## ACT V

*Enter Messenger.*

MESSENGER. “For one beloved, affection  
makes us dread  
Evil and death, though he be safe at home.  
How much more should we fear when far away  
In some lone place, he dwells apart from men.”

And this is the case with King Viśvâvasu.  
For his son-in-law, Jîmûtavâhana, has gone  
away to a region terrible through the neigh-  
bourhood of Garuḍa, the King of the Birds.  
Nothing has been heard of him since he left.  
So I am going to try and find the prince.  
Well! Here I see King Jîmûtaketu in the  
distance, with his Queen and the Princess  
Malayavatî.

Behold the royal sage! with linen robes  
Whose folds are like the ripple on the sea,  
White as the foam! and by him sits his Queen  
Adorning him as Ocean is adorned  
By sacred Ganges—both of excellence  
And fruitfulness unrivalled: at their feet  
Sits Malayavatî, the fair Princess.



## SCENE I

*Enter* KING JÎMÛTAKETU, *his* QUEEN, *and*  
PRINCESS MALAYAVATÎ.

THE KING. Mine has been all the joys of  
youth : my realm  
All glorious : devotion ever filled  
My mind : Jîmûtavâhana has gained  
The praise of all : his wife is by our side,  
As noble as himself. All has been mine !  
Is it not time to meditate on death—

MESSENGER (*coming in suddenly*)—of Prince  
Jîmûtavâhana.

KING. Avaunt !

Ah ! what ill-omened words.

QUEEN. The gods avert  
The omen !

MALAYA. Ah ! my heart within me sinks !

KING. What is your news ? What of his  
highness ? Speak !

MESSENGER. Your Majesty ! The King  
Viśvâvasu  
Has bid me ask you, for he fain would know,  
How fares the Prince ? What answer may I  
take

Back to my lord ?

KING. How ? What say you ? My son—  
Is he not with the king ?

QUEEN. Why this delay ?  
Where can my son be gone ?

KING. It is for us,  
No doubt, that he is gone away ! His thoughts



Are ever set on us.

MALAYA.

May it be so !

Indeed ! *I* fear the worst !

MESSENGER.

Your Majesty !

Command me ! Say what answer I may give.

KING. I know not what to say ! My mind is filled

With dread ! “ Jîmûtavâhana delays ! ”

That is your answer ! Ah ! my son ! my son !  
(*Looking at the sun*) Life-giving orb ! O may  
thy thousand rays !

O eye the guardian of three worlds ! make clear  
The glory of my son.

[*A crest jewel falls at their feet.*

Oh ! what is this ?

As though the wind had torn a crimson star  
From highest heav'n, and cast it down to earth!

O see ! Its rays are like a mass of blood,  
Mine eyes are dazzled by its brilliant light.

(*All look at it.*)

It is the jewel from a crest, with flesh  
All raw and bloody hanging to it !

QUEEN (*mournfully*)—

Ah !

It is my son's ! Alas ! he has been seized  
A victim by Garuḍa !

MALAYA. (*aside*).

God forbid !

MESSENGER. Most mighty king ! let me allay  
thy fears !

Here many jewels, torn from Nâga crests,  
Lie on the ground.

KING (*to the QUEEN*). Reason may be per-  
chance



In what he says !

QUEEN. My son may even now  
Have reached the palace of Viśvâvasu.  
(*To the Messenger*)—

Go and find out at once if this be so.

[*Messenger exit*]

KING. O may it prove to be a Nâga's crest !

*Enter ŚANKHACHÛDA wearing red garments.*

ŚANKH. My pilgrimage is o'er, and I return  
Whence I set out. Here is the slaughter rock,  
The deadly stone ; but the Vidyâdhara,  
Where is he gone ? Alas ! he has been borne  
On high, seized by Garuḍa's talons—torn  
In pieces. (*Weeps.*) Ah ! my dearest, truest  
friend,

Thou filled with pity, though there was no  
need—

More than a friend—gavest thyself for me !  
Where art thou gone ? Ah ! wicked that I am !  
My crime is past forgiveness ! I have lost  
All chance of merit by self-sacrifice  
For all my kin : and I have disobeyed  
My sovereign lord ! O wretched that I am !  
Saved by another : I have been deceived—  
Nor will I live to be the mark of scorn,  
But following the tracks of blood that lie  
In streams upon the sacrificial stone,  
But getting less and less, as in their course,  
The ground—the trees—are sprinkled with the  
drops.

QUEEN (*anxiously*). Your Majesty ! Pray, who  
is this ? His words





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With pity, gave himself to death for me.

KING. And who except Jîmûtavâhana  
Could e'er have offered up himself ? My son—  
This noble deed. Know when you tell the tale,  
You say the name, " Jîmûtavâhana."

QUEEN. Alas ! my son !

MALAYA.                               The evil I foresaw  
Has come to pass.

ŚANKH. (*with tears*). Oh ! woe is me ! my crime  
Has brought this evil on them ! Surely these  
Must be my saviour's parents ! What could  
come

Save poison from a serpent's deadly mouth ?  
Ah ! Śankhachûda ! how hast thou repaid  
Thy generous friend, who sacrificed himself  
For thee ! How shall I kill myself ? But first  
My aim must be to comfort them.

QUEEN (*to MALAYA*).                               My child !  
Without Jîmûtavâhana how can we pass  
Our life on earth ?

MALAYA.                               Belovéd ! Shall I see  
Thy face no more ?

KING.                               My son ! my noble son !  
Even in death thy duty as a son  
Was not forgotten, casting at my feet  
Thy jewelled crest ! (*Takes it up.*) And is this  
all I have

Left of my son ? Alas ! this sparkling gem  
Against my feet continually pressed  
In awe and reverence, polished by their touch,  
As by a touchstone : never working ill  
To any living creature : ah ! that gem



Pierces my heart !

QUEEN. Jîmûtavâhana !  
To thee the highest earthly pleasure seemed  
Obedience to thy father's will : and now  
My dearest son, the truest happiness  
Is thine in Paradise.

KING. My loving spouse !  
How can we live without him ? These are words  
Of cruel comfort !

MALAY. Father ! give to me  
The jewel crest, the outward mark he wore  
Of rank, and let me wear it next my heart.  
Adorned with this, upon the funeral pile,  
I will efface the pain that burns me up.

KING. And what but that is left for all of us ?  
My wife ! why are you troubled ?

QUEEN. Mighty King !  
Why do we then delay ?

KING. There is no need !  
The sacrifice is burning on the hearth,  
The purifying flame : with that light up  
The pile, and in the fires our life shall end !

ŚANKH. O wretched that I am ! I have  
destroyed  
A noble family ! What shall I do ?  
(*To the KING*) It is not meet that such a deed  
as this

Should be performed without due thought.

For fate  
Makes sport of men ! Perchance the King of  
Birds

Will let your son go free, finding his prey



Is not a Nâga ! Therefore let me trace  
Garuḍa's course, marked out in lines of blood.

QUEEN. May the gods grant me to behold my  
son

Once more !

MALAYA. Would it were possible ! Could I  
Believe that this thy prayer were heard.

KING (*to ŚANKH.*) My son !  
O may thy words prove true ! But as for us !  
We cannot go without the sacred fire,  
A fellow-traveller along the road.  
Do thou pursue Garuḍa's track, and we  
Will fetch the fire that burns upon the hearth,  
And follow thee. [*Exeunt.*]

ŚANKH. Now will I find the foe.

[*Walks about looking.*]

Ah ! there I see him, on the topmost height  
Of Mount Malaya ; with his gory beak  
He ploughs its sides : his blazing eyes, like  
flame,

Scorch up the forest trees. The earth is torn  
And furrowed by his adamantine claws.

[*Exit.*]

## END OF SCENE I

## SCENE II

GARUḌA *seated on a rock, and Jîmûtavâhana*  
*lying before him.*

GARUḌA. A wonder such as this I never saw  
At all my Nâga feasts, since I was born.  
He shows no pain or terror, even joy—





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GARUḌA. But how is this ? Both of you bear  
the mark

Of sacrifice : which is the Nâga ? Speak !

ŚANKH. How canst thou doubt ? Is not the  
mystic sign

Upon my breast ? Upon my limbs the scales  
That show the serpent ? Seest thou not my  
tongues

Of double form ? my head with triple hood,  
Through which my sighs resound, with whistling  
wind—

Sighs wrung from me by grief unbearable ?  
And seest thou not the gems which deck my  
hoods,

Distorted by the mass of smoke and fire  
That rises from my poison ?

GARUḌA (*looking at each alternately*).

Who is this ?

I pray thee tell me ! Whom have I destroyed ?

ŚANKH. This is Jîmûtavâhana, the Prince  
Of the Vidyâdharas ! In ignorance  
Thou hast destroyed him, cruel as thou art.

GARUḌA. Alas ! is this Jîmûtavâhana,  
The Prince of the Vidyâdharas, whose fame  
Is sung by bards and minstrels, as they roam  
From clime to clime. Ah ! often have I heard  
His glory hymned—in earth's remotest bounds—  
In peaceful valleys—on the mountain peaks—  
In hill-side caverns—even on these heights—  
Where is his name unheard ? Ah ! I have sunk  
Head first into the pit of sin.

JÎMÛT.

My lord !



Why art thou troubled ?

ŚANKH. Is it not indeed  
The time for trouble ? Thou should'st hurl me  
down

To lowest hell : for coward that I am,  
My body has been saved from death by thee  
Giving thine own.

GERUḌA. Alas ! this noble Prince !  
His body willingly became my prey,  
And saved a Nâga's life, whose time had come  
To satiate my greed ! How horrible !  
Ah ! What a sin is mine ! For I have slain  
One who has all but reached the perfect state  
Of righteousness. What is there left for me ?  
How expiate my crime ? Except the flame  
Should burn me up, and purge my sin away.  
The fire ! Where shall I find it ? (*Looking  
round.*) Ah ! I see

Some persons near, and in their hands the fire !  
I will await them.

ŚANKH. Prince ! Your parents come !

JÎMÛT. O Sankhachûda ! sit by me and cast  
Thy garment o'er me ; hide my bleeding limbs ;  
For if my parents saw my body torn  
And mangled by Garuḍa, they would die !

[ŚANKHACHÛDA *spreads the garment over*  
JÎMÛTAVÂHANA.

*Enter* KING JÎMUTAKETU, the QUÉEN, and  
MALAYAVATÎ *bearing the sacred fire.*

KING. My dearest son ! Jîmûtavâhana !  
When you, with pity filled, gave up your life



To save the Nâga, why did you not stop  
 And think within yourself : My death will save  
 But one ! I die, and with me, parents—wife—  
 My family—all die with me.

QUEEN (*to MALAYA.*). My child !  
 Weep not ! or you will quench the sacred flame !  
 GARUDA. Ah ! who is this who says : “ My  
 dearest son !

Jîmûtavâhana ! ” Who can it be,  
 If not his father ? So the fire he bears  
 Shall carry out my wish ! But in his face  
 I dare not look for shame ? Why should I stay  
 To ask for fire ? Is not the ocean near,  
 With fire beneath it ? Kindled by my wings  
 Into a fiercer flame, with flickering tongues  
 Waving with pleasure, like the tongues of death,  
 By which the world itself shall be consumed—  
 The sea licked up in mouthfuls, as they glide  
 Over its surface—into this I cast  
 Myself.

JÎMÛT. That will be all in vain ! Your sin  
 May not be expiated thus !

GARUDA (*making an obeisance*). Then speak !  
 Most noble one ! and say what shall I do  
 To gain forgiveness ?

JÎMÛT. See ! my parents come !  
 I must salute them first !

GARUDA. I wait your will !

KING (*joyfully*). Ah ! fortune favours us !

Our dearest son  
 Awaits us here—he lives—the King of Birds  
 Stands as a suppliant before his feet !





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To thee, most noble King—Madam, to thee,  
Such comfort as I can. Your son revives !  
Do you not see he lives ? And for your sake  
Alone, he lives.

QUEEN. My son, thou art the prey  
Of cruel death, even before our eyes !

KING. Ill-omened words ! Do you not see he  
lives ?

Console his weeping bride !

QUEEN (*weeping and covering her face*)—  
Ill-omened words  
Begone ! I will not weep ! Be comforted,  
My dearest daughter, Malayavatî,  
Look on your husband !

MALAYA. Ah ! it is indeed  
My husband's face !

KING. When I behold my son,  
Whose strength is gone, whose life is ebbing  
fast,  
How should my heart, insensible, not break  
Into a thousand pieces !

MALAYA. Ah ! my mind  
Is evil, or I should cast off my life,  
For sympathy with him, whose end is near.

QUEEN (*to GARUḌA*). How could'st thou  
wreck this body of my son ?  
All fresh and beautiful in fairest youth.  
Hadst thou no care ?

JÎMÛT. What evil has he done ?  
Is not my body just the same ? a hideous  
thing,  
Full of all evil, but a mass of flesh,



And blood, and bones, o'er which the skin  
extends  
Its covering.

GARUḌA. O noble-minded man !  
Ah ! see my pain ! The flames of deepest hell  
Already scorch my being ! Tell me how  
I may be purified from this my sin.

JÎMÛT. Yes ! I will tell thee, if my father give  
Me leave.

KING. Speak on, my son !

JÎMÛT. Garuḍa, hear !

GARUḌA (*making an obeisance*)—  
I am thy slave !

JÎMÛT. Cease from destroying life ;  
Repent thee of thy former evil deeds ;  
Lay up a store of merit ; do good works ;  
By kindly love remove this fear of thee  
That dwells in living creatures : so thy sin—  
The sin which thou hast wrought—destroying  
life,

May cease to bring forth fruit, but, in the sea  
Of merit plunged, may all be swallowed up,  
Even as a grain of salt in Ocean depths.

GARUḌA. So will I do ! for lying in the depths  
Of ignorance, I have been roused by thee.  
Henceforth I will no more destroy the race  
Of living creatures. Let the Nâgas play  
Over the ocean, in their multitudes,  
In peace and happiness : and in the groves  
Of sandal, let their damsels sing thy praise.  
The morning sun may tinge their glowing  
cheeks



With crimson hue ; their loosened hair may  
fall

All flowing to their feet, black as the cloud  
Of evening : they may faint with weariness :  
But still their saviour's praise unceasingly  
Shall rise.

JÎMÛT. I am content ! Be firm ! Change not !  
(*To ŚANKHACHÛDA.*) Depart ! go to thy home !  
[*ŚANKHACHÛDA hesitates, and stands with head  
hanging down.*

Why tarriest thou ?  
Thy loving mother waits in anxious dread  
To learn thy fate ; perchance thou hast been  
torn  
In pieces by Garuḍa !

QUEEN. Blest indeed  
The mother who beholds the son she loves,  
With form uninjured, though the King of  
Birds  
Had all but seized him !

ŚANKH. What thou sayest is true !  
O could the Prince be saved !

JÎMÛT. Ah ! now I feel  
The agony that racks my limbs : delight  
In doing good obscured the sense of pain,  
But o'er me now, the darkness closes in.  
[*Sinks dying.*

KING. My son ! why dost thou fall ?

QUEEN. Alas ! my son !  
His life is gone !

MALAYA. My husband ! best beloved !  
Why dost thou leave us ?





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ŚANKH. O Prince ! where art thou gone ?  
Forsaking those who love thee more than life !  
Ah ! I will follow thee !

GARUḌA. What can I do ?

QUEEN (*looking up with tears*). Ye gods, our  
guardians ! come, I pray, and bring  
The heavenly nectar ! O with that restore  
My son to life again !

GARUḌA (*aside*). I may atone  
For that my crime : so will I pray the gods,  
And they shall send the heav'nly shower down,  
And bring Jîmûtavâhana again  
To life. Nor only so ! but all the bones  
Of Nâgas, who in times gone by were slain  
By me. But if they will not hear my prayer,  
My wings with furious blast shall turn to foam  
The waters of the Ocean : at my eye  
The Sun shall scorch and fall from heaven :  
my beak  
Shall dash Kuvera's club in pieces : break  
The thunderbolt of Indra : rend the net  
Borne by the lord of Waters : in the fight  
I will subdue the gods and rain from heav'n  
To earth the show'r of immortality.

[*Exit.*

KING (*to ŚANKHACHŪDA*). O why dost thou  
delay ? Collect the wood !  
O let us build the funeral pile, and die  
With our beloved son !

QUEEN. Make haste ! Make haste,  
Come, let us join him ! Oh ! he is in pain,  
Bereft of us.



ŚANKH.                   The pile is all prepared !  
Shall I not go before you, on the road  
To meet your son !

KING (*looking at JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*). Then let  
us mount the pyre !  
O head that wore the diadem ! O eyes  
Like lotuses : O form divine : O hand  
Marked with the Mystic Sign : how hast thou  
gone !

Is it for my misdeeds that thou hast lost  
The sovereignty of the Vidyâdharas ?

MALAYA. Gaurî divine ! Where is the noble  
Prince,  
Of the Vidyâdharas, my future spouse ?  
Thy promises have failed ! My hopes are gone.

*Enter GAURÎ.*

GAURÎ. O mighty king ! act not so hastily !  
Forbear !

KING. Ah ! Gauri ! Blessèd be the sight !

GAURÎ (*to MALAYA.*). My child ! how could I  
ever seem to speak  
Words that are false ? (*To JÎMÛTAVÂHANA*)

With thee, my noble son,  
I am well pleased, for thou hast offered up  
Thy life to save the Nâga world !

[*Sprinkles JÎMÛTAVÂHANA with the nectar of  
immortality.*]

Arise !

Jîmûtavâhana !

[*JÎMÛTAVÂHANA stands up.*]

KING.                   Receive our praise !  
Gaurî divine ! it is to thee we owe



Our son ! He lives again.

QUEEN.

By Gaurî's aid !

[JÎMÛTAVÂHANA, *seeing* GAURÎ, *puts his hands together*.

JÎMÛT. O, how could thy divine assistance fail !

Thou givest all we ask ! Thou tak'st away  
Pain from thy worshippers ! Low at thy feet  
I fall, O my protectress : hymns of praise  
Shall rise to thee from the Vidyâdharas.

[*Shower of nectar falls*.

KING. Ah ! tell me ! What is this ? I see no  
cloud !

GAURÎ. The gods, in answer to Garuḍa's  
prayer,

Have sent the rain of immortality.

For he, repentant, would restore to life

Thy son, and all the Nâga chiefs whose bones  
Lie here in whitening heaps. Dost thou not see,

O King ! the Nâga lords : their jewel crests

Sparkling upon their heads : they lick the  
earth

With forked tongues, in eagerness to gain

Their share of the immortal shower that falls :

And then, with forms restored again to life,

In all their pristine beauty, see they glide

With winding course under the ocean wave

Ev'n as a rushing river.

(*Addresses* JÎMÛTAVÂHANA) O my son !

The gift of life alone is not enough

For such as thou ! my blessing must be thine

In fuller measure ! Thee I consecrate





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Send down from heav'n the seasonable shower,  
Making the peacocks dance with joy : the  
earth,

Clothéd with verdure as a robe, bring forth  
Her plenteous harvest ; may the nations keep  
High festival, rejoicing with their friends  
In song and dance, from all misfortune free,  
Of merit laying up abundant store,  
By envy or by hate, untouched their minds.

*[Exeunt.]*

END OF ACT V



# NOTES

## NOTES ON THE CHARACTERS

*Vidyâdharas* = possessors of wisdom, are represented as a class of inferior deities inhabiting the regions between earth and sky. They are attendants upon India, but have kings and chiefs of their own, and are represented as intermarrying and having intercourse with men (Dowson, Class. Dict. Hindu Myth.); cf. Gen. 6. 2. “The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose.” Sons of God, being explained as meaning in the original, “belonging to the class of supernatural beings.”

*Siddhas* = perfected. A class of semi-divine beings possessing supernatural power, but like the last mentioned associated with men.

*Nâga* = a serpent. Mythical personages with the head of a cobra. In Act V, Scene 2, the Nâga Prince describes the serpent appearance as the proof of Nâga identity; — the scales — the double tongues — the triple hood. They were supposed to inhabit Pâtâla, a region below the earth. A race of Nâgas really existed, who have left behind them various evidences of their existence. They are supposed to have been a race distinct



from the Hindûs, and to have been called Nâgas from the fact that serpents were an object of worship. Nâgpur=City of the Serpent, owes its name to them. The reader may be referred to the mysterious and not easily explained story of the Serpent in the Wilderness, an object of Sacramental Worship.

*Garuda*=a mythical being, half man, half eagle. He is represented as the King of the Birds, and the great enemy of the serpents. He has a vast number of designations, under which he is known.

*Âtreya*=the Brâhman. Called also the Vidûshaka. This character always appears in dramatic works, as the confidant, and attendant of the hero. Vidûshaka=buffoon—and his part corresponds something to the “fool” of mediæval society. Although the character is one of a low (somewhat vulgar) description, and the personator is represented as a glutton, and a drunkard, and perhaps worse: he is always represented as a Brâhman, and belonging to a higher caste than the King, or Prince, whose companion he is. The Brâhman had from his birth, and in consequence of his birth, supernatural powers, and a religious position above ordinary people; so that the position of the Vidûshaka may be paralleled by a Priest or Levite among the Jews being brought forward on the stage and made a butt of for his follies or vices. For something similar to the treatment of the Brâhman, one might compare Boccaccio’s “Decameron,” where any crimes or offences of unusual enormity are attributed to Priests or Monks and Nuns, or





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The name of *the* Buddha was Śākya-muni, or Śākya-simha. He has a real existence, being born at Kapila-Vastu. His father Suddhodana, of the family of the Śākyas, was king of the country, and his mother Mâyâdevi of royal parentage. He therefore belonged to the Kshatriya caste. Another name—Gautama (by which he is known), comes from the race to which his family belonged, and Buddha—which means the “Enlightened One,” or one who has a perfect knowledge of the truth, was given in later times. He is known by a variety of names and epithets.

p. 24, l. 1. “While Indra gazed,” etc. Literally—“Indra looking on with his hair standing on end with astonishment.” It ought to be remarked, that Indra is represented as taking an interest (and perhaps something more) in the scene of the Buddha’s temptation, since the gods of Hindû mythology are said to be jealous of the austerities practised by men, by means of which humanity is raised to the divine level. Probably, therefore, the idea lying behind is, that Mâra, or Kâma, was put on to tempt Buddha by the gods.

p. 26, l. 12. “Malaya’s Hill.” This is a range of mountains in Malabar, the Western Ghats in the Dekkan. The mountains abound in sandal trees. The sights and scents of this garden-like district fill Jîmûtavâhana with misgiving, lest his mind may be distracted from the path of devotion which he has marked out.

p. 27, l. 28. “The mysteries of sacred lore,”



refer to the learning and explanation of the Vedas, performed respectively by the disciples and sages.

p. 33, l. 6. “My lord and master Kauśika.” The title given to Kauśika is Kula-pati= head or chief of the family. It is explained as one who feeds and teaches 10,000 pupils.

p. 33, l. 10. “The mystic sign.” Chakra, explained by M. Wilhâm (lex.) as a circle or depression of the body for mystical, astrological, or cheiromantic purposes. Jîmûtavâhana appears to have had the mark, a mark of sovereignty, on the soles of his feet.

p. 37, l. 15. “Lord of the darts whose tips are armed with flowers!” Kâma, the Hindû Erôs, is armed with a bow and arrows. The bow is of sugar-cane, the bow-string is a line of bees and each arrow is tipped with a flower.

p. 40, l. 1. “Have I not gazed,” etc. To a person in the condition of Jîmûtavâhana, it should be explained that all these things are absolutely painful.

p. 40, l. 21. “The moonstone slab.” This is a kind of crystal, said to exude moisture under the moon’s influence.

p. 47, l. 22. “From which the moon sprang forth.” The moon was supposed to have sprung forth from the ocean when the gods churned it up for the ambrosia.

p. 48, l. 13. “Marriage according to the Gandharva rites.” Gandharva marriage is one of the eight forms of marriage described, Manu. iij. 6. “Mutual contract based on



affection is declared to be lawful for Kshatriyas." This form of marriage is founded on affection, without consent of parents or any ceremonial (cf. what are termed 'Scotch marriages').

p. 50, l. 21. In these words there is an untranslatable pun. Sékharaka, the name of this hanger-on=a garland. Navamâlikâ, the girl's name=Jasmine.

p. 53, l. 3. "The sacred thread." The peculiar thread worn by the first three of the sacred castes—Brâhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaiśyas: a cord hanging diagonally over the body, from the left shoulder to the right hip.

p. 63, l. 1. There are several words in this speech which have a double meaning, untranslatable in English. The chamberlain—ruler of the Seraglio—bears, a staff, "daṇḍa," as a king bears a sceptre: he looks after the "antahpura," inner chambers, as the king looks after the inner government of cities. "Skhalan," the faults and mistakes (trippings) in the State, corrected by the king; in the ladies' apartments, by the chamberlain.

p. 71, l. 17. "Viśvâmitra . . . took dog's flesh." "He who, to save his life takes food, wherever it may have come from, is not defiled thereby. . . . Viśvâmitra, the discerning between right and wrong, when he was overcome by hunger, took the leg of a dog from a Chandâla's hand and ate it." (Manu. x. 108. Cf. 1 Sam. 21. 6.)

p. 78, l. 6. "Of Jîmûtavâhana." Depends on something said by the messenger behind the scene, and is spoken as he comes on. In its





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