

CALQUE: (kælk) [Fr. lit. ‘copy’, f. *calquer* ‘to trace’ (a design, etc.), ad. It. *calcare*, ad. L. *calcare* ‘to tread’.] 1. n: A loan translation; a literal translation of a compound, derivative, or phrase from one language to another, e.g. ‘thought experiment’ calqued from the German *gedankenexperiment*, ‘free verse’ calqued from the French *vers libre*, ‘blue-blood’ calqued from the Spanish *sangre azul*; vt. to adopt a word or phrase from one language to another by semantic translation of its parts. 2. n, vt: In translation practice, to consciously translate a word into the target language in a way that releases meaning not contained in the source language, e.g. to translate the contemporary Italian *soggiorno* into the archaic ‘sojourn.’ 3. n: An original work written using the conceptual or aesthetic system of a source text; literary work that translates not the content of a source text, but the mode in which that text was written, e.g. *Ulysses*, where Joyce’s hero traces a journey analogous to that of Odysseus while the novel itself stylistically and thematically genealogizes the English literary canon, beginning with Homer’s *Odyssey*.

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C A L Q U E

F i v e

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*Perhaps a time will come when a translation will be
considered as something in itself.*

—Jorge Luis Borges

Qutban

from *Mirigāvati*

// Translated from the Hindavī by ADITYA BEHL //

'The Path of True Feeling': On Translating Qutban's *Mirigāvati*¹

Some years ago, I was blocked on a book manuscript that had taken me eight years to complete, a genre study of the literary tradition of the Hindavi Sufi romances from the sultanate period of Indian history, extending from the establishment of the centralized Delhi sultanate in 1206 to the consolidation of Akbar's Mughal empire in the late sixteenth century. I had produced a chronologically arranged reading of each romance, but found myself repeating myself in many places and everywhere subject to the tyranny of plot summary. The book manuscript, due at Oxford University Press, lay flat and forbidding on my desk. It had won me tenure, and was the essential companion to my collaborative blank verse translation of Shaikh Mañjhan's *Madhumālatī*, a mid-sixteenth century romance from the Shattārī Sufi order. Yet I could not send it in to press, because I was not happy with my own account of the poetics of the genre. Until I understood how these romances worked as spiritual texts, I could not adequately represent them in print. I felt that scholarly integrity demanded no less, and I withheld the manuscript from publication.

1. This introduction was delivered in November, 2008 as a lecture entitled "On Reading Enigmatically" at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The author would like to thank J. S. Hawley for his comments on an early draft, and D. F. Plukker for his aid in reconstructing the text from the manuscript evidence. The author is also obliged to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts for their generous assistance in bringing this translation to completion.

I turned my hand to something else, a blank verse translation of another text from the genre, Shaikh Qutban Suhravardī's *Mirigāvati*, composed in 1503 at the court-in-exile of the cultivated Jaunpur Sultan, Husain Shāh Sharqī. The author is only known to us from the prologue of his poem, which effaces all personal mention. All the information we have about the particular branch of the Sufi order to which the poet belonged is contained in a dedicatory verse to his own spiritual preceptor, Shaikh Buddhan Sūhravardī. Looking in the sources for the identity and precise location of Shaikh Buddhan, whose affectionately shortened name means simply "the big son" or "the eldest one", is a bit like looking for someone named Joe in America or Alejandro in Mexico. At least three are known from the published history of the sultanate of Jaunpur, one of whom meditated in a small cell that you may inspect today near the Central Post Office in the city of Jaunpur, site of an annual fair. There are also numerous Persian manuscripts gently decaying in archives and shrine libraries, awaiting the spade and trowel of the researcher. Who knows what is contained in them?

Jaunpur was an important regional sultanate, founded in the 1390's by one of the eunuchs of the house of Fīrūz Shāh Tughlaq in Delhi, the line descending as an independent kingdom through an adoptive son after Timūr the Lame sacked Delhi in 1398. Part of the trouble is that Jaunpur itself was taken apart stone by stone, saving only five mosques, by the armies of the Lodī Sultan of Delhi in the 1480's, ending a long struggle between Sultan Husain Shāh Sharqī's military pretensions and the might of Delhi. So Shaikh Qutban's romance, while from the court of Jaunpur, was actually composed and performed for a Sultan in exile in a village in Bihar after the loss of Jaunpur, a city of poetry and the arts famed as the Shiraz of India. Sultan Husain Shāh Sharqī was himself a noted musician, composer, patron of the arts, in short, the ideal civilized patron with the time and leisure to savour artistic, poetic, and musical offerings.

The *Mirigāvati* was also a teaching text for novices in the Sufi order to which Shaikh Qutban belonged, the Suhravardis. The romance begins with the hero, called simply Rājkunyar or 'Prince', riding out to the hunt with a company of noble retainers. He sees in the forest a glimmering seven-coloured doe, the *Mirigāvati* or magical

“doe-woman” of the title. He follows, and is soon separated from his companions. The doe lures him to an enchanted lake into which he vanishes. Although the Prince jumps in, she is gone and he is left lamenting. He will not return to court, and stays there meditating on the vision he has seen. His father builds a palace for him on the lake’s shore. This motif inaugurates a long and elaborate romance in which the Prince first captures the magic doe, who is really the heroine Mirigāvatī, by trickery, then has to regain her through many difficult ordeals, including rescuing a Princess, Rūpminī, and marrying her, then undergoing further trials and tribulations before dying at the end and being burnt on a pyre with his two wives.

Comparison with the Suhravardī sources did not yield any schema which would explain the text. The Hindi critics and critical editors of the texts seemed to focus largely on finding adequate categories with which to avoid embarrassment over the fact that the first large-scale narrative and devotional literature in Hindi was written by Muslims. They foundered alternately on the Scylla and Charybdis of pious Hindu nationalism with its purist categories and *alampkāra-sāstra* (“the science of ornament”) or Sanskrit aesthetics, with its endless sub-categories. The Urdu critics had simply buried their heads in the sand when it came to precursors of Urdu, invented in their view definitively, once and for all, in Mughal Delhi *circa* 1700. The process involved, aside from a ludicrous over-Persianization that is to be seen at its hyperaesthetic nadir in the writings surrounding the College of Fort William since its inception in 1800, a wilful forgetting of the bread-and-butter part of Urdu’s origins, the *desī bhāṣā* or spoken language that the Delhi poets and lexicographers sought to refine in an Islamicate direction.

It is the question of the demotic, the Hindustani that everyone speaks but no one claims, that haunts the drawers of boundaries between Hindi and Urdu, and will continue to do so until they redraw the political spectrum as a spectrum, not a dualism nestling neatly within the binaries of religion and region. The two ends of the spectrum may encode a radical difference of worldview, but any form of social organization requires a pluralistic understanding of a range of possible options, preferably without the political will to delineate

or to police any such options. We cannot continue to apply blindly the classical European model of the nation state, with its historical specificities of united languages, territories, and ethnicities, if not religions, to the polities of Asia, Africa, and the Americas as if there were no significant historical differences between these continents and their histories.

In short, then, aside from the text, I had no sources of illumination, and pretty soon I was waffling about intercontinental cultural politics. A moment that all writers, critics and teachers have known. Just the romance. That’s it. Explain it to us, son, you’ve just spent another eight years translating this unknown medieval text, you didn’t publish your book, what does it all add up to? That makes half a young lifetime, sixteen years. A long time in which to ponder the workings of a literary tradition removed by five centuries from my own lifetime. I had no flipping idea. Then the dreams began. To my amazement, my dreams the next few nights led me through sections of the romance I had just finished translating, and pointed again and again to the palace the Prince’s father had built for him, included in the section translated here. The palace was a building ‘with four parts’ (*caturamga*), and had seven stories, and atop it was a four-sided *caukhandī* over broad balconies with four gateways or doors with steps (*paumṛī*). Okay. In case you are wondering, I am not a new age loonie. I left graduate school at Chicago a confirmed Marxist in spirit. It was all a mask for power and money. *Tout*. So what was happening? I was not accustomed to dream visions as regular sources of enlightenment.

When I awoke, I mapped the building and realized that its structure and ornamentation encoded certain messages. As a *caturamgi*, or four-part building, it was a four-sided palace encoding a quest in four stages. That was the most basic division, and it had seven stories with *jharokhās* or windows set in. The palace of four had also four gateways or doors, one on each corner. The reason why they had to be on the corners rather than on the sides of the building was because the poet also mentions that it seemed as if broad balconies or *atāris* were set on all four sides. This means that there could not be gates in the middle of each side, for they would break up the expanse of the wall. Therefore the gates or doors had to mark the progression from one side of the

building, one stage, to the next, meaning that there would be ways to signal these turning points in the text. *Aṭṭīs* are roofs or balconies from which, in the world of Indian poetry, the lovelorn heroine watches out for the return of her lover. Here, they seem to be used as a way to direct the gaze inwards, as for instance to look at each side of the building structuring an inner journey as a distinct stage in the work of spiritual cleansing. The seven stories suggest also that there is a structure of spiritual ascent somewhere in the quest, which most plausibly fits in before the meeting with divinity, i. e., the attainment of union with the divine heroine of the romance. Atop the building is a *caukhandī*, a miniature dome supported by four arches, found as a tomb ornament in sultanate architecture. It is also attested in literary texts of the period as a house built around all four sides of a central courtyard. Here we have to take it as a cupola, a little dome set on four arches, since the poet has specified that it rests on top of the building. In the architectural and symbolic grammar of the period a cupola signifies a tomb ornament, meaning that death will come as the end of this particular quest.

Let us take the seven stories first, the structure of spiritual ascent. I had earlier written a paper on an allegorical clue in a single line at the end of the Prince's quest, when he leaps over seven steps to enter Mirigāvati's palace gate. After being tested, he is deemed worthy and Mirigāvati grants him his nuptials. At the precise moment that the Prince ascends the seven steps of the palace gate, the poet clues us in to what is going on by saying that each step had a different *bhāva*, a different feeling or emotion. Thinking back to the path he has just traversed, I could see that it had seven distinct stages: (1) seeking the guidance of a wandering ascetic, who sends him off on an ocean voyage; (2) surviving a month-long battle with the waves; (3) landing on a shore preyed on by a man-eating sea-serpent and surviving; (4) rescuing a Princess, Rūpmīnī (Beauty or Form), from a seven-headed demon, thus introducing the secondary heroine, the wife who represents the world; (5) marrying the Princess under duress, but living chastely within marriage; (6) being guest to a cannibal herdsman, whom he blinds in an episode curiously reminiscent of the Odysseus and the Cyclops; and (7) passing a night in deadly danger in a palace full of the illusions of sensuality. In particular, the episode in the cannibal herdsman's cave keeps mentioning *sat bhāva*,

'true feeling', which is also cited in the prologue as the path taught by Qutban's preceptor, Shaikh Buḍḍhan Suhrawardi. The word *sat* conceals a pun, for it means both 'truth' and 'seven', the number of stages of emotional refinement on this path of true feeling.

The seven stages each involve dealing with emotions like fear, lust, gluttony, and temptation. The point in all these seven episodes is that they refine human *bhāva* or emotion, feeling, until the listener can get the Sufi message. The narrative design here uses each stage of the seven ordeals to show how each emotion can be turned around and controlled through fasting, breath control, *zīkr*, what have you. An entire basic regimen of Sufi exercises for gaining mastery of the self and its impulses. What do you know ... and now the building offered me an architectonics for the text, a framework within which to set these seven stages of emotional refinement. The stages began with becoming a *jogī* and taking initiation with a spiritual guide. Like life, there are different guides at different points in the narrative, leading up to the meeting with the heroine, divinity, after the hero had done the basic work of turning around the baser drives to which the human race is prone.

It was fascinating work putting the pieces together, the four stages of the quest marked by turning points, portals at each corner of the four-sided palace, as follows: (1) the delineation of the quest and its object, *prema rasa*, the sublimated juice of love and the introduction of the hero and heroine, the principal characters, turning point: Mirigavati leaves and the Prince puts on yogic garb to start his quest; (2) the seven stages of his quest, turning point: the Prince sits under a tree and hears two birds talking about a Prince who is near the object of his quest, Kanchanpur, the City of Gold; (3) the Prince's sojourn in the City of Gold, the metal here used in the sense of alchemical purification and transmutation into gold of the seeker, turning point: the dispatch of the *bārab-māsā*, the account of her sufferings through the twelve months by the worldly wife, Rupmini; and (4) the Prince's journey back into the world, his reintegration with the rhythms of worldly life, turning point: the arrival of the hunter and his request for the Prince's intervention with the tiger. This last turning point marks the passage into the end of the quest, the *caukhandī*, the tomb ornament signifying *fānā* after the four stages are completed,

the balance between material and spiritual aspects of life attained. Thus the romance culminates in the literal death and allegorical annihilation of self of all the major characters.

What I've just described is my unlocking of an enigma, a problem unresolved in the scholarship since 1896, when Sir George Abraham Grierson, linguist *extraordinaire*, began publishing the most famous text of the genre, Malik Muhammad Jāyasi's *Padmāvat*, first composed and performed in 1540, newly recovered from shrine manuscripts. Clever, but what does it mean? What are the implications? Well, first you have to hear what happened, it's not over yet. I had been invited by the editors of *Calque* to do a reflection piece on translating the *Mirigāvati*, along with a translated excerpt, and I had asked for time because I knew it would take me a while to think through the extraordinariness of the last few months. Try as I might, I just could not begin the piece. Instead, I found myself writing the poem printed with this piece, 'Let's Leave.' As you will see, it reproduces the enigmatic form (*rūpa*) of the dream building, in a poetic medium that I am comfortable in, blank verse, before finalizing the translation a few months later. The implications of this act slowly dawned on me during the ensuing months. Somehow, I just had to replicate the process of aesthetic creation that shaped the sultanate poet's understanding of his craft.

Let me explain. India did not know a theory of aesthetic creation that involved, as it does in western traditions post-romanticism, a spontaneous and unmediated onrush of emotion, poetic inspiration yielding the form and content of the poetic effusion, nor the ultimately dystopic breaking of form engendered by modernism and its successors. Instead, an artist in any medium would first engage in a meditation (Sanskrit *dhyāna*) on the object he sought to create. When the artist felt that he had identified completely with his intended aesthetic object, in effect he became one with the form in his heart and mind. Once subject and object had fused, he could then recreate that form (*rūpa*) in his chosen medium. If there was a flaw in the execution, it was held by the audience to be a laziness

or weakness of the artist's concentration.² But what of the aesthetic effect of the artistic creation? Here the audience would have to allow the object to work on their own consciousness, but how? One other aspect of this summary icon, this enigmatic form, sketched out at the beginning of the long narrative, that had struck me forcibly was its similarity to the genre of classical Indian music called *dhrupad*, the dominant tradition when the Sufi romances were composed and performed. In this form of Indian music, the musician builds up in the opening section a melodic outline of the *rāga* or melody that is then elaborated at length. Why did both media, narrative poetry and music, share a parallelism in form? It suddenly struck me that both were dependent on the sense of hearing, for these poems were received in oral performance during this period, a tradition now lost to us except for a few tantalizingly brief references in the sources.

So the senses were key to understanding poetry and the other arts of the period, but again, how? I went back to look at the building. I had a good explanation for its structure, but what of its ornament? It was painted with murals, a practice common in sultanate palaces in India: scenes from Indian epic and story literature, the hunt and rows of wild game, and of course the doe who had led the Prince out into the forest and for whom he pined. The scenes from epic and story literature, clues put there to provoke a response through vision and a shared cultural understanding, had all to do with one of three themes. The first was heroism: the portrayal of the demon-king Rāvaṇa seizing Rāma's wife Sīta, the *casus belli* from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and, from the same epic, the hero Āṅgada girding his loins, or, from the *Mahābhārata*, Arjuna's valor and Bhīma's killing of Kīcaka and Duḥśāsana. The second theme signalled by these murals is love, here indicated by a portrait of Kṛṣṇa with sixteen thousand cowgirls. And third, the story of King Bhartṛhari and Queen Piṅgalā, whom he abandoned to become a yogi, points towards renunciation or asceticism as a major theme. At the end of the story, the poet confirms

2. These ideas are helpfully summarized in A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956 [1934]), 15–16, and will be discussed in full with reference to Hindavi Sufi poetry in my own monograph, *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379–1545* (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

that ascetism, love, and valor were the *rasas* or ‘moods’ of his poem in a framing verse.

Rasa ... the word takes us straight to the heart of aesthetic understanding in Sanskritic India. *Rasa* means juice, essence, sap, semen, flavor, or mood, what is blissfully savored or tasted when appreciating the arts. The basic building blocks of different moods or flavours are the emotions. In each episode, Qutban uses the word *bbāva*, ‘emotion’ or ‘feeling’, to show the seeker how to control it. In performance, the storyteller or singer created a psychological induction experiment where the listener had to imagine himself/herself in a thought world where a situation has happened, the hero is in danger, and shown techniques for overcoming that danger and the primary emotion associated with it. In other words, we had a narrative design for messing with human consciousness, using an indigenous poetics of sensory response and its sublimation into aesthetic savor. The point was to show humans to control their drives and baser emotions rather than have the emotions controlling them. I began to realize that reading this genre meant being open to a kind of ‘experiential listening’ in which one imagines oneself in each of the situations described and allows the magic of the poetic text to work on one. In each episode, the clues could come in the form of ornament, word or other coded symbol. These elements are explicitly marked out in Sanskrit criticism as sources of rasa (*vibhāva*) and actions or experiential signs (*anubhāva*) that heighten the audience’s experience of the main emotion or mood (*sthāyi-bhāva*) or the various transitory emotions in a scene (*vyabhicāri-bhāva*).

It seemed to me I had hit upon the human sensorium as a way of thinking about the arts in a unified way in sultanate India. The difference was that this Indic technology of emotion was here being used for an Islamic, Sufi spiritual purpose, at a very early time, and this fact had important historical implications. The Sufi use screamed out a major cultural-historical fact that the Orientalist and nationalist scholarship had each suppressed for different reasons, that the classical Sanskritic intellectual world had not fallen with the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1206, but lived on in attenuated and modified fashion. Among the most surprising agents of this Indian *translatio studii* were the Muslims of the Delhi sultanate!

The transfer of Sanskritic learning to later centuries was conducted not only through lineages of Brahmins more purist than pure but also through sympathetic Sufi orders who engaged in intellectual and spiritual debates with local groups. In this process of dialogue and exchange, both sides clearly benefited from the exchange, putting the lie to narrow nationalist and religious ways of reading the Indian past.

Coming back to the text itself, its architectonics or overall structure was half revealed, half concealed by the poet, a code that could be put to use with flexibility by the users depending on the kind and nature of the audience: shrine, courtly gathering, salon or bazaar. I would characterize this as a dynamic allegorical code, in contrast to more static definitions of allegory as a point to point correspondence between two levels of meaning. Fundamentally, in Indic and Sufi cosmologies, words have power, and one can praise, invoke, create, transform, and create worlds through them, provided the receiver of the message has ears to hear. If a form remains obscure, then the consciousness of the listener needs more polishing, more cleansing, so that the responsibility for understanding is not simply on the part of the author, but also the audience. This contract between author and audience is therefore a condition or price for entry, submission to the Sufi master and the willingness to apply the lessons of the text to one’s own life. The Sufi masters who composed these elaborate texts seemed to be well aware of the human tendency towards essentialism, which they called “idol-worship”, and made narratives designed to frustrate attempts at simple mapping or classification. In order to “get” the text, even, perhaps especially, for a reader outside the tradition, one has to give oneself up to the text and allow it to work its subtle magic on one.

In a Borgesian twist, this is a textual tradition that is designed to resist decipherment until one submits to the text and allows it to create reality around one in the act of reception. Further, this is a dynamic allegorical code, one which allows its users to divulge only as much of the meaning as the audience is deemed ready or worthy to hear. There is a flexibility of meaning that works to the advantage of the enigmatic poet, who could only choose to open out spiritual meanings behind closed shrine doors and not in the bazaar or the royal court. The code is entwined with sensory perception and its

manipulation through narrative, in which sense it is a design for transforming human consciousness in order to achieve a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life. Each Hindavī Sufi romance enigmatically embodied in its performed *rūpa* both the central teaching of and the medium of spiritual instruction for Sufi pīrs in sultanate India. As they ministered to a rapidly growing community of *desī* Muslims, it is not surprising that they should use techniques, motifs and structures drawn from the local environment. These were set within a generic framework derived from the romances of Nizāmī Ganjavī. It is such novel fusions that define the moments of Indic and Islamicate engagement in the provincial sultanates of the Dār-al-Islām, the dominant world order of the period.

The only question about this flexible pluralism of meaning was whether it had any limits, or could there be an infinite play of meanings? The details, structural and ornamental, of the enigmatic form or *rūpa* would have to be the limits or horizons of reception, for they set the alternative levels of signification in place, to be brought into play when appropriate to the ‘inner work’ necessarily carried on by the ideal listener. In a sense, the enigmatic form was being used to imprint the listener at the beginning, just as in music the melodic outline was sketched out by the performer to set the broad outlines within which the composition would be elaborated. On the side of reception, the form was an imprinting of consciousness, pushing the receiver’s understanding into a predetermined set of limits. Could this work in practice? I had no evidence to go on but my own experience, but, given that I just had to write a poem replicating the enigmatic form of the romance before finalizing my translation, I have to say, it works.

The poem below is the record of my identification with Qutban’s romance, proof that the pattern of cognitive and sensory imprinting encoded in the Hindavī words has to reshape the listener’s consciousness before the work of art can emerge in a new medium. This was known in the Islamic literary sciences as *sīhr al-halāl*, the ‘licit magic’ of the arts, their power to transform human subjectivity. In this communication through translation, possible through the licit magic of poetry, what had happened to the Marxism of my graduate school years? I realized I had confused correlation with causation,

allowing the instrumental *raison d’être* of the age, currently in crisis, to cloud my brain. Now, with the clarity of a thunderclap, the theory of aesthetic creation in the sultanate period had demonstrated itself through triggering a similar process in me. I had recreated in my own medium the enigmatic form of the poem I had just translated, before recreating Qutban’s artfully constructed poem for an English-speaking audience. I am so glad I waited to publish the book.

Or, as the Sufis would say, the open heart is the key to every enigma...

Let's Leave

Let's leave
in the lees
the sour wine of yesterday!

Look instead
at today,
fresh, new
as the birth of passion,
peonies in flower.

Look inside,
lotuses blossoming
on magic lakes
in faëry lands forlorn!

Here's the Prince,
dismounting at the lake,
jumping in
after the magic doe
who has led him so deep
into the jungle.

She vanishes into the mere,
a magic lake here,
for the Prince to dive into,
to no avail,
for she's gone,
with her seven colors
and ornaments of gold.

II.

The company catches up
with the Prince
under a banana palm
canopied with shining leaves,
disconsolate by the lake.

He will not leave,
for no one's sake,
not family, nor kingdom,
nor friends and retainers,
so they build him a palace
on the lake's shore.

The palace: foursided, sevenstoried,
bright gold and red lead,
broad balconies on each side,
a quest encoded
in pictures of warriors,
yogis, lovers, new *rásas*
to savour in a new age.

On top, a miniature dome
set on four little arches,
a tomb in small
for a deadly combat
with a tiger,
the inner beast,
kill him and you die!

All things,
all things to dust return,
souls to their Maker.

III.

A yogi is a form of Shiva,
ash-smeared,
trident in hand,
third eye
a thousand petalled lotus,
open for business.

What inner forests yet remain
to roam –
what picture pavilions,
what fire-breathing demons,
what damsels in distress,
what magic talking birds,
what cannibal herdsmen posing as hosts –
what desperate souls
on the ocean of feeling?

He has stages to go before he sleeps,
seven of them,
chakras, perhaps,
meaning mastery
of self,
the ultimate landscape.

Philadelphia,
Spring 2008.

ēka bāta aba kahaū rasāla | ratana mōti ānaū bhari thāla ||
rājā ēka sauna hama sunā | ati re dāni lōnā bahugunā ||
bahuta kaṭaka aganita asavārā | dharama pañtha ohi daī sāvārā ||
ēkau rāu na ohi saū pārai | jō re jūjha sō tatikhana hārai ||
jō kuchu cāhai sō saba ahā | ēka na pūta nāū jehi rahā ||
aratha daraba hāthī bahu ghōrā ganata na āva bhāḍāra |
māngai pūta duau kara jōrēṇ bēgi dēhi karatāra ||

[13]

khōli bhāḍāra dēi saba lägā | jinha pāvā tinhā dārida bhāgā ||
bhūkhehi bhuguti piāsehi panī | nāngehi kāpara dīnhēṇ ānī ||
manakāmanā jo puravai āsā | marama jāni nahī karai nirāsā ||
jō bidhi saū mana imchā māngī | pāi sabai na ēkau khāngī ||
asa māngā bidhi hama kō dēhi | aratha daraba dhana pūta sanēhi ||
jō māngisi sō pāisi āsā rahī na ēkau khāngī |
ēka na pūta ahā ghara ohi kēṇ so bidhi saū liē māngī ||

[14]

Let me now tell you a delectable tale!
I bring you a platter full of pearls and gems.
We have heard with our ears of a King,
very generous, handsome, and full of virtues.
He had a huge army, countless cavaliers.
God had adorned the right religion with him.
Not one ruler could surpass him.
Whoever fought him lost in a second!
Except for a son to carry on his name,
he possessed everything he wanted.

He had wealth, elephants, and horses, and his treasury was
beyond all counting.
He prayed for a son with folded hands, 'A son, and quickly, O
Creator!' [13]

The Royal Gift

He opened his treasury, and began to give it all away.
Poverty fled from the one who gained something there!
He gave food to the hungry and water to the thirsty.
He brought clothes and gave them to the naked.
He fulfilled the hope of every heart. Once he knew
their secret wish, he did not disappoint them.
The heart's desire for which he petitioned God,
he received it all, without any stint.
Thus he prayed, 'O Lord, grant me
wealth, store, and treasure, a loving son.'

Whatever the King wished for he got, not one hope remained
unfulfilled.
His house wasn't blessed with a son, so for that, he had prayed
to the Lord. [14]

rājā mādira pūta autārā | ati sarūpa dhana sirajanaḥārā ||
 sasihara janu pūniū kara ahā | bhari ujiāra jagata mahā rahā ||
 rājaī pūta distī bhari dēkhā | bhā anamda asa āva na lēkhā ||
 karama jōti mani dipai lilārā | lakhana batīsau rājakumārā ||
 pamdita au budhivamta hākārē | rāsi ganahu au nakhata unhārē ||
 gani guni dēkhahu patrī janama ki kauna garaha dahū suddha |
 nāū dharahu niramala uttima kai lakhana dēkhī au buddha ||

[15]

bāñbhana baiṭhi ganai saba lāgē | rāsi ganahī dahū karama sabhāgē ||
 ganī rāsi bāda rājā hōi | ehi sari aura na pūjai kōi ||
 tulā rāsi gani nāū so rākhā | rājakūvara saba pāḍitanha bhākhā ||
 bahuta garaha unha uttima ganēn | kuchu re garaha āhahī sāmanēn ||
 tinhā gani guni pāḍitanha kaha sōi | tia biōga kara kuchu dukha hōi ||
 dai re asīsa jōtikhī bahurē pāinhi bahuta pasāu |
 dhana parivāra kuṭuba seū sampati juga juga jīau rāu ||

[16]

The Birth of the Prince

A son was born in the King's palace,
 very handsome, the Creator be blessed!
 He stayed in the world, filling it with light
 like the shining moon at its full.
 The King looked at him, filling his glance.
 He was so happy it cannot be described!
 His son was a Prince with all thirty-two signs,¹
 and his forehead shone with a gem, the fate-line.
 The King called for pandits and wise men,
 to read the stars, to count the constellations.
 The King said, 'Reckon, count, and draw his horoscope,
 marking the auspicious houses.
 Considering his good points and intelligence, choose a stainless
 name for him, the best!' [15]

The Astrologers

The Brahmins sat down and began to count.
 They reckoned the signs of the zodiac,
 and if the Prince's karma was favourable.
 'According to his sign, God will make him a king,
 and no one will be able to best him.'
 They considered his sign, Libra, and chose a name.
 All the pandits said, 'His name is Rājkunvar, Prince.
 They reckoned as excellent many of his houses,
 but some of them were quite adverse.
 Counting and calculating, they predicted, 'He'll suffer
 some sorrow of separation from a woman!'

The astrologers blessed him, received many rewards from the
 King, and returned.
 May the King live for aeons, endowed with these riches, with
 this family and clan!' [16]

rājaī dhāinha āisa dīnhāñ | pālahu bēgi jo hama kahā cīnhāñ ||
 dhāinha asa kai khīra piāvā | barisa devasa mahā bacana sunāvā ||
 barisa pānca mahā bhaeu savāi | rājaī pāditanha kahā bolāi ||
 tumhā saba ehi kahā guna sikhāvahu | paḍhi orāi tau bāna bijhāvahu ||
 pamṛdita āi paḍhāvai lāgē | jō kuchu guna tehi cita mahā jāgē ||
 dasa re barisa mahā pamṛdita asa bhā pōthā bānca purāna |
 hēnguri khēla bējha bhala mārai nagara catura sujāna ||

[17]

ati budhivamta uṭhā bhala nāūñ | saba dēkhahi āvahī ohī ṭhāūñ ||
 karai ahēra sāvaja māra | rāti devasa ohi ihai dhamāra ||
 eka devasa jau ahērēñ jāi | jana rāuta sāga lihisi bolāi ||
 saba kahā parohana dītihī ānīñ | pīthi ghāli pākhara sonavāññ ||
 bhai asavāra sātha saba calē | rājapūta rupavamta jo bhalē ||
 rahasata calē sātha jo kūvara kē khēlai lāga ahēra |
 sāvaja bahuta uṭhē tehi bana mahā hōi lāga bhaṭabhēra ||

[18]

The Wise Men

The King commanded the royal Nurses,
 'Nurture him quickly, so that he grows up
 to be just like his father!' The Nurses
 fed him their milk with such care
 that in a year and a day, he was speaking words!
 Within five years, he had outgrown his peers.
 The King had wise men summoned before him.
 'All of you must teach him everything,
 to read and to recite the holy scripture aloud.'
 The pandits came and began to teach him,
 awakening in his mind its innate virtues.

At just ten years, he was a great scholar, and could read the holy
 scripture correctly.

He played polo, learnt to hit the mark, and became a man about
 town, clever and smart. [17]

Prince Rājkunvar

The Prince was intelligent and his name was famous.
 People would come to that place to see him.
 He began to hunt and to kill wild animals.
 Night and day, hunting was his game.
 One day, when he went off to the hunt,
 he assembled a company of nobles and retainers.
 Everyone was given horses to ride on
 with gilded armour on their backs.
 All rode out accompanying the Prince,
 noble Rajputs, handsome and good.

Everyone went along rejoicing, all happy to hunt with Prince
 Rājkunvar.

Many wild animals came out, and the forest rang with blows
 and cries. [18]

bēgara bēgara saujanha sātha | sārāga bāna phōka lai hātha ||
 rājakūvara phuni bēgara parā | nirakhisi sāuja caracai kharā ||
 barana sāta eka mirigī dēkhī | apanē jarama na kahiau pēkhī ||
 kahisi kuramgini jarama na hōi | cūrā nēura pahirē sōi ||
 jau saba abharana pahirēn sāmāṇ | rēngi calī jānaū bhali rāmāṇ ||
 dēkhi acābhau rāu raha phuni re calāisi ghōra |
 kahisi bāna haū kā ehi māraū utari dharaū hathajōra ||

[19]

chādisi ghōra dharai ohi cahā | dēkhata rūpa pēma cita gahā ||
 mana mahā kahisi niara hoi dharaūn | hātha na āva tauhi pai maraūn ||
 kara gahi dharaū niara aba āī | taraki kuramgini calī parāī ||
 hātha malai au jia pachatāī | calī kuramgini cētaka lāī ||
 caḍhā turamga sātha ohi lāgā | kēsari rūpa miriga phuni bhāgā ||
 jōjana sāta miriga kē pāchēṇ parā jāi jo akēla |
 bēgara parā sātha seū kūvara lōga jāna vaha khēla ||

[20]

The hunters spread out after their prey,
 carrying bows of horn and feathered arrows.
 Then the Prince was parted from the company.
 He saw a creature and stood there thinking.
 In the distance was a seven-coloured doe,
 such as he had never seen in his life.
 He said, 'That cannot possibly be a doe
 by birth - she wears bangles and ankle-bells!
 That dark one wears ornaments of gold,
 and she walks like a beautiful woman.'

The Prince looked at the marvel, pausing for a moment, then
 spurred on his horse.
 He thought, 'Should I kill it with an arrow? Or dismount and
 capture it by force?' [19]

He abandoned his horse and wanted to catch her.
 When he saw her beauty,² love seized his heart.
 He thought, 'Let me get nearer and seize her!
 I'll die if I cannot get that beautiful doe.
 When I get near her, I'll catch her with my hands!'
 But the doe skipped away and evaded him.
 He rubbed his hands in disappointment,
 began to rue in his heart the spell she had cast.
 He mounted up again and followed her close,
 but the saffron-coloured doe ran away again.

He followed her for seven *yojanas*,³ till he had parted from the
 company.
 The nobles and followers thought he was hunting, but the
 Prince went on alone. [20]

rāu akēla miriga hai jahāñ | tīsara aura na āhai tahāñ ||
 lubudhā pēma kuramgini kērā | budhi bisarī sudhi gai savērā ||
 hariara birikha dīkha eka mahā | mānasarōdaka tehī tara bahā ||
 kūvara saṃgati kuramgini ḍarī | mānasarōdaka bhītara parī ||
 tehi mahā miriga chapāneu āī | bahuri na nikasā gaeu herāī ||
 turia bāñdha taravara seū tatakhana kāpara dharisi utāri |
 bēgi paītha saravara mahā ḍubi ḍubi ḍhūñdhai lāga nihāri ||

[21]

ḍhūñdhai lāga na pāisi cāhā | bisarā sabai jo mana mahā āhā ||
 jaba lagi haū na kuramgini pāvāū | maraū na jiaū ihāhi jiu lāvāū ||
 sudhi bisarī budhi gai herāni | cita mahā gaḍī so pirama kahānī ||
 bisari na jāi citra cita lihī | pāthara mānjha kīra janu kihī ||
 khana khana pēma adhika cita caḍhā | duija caṇḍramā janu so gaḍhā ||
 cāhisi bahuta na pāisi ohi kahā nikasi ṭhāḍha bhā tīra |
 rōvai bahuta ānsu para ānsu kuchau na samūjha sarīra ||

[22]

The Prince and the doe were alone in the forest.
 No third person was around there with them.
 The Prince was enraptured, in love with the doe,
 his intelligence was forgotten, all sense fled at dawn.⁴
 He saw a green tree there, massive,
 with a pure Mānasa lake⁵ flowing beneath.
 The doe feared the nearness of the Prince.
 She sank into the waters of the Mānasarodaka.
 The doe hid herself in the magic mere
 and did not appear again, but was absorbed.

The Prince tied his horse to the tree, quickly disrobed, and put
 his clothes down.
 Swiftly, he jumped into the lake. Sinking in, he began to search,
 looking all around. [21]

The Hunt

He sought her, but did not find any sign.
 He forgot everything but his mind's longing,
 'Until I do not obtain that magic doe,
 I shall not die or live, but give my life here!'
 His senses left him, his intelligence was forgotten.
 The story of love was etched on his mind.
 He could not forget the picture in his thoughts,
 engraved there as if by a nail in stone.
 Minute by minute, love engulfed his mind,
 waxing like the moon of the second of the month.

He longed for her deeply, but could not find her, came out and
 stood on the shore.
 He cried tears upon tears of sorrow and grief, his body bereft of
 sense. [22]

pēma cakhāi gai tehi jōvai | lamka tēki kari ṭhāḍha bahu rōvai ||
 jasa bhādaū barisai ativānīn | saba jaga bharā naina kē pānīn ||
 salilā sabai sarila gai bhai | laghu dīragha jahavān lahi ahī ||
 jasa pāvasa barisai garalāi | khana khana adhika ughari nahi jāi ||
 kahai paṇkha bidhi dēhi uḍāūn | sauna sunaū haū tehi ṭhā jāūn ||
 jhuravai baiṭhi ṭhāḍha hoi kuchau na āva bicāra |
 lōga kuṭuba gharabāra tehi re lagi bisarā saba saīsāra ||

[23]

She gave him a taste of love, then left,
 The Prince sought her, then, leaning his back
 against the tree, he stood and wept copiously.
 As when the rainy month, Bhādon,⁶ pours down,
 just so, his eyes filled the world with water.
 All his tears became flowing streams,
 great and small, from wherever they came.
 Just as the rainy month pours and thunders,
 his eyes rained more every second, never tiring.
 He prayed, 'God, give me wings,
 that I may fly wherever I hear she lives!'
 Burning with longing, he stood up and sat down, unable to
 think of anything at all.
 He left his home, his family and other people, for her sake he
 forgot the world. [23]

khēlata sabai ahērā jahān | rājakūvara nahi dēkhahī tahān ||
 ēka ēka kahā pūṇchāi bāta | kāhūn dēkhā jōjana sāta ||
 kahisi miriga kēn pāchē jāi | tumhahū calahu jani parai bhulāi ||
 ḫhūṇḍhata calā sātha saba kōi | rājakūvara **dahū kehi** ṭhān hōi ||
 dēkhinhī ēka birikha ati harā | mānasarōdaka tehi tara bharā ||
 parasa ghāṭa saba bāṇḍhē raci raci īngura phatika rasāi |
 kausīsa rāvāṭa phuni lāgā dēkhi pāpa jhari jāi ||

[24]

The company at the hunt could not see the Prince
 anywhere near where they were hunting.
 One asked another, and the other said,
 'Someone saw him seven *yojanas* away.
 The Prince went chasing after a doe.
 You go after him, he may be quite lost!'
 Everyone set out on the search together,
 hoping to find the Prince somewhere.
 They came upon a tree, very green,
 under it, a magic lake full of water.
 Philosopher's stones made up all its ghats, constructed carefully
 with red lead and crystal.
 Lapis lazuli was inlaid on its ramparts. All sins were destroyed
 on seeing that lake. [24]

sujhara pāni dēkhata ati cōkhā | piata rahai nahi ēkau dōkhā ||
 bēnāñ bāsa piata ati mīthā | ambrita aisa na jaga mahā dīthā ||
 sītala sēta ampha kara rūpā | pañka kapūra sunahu so anūpā ||
 phūlē bahuta kāvala tahā ahā | lubudhā bhāvara pēma kara gahā ||
 phūlī kumudini saghana sohāī | sasi pirīti jā saū gara lāī ||
 cakaīñ cakavā hañsa kēli kara dēkhata ati re sohāva |
 birikha apūruba kāha sarāhaū kei bhagavamta so lāva ||

[25]

kadali pēda dārīñ chatanārīñ | ambrita sīncēñ kei re sāvāri ||
 harē pāta saba kōpala naēñ | ati cikanō arasi seū bhaēñ ||
 janu rājā para dāmbara tānāñ | tinhā tara baiṭha dēkha unha rānāñ ||
 utarē sabai niara cali āē | kai johāra sira bhuī lai lāē ||
 āi baiṭhi saba pūchahī bātā | sāñvara barana bhaeu kehī rātā ||
 kāvala bhānti dina bigasata dina dina jasa nisa ūe mayamka |
 rōvai cēta na cētai binu sudhi dabba gaēñ jimi rampka ||

[26]

The Water

The clear pure water was very beautiful to see.
 No fault remained in the one who drank from the lake.
 Its water was sweet, scented with vetiver!
 Such nectar had never been seen in the world.
 White and cool was that lake's beauty,
 its mud was camphor. Listen, it was matchless!
 Many lotuses blossomed in its water.
 Black bees hovered, drunk, caught by love.
 White water-lilies flowered, dense and beautiful,
 in love with the moon's bright light.

Cakas, cakīs⁷ and geese played love-games, so very pleasing to
 behold.
 How can I praise its peerless trees? Did some fortunate man
 plant them? [25]

The Trees

Plantains⁸ spread their parasols on the lake's shore,
 watered with nectar. Who had taken care of them?
 Their leaves were green and tender, just sprouted,
 fresh new leaves shining like little mirrors.
 The palms shaded the Prince like a glittering canopy.
 The nobles saw him sitting underneath.
 They dismounted and approached him,
 salaamed and touched their foreheads to the ground.
 They all sat around him and asked him,
 'Why has your high colour turned black?
 With whom have you fallen in love?

Like a lotus, you blossom every day, and, at night, you wax with
 the deer-marked moon.'
 But he wept senselessly, his mind did not work; his wealth was
 gone, like a beggar's. [26]

utara na dēi pēma gada lītā | sravana na sunaī nēha para cītā ||
 phuni re kahinhi hama āisa hōi | jō manasā cita puravahī sōi ||
 kahisi miriga hama āgēn āvā | barana sāta eka bhāi dekhāvā ||
 sīnga jarē kā kahaū savāngā | galēn hāra gajamōtinha māngā ||
 nēura cūrā ghūghurū ahē | naina sarūpa jāhī nahi kahē ||
 camcalā capala calata khana jānahu calī uḍāi |
 dēkhata pai bana kahai na āvai ehī mahā gai bilāi ||

[27]

kahisi sīgāra sapūrana kihē | bahutai chōha rūpa bahu lihē ||
 bāraha abharana pahira sāvārī | ati sarūpa bhara jōbana bhārī ||
 sō hama dēkhata ehī mahā gai | aisa na jānai dahū kā bhai ||
 yaha asi bāta jāi nahi kahī | vaha apaccharā imdra ki ahī ||
 utħahu calahu ghara khēlata jāhīn | pitā bājhu tumhā jī'haī nāhīn ||
 kahā tumhāra na pāraū mēñtai jau ghaṭa mahā jiu hōi |
 jiu lai gai kayā pai dēkhia naina rāhē pātha jōi ||

[28]

The Prince Speaks

The Prince did not reply. He'd quaffed love's poison.
 His ears were deaf, his mind was on love.
 They asked him, 'Order us, and we will do
 whatever we can to fulfill your mind's desire.'
 Then he replied, 'A doe came before me,
 showing me seven colours at once.
 Her horns were encrusted with jewels –
 how can I describe their splendid show?
 She wore a necklace of rare pearls,
 precious, taken from elephants' foreheads.⁹
 She wore bangles and anklets, and tinkling bells.
 Her eyes were lovely beyond all words.

Lively and frisky, she walked with such grace that she almost
 seemed to fly.
 One could only watch, and not speak words. Into this lake she
 vanished! [27]

'She had adorned herself in all sixteen ways,¹⁰
 and walked with grace and beauty.
 She wore all the twelve ornaments,¹¹
 was very well-formed and lovely, in her prime.
 As soon as she saw me, she went in here,
 then I do not know what happened to her.
 This is not a matter I can express in words:
 she must have been a nymph from Indra's heaven!
 They said, 'Rise now, let's go home playing!
 Your father cannot live without you.'

Rājkunvar replied, 'If life remained in my body, I could not go
 against your words.
 She took my life, only my body can be seen, my eyes will stay
 focused on her path.' [28]

kūvara bāta unha saū asa kahī | sagalenha kē jiā cimtā gahī ||
 saba āpuna mahā mātā karāhīn | kūvarahi chādi kahān hama jāhīn ||
 kūvarahi bahuri lāga samujhāvai | pēma gahā vaha cita na dolāvai ||
 kahisi cādi jau tumhā hai mōrī | paithahu dhūndhai kāpara chōrī ||
 dhūndhai paithē kūvara jo kahā | nikasē dhūndhi kuchau nahi ahā ||
 bahuri lāga samujhāvai saba mili baiṭhi kūvara kē pāsa |
 kaunihu bhānti na samujhai lubudhā lēi ūbhi kai sānsa ||

[29]

kahā tumhāra āhi anu bhalā | binu jiu kahahu jāi keū calā ||
 rōvai bahuta sarila saba lōhū | jō re dēkha tehi uthai marōhū ||
 jaba lagi cāha na ohi kī pāvaū | maraū iñhān pai cita na dolāvāū ||
 kahinhi kāha kasa kījai tāsu | dhāvana pathaia rājā pāsu ||
 kāgala lihi dai bātau kahī | jō saba bāta iñhān kī ahi ||
 calā bēgi tahā jāi tulānān kaha rājā saū bāta |
 kahahu kahān āhai kehi ṭhān ihā hutu jōjana sāta ||

[30]

The Prince's Words

When the Prince said such words to them,
 worry gripped all of them in their hearts.
 They took counsel amongst themselves,
 'How can we leave the Prince here and go?'
 They tried hard to persuade him, but he
 would not be moved, since love had seized him.
 He said, 'If you're so concerned about me,
 jump in and find her, leave your clothes here.'
 At the Prince's request, they entered the lake to search.
 They came out, saying, 'There's nothing there!'
 Then the company tried to convince him to return home,
 sitting in a group near him.
 But he would not be persuaded by any means, and sighed only
 for his lost love. [29]

The Prince's Reply

The Prince said, 'What you say is true, and right,
 but tell me, how can one go anywhere without one's life?'
 He cried rivers, his eyes flowing blood.
 Whoever saw him was moved to compassion.
 He said, 'Until I find some trace of her, or news,
 I'll die here, but I won't let my mind waver!'
 They said, 'What shall we do with him?
 Let a runner be sent to inform the King'
 They took paper and wrote down everything,
 everything that had happened here.
 The runner went post-haste and reached the King, and gave
 him all the news.
 The King said, 'Tell me where he is, at what place?' 'He is seven
 yojanas from here, Sire!' [30]

sunī bāta dukha bhā sukha bhāgā | rājaī turia bēgi kai māngā ||
 nagara jahāŋ lahi mānusa ahā | calā sabai ēkau nahi rahā ||
 bhai asavāra rāu au rānā | pahara ēka mahā āi tulānā ||
 rājā dēkhi acam̄bhau rahā | badana cānda janu gahanē gahā ||
 mūrati bharama chayā pai rahī | kayā anala birahānala ḍahī ||
 kahahu kāha kasa dēkheku apūruba jō cita rahā na jāi |
 rōvai bahuta bāta nahi āvai saūri saūri pachatāi ||

[31]

rājā pūcha kahahu hama bātā | dēkhehu kāha kāhi jiu rātā ||
 dēkheū sōi jāi nahi kahī | uhai bāta gahi cita mahā rahī ||
 dēkheū ēka kuram̄gini mahā | sauna na suneū kahaū dahū kahā ||
 sō jiu lai gai kayā bhulānīn | ana na rūca bhāvai nahi pānīn ||
 disti rahī tehī māraga lāgī | jehī māraga vaha gaī sabhāgī ||
 paṇtha nihārata tāhi kara lōina khīnīn jōti |
 jeū jala cāhai svānti kara sāira sīpahi mōti ||

[32]

The King's Foreboding

When the King heard these words
 he was sad, and his happiness fled.
 He sent for his steed without delay.
 All the people of the town went
 along with him, not one stayed home.
 All the King's vassals and nobles rode out,
 within one watch of the day they reached that place.
 The King remained looking at the marvel,
 his son's moon-face seized by an eclipse.
 His form was just a suspicion of a shadow,
 his body burnt up by separation's fire.
 'Tell me what you saw, so unprecedented, that's in your
 consciousness and will not leave?'
 But the Prince cried unceasingly, silently; he remembered
 constantly, and mourned. [31]

The King Asks Some Questions

The King asked his son, 'What's the matter?
 What did you see, whom does your heart long for?'
 The Prince replied, 'I cannot tell you
 what I saw, and that is the very thing
 that has seized my consciousness.
 I saw a great doe, so grand that my ears
 have never heard of such a one before,
 but what can I say? She took away my life
 and left my lifeless body here forgotten.
 I do not like food or water any more.
 My vision stays watching her path,
 the path on which she vanished, that fortunate one!
 Watching the path for her to come has darkened the light
 of my eyes. I wait
 like the pearl shell in the ocean, who longs for the constellation
 Svāti's rain!'¹² [32]

rājaī kahā bāta sunu mōri | ehī re bāta āhai budhi thōri ||
 miriga na pāniṇ mānjha herāi | sapana ki sautuka dēkhehu āi ||
 uṭhi ghara calahu sātha hoi mōrēn | nāhī ta hamahū maraba sāga tōrēn ||
 kahā tumhāra kahahu sō mānaū | jō kuchu kahahu so saba paravānaū ||
 hama binu khānga na rāja tumhārēn | juga rājā sira chānha hamārēn ||
 ati budhivānta sabai guna jānahu tumhā asa pitā na āna |
 sō upakāra kahaū haū tumhā seū jehī ghaṭa rahai parāna ||

[33]

The King said, 'Listen to me now.
 This is where you are being stupid.
 A doe could not vanish into the water!
 Did you see that face-to-face, or in a dream?
 Get up and come home with me now,
 otherwise I shall kill myself here with you!
 Say what you want, and I will accept it.
 Whatever you tell me, I will fulfill it all!
 He said, 'Without me there's no lack in your kingdom.
 Rāja of the age, our heads rest in your shade!
 You are very wise, and know all virtues; no one else could match
 you as a father!
 I am telling you the only stratagem through which life can
 remain in my body.' [33]

The Prince's Prayer

'I entreat you, father, grant my wish.
 Build me a palace at this lakeside.
 Tell them to build it in such a way
 that in it flows the water of the Mānasa lake!'
 The King sent for his Negīs,¹³ his trusty servants,
 'Build a matchless palace by the lake!
 This is the royal command of the Prince.
 Do what he wants without delay!'
 The Negīs said, 'We'll fulfill your wishes
 to the furthest limit of our abilities!'
 The King wrote a charter and his command
 was proclaimed publicly through the land.
 'Young men and old must remain to attend this muster. No one
 is excused.'
 He gave this order and went back to town, leaving the worry to
 the Negīs. [34]

māngāu ihai bāta suni lēhū | mādira ucāi māna para dēhū ||
 kahahu bhānti asa mādira ucāvai | mānasarōdaka jehī mahā āvai ||
 rājaī nēginha kahā bolāi | bhauna apūruba dēhu ucāi ||
 ihai rajāisa kūvarahī kērā | jō re kahahī tehi lāga na bērā ||
 jahā lagi hama āisa paravānān | pātī likhī dēsa bhai ānān ||
 bāra būḍha saba āisa līnhēn rahai na kōi jāi |
 rājā calā nagara kahā phiri kai nēginha cimtā lāi ||

[34]

dēsa lōga kahā paṭhai pātī | bēgi āu kou rahai na jātī ||
 bāra būḍha jahavān lahi ahā | bēgi āva ghara kōu na rahā ||
 thavaī baḍhai aura lohārū | āe patheriā au cunahārū ||
 āe sonāra jo ḍhārai pānī | citra citērā ati re binānī ||
 karavatiā bahu āe kūdērā | mādira ucāvata lāga na bērā ||
 sutianha nēū ghāli dekharāi mādira uṭhai bahu bhānti |
 āpana āpana kāja sāvārahī baiṭhē pāntinha pānti ||

[35]

khāḍa ūpara khāḍa sāta ucāē | dharē jharōkhā ati re sohāē ||
 cāri paūri caturamga sāvarīn | jānu cahūn disi sajīn aṭārīn ||
 tinhā ūpara caukhāḍi sāvāri | kanaka pāni au īngura ḍhārī ||
 bhāratha rāma ramāina cītā | rāvana hari rāma ghara sītā ||
 kanha sahāsa sōlaha saū gōpī | āgada jāṅgha lāmka mahā rōpī ||
 kathā nēha saba jhāri urēhi eka eka anavana bhānti |
 simgha miriga kastūri urēhē sāvaja pāntinha pānti ||

[36]

The Command for a Palace

A royal proclamation was issued to the populace,
 'Come quickly, no caste should be left out!'
 The old and the young, as many as there were,
 came quickly, and no one stayed at home.
 Builders, carpenters, and ironsmiths came,
 and stone-cutters and workers in stucco.
 Goldsmiths came, experts at gilding,
 and painters of pictures, extremely talented!
 Sawyers came, and those who turn the lathe.
 It took no time to build the palace.

The mensurers mapped out the foundation with cords. A pālace
 arose, manifold.
 Everyone did their appointed task beautifully, sitting there row
 upon row. [35]

The Palace

They lifted up seven stories upon stories,
 and set in carved windows, exquisite.
 They fashioned four four-stepped stairs,
 like broad balconies facing the four directions.
 Over them, they put a four-cornered pavilion,
 gilding it with gold leaf and red lead.¹⁴
 They painted scenes from the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*,
 Rāvana's seizing Sītā from Rāma's home.
 They depicted Kṛṣṇa, with sixteen thousand *gopīs*,
 and Angada girding his loins in Lāṅkā.

All the stories of love were depicted there, each one matchless
 in its own way.
 Lions, antelope, muskdeer they painted, and wild game, row
 upon row. [36]

bhiū urēhā kīcaka māra | lihā dusāsana bhujā upāra ||
 lēhā bharathari au pīgalā | jehī biōga jōgi sāga calā ||
 arajuna rāhu bēdha jasa kītā | kaūrau māri durapadī jītā ||
 riga juga sāma atharabana ānān | pādīta sahadēva lihā sayānān ||
 jahā lahi nānca pēkhanān ahē | binu dēkhēn mohī jāhī na kahē ||
 uhai kuramgini citra urēhī jei ati kia apakāra |
 dēkhi dēkhi tehi rōvai sābharai jīvana uhai adhāra ||

[37]

sāvarai tāhi jo dēkhisi ahā | rōva bahuta sāga kōu na rahā ||
 dhāi ēka āchai tehi thāin | ghēri mōha kuchu kahai bujhāin ||
 khana eka dhāi bāta cita lāvai | phuni jiu jāi jahān ohi pāvai ||
 sūni kayā nahi jiu ghaṭa mahān | pavana kuramgini dēkhisi jahān ||
 käma bāna bēdhā na sābhārai | japai kuramgini khinu na bisārai ||
 nisi bāsara bibi taisehī khana eka dōsara cita na karāi |
 cita mahamāta gayamda jeū kaisehū utari na jāi ||

[38]

The Picture-Pavilion¹⁵

They painted Bhīma and his killing of Kīcaka,
 and the way he had broken the arms of Duḥśāsana.
 They showed King Bharatrhari and his Piṅgalā,
 separated from whom he went off with the yogis.
 Arjuna's feat was there, when he pierced the fish,
 and his winning Draupadī by killing the Kauravas.
 They depicted Sahadeva, the wise pandit,
 and brought in the *Rg-veda*, *Yajus*, *Atharva*, and *Sāma*.
 As many dances and spectacles as existed were there,
 but since I never saw them, how can I recount them?
 There they drew pictures of the magic doe that had so afflicted
 their Prince.
 He'd look at her again and again, weep, then collect himself, for
 she was his life's support. [37]

The Prince is Sorrowful

He remembered only what he had seen.
 He cried piteously, and stayed there alone.
 A Nurse of his was there, in that very place.
 In the grip of affection for the Prince,
 she would try to counsel him patiently.
 For a moment, he would pay attention to his Nurse.
 Then his soul went to where he might find her.
 His body was empty, for his soul had left.
 He was where he'd seen the doe of the wind.¹⁶
 The arrow of the God of Love¹⁷ had pierced him.
 He could not recover, but repeated constantly
 the doe's name, not forgetting her for an instant.
 Night and day he stayed absorbed, and did not think of any
 other in his mind.
 His mind was a maddened Indra among elephants, from which
 he could not dismount! [38]

bhādaū maghā naina barisāī | bana jalahara bharipūri rahāī ||
 nisi ādhīārī tehi binu lāgai | sēja na bhāva raini saba jāgai ||
 dāmini chayā naina tara āvai | dharai cāha dahū kahā kata pāvai ||
 mādira sūna sāga sātha na kōī | dādura samgha rarahī pai sōī ||
 cātika piu piu jalahī pukārai | vaha biōga bēdhā na sābhārai ||
 lāi naina dui barakhā ugharahī barisai gahira gābhīra |
 naina salila mahā dūbaū daia lāu pai tīra ||

[39]

mānha tusāra na lāgai dēhā | biraha āgi jari bhaeu so khēhā ||
 nisi narimāda saba ṭhāḍha pukārai | lōina läva na rasanāñ hārai ||
 kāma āgi upajī tana sētīñ | kahā tusāra kahā jōgata ētīñ ||
 kōsa bīsa eka tehi saū bhāgai | rahai ta jarai bhasama hoi lāgai ||
 biraha āgi aisī parajari | siu yaha parāna puhumi saba harī ||
 rāvana lamka jari bujhī yaha kaisehū na bujhāi |
 jehī kārana yaha lāgī sarira tehī bhēñtai tau jāi ||

[40]

The Rains

In Bhādon, his eyes rained like the constellation Maghā.¹⁸
 The forest and lake remained full of water.
 Without her, the night seemed very dark to him.
 He did not like his bed, and stayed awake all night.
 The lightning flashed under his eyes' shadow.
 He was watching; where and how could he get news?
 His palace was empty, and no one was with him.
 His only companions were the frogs, who croaked.
 The cātaka¹⁹ in the water cried 'Pī! Pī!'
 Pierced by separation, he could not bear any more.

Both the Prince's eyes rained heavily, showering
down long and hard.

'I shall drown in the water of my tears, may providence could
carry me across!' [39]

Winter

The month of frost didn't even touch his body.
 The fire of separation burnt him to a cinder.
 The King stood there all night calling to him,
 eyes fixed on him, tongue never tiring.
 But his body emitted the flame of desire.
 How could the hoarfrost match that fire?
 Winter ran about twenty *kosas*²⁰ away from him.
 If it stayed with him, winter would get burnt!
 The fire of separation blazed up so high,
 that the cold fled and the earth was all green again.
 Rāvana's Laṅkā burnt and went out, but this fire could not be
quenched at all.
 He'd only be at ease when he met her, the one for whom his
body suffered. [40]

Summer

jhārā ||
jiā ||
erānī ||
anēhā ||
hōi ||
arāna |
ōrāna ||

The month of Jeth² was burning, as though
it were raining sparks, but he did not use
sandal paste on his body, nor take any care.
Nor would he drink cool sugar-water.
God knows how he lived through it!
The hot summer wind blew, but for him
it was merely the form of his beloved.
He directed his eyes to the place where he'd lost her.
Cold and heat can only touch the limbs
of the one whose frame is without love.
Only if one's soul yet remains in one's body
can one feel the heat or the cold weather.

[41]

She had stolen his soul, to whom could he now explain why
his body lay lifeless?

The six seasons and the twelve months passed, all the days
of a year went by. [41]

Endnotes

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1. *thirty-two signs*: these are the traditional Indian *lakṣaṇas* or signs of royal birth, and include auspicious marks on the Prince's body like the wheel (*cakra*) and the conch (*sankha*).

2. *beauty*: Qutban here uses the key word *rūpa*, beauty or form, which is a calque of the Ar. *jamāl*, beauty, one of the attributes of Allah. The word is used here to indicate the beauty of the magic doe, but can also mean form or embodiment, and has both theological and aesthetic dimensions.

3. *yojana*: a measure of distance equivalent to four *krosas* (Hind. *kosa*), eight or nine miles.

4. *at dawn*: a coded reference to the beginning of the Prince's illumination, the dawning of awareness.

5. *Mānasalake*: A key element of the symbolic landscapes of the Hindavi Sufi romances, signifying the lake of the mind in the subtle body of the seeker.

6. *Bhādon*: Bhādon is the sixth month of the Indian calendar, occurring around the same time as the European month of August, marked by heavy rains, storms and dark clouds.

7. *cakas, cahis*: a large orange-brown duck and its female, also called the sheldrake or Brahminy duck (*Anas casarca*, Sanskrit *cakravāka*). They mate

in couples, and are traditionally supposed to be separated at night. They are thought to mourn until they meet their mates in the morning.

8. *Plantains*: these signify that this place is a *kadalī-vana*, a plantain or banana forest, indicating a place of ascetic mortification in Indian devotional traditions.

9. *elephants' foreheads*: elephants are believed to have precious pearls, *gajamotī*, inside the recesses of their foreheads. In the symbolic grammar of the genre, these signify pearls of mystical awareness.

10. *all sixteen ways*: these are the 16 ways that a woman could adorn herself to look beautiful, the traditional Indian *solah singār*. The 16 kinds of make-up are: (1) *dāntan*, 'tooth-brush'; (2) *manjan*, 'tooth-powder'; (3) *ubtan*, 'cosmetic paste' made of gram flour or barley meal for softening and cleaning the skin; (4) *sindūr*, 'vermilion' for the forehead and parting of the hair; (5) *kesar*, 'saffron', also for the forehead; (6) *anjan*, 'antimony' or 'collyrium', kohl for the eyes; (7) *bindī*, 'dot, mark, or spangle ornamenting the forehead'; (8) *tel*, 'hair-oil'; (9) *kaṅghī*, 'comb'; (10) *argajā*, 'perfume'; (11) *pān*, 'betel' for reddening the lips; (12) *missī*, 'dark paint for the teeth and lips'; (13) *nīl*, 'indigo' for tattooing; (14) *meñhdī*, 'henna' for the hands and feet; (15) *phūl*, 'flowers' for the hair; (16) *altā*, 'red dye' or 'lac,' an insect-based extract used to paint the feet red.

11. *the twelve ornaments*: these are the traditional 12 ornaments (*bārabā abbarana*), viz., (1) *nūpur* or *pāzēb*, 'ankle-bells'; (2) *kardhāni* or *kiṅkinī*, 'waist-belt with little bells'; (3) *cūdi*, 'bangle'; (4) *angūtī*, 'ring'; (5) *kangan*, 'bracelet, thick bangle'; (6) *bāzūband* or *bijāyatā*, 'tied or linked armlet'; (7) *hār*, 'long necklace'; (8) *kanthā-sī*, *kanthā* or *kanthī*, 'choker, large or small'; (9) *besar* or *nāth*, 'nose-ring'; (10) *karna-phūl* and *biryā* or *bundā*, 'ear-studs and pendant earrings'; (11) *tikā*, 'forehead ornament, usually hung in the parting of the hair'; (12) *sīs-phūl*, 'head-ornament, usually made of gold and jewels, patterned variously like a flower, circle, or paisley, etc.'

12. *I wait ... Svāti's rain*: this refers to the star Arcturus, which forms the fifteenth lunar asterism. When the moon is within the constellation of Svāti, generally in October, raindrops falling into a shell are said to become pearls.

13. *Negīs*: a caste of attendants often entrusted with political and/or matrimonial negotiations.

14. *a four-cornered pavilion ... gold leaf and bright red lead*: this is an extremely significant building, for it encodes several levels of textual and narrative reference, and forms a summary or icon of the Prince's quest itself. In common with the other poets of this tradition, Qutban has concealed the structural principle of allegory in his iconic description of this building, whose form (*rūpa*) encodes the form (*rūpa*) of the quest itself.

15. *The Picture-Pavilion*: this title, supplied by the scribe of the Ekadala manuscript, is the *citra-sārī*, a painted pavilion that the poets of the genre use to indicate images (*mīṣāl*) that encode particular aspects of the Sufi path. Although the title is somewhat redundant, since it is really a painted palace that Qutban is describing, it is notable that the mythological scenes chosen in this and the previous verse have to do with love, valour, and asceticism,

which the poet explicitly reveals as the three *rasas* or 'moods' of his work in the *envoi* to his romance.

16. *the doe of the wind*: the Hindavī here reads, *pavana kurangini*, 'doe of the wind,' which could be a reference to her power of flight (although the Prince has not yet been a witness to this power). Alternatively, the poet could be introducing the key word *pavana*, 'wind,' as a coded reference to the Prince receiving mystical instruction, especially the techniques of breath control and the awakening of the 'airs' of the seeker's subtle body. The latter interpretation is strengthened by 38.5 below, which mentions his constant repetition of the object of desire's name (as is usual for a mantra employed for chanting or meditation).

17. *God of Love*: Kāmadeva, the Indian god of love, is portrayed as a beautiful youth riding on a parrot and armed with a bow of sugarcane, which is strung with a row of bees, and arrows tipped with flowers.

18. *Maghā*: this constellation is the tenth lunar mansion (*nakṣatra*), consisting of five stars, and is prominent during the month of Bhādon.

19. *cātaka*: this is the *papibā*, the pied cuckoo or brain-fever bird (*Cuculus melanoleucus*, Sanskrit *cātaka*) is a grey-brown, pigeon-sized bird which is supposed to live only on raindrops falling from the sky when the constellation Svāti is overhead. It is silent in the winter, but with the approach of the hot season becomes increasingly noisy. Its distinctive call is a loud shriek repeated five to six times rising in crescendo, rendered by Qutban as 'Piu! Piu!' which can mean 'My love! My love!' or, in the proximity of the lake, 'Drink! Drink! I have employed the modern Hindi 'Pi! Pi!', which also carries both meanings.

20. *kosas*: a *kesa* is a measure of distance roughly equivalent to two miles. Four *kosas* make a *yojana*.

21. *Jeth*: this is the hottest month of the year, occurring in May-June, at the height of summer. Traditionally it is also the favoured month for weddings.