

Hikayat Nakhoda Muda.

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"When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband: but in such a 'then' I write a 'never'."

All's Well that Ends Well, Act III, Sc. II.

It was Dr. H. H. Juynboll in his Catalogue of Malay manuscripts in Leiden University Library (p. 171) who pointed out how the plot of Shakespeare's play occurs also in a Malay romance, the *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*.

He might have added that the plot which Shakespeare got from Boccaccio is common in Indian tales. In Mary Stokes' "Indian Fairy Tales", p. 216, a merchant going on a long journey tells his wife that on his return he shall expect to find a well built and a son born. By a trick the woman got money to build the well. Disguised as a milk-maid she met her husband's boat and was taken by him to live on it; when discarded, she went home taking his cap and portrait. Returning from his long journey, the merchant found a well built, a child born and his own cap and portrait—evidence of its parentage. A similar plot occurs in "The Story of Madana Kama Raja", edited by Natesa Sastri, p. 246, and in Knowles' "Folk-Tales of Kashmir", 2nd edition, p. 104 and in Sinhalese folklore,—Parker's "Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon", vol. II, No. 92, pp. 81-2, and vol. III, No. 249, pp. 235-327. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara* of the 11th century Kashmirian poet Somadeva (Tawney's ed. vol. II, p. 620) a Brahman deserts his wife, whereupon she goes to his native town and establishing herself as a courtesan rejects all visitors till her husband unaware of her identity stays with her: she bears him a child who reconciles them.

There are two manuscripts of the Malay tale, (which is also known as *Hikayat Siti Sara*), one at Leiden (Cod. 1763 (1)) written at Batavia in 1825, one in the Batavian Library (Bat. Gen. 77) copied at Macassar in 1814. The plot is summarized by Juynboll (p. 171) as follows. Sultan Mansur Shah of Ghazna (غزنای) dreamt of a princess and sent Husain Mandari and Husain Mandi, sons of his vizier, to search for her. In Batlawi they find Siti Sara who resembles the princess of the Sultan's dream. Sultan Mansur Shah weds the princess but deserts her

for barrenness, sailing off to the island Langkawi with his treasure and a mare. He declares that he will return only when his treasure-chamber shall be refilled, his mare be with foal and his wife with child. Disguised as sea-captain (*Nakhoda Muda*) she visits Langkawi, and beating her husband at chess wins his treasure and his mare. Pretending to be the unfaithful mistress of the sea-captain, she visits the Sultan by night and becomes with child. Then she summons him home, saying that his three vows are fulfilled.

It may be remarked that the Ghaznevid dynasty (976-1186 A.D.) founded in Afghanistan by a Turkish slave ruled for a few years from Lahore to Samarcand and Ispahan, and permanently established Islam in the Punjab: its court in the 11th century formed the rallying-point of all that was best in the literary and scientific culture of the day (A. R. Nicholson's "A Literary History of the Arabs", pp. 268-9). So it would not be surprising to find a Ghaznevid playing a part in an Indian Moslem romance.

The Batavian MS. reads Ajnawi for Ghaznawi, Sahel for Husain Mandari, Nain for Husain Mandi, Patalawe for Batlawi, Birandewa for Langkawi and Bujangga Indramuda for Nakhoda Muda. The names Sahel and Nain show that the story has been confused with the tale of another dream princess, No. 24 in my edition of the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, the Malay version of the Tutti Nameh or "Tales of a Parrot".

This identification is corroborated by a third version of the *Hikayat Nokhoda Muda* in a Batavian MS. of the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (Collectie v.d. Wall 173, No. LXIX, v. Ronkel's Cat., pp. 82-84), where it actually takes the place of that story. The name of the king is *عزربوي* of Ghazna. Two sons of a vizier *هياس* and Husain (or *خر*) Mandi go to seek his dream princess and get locked up by an old fellow who mistakes their talk for lunatic raving. The old fellow's daughter, Siti Sara, sends them dainties by her maid Dalimah. They discover in Siti Sara the princess of the king's dream and one of them takes back her portrait to show. The Mantri and the Mangkubumi fetch her to marry the king. One day hunting the king kills a deer and seeing her fawns bewail her thinks of his own childlessness and sails off to the island Birama Dewa. His consort disguised as a sea-captain, under the name of Dabu Janggëla Indra Muda, sails after him, wins at chess his mare, which becomes with foal; then passing herself off as the faithless mistress of the sea-captain whom

she is impersonating sleeps with the king and finally still unrecognized returns him his mare and his ring and departs. She bears a son *سيوالامعفر*. The mare foals. The princess has fulfilled her lord's seemingly impossible conditions that on his return he shall find a son, a foal by his mare, and his ring on his own finger. This recension as outlined in van Ronkel's catalogue, is closer to Shakespeare's version than the two former in that the episode of the ring is mentioned though apparently bungled.

Yet another version of the tale is given in van Ophuijsen's *Maleisch Leesboek*, No. 52. Sultan Mansur Shah ruler of 'Aznawi dreams of a girl standing at a door, holding a fried sheep's liver and dressed in red cloth (*gërim*). The sons of his vizier, Husain Mandari and Husain Mandi, go in quest of her. Like the youth in my version of *Musang Bërnggut* (J. R. A. S., S. B., No. 52, p. 122) they enquire of an old rustic for the house that has no kitchen, call a railless bridge a monkey's bridge, put on their shoes when passing through a stream and open their umbrellas in the forest shade. The rustic's daughter Siti Sarah explains their strange conduct and sends them for several days, by her maid Si-Dëlima, thirty cakes, seven bowls of palm-sugar, and a vessel of water, always giving the same message, "The month has thirty days, the week seven days and the tide is full and not ebbing." One day Si-Dëlima meets a lover, gives him four of the cakes, a bowl of sugar and a drink of water. The sons of the vizier send a return message, "The month lacked four days, the week lacked a day and the tide ebbed before its time." The maid's pilfering is thus revealed by parable to her mistress. Exactly the same episode, with 31 loaves a whole cheese a stuffed cock and a skin of wine instead of the Eastern fare, occurs in a modern Greek tale of a prince who marries a clever village girl skilled in figurative speech. (E. Legrand's "Receuil de Contes Populaires Grecs, Tale IV, Paris 1881, quoted on pp. 276-7 Clouston's "Flowers from a Persian Garden"; cf. Parker *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 112-114 for a clever girl solving enigmas). One day Siti Sarah invites the sons of the vizier to a meal and awaits them at the door clothed in red cloth, with a fried sheep's liver in her hand. They recognize her as the dream princess and despatch her picture to their king, who sends his vizier to Betalawi to fetch her. He marries her, but one day killing a fawn thinks of his childlessness and sails to Langkawi, swearing he will not return till his consort has born a son, his treasuries are full, his mare has foaled and the ring he always wears is found in the palace where he leaves his consort. As in the other versions she follows him, disguised as Nakhoda Muda (from the land of Ardap) and fulfils the hard conditions. In this excellent little version of the tale the parallel with Shakespeare's plot is exact.

Falling in love through a dream is a common incident in Indian romance, e.g. in the *Vasavadatta* by Subhandu, 7th century, (Colebrooke 'Asiatic Researches' vol. X): the motive is found also in Tale XI of my edition of the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, and in that pastiche, the *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*.

The title *Nakhoda Muda* is also given to a Malay romance known too as the *Hikayat Maharaja Bikrama Sakti*. Of this tale there are five manuscripts at Batavia (van Ronkel's "Catalogus", pp. 135-138), one manuscript in the Bibliotheque Royale at Brussels, No. 21512, and a version lithographed at Singapore for the second time in 1900 A.D.: of the tale inset in the Singapore version van Ophuijsen has printed a romanized text, No. 50 in his *Maleisch Leesboek*. The following is an outline of the Singapore text.

Maharaja Bikrama Sakti and his consort Sinar Bulan, daughter of the ruler of Juita, reign over Maha Hairan (or Mihran) Langkawi. They die, leaving a son Maharaja Johan Shah and a daughter Ratna Kemala. The son sets out to travel under the name of Nakhoda Lela Genta, comes to Rumenia (-in the MSS. Rumbia—van Ronkel, p. 135) Island, where pips of the fruit from which the island takes its name, if cast to the ground, spring up immediately as trees. Taking some of the pips he sails to Beranta Indra where reigns Maharaja Dekar (= Pēndekar, 'Champion'—Malayalim) 'Alam, the father of prince Bikrama Indra. There he stakes self and ship on the magic property of the pips; loses his wager and is made a groom. His sister disguised as a sea-captain (*Nakhoda Muda*), with a female crew also disguised, goes in quest of her brother, comes to Rumenia Island, discovers the magic trees and taking pips and soil together sails on to Beranta Indra where her faithful parroquet finds her luckless brother at work as a groom. Staking self and ship on the *rumēnia* pips, she wins and recovers her brother and his ship by sprinkling secretly the spot where the pips are to be sown with soil from their native island. After that she would sail away to Langgadura (= in the MSS. Langga Widura and Langkadura, *ib.*, pp. 136-7) to the court of Sultan Mengindra Sakti, father of prince Dewa Laksana and princess Indra Madani, to ask the hand of the latter for her rescued brother. But the crown prince Bikrama Indra, detains her, suspecting that she is a girl and loving her, though unaware that she is actually his betrothed.

His father tells him how to test her sex but her parroquet overhears all their plots and forewarns her. She does not pick and choose her food; she gambles, heedless as to luck or loss; when jewels are offered to her, she does not select but takes a handful at random; she displays skill at cock-fighting, climbs a tree, plucks flowers carelessly fresh and faded, races on a pony, bandies quatrains, dances, jumps over ditches, and being trapped into retiring to the prince's chamber whiles away the night by telling a tale or rather two tales in one:—

Once a king died, bequeathing each of his three sons a treasure-house (*gudang*) and a magic stone (*kēmala*). The eldest son plots to rob the youngest of his inheritance who resists. The vizier advises them all to take the case before a neighbouring just king. The eldest and second brother travel to his court with a retinue. The youngest on foot and alone encounters a headless corpse and the tracks of a buffalo. Two men ask him if he has met their brother. 'No' he replies, 'but I saw just now the corpse of a confirmed betel-eater with a moustache and black teeth'. Seeing that the corpse is headless, they infer he must have been the murderer and arrest him. Two more men come up and ask if a stray buffalo has been noticed. 'No' replies the prince, 'but I passed the tracks of a toothless old buffalo, blind in the right eye'. They think he must be the thief. He is carried off to prison in the country of the righteous king, who tries the case. The prince explains that he recognized the headless corpse as that of a betel-eater, because the first finger was red and the finger-nails full of lime; his teeth would be black, because the ring finger was black with burnt coconut-shell (*gěrang*): he must have had a moustache because his chest was hairy. As for the buffalo, he was large because his tracks were large, and blind in one eye because he fed only on one side of the path, and toothless because he failed to bite the grass clean. He is acquitted of murder and theft. The just king proclaims that whoever can settle the dispute between the three brother princes shall be made vizier. A merchant's son undertakes the task, choosing the sea-shore for the trial. The eldest prince produces two magic stones and says the third is lost. The judge snatches them, runs off and pretends to throw them into the sea. The eldest prince stands still, the two younger race to save the stones. The judge declares that indifference shows the eldest prince must have had his stone; he lies in denying he ever had one.

The night spent in story-telling, the disguised sea-captain returns to her ship. Her parroquet hears that the next test of sex is to be bathing. She arranges that all shore-boats be made unseaworthy and that her ship shall seem afire as the bathing, which is by her request to be on the shore, begins. At the cry of fire she hurries back to her ship. Other boats follow to help douse the fire but sink. The onlookers from the shore see blazing coconut husk cast overboard, the fire doused and the captain with loosened woman's hair preparing to sail away. Bikrama Indra faints and his father distracted cries, "What mountains do you climb? What plains do you traverse that your ears are deaf to my cries?"

Maharaja Johan Shah marries princess Indra Medani of Langgadura and returns home with his bride and her brother Dewa Laksana. Ninety-nine princes (as in the *Hikayat Indraputra*—Snouck Hurgronje's "The Achehnese" vol. 88, p. 148) come to woo the heroine, Ratna Kemala, their boats meeting at sea "like buffaloes on a plain". Her brother announces that by his father's will his

sister is to marry the archer who can cleave a hair at the first shot. All the suitors fail except Bikrama Indra who thus wins his love:—later the suitors try to wrest her away at sea but are defeated by her husband and his friends after battle in which genies and fairies take part. Dewa Laksana marries Lela Mengerna daughter of Raja Mengindra Dewa of the country of Merta Indra. On pages 80-90 there is a spirited picture of the princess' maids frightened by the parroquet, which reminds one of the comic interludes in such Malay folk-tales as *Awang Sulong* and *Raja Donan*. (Papers on Malay Subjects; Literature II, p. 32: R. O. Winstedt).

This lithographed version would appear to correspond closely with one only of the Batavian MSS. (Collectie v. de Wall 166; van Ronkel' Catalogue CXCIX, p. 137), as in other MSS. the 99 suitors do not occur, Gardan Shah Dewa of the land of Belanta Dewa taking their place and being slain in an attack on Mihran Langgawi.

The episode of the seeds which cast to the ground spring up immediately as trees must be based on the well-known mango trick of Indian conjurers. Another reference to it occurs in the *Ht. Hang Tuah* (Shellabear's ed., Singapore 1909, part III, p. 143) where the hero amuses Kishna Rayana with the trick.

This tale of Maharaja Bikrama Sakti, like the tale of Siti Sara, is evidently from an Indian source. The inseting of a long tale within which is yet another tale is in a fashion which research has shown to be specifically Indian, the sole example of such a device outside Indian influence being Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. ("Encyclopaedia of Islam", No. 4, p. 254, *Alf-laila wa-laila*). Other examples of such inseting of tale within tale in Malay romances translated or adapted from Indian originals are found in the *Hikayat Kalila dan Damina*, the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, the *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, the *Hikayat Puspa Wiraja* (*Bispu Raja*).

Again the winning of a bride by skill at archery is no more Malay than are bows and arrows but it is a common episode in Indian tales and occurs in the Malay version of the *Ramayana* (J. R. A. S., S. B., No. 70, p. 192).

Seeing so many India folktales are now becoming accessible, it is to be hoped that parallels may some day be found for the version of the *Nakhoda Muda* known also as the *Hikayat Maharaja Bikrama Sakti* with its inset tales of the three princes.



Winstedt, Richard. 1921. "Hikayat Nakhoda Muda." *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 83, 104–109.

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