



Three Satires (Clay Sanskrit Library)

Nilakantha, Kshemendra, Bhallata

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The Dark Age Ridiculed, by Níla-kantha, *Beguiling Artistry*, by Ksheméndra, *The Hundred Allegories*, by Bhállata

Written over a period of nearly a thousand years, these works show three very different approaches to satire. Níla-kantha gets straight to the point: swindlers prey on stupidity.

The artistry that beguiles Ksheméndra is as varied as human nature and just as fallible. We are off to a gentle start Sanctimonious—really no more than a warm-up among vices—but soon graduate to Greed and Lust. From there it's downhill all the way, as unfaithfulness leads on to fraud, and drunkenness to depravity; deception and quackery bring up the rear. What's this at the very end? Virtue? A late arrival, pale and unconvincing.

This volume presents three Indian satirists with three different strategies: in the ninth century C.E., Bhállata sought vengeance on his boorish new king by producing vicious sarcastic verse, “The Hundred Allegories;” in the eleventh century, Ksheméndra presents himself as a social reformer out to shame the complacent into compliance with Vedic morality; and in the seventeenth century little can redeem the fallen characters Níla-kantha portrays, so his duty is simply to warn about the corruption of every social type.

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