

*Citranaīṣadham* is a first-of-its-kind Sanskrit short poem (*khaṇḍakāvya*)—a picture-poem (*citrakāvya*) composed entirely in the zig-zag *gomūtrikabandha* pattern. It beautifully ‘paints’ the narrative of Nala and Damayanti’s romance and wedding from the *Nalopākhyāna* of the *Mahābhārata*. The hero and heroine, made to fall in love by a celestial swan, are united in matrimony despite the deities’ attempts to deceive them. The work is a fascinating example of constrained writing.



**Shankar Rajaraman** (1976–) is an allopathic doctor, a psychiatrist, an award-winning Sanskrit poet, and a performer of the *avadhāna* art. He is currently pursuing a doctorate that bridges psychology and Sanskrit poetics at NIAS, Bengaluru. He has been awarded the Badrayan Vyas Samman for the year 2016.

**Ankur Nagpal** (1993–), the Hindi translator, studies Sanskrit at the University of Delhi. He is an active writer and editor in Sanskrit.

“Following the great classical Sanskrit poets who incorporated a *citra* (specialized geometric forms of wording) section in epics like *Śiśupālavadhā* and *Naiṣadhiyacarita*, Dr. Shankar Rajaraman has composed the beautiful *Citranaīṣadham*, not only retelling the classical story of Nala and Damayanti, but also displaying his poetic prowess through the use of *yamaka* and *gomūtrikābandha* forms in his poetic narration. I congratulate him, and hope that he will continue producing more such beautiful poetic creations.”

—Prof. Madhav Deshpande, University of Michigan

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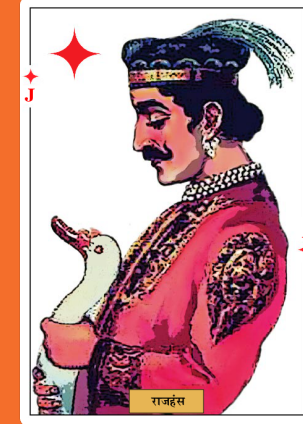
SHANKAR RAJARAMAN



चित्रनैषधम्

*Citranaīṣadham*

The picturesque tale of King Nala



Composition and English translation by  
**Dr. Shankar Rajaraman**

With a Hindi translation by Ankur Nagpal