Judit Törzsök is Lecturer in Sanskrit, Université Charles-de-Gaulle, Lille. She has also translated Rama Beyond Price by Murári.

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“FRIENDLY ADVICE”
BY NĀRĀYĀNA
&
“KING VIKRAMA’S ADVENTURES”

TRANSLATED BY
JUDIT TÖRZSÖK

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PROLOGUE
Aṣṭi Bhāgirathūṭiṁre Pātaliputraṁnāmadhyeyāṁ nagaṁram. tatra sarvajñāṁguṇaṁopetaḥ Sudarśana nāma naraṁpatīr āṣīt. sa bhūpataṁ ekadā keṁ āpi paṭhyamānaṁ ślokaṁdvayaṁ śuṣṭāva.

«aṇekeśaṁśayā'occhedi
darśakam
sarvasya locanāṁ śāstrāṁ;
yasya n' āstya, andha eva saḥ. [10]

yauvaneṁ, dhanāśampattīḥ,
prabhutvam, aṅivektā
ekmāṭam apy anarthaṁ,
kim u yatra caṭuṣṭayam.» [11]

ity ākārṇy ātmanaṁ puṭrānāṁ anādhipataṁśāstrānāṁ, ni-
tyam unāṃśagāmināṁ śāstrāṁjanuṣṭhāneṁ ṗdvignāmaṁ-
nāḥ sa rājā cintayāṁ āśa:

«ko 'ṛthah putreṇa āṭenā
yo na vidvāṁ na dhārmikāḥ?
kāṇena cākṣuśā kim vā?
cākṣuḥpitd' āiva kevalam. [12]

aṅgataṁṛṣṭaṁurkhānāṁ varam ādyau, na c' āntimaṁ;
sakṛddiḍuḥkhaṁkarav ādyāv, antimas tu pade pade. [13]

kim ca,
On the bank of the river Ganges there is a city called Pātalīputra. A king named Handsome once lived there, possessing all the qualities a ruler should. One day he heard someone recite the following two verses:

“Learning resolves countless doubts and reveals what is beyond perception. Learning is the universal eye; without it, you are blind.

Youth, wealth, power and recklessness can each lead to disaster; all the more so when the four are combined!”

When the king heard these words, he became anxious about his sons, who had not received any instruction, always took the wrong path, and followed no good teaching. He then thought:

“What’s the use of a son if he is neither learned nor righteous?—What’s the use of a bad eye? It only causes pain.

Of an unborn, dead or stupid son, the first two would be preferable, for they cause pain only once, but the last does so at every step.

What’s more,
FRIENDLY ADVICE

sa jāto yena jātena yātī vaṃśaḥ samunnatīm.
parivartini samśāre mṛṭaḥ ko vā na jāyate? [14]

gunīgaṇaṇaṇāṁjārambhe
na paṭati kaṭhini suṣaṁbhramād yasya,
ten amṛtā yadi sūṭinī,
vada, vandhyā kidṛṣṭī nāma? [15]
dāne tapasi śaurye ca yasya na prathitaṃ yaśaḥ
vidyāyām arthaśābhe ca, mātṛur uccāra eva saḥ. [16]

0.20 aparāṁ ca,

varam eko guṇī putro, na ca mūrkhāśatāny api.
eka candras tamō hanti, na ca tārāgano 'pi ca. [17]

puṇyaśūṅthe kṛtaṁ yena
tapaḥ kv āpy atiduṣkaram,
tasya putro bhaved vaśyaḥ,
saṁṛddho, dhārmikāḥ, suḍhīḥ. [18]

arthajāgamo, nityam aṭrogiṭā ca,
priyā ca bhāryā, priyavādini ca,
vaśyaḥ ca putro, 'ṛthaṅkarā ca vidyā,
śaj jīvaḷokasya sukhāni, rājaṇ. [19]

ko dhanyo bahubhiḥ putraiḥ kuśul'āpūraṇādhaṅkaiḥ?
varam ekaḥ kulālabi yatā viśrūyate pīta. [20]
PROLOGUE

He whose birth brings higher status to his family has been rightly born. In this ever-revolving transmigration, who is not ordinarily reborn after death?

If a woman can be called a mother even when she has given birth to a son who cannot be counted among the virtuous,* then tell me, whom can you call a barren woman? One who does not distinguish himself by his generosity, asceticism, heroism, learning or wealth is nothing more than his mother’s excrement.

Furthermore,

Better to have a single virtuous son than a hundred fools! One moon destroys darkness, but not even a multitude of stars can do so.

A man who practices strict asceticism in a holy place will have a son who is obedient, prosperous, virtuous and wise.

A large income, perpetual health, a wife who is dear and who speaks pleasantly, an obedient son and money-making know-how—these six are the sources of happiness in this world, O king.

Who is fortunate to have many sons, if they are like measures of grain that fill up the store-house? It is better to have only one who maintains his family and makes his father famous.

*
0.25  ṭaṅkaṁtā pitā satruṁ, mātā ca vyabhicāriṇī,
baṁra ṛpaśati satruḥ, putraḥ satruḥ apanḍitaḥ. [21]

anābhyaśe viṣaṁ vidyā, aśirṇe bhojanaṁ viṣaṁ,
viṣaṁ saṁbhā daridraśya, vṛddhāsya taraṇi viṣaṁ. [22]

yasya kasya prasūto ’pi
guṇāvān pūjyate naraḥ
dhanur vaṁśa/viśuddho ’pi
niriguṇaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati? [23]

hā hā putraka, n’ ādhipaṁ, suगat’, āitāsu rātriṣu;
tenā tvam viduṣaṁ madhye paṅke gaur iva sidasi. [24]

tat katham idānīṁ ete mama putrā guṇavantaḥ kriyant-
tāṁ? yataḥ,

0.30  āhāraṁnirābhayaṁaitthaṁ ca—
saṁyayam etat paśubhir naraṇām.
dharmaṁ hṛṇaṁ paśubhir saṁyayam.
dharmaṁ hṛṇaṁ paśubhir saṁyayam. [25]

dharm’ārthaṁkāmamoksānām
yas’ āiko ’pi na vidyate,
ajaṅgaṁstanasya’ ēva
tasya janma niṁarthakam. [26]
PROLOGUE

A father who incurs debts is an enemy, as is an adulterous mother; a beautiful wife is an enemy, and so is an unlettered son.

Knowledge is poison if it is not maintained by assiduous study; food is poison in the case of indigestion, a large gathering is poison for a poor man, and a young wife is poison for an old husband.

A man of merit, even if he is not of noble descent, is honored. What is the use of a bow without its string, even if it is made of pure bamboo? What can a man without merits do, even if he is of pure warrior descent?

Alas, my child, you have led an easy life, not studying all these nights; so now, when you are in the company of learned people, you will be stuck like a cow in mud.

Now how could I transform my sons into men of merit?

For,

Eating, sleeping, feeling afraid and copulating—these things men have in common with animals. But man distinguishes himself by doing his duties; those who neglect them are like beasts.

The birth of a person who does not succeed even in one of the four life-aims—to fulfill one’s duties, obtain riches, satisfy one’s desires or attain final release—is as useless as a nipple on a nanny-goat’s neck.
FRIENDLY ADVICE

yac c ‘ócyate—

äyuh, karma ca, vittaṃ ca,
vidyā, nidhanam eva ca—
pānc’ āitāny api stṛyante
garbhaṣṭhasy’ āiva dehinaḥ. [27]

kim ca,

0.35 avaśyaṃbhāvino bhāvā
bhavanti mahatām api:
nagnatvam Nilaśaṃṭhasya,
mah’āhiśayanaṃ Hareḥ. [28]

api ca,

yad abhāvī na tad bhāvī, bhāvī cēna na tad anyathā.
iti cintāviṣaaghno ‘yam agadaḥ kim na piyate? [29]

etat kāry’ākṣamāṇāṃ keśāṃ cid ālasya|vacanam.

na daivam api samcintya tyajed udyogam ātmanāḥ;
anṛudyogena tailāni tilebhyo n’ āptum arhati. [30]

0.40 anyac ca,

udyoginaṃ puruṣaśīṃham upaiti Lākṣmīr;
«daivena deyam» iti kāpuruṣā vadanti.
daivaṃ niḥarta kuru puruṣam ātmāśaktyā;
yatne kṛte yadi na sidhyati, ko’tra doṣāḥ? [31]
And it is also said:

One’s life-span, deeds, wealth, knowledge and the moment when one dies—these five are already determined for a mortal when he is in his mother’s womb.

Moreover,

What is destined to take place does take place, even for the great: Shiva, the blue-necked god, cannot help but be naked, and Vishnu has to lie on an enormous snake.

Furthermore,

What is not to happen will never happen, and what has to happen will not be otherwise. Why don’t you use this as an antidote against the poison of worry?

Some people, unable to act, say such words to justify their idleness. However,

One should not give up one’s efforts, even when acknowledging the role of fate; without effort, one cannot obtain oil from sesame seeds.

And there is another verse on this:

Fortune gravitates towards eminent men who work hard; only cowards say it depends on fate. Forget about fate and be a man—use your strength! Then, if you don’t succeed in spite of your efforts, what is there to blame?
yathā hy ekena cakreṇa na rathasya gatir bhavet, evaṃ puruṣākāreṇa vinā daivaṃ na sidhyati. [32]

tathā ca,

pūrvajanmaṅkṛtaṁ karma tad «daivam» iti kathye. tasmāt puruṣākāreṇa yatnaṁ kuryād aṭandritaḥ. [33]

yathā mṛtipiṇḍataḥ kartā kurute yad yad icchati, evam ātmakṛtaṁ karma mānavaḥ pratipadyate. [34]

kākatāliyavat prāptaṁ drṣṭvā āpi nidhim agrataḥ na svayaṁ daivam adatte: puruṣārtham apekṣate. [35]

udyamena hi sidhyanti kāryāṇi, na manoṣrthaiḥ: na hi supṭasya simхаṣya praviṣanti mukhe mrgāḥ. [36]

matāpiṣṭikṛṭaḥbhyaśo guṇītam eti bālakah, na garbhacyutiṁatreṇa putro bhavati paṇḍitaḥ. [37]

mātā śatrulḥ pitaḥ vairi yena bālo na pāṭhitah. na śobhate sabhāmadhye haṃsāmadhye bako yathā. [38]

rūpajyauvanaśampannā viśālaḥkulaśambhavāḥ vidyāhīnā na śobhante—nirgandhā iva kimśukāḥ. [39]
PROLOGUE

Just as a cart cannot move forward on one wheel, so fate itself cannot be fulfilled without human effort.

And in the same way,

“Fate” is the karma one accumulated in a previous life. That’s why one should exert oneself in manly activity, tirelessly.

Just as a potter fashions whatever he likes out of a lump of clay, the karma a man encounters is what he created for himself.

Even if you unexpectedly come across treasure in front of you, fate itself does not pick it up; that needs human effort.

Desired outcomes are achieved through effort alone, not through mere wishes; for gazelles don’t rush into the mouth of a sleeping lion.

A child becomes accomplished if his parents educate him. A son does not become learned just by dropping from the womb.

A mother and a father who do not educate their son are his enemies, for he won’t shine in public—he will be like a crane among swans!

Men who are handsome, young and well-born will not excel without knowledge—they are like kinshuka flowers, which have no scent.
FRIENDLY ADVICE

mūrkhō 'pi śobhate tāvat
sabhāyām vastraśeṣṭih—
tāvac ca śobhate mūrkhō
yāvat kīm cīn na bhāṣate.» [40]

etac cintayitvā, sa rājā pāṇḍitaśabhistam kārita vān. rājī" ovā- ca: «hoh bhoḥ pāṇḍitaḥ, śrūyatām. asti kā cid evam bhūto
vidvān yo mama putrānāṃ nityam unmārga-gāminām an\| adhiṣṭhāṣāstrāṇāṃ idānīm nitiśāstrā śāstraśeṣena punarjana-
ma kārṇiyatāṃ samarthāḥ! yataḥ,

kācaḥ kāñcanaśaṃsargād dhatre mārakatīṃ dyutim;
tathā saṭṣaṃvidhānena mūrkhō yāti praviṣṭatām. [41]

uktatāṃ ca,

0.55
hiyate hi matis, tāta, hīnaiḥ saha samāgamat,
samaś ca samatāṃ eti, viśiṣṭaiḥ ca viśiṣṭatāṃ.» [42]

atra' antare Viśūṣarmanāma mahāpāṇḍitaḥ sakalaṇītī|
śāstraṭatratvajīno Bhṛhaspatir iv' ābrvīt: «deva, mahākulaṃ-
śāstraḥ ete rāja-purānāḥ. tan mayā nitiṃ grāhāyātāṃ śakya-
nte. yataḥ,

n' āḍravye nihiṣāt kā cit kriyā phalavati bhavet;
na vyāpāraśate' āpi śukvāt patiṣṭhāte bakaḥ. [43]
PROLOGUE

Even an idiot can appear distinguished in an assembly if he wears the appropriate clothes, but he will remain so only as long as he does not say a word.”

Prompted by these thoughts, the king summoned an assembly of learned men. He then asked: “O learned scholars, listen, is there a wise man among you who could teach my ignorant and perpetually wayward sons the science of political ethics and thus give them a new birth, as it were? For,

When a piece of glass is set in gold, it takes on an emerald luster; in the same way, if a fool remains in the company of the wise, he will become clever.

And it is also said:

Dear friend, one’s intelligence diminishes in the company of inferior intellects, it remains the same if one is with equals and improves in the company of superior minds.”

Thereupon a great scholar called Vishnu-sharman, who knew all the learned works on statecraft very well and was like Brihas-pati* himself, spoke: “Your Majesty, these princes come from a distinguished family, so they could be taught good governance, and I am ready to instruct them. For,

No action can bear fruit if it is performed on an inappropriate object; a crane cannot be taught to speak like a parrot, even after a hundred exercises.
anyac ca,

asmiṣṭa nirguṇaṁ gotre n' āpataṁ upajāyate;
ākarc padmārgaṇaṁ janma kācaṁaneḥ kutah? [44]

0.60 aṭo 'ham śaṅmāś(abhyantare tava putraṁ nitiṣṭastraḥ(abhi-
jnān karisyāmi.) rāja saṁvayaṁ punar uvāca:

«kiṭo 'pi suṁanaḥśaṅgagād ārohati satāṁ śīraḥ.
āśīm” āpi yāti devatvaṁ mahādbhiruṣtriṣṭhitah.[45]

anyac ca,

yath” Ödayagirer dravyaṁ saṁnikarṣena dipyate
tathā saṁsaṁnidhānena hinaṁv>r ‘pi dipyate [46]

guṇa guṇaṁjneṣu guṇa bhavanti, 
te nirguṇaṁ prāpya bhavanti doṣāḥ.
āsvādyatoyāḥ prabhavanti nadyaḥ,

samudram āsāyā bhavan ty āpeyāḥ.[47]

0.65 tad eteṣām asmaṭputraṁ niṣṭastraḥ(abodeśāya bhavan-
taḥ pramānaṁ.) ity ukrvaṁ tasya Viṣṇuṣarmano bahu|māna| 
purāḥsaram putraṁ samarpitavān.
What is more,
In this family, no child could be born without merits;
how could a mine of rubies produce a shard of glass?
Therefore I shall transform your sons into experts on statecraft within six months." The king replied politely:
“Even an insect can climb up good people’s heads by sticking to the flowers they wear. Even a stone can become a god if it is consecrated by the great.
Furthermore,
Just as objects on the Eastern Mountain shine because of their proximity to the rising sun, so too can a person of low rank shine if he is close to good folk.
Good qualities remain good qualities in those who appreciate them, but become faults in a person of no merit. River water tastes good at its source, but when it reaches the ocean it becomes undrinkable.
Therefore I give you a free hand in teaching my sons the science of politics.” And with these words he paid his respect to Vishnu-sharman and entrusted to him his sons.
Judit Törzsök is Lecturer in Sanskrit, Université Charles-de-Gaulle, Lille. She has also translated Rama Beyond Price by Murári.

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Friendly Advice by Naráyana
& King Víkrama’s Adventures

Translated by JUDIT TÖRZSÖK

Here translated together for the first time, FRIENDLY ADVICE and King Víkrama’s ADVENTURES both provide instruction for monarchs in the form of amusing tales. Although from different periods, both were redacted after the seventh century CE, while their stories must date from far earlier. These timeless works are ideal for beginners in Sanskrit.

The best-selling “Hītopadēsha” gives its reader much more than friendly advice. In one handy collection—closely related to the world-famous “Pañcatantra” or Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom—Narāyana’s book combines numerous animal fables with human stories, all designed to instruct wayward princes. Tales of canny procuresses compete with those of cunning crows and tigers. An intrusive ass is simply thrashed by his master, but the meddlesome monkey ends up with his testicles crushed. A prince manages to enjoy himself with a merchant’s wife with her husband’s consent, while another is kicked out of paradise by a painted image.

This volume also contains the compact version of King Víkrama’s Adventures, thirty-two popular tales about a generous emperor, an Indian King Arthur, told by thirty-two statuettes adorning his lion-throne.

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