Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library edition and translation of the second volume of Budha·svamin’s The Emperor of the Sorcerers.

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In this and those of how the prince comes by his next two wives, the reader’s tour of ancient India continues, extending to the far south and beyond, to magical islands of gold, before heading north to Varánasi.

Along the way, we learn of, among other things, flying sorcerers, transvestite ascetics bearing skulls, the finer points of gambling with dice, the perils of trading by sea, the rivalry between fate and human effort and the difference between town and country mice.
THE EMPEROR
OF THE SORCERERS
VOLUME TWO

BY BUDHASVĀMIN

EDITED & TRANSLATED BY
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CANTO 26
A GLIMPSE OF BREASTS
26.1 Ty[ādi]kuṭil’ālāpakaḷāpapagita|trapām
tām āmaṇtrya svam āvāsam agacchaṁ saha|Gomukhaḥ.
ēkādā punar āyātas tay’ ānuśṭhitaṁ|sat|kriyaḥ
vipaṇer gṛham āyātam apāṣyam Priyadarśanam.
kaṇcukaṁ muṇḍatas tasya mayā dṛṣṭaṁ payodharāḥ
payodhar’āntar’ālaksyaḥ sa’ ’iva parīmanḍalāḥ.
āṣic ca mama ‘yoṣ’ āṣaṁ yat as tuṅgāpayodharā
stankeśavatītvam hi prathamaṁ striivalaṅkaṇam.

26.5 lokas tu yad imāṁ sarvāḥ pratipannaḥ pumān iti
bhārtitijjānam idaṁ tasya kim cīt sadṛṣṭyakāritam.
atha va kim vikalpena mam’ ātimiracaksuṣaḥ
na hi dṛṣṭena dṛṣṭaṁ ārthe draṣṭur bhavati samśayah."
ityādiḥbhauṣaṅkalpaṁ añimeṣāvilocanam
apāṣyad Rṣidattā māṁ paśyantaṁ Priyadarśanam.
ath’ āsau gadgad’ālāpā pritiḥbāṣp’āvṛt’ekṣau
‘ātmānano cetayav’ ‘eti Priyadarśanam abravīt.
asāv api tam uddeśam prakāṣya jhagiti tvīṣa
tādighuṇa iv’ āṁbhodam pratiśam mandīr’ōdaram.

26.10 Rṣidattāṁ ath’ āpaṣyāṁ krodhā|viṣphārit’ekṣau
yay’ āpakramitaḥ śreṣṭhī mama locanāgocarāt.
uttāya ca tataḥ sthānāt saṅkāma|krodha|Gomukhaḥ
Punarvasugṛham prāpya paryāṅkaśaraṇo ’bhavam.
tataḥ kramaṁ parityajya kāmāvasthāparamparā
tumul’āyudhiṣen’ ēva yugapan māṁ abādhata.
ath’ ācir’ājgataśrikō yathā bāḷaḥ prthagjanaḥ
tath’ ājñāpitavaṁ asmi Gomukhaṁ rūkṣayā girā.
‘api pravrajitāḥbhartaḥ! priyā me Priyadarśanā
ākṛtaṃpratīkarm’ ēva kṣipram āṇyatām‘ iti.

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AFTER I HAD REMOVED her embarrassment with my artful words, I said goodbye to her and went home with Go-mukha.

One day when I went there again and was welcomed hospitably by her, I saw Priya-dārshana, who had come home from the market. As he took off his jacket I caught sight of a breast: it looked like a round moon seen through clouds. I said to myself, “He must be a woman: he has prominent breasts. The primary mark of womanhood is the possession of breasts and long hair. Everyone who thinks she is a man has been misled by her passing resemblance to one. But my eyes see clearly and I am in no doubt; when something is seen the seer does not doubt what he has seen.”

While I was having these thoughts Rishi-datta noticed me staring unblinkingly at Priya-dārshana. Her eyes filled with tears of happiness and in a faltering voice she said to Priya-dārshana, “Watch yourself!” Like a streak of lightning going into a cloud, Priya-dārshana lit the place up with her beauty before darting into the house. My eyes bulged with rage as I looked at Rishi-datta, she who had made the head of the guild leave my view. I stood up and, accompanied by love, anger and Go-mukha, left there for Punar-vasu’s house, where I took refuge in my bed. Abandoning their usual order, the progression of manifestations of desire assailed me all at once, like a chaotic army of warriors. In the manner of an ignorant and vulgar parvenu, I harshly ordered Go-mukha, “Hey, nun’s husband! I’m in love with Miss Priya-dārshana. Quickly, fetch her, and don’t let her make herself up!”
sa tu mām abrāvīt trastah «kā nāma Priyadarśanā
tyajitāḥ stha yāyā saddyaś cetasaḥ sthiratām?» iti.
may” okaṃ “tava yaḥ śyālaḥ puruṣaḥ Priyadarśanāḥ
ayam eva jagatśāraḥ pramāda priyadarśanāḥ.
yac ca vākṣyasi sarvasyaṁ Vārāṇasyām ayaṃ pumān
bhavataḥ katham ekasya pramad” eti tād ucyeate.
«Ṛṣidattā virakt” eti paricchinnā purā tyā
adhunā bhavataḥ kāntā jāt” ety atra kim ucyeate.
gat’ānuगatiko lokaḥ pravṛttto hi yathā tathā
param’ārthaḥ punar veda sahasr’āikaḥ pumān» iti.

ten’ okaṃ “janatāśiddhaṃ viruddham api na tyajet
kriyate chagalaḥ śv” api saṁhaya baubhir balāt.
tena yuṣmād vidhāhaḥ prajñār timing vacyāṃ sad ap’ idṛṣaṃ
asraddheyaṃ na vaktavyaṃ pratyakṣaṃ api yad bhavet.
śrīyatām ca kathā tāvad arthasya’ āṣya prakāśikā
pramāṇaḥ hi pramāṇajñāṇāḥ purākalpe ‘pi vartitam.

babhūva Kauśiko nāma Veda’āṅga vid dvijaḥ
satya’vratatayaḥ loke prasiddho Satyakuśikaḥ,
kadā cid abhisēkāya tena yātena Jāhnavaṃ
asāṣyajaparivāreṇa taranti prekṣitā śilā.

mahat” āsa prayaṭnama śiṣyān anvaśīṣat tataḥ
‘n’ āyaṃ artho mah”ānjarthaḥ prakāśyaḥ putrakair iti.
ath’ āikaś capalaḥ teśaṃ baṭuḥ Pīṅgala’nāmakaḥ
vipaṇaḥ mantrayeṇaḥ ca kasya cid vanijāḥ puraḥ.
śreṣṭhi kim na śrṇosy ekam aścaryaṃ kathayāmi te
tarantiṃ drṣṭavān asmi sʾōpādhyāyaḥ śilāṃḥ iti.
Frightened, he asked me, “Who is this Miss Priya-darshanā that has made you suddenly lose your composure?”

I replied, “Your brother-in-law, that man Priya-dārshana, is in fact the finest thing in the world, a beautiful young woman. If you ask how he can be a man to all Varānasi and a woman to me alone, then I shall reply that Rishi-datta was deemed to be a celibate ascetic by the city and now she has become your sweetheart! What do you say to that? People follow the beaten track in everything, but one man in a thousand understands how things really are.”

Go-mukha replied, “One should not ignore popular opinion, even if it is absurd. When many people act together, they can even force a goat to become a dog! So clever men like you should not say such things, even if they are true. Even something seen with one’s own eyes is not to be reported if it is unbelievable. Listen to a story that illustrates this point, for even in days of old a standard was established by those who understood such things.

There was a brahmin called Kāushika who knew the Vedas and their auxiliary disciplines. Because he observed a vow of truthfulness, everyone knew him as Satya-kāushika. One day when he had gone to take a bath in the Ganga with a group of students, he saw a floating rock. He took great pains to admonish the pupils, saying, ‘Boys, this matter does not bode well; you must not publicize it.’

One amongst them, a naughty lad called Pingala, said to a merchant in the market, ‘My good man, you should listen to me—I’m going to tell you something amazing. My teacher and I have seen a floating rock!’
THE EMPEROR OF THE SORCERERS

ath’ āntahpurika daśi kim api kretum āgatā
etad ālapam ākarnya rájapatible nyavedyat.
tay’” āpi kathītaṃ rajne sa tāṃ pṛṣṭvā paramparām
bātun” ākhyaṭam āhavyā pṛṣṭvān Satyakausikaṃ.

26.30 «satyaṃ brūḥ’ iti no vācyāḥ satyajāvādīvratō bhavān
mithyā brūḥ’ iti no vācyāḥ kāmī mithyāvratō hi saḥ.
kiṃ tu yat Piṅgalen’ ὁktam etad yuktam parikṣitum
pramadāt satyam apy ete vadanti bātvō yataḥ.
sāśiyailḥ kila yuṣmābhīs taranti prekṣitaśīlā
kim etat satyam āho svin mrṣāḥ” ēty ākhyaṭātyāṁ! iti.
āśic c’ āśya dhip etāṃ me ninditaṃ satyajāvādītām
duhṣṭraddhānāṃ anāṣṭaṃ ca yan maṇa vācyam idṛśām!
«na satyam api tad vācyam yaḥ uktam aṣuḥkḥ’āvaham»
itī satya-pravādō ’yaṃ na tyāyaḥ satyajāvādbhīḥ.

26.35 tasmāt satyam idaṃ tyaktvā mrṣāvādaśāt’ādhiḥkām
aṣatyaṃ abhidhāyāṁ satyajāvādaśāt’ādhiḥkām.»
ath’ āvocat sa rājānaṃ -rājan mithyā bātor vacāḥ
agnim paśyati yaḥ śitaṃ plavamāṇāṃ śīlām asau.
kaḥ śraddadhyād bātor vācaṃ nisarg’ āddhiracetasah’?
capalasy’ ṭopamāṇaṃ hi prathamāṃ bātumarkaṭāḥ’-
viśaṇṇam itī viśvāya rājanaṃ Satyakausikah
vīruddhāvādināṃ kruddhāḥ Piṅgalam nirvāsāya.
tad evāṃ lokāvidviśtām anuyukto ‘pi bhūḥbhṛtā
satyam satyapratijño ‘pi n’ āvadat Satyakausikah.

26.40 yuṣmākaṃ punar ajñātaśīlaçārīrajanmanām
A servant from the royal harem who had come to buy something overheard this and reported it to the queen. She then told the king and he asked her where she had heard it. He summoned Satya-kāushika and asked him about what the boy had said: ‘There is no need to tell you to speak the truth because you have taken a vow of truthfulness, just as there is no need to tell a lover to lie for he has taken a vow of mendacity! But we should check what Pingala has said, because young men can also tell the truth by mistake. Apparently you and your students have seen a floating rock. Is this true or false? Tell me!’

Satya-kāushika said to himself, ‘Damn this cursed truthfulness of mine for making me have to say such an unbelievable and undesirable thing! “Even something that is true should not be told if it will then bring about unhappiness.” Those who are truthful should not ignore this saying about the truth, so in this matter I shall part from the truth, which is worse than a hundred lies, and tell a lie better than a hundred truths.’

Then he said to the king, ‘Sire, the lad’s words are untrue. Only the man who sees cold fire sees a floating rock! Who would believe the words of a young lad; their minds are naturally excitable. Boys and monkeys are prime examples of fickleness!’

Having thus convinced the disappointed king, the angry Satya-kāushika had the quarrelsome Pingala expelled. So, even on being questioned by the king, Satya-kāushika, despite having taken a vow of truthfulness, did not speak the truth because it would have been unpopular. Moreover,
viruddham idam īḍṛk kāḥ śraddadhyād vadatām? iti.

sa may” ōkto “bhavān eva duḥṣraddhānasya bhaśīta
yasy’ āśmin pramadāratne pumān iti viparyayaḥ.

kim c’ ānena pralāpena strīratraṃ Priyadarśanāṃ
ačīrāt svīkarisyāmi krośatāṃ tvāḍṛśāṃ! iti.

evaṃ ca mama vṛtt’āntaṃ vijānann api Gomukhaḥ
vaidyaśrājāṃ samāhāya vaidyaśrājam upāgamat.

sa mam’ āḷāpam ākāṃṣya kāyāchāyaṃ vilokya ca
pradhārya c’ āparair vaidyaiḥ śanakair idam abravit.

26.45 “mānasobe viṇār ṣya ṣva ṣitasat āyam īpsit āḷābhāḥhetukaḥ

ten’ āsmai rucitaṃ yat tad āṣu saṃpādyatām” iti.

atha Nand’ōpanandābhīyāṃ saṃskāryāḥ āhāram ādarāt
māṃ Punarvasuhastena Gomukhaḥ prāg abhojyat.

sa c’ āhāraṃ suṣaṃskāro lobhano ṣya āṃṛt’āśināṃ
triphalākvāthavad dveṣān mam’ āṅgāni vyadhūnayat.

26.50 tato Nand’ōpanandābhīyāṃ bhojyamānaḥ krameṇa tau
sa/viṣādau karomi sma viṣādaśaṃ his īva vaiśīnuau.

tesu vandhyāpṛyatnesu Gomukhaḥ Priyadarśanām
lajjāmandaśpadaśnyāsāṃ namit’ānanam ānayat.

sa māṃ samānaśparyaṇaḥ/madhyam adhyāsitas tataḥ
grāsān agrāsayaḥ śaḍ vā sapta vā Gomukh’ājñāyā.

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your character, conduct and birth are unknown: who would believe you if you said something so absurd?"

I replied, "It is you that is saying something unbelievable, perversely asserting that this jewel of a girl is a man. But enough chatter! I shall make Priya-darshaná my own precious wife before long, while people like you make your laments!"

Even though he understood what I had told him, Go-mukha asked after the best doctor available and went to him. When he heard me speak and examined my body, the doctor consulted some other doctors before saying quietly, "He has a mental derangement caused by his not getting something he wants, so he must quickly get whatever it is that is dear to him."

Go-mukha made Nanda and Upanánda carefully prepare some food, and then had Punar-vasu feed it to me before anyone else. The food was so well made that it would have been tempting even to the gods, who eat ambrosia, but like a decoction of tri-phala it made my body shudder with disgust.* Nanda and Upanánda took turns to feed me and I made them feel as unwanted as if they were enemies giving me poison. When these attempts were unsuccessful, Go-mukha fetched Priya-dárshana, who shuffled in embarrassedly, hanging his head. He sat down on my bed and, at Go-mukha’s command, fed me six or seven morsels of food.

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*Canto 26: A Glimpse of Breasts

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yetat

A

Asaroja

Sarngasubhaga

grasa maya svaditah
taih sadyas tantram anyata sa me
samkalpajanmah jvara

siil'endrathu cinisukrabhana dahanaj
plus'topal'adhiryakah
mandair apya udayubbhir navatara
ujjhanti samaptatam.

Priyadarshanilabh

Priyadarshastanadarshasarga 26.
The morsels that I ate were blessed by the touch of his lotus-hand and they instantly relieved my love-induced fever. When stony mountain plateaus are scorched by the burning of the dazzling summer sun, even gently dripping drops of fresh water remove heat from the huge rocks.

Thus ends the Glimpse of Priya·darshaná’s Breasts Canto in the Winning of Priya·darshaná.
The second volume of Budha-svamin’s The Emperor of the Sorcerers continues the racy telling of the celebrated lost Indian narrative cycle The Long Story, framed by Nara-vahana-datta’s magical adventures on his quest to become emperor of the sorcerers.

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Sir James Mallinson translates and edits Sanskrit literature full time for the JJC Foundation, co-publishers (with NYU Press) of the Clay Sanskrit Library. He is also the translator of Volume One of Budha-svamin’s The Emperor of the Sorcerers.

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THE EMPEROR OF THE SORCERERS

VOLUME TWO

BY BUDHA-SVAMIN

Edited & translated by

SIR JAMES MALLINSON