

Indumatī's Silence

Andrew Ollett 🍀 Oct. 21, 2022

for Tom Hunter

1. Kumārasambhavaḥ 6.12

strī pumān ity anāsthaiṣā vṛttaṁ hi mahitaṁ satām

Man or woman, it makes no difference.
It's what you do that matters to good people.

2. Sumanasāntaka 10.14

*dudv aṅkēn vāṇi dē nira n vruḥ aṅucap mari bisu-bisu saṅsayābānār
sampun rakva sirāpupak pinakapūrvaka nira n aṅajī munīśvara
prajña vruḥ ri kalīna niṅ pada kadi vruḥ alavas anulus vicakṣaṇa
ēṅgal pathya ri kaprayōgan i rusit niṅ aji kadi tāmah sarasvatī*

But with every night her situation changed:
she learned **how to speak**, abandoning her previous
silence, becoming more articulate by the day.
By the time her baby teeth fell out
she was already learning texts from great sages.
She was wise, knowledgeable about what could be said in verse,
as if she already knew all there was to know.
Soon she was well-practiced in practices found in
the finer points of sacred lore,
as if she were Sarasvatī herself.

3. Sumanasāntaka 16.7

*tan saṅkēṅ avalēpa kāraṇa nira n lvir tuhva mōnabrata
kēpvan buddhi nirātāgag maṅucap agyā-gyān harāp mantuka
vahvādandan anāmbahē nṛpati mōjar saṅ sunandāṅjavil
ōm yan ōm huvusān huvus liṅa ni māskv ālah tuhan mājara*

It's not because of pride that **it seemed like**
she was practicing a vow of silence.
She was embarrassed at heart, and **couldn't speak**,
so eager she was for her desires to be fulfilled.
Just as she was about to bow to the king,
Sunandā said, nudging her: "Agree, since your
agreement has already been taken for granted,
whatever you might say. **Come now, mistress, will you speak?**"

4. *Raghuvaṁśaḥ* 6.25

*ēvaṁ tayōktē tam avēkṣya kiñcid
visraṁsidūrvāṅkamadhūkamālā
ṛjupraṇāmakriyayaiva tanvī
pratyādidēśainam **abhāṣamāṇā***

At these words of Sunandā, she looked at him for a moment, and her garland of *madhūka* flowers joined with *dūrvā* grass slackened, while she herself rejected him with just a formal bow, **saying nothing.**

5. *Sumanasāntaka* 108.4

*nāhan raśmi nikān ujar tēka rāsap ri tvas narēndrātmejā
sampun vaspada kuñ nirē sañ aja marma dyah sunandā sukha
ndan mōgāñjrum apēt prahēlika lañē siñgih juga n **strī kavi**
dēnyāñjrum rasa guyva-guyvan araras ndātan tākē jrō hati*

Such were Sunandā's beaming words, which struck deep in the prince's heart. The princess's love for Aja was completely obvious, and Dyah Sunandā was moved to happiness. But she decided to tease her, seeking a riddle of rapture, as was totally fitting, **given that she was a poetess.** The point of her teasing was merely to have a charming laugh, not to hurt her.

6. *Raghuvaṁśaḥ* 6.20

*tatō ṛṣpāṇām śrutavṛttavamśā
puñvat pragalbhā pratihārarakṣī
prāk sannikarṣaṁ magadhēśvarasya
nītvā kumārīm avadat sunandā*

Then the doorkeeper, Sunandā, **bold as a man,** learned in the deeds and dynasties of kings, led the princess first to the king of Magadha and spoke as follows.

7. *Raghuvaṁśaḥ* 7.69

*hṛṣṭāpi sā hrīvijitā na sākṣād vāgbhiḥ sakhīnām priyam abhyanandat
sthalī navāmbaḥṛṣatābhivṛṣṭā mayūrakēkābhir ivābhavrindam*

Although she was pleased, embarrassment got the best of her, and she did not thank her husband outright, but through the speech of her friends, like the earth, on receiving the first raindrops of the season, thanks the gathered clouds through peacocks' cries.

8. *Raghuvamśaḥ* 8.48

*ṛṭavaty asi nāvadhīraṇāmaparāddhē 'pi yadā ciraṃ mayi
katham ēkapadē nirāgasam janam ābhāṣyam imam na manyasē*

You never disrespected me, although I often did you wrong.
So why is it this time, when I have done nothing wrong,
do you not consider me **worth talking to?**

9. *Raghuvamśaḥ* 8.55

*idam ucchvasitālakam mukham tava viśrāntakatham dunōti mām
niśi suptam ivaikapānkajam viratābhyantaraṣaṭpadasvanam*

Your hair is disheveled, and **you have ceased to speak:**
your face is like the only lotus closed at night
where the bees within have stopped buzzing,
and it gives me grief.

References

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