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-The TFIC Team.

JAINA STORIES

(as gleaned from canonical texts)

Vol 2

Adhayatma Yogi

Upadhyay Muni SRI MAHENDRA KUMARJI 'Pratham'

Foreword by

R A J A R A M S H A S T R I

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K C L A L W A N I

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FOREWORD

The story is a kind of "Saying" It is however, a kind of literary form from ages but it does spring from deep human impulses and does fulfil human needs Stories of witchcraft and enchantment, wondering loose in men's mind, attached themselves in the early Sixteenth Century to a real life The religious stories have played a revolutionary role at a time in changing and directing the Socio-economic structures With the progress of Science, prose literature come to prominence and Rationality took place on the head of irrational sentiments and emotions On the threshold of Technological development Epic age took to heels and soon the literary form changed to new social and spiritual requirements of Atomic age Specialisation has created labour divisions and scarcity of time for man. Consequently, stories, specifically, short stories, have become the predominant form of literary expression to meet the contemporary historical necessities.

The History of the development of stories and fables is running through from primitive time to our present space age. It was a link between wise sages and common people. Stories and fables carried the message of religious scripts to the common people

From primitive age stories have been used as a tool to depict the development of primitive institutional organisations. These stories represent the cultural history of their times

Vedic Age is a transitory period between primitive socialism and slave system The stories and fables of primitive age envelope in themselves the worship of Natural gods and goddesses and battles between gods and devils (Devasur Sangram) The essence is that they represented the changes which was seeded therein for further development of society i. e , towards vedic age, The characters of these stories were birds and animals but that was symbolic

picturisation of human societies. In ancient times communication system did not develop so birds and animals were used as messengers. Allegory is our old social treasure and ancient stories always carried figurative representation of man's activities through animal world. They were also used to carry the ambiguous and complicated ideas of Vedas to the common men through Upanishads and Brahmanas. The society march forward and we find that by the times of Purans figurative representation through birds and animals was dropped from literature and man-characters directly put into action in the stories. By this time the caste system took roots in the society and political and military institutions made big strides in developments. Subsequently village and tribe organisations developed into a natured political and social state and thereon a new struggle then ensued with changed relationship between new forces.

In other countries also the nature of the development of stories and fables tread the same path. If we examine closely the Aesopets, Arabian Night's and Indian stories and fables, we find that they depict the similar way of characterisation, figurative representation and way of saying while giving full exposure to their different local situations, social relationships and human physics.

Jain stories particularly have made a notable contribution to the development of literature in the form of stories. Every aspect of life has been depicted in Jain stories. They are influenced with subtle sagacious discourses on religion and philosophy. Light has also been thrown on the practical aspects of life. The significance of Jain stories lies in the fact that each incident has been narrated metaphysically. Each incident envelopes valour, intelligence, understanding, tolerance and other essential attributes. Spirituality is of course the main theme of Jain literature but that spirituality is not barren in the Jain stories. While taking stock of the ups and downs of life, a man ordinarily loses sight of future and hence he commits a mistake which makes even the present fatiguing and oppressive. Jain stories live in present and picture the future.

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In many of the stories of Jain literature, travels by the principal characters therein have been displayed prominently. Travel was at that age considered essential for diplomacy and advancement of business and propagation of religious ideas.

If we want to see ourselves in perspective to understand our predicaments and possibilities, we must be able to make comparisons with some other societies, altogether perfectly of a quite different time and place. Only then we shall be armed with sufficient detachment to grapple with our own problems and with the demand on our own would make upon us. In this respect Adhyatmayogi Munishri Mahendra Kumarji 'Pratham' has done a splendid and memorable work by reproducing old Jain stories in Hindi which represents a quite different period from our own.

Kashi Vidyapith,
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12 8 76

RAJA RAM SHASTRI
M P , Lok Sabha
Vice-Chancellor

PREFACE

Life with most people is a limited territory in which they fulfil a routine till they go out. They are used to live within this limit and have neither the will nor the capacity to break through its bounds. Completely surrendered to environment and nurtured by it, they have neither the urge nor the ambition to go beyond it and get established in their own authority, so that when at last time comes for them to leave their earthly abode, they do so without virtually leaving any mark behind. They are mere tools rather than artisans, mere slaves rather than masters. It is a remote chance, a rare possibility, that an event somewhat worthwhile ever takes place in a life like this, which, therefore, remains dull, flat and pedestrian to the core. And in the absence of events, this sort of life does not produce any history. It is just historyless, which is the same thing as saying that the life-story of most men terminates with them.

In contrast, there may be a few others, almost in every age and in every country, who break through the limits of life to attain a wider expanse. They live more for others than for themselves. They are the real harbingers of progress. The experience of such men contributes to improve the quality of human life, and since there is a succession of such men from age to age, the progress upward of humanity has remained unabated. Such men are the real creators of history, and it is a knowledge of this history that serves as a guide to understanding the progress of human society.

Events in the life of such creative men, floating down the current of time, become, at a gap of years and centuries, a sort of tradition, a heritage, a treasure for the community. They inspire the creative writers and get recorded in the literature which, in fact, is a reflection of life. In producing literature, the writer weeds out certain things which are unnecessary, adds things from his own imagination, imparts dialogue and creates in the process something which is noble, dignified, enchanting, inspiring, something which is a true

replica of life and something which, when heard or read, goes straight to the heart. Short story is one of the literary forms in which the writer expresses himself. Jainism provides a philosophy which is difficult to the extreme and is intelligible to a handful of scholars. To bring it home to the common man, spiritual teachers and scholars in different ages have used the medium of short stories of which there are hundreds, even thousands, scattered throughout the length and breadth of the vast *agam* literature and their commentaries. They have been produced in different ages by men with widely divergent experiences, but all against the backdrop of a common canvas which is Jainism. The analysis of personalities in these stories, the conglomeration of events, the clashes of selfish motives and interests, the display of bravery, the shape of endeavour, the depth of human life, the quagmire of meanness, fear, squalor, impatience, lethargy, imbalance, etc., which undermine the quality of life and place it on a very low pedestal, these and many such things dominate these stories. These have been repeated innumerable times to refix the fallen, the misguided, the downtrodden to the right path which is the path of religion, the path meant for a pilgrim, and they are still not devoid of freshness and potentiality.

To be the subject-matter of literature, it is not necessary that the life of men only with a golden tinge is deserving of consideration. Even the life of men with dark patches provide an equally worthwhile material for the purpose. These two types of men may stand widely apart, they may, so to say, be called to belong to entirely different worlds, but that does not prevent them from receiving consideration at the hands of a creative artist. Whenever life, golden or dark, has some vigour in thinking, some capacity for acting, some message for others, it becomes a worthy material for the literary man's attention. Jaina stories, in fact, depict the life of men with a golden tinge as well as that with dark patches. Men with a golden tinge are inherently good and they are already on the right path as good examples for others. But even men with the deepest patches stand the chance of rehabilitation if they can be brought back to the

right path. Then there are cases where a man has slipped from the right path to get wholly lost. An account of such men serves as a useful warning. Quite a number of stories uphold the cause of women, the fallen, the downtrodden, the backward sections of the community. Jainism believes in the infinite capacity of the human soul and the core message in Mahavira's *Kriyavada* is that man is the architect of his own fortune provided he asserts as a master and remains not submissive as a slave. The soul has no sex or caste and nomatter whether it is encased at a moment in the frame of a woman or a *sudra*, with right exertion, it is liable to attain perfection and liberation.

One important theme of many Jaina stories is the ability of many monks to reveal the operation of *karma* effect in the life of man. In doing so, they have thrown light on the previous birth(s) of the questioner. Some have even gone to the extent of forecasting the shape of things to come, not like an astrologer, but like a true seer, telling the questioner where his soul will go when it is dislodged from here. Not only monks, according to some short stories, even lay men had their long memory revived at the sight of a familiar personality or scene or at the occurrence of some familiar event somuch so that they had their past lives revealed to them and this served as an inspiration to them to quit this mundane life which, in Indian view, is a veritable bondage. Though this type of knowledge is now virtually lost, like many other good things of the old world, there is no reason why it should be rejected as a myth, since we have at any time present in India as well as outside many cases where an individual has been able to recollect his past life and give dependable evidence in support of it. Though there is hardly any Jaina monk living now who can reveal the past life of any questioner, there are quite a few, including the present author, who have demonstrated on many occasions a long memory through their *avadhana* technique.

Quite a number of Jaina stories are fictitious, a creation by some teacher or commentator to drive home a point or a difficult theme or a terse tenet, but quite a vast number

deal with the life events of monks, *acharyas*, *sravakas*, *sravikas*, or even people who are known to history, and in so far as this has happened, these stories may serve as a good source material for history. A large number of stories are connected with events in the life of Mahavira, and they are highly instructive to the reader. The lives of great teachers and monks have always been a source of inspiration to others, and when these have been catered through the medium of short stories, they have reached a much wider and a cross section of the members of the public.

When in the course of my own studies of the *Agamas*, I became acquainted with the existence of such a fabulous crop of short stories, I set myself, under the inspiring guidance of my senior colleagues, notably Muni Nagarajji of the Terapanth sect, to the task of bringing this harvest within the reach of the common man. My endeavour was, therefore, directed to the faithful reproduction of these stories in readable Hindi. As I proceeded in my work, new vistas opened in front of me so that by now it has been possible to print 27 parts in Hindi and many more parts will follow in years to come. I was encouraged by the reception given to my labour and this made me think of bringing out the same stories immediately through the English medium to reach a much wider section of the public in India and outside. The English version of Jaina short stories produced by Prof. K. C. Lalwani is now going out for the first time, and it is expected that the book lovers irrespective of caste or creed will derive ample benefit and pleasure from it.

Before I conclude this brief preface, I must add a personal note which I am keen to share with the earnest reader. The vast world of Jaina stories gave me an acquaintance with human character which I saw corroborated through my own experiences during the past two years or so when I passed through many trying situations, trials and tribulations, ignominy and hardship. But no hardship lasts for ever. As a good experience may be followed by a bad one, all due to the operation of *karma*, so a bad experience is itself followed by a good one. This is the eternal order. If one is securely

rooted in his base, nothing can throw him out from his position, and as the dark days recede, one is able to see the ray of light again. This is a great lesson I have myself derived from life, and this is a lesson which I bequeath to my dear readers through this vast world of Jaina stories.

Upadhyay Mahendra Kumar

INTRODUCTION

Short stories have been used as a convenient medium for educating the people in religious tenets, moral principles and ethical norms. For this purpose, every country has its own fables, legends, short stories and the like and these together, poetry apart, constitute one of the early literary forms which human mind had devised and used. From Greece, we have the well-known *Aesop's Fables*. In this country, we have innumerable Pauranic legends and an equally large number of stories such as those contained in the *Panchatantra*, *Hitopadesa*, etc. So goes the story that a Brahmin named Vishnu Sharma produced the five principles of state-craft in story form to impart lessons to the sons of his patron and king who were totally averse to education and would take to no sane advice or discipline. Besides these, every country has its legends, like the legends of Greece and Rome, of Persia, of India and of China. And then there are the folk tales some of which, like De's *Folk Tales of Bengal*, have been collected and put into print, while others are in currency as words of mouth. Because of its infinite efficacy and popularity, this form of literature has become a precious cultural treasure with all ancient peoples surviving to this day and continues to inspire people from generation to generation.

The Jaina *Agamic* texts are a complex affair, apart from being vast. To make them intelligible, the authors have included many illustrations, even stories, which are now a part of the Sramana cultural tradition. Some of these texts, notably the *Vipaka Sutra*, which itself is the 11th principal text (*anga*), are wholly in story form, and in this particular *Sutra*, ten stories illustrate the pleasant experiences of life and another ten the unpleasant experiences of life, each bunch explaining the operation of pious and impious *karma* respectively. Following the compilation of the principal texts, generations of teachers and commentators have added illustrations of their own to inspire the people to the faith and to pin them

to right conduct Altogether, the Jaina story literature is a vast store-house of knowledge

The Jaina short stories are a type by themselves and, strictly speaking, they may not be comparable with legends, fables and folk tales from other cultures and countries wherein the objective does not, by and large, extend beyond enunciating an ethical norm or social behaviour In contrast, most of the Jaina stories, unless they are historical episodes or personal accounts, have a clearly religious purpose which is to turn people from domestic life to the monastic order and ultimately to liberation As an illustration, all stories contained in the *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* have this bias They are, therefore, not very useful for children but presume a certain degree of maturity in the reader

A very important common element in many Jaina stories is the illustration of *karma* effect *Karma* pursues all souls, from human till those of the most invisible insects and bacteria, through various existences, and this process is going on from an eternal past and will continue through an eternal future In the case of the human soul, however, the difference is that this soul not only experiences, but is fully conscious of *karma* effect It knows pretty well, since it is a part of the cultural heritage, that *karma* is the determinant of which the human life is a determined product *Karma* is not mere action, but a very subtle matter which is always affixed on the space-points of the soul, imparting in the process some weight to it, so that the soul becomes incapable to rise to the crest of the sphere (*loka*) which is liberation *Karma* takes the soul through the cycle of birth and death, and birth again When a bad *karma* fructifies, a human soul suffers untold misery, when a good *karma* fructifies, it has pleasant experience, wealth, prosperity, power and fame. As one *karma* is exhausted through fructification, others are rushing in all the time, so that there is at no time a vacuum In fact, not a single *karma* lasts for ever. For there's nothing permanent in the natural order. Bright day dawns as a bad *karma* is exhausted through fructification, making room for a softer one. Given right endeavour, a human soul can earn its own liberation from the clutches of *karma*

Some stories tend to illustrate the efficacy of *namokara* which is simultaneously a form of obeisance and a *mantra* to be repeated on the beads. A hero or a heroine in a story utters the *namokara* under a difficult situation and is at once protected by the 'Five Well-wishers'. It is a matter of faith of the believer. Some stories illustrate the efficacy of observing the vows, five by the monks, viz, non-violence, non-lie, non-theft, non-accumulation and non-sex, and the same five for the followers, *albeit* in a less rigorous form, plus seven more to supplement. It has been demonstrated in many stories how by sincerely observing the vows, many have been liberated in the past or at least improved the quality of their life, the moral being that many more may still do the same provided they sincerely observe them. Some stories illustrate the outcome when a monk or a follower slips from the right path due to non-observance of vows, which serves as a severe warning.

A careful perusal of these stories gives an idea of the social, political, economic and cultural conditions of the time in which they were written. Kings were the heads of the state and they had ministers to aid and advise them in running the administration. *Sresthis* or merchants constituted the most affluent section of the society. They had extensive trade connections not only within their own state and region, but also with other states and regions, sometimes very far off. Quite a number of them were sea-faring. We have the names of many important ports which were then in use. Some of these merchants had more wealth than what was contained in the king's treasury. Apart from usual professions and crafts, dream interpretation appears to have been an important profession which claimed many people. Prostitution was another important institution. People coming from outside, notably merchants, halted outside the city walls, giving the idea of an extensive suburbia which was separated from the city by a wall. Monks used to camp outside the city, mostly in structures dedicated to the *yaksas*. *Vidyadharas* were a species of human beings who were in possession of some special *vidyas* or powers, particularly flying. There were other powers which some people possessed,

e g , power to transform oneself into any form, power to understand the language of animals, etc , etc Quite a number of stories throw light on administration, law and order, justice, crime and punishment, etc , and many of them make use of supernatural elements or are delineated in a medieval setting or mythological language which may not appeal much to a modern mind In many cases, the same type of incident is repeated in more than one story which may be detested by a reader who is seeking fresh things all the time But this has been done for the sake of emphasis, and is not wholly redundant

In almost all the stories, renunciation has been upheld as the most laudable means for attaining the ideal of life. This is in a sense connected with idea of the transmigration of the soul which is widely accepted in all the Indian systems. This life has been viewed as a microscopic fraction of an eternal life, no bigger than a step from the past into the future And if this step is to be a worthy one, then one must improve the quality of life by living as a monk There are examples where a man has courted monkhood pretty early in life and has been liberated pretty early in age But for most people, kings or common-folks, monkhood is shown to have invariably come in old age, making it somewhat similar to modern superannuation People have been inspired to monkhood when in advanced age they realised the futility of domestic life or by simply listening the inspiring sermon of some monk or spiritual leader

Closely linked up with the idea of transmigration of the soul is the idea of *jati-smaran* or remembering one's past life in which a person has his past life revealed by a monk or in which the revelation comes itself on witnessing a familiar scene or experiencing a familiar event Whatever the methodology, this gives one the memory of the past life, which in turn lends support to the idea of the transmigration of the soul The revival of the memory of the past life has been invariably followed by renunciation by the person concerned who goes forth to attain the higher ideals of life Wherein the past life is revealed by a monk, in some cases, he has thrown light on the life hereafter It is on record that on a

question by no less a person than king Srenika Bimbisara of Magadha Mahavira revealed that he was destined to go to hell and that this was irrevocable. On a further question, Mahavir said that Bimbisara was going to be the first *tirthankara* of the next bracing phase of the time-cycle on completion of his life in hell. All this must be very interesting to the reader.

Practically all stories lend support to Mahavira's *kiryavada* in some way or other. In a nutshell, *kiryavada* means actionism, which further means that man is the architect of his own future, and that there is no power in heaven, earth or the nether world which can either help or hinder a determined man. Two supporting pillars are knowledge and action, and Mahavir is said to have observed, *jnana-kriyabhyam moksa*. Actionism has no room for divine grace on the one hand, and on the other, it strikes at the very root of determinism or fatalism, which was the philosophy propounded by some powerful adversaries of Mahavira. To build up one's own future, one needs undergo right exertion or endeavour under proper guidance. Misdirected energy or hardship yield no result. It is a pity that a sense of cynicism prevails in the present day Jaina monastic order according to which liberation is no longer possible in the present age partly because the span of human life has become short and partly because man's capacity to bear hardship has gone down. Such a view is not only wrong, but it strikes at the very root of *kiryavada*. Man was never more powerful than in the present age, and given earnest endeavour he is sure to be liberated even now. In so far as this point is upheld in many a story, their scope becomes as much extensive as that of Jaina philosophy and religion.

Quite a large number of stories are connected with events in the life of Mahavira and they are, therefore, useful in constructing the life story of this great teacher. Many others give account of the life of innumerable monks and church leaders. We come across the names of a large number of rulers, kings, ministers, *śresthis*, who have had a place in history. Not only stories but the whole gamut of Sramana literature has useful material for the reconstruction of ancient

Indian history, which, as it stands at present, is lopsided and unbalanced because of its exclusive reliance on the Indo-Aryan sources, to the total exclusion of Sramana sources. Some lesser known Jaina scholars have made a juvenile attempt at this reconstruction, but it has yet to gain a wider acceptance. We get also some glimpses of the history of the Jaina church through some of these stories. For instance, we have the story of Kesi-Gautama in the *Uttaradhyayana*, being respectively the stalwarts of the church of Parsva and that of Mahavira. After a frank discussion between the two, Kesi and his followers took shelter in the church of Mahavira. It is thus certain that the Jaina church became united at the time of Mahavira.

Many more things could have been written about these short stories, but I am afraid, an introduction to a book is not an appropriate place for this. So long, this vast store-house remained confined to Prakrit and Sanskrit so that it was not available to the common man. Sparingly, it was used by a monk or a nun to illustrate a point here and there, but its wide use was not possible. About a quarter century back, it occurred to some people that this material should be presented through the medium of modern Indian languages, notably Hindi, which the vast majority of the Jainas understand. But who was to do this? For while some of the Jaina monks were well-read in Prakrit and Sanskrit, their proficiency in Hindi was not high, while the usual Hindi story writers were not acquainted with this field in Prakrit or Sanskrit which they did not know. At this stage, Muni Mahendrakumarji Pratham stepped in to present a large number of Jaina stories *verbatim* in plain Hindi. Ten parts of these stories as retold by him appeared in print, about 100 pages or more in each part in double crown size, by 1961, and another 15 by 1971, so that the Muni has about 3,000 pages in print to his credit. Provided his indifferent health permits, he desires to raise it to 10,000 pages which, he is sure enough, is a pretty easy job. Since the Muni's works have been published, but quite independently of them, one or two writers have retold some Jaina stories through the medium of Hindi and Bengali by making use of modern

technique of story writing, and making them more readable, but the Muni's work remains to this date the most massive.

It was in 1969 that I was approached with a request to translate the stories into English. I was reluctant partly because my hands were already full with no less worthwhile things, and partly because I have no taste for literary production or reproduction. But ultimately I had to accept the job which I completed by 1972, putting it mostly through my hours of odd things like rail travel or hours of relaxation. Although I have never felt very happy about the form in which they have been presented in Hindi, I have myself not dared to change it in my English rendering.

All the stories included in this volume have been taken from *Vardhaman-desana*, a work which has been inspired by the seventh *Anga* of the Svetambara Jainas named *Ubasag-dasao* (*Upasaka-dasa*). Actually the *Anga* deals with the ten celebrated followers of Mahavira who were pious and devoted to religion. Deriving inspiration from this work, later writers have built up stories of their own to illustrate the twelve vows, non-violence, etc., of the lay followers (*sravakas*). *Vardhaman-desana* which is a work of 16th-17th centuries Bīkram (17th—18th centuries A D) has several versions by several authors. Muni Mahendrakumarjī has based his Hindi version on the version by Rajkīrti Gani, disciple of Ratnalabha Gani. The original work is in Sanskrit prose and bears a close resemblance with another poetic version of the same work in Prakrit by Subhavaradhan Gani. Mahendrakumarjī has used only the story part of *Vardhaman-desana* and dropped the account of the ten *sravakas*, Anand and others for this volume.

K C Lalwani

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ARAMASOBHA

There lived at Palasagrama a brahmin named Agnisharma. He was an expert in sacrificial rites and was thoroughly versed in the four Vedas. His wife's name was Jvalanashikha. He had a daughter named Vidyutprabha who was extremely graceful. When Vidyutprabha was eight years old, her mother passed away. This was a great shock for her. Besides, the responsibility of managing the household was now on her young and immature shoulders. She would get up before sun-rise, clean the house and besmear the kitchen; then she would follow the cattle to the jungle for their grazing. At mid-day she would be back home, milk the cows, serve food to her father and take food herself, and follow the cattle to the jungle again. She came back after sun-set. After she had finished her daily duties, she would be wholly exhausted. But she would not go to bed before her father, and she would get up before him. Such was her daily routine.

One day Vidyutprabha came to her father and said :

“Father, I am somewhat incapable of running the household alone. What to speak of me, even the bulls will break down under pressure of so much work. So my request is that you marry some respectable lady so that my burden will be shared and the household will run well.”

This was a good proposal and Agnisharma agreed. He soon married and brought a new wife. Even Vidyutprabha was happy to receive a new mother. But the happiness was not to last for long. The new mother had no training in household work, besides, she was too much lazy and easy-going. So all her expectations were washed away and Vidyutprabha had only remorse in store for her; but she would blame none save her own luck. With a deep sigh, she would say, “So long I worked for my father, but now

I have the added burden of a mother. I sought happiness but I have lost even what I had ”

In this manner, four years rolled by, and those were long and unhappy years for the young girl. She was now a lass of twelve. One day while looking after the cattle in the jungle, she lay under a tree and fell fast asleep. At that time, a big and dark snake, who had a rapid pace and bloodshot eyes, slowly approached and addressed her in a human voice :

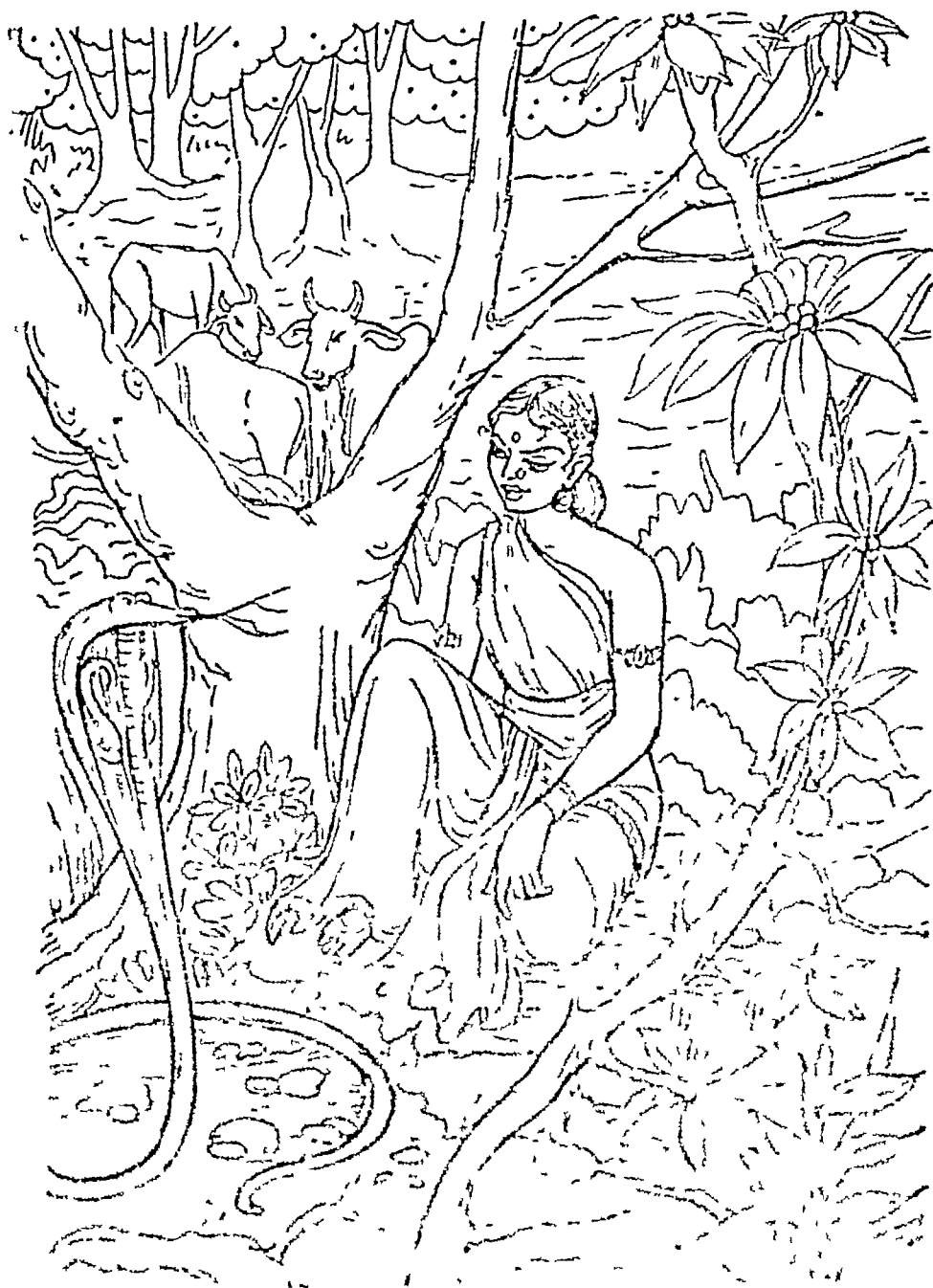
“Charming maid ! Fear me not. Do as I suggest. I have been living in this forest for a long time and good luck prevailing, I was happy here. But to-day my ill-luck has come up and there are some charmers in this forest who are in search of me. If they capture me, they will place me in a basket and make my life miserable. So I seek shelter with thee. Place me on thy lap and cover me with thy cloth. To shelter one in distress is an act of righteousness.”

Vidyutprabha woke up at the approach of the snake. She distinctly heard all this and hurriedly thought .

“I did not acquire much virtue in my previous life and hence my present misery. If now I do not help this snake in distress, then the door to happiness will never open for me ”

So thinking, she extended her hand to pick up the snake, placed it on her lap and covered it with her cloth. No sooner had she finished all this than the charmers arrived on the scene and made enquiries about the snake. Vidyutprabha told them that she was sleeping and so she had no knowledge of it.

The charmers were convinced. “After all, this is a young girl,” said they among themselves, “She would have been frightened to see the terrible snake. So it can’t be here ” When they were gone beyond sight, Vidyutprabha told the snake to come out and go its own way. But as she removed her cloth, there was no snake to be seen. She knew not if she was in a dream or confusion, but before she could think further, she heard a voice saying ; “I am



* Crying mad ! I seek shelter with thee . . . "

overwhelmed by thy courage, oh charming maid ! Seek a boon ”

Vidyutprabha turned round and saw a god who was repeating the aforesaid words So said Vidyutprabha, “Oh the best among the gods ! If you are pleased with me, then be good enough to do something to help my cattle. Please give a forest cover to them They are much oppressed by the rays of the sun ”

The god cast a deep sigh. Thought he, “What a request ! She could have got rid of her poverty Ignorant is she Whatever that may be, her wishes must be duly honoured.” So he created a forest above her, as charming as the Nandana-vana, the celebrated heavenly forest. Then he said to her :

“Here is your forest, wherein you will get trees yielding all sorts of fruits and flowers Wherever you go, this will follow you like an umbrella Like a divine damsel you will freely play in it and your cattle will suffer no more. If at any time in future you are in difficulty, think of me and I shall be at your service ”

The god disappeared Vidyutprabha ate sweet fruits from that forest and returned home in the evening The mother asked her to take food but she had no appetite Now on, she would go to the forest early in the morning and return home in the evening There she would be playing throughout the day while her cattle would be grazing

One day as she was lying under a thick tree, king Jitashatru of Pataliputra with his retinue was passing by that way. He was delighted to see the divine forest and decided to rest there for some time. The king's throne was placed under a tree, the pack animals were let loose to eat grass, the chariots were parked in a shady spot ; and the men were at ease, gossiping and relaxing This disturbed the peace of the forest and Vidyutprabha's cattle fled away. When Vidyutprabha woke up, she found that the cattle had disappeared. So she rushed forth to find them out Now, as she moved, the forest-umbrella over her head moved too, and the king and

his retinue were also moving, all topsy-turvy. This was a great surprise for the king. He was anxious to discover its secret and came to know that the forest was moving with the girl. So he asked his minister to approach the girl and request her to go back to her original position, assuring her that his men would find her cows. The minister did as per the king's command. As soon as the girl returned, the forest stopped still. The king's men and animals were restored to order and the king was happy. Then the minister said :

"Your Majesty ! The surprise we experienced seems to be all due to this girl."

The king replied, "Truly so. Is she a nymph, or a girl from the nether world, or even a damsel from heaven ? She would be a precious acquisition for the palace of any king."

The minister agreed. At the king's wishes, he came again to the girl, told her all about the king, and finding her favourably disposed, at right moment, proposed for her hand for his master.

Vidyutprabha was abashed and said :

"High-born damsels do not select their husband. He is selected for her by the parents. You may like to converse with my father. His name is Agnisharma and he lives in the village nearby."

The minister went to her father and narrated the whole thing. This became a moment of great joy for Agnisharma too. He was brought to the presence of the king in the forest. Now, delay was unbearable to the king and so the marriage was celebrated then and there as per *gandharva* rites. The king wanted to change the name of his new consort, and as she had a forest umbrella-cover on her head, she was henceforth to be called Aramashobha (meaning comfort and grace). To put the brahmin in affluence, the king bestowed on him revenue from twelve villages.

Then the king mounted on the elephant in the company of his wife ready to depart. The forest was still on her head. The minister went ahead of the party to organise the reception of the royal couple at the capital. It was a great

occasion. People everywhere, singly or in groups, were talking of the good-luck of the monarch. These words, as they reached the king's ears, made him happy too. The royal couple were now at the palace where all comforts were provided for the new queen. The king and the queen lived henceforth a happy life

Now, brahmin Agnisharma had a daughter from his newly married wife. When she came of age, her mother thought that if somehow Aramasobha could be made to die, then the king might be pleased to consider her own daughter to be worthy of him. "And to kill the daughter of a co-wife is no sin", she said to herself. So she hatched a plot and one day said to her husband :

"Aramasobha has gone to her husband's home for many years now but we have never sent her anything. For girls things from their parental homes are particularly dear."

The brahmin smiled and said, "Aramasobha is no longer poor. She is now a queen and hardly needs anything from us."

Agnishikha (for such was the name of the brahmin's second wife) protested : "Even though the father-in-law's home has affluence all round, anything sent by parents is dear to a girl. Though rich, daughters expect occasional gifts from their former home." The argument had no gap. So the brahmin could not turn it down. The lady prepared *kesariya-modaka* (henceforth to be called *modaka*, a delicious sweetmeat), poisoned it, placed it inside a pot and sealed it. Then she entrusted it to her husband saying :

"You give it to Aramasobha and none else. Even Aramasobha is not to share the sweets with anyone. If she shares it with others, we shall be put to ridicule, poor as the stuff is, and poor as we are."

Agnisharma could not read into the evil design of his wife. He picked up the pot and turned his steps towards Pataliputra. When he was not far from the capital city, he was so tired that he placed the pot beneath a banyan tree on the wayside, lay down to rest and was soon fast asleep.

A *Yaksha* used to live on that tree. By dint of his great insight, he came to know of the evil design of the brahmin lady. Thought he : "When there is such an able one like me here, can anybody put Aramasobha to the torture of death ? Has she not accumulated much righteousness in her previous birth ?" So thinking he replaced the poisoned *modaka* by a good one, delicious like nectar. The brahmin got up, picked up the pot and resumed his journey. At last, he was at the palace gate. His arrival was duly announced and with the royal sanction, the brahmin was conducted inside the court to the presence of His Majesty. The brahmin profusely blessed the king. Then there were mutual enquiries about health, after which the brahmin presented the pot to the king. The king was very happy and ordered it immediately to be carried to the queen's chamber. The brahmin was honoured by the gifts of clothes and ornaments.

Now the king was in Aramasobha's chamber. He thought of the *modaka* and wanted to have a portion of it. Happily did the queen open the pot and, what joy, the whole chamber was filled with its fragrance "Surely", said His Majesty, "is this *modaka* prepared with nectar" The king cast a lustful glance at the queen and requested her to distribute it to all her co-wives, In deference to the king's wishes, Aramasobha did it with her own hands. All the queens were happy to taste it and all spoke in glowing terms of the skill of her mother.

When the king came back to the court, the brahmin made a prayer for his daughter's going to his home for once. To this, the king smiled and said, "The queen does not see even the sun ; so how can she go to her parents' home ?" The brahmin returned on fulfilment of his mission and reported it to his wife. The lady was now waiting to hear about her step-daughter's death. But the tidings did not come and she grew restless. Perhaps the sweet was not sufficiently poisoned. So she resolved to make a renewed attempt and continue it till her goal was attained. This time she poisoned the *modaka* very deeply, packed it as before and despatched it with her husband with the same

sort of message The brahmin was again on the road to Pataliputra. When he arrived beneath the same banyan tree, he was tired, lay down and fell fast asleep As before, the *modaka* was changed by the *Yaksha*, was later taken to the court and delivered to the king This time, too, the *modaka* was tasted by all the queens and both Aramasobha and her mother were praised by all

But the coveted bad news about Aramasobha's death did not arrive and the brahmin-lady was bitter and highly depressed. So she repeated the mischief for the third time, mixing this time the most dreadful *talaputa* poison with it She also insisted that Aramasobha should be brought once to her parental home, and if the king did not agree, she advised her husband to use his brahminical power to force his hands The brahmin started again, came under the same banyan tree, where everything repeated as before, so that the *modaka* was changed, and once again, at the palace, everyone was happy to taste the divine stuff and spoke in high praise of its sender.

The court was now in full session. Agnisharma made the proposal about his daughter's going to her parental home, and insisted that her first child should, in fairness to the custom prevailing, be delivered there But the king would not budge, "That has never been so," said he, "and that will never be." The brahmin now displayed his brahminical power and threatened to commit suicide right there if his request was not honoured Said he, "If you do not send Aramasobha with me, then I shall stain you with the sin of murdering a brahmin Oh king, I gave you my daughter's hand not on this term that she would never see her parents at their own home She too must be feeling keen to go there once. Will the parental affection thus go unheeded?"

The minister intervened, "Your Majesty! Surely this brahmin has gone mad But if you do not agree, he will not hesitate to stain you with the blasphemy of killing him. So may it be decided that the queen goes once"

Under so much pressure, the king reluctantly agreed.

The queen was given much treasure and was seen off. Along with her started her forest-umbrella. Agnīshikha had her plot wholly ready. She had a deep well dug behind her house. At the right moment, Aramasobha gave birth to a godly child. She was then taken to the backyard of the house for a wash, her step-mother attending. On seeing the well she asked when it was dug. The mother said, "This has been dug for you. You are now a queen and there may be jealous people who may poison your drinking water if it is fetched from a distance. Hence this arrangement for your safety." Aramasobha took it all as said and bent to have a look inside. As she did so, the step-mother pushed her into it. As she was going down, her mind went back to the god who had once promised her help, and he readily appeared on the scene. He supported her by his hand and made her sit on a comfortable place. He would have punished Agnīshikha on the spot for her misdeed but desisted as Aramasobha held fast his feet. In the nether world, the god built a chamber for her stay. The forest-umbrella too stayed with her there.

Agnīshikha now dressed her daughter in the clothes of a woman recently delivered and placed her on the couch. When the servant maids returned, they expressed surprise to see a lustreless and uncouth woman with a plump frame lying there. False Aramasobha said, "I know not why all this has happened, but meseems, some internal disease or disorder is the cause of my physical change." When the servant maids reported the matter to Agnīshikha, she rushed wailing and striking her breast. "Oh daughter! How it has happened like that? Has anybody cast inauspicious glance at thee? Or is it due to gastritis or some organic trouble? Alas! All my sweet dreams may come to an end." She pretended to make all possible arrangements for her restoration but none yielded any result.

Now, the minister came to take the queen back. The party started for Pataliputra. On the way, when the servant maids asked why the forest-umbrella was not there, false Aramasobha said that it had gone to the well to take water and would soon follow. When the party was in the vicinity

of Pataliputra, the king arranged a fitting welcome. He was pleased to see a godly son but was sorry at the queen's plight. When he enquired the cause of it, she repeated the same words as before—"some internal disease or disorder." The king's sorrow knew no end. When he enquired about the forest, the lady said, "When I came, it was taking water at the well. So I have left it behind. It will come itself after some time." The king had some doubt about the lady. Was it Aramasobha or someone else had stepped in her place? He apprehended that there might be a trick behind it, some sort of mischief. He said to her again : "My dear ! Bring that forest back. I feel so uneasy without it "

And there was the same evasive reply, "Be not anxious, sir ! It will come back in time "

The king's doubt was now largely confirmed. This was another lady and there had been some mischief-mongering at his cost. The plot must be unfolded.

At the other end, Aramasobha was safe and comfortable at her underground shelter and all her needs were taken care of by the god. One day she said to him, "I feel very uneasy for my son. It behoves you, oh god, to do something to relieve me of this."

"This can be done by dint of my power, but only on one condition. At night you may go to your son, but you must return before sun-rise. If you fail, then you forfeit my assistance for ever. And in that case, a dead snake will drop from your braid and that will sever our link beyond repair. If you agree, then your desire to meet your son may be fulfilled "

Aramasobha agreed. With the god's power assisting her, she reached the palace, embraced the child in her arms and was happy to play with him. When the time for her return approached, she placed the child on the couch, scattered some fruits and flowers from her forest and left. When in the morning the matter was reported to the king, he made enquiries about it from the queen who said, "My Lord ! I brought these fruits and flowers from my forest and scattered them here "

‘If that be so, then bring some fruits and flowers from the forest just now.’

‘Well, sir, I shall do so to-night.’

The king had no more doubt about the mischief played on him. The event was repeated on the second night, and then on the third, this time the king himself keeping watch. With a sword in his hand, he sat in the shadow of a lamp. At the right hour, Aramasobha came, embraced the child and started playing with him. The king had no doubt as to who she was but he restrained himself. Aramasobha left the palace before sun-rise.

In the morning, he went to false Aramasobha and said, ‘Lady ! If you can restore the forest, well and good. Otherwise, I have no need of thee. Go thy way.’

The earth now slipped away from beneath the lady’s feet. She knew not what to do. The king rebuked her harshly and returned to the court.

On the fourth night, Aramasobha came as usual to her son. The king was in hiding. Now, before sun-rise, as she was about to return, he held her hand and said, ‘My dear, why this trick with me ? Come back to thy palace. I can no longer brook thy absence.’

Aramasobha was taken aback. She tried to free herself but failed. In a helpless tone she said, ‘Sir, there is some serious reason behind it. To-night you delay me not. I shall come again to-morrow at the same hour and narrate the whole thing to you. If you release me not now, I shall have cause to repent throughout my life.’

The king said, ‘My dear ! My eyes are languishing for you for many days. Now that you are within my grip, how can I let you go ? Tomorrow is far off ; even a moment would be too long.’ Aramasobha was between a frying pan and fire. To narrate the whole thing to the king would take a lot of time and the sun-rise was not far, if she did not do so, the king would not release her. She could not disoblige the king, whatever the risk. She tried to be brief but all in vain. Mean-

while the early rays of the sun burst forth on the earth and the dead snake dropped from her braid, as predicted. "How unfortunate am I ! Alas, I am undone !" These words dropped from her lips as she herself dropped senseless on the ground. When restored to her senses, she was only moaning and bewailing. The king consoled her saying "My dear ! Who can avoid the inevitable ? Whatever was destined has happened. Forget the past and look forward to a golden future."

The king was now all rage towards false Aramasobha. She was handed over to the guards and was severely beaten. Aramasobha pleaded mercy for her sister and the king could not deny it to her. But she was expelled from the city and her father was deprived of the twelve villages and the treasures bestowed on him. The family was turned out from the kingdom for good.

Aramasobha was happy once again. One day the king and the queen were in conversation, when the latter thought, "My early life has been spent in distress followed by happiness now. These are all the outcome of *karma*, good as well as bad, acquired in previous life. I must know them." In those days, Acharya Virabhadra with his spiritual family of five hundred monks was present there and the royal couple thought of benefitting from the presence of the celebrated Acharya. After the queen had listened the Acharya, she fell down in a swoon. When she recovered, she made the following submission : "Your Holiness ! The account of my previous life as given by you is wholly correct. With my reawakened memory, I can fully testify it. But I am now uneasy about the worldly existence. With the permission of my husband, the king, I desire to be initiated by you into the holy order."

Needless to add, the king approved of her noble wishes. He, too, revealed his mind in the following words :

My dear ! Once having known the worthlessness of the worldly life, who wants to remain any longer in it ? I too shall follow thee."

Then turning to the Acharya, he said,

“Your Holiness ! I shall presently return to the palace and crown Aramasobha’s son Malayasundara as king. Immediately thereafter I shall return to thee. Till I come back, may your Holy Grace not withdraw from this city !”

The king came back to the palace and placed the young prince on the throne. Then both the king and the queen were initiated into the holy order. They spent their time in acquiring scriptural knowledge and soon became profound. The king, now a monk, was nominated by the Acharya as his successor to the holy chair and under his able guidance, the order flourished. Aramasobha became the head of the order of nuns. For many years, they served the order and then gave up their mortal frames through spiritual fasts and attained coveted higher regions.

ARAMASOBHA'S PREVIOUS BIRTH

At Champapuri, there lived a very rich merchant named Kuladhara. Kulananda was the name of his wife. The merchant had seven daughters named as follows : Kamalashri, Kamalavati, Kamala, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Jayamati and Priyakarini. They were as beautiful as they were proficient. They were all married to merchants of very noble birth. An eighth daughter was born to Kuladhara but she was less fortunate. The parents were so unhappy at her birth that they did not perform even her naming ceremony. The girl grew up and stepped from childhood into youth. But her father was indifferent to her future happiness and did not bother to settle her in life. If some member of his household drew his attention to this, he would only say that she would be settled as soon as a right groom was available, and he would assure them that he was on the look-out for one.

One day, as the merchant was seated at his shop, a stranger youth came up to him. His dress was poor and his hairs were dishevelled and infested with lice.

The merchant : "Who are you ? Wherefrom do you come ? What country you belong to ?

The youth : "Sir, I belong to Koshalapura. Nandi is the name of my father and Soma that of my mother. My own name is Nandana. I am penniless. I went to Chandadesha to do some business but my ill-luck followed me even there. At Chandadesha lives a merchant named Vasantadeva who belongs to this city. I am employed in his service. He has sent me with a letter which is to be delivered at his house but I know not its location. It will be a great favour done to me if you could direct me thither."

Kuladhara thought within himself that this would be a right groom for his youngest daughter. "If I settle

my daughter's marriage with this young man, then I get rid of her," thought he, and said,

"Young man, you deliver the letter at Vasantadeva's house and come back at once"

The merchant sent one of his attendants to accompany him. The young man also did as he was asked to do. After he had finished his bath, the merchant gave him clothes and food and then at the right moment, he placed the proposal for his daughter's marriage.

The youth : "I have to return this very day, sir"

The merchant : "There will be no difficulty. I shall make every arrangement in a fitting manner and the ceremony itself will not take much time. For your subsistence, I shall later bestow wealth on you."

The young man agreed and the marriage ceremony was over within a few hours. The daughter bade good-bye to her parents' home. The couple then set out on the road to Chandadesha. When they were very near to Avantidesha, they took shelter in a temple to pass the night there. It was the dead of night and the bride was fast asleep. So thought the young man lying beside her :

"As my wife is with me, I cannot walk as fast as I would like to. And if I go like this, it will be necessary to spend a long time on the way. I have scanty means to support both of us in the journey, and if it is exhausted, I would be forced to begging. That will be highly unbecoming of me. So why not I give up my bride here. This will save me from a probable calamity."

No sooner had he thought it than he gave effect to it. He picked up whatever things he could and immediately left the place.

At sun-rise, when the lady got up, she found neither her husband nor the means to support herself. She took no time to realise that she had been given up. She could hardly think of such a thing happening but was soon reconciled to the hard reality and set her mind on the future. For a

moment she thought of going back to her parents ; but then she thought of the sort of life she had led there and the sort of reception she would receive now, and preferred to court suffering to going back to a life of scorn. But the very next moment she thought as to who would support her and how she would begin this new life. The prospect of begging was not at all palatable. But she gathered courage and confidence, and thought : "If all living beings support themselves, I too can do the same. I will take up some work to support myself but I must preserve my purity and truth "

The brave lose nothing , instead, they find a way. The lady got up and reached the market-place of the city of Vishala. She stood in front of the shop of merchant Manibhadra. She looked at him, as he looked at her. She had a feeling that this was a good man. So she came nearer and said,

"Father, I am on the look-out for some work. It will be a great favour if you could give me one "

Manibhadra felt compassion for her but he hesitated to take an unknown lady into his household. He asked who she was and why she was there. The lady said,

"Sir, I am the daughter of merchant Kuladhara of Champa. I was on my way to Chandadesha in the company of my husband, but misfortune having befallen, I have been separated from him. So I have come to you to seek some job so that my days of suffering may be easily spent "

Manibhadra consoled her and showed her affection. He invited her to stay in his household and she was placed in charge of his household affairs. He sent men in search of her husband but no trace of him could be found. He also made confidential enquiries about her parents and they tallied with what she had told him. So she was installed in Manibhadra's family with full dignity, and, on her part, she won the affection of everybody by dint of her good behaviour.

Now, Manibhadra built a magnificent Jina temple with high gates and colourful flags. Kuladhara's daughter

went there everyday to offer prayer and worship. She came into contact with the nuns and acquired the knowledge of *nava tattva* (nine doctrines). Now she became a *sravika* like the great Sulasa, steadfast in equanimity. Manibhadra was never niggardly to fulfil her wishes and held her in great esteem. Once she desired to donate three gold umbrellas bedecked with jewels to be placed to cover the head of the Jina image and this was readily arranged. Much of her time was now devoted to penance, service to the holy order and sundry religious activities.

One day Manibhadra sat deeply immersed in anxiety when Kuladhara's daughter came to him and enquired about the cause. In apprising her of the situation, the merchant said :

"For the worship of the god, the king entrusted me with the upkeep of a flower garden and everyday flowers collected from there were used for worship. But today the garden is suddenly dry. I tried my best to restore it to freshness but all my efforts have been in vain. I know not what hard steps the king would now take against me for this."

"Father," said she, "suffer not with anxiety. Leave the matter to me. I shall set it right. I command rock-like purity and till the garden is restored to freshness, do I give up my four foods."

"Don't ye say so, my daughter. Put me not to ridicule by taking my anxiety wholly on thyself."

"Father, you know, a vow taken once cannot be dishonoured. You will just see that all the adverse forces will give way to the strength of my spirit."

Kuladhara's daughter returned to the Jina temple. Bowing before the image, she immersed herself deep in *kayotsarga*. She touched neither food nor drink. A day passed, followed by a second and then by a third. At last, *Sasanadevi*, the controlling goddess of the order, made her appearance on the third night and said .

"My daughter, a god with a wrong outlook has played havoc with the garden. But he could not withstand thy purity

and has fled Your vow is fulfilled and in the morning you will find the garden restored to its freshness ”

The morning saw the miracle happen The garden was restored to its beauty and freshness Mamibhadra was astonished He rushed to Kuladhara's daughter at the temple premises to break the news and congratulate her Said he,

“My daughter, my wishes have been fulfilled by the strength of thy purity and penance It behoves thee to break the fast now ” With the speed of lightning the news reached every household in the town, and all the resident of the town, both men and women, came rushing to the temple. All spoke highly of her purity and the merchant's good luck who has such a worthy daughter in his house. Kuladhara's daughter offered food to the monks, served the same to the members of her order and then broke her fast

This was indeed a great day for the religion of the Jina. Many days passed thereafter. One night, at late hours, as Kuladhara's daughter lay awake in her bed, a thought came to her :

“By good fortune, I am born in the order of the Jina But I cannot practice the ‘great vows ’ This will be a severe failure on my part So I must make the best use of whatever limited capacity I have for spiritual advance ”

Now, she changed the course of her life. Sometimes she would be on fast for two days, sometimes for three days and sometimes for four, raising the duration gradually to a fortnight and then a month. This reduced her body. Then she undertook the final fast and ended her life through auspicious meditation. Thereafter she was born in heaven called Saudharmaloka Having completed her life there, she has been born in the house of brahmin Agnisharma as his daughter and has been named Vidyutprabha

HARIBALA

Vasantasena was the king of Kanchanpura. His first consort was Vasantasena. After a long gap following their marriage, a daughter was born to them. She was named Vasantashri. She was a notable mixture of beauty and intelligence. When she attained her youth, the royal couple became anxious to settle her in marriage.

In the same city, there lived a fisherman named Haribala. He was very simple, polite and industrious and was happy in his poverty. His wife Prachanda (meaning 'violent') fully justified her name, and she was very ugly, harsh in voice and impolite in her behaviour. Haribala was always afraid of her turbulence and never enjoyed her company.

One day, Haribala had gone to the bank of the river to catch fish. A *muni* (monk) was just then passing by that way. As if induced from within, Haribala bowed before him. The *muni* blessed him, but, finding him engaged in an impious profession, he said,

"Friend, do you also practise pious deeds?"

"I view on my family profession as a pious deed, and, believe me, sir, honestly do I fulfil it. Everyday I come to this river bank and spread my net. I view as my own whatever catch I have. I know not of any other pious deed."

The *muni*, who had a natural serenity on his face, charm in his voice and equanimity in his eyes, said

"Oh fisherman, family profession is not the only pious deed one should perform. These professions vary with individuals. *Dharma* is based on *ahimsa*. Anything that strengthens *ahimsa* is *dharma*, and everything else is a sin. Every living being wants to live. Life is dear to all. So, torture not anyone, give not pain to anyone. What you

call your family profession is at every stage a sinful act. You need take a look at yourself ”

Haribala felt a stir within himself. His thought got encouragement. The seed of piety hidden in him came up. As if spontaneously, the following words mixed with awe came out from his mouth :

“Oh great *muni*, save me I am deeply immersed in acts of killing It is not possible that I get out of them You show me the way ”

The *muni* looked at Haribala. Pity was taking shape on his face The *muni* wanted him to desist wholly from acts of killing but this was too much to expect. So he found a way out for him, and said,

“Fisherman, I suggest that you spare your first catch, kill it not This may be easy for you Isn’t it so ?”

Haribala thought for a moment and then, mastering courage, he said,

“Oh *muni*, I accept this. From this day on, I shall not kill my first catch ”

The *muni* went on his way and Haribala turned to his work. The power of spiritualism, when it is awoken, knows no limit and is capable of washing away all the sins. Haribala threw his net in the river As he pulled it, he felt it to be heavy. The catch was a big fish. But he remembered the vow ; so he tied a shell round its neck and restored it to the stream He cast his net for the second time, but as ill-luck would have it, the catch was the same fish and this happened several times, and on each occasion he restored it to the stream It was already noon and the fisherman had no catch for himself. So he changed the place But the fish too did the same and even there he caught the same fish in his net. He changed the place several times, but with no better result, as if at every point in the stream, there was no other aquatic The sun was now on the western sky but the fisherman had not earned his day’s subsistence. But he remained steadfast in his vow and did not repent for it.

Even a small vow sometimes becomes pretty difficult but the difficulty is resolved by steadfastness. Seeing that Haribala would not deviate, the fish said in a human voice,

“Oh pious man, I heartily congratulate you for your steadfastness. You did not care for your daily bread in fulfilling your vow. This has impressed me much. Ask for a boon.”

Haribala was surprised. “You are only a fish,” said he. “What boon can you give me? Between man and fish, you should know, one does not help the other.”

“Oh lucky man, why do you see only a fish in me? I am the Master of the Salt Ocean. I came here to test your steadfastness and I am happy to declare that you have successfully got through. Most people do not take any vow. Few take but do not fulfil. There are very few like you who are truly steadfast. So I urge on you again to ask for a boon. I will deem it a great privilege to be able to help you.”

Haribala was very happy to notice the instantaneous effect of a vow. Thinking for a while, he said

“Oh great one! I am grateful to thee for thy kindness. I pray that whenever I am in difficulty, thou extend thy help to me.”

It was already evening but the fisherman had no money in his hand and he was hesitant to return home. So he went to a temple and lay there in a corner engrossing himself in his own thought.

‘I have fulfilled only a fraction of a vow and what a good return it has given me. Fortunate must be those who practise *ahimsa* to the full.’

It was a striking coincidence that on the same night fisherman Haribala took shelter in the temple, a young merchant with the same name was scheduled to meet Princess Vasantashri at the same place. This was desired by the princess herself who, while seated one day at her window, had seen the young merchant Haribala passing by that way.

and fell deeply in love with him. She at once scribbled a brief note suggesting the meeting and dropped it from her window. The note from the princess suggested the meeting at the temple on the fourteenth night of the dark half of the month wherefrom, it was suggested, the two would proceed to some unknown destination

On the plea of visiting the temple for purposes of worship, Vasantashri started from the palace on the appointed night. She was in the best of her clothes and jewellery and carried many other essential things. But merchant Haribala did not turn up on account of a mental conflict. He had never known the princess before and her love was only at first sight. This, he apprehended, might later be a cause of trouble. Besides, women are by nature crafty and secretly they perform many things. When Vasantashri reached the temple, it was very dark. She called out .

“Haribala, Haribala ”

There was no response except the echo. The princess called out again. Fisherman Haribala heard it, and finding somebody calling him by his name, he responded from where he lay. The princess said,

“Hurry up, my dear. We have to go a long distance ” Fisherman Haribala did not take much time to understand the situation. He understood that he had replaced somebody bearing the same name as himself, who had failed to turn up. So he thought of playing the necessary role. He at once came up and mounted on the chariot. The chariot proceeded at top speed. In his hurry, Haribala had left his fishing net behind. After they had gone some distance, the princess discovered that the man accompanying her had hardly much clothes on. Did he come in disguise or some miscreant had robbed him of his wear, she thought. When the princess asked him about his clothes, he said

“Hm”

So she gave him some out of her own stock. Then the princess induced him to enter into conversation with her and conveyed her deep love to him but he would only repeat as previously,



The chariot proceeded at top speed.

“Hm ”

Now, the princess felt some doubt about the man in whose company she had eloped and many a question disturbed her mind.

‘Is he proud ? Does he not understand what I say ? Is he angry ? Why does he not talk with me and convey his love to me ?’

She was now sure that she had come out with a different man, that she had taken a wrong step or she had been deceived. She was pretty sure that this was not the man whom she loved, When it was dawn, she could clearly see the man seated beside her. Her dreams now vanished and the ground almost slipped from beneath her feet. She had only scorn and remorse for what she had done. Her mind went back to the palace, to her parents, the king and the queen, their great affection for her, her own comfortable life—all these were left behind and that for good, and she had stepped into a great uncertainty. The princess could no longer bear and fell down in a swoon. When she regained consciousness, she bewailed and lamented, to become senseless again.

Haribala knew not what to do. He read into her mental agony. He realised that he could not live with her in peace and comfort. He thought of the *deva*—if he could do something to save the situation.

Time is the best healer. With the passage of time, the princess became somewhat consoled. She could blame none save herself. All that had happened was her own doing. It was no use lamenting for what had been left behind ; wiser it would be to look ahead and build up the future.

If an arrow, haphazardly cast, hits the target, it becomes a source of joy for the archer. Such a thing now happened to the princess. She opened her tired eyes to look at the man and wanted to ask him about his family, profession, residence and many other things. Just at that moment she heard a voice from the sky :

‘Princess, you are lucky. It would be a folly on your

part to look down on this man His luck is to take a favourable turn very soon. Who can be a better consort for thee save he ?

Now a feeling of joy replaced her remorse and she began to feel love for the man She looked at him again and tried to read into his mind. But Haribala sat calm, grave, placid With hesitation, the princess said

"I am thirsty If you fetch me some water . . ."

Haribala got up at once and proceeded towards the jungle. After a short time, he came back with a jar full of water. The princess drank to her heart's content Then she looked at him again. She was convinced that a man who could bring water within such a short time in such a lonely place could not be just ordinary.

The sun was now high up in the sky and Vasantashri could fully see the man What wonder, the ugly man was totally changed and he was now all beauty and youth. Vasantashri was immensely delighted. She said to him

"My dear, it is time you accept my hand The desire that goaded me hither in thy company may now reach its fruition"

The two were married there as per the *gandharva* rites.

It was the beginning of a new chapter in the life of Haribala and Vasantashri. They resumed their journey and reached the city of Visala As they entered the city, they met with a merchant from whom they came to know all about the city. They decided to settle there They purchased a seven-storeyed mansion for their residence, took four horses and many attendants to make their life comfortable Theirs was a very happy life

All along a man of active habits, Haribala maintained them even now Everyday, he would receive the needy at his house, listen to their difficulties and extend whatever help he could, including financial Though a new-comer, he soon became well-known on account of his generousities, a very respected citizen of the city of Visala Stories of his

charities soon reached the ears of King Madanabega who invited him to his court and honoured him. He was admitted to a high rank by the king and soon became his friend and favourite

To strengthen the tie of friendship, the king one day invited Haribala and his wife to dinner. As the couple came to the palace, they were duly received by the king who served them food at the table with his own hands. But Vasantashri's beauty captivated the king's eyes, who lustily longed for her company. From that day on, the only thought that haunted the king was—how to get her. He conceived many stratagems but none helped him to realise his end. At last, he took his chief minister into confidence. For the chief minister, this was a good chance, since he was very jealous of Haribala's popularity. Within the next three or four days, he submitted his plan which the king liked and accepted.

When the court assembled the next day, and all the courtiers were present, the following announcement was made by the king : "You all know, gentlemen, the princess is now grown up and I have to arrange for her marriage in the very near future. This will be a nice opportunity to establish contact and friendship with leading kings in countries far and near. Now, it will be the responsibility of our courtiers to go and extend invitations personally. I have in my mind to invite the great king Vibhisana of Lanka with the members of his royal household to grace the occasion by their august presence. Someone from among you is, therefore, to go thither as my envoy. May I know from you who may be entrusted with this very important and responsible mission?"

There was silence all over the court. Courtiers were looking at one another but none was ready to shoulder the mission. Then the chief minister stood up and said :

"Your Majesty ! You are a favourite of fortune. You have in your court assembled people of all sorts of calibres. Going to Lanka to invite King Vibhisana is indeed a difficult job, but we may have someone to fulfil even this difficult mission."

Then the minister looked all around and suggested Haribala's name. He spoke about him in very glowing terms.

The king now turned to Haribala, who felt elated. So, even though he was not keen, the mission fell on him. The king was delighted at the success of the plan. Haribala returned home and narrated the events at the court to his wife. Vasantashri at once saw in it a trap. She said,

"My dear, you have been deceived. There must be a plot behind all this. The king has some evil design. Ever since we went to dinner at the palace, he must have been hatching it. He wants to remove you for ever so that he can have me. It will be better if you somehow come out of it."

Haribala's sense of pride was hurt. "I may die but I cannot decline an assignment I have accepted," said he. "So I must go. The outcome is in the hands of destiny, but to make the best of exertions is within my capacity." Then casting a deep sigh, he added, "I am not as much worried about myself as for you. I do not know what may happen to you after I leave."

Vasantashri on her part was not prepared to show any weakness. She said,

"My dear ! May you safely return after the fulfilment of your mission. May there be no difficulty in the way. You do not feel anxious on my score. I am fully capable to guard my purity. All the designs of the king will be baffled." Haribala started on an auspicious day. He passed through many villages, towns and countries, he left behind many villages, towns and countries; he crossed through many rivers, forests and mountains. At last, he reached the sea shore. He had to cross it to reach his destination, but there was no ferry nor did he know how to swim. He was now convinced that it was a plot to kill him. In this difficult situation, he remembered the *deva* who appeared at once, and on hearing about the difficulty, he turned himself into a fish to carry Haribala through the sea. Comfortably seated on the back of the fish, Haribala now enjoyed the first experience of a voyage. Swimming through the limitless waters, the fish at last reached the shores of Lanka. Haribala's-

joy know no end. He had never thought that such a difficult job would be so easily accomplished. He thanked the *deva* for his services and bade him good-bye.

From the shore, Haribala moved into the city. It was a different world altogether which presented itself to him. Lanka was a magnificent city with wonderful buildings and parks, the like of which Haribala had never seen before. There, inside the city, he came across a wonderful mansion, which, however, wore a deserted look. He entered the mansion and freely moved through its chambers. At the sixth floor, in one of the chambers, he saw a young lady lying senseless. This surprised him all the more. He looked around and in one corner, he saw a jar full of nectar. He sprinkled a few drops from it on the lady, and what a surprise, the lady sat up, as if awoken from a sleep. She was, however, somewhat surprised and abashed at the presence of a stranger and foreigner in her chamber. She asked him who he was and how he came there. After Haribala had narrated his part of the account, the lady gave the following account about herself :

“My name is Kusumashri. My father Puspabatuka is a gardener unto King Vibhisana. The king has much wealth and grains but his ideas are not lofty. My whole family is unfavourably disposed towards him. The quarrel has gone so far now that none save me from my family can go to the king. As for myself, I do not want to go to him, but I can't help. It is my father who has made me the pivot of the whole game.”

Haribala's curiosity was fired. Kusumashri continued :

“Once my father had consulted an astrologer about my future. The fellow had predicted a bright future for me and said that my husband would be a king. My difficulties really started from that day. My father has been dreaming now of the arrival of a king and does not give me in marriage to any other young man. What a dilemma for me and ignominy for my father ! For this very reason, everyone in the family is now opposed to him. When he goes out, he makes me senseless, and when he comes back, he restores me to sense

by sprinkling this nectar Mine is a miserable life It is good that you have come and I may now have the fulfilment of my wishes."

Thus concluding her account, she looked at Haribala Haribala too did the same, and the four eyes met Kusumashri gave the proposal and Haribala accepted The two were married right there. Now, Kusumashri said,

"My dear, it is not safe for us to stay here any longer. If my father returns, we shall be in trouble "

"But the purpose for which I have come remains unfulfilled "

"My dear, you drop the idea of inviting King Vibhisana. Your coming to the country has been as good as inviting him. King Vibhisana will never go out of Lanka. You may say so to your king "

She managed to procure the Chandrahasa sword which belonged to the king and gave it to her husband to carry as a token of his having come to Lanka Then they collected all useful things from that mansion, including the jar of nectar, and hurried to the sea shore The *deva* was remembered again and he arrived, helped them to cross the sea and placed them right in the park in the city of Visala

After Haribala's departure, the king became active again to win over Vasantashri Everyday, he would send his maid-servants to her to bring her to the palace but this had no effect. So one night, the king himself arrived She could not be discourteous and received the king The king now tried his best to attract her He told her that he had sent her husband to Lanka on an important mission and his return was likely to be delayed On his own part, he could not leave her alone. So he proposed that she should go with him to live at the palace

Vanantashri silently listened This was a trap to catch her and she knew not how to keep out The king continued his overtures and denounced Haribala openly as a bad man Vasantashri bore all silently. But as the king was about to transgress the limit of decency, her whole purity burst forth :

"Whatever you do, I shall not deviate from my path"
The king too raised his voice and said,

"You foolish girl ! you are unaware of the consequences of transgressing my order If you do not favourably respond to me, I shall not hesitate to apply force."

Vasantashri was terrified, but to save the situation, she said,

"Your Majesty ! What is the hurry about it ? If there is no good news about my husband, I shall do as Your Majesty will be pleased to suggest "

When all this was happening, Haribala, who had already returned, was watching the whole thing from behind a pillar. He had left his newly-wedded wife in the park and had come to see Vasantashri when the king was there. He was happy at the purity and steadfastness of his first wife Now he stood before her It was a moment of great joy for Vasantashri. She reported all that the king had tried to do during his absence but all had been in vain. Haribala was boiling with rage but this was no occasion to take revenge On his own part, he narrated his journey to Lanka, his voyage, his experience at the capital of the demons, and his marriage with Kusumashri Vasantashri now made preparations to receive her co-wife. When the two met, they were locked in deep embrace

The news of Haribala's return from Lanka spread with the speed of a lightning and the king also came to know of it. He had not only come back after inviting King Vibhisana, but had won his daughter's hand This was highly disheartening, but the king suppressed his real feeling and informed the court as follows : "Gentlemen ! It is a great news today that our good friend and courtier Haribala has returned and will enter the metropolis today. This is a great personal honour to me, to the people and to the country at large We have to accord him a fitting welcome, for which the city has to be properly decorated I shall myself receive him in full audience None of my people should keep aside on this great occasion."

Within a few hours, this announcement reached every

corner of the city. People were happy and they thronged at the park to celebrate the home coming of the hero. He was duly received there by the king who then brought him to the palace.

The court was overflowing with the people. Very cordially, did His Majesty say to Haribala :

“My worthy friend ! How did you perform this most difficult job ? We are waiting to receive the full account from you ”

The following account was given by Haribala :

“Your Gracious Majesty ! The course of events is too long to be narrated within such a short time, but I shall make the long story short. I started for the south, and after having left behind many a dense forest and difficult mountain, at last, I reached the sea. As I had no aid to cross it, I stood on the shore thinking. At that time, a terrific giant, who was very hungry, came to me to use me as his food, but I could read his intention and so humbly said that it would be a great occasion for me when my mortal frame would serve as his food, but, said I, my only regret would be that the body would end before it had fulfilled a promise. The giant became impatient and shouted, ‘What is your promise ? I shall help you to fulfil it.’ But when I told him about it, even the giant was taken aback. ‘It is not easy for a human being to cross the sea ; but let me think.’ With folded palms I waited. At last, the giant said, with his dreadful tongue visible : ‘A pyre is burning in the forest. Go there and jump into it. You cannot go with this body into Lanka. That may be the only way.’ I got alarmed, but I held my assignment above everything, even life, and so without thinking, I jumped straight into it. Soon my body was turned into a pile of ashes. The giant then collected my ashes in a piece of cloth, carried them himself to Lanka and placed them before king Vibhisana. When the King heard the whole story from the giant, he was amazed at my devotion, and at once restored me to life, imparting in the process more beauty than I had before. I bowed before the king who received me very cordially and at once proposed his daughter’s

marriage with me. When I sought audience with him to unfold the purpose of my mission, he was pleased to give me leave. After I had suitably done it, the king accepted invitation from Your Majesty and promised to be here at least two days before the ceremony "

Haribala added before concluding :

"With great eagerness, he gave me his daughter's hand and bestowed on me this Chandrahasa sword which belonged to him. When I was making preparations to return, he lifted both of us up, and sent us hither in a moment "

Everywhere there was a murmur of praise and joy. All spoke highly of Haribala's ability, personality and shrewdness. The solitary exception was the chief minister who had no doubt that the king had fallen victim to a humbug. So he started hatching another plot against him, and, of course, he had the king's knowledge and consent. He arranged a reception for the king at Haribala's residence which Haribala could not decline. On the appointed day, the king arrived with his ministers. Wonderful dishes were served to the guests. The king saw the two ladies and his lust was again aflame. He was now anxious to invite both of them to the palace.

Impending evil changes men's ideas. The king again held consultation with the chief minister who suggested that the king alone was entitled to the best things in the kingdom. If the king would so desire, Haribala would have no other alternative but to send the two ladies to the harem.

"But he is my friend", said the king. "Besides, he has rendered important services to the state. It will not be fair on my part to issue such a rude order."

"Your Majesty may again give him an assignment, more difficult this time than previously and thus get rid of him."

The minister gave him a plan which was to send Haribala to invite Yama, the King of Death, and Haribala had no other alternative but to agree.

Haribala came back home and narrated the whole thing to his wives. He was very sad but the wives consoled him.

"Even though this time it will be a play with death," they said, "but everything will be okay. The king will be taught a lesson and our purity will remain unmolested."

A huge pyre was erected outside the city. At the right moment, the king came there followed by all the people of the city. Haribala too was there. Everybody was unhappy and there was a suppressed discontent about the king's behaviour. No one had any doubt that the king was intent upon liquidating a very capable man. Haribala became a hero in the eyes of the people who praised him in all directions for his merits, for his charities and for his keen intellect and personality.

The *deva* was invoked by Haribala at the right moment. He arrived at once. He heard about the new difficulty and said :

"You go back to your own mansion and I replace you here. I shall jump into the fire and the mean ideas of the king will not materialise."

This was immediately put into effect. At the proper time, a figure looking like Haribala jumped into the pyre. Soon the body was reduced to a pile of ashes. The king was happy. He was sure that Haribala would return no more.

It was mid-night and Haribala was talking with his wives. The king unexpectedly arrived. Haribala hid himself in an antechamber, and the two ladies got ready to receive the king and teach him a proper lesson. The king came in and said, "Now Haribala has repaired to the city of Yama, and there is none to protect you here. So I have come to invite both of you to the palace. You are very lucky and you shall be my queens." The two ladies now shouted with rage :

"The king is expected to suppress the wicked. But when the king himself is a rogue, who is to suppress him? You are not our saviour. You want to ruin us. We do not want to look at you. Why do you then come here again and again?"

But the king would not see the right way. He went on repeating his overtures but they were repeatedly turned down by the two ladies. Kusumashri gave a final warning. The king was now ready to apply force. She at once invoked her special powers, tied the king and hurled him headlong down. The king lost some of his teeth.

The king lay there helpless and unattended by anyone for several hours. He was in extreme pain, with blood and saliva oozing from his mouth. But much more than that was the humiliation to which he had been put. When he had somewhat recovered, the ladies took pity on him. They made him promise not to repeat such a behaviour in future and then he was set free.

Wounded and humiliated, the king returned to the palace. In the morning, he took the chief minister into confidence and narrated the whole thing to him. The chief minister was now afraid of his own safety and resolved never to tender any more counsel to the king.

Haribala was highly pleased at what his wives had done. Said he, "Never tolerate any torture. If it is there, get rid of it. Otherwise, it gets elongened."

Haribala now remembered the *deva* for consultation, who appeared at once. They prepared a plan as to how best to present the whole thing at the court next morning. The *deva* imparted a great glow to Haribala's body and dressed him in divine robes and ornaments. A dreadful attendant was created to accompany him to the court.

In the morning, Haribāla, duly attended, appeared at the court. The king was taken aback to see Haribala come back to life from the other world. The whole court was astonished. Had not everybody seen Haribala turned into ashes only the previous evening? On behalf of everybody, however, the king said,

"Haribala, we are all very happy to see you back. We are now anxious to know how you reached the abode of Death, how you were received there, what special things did you notice, if Death has been kind enough to accept our invitation and who this man with you is."

Haribala now displayed the marvel of his intellect and imagination. He started his narrative :

“Your Majesty ! After my mortal frame had been turned into ashes, I went to the abode of Death where at the main entrance I met its keeper, Baidhyata. He announced my arrival to Chitrugupta, the keeper of records. Chitrugupta was somewhat surprised to see me there before time. When I told him the purpose of my coming, he welcomed me and arranged an interview with Death. I was conducted into the presence of His Majesty the Yama by two attendants named ‘Chanda and Mahachanda.’”

Taking meticulous care to provide the details, he continued :

“One who goes on a mission to an auspicious man gets unexpected results. This happened to me. Death usually never looks at a stranger with grace. His big and red-shot eyes, his curved brows, long teeth, curled hairs, pitchy dark complexion, like a newmoon night, fat limbs—all generate fear. If he emits a shout, that causes instantaneous death to many. I was very nervous to see all this. But in a moment, when his eyes fell on me, he was a changed person. His eyes showered nectar on me and he was in a happy mood. At once, I and the two attendants bowed before him. Then the attendants submitted my file before him for his perusal. Its top flap contained a note as follows :

Haribala is exceedingly faithful to his master. He never cares for his own life for the fulfilment of even the most difficult of assignments given by the master. It is in fulfilment of one such assignment that he is here as his master’s envoy.

Death was mightily pleased to read this note. He cordially received me and gave me a seat in the midst of his own courtiers. He asked me many questions about my family, Your Majesty, the chief minister and about the country. At the right moment, I unfolded the purpose of my visit and Death was gracious enough to accept the

invitation A note to this effect was taken by his secretary-Tamrachuda, who was in attendance with writing material ready at hand "

To make the story still more fascinating, he added,

"Then Death introduced me to the members of his royal household His parents Surya and Sanjnavati, his principal queen Dhumorna, his brother Sani, his sister Jamuna, were all present They were very kind to me and gave me company for several hours Then I was shown round the capital city I saw so many things in such a short time that it is difficult to recount them all

"When after this it was time for me to return, Death was gracious enough to send through me immediate invitation to Your Majesty, the chief minister and other dignitaries of the state to see him in his own citadel He was keen to bestow on Your Majesty much wealth and the hands of his daughter He offered me very valuable gifts of robes and ornaments and hundreds of dancing girls, of which I accepted only very few Death was insistent to make me accept at least one dancing girl, the very best of the lot, To guide me in my return journey, and to convey a formal invitation to Your Majesty on behalf of himself, Death has deputed with me this envoy of his own "

As previously arranged, the envoy now came forward and repeated the invitation He requested the king to honour it without delay. The courtiers knew not what to make of it, but at last with the consent of all, the king accepted the invitation

At the king's order, a big pyre was set ablaze outside the city around which were assembled the king, his chief minister and other ministers, high dignitaries of the state and the citizens Now, who was to plunge first into the flame and be the first to reach the citadel of Death ? After much consideration, the chief minister became the recipient of this signal honour and was soon turned into a pile of ashes. Next was the king's turn As he proceeded towards the pyre, Haribala could no longer contain himself.

He was sorry to think that so many would die in ignorance and foolishness by simply relying on his words. He caught the king's feet and said,

"Your Majesty ! The culprit has been punished and Your Majesty need not take a plunge. All the wrong steps you took were at the advice of the chief minister and he is now no more to do any further mischief. Repent not about what is dead and past, strive to make the future glorious."

The king was thus humiliated in public and was deeply ashamed for all that he had done. Gradually, he found a profound indifference overtaking him. He returned to the palace and married his daughter with Haribala. Then he gave charge of his kingdom to him and renounced the world in order to spend the remaining portion of his life worthily in spiritual pursuits.

When Vasantasena, Vasantashri's father, came to know the happy turn in the fortune of his daughter, he had no more reason to remain angry with her. Besides, he had grown old and wanted to retire, and none was more suitable than Haribala to take charge of his kingdom. So he entrusted his kingdom to him and renounced the world.

Despite so much good fortune, Haribala never forgot about his vow. Often his mind went back to the day when the *muni* had induced him to accept a fraction of a vow. It was this small thing that had helped him to rise to the pinnacle of glory and earthly prosperity. So, thought he, if he would practise the whole vow, how much more would he not achieve ! Although a king, he always cherished high thinking. He would not only himself remain immersed in lofty things, he would even inspire his three wives to do the same. He brought his first wife Prachanda to live at the palace. In his old age, he renounced the world and through the practice of penance and austerities attained a very high degree of knowledge.

KING HANSA

King Hansa reigned at Rajpur. He was famous as a just and fair king. Being a *sravaka*, he never resorted to falsehood to meet any situation. Thus he was reputed for his devotion to truth.

On the summit of Mount Ratnasringa, there was a beautiful temple dedicated to the first *tirthankara* Rshabha. On the full-moon day in the month of Chaitra, there used to be a special ceremony in honour of the Lord when people from far and near flocked there. King Hansa thought of visiting the temple on that day. He gave temporary charge of his kingdom to his council of ministers and started with the members of the royal household and others for the fulfilment of his spiritual mission.

After the departure of King Hansa, another king, Arjuna by name, who was his adversary and who was on the look-out for this opportunity, laid siege of Hansa's city. Hansa's army was not only defeated but was routed and some of the leading generals lost their lives on the battle field. The rest fled the country. There was none to protect the city or the citizens. The victor-king captured the palace and the treasury, sat on the throne and rigorously enforced his authority all over the kingdom.

When King Hansa was only half-way to his destination, the news of this misfortune reached him. A messenger sent by the minister, Sumati, narrated the developments at the kingdom and said in conclusion :

"Your Majesty ! It may now be for your graciousness to consider what may be needful."

The king's courtiers were very much perturbed. They said, "Your Majesty, we should drop the idea of pilgrimage."

and reverse our steps towards the city. No enemy, however powerful, would stand thy presence. After the enemy is thrown out, we may resume our pilgrimage."

The king did not take much time to give his decision. Said he, "Prosperity and adversity are beyond human control. The real factor determining them are *karma* acquired in the past. Pious deeds are often obstructed by idleness and doubt. Since we are out on a holy mission, I do not consider it worthwhile to retrace our steps. We shall think of the city on our return. It can be reacquired."

So the king and his party went on. But his men were not very happy at the decision, for they had their families in the city and they were anxious about their safety. So one by one they began to drop out. But the king did not waver from his goal. At last, only one umbrella-bearer was left with him.

The king had no more a guide with him and he was now on a wrong route. He was in a forest, whose density increased as he proceeded. He became anxious about his own safety in the hands of the aborigines living in that forest. So he took off his costly robes and jewellery and entrusted them to his companion. The two were now moving separately.

The king had not gone very far when a deer came running and disappeared in the forest. It was followed by a hunter with a bow raised. When he asked the king about the deer, he was in a dilemma. He thought: 'If I express ignorance, I break my vow. If I speak the truth, the poor animal will be in danger. It will be good if I can avoid both the situations.' Meanwhile, the hunter repeated the question and the king said:

"I have lost my way."

"I am asking about the deer. Did it come hither? If it did, whither is it gone?"

"I am king Hansa."

The hunter was excited at this evasive reply.

"I did not ask, sir, who you are. I am asking about the deer. Tell me, if you know, whither it is gone."

The king wavered not from his plan but calmly replied :

"I belong to Rajpur "

The hunter was now enraged.

"Why don't you give a straight reply to my question ? How do you gain by talking irrelevant things ?"

"I am a kshatriya "

"Are you deaf ? I ask you something and you say something else "

"I shall go the way you indicate to me "

"You get out of my sight. I have no need of you. I have for nothing wasted my time with you."

So saying the hunter went on his way and the king went on his own. After he had gone some distance, the king saw a *muni* which he deemed very unusual in this dense forest. The king paid his respectful homage and obeisance and the *muni* went away. Immediately thereafter, two *bhils* (aborigins) came running to the king, and said :

"Here in this forest lives our chief named Sura. As he was about to set out to-day with his men to commit theft, he came across a man with tonsured head. This he considered very inauspicious and so he has sent us to kill that fellow. Tell us whither is he gone "

The king was in a fix again, but to avoid the situation, he said, "Beg your pardon. I did not exactly follow what you said "

"Well, sir, did you see a man with tonsured head passing by this way ? We are keen to know which way he has gone. If you give us the direction, we shall follow him and kill him "

The king came out with a beautiful reply :

"Men ! One who sees tells not ; one who tells sees not "

The *bhils* thought that the fellow had failed to understand them. So they repeated what they had said before. The king also repeated his own statement.

"You are a mad man. Get out of our way. We have unnecessarily wasted our time with you."

It was evening when the king stopped beneath a tree to take rest. In a nearby grove were hidden a few thieves who were discussing their plan. On the third night, they said, they would raid a holy company of monks and their followers that would be passing by that way. The king heard this and became anxious about the safety of the monks.

When the king was thinking about this, a party of policemen came there in search of the thieves. They had prior information about their plans, it seemed. At first, they took the king to be of their party but soon they realised their mistake and thought of using him, if possible, for their own purpose. They came to the king and said,

"Sir, in the course of the next few days, a holy company is scheduled to pass by this way. We have information that some thieves have plans to plunder the company. There is a city called Shrinagar which is at a distance of 10 *yojanas* from here. King Ripumardan reigns there. He has deputed us to look after the safe movement of this company, and we have orders to arrest the thieves, and even to kill them, if necessary. So we are here in search of them. If you have any information about them, we shall be glad to have it."

The truthful never transgress their vow; yet they do not open the door to harm, unpleasantness and injury. The king was not in very dissimilar situation. He had to uphold truth and the safety of the holy company, and yet he could not expose the thieves to harm. So after a moment's thought he said,

"Friends, why do you bother about the thieves? Your assignment is to guard the company, and this will be done if you stay with it. If the thieves raid it, you can see them right there and do the needful."

The policemen were impressed by these words, and they turned their steps to where the holy company was.

Religious behaviour has its impact even on the most cruel. The thieves heard everything the king had said, and they were very grateful to him.

"Surely, this must be a god among men," they said. "It seems he knows of our presence here and yet he dropped no hint about it "

They all came out of the grove and stood before the king. They saluted him and said,

"Sir, you are our saviour and we are very grateful to you. You knew about our presence in the grove and yet you gave no hint. This surely reveals your greatness. We are now, sir, at your service. What can we do for you?"

The king offered them good counsel and advised them to desist from theft. Thieves by profession, they could not agree to it, but they promised not to touch the holy men or render any harm to them.

A more rigorous ordeal still waited for the king. This concerned the safety of his own person. Hardly had he traversed some distance than a party of horsemen stopped him and said,

"Did you see king Hansa passing by this way?"

"How do you feel interested in him?"

Narrating the purpose of their mission, the horsemen said, "We are the very trusted men of King Arjuna. He is now in occupation of Raipur and King Hansa of the republic has fled for the safety of his life. We are now in search of him and we have orders to kill him. Tell us soon if you have seen him."

It was now no easy task for the king to give a reply or to evade it, and yet he was determined not to transgress his vow. Even at this moment of the greatest danger to his own person, he placed truth above self and said in a calm and steadfast voice,

“Friends, the man before you is King Hansa himself, after whom you are here. He is in your hands. Do as may suit your purpose.”

So saying, he stood fast, with his eyes shut. He chanted the holy *namokara* within himself and withdrew the attachment to the mortal frame. Spiritual power tremendously grew. This was a moment of triumph for the king. Just at that moment, a *deva* of right outlook made his appearance there and said, “Oh king! I am overwhelmed by thy steadfastness. I have thrown out thy enemies from the city. It is safe now. You are out on pilgrimage and to-day is the proper day to worship the idol. The place is yet far off, and you can by no means reach there in time for the worship. My chariot is ready. May I take you thither!”

The King was overwhelmed at the miraculous turn of events. Now, in the company of the *deva* in the latter's chariot, the king reached the summit of Ratnasringa in time for the worship. This was the fructification of his mission for which he started and because of which he underwent hard ordeals. The *deva* then escorted the king back to his own city, where his adversary, King Arjuna, had already been thrown into the prison. At the king's earnest request, the *deva* released him. After this, the *deva* deputed four of his trusted lieutenants to look after the safety of the king and the kingdom, and departed for his celestial home.

LAKSMIPUNJA

At Hastinapur, there lived a merchant named Sudharma. A devout Jaina, the merchant was very poor and ran a petty business. His wife's name was Dhanna. One night, as she was fast asleep, she saw in a dream the Goddess Shree (the goddess of prosperity) in the Lotus Lake. Dressed in the best of her robes and ornaments, she was seated on a lotus. Dhanna woke up after this good dream, and when she apprised her husband of this, he said, "Now our days of woe must be nearing their end. Indications are that a boy will be born in the family and his fame will go far and near."

With this sweet thought in her mind, Dhanna could not sleep for the rest of the night.

The arrival of a pious soul becomes a turning point in the life of a family. From the day Dhanna had dreamt the dream, there was a turn for the better in Sudharma's material condition. The profit from business also looked up. But Sudharma's depression was not yet over. The anxiety about how best to accord a welcome to the in-coming pious soul always haunted him. One day, as he was standing in the courtyard with this thought up in his mind, a portion of the earth slipped from beneath his feet and peeped through it a jar full of gold and gems. This was a major turning point. Henceforth, fortune smiled on him and he was living in a mansion of his own served by many servants and attendants.

At the right moment, a male child was born to Dhanna. On the third day, he was exposed to the sun and the moon. On the sixth night, the mother kept awake to worship the deity of Birth and on the eleventh day, the house was cleaned in the customary manner. On the twelfth day, relations and friends were invited to dinner and the boy's naming ceremony was performed. He was to be henceforth called Laksmipunja.

When Laksmipunja was eight, he was married to a beautiful damsel from a rich merchant's family. He was a happy young man enjoying all the pleasures of life. One day, a thought came into his mind : 'Wherefrom has all this non-ending treasure come ?' On the same day, he had the following revelation about his previous birth

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There was a city named Laksmidhara where lived a merchant named Gunadhara. He was rich but he was a man of very simple and unassuming habits. One day, he went to the park, where a *muni* was giving a sermon on *adattadana*, i. e., not to acquire unless a thing is bestowed or bequeathed. When the sermon was over, the merchant came near the *muni*, paid him homage and obeisance and took the vow of *adattadana*.

The merchant started with a convoy of 500 carts loaded with merchandise for another country. When the convoy reached a dense forest, the merchant felt that it would be risky for him to move with it, and so on horse-back, he separated from it, taking an obscure route made of foot-prints. On the way, he came across a costly necklace, which he did not even care to look at. As he wanted to proceed fast, he struck the horse with his heels and put it to gallop. At one place, as the earth was removed by the horse's hoof, the merchant saw a jar full of treasure, but, with perfect detachment, he put the horse to a still greater speed. But ill-luck prevailing, before the horse could go far, it dropped down exhausted and died on the spot. This was a great shock for the merchant, who felt that the horse had met with its end prematurely because of him. So he said aloud : "If anyone can restore the horse to life, I shall give him my whole treasure." But, as none came, the merchant discarded the dead horse and proceeded on foot.

The merchant was now proceeding alone through the dense forest. He became very thirsty but there was no water to be seen anywhere in the neighbourhood. Soon he discovered a leather-jar full of water hanging from a tree.

He came beneath the tree, but as he remembered his vow, he shouted :

“To whom does the jar belong ? I am very thirsty.”

At the other branch of the same tree, there was a cage from where a parrot responded.

“This belongs to a medical man. He has gone in search of herbs in the denser parts of the forest. Nobody knows when he may come back. If you are thirsty, you may very well drink from the jar. But neither its owner nor his agent is present here at this moment.”

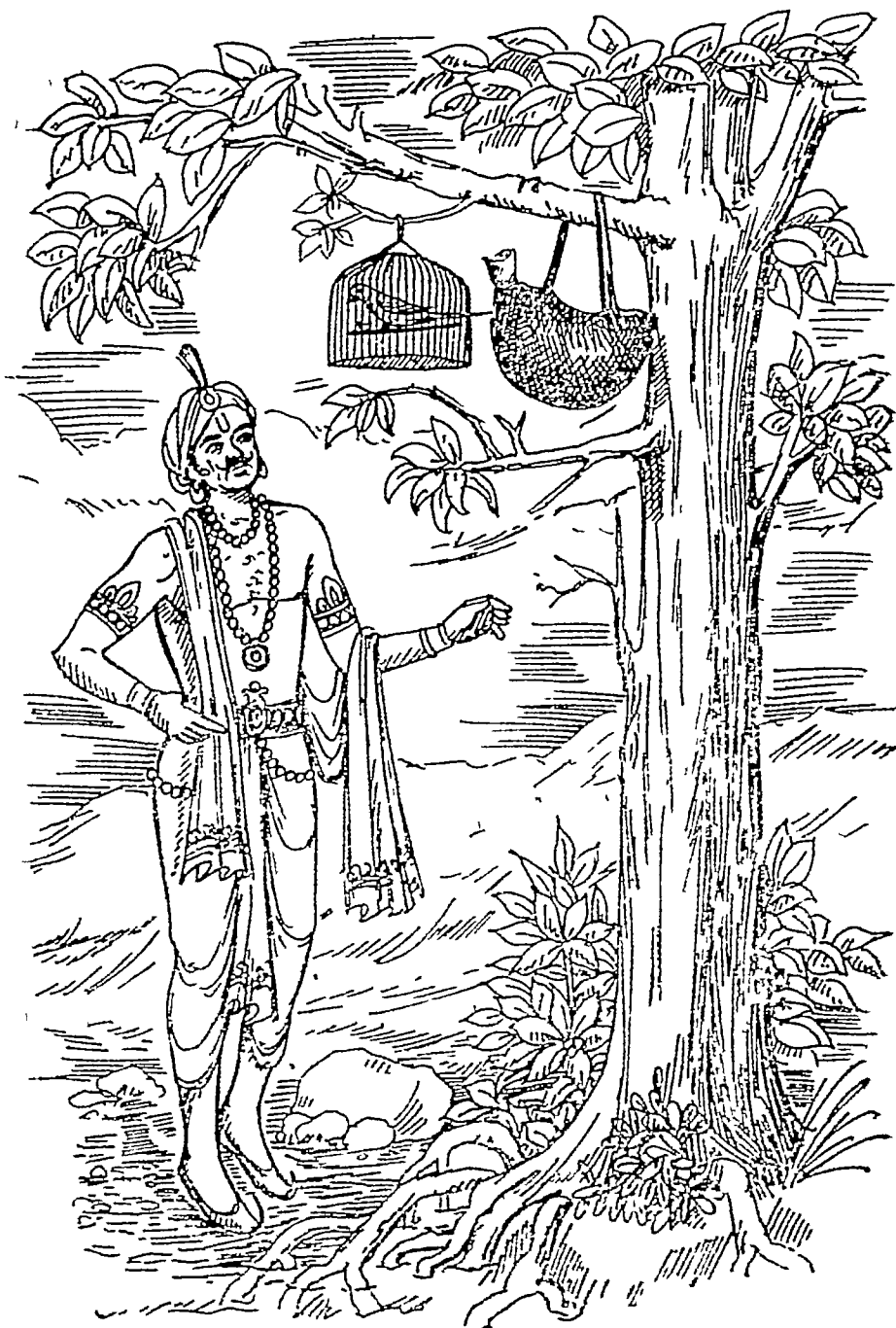
Gunadhara was so badly thirsty that his eyes had almost shot out and it was not possible for him either to speak or to walk. Still he said to the parrot, “Thirst may take my life, but I don’t accept a thing not properly given to me.” He sat down with his eyes closed. When after sometime he opened them, he found to his surprise that neither the leather-jar nor the parrot and the cage were there, instead, there stood a *deva* who said,

“Sire, I am a resident of Vipula which is located atop the mountain Vaitadhya. My name is Sura and I am a Vidyadhara. My father who has joined the holy order resides in a park outside your city. I had been there to pay respect to him just at the time when you took the vow of not accepting anything not duly given. You are a merchant and you have to move to far-off lands on business. So I wondered if it would be possible for you to honour your vow. It was for testing you, therefore, that I laid a few traps, the necklace, you remember, the jar full of treasure. It was I again that made the horse die. The jar, the cage and the parrot were all placed by me on the tree.”

So saying, he recalled the necklace, the jar, the horse and many other things, and made a gift of them to the merchants.

Gunadhara—“Why do you give me all these ?”

Vidyadhara—“It was my father who told me to keep away from superfluous riches, but I did not care to listen



A parrot responded, "This belongs to a medical man "

to him For, I could not free myself from attachment. But to-day I have seen in you one who has conquered attachment, and this has really inspired me. I have now resolved to court total detachment I hold you as my master, and I want to make a gift of my all to my master ”

Gunadhara—“But why don't you return them to their proper owners ?”

Vidhydhara—“Well, sir, all these belong to me, and all these are yours now ”

Gunadhara—“Very good But I too am under a vow to bestow my all to one who restores the horse to life ; and since you have done it, you are henceforth the rightful owner of everything I have ”

Vidyadhara—“Sir, you are my superior, and so I cannot accept your treasure ; but, as you say, you are under a vow and so you can no longer retain its ownership. What will happen to all this then ?” Gunadhara gave a solution

“Let us do one thing Let none of us use it. Let it be given as a gift for some public, social or religious purpose.”

The solution appealed to both

From that time, merchant Gunadhara changed the course of his life He became immersed in *dharmadhyana* (spiritual meditation). Thus he ended his life

The same merchant has been reborn as Lakshmipunja with so much affluence of wealth and treasure

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This revelation revived Lakshmipunja's memory of his previous birth. His detachment came up soon and he renounced everything He entered the spiritual order and lived therein enriching his soul practising penance and restraint

MAIRAVATI

Ripumardana was the ruling king at the city of Ksitipratisthita and Madanarekha was his first queen. She was a devoted *śravika* who was acquainted with the principles of religion. She gave birth to a daughter who was named Mairavati. She was her mother's daughter, a mixture of beauty, conduct and intellect. The king made proper arrangement for her education and very soon she became proficient in all the branches of learning. Her spiritual education was in charge of her mother.

One day, when the court was in session, Mairavati was sent there by her mother. She was in the best of her robes and ornaments. The princess bowed before her father, the king, who affectionately received her and made her sit on the throne with himself. The king had a proud bend of mind. Addressing the courtiers, he said,

"Do you think there is another monarch on earth who has as much material prosperity, illustrious court and gifted kinsmen as I have?"

"Your Majesty, what to speak of having them, in reality, they cannot conceive them even in dreams.

The princess, however, did not agree. She signified her dissent by nodding her head bothways and added,

"Sire, whatever the courtiers have stated is stark flattery, a total violation of truth. On this earth, there are many monarchs who are in possession of equivalent treasure, court and kinsmen. Are these really things to be proud of?"

This observation was not palatable to the king who overlooked it.

He asked the courtiers again :

"By whose favour are you all happy?"

"Your Majesty ! Can there be any question or doubt about it ? We are all happy because of thy favour. Can anybody shower happiness on others save the *kalpa* tree ?"

The princess, however, disagreed again.

"You are all liars indulging in naked flattery. Acquisition of good and evil is the outcome of *karma*, beyond the capacity of human agency." Then, turning to the king, she said,

"Father, if you are the real determinant, why don't you make everybody equally happy ? Some of your courtiers are more happy and others are less happy. This is the outcome of their respective *karma*. You are only an instrument in its operation. Speaking about myself, my birth in your royal household and the affluence I enjoy are all the outcome of inexorable *karma*."

The king's rage now reached the highest pitch. He burst out :

"Foolish girl ! Who has taught you all this garulity ? Meseems that in the garb of my daughter, you are a real enemy. You should know it for certain that it is my favourable glance that can make a poor man rich, and it is my angry glance that can ruin one for ever. If you agree with me, you will be married in some prosperous household ; otherwise, you will just be disposed of to some poor man."

"Father, you are mistaken. If I have not righteous *karma* to favour me, even the best of grooms chosen by you will turn pauper. But if my favourable *karma* be up, even a commoner may rise to the acme of prosperity, and acquire a kingdom. Pride is the virus of worldly life. So, sire, get rid of it."

The king could no longer contain himself. At once he gave the following orders to his men :

"Go thee and bring forth one who may be the poorest, the meanest, the lowliest, and one in wretched health."

The princess sat calm. The king's men went to the central square and picked up a man who was gasping

because of ill-health. They brought him before the king. His ears were rotten, nose dull and flat, lips long and projected and cheeks marked by depression. His body was all bones and no flesh, with distinct marks of leprosy. The king's pride was now gratified. He turned to the princess and said,

"Well, madam ! In deference to your *karma*, this man has been brought here. It is my order that you marry him."

The truly great have no gap in their profession and practice. The princess slowly came down and courted the leper as her husband. The whole court was stunned and mortified, but not the king. His pride and vengeance were fully gratified. The princess was then deprived of her jewellery and rich robes and turned out from the city.

The two took shelter in the precincts of a temple to spend the night there. The leper's compassion was up. Addressing the princess, he said :

"Noble lady ! Whatever the king has done has been unjust and malicious. This is neither good for thee nor for the royal household. Thou art a lovely damsel of noble birth, and I am only a poor leper. I am not fit for thee. So, madam, I regret my inability to accept thee and gladly do I permit thee to give me up. You forget about me and marry some suitable young man. I have no doubt, wherever you go, you will be an asset."

The princess appealed : "My dear ! What do I hear from thee ? When sins are up, one is born as a woman, and for a woman to give up purity is more sinful. You suggest me to do that. Youth, beauty, wealth—these come and go, but purity is a rarest acquisition. You may be rich or poor, well or ill, but you are my all. In future, may I not hear what you have said just now ?"

The leper was happy at this unusual reply. The sun had gone down and the leper was asleep. Only the princess was awake. She saw an old lady coming towards her. A young man accompanied her. The lady came to the princess and said,

"My daughter ! I am the deity of this city. I am deeply mortified at thy father's behaviour. So I have come to help thee"

Then pointing to the young man she said,

"This beautiful and lucky young man is meant for thee. You give up this leper and be his wife. You will be happy with him. I shall help you in all respects"

This was really a trap and how many would come out successful ? Mairavati was one of those that are steadfast in all situations. She said :

"Mother ! I haven't enough words to thank thee. But I am duly married with this man with the consent of my father. So how do you think I can give him up ? A woman courts a husband but once. He may be a leper, but to me he is the king of kings, my all. I only beg and entreat that this man whom you have brought with you may be withdrawn and restored to his proper place"

The deity took this refusal as an affront to herself. She hurled the princess into the sky saying :

"If you take my advice, you will be happy ; otherwise, I will kill you"

The princess was helpless but she was incessantly uttering the holy *namokara*. And then a miracle happened. There was neither the deity nor the leper ; instead, a divine person stood before her. He said to the princess :

"There is a city named Manipur on the Vaitadhya hill. I am Manichuda, its king. Once, while wandering, I heard somebody say,

Crows are black everywhere

Parrots are ever green,

Happy are happy everywhere

Misery the wretches are in !

I thought of testing the truth of this and changed myself into a leper. Just then the king's men picked me up.



“... I am the deity of this city . I have come to help thee.”

The rest of the story is well-known to you. You did not deviate from your resolve. You are really praiseworthy and honorable. How lucky am I and how lucky is my city to have in thee a wife and a queen, acquired so unexpectedly."

The princess knew not if it was a dream or reality. She could not rely on her audio-visual organs, but this much she was confident about that purity always shines. She had a feeling that it was her purity incarnate that stood before her in body and flesh. The princess conveyed her gratefulness to the divine person, her husband, and acknowledged this turn in her luck to be the outcome of *karma*.

The two now happily lived there for some time. One day, Manichuda said to his wife :

"My dear, I want to see my father-in-law, your father, and teach him a lesson for all that he did to you. Can you suggest how best this should be done?"

"My dear, you make him appear before you dressed as a peasant. That will crush his pride for ever."

This was done. By dint of his divine power, Manichuda raised a mighty army and laid siege of the city of his father-in-law. Then he sent a messenger to King Ripu-mardana to tell him in unmistakable terms to dress like a peasant and submit to him, failing which he would be duly punished.

The king became red at once and was about to accept the challenge, but the minister prevailed upon him and said,

"Your Majesty : One should act with due caution even when the adversary is your equal, the more so when, as in the present case, he is a superior. I think, in the interest of the kingdom and in that of our own, you should act as the messenger desires."

The king realised the gravity of the situation and softened. Now, dressed as a peasant, he came to meet King Manichuda. Manichuda, however, fittingly received him and immediately gave him a change of dress. Soon the king's eyes fell on his own daughter who was seated on the

throne. The king bent his head in shame. Mairavati said, "Father, be not remorseful. The leper to whom you gave me away has luckily turned out to be a divine personality. We need acknowledge that this is the play of *karma*."

The king was happy to see the turn in his daughter's fortune. Manichuda apprised him of all that had happened since the princess was banished from the city. Then he added :

"Sire, blessed are you that in your royal household has been born such a precious soul as your daughter. And doubly blessed am I that has acquired such a pious thing without any effort."

After this, the *deva* returned to his city on the Vaitadhiya hill in the company of his consort. Always steadfast in purity, Mairavati spent the rest of her life devoted to spiritual practices.

DHANASARA

A merchant named Dhanasara used to lived in Mathura. He was the owner of a vast fortune of 620 million gold coins, but he was extremely niggardly and would not even give as much as a copper or a nickel. He was well-known for his wealth as well as niggardliness.

Money is acquired both by honest and dishonest means. Money honestly earned does not become a source of trouble, but not so money earned through unfair means. Besides, the latter does not last as much as money honestly earned. One day, Dhanasara went to take stock of the treasure kept underground, but to his great shock, he found it all changed into charcoal with reptiles crawling through them. As he was brooding over this great loss, there came the news of the loss of a ship loaded with cargo on the high seas. And then followed a third shock about a highway robbery in which a convoy of his carrying precious merchandise had been looted. These made him feel so helpless and wretched that he saw darkness all around. Holding his forehead between his palms, he was bewailing for his ill-luck.

When the unfavourable *karma* is up, whatever a man may do will inevitably go against him. Dhanasara borrowed one million gold coins from a relation and went abroad to do business. But as ill-luck would have it, there was a ship-wreck and his entire gold fell into the sea. He could save himself with difficulty by catching a floating log and swimming ashore.

He spent a day on the sea shore and on the next day he moved to a nearby park. There he saw a *muni* under the shade of a mango tree giving sermon to assembled people. Dhanasara also sat down to listen. When the sermon was over, the merchant came near the *muni*, paid him homage and obeisance and said,

"Oh *muni* ! For what *karma* did I acquire so much wealth and for what *karma* did I lose my all ?"

The *muni* said,

"Oh merchant ! All these happen as per *karma* which is powerful. In Dhatakikhand, there was a city named Ambica. Two brothers lived there. The elder brother was always generous helping the needy, but the younger brother was miserly and did not like the charities made by his elder brother. When he saw him making charities, he would even lose his temper. Such a situation continued for some time and then the younger brother could tolerate it no more and separated. But even after this, the elder brother's wealth, instead of diminishing, went on increasing. So the younger brother lodged a complaint with the king and induced him to take custody of his property and wealth. The elder brother was deeply wounded at this and he renounced the world. After his death, by virtue of his good deeds, he became a *deva* heaven.

The younger brother was now bitterly criticised by the people and he could no longer remain in the society. So he joined the order of some heretics and on completion of his life was born as one of the Asurakumaras in hell. Having completed his life there, he is reborn in you. In your previous life, you disapproved of gifts and charities and so you are still a miser. You deprived your brother of his rightful wealth and so you are deprived now. And, well, your elder brother, having spent his life in Saudharmaloka, he was born as a merchant in Tamralipti. He earned much wealth and spent many years enjoying material happiness. Then he gave up his all to join the order of monks. He is the person now speaking to you."

Dhanasara was sorry, and was yet amazed to hear this revealing account. He fell at the feet of his elder brother, the *muni*, and begged to be forgiven. He took vow not to indulge in sinful acts any more and to donate three-fourths of his earning, retaining for personal use only a quarter. This had instantaneous effect. By the mercy of a *deva*, all his wealth and affluence that had been lost were restored.

Henceforth, Dhanasara become a devout *sravaka* who regularly spent his wealth on seven worthy items, viz., Jaina abodes, Jaina idols, Jaina literature, Jaina monks, Jaina nuns, Jaina *sravakas* and Jaina *sravikas*. This was a real turning point in his life and the rest of it was worthily lived

KESAVA

At Kundanpur, there lived a merchant named Jasodhara. His wife's name was Rambha. He had two sons by her, Hansa and Kesava. There was much cordiality between the two brothers. They used to read and play together. One day, while taking a stroll, they reached a park where they saw a *muni* who was giving a discourse. The two brothers listened to him and were very much inspired by the *muni's* words. In the presence of the *muni*, they took the vow of not taking food at night. The *muni* heartily approved of their resolve and gave them inspiration to remain steadfast in their vow.

The brothers returned home. Now, before the sun went down, they asked their mother to serve them food. The mother understood not why. The family was in the habit of taking food at night. When the mother came to know of their vow, she became furious. She not only rebuked them, but told them not to indulge in much odd things. That night, food was prepared after a quarter of the night was over. As Jasodhara sat for the dinner, he enquired about his sons. They came in but would not touch anything because of the vow. This made Jasodhara too furious. Said he,

“You are just kiddies, and it seems you have turned into agents of religion. This is very bad. I won't allow this in my family.” But the two brothers remained steadfast and went to bed without food.

Jasodhara tried to argue with the boys.

“This is neither our habit nor customary with the family.”

But it was all in vain. So he asked his wife not to serve any food during the day so that they would be coaxed

to take food at night. The next day, the whole scene repeated again. The boys asked the mother to serve food before sun-set. But the mother said, "Food will be ready at night. There is nothing remnant from the morning which you can take. So, like good boys, you should have your dinner at night with your father. It is your duty to abide by the wishes of your parents."

The two brothers went to their father's shop without taking anything and attended their regular duties as everyday. Jasodhara gave strict instruction to his wife to remain strict and give no indulgence. At night, the father again asked the boys to dine with him, but both of them declined. The next day the father imposed on them such a heavy load of duties that they had no time to take food, and at night they would not take it, though offered.

In this way, five days passed. On the sixth day, Jasodhara sent for both of them. First he tried to persuade them to give up the vow. He said that their mother was on fast on account of them, that everybody in the family was unhappy. He told them that even the learned people took food during the first quarter of the night and that, therefore, there was nothing wrong in it.

Hansa was already very hungry and slowly he was giving way. He looked at Kesava who stood steadfast like a rock. Kesava told his father in most unmistakable terms that it was none of his business to interfere into his affair and that he would do as suited him best.

Jasodhara could no longer contain himself. In extreme rage, he burst out,

"What do ye say, ye bad boy? If you do not obey me, I do not shelter one like you to stain my family. Get out at once. I do not want as much to see your face."

The final decision for him was thus given by his father and it was irrevocable. But Kesava wavered not. He preferred to court hardship to submitting to threat or giving up the vow. He fled the parental home. As Hansa was about to follow him, the father held his hand. He induced

him not to go but to give up the fast and live happily. Hansa was a weak personality. He submitted and sat down to dine.

After leaving his home, Kesava covered a long distance on foot. He did not stop even when it was evening. At last, he reached a *yaksa* temple where people were assembled to offer worship. The ritual was over and they were about to partake out of the offerings when Kesava stepped in. Everybody was happy to get an opportunity to entertain a guest after the worship. They welcomed him and offered him some fruits and sweets and begged him to accept them. Kesava was in a fix. If he accepted the offer, he would break the vow, if he declined, he would deprive the worshippers of a chance of entertaining a guest. But he gathered courage and said,

“Friends. I am under a vow not to take anything at night, and whatever the difficulty of a situation, I cannot transgress it. It is on this very issue that I have left my home. How can I give up my vow here?”

People were irritated at these words.

“But, sir, you are our guest and to entertain a guest is a part of worship. You should not deprive us of it. Is it the object of your vow to disoblige us? All our worship will be in vain if you do not accept our offer. Besides, unless you take food, none else can take it, which means that you compel all of us to go without food. Religion does not permit you to give pain to others. In the interest of religion and greater good, therefore, you take food with us.”

But Kesava did not waver. When arguments and counterarguments had reached a high pitch, and they could not agree, just then a giant emerged out of the idol who advanced towards Kesava with blood-shot eyes and said,

“Kesava! How haughty you must be. My devotees are all on fast and you make pretext of your vow. Come and take food. Otherwise, I shall wipe you out of existence with my mace.”

Kesava bore this with patience. He was faced with a fire ordeal, But his mind did not approve the idea of transgressing the vow. That would be as good as his sacrificing all. So he stood firm, as if in a trance, and gave no reply. He was ready for the worst

The *yaksa* read into Kesava's mind. He was pretty certain that his power was useless to move Kesava. So he changed his tone and advised his own devotees to get hold of Kesava's master, the Jaina monk, who had fixed him in the vow and who alone was now capable to change his mind and induce him to take food. Some of them started at once and returned after some time with a monk, named Dharmaghosa, who was tied fast with ropes. As soon as he saw Kesava, he began to lament. Kesava looked at him and took no time to understand that this was not his master. It was all a false game which the *yaksa* was playing. Now, addressing the monk, the *yaksa* said

"Monk ! You permit this follower of yours to take food. Otherwise, you will be put to death

Turning to Kesava the monk said,

"Kesava ! My child ! you see, for thy sake, my life is in danger. You should not behave like a bigot. In transgressing a vow for the sake of a *deva*, one's own master and a holy company, one does not really fall from the path. If you have any consideration for me, you give up the vow but once and take the offering."

Kesava replied at once,

"My master prescribes not to take food at night. He follows the path of the Jina who is free from all attachments. The path has no corner for fear. So a man who gives a different prescription out of fear cannot be my master. This is all a magic created by the *yaksa*."

The *yaksa* was not prepared for this. He shouted :

"Ye wretch ! Take food at once or goes down thy master rolling on the ground the very next moment."

Kesava—' This is not my master. He would never step

into a trap set by you. You will never have the courage to look into his face ”

The monk — ‘Kesava. It is wrong on your part to question my identity. I am the same monk who fixed you in the vow. You take food so that I may be saved.’

Tears were rolling down the monk’s cheeks, his voice was shaky, his lips were quivering and he was not able even to stand any longer. The *yaksa* caught hold of him and dashed him against the ground. The monk fell senseless. Then while picking up the mace, he said to Kesava.

‘Kesava ! Nothing is lost yet. If you are prepared to partake of the offering, I shall restore your master to life I shall even consider bestowing a vast kingdom on you. You will be rolling in luxury. But if this is not acceptable to you, then you will suffer the same fate as your master. I shall break you into pieces with this mace ’

In a firm voice, Kesava said,

‘This is not my master. You say, you can restore a dead man to life , then what prevents you to restore your own devotees to life who may be dead ? You say, you can bestow a kingdom on me Well, if you bestow it on your own followers, they may be a little better off I have no need of thy kingdom. As to death, it is inevitable to mortal beings. I am not afraid of its touch.’

The *yaksa* now changed his strategy and changed into a friend. He took Kesava into his embrace and said,

‘Truly, this man is not your master He is the creation of my magical powers to test your steadfastness. It is also true that none can restore a dead man to life, nor can one bestow a kingdom on another Then at a silent hint from the *yaksa*, the devotees who stood all around said,

‘Well, sir, we understand that you are on fast for the past one week You are tired too for covering such a long distance on foot. We are sorry, we too have given you much trouble. We think now that you enjoy a well-earned rest. If you will take food only after sun-rise, we shall also do the same ’

They provided him with a cushion and Kesava lay on it. Soon he was fast asleep

After some time, the *yaksa* woke him up to announce the sun-rise and invite him to partake of the offer

Kesava rubbed his eyes and stood up. He looked around to see light but he was not sure if the sun was really up. He had a feeling that he did not sleep for long and it could not be morning so soon. It must surely be another of the *yaksa's* tricks. But to be doubly sure he extended his gaze and saw darkness all around. He had no doubt now that it was still the dead of night. So he said to the *yaksa*.

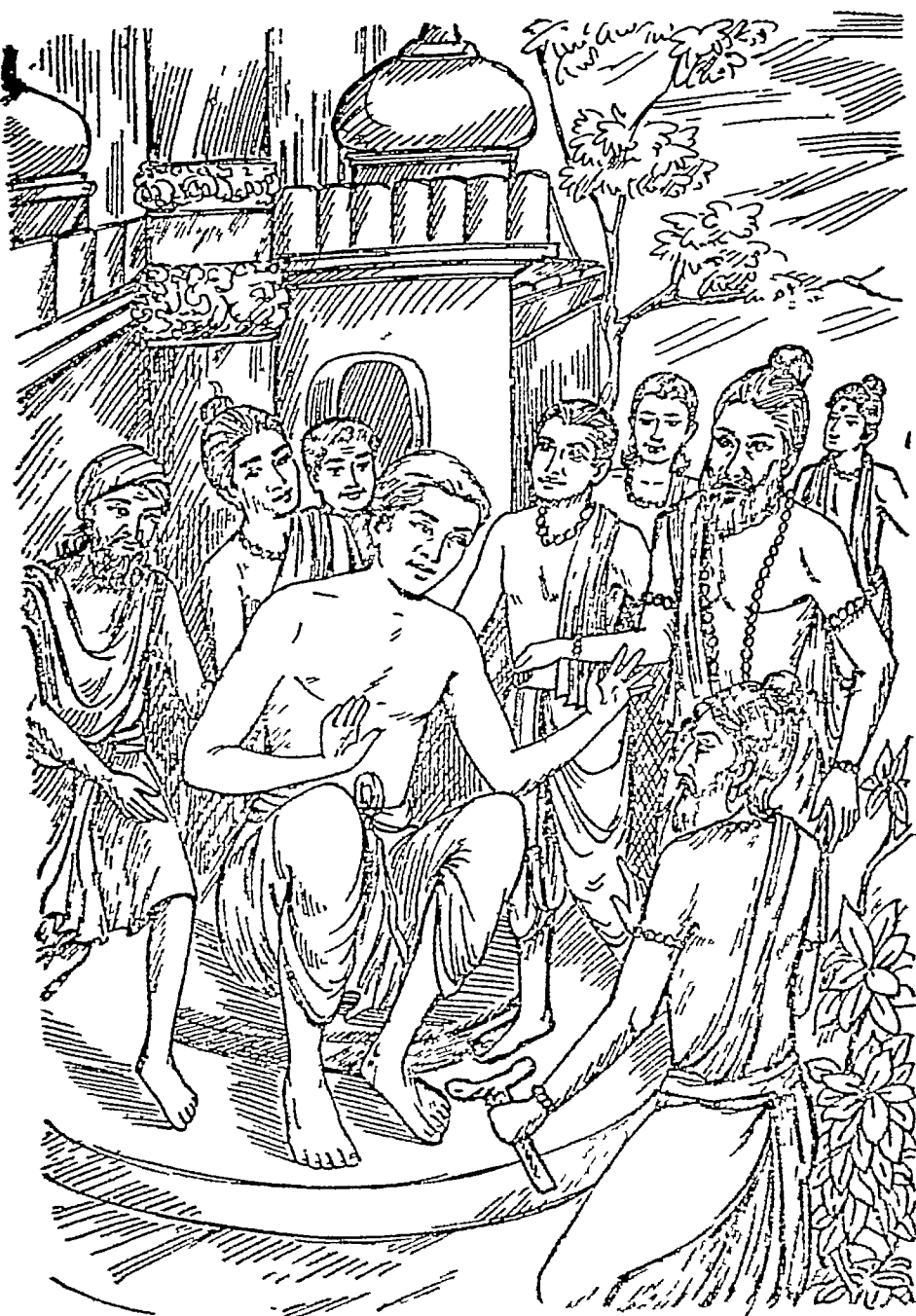
The sun is not yet up. It is all a trick by you. But I am strong in my vow and I cannot accept food before sun-rise "

The whole group headed by the *yaksa* was now prepared to coerce him. So he stood fast, with his eyes shut, as if in meditation. The noise gradually settled down, followed by a dead silence. When, at last, Kesava opened his eyes, he saw to his surprise that there was nothing—neither the temple, nor the *yaksa* nor the devotees. Instead, there stood a divine person, who spoke in a solemn tone :

"Kesava ! You have passed through your test. You are fulfilling the vow with the same steadfastness with which you started it. So you deserve to be congratulated. One day in the assembly of gods in heaven, when the king of gods was eloquently praising you for your steadfastness, all those present agreed with him, with the solitary exception in me. But, to-day, I am an eye-witness of your strength. The ordeal you underwent was all my creation, and I am sorry for the trouble caused to you. I crave thy forgiveness and pray, you ask for a boon "

Kesava—"You bless me, sire, that I may continue to fulfil my vow till the end of my life. I am in no need of anything else "

Deva—"Still I want to bestow something on you, and you will do me the favour to ask for something."



"Friends ! I am under a vow"

Kesava—"But, sire, you see, I hardly need anything. Contented am I"

Deva—"But I am keen to share in the virtue of thy steadfastness. How do ye deprive me of that?"

Kesava—"As it pleases you then, sire"

Deva—"So I give you the boon that the water which washes the first finger of your leg will heal any disease for good. When in difficulty, you will attain whatever you will crave for. Nothing is unattainable for the virtuous"

The *deva* then placed Kesava on the outskirts of a city and disappeared.

In the morning, Kesava entered into the city to find that a religious assembly was in progress. Acharya Dharma-shri was giving a discourse to the people assembled there. Kesava also sat down to listen.

The name of the city was Saketa. Dhananjaya was the ruling king. For quite sometime he was anxious to renounce the world and join the holy order, but he was prevented from doing so for want of a son and successor. The king was present in the religious assembly in which the Acharya was speaking. When the discourse was over, the king made the following submission :

"Holy sir ! I got indication last night in the course of a dream that in to-day's assembly, there will be present a young man who will assist me in my spiritual design and set me free from my present anxiety. It behoves thee to enlighten me how I dreamt such a dream and to indicate if such a person is present in the assembly." By dint of his superior knowledge, the Acharya realised the whole situation. Pointing to Kesava, he said,

"Here is your young man, named Kesava. The *deva* who tested Kesava's steadfastness also gave you the indication.

The king's joy knew no bound. He at once came to Kesava, embraced him and took him to the palace. Kesava was enthroned as the king of Saketa. Dhananjaya joined the holy order.

One day, as Kesava was seated at the palace window, his eyes fell on an old man in the street who was in tattered clothes, and a very embodiment of poverty and distress. Kesava took no time to recognise him to be his father. He at once came down and touched his feet. The old man was happy to see his son, the more so to see him to be a king. Seeing his father alone, Kesava enquired about his elder brother, when the old man sighed and said,

“It is a very sad story. The night you left I forced him to break the vow. He sat to dine with me. But it so happened that the food he took was contaminated with deadly poison which soon spread through his body. A healer was at once called in. He tried his best to save him but could not assure a permanent cure. He has forecast that he would not survive beyond a month, when his flesh would separate from the bones under the impact of the deadly poison. I stayed near him for five days. Then I started in search of you, and, luck favouring, I have so unexpectedly met you. To-day I complete a month since I left home, and I know not if Hansa still lives in his mortal frame.”

Kesava's fraternal affection was awakened. By the grace of the *deva*, he, along with his father, was beside his brother's bed in a moment. Hansa's body was emitting a foul smell and the flesh was all dilapidated. Kesava could no longer bear the sight. The *deva* at once reminded him of the healing powers he had endowed him with. The potion was made ready and sprinkled on Hansa's body. What a wonder, in no time, Hansa was all right.

It was really a day of great rejoicing and family reunion. The story of Kesava's magical power spread throughout the city and many came to receive cure for their ailments. Thereafter Kesava took his paternal family to his own city, Saketa. The king issued a special proclamation, which the people gladly courted :

“Desist from taking food at night.”

CHARUDATTA

Sresthi Bhanu was a resident of the city of Champa. His wife's name was Subhadra. He had a son named Charudatta. Charudatta was so fond of reading from his infancy that he would care for nothing else. When he came of age, he was married to his cousin Mrigavati. But even this did not change his habit. As Mrigavati lit the lamp in her bed-room, Charudatta would sit down with a book and spend the whole night on it. He did not care for his wife's presence nor sought her company.

Merchant Bhanu and his wife were very much perturbed at the abnormal behaviour of the son. They tried various remedies but without success. Charudatta remained an inveterate book-worm and would care for nothing else in life. After much consideration, his father thought of engaging a public woman to change his son.

It is always a bad thing to indulge in one bad habit to uproot another. This may rid you of one to make you a slave of another. But in his anxiety to cure his son of his reading habit he never looked at this aspect. A well-known harlot, Vasantasena, was engaged for the purpose and very soon she was successful. Now the young man was having a good time in her company. Thus twelve years rolled by. During these years, a vast sum of money flowed out from the merchant's coffer to reach the hands of the harlot. The merchant was now in severe financial strain. The continued absence of the son from home was an additional pain. But Charudatta would not care to look at his father's business, nor was he ready to give up the company of the woman. At last, the merchant and his wife died of a broken heart.

A harlot would care for a man only so long as he is a source of her earning, and she would throw him out as soon as he went dry. The relation between the two is not based on



"I shall lower you inside the well . . . "

love, but on money, and so it does not take time to terminate Charudatta was penniless. So Vasantasena turned him out of her abode. The young man returned home and saw it in a bad state. His parents were dead and the mansion was about to crumble down. Affluence was no longer there. It was all a reign of poverty in his one-time prosperous home. This was a great shock for the young man. He sat down on the steps and bewailed for the great misfortune. When Mrigavati heard the sob, she came out, to see her own husband, and she took him in. She consoled him with sweet words, made him take bath and served him food. After he was somewhat consoled, she said.

“There is no use lamenting over what is past. I have some ornaments. You may raise money against them and start some business. The goddess of fortune smiles on one who is enterprising.”

To this, Charudatta agreed. He raised a small amount of money and started for another country in the company of his maternal uncle. They bought some cotton, loaded it on a cart and turned their steps towards Tamralipti. In the way, the merchandise was lost in a fire. They had no more money in the pocket. The uncle thought, ‘Charudatta is very unfortunate. If I go with him, I won’t have a better turn in my fortune.’ So he parted company with him and went on his own way.

Charudatta was now without a support. Even his fortune would not stand by him. Wandering alone, he reached the city of Priyangu. There, a merchant, named Surendradatta, who happened to be his father’s acquaintance, recognised him and took him to his house. There he stayed for some time.

One day, he found that some people of the city were preparing to go on a voyage. Charudatta also decided to go with them. Surendradatta discouraged him, but he would not listen.

The ship with Charudatta and others on board cast anchor at an island where all the merchants did their

business. Charudatta also did the same and earned a sizeable amount. He was now anxious to return home. So he started back with whatever money he had earned. Luck disfavoured him again. The ship was caught in a storm on the sea and was lost. With it went down Charudatta's entire fortune. He saved himself with great difficulty by swimming ashore with the support of a floating plank. He now reached the outskirts of the city of Rajpur where he sat under a tree, taking stock of his life. A traveller was passing by that way. Charudatta saw his brilliant face and felt that this must be some uncommon personality. He folded his palms and wished him a good-day. The traveller stopped to look at him. When he saw him in a pitiable condition, he said, "How do you look so sad and downcast, oh young man?"

Charudatta narrated his story

The traveller took pity on him and took him with himself. Charudatta apprehended no danger from him.

Danger, however, comes without giving notice, and it comes in a manner and at a time when it is least expected.

After they had covered some distance, the two reached a dense forest. There was a hill in it and there was a cave in the hill. The man opened the door of the cave and the two entered into it. As they proceeded inside the cave, they reached a well which was emitting very foul smell. The man handed over to Charudatta a hollow gourd and said,

"I shall lower you inside the well. You fill it up with the juice that is stored inside and pass it on to me. Then I shall take you out."

Then the man lowered Charudatta into the well. Now he was near the juice. As he extended his hand to fill up the gourd, he heard a voice from inside speaking something to him.

The voice—"Gentleman, Take not the juice."

Charudatta—"Sir, Whoever you may be, I am to inform you that I am Bhanu Sresthi's son. At the bidding of a

greedy of flesh, may pick up and drop us up in the Land of Gold. That will make our task very easy ”

The plan did not, however, appeal much to Charudatta. So he said,

“We passed through the dense forest on the back of these goats. Should we now kill them? Life is as much dear to them as to us. These animals too have a feeling of pain. So we should give up the idea of killing them ”

Rudradatta—“Well, I do not understand your mind. These goats are neither our parents nor our brothers. In fact, they are none to us. They are meant for our use and we need give priority to our own requirements without brothing about what happens to them ” Charudatta protested again, but Rudradatta said with a firmness .

“I am decided to kill my goat ”

No sooner had he said it than he did it. Then he took out its hide

Now, turning to Charudatta he said,

“You cannot do it. So let me do it for you.”

On hearing this, Charudatta came to the goat and said,

“Poor animal ! In your previous birth, you must have killed some animal and so you are going to be slaughtered now. This is time for you now to renounce the *asravas* that tie the soul and take refuge unto the *arīhantas* the *siddhas*, the monks and the religion. You seek forgiveness of all living beings, give up anger and cultivate a feeling of fraternity to all ”

So saying he uttered the holy *namokara* into his ears

Rudradatta killed the goat and used the two hides to prepare two leather bags. He entered into one of them and made Charudatta to enter into the other. Thus they lay on the ground taking their chance

Now, everything went as expected. (Two *bharunda* birds descended there and picked up the two goat skins in their

claws and flew away in the sky) After they had covered some distance, they came across a few more birds of their own species. A quarrel ensued between them, in consequence of which the bags dropped down. Luckily, however, Charudatta's bag fell into a tank. So he remained unhurt. He now tore the bag and came out.

When favourable *karma* is about to come up, it brings hope in the midst of darkness. Charudatta's unfavourable *karma* was in the exit phase now. While wandering in the forest, he reached the top of a hill, where he saw a *muni*, who was exposing himself to the blazing sun, with his arms stretched upwards. Charudatta sat down. Having finished his *kayotsarga*, the *muni* said,

"Who you are and why have you come here ? This is an island named Kumbhakunda and this hill is named Kakkoda. None can come here except the *devas*, the *vidyadharas* and the flying monks who are gifted with special powers. There is a deep sea all around this island. How did you cross it ?"

Charudatta narrated his story. On hearing his account, the *muni* said,

"In this mundane life, difficulties abound, not well being. Not even the king of gods is capable of transgressing *karma* without experiencing its impact. It will be advisable for you to prevent the influx of fresh *karma*."

Just at that time, two persons descended there from an air-chariot. They were the monk's sons in the worldly life, both *Vidyadharas*, now residents of the *Vaitadhya* hills and both had come there to pay obeisance and homage to their father.

When Charudatta and these two were in the midst of a conversation, they saw another air-chariot rushing through the air. It was so bright that it gave light to all directions. The air-chariot descended on the hill and from it alighted a *deva*, attended by many others. To the surprise of all, he first paid obeisance and homage to Charudatta and then to the monk. Enlightening all, the in-coming *deva* said,

fellow traveller, I have come down to take the juice from this well. You will excuse my disturbing you and be good enough to permit me to take a gourd-full of juice."

The voice—"I was a sea-roving merchant myself. Once I was a victim of a ship-wreck and saved myself by swimming ashore. Meseems that I met this same traveller who induced me to come with him. After we had reached here, he lowered me into this well. Then he took the gourd full of juice from my hand but he dropped me into it. Now, you see, sir, the same fate awaits thee. Once in the well, it is impossible to get out. This juice is dangerous to the body and my end now may not be very far off. That's why I warned you not to touch it. You give me the gourd. I shall fill it and pass it on to you."

Charudatta gave him the gourd, which the man filled up and returned. The traveller now pulled up the rope.

The traveller—"Give me the gourd first. Then I shall take you out."

Charudatta—"You have to take me out with the gourd."

The traveller was vexed at these words. He took both of them out, but he pushed both back into the well. But as fortune helped him—and he was cautious too because of the prior warning—he caught the support of the earthen ring inside and stood half-way from the juice. But, as there was no possibility of his getting out, he started brooding over his past. As he did it, he felt very bad. But time is the best healer, and after some time, his agony had somewhat abated. It occurred to him that it must be all a play of *karma* accumulated from the past, and it was not known what other hardships were still in store. He went on brooding and brooding and at last thought of giving a turn to his life by changing its course in the spiritual direction. He remembered the *arhantas*, the *siddhas*, the monks and the religion. He took the vow to desist from sinful acts, went on fast and became immersed in meditation.

The man who was already in the well said the following soothing words to console him.

“On the third day from to-day, a cow will come here to drink from this well. If, at that time, you can catch hold of her tail very fast, there may be an escape for you.”

This gave a ray of hope to Charudatta, and he became more alert not to miss the chance.

After passing this piece of information, the man inside the well breathed his last.

On the third day, the said cow came there. Having drunk, as the cow was about to return, Charudatta caught hold of her tail and jumped out. He sat for a while to chant the holy *namokara*. Then he left that place.

Hardly had he gone far when a wild buffalo chased him. Charudatta ascended on a hill. The buffalo sat on the passage waiting for him. But good luck prevailing, a huge cobra came out of a cave in the hill and swallowed the buffalo. Charudatta now came down. After he had crossed through the forest, he reached a village. There he met a friend of his father, Rudradatta, who himself was a merchant. Charudatta stayed with him for some time.

But Charudatta's luck was still in ferment and would not allow him to settle down. Now he and Rudradatta prepared a plan of going to the Land of Gold. No sooner was the plan ready than the two set out. They crossed a turbulent river and reached the region of Tonk. The way ahead was extremely dangerous for walking on foot. Besides, it did not give them speed. So they bought two big-sized he-goats and continued their journey on their back. But the Land of Gold was still very far. So Rudradatta said,

“If we proceed at this speed, we shall never reach our destination for a very long time. So we should devise some means of reaching there early.”

Both started thinking. Soon, however, Rudradatta hit upon an idea. Said he,

“Well, I have an idea. Let us kill our goats and use their hides to prepare two bags. Then we get inside each and lie on the ground. Some big-sized *bharunda* bird,

“This *sravaka* (pointing to Charudatta) is my spiritual master. It is because of his great favour that I have attained this divine status. To me, therefore, in matters of paying obeisance, he is Number One.”

When the *Vidyadharas* asked how this came to be so, he said,

“In my previous birth, I was a goat and he was my master. Now, I was slaughtered by his companion. But before he could kill me, this man did his best to help my spirit and chanted the holy *namokara* into my ears before I was slaughtered, by dint of which I enjoy this status to-day.”

So saying, the *deva* paid him homage again and flew away. The *Vidyadharas*, on their return flight, restored Charudatta to his city. But before he departed, on the suggestion of the *muni*, Charudatta took the vow of imposing zonal restriction on his movement from the time he reached his home-city, for, he confessed that, for want of a vow like this he had suffered much in life.

On the return flight, Charudatta spent a few days in the company of the *Vidyadharas* on the Vaitadhya hills and accepted the hand of a *Vidyadhara* damsel. Then, back to his city, Charudatta, in the company of his two wives, spent the rest of his life happily and worthily, fulfilling the vow he had imposed on himself.

DHARMAKUMAR

In the land of Bharata in Jambudvīpa, there was a city named Kamalapura. There reigned a king named Sahasrakṣa. One day, as the king was seated in the court, there came an astrologer, who uttered benediction and resumed a seat. The king said,

“Astrologer ! If it pleases you, do enlighten us about what is going to happen in the near future ”

The astrologer remained silent. When the king repeated his request again, he said,

“Your Majesty ! A severe famine is about to break out which is to last for about twelve years. This will strain the administration and wipe out the people ”

The king was very much perturbed. He said,

“We should take remedial measures from now ”

He discussed the matter with his entire cabinet and arrived at the decision to empty the treasury to fill up the granaries. The work started at once. Many, who could afford, however, fled the country and moved elsewhere, some even across the sea.

It was the month of *āśāḍha* (June-July). A patch of cloud was visible in the sky. The king was happy. ‘This will give us the much-needed water’, thought he. ‘It is a very auspicious omen.’

And so it was. The cloud soon spread all over the sky. It gave a good shower and the fields had enough water. There was a bumper crop. People were relieved. The famine had been averted and the astrologer proved untrue.

One day, the keeper of the king’s parks came with the following message :

“Monk Yugandhar has camped for his monsoon stay in a park. He will remain without food for all these months. By dint of silence, meditation and *kayotsarga*, he has already acquired the *kevala jnana*”

The king duly rewarded the keeper for this message and started with his people to welcome the monk and pay him obeisance and homage. After the king had met the monk and heard his holy words, he made the following submission :

“*Bhante* ! How did it so transpire that the astrologer’s words proved untrue ?”

The monk—“Oh king ! The famine was really unavoidable due to the influence of the stars. But the reason how it has been averted was not clear to the astrologer”

The king—“*Bhante* ! I am eager to know the reason, if possible”

The monk—“In this land of Bharata, there is a city named Purimatala. There lived a rich young man, who suddenly became ill due to the coming up of some inauspicious *karma*. No amount of substantial food intake would cure him and his ailment was everyday on the increase. One day, in the presence of his spiritual master, he gave up all rich food, sweets, milk products and resolved to live on a coarse diet and physical exercise to control the abdomen. He also courted a celibate life. Very soon, he recovered and was in the very best of health. This helped him even to take greater care of his business and add to his wealth. But he did not change the course of his life nor deviate from the vow about food and sex. Once, there was a severe famine in the land, and all his wealth was spent to help the people. Now, on completion of that life, he was born as a *deva*, and has now been reborn as the son of *sravaka* Subuddhi. Because of the birth of this pious soul in your kingdom, oh king, even the inevitable has been averted.”

The king took leave of the monk and proceeded straight to Subuddhi’s house. He saw the child who was an embodiment of divinity. He blessed him from the core of his heart and named him Dharmakumar.

Dharmakumar grow up to be a worthy lad. He was married in a respectable family. He had a happy life, and in his old age, he joined the holy order of the monks. There he attained, in the end, *kevala jnana*

SURASENA AND MAHASENA

In the city of Ksitipratisthita, there lived a king named Virasena. From his wife, Kamaladevi, he had two sons, Surasena and Mahasena. They were lucky and intimate and had a deep fraternal tie.

At times, even the happiest on the earth becomes the victim of pain and suffering. Mahasena had a boil on his tongue. It grew in size and gave him no rest. Soon it became septic. All attempts to cure him failed, and people could no longer bear the sight of his suffering. The doctors at last declared it to be incurable.

The tongue was now rotten and emitted a foul smell. None could come near the prince, not even his own parents, the king and the queen. The only person who did not give him up was his brother Surasena who always sat by his bed. One day he took the vow not to take food till his brother was cured.

It then occurred to him :

“Why not I try the holy *namokara*”

So he brought some water in a cup, chanted the holy words into it and sprinkled it on the affected tongue. What a wonder ! It gave immediate relief. The holy water was sprinkled several times every day and in a few days, the prince was all right. The bad odour was gone and the tongue had regained its normal softness. That was a day of great glory to the religion. Once, after this incident, Acharya Bhadrabahu had come there, himself a master of *avadhi* knowledge. Surasena and Mahasena came to him to pay obeisance and homage. After the sermon was over, Surasena approached him with a request to be enlightened about the *karma* because of which his brother had suffered so much from the boil on the tongue.

The Acharya gave the following account :

“In the land of Bharata, there is a city named Manipur. There lived a warrior named Madan who was an ardent follower of the Jina path. He had two sons, Bhira and Vira. One day, on their way to the park, the two brothers came across a monk lying senseless on the public thoroughfare. On enquiry, they were told by the people that the monk was in *kayotsarga*, when he was bitten by a venomous snake. The snake had escaped into its hole.

On hearing this, Vira said,

‘You were so many people here. Why didn’t you kill the snake ?’

Bhira—‘If the snake has escaped because of the support of his favourable *karma*, why do you yourself use such sinful expression about the slaughter of the snake ?’

Vira—‘But don’t you see, the snake has committed a crime in biting a monk. It deserved to be killed. I guess, that would have been an act of righteousness, not sin.’

“Now, Surasena,” continued the monk, “that Dhira is reborn in you, and Vira in your brother. As he had spoken sinful words about the killing of the snake on that occasion, and did not rightly withdraw them, he suffered from the boil on the tongue. You yourself cured him with the help of the holy *namokara*.”

The account was over. It awakened the memory of previous birth in the two brothers. They now resolved to cut the tie of mundane life, and so they did, to join the order of monks and make a full use of their human birth.

KESARI

In the land of Bharata, there was a city named Kamarupa, where ruled King Vijayachandra. In the same city, there lived a rich merchant named Sanghadatta, who had a son named Kesari. The merchant was famous for his honesty and munificence, but the son was the reverse of it. He had developed into a notorious thief. The merchant tried his best to improve his son, but it was all an useless effort. Then, at last, he brought the matter to the notice of the king :

‘Your Majesty ! I have nothing to do with this boy. I have tried my best to improve him, but he is incorrigible. If, in future, he commits a theft, I suggest, let the law take its own course.’

The king sent for the boy and asked him to get out of his kingdom at once. He told him that he would kill him if he saw his face again.

Kesari left the kingdom. While wandering through a forest, he reached a tank and drank water from it. Then, as he was seated in a corner, taking stock of his situation, he saw a man descending from the sky. He further saw that the man had a pair of magic sandals which helped him to fly and he hid these in a part of the forest and entered into the tank.

Kesari now silently stood up, picked up the sandals and flew away into the sky. He spent the whole day flying, reaching home after sun-set. Here his first task was to chastise his father who had reported against him to the king. He bit him so severely that the poor man died.

Already a veteran thief, Kesari had now the equipment of the pair of sandals which could take him anywhere he liked. So now he could extend his activities over wider regions and there was hardly a rich man in the lands

far and near who was not a victim. He would commit theft at night and come to the aforesaid forest to hide his booty.

He soon became a source of great terror to everybody. The leading citizens came to the king who, in turn, sent for the head of the police. The police chief made the following submission :

“Your Majesty ! This thief is somewhat different from the usual ones. He comes through the sky and goes back through the sky, and so he is beyond anybody’s catch. Your Majesty may be gracious enough to determine my duty in this situation,”

The king sat silent immersed in thought At last said he,

“A king who cannot catch a thief and ensure the safety of life and property to his people is a bad king I must see what I can do in this matter ”

Then attended by a few competent men, the king set out himself.

The party searched every corner of the kingdom, but could find no trace of the thief One day, after the search, the king was taking rest under the shade of a tree when he smelt a fine fragrance that came floating in the air He stood up, and then moving in the direction from which the fragrance came, the king at last reached a temple dedicated to Goddess Chandika. When he entered inside, he saw that the idol was adorned with fragrant objects like sandal wood, deer-musk, etc , and there stood a devotee offering worship. On being asked by the king, he gave the following account of himself

“I am the son of a merchant but am very poor and miserable I worship this goddess everyday in the expectation of wealth and happiness The goddess is well-pleased with my devotion When in the morning -I come here, I find lying at her feet precious stones and gems. This has turned my fortune and so I worship the goddess with fragrant objects every day.”

The king was now almost sure about the presence of the thief in that temple every night. He returned to the forest and waited there till evening. At night, he moved



With the sandals in his left hand, he entered into the temple.

to the temple precincts along with his men and hid there waiting for the thief. At the dead of night, Kesari came through the sky and descended there. With the sandals in his left hand, he entered into the temple. The king silently shut the door from behind.

Having finished his worship, as Kesari came to the door, he was chased by the king. Quickly, he placed the sandals on the floor, but had no time to wear them. So he left them behind, opened the door and run out at top speed. The king's men followed him.

As Kesari was running, there came a sudden change in him. He was now thinking of his bad deeds and accumulated sins.

A timely reaction may even change the cruelest of men and build a bright future for him. As Kesari penetrated into the deepest part of the forest, he came across a monk immersed in meditation. He stopped there and thought of desisting himself from malice and greed. He thought of the transitoriness of life, of its sure end. Soon his evil *karma* moved out and he became enlightened. This metamorphosis took no time to work out and was complete by the time the king entered into the arena to arrest him. The king now could not lay his hand on him, instead, he bowed at his feet and said,

“My dear friend ! How is it that the thief Kesari is changed into Kesari the enlightened ?”

So said Kesari :

“Sire ! It is true that my whole life is a long story of misdeeds ; but in the midst of them, I never forgot to sit for one *samayika* per day. That is why the bondage of *karma* could not ensnare me very fast. Know it for certain, oh king, that as much *karma* is tranquilised by a short equanimity as by a long drawn penance. That is the charm of equanimity. It is this short course that has helped me in my enlightenment.

The king came back to his city, while Kesari courted the life of a wanderer indicating the path of liberation to the worldly beings.

SUMITRA

KING Tarapida of the city of Srishandra had a minister named Sumitra, who was a devoted *sravaka* and regularly performed the *samayika*, *pratikramana* and other religious rites. These were very much disliked by the king who said one day :

"Sumitra, why have you unnecessarily loaded yourself with these worthless activities ? You are emaciating your body with penances, but what is the outcome of this all ? Give up these oddities and have a pleasant life "

"Your Majesty ! You should extend your co-operation to my spiritual activities. But instead of doing that, you are only discouraging me. This is somewhat unbecoming of you. You should know that good deeds alone help men in attaining true well-being "

"Sumitra ! If you can demonstrate the instantaneous outcome of religion, then I may agree with you ; but not otherwise."

"Sire ! The very fact that you are a king, the master of so much wealth, and responsible for the well-being of so many people, is the greatest proof of the practical utility of religion. What other proof can excel this ?"

"Well take an example. There is a slab of stone. It is cut into two pieces. One is used for the construction of a staircase and the other is curved into an image. Will you say that one-half of the stone had accumulation of sins while the other half was all merit and piety ? Likewise, you take it from me, some one is a king, some one a minister and some one a mere attendant "

"Sire ! There is no comparison between life and a slab of stone. The slab may be broken into many pieces, but not the soul of a living being. Each soul has a

distinctiveness and existence of its own, each one has separate *karma* and each one is a separate prey to their outcome ”

“Still I don’t agree till I am an eye-witness of its practical usefulness.”

This sort of debate often took place between the king and the minister, but none would yield

It so happened one day that the minister, having finished his duties at the court, returned to his residence after dusk. That being a *chaturdasi* (fourteenth) day of the fortnight, he was on fast. But as he could not come in time to perform the *pausadha*, by way of atonement, he imposed on himself the vow of not to move out from his house during the night till sun-rise and sat down in *pratikramana*

At night, there came a messenger from the king with an urgent call for the minister, but the minister, communicated back his inability to comply with the king’s request till day-break. The king was aflame at this insubordination on the part of the minister and sent the messenger again with a stricter order for the minister either to turn up at once to attend urgent business of the state or resign his office and surrender the seal thereof

This was a test for Sumitra. Thought he,

‘To transgress the vow is a great sin. I am at this moment a minister, and even if the position goes, I may get similar position again. A position is insignificant when compared with a vow. So it is not worthwhile to give up the vow as desired by the king and save the position.’

So thinking he did not comply with the king’s order. The messenger started back to apprise the king of the minister’s stand

On the way back, the messenger was thinking. ‘If I were the minister .’ and then he did not know when he started saying .

“I am the minister, I am the minister . . .”

No sooner had these words been uttered than there was an uproar :

“Strike him, kill him.”

And in the twinkling of an eye, a few armed men jumped on the messenger and made him lie flat on the ground. They snatched from him the minister's resignation and seal of office

When the news of the messenger's death reached the king, he started at once with an unsheathed sword in his hand. He was under the impression that Sumitra had a hand in the murder. On the highway, he met these armed men surrounding the deadbody of the messenger. The king stopped and said,

‘Who are you ? Why did you kill my man ?’

‘We have come from Dharavas where reigns King Surasena. Our purpose was to murder the minister, Sumitra, who extorts at exorbitant subsidy from our king. As we reached here, this man was shouting ‘I am the minister’, and so our wrath fell on him. But now we find that he was not the minister, and so our exertion has been in vain.’

The king now chased them all with his naked sword and brought them down dead. Thought he,

‘It is good that Sumitra did not come. His vow has saved him. Otherwise, he would have fallen a victim to swords of these men. This must be the outcome of religion, and, I feel, it has some practical utility.’

Instead of returning to the palace, the king proceeded straight to the house of the deposed minister, to whom he said,

“Sumitra, today I am an eye-witness of the practical utility of religion. Had you not been under the vow, you would have been butchered. And that would have been the greatest tragedy for the kingdom. I am very sorry that I removed you from office. But I reinstate you.”

This was a proper occasion for Sumitra to convert the king to the path of religion and he said many wise things to him. Once the king met Acharya Purnachandra, when he accepted the vows of a *śrayaka*. This also had its impact on the deliberations at the court which now changed virtually into a spiritual assembly. On the advice of the minister Sumitra, the king now did many things for the good of his people.

RANASURA

King Ranasura of Kanchanpura was so very licentious that he spent much of his time in the company of his consort Srikanta, and never cared for any spiritual activity. One day, as he was seated in the court, an unknown person came there and said in a challenging tone :

“Oh king ! It is not a good thing to remain immersed all the time in objects of pleasure and enjoyment. Total indifference to religion is another name for a total indifference to spirit. One should keep in view the fact that life is short and death is inevitable. If you think that you can do anything you please with your earthly power, then you are mistaken. I challenge you and you can test it against me.”

This was too much for the king to bear in silence. He ordered his men to pursue him and kill him. All of them reached an open field where the encounter took place, but what to speak of being a match for him, none of the king's men did dare to come near him. Single-handed, he defeated them all, and put them to their heels. The man then returned to the court, held the king by his hairs and removed him to a far-off jungle.

The king was now all alone in the jungle, far, far away from his city, and more than that, from Sukanta, whose separation he could not bear even for a moment. He felt so helpless. Just at that moment, he saw a monk in meditation, and sat down near him. When the meditation was over and the monk opened his eyes, he saw the king. At once, these puzzling words came out from the monk's mouth :

“Hellow ! Haven't you got your solution yet ?”

The king could not catch his meaning, and said almost mechanically,

“Be kind to me, sire.”

The monk then gave him some good counsel, after which the king said,

“Oh monk ! You are beautiful and young. Instead of enjoying the pleasures of the world, why did you renounce them so early ?”

“Oh king ! The thought of oldage and of death inspires and induces one to court renunciation. But when you actually renounce depends on when the thought comes up to you, and it does not come up to all persons at the same age. These are the two eventualities, oldage and death, that expose life in its naked form. I was a king myself, but, you see, the thought of these two came pretty early to me, and so I renounced the world in the very prime of my youth. Now in the order of the monks, freed from the terror of oldage and death, I roam about in the most natural pleasantness of life ”

The king was convinced that this was no ordinary person. So he asked him about the cause of his present misfortune :

“Holy sire ! Only recently, one day, as I was seated in my court chamber, a powerful man picked me up and discarded me in this wilderness. Could you be kind enough to enlighten me as to who he was and why did he behave so curiously towards me ”

The monk gave the following account to the king :

“There is a god named Amritpriya, a resident of heaven, who called on me only a few days back, and enquired who would be his successor in his heavenly abode after he would vacate from there. When I revealed your name, he reacted at once, saying that you were licentious, excessively fond of Srikanta, that you never indulged in spiritual activity, and that, therefore, he did neither approve nor relish the idea of your succeeding him in heaven. I told him that you would be brought here by him, that you would thereafter take the path of religion, be enlightened, acquire sufficient pious *karma* to be entitled to a heavenly abode. It is for this reason, oh king, you have been brought here by the said god.”

This opened the eyes of the king and right there, he accepted the vows of a *śrāvaka*. Even the god appeared there and congratulated the king for the great change. Then he restored him to his city and departed.

At times, an unexpected event gives a major turn to life and simultaneously acts as an ordeal. Such a thing was to happen to the king. One day, as the king came to the harem, he did not see Śrīkanta there. He waited for some time but she did not come. The king became restless, and ordered a search of the whole palace, but she was nowhere. In extreme anxiety, the king sent for an astrologer who advised him to proceed in the northern direction and assured him that he would find her there. The king started at once and proceeded for five days without any stop. At last, he reached a jungle, where he saw a temple dedicated to a *yakṣa*. The king halted there to rest. As it happened to be *chaturdasi* (14th day), he sat down with a triple vow of silence, meditation and *pausadha*.

The resident *yakṣa* named Dhananjaya wanted to test the king's devotion and steadfastness. So he ordered an attendant to go at once to the king with the message that his consort, Śrīkanta, was being carried away by that way by a miscreant.

The king heard the message but did not respond, nor did he seek the miscreant with a view to recover Śrīkanta. To break the vow would be, thought he, like taking content out of life, and in that case, what would remain of life and what of the woman he loved so infatuously! So he let the event take its own course during the duration of the vow. But even in his meditation, the king could feel some miscreant carrying Śrīkanta away and hear her bewail as follows :

“My Lord ! Save me. This wretch has stolen me away from the palace. He is now carrying me away to fulfil his evil design. I know not what he will do to me. I am so helpless. I am undone. My dear, you love me so much and you have come all the way here in search of me. It is a happy coincident that this wretch has brought me here. Rescue me at once from his hands.”

But the king did not move and kept full control on his mind, not allowing it to be disturbed in any way by the events outside. Failing in this plot, the *yaksa* then contrived a shower of dust on the king. This was followed by the appearance of a snake, a scorpion, and poisonous ants one after the other. They even stung the king. Then came ferocious animals. But the king remained firm in his triple vow. The *yaksa* now admitted defeat and admired the king's steadfastness.

After the vow was completed, the *yaksa* made the following confession :

“Worthy sire ! There is no Srikanta here. She has been carried away by a *Vidyadhara* of the city of Gagana-ballava in the southern range of the Vaitadhya hills. As the *Vidyadhara* was about to transgress the limit of decency towards her, she took the extreme course of beating him with a club, which she continued till the poor fellow died. Her purity thus stands unstained which I happily confirm.”

So saying, the *yaksa* arranged to procure her from the Vaitadhya hills and restore her to the king.

In the company of his consort, the king now returned to his city. Ever since he had met the monk, he took the vow to practise *pansadha* on each religious occasion, and this he continued to fulfil throughout his life. This earned for him a worthy life on earth, and thereafter a place in heaven.

JINADATTA

In the city of Pottanapura, there lived a wealthy merchant named Jinadatta whose wife's name was Purna. He was not merely a follower of the Jina path but also a great doner and considered any chance to make charity as an omen of good luck. One day, an *acharya* had come to the city, when Jinadatta visited him in the company of other fellow citizens and accepted the vow to fast every alternate day and say *pratikramana* twice daily,

The goddess of fortune is the most fickle and least dependable, and no one can be sure as to when she comes in and when she moves out. Jinadatta was a man of wealth and affluence, but with a turn in his fortune, he became poor and could not have even the barest of subsistence. One day his wife suggested that it might be worthwhile to go to her parents, borrow some money and start business afresh. The idea did not appeal much to Jinadatta, but as his wife was insistent, very reluctantly he agreed and started on a fine day. Purna gave him a packet of fried chick-pea powder for his meal on the way.

The trip did not disturb the merchant's vow to fast every alternate day. The day he started was for him a day of fasting. On the second day, at noon, he sat down on the bank of a tank and diluted some chick-pea powder in a cup of water. Then washing himself he sat down to break his fast. Thought he, "When at home, I take my meal only after giving a portion of it to some pious seeker. But where do I get a seeker here?" Luckily, however, his thought-process worked, and he saw a monk coming in that direction. The monk's body was very lean and emaciated because of the frequent practice of month-long fasts, and even on that day the monk had come to seek food after one such fast. Jinadatta bowed before him and prayed that the monk might partake a portion of his meal. The prayer was accepted.

On the fourth day, Jinadatta reached his father-in-law's house. After the usual reception and meal, he apprised his father-in-law with the purpose of this unusual visit. It is a great irony of life that prosperity makes a friend of everybody, but not so adversity, which is a real testing time, when one may distinguish a friend from an indifferent onlooker. The father-in-law held consultation with the members of his family, even the family diety and regretted inability to extend any financial help.

Extremely disappointed, Jinadatta turned his steps homeward. Nearing his own city, he started to guess the reaction of his wife when she would hear of her father's refusal. He felt somewhat mortified and ashamed. But to avert the first shock of their meeting, he picked up a bag-full of pebbles from the bank of the river, placed the bag on his head, and returned home.

Purna eagerly received the bag from her husband and rushed to her bed-chamber to see what it contained. And what a surprise, it was all full of precious stones and gems.

'How very considerate my father must have been', thought she. He must have taken pity on our present situation and given these all'.

Then she took one precious stone, and went to a grocer's shop to mortgage it and bring some provisions. She cooked various delicacies and served them on the table.

Jinadatta was taken aback to see so many cooked items served on the table. Said he,

"My dear ! We are already in heavy debt. Why did you borrow again to prepare so many delicacies for me ?"

Purna smiled and said,

"Why, I borrowed nothing. My father has given you so many precious stones and gems and I have sold but one out of them to get necessary provisions."

This was a real surprise for Jinadatta who had actually



it was all full of precious stones and gems

brought nothing from his father-in-law. So he rushed to the bed-room, and to his surprise he saw that the pebbles he had collected and brought home had all turned into precious stones. Then he turned to his wife and said,

“My dear, the gems you see haven’t come from your father’s home, a gift of chick-pea to a monk has turned pebbles into precious stones.”

Eventually, the stones were sold in the market and this brought the couple a large fortune. They were wealthy once again. This event gave a great fillip to their faith in the efficacy of gifts and charities, and henceforth these become a unforgettable part of their daily life.

RATNASAR

In the city of Ratnavisala, where reigned King Samar Singha, there lived a merchant named Vasusar. He had a son named Ratnasar. One day, Ratnasar went to his garden-house in the company of his peers when his eyes fell on Acharya Vinayandhara who had come there. He went near the Acharya, bowed thrice and raised the following question :

“Holy sire ! What helps the acquisition of happiness ?”

The Acharya said,

“As a key to happiness, contentment may be deemed to be unsurpassed. In the absence of contentment, not even the king of gods or a universal monarch can be happy ; but with contentment, even one sleeping on the bare earth and living on coarse diet may be happy. Contentment may be of two types—full and qualified. A homeless monk has full contentment, but a house-holder’s contentment is qualified. (To have it), every house-holder should limit his acquisition.”

These words very much inspired Ratnasar who accepted the vows of a *śravaka*, particularly the vows of equanimity and of limiting acquisition.

One day, Ratnasar came across a Kinnara who had the body of a human being but the face of a horse. Ratnasar could not check a smile at his queer shape, and he spoke the following words almost without effort :

“If this be a human being, why does it have the appearance of a horse. Surely, he is neither a human being nor a celestial being, but an animal from another land or an animal-vehicle for some god.”

At these words, the Kinnara felt slighted and said,

“Ratnasar ! You look on me with utter contempt only because of your ignorance I am a Vyantara (sylvan) god with freedom to behave and freedom to enjoy. In my view, you are a real animal who are grossly deceived by your own father.”

Ratnasar was taken aback. Said he,

“What do you mean when you say that I have been grossly deceived by my own father ?”

“I mean what I say You have been deceived. Had it not been so, you would have been in the know of special things in your household Your father has kept out certain things from the purview of your knowledge.”

“But your allegation is vague To substantiate, you should be specific at least about some items, and indicate how they have been kept out of my knowledge.”

“Your father has a special steed of black hue, lean but very fast, who has been imported from another land. It has a broad neck, flies with the air and gives sure success to its master Its normal speed is 100 *yojanas* per day and it can encircle the earth in seven days The steed is kept hidden from you. I shall deem you to be a true hero only when you can take possession of it.”

So saying the Kinnara disappeared in the sky Ratnasar returned home with the only thought, how to get the steed. He entered into a discarded room and lay on an worn-out cot. When the news reached his father, he came running and, on knowing the problem of his son, he said,

“I had really no intention to hide anything from you. But, you see, I cannot tolerate your absence from home. If you had known the existence of the steed, it is pretty sure that it would have been difficult for me to detain you at home I deliberately kept it a secret only to avert this situation But now that you have known about it, I shall pass it on to you and give you the liberty to do what pleases you”

Ratnasar's problem was so easily solved. He was happy

now. He took no time to ride on its back and move out of the city. Once beyond the bound of the city, he put the steed to gallop. Vasusar had a trained parrot. Knowing that his master's son had moved out, it expressed a desire to accompany him as an escort. Vasusar readily agreed. The parrot now flew out of the cage and overtook Ratnasar who received it cordially and placed it on the steed."

As the steed was flying over a dense forest, Ratnasar's eyes fell on a hermit youth who was extremely charming. The youth also saw him and was charmed at his manly grace. The existence of a human being in such a dense forest so much delighted Ratnasar that he could not check the temptation to come down and meet him. The hermit youth advanced to receive him. The youth made enquires about his name, his parents, his family, his line, his caste, his city and his country, and the purpose of his visit there. He also invited him to be his guest.

As Ratnasar alighted from the steed and was about to satisfy the curiosity of the youth, the parrot spoke out,

"How do you feel interested about these details? We haven't come here to settle a marriage in your family. We are strangers and, at the moment, your guests. That should be enough for you." The hermit youth took no offence at the parrot's words but was delighted at the parrot's intelligence. Then turning to Ratnasar, he said,

"Sir, you are lucky to have a sincere friend in this parrot. I request you both to accept my hospitality. I am a hermit and so I may not be able to provide you with all comforts, but I shall do my best to help you."

Then the youth led them to another part of the forest where there was a tank. Ratnasar took his bath and became fresh. Then fruits were served for his lunch. The parrot and the horse were duly fed.

After the lunch, all of them sat down to rest and chat. Getting a hint from his master, the parrot said,

"Young man! You are in the very prime of youth, and it should be a surprise that you have courted renunciation.

Despite your very delicate frame, you have preferred to choose a hard life. But it seems to me that, like the *malati* flower, you have dedicated your life to a colossal waste. How very nice you would look in silk and nylon ; instead, you have put on a bark Your hairs need a delicate touch ; instead, they are all matted. I do not know what induced you to this wrong choice."

The hermit youth was abashed With tears of joy in his eyes, and throat almost choked, he said,

"Your endearing words give me a great joy. Both of you are inquisitive about my choice, and this gives me added joy. Surely shall I narrate the story of my life to such friends as you both "

Ratnasar and the parrot now sat all attention and the hermit youth was just about to start his account, when there started a severe cyclone darkening all directions with flying dust There was a terrific roar in the wind, so that nothing was visible and nothing was audible. The hermit youth was unfortunately caught in the wind which lifted him up to the sky. He cried for assistance, but before Ratnasar could do anything, he was carried far, far away.

Ratnasar became very sad at this event To change his thought, the parrot said,

"This hermit youth does not seem to be a boy He must be a girl, who has been turned into a boy by the machination of some cruel god, demon or *Vidyadhara* His face-cut and gait lend support to my guess If somehow she could be rescued from her present state, I have no doubt, she would be glad to marry you " They were now searching for the youth, but the search did not yield any result One day, they reached a temple dedicated to the first Tirthankara Rısabha Ratnasar worshipped at the feet of the image and sat down at the window to rest and enjoy the forest-scape outside Addressing the parrot, he said,

"So many days have passed, and we have not been able to trace the hermit. It causes me much pain."

“Regret not, sir. There will be the happy reunion this very day.”

Just then a lady stepped inside the temple. She worshipped and danced before the image Ratnasar saw all this from the window. Slowly he came down to her, bowed before her and enquired who she was and how she came to that dense forest and for what purpose. The lady gave the following account :

“There is a city named Kanakpura where reigns King Kanakadhwaja. His wife Kusumshri dreamt one night that two garlands came flying to her. In the morning, when she told the king about the dream, he said,

‘It appears that twin girls will be born to you.’

“In course of time, the queen gave birth to two daughters, who were named Asokamanjari and Tilakamanjari. When they stepped into their youth, the king thought of settling them in marriage, preferably with one groom.

“It was now spring, and both the sisters went to the royal garden to enjoy a swing. Asokamanjari sat on it and Tilakamanjari pushed from behind. Just then a *Vidyadhara* was flying over the garden. When he saw Asokamanjari on the swing, he picked her up from there and disappeared in the sky. When Tilakamanjari saw this, she fell down senseless on the ground.

“When the sad news reached the palace, the king, the queen and members of the royal household, leading citizens, all came to the park. But there was nothing to be done and so all returned very sad at the episode.

“Tilakamanjari was now at the palace. It was the last quarter of the night when she got up and came to the temple of Goddess Chakreswari to propitiate her for the recovery of her dear sister. The goddess was well pleased at her devotion, and assured her that in a month’s time she would not only know the where-about of her sister, but also meet her. When Tilakamanjari enquired of the goddess when and where she would meet her, the goddess told her that she would meet her in a temple dedicated to the first *tirthan*-

kara in a dense forest in the western direction from the city. The goddess further advised her to worship the *tirthankara* everyday and offered her the assistance of a divine peacock to carry her there. I am that Tilakamanjari, sir, and you understand now the purpose of my presence here."

Just at that moment a peacock came down. While taking leave of the stranger, the princess said,

"This peacock is my vehicle, and I come here everyday on his back. Today I complete a month of my worship, but I do not see any trace of my sister anywhere. Sir, you are moving through many lands. If, by chance, you come across a lady bearing similarity with me, be kind enough to pass the information on to me."

"Charming lady! Surely shall I oblige you if I see one like you. So far in my wandering I did not come across any such lady but I met a hermit youth in a forest."

"To-day you will surely meet your sister," said the parrot,

"In that case, I shall remain ever grateful to you."

When the three were in the midst of conversation, a terrified goose fell from the sky and sat on Ratnasar's lap saying, 'Oh brave man! I seek refuge with thee. I am wretched and helpless, and there is none to save me. Please save my life.' Ratnasar took the goose under his protection and uttered words of consolation. He offered it cool water to drink. After the goose was somewhat pacified, Ratnasar asked who it was, wherefrom did it come, how it could speak in human voice, and of whom it was so much afraid. He assured that he would try to mend the situation and allay the fear if it was within his power in any way. As the goose was about to recount its story, however, a noise became audible outside and soon there appeared some soldiers outside the temple. The parrot now came near the temple door and said to the soldiers in an angry voice,

"Men! Haven't you reached a wrong place? Don't you know that Prince Ratnasar is taking rest here? Aren't you familiar with his prowess, which neither gods, nor demons

nor *Vidyadharas* can excel. If by any chance his angry glance falls on you, you can nowhere escape for the safety of your life."

This created a terror in their mind. They talked amongst themselves,

"Surely this must be a god or a demon; otherwise, he would not have challenged us, the *Vidyadharas*. If, as we see, the prince's parrot is so very sharp, how much more powerful the prince himself must be! It may become difficult for us to stand before him. It is, therefore, not wise to accept the challenge of one whose strength we don't know."

So the soldiers returned to their chief to report, who, on hearing the account, lost his temper and said,

"Fie on ye all, cowards, that ye are so much afraid of an insignificant parrot. I used to take pride in your valour, but I see now that it was all placed in very unworthy persons. I know not who this prince may be, but you at least should have known that none among the gods or the demons is capable of standing before my prowess. Fools ye are all, wholly unworthy for the profession of arms."

So saying, he mobilised his power to the full, with ten heads and four hands, and equipped himself with deadly arms. Then with a terrific roar that would put even a lion to shame, he descended and entered into the temple precincts. The parrot saw him and came back to Ratnasar in terror. Now, throwing the challenge, the *Vidyadhara* said,

"Ye wretched man! Get away at once, or ye force me to kill thee. Ye have kept hidden my dear goose. If life be dear to thee, then surrender her at once."

The parrot, the lady, the peacock and the goose were all trembling. Only Ratnasar did not lose nerves. Firmly he said,

"Ye fool! I am not afraid of thee, nor am I going to surrender the goose unto thee. Get out of my sight at once, or I shall cut off your ten heads and make gift of them to the ten directions."

There was a severe fighting in which Ratnasar fought.

against the *Vidyadhara* and his soldiers from horse-back. One by one, the soldiers fled, and soon there was none barring the chief. There was now a straight fight in which the *Vidyadhara* invoked his magical powers and hurled them at his human adversary. Ratnasar met them all. At last, he threw an arrow which pierced the *Vidyadhara* in the chest and he fell down in a swoon. Regaining sense, he entered the arena again, this time more dreadful than on the previous occasion. Finding Ratnasar in danger, the divine peacock assumed his original form of a god, picked up a heavy mace and struck the *Vidyadhara* on the head. This ended all his magical powers and he stood helpless acknowledging defeat.

Ratnasar now came inside the temple in the company of the god (former peacock). Tilakamanjari who had witnessed the fight from the temple had no doubt that the man must be a rare hero. He was beautiful too and she felt, she would be happy to be his bride. Besides, this would help her in the search for her sister, which was only possible by courage and intellect, which Ratnasar possessed.

Ratnasar now picked up the goose and placed her on his palm to help her to tender her account, which she did as follows :

"Madan is the *Vidyadhara* chief at Rathanpur on the Vaitadhya hills and his wife is Kamala. One day, the chief was flying over a garden at Kanakpur when princess Asokamanjari was enjoying a ride on the swing. The chief was charmed at her beauty and picked her up from there. When Asokamanjari started bewailing, he said to her,

"Oh lady ! Don't be afraid. I am not a rogue, nor a thief, but the master of a kingdom. You will have no trouble with me. Rather, you will always find me obliging and ready to serve you in all manners. Among all my consorts, you will be the foremost."

"Asokamanjari was very much annoyed at his misbehaviour in picking her up, but she preferred to keep silent. Madan took it to be the outcome of the sudden separation from her near and dear ones and felt that she would be all



There was a severe fighting in which Ratnasar fought from horse back

right after some time To give her respite to convalesce, he turned her into a hermit youth and placed her in a forest. There he visited her every day to win her favour, but was no more successful than he was on the first occasion. Sir, it was this hermit youth whom you yourself met. If you still remember, as on your request, the youth was about to tender his account upto you, there was a cyclone which was a creation by the *Vidyadhara*, who picked the youth up and took him to his own city There he again repeated his overtures, but with no better result. Then he unsheathed his sword to kill her but Asokamanjari did not yield Said she,

“Swords may be helpful to win kingdoms, but not a woman’s heart, which can be won by love and affection only By sticking to your haughtiness, you demonstrate how unworthy you are to seek my heart.”

“Madan was fully aflame with rage ‘You foolish girl ! You decry me like that in my very presence ! I must put an end to your life,’ he shouted.

“Asokamanjari was not terrified at his words.” She said,

“When I am decided not to court thee, what’s the point in my staying with thee like this ? It is better that you kill me at once. I am no seeker of my life from thy hands.’

“At this, Madan softened. He even changed his mind. Then he turned Asokamanjari into a goose and put her in a cage. When his wife, Kamala, saw the goose, she had some suspicion One day, she induced the goose to give her full account, which she did. Now, you know, a lady cannot bear the presence of a co-wife. So one day Kamala took her chance and opened the cage The goose escaped and was on her wings floating through the air When at last she became tired, she came down to the ground to sit on your lap. Here am I, Sir ! When the *Vidyadhara* came to know of my escape, he pursued me. The rest of the story is too well-known to everyone present here.”

When the account was complete, Tilakamanjari could no longer restrain herself. She said,

“Sister dear ! How did you live in the dense forest as a

hermit youth ? How do you live now in the shape of a bird ? I know not what *karma* may have put you to so much suffering. How will you get rid of this animal body ?”

The god stood near at hand. He changed the goose into her human form. It became a very happy occasion, an occasion of reunion of two dear sisters.

Jokingly, Ratnasar said to Tilakamanjari,

“The credit for this reunion should in part go to me I must have my due price ”

“Sir, even if we give our all to you for all that you have done, that will be too inadequate a price ”

So saying Tilakamanjari took out a precious necklace from her neck and placed it on Ratnasar. He was not willing to accept it, but Tilakamanjari was insistent and he could not disoblige her.

Tilakamanjari also honoured the parrot suitably.

The god then turned to Ratnasar and said,

“These two worthy ladies have already been allotted to thee by Goddess Chakreswari. I am only to fulfil the ritual aspect now. I offer the hands of both the sisters unto thee and it behoves thee to signify thy acceptance.”

Ratnasar could not decline such an offer. He gladly signified his assent.

It is a significant irony of life that it never moves in a straight line. At a moment when one feels he is in full possession of earthly pleasures, pains almost unknowingly creep in. One night, as Ratnasar was lying on his couch, he saw a terrible-looking man rushing towards him with blood-shot eyes and challenging him to a duel. As he got ready to meet him, the man picked up the cage with the parrot and fled. Ratnasar pursued him upto a very long distance but could see him no more. He had now no doubt that his adversary was either a god, a demon or a *Vidyadhara* who had put him to an irreparable loss by taking away the parrot

But he did not turn his steps, and was decided not to

do so till the recovery of the parrot. Throughout the day, he continued his search, and reached a city in the evening. As he was about to enter the city, he was prevented from doing so by a parrot, who said that it did so for his own good. This made Ratnasar very inquisitive, and as there was no prohibition or taboo on the account being given, the parrot gave the following account :

“Here, in this city, there reigned a king named Purandara, under whose administration, people were happy, except for one thing, which made their life miserable. This was the depredation by a thief who regularly visited the city at night. He turned many rich men into paupers. Efforts were made to catch him but without success. One day, the king himself headed the hunt and pursued the thief as he was escaping with a bundle of treasures. When the thief saw that he could not escape, he slipped into a nearby monastery. Inside, there lay a monk who was fast asleep. He dropped the bundle near him and, empty-handed, he escaped without generating any suspicion. When the king reached the monastery, he found the monk with the stolen treasures and arrested him. The monk was tried and ordered for execution. After he was executed, he became a *yaksa*. To take revenge, he not only killed the king, but turned the whole city into a desert, and he still haunts it. It is for this, sir, I prevented you from entering into the city.

A grateful Ratnasar said,

“Dear bird ! Thank you for the information. But you take it from me that I am not afraid of the devil and he can do me no harm. Rather, you will see, I shall bend him before me.”

So saying, he entered into the city. He freely moved through it, and was charmed at its wealth and affluence, piles of grains and the palace, and he passed through all the chambers of the palace. At the seventh floor, he saw a fine couch, and, tired as he was, he lay on it and was soon asleep.

The *yaksa* returned at night and became furious to find a man lying on his couch. He was surprised too. Diverse thoughts came to him. ‘A place where people do not even

dare to come, this man sleeps carefree. He must be very much daring I must kill him. But what mode shall I adopt to kill him ? Shall I separate his neck, as a fruit is separated from a tree ? Shall I peel his skin with a knife, as is done to a fruit ? Shall I hurl him into a blazing fire ? Shall I throw him up in the sky like a ball ? Shall I drown him into the sea ?

But the very next moment, he changed his mind :

‘After all, he is my guest. He has come to take shelter in my abode. It will be ridiculous to kill him. Even an enemy should not be killed if he be a guest I should do him no harm till he wakes. Then I shall consider the right step.’ He went out and assembled his attendants Then he returned inside the palace.

But he could not contain himself for long. As he saw Ratnasar still in deep slumber, his blood boiled again, and he thundered :

“You shameless wretch ! Does it look nice to lie like this in another’s couch ? Get up and fly, or be ready for a fight.”

“Why do you disturb me ? You need be kept busy. I bid you to rub my feet with *ghee* mixed with water and put me to sleep again.”

These words surprised the *yaksa*. ‘Men are afraid of me,’ thought he, ‘but what sort of man this may be who bids me to rub his feet. He must be a very divine person. I must obey him’

So he started rubbing his feet as ordered. He became a slave unto him. After the *yaksa* had done it for some time, Ratnasar sat up and said,

“I am sorry for putting you to this humiliating job, but I am pleased that you obeyed me Ask for a boon. I shall undertake any difficult job to help you”

This was a greater surprise for the *yaksa*.

‘A human being willing to give a boon to one who is a

divine person. Normally, a god gives a boon to a human being. What new thing can this fellow offer of which I may be in need? But let me see.

So thinking, the *yaksa* said very politely :

"Sire, I do not know of any on the earth, in heaven or in the nether world who can offer me anything I do not myself possess. But since you insist, I must ask. May I take it that you will not decline?"

"Speak out what you want. I stand by my words."

"Then, sir, you take over the administration of this city. I deem you fit for this job. So you rule here and have a nice time. I shall help you in all possible manners."

Ratnasar was caught up in his own snares, Thought he, 'This fellow offers me a kingdom, and a kingdom is obtained only when auspicious *karma* is up. But already I am under a vow not to acquire a kingdom. And at the same time I am promise-bound to this fellow to honour my words. What is to be done now?"

After some consideration, he said,

"My dear fellow ! As to the acquisition of the kingdom, I am already under a vow not to do so. Therefore, ask for something else. What's the utility of gold (ear-ring) that obstructs hearing?"

"But, sir, you have given me your words of honour, and honest people do not transgress them even if it may cost them their life."

"Since a kingdom becomes a cause of much sinful activity, I did undertake a vow pretty early never to acquire one. And you will agree, to transgress a vow is the worst of all sinful activities. I cannot strike at my own feet with an axe to suit your purpose, or even to please you. So you see, it is necessary for you to ask for something else."

The *yaksa* now lost his temper.

"This is very unworthy of an honest man, I must say.

Now a duel is inevitable to settle it, and, as I can see, one must die. Do you think it will be less sinful? When I, a god, desire you to do something, where is the question of transgressing the vow? I have given you a good chance, my dear sir, and you are a fool not to make use of it. You know, you lay on my bed; you made me rub your legs; and now you dishonour me! This is extremely impertinent and I warn you about the consequence. So long as I am favourably disposed towards you, I can do anything to help you; but once I am angry, you will find no place where to hide your head."

Ratnasar remained silent. The situation being what it was, what else could he do? This all the more irritated the *yaksa*. He threatened him again and repeated the threat for the third time. The *yaksa* now caught him by the hairs and threw him in the sky. As he was falling, he held him between his hands and said,

"Don't invite sure death by your foolishness. It is not wise to refuse a kingdom. I discharged even menial duties to please you, and you disobey me even on the most coveted offer. Well, this is your last chance. So long I did save you because I was favourably disposed towards you, but you deserve no genial treatment, since you have only slight for me. So I must now set you right. I must hurl you on the yonder rock, as a washerman does with his clothes against an wooden plank. You will die a painful death and go to hell."

So saying he brought Ratnasar to the rock-side. But Ratnasar did not waver. With his firmness, he said,

"Do what you please." Ratnasar has never transgressed his vow, nor will he do so now. He is above fear and greed. No power on earth can make him change his mind."

Even the power of a divine being breaks before the power of a mighty soul. The *yaksa* admitted defeat. He gave up his disguise and appeared in his celestial form. He congratulated Ratnasar for his strength of mind and steadfastness about the vow and said,

"Sir, I confirm that you are the foremost among the people who are well known for their steadfastness. Men like you alone justify the epithet of the Mother Earth as being the mother of heroes. My real name is Chandra Sekhara. While in heaven, I had heard about your steadfastness. The heavenly surgeon Harinegamesi, one day, extolled you so high as to suggest that you would not accept even a kingdom to uphold your vow. So I came down to hold the test, and, I must candidly admit, your performance excels all expectation. Pleased as I am with you, I request you now to seek a boon.

With his usual detachment, Ratnasar said,

"Divine sire ! By the grace of spiritual power, I have all I need. I want nothing. But if you so please, I suggest, you fix yourself in religion."

The god now restored the parrot to Ratnasar and shifted the two to their own city. Then he took leave and disappeared

We now reach a happy end to Ratnasar story. The story of his steadfastness reached far and wide, and men, even monarchs, organised receptions for him and held him in the highest esteem. Many years passed since he had left his parental home on the back of his father's steed. So Ratnasar's mind moved thither. Therefore, in the company of his two wives, Tilakamanjari and Asokamanjari, he came back to his own city, where a reception was held in his honour by the king.

Such a worthy man throughout his life, Ratnasar could not but pass his old age still more worthily. Once Dharma Suri, the master of all knowledge save the *kevala jnana*, had come there, and Ratnasar came to pay his obeisance and homage to him. Even King Samar Singha had come. Now, on a query by the king himself as to the pious *karma* in previous births, by dint of which Ratnasar came to command so much prestige and fame, the learned sage gave the following account, which is the subject-matter of the next story.

RATNASAR JATAKA

(*Story of his previous birth*)

“In the land of Bharata, in the city of Rajpur, there reigned King Jitasatru, whose son was Srisar. The prince had three friends in the son of a general, the son of a minister and the son of a merchant. One day there was a theft in the king’s harem and the thief was caught red-handed by the police chief. Now, as the police chief was taking the thief to the execution ground, he saw the prince on the way. On enquiry by the prince, the police chief on his own part gave an account about the theft, but the thief also got a chance to apprise the prince of his part of the story. On hearing the two versions, the prince turned to the police chief and said,

“As the case concerns my mother’s ornaments, you leave the thief with me. I shall deal with him appropriately.”

“The prince brought the thief outside the city, where he gave him good counsel not to steal any more. The fellow was truly inspired and he took the vow not to steal. So the prince set him free.

“The prince’s enemies came to know of this and reported the matter to the king. The king at once sent for the prince, rebuked him severely and ordered him to leave the city. His friends too went with him. As the four had gone a long way, they reached a forest and spent three days there. On the fourth day, they reached a village. They cooked their food and were about to eat when a monk came there. Amiable by nature, the prince served him food and the minister’s son, and the merchant’s son approved of it. The general’s son however, suggested that some food should be kept aside for their own use.

“After some time, as the king’s wrath was pacified, he

recalled the prince. Later, he was crowned a king and had a glorious reign. That king, Srisar, is now born as Ratnasar, as you see him, the son of the minister and the son of the merchant are his two consorts, Tilakamanjari and Asokamanjari, and the general's son is born as the parrot. The thief liberated by Srisar and placed under the vow is now a *deva* named Chandrachuda, and he is all the time extending an umbrella of protection to his former benefactor "

SINGHAL SINGHA

Singhaleswar was the king of Singhal island. His queen's name was Singhala and that of his son Singhal Singha. One day the prince had gone to the garden-house. It was spring and the trees were in full bloom. As the prince was pacing through, admiring their beauty, he heard a pitiable cry, which appeared to be that of a woman. The prince at once rushed towards her and saw that a young girl was held by an elephant in its trunk. He asked the elephant to release the girl at once and come forward to meet him if he was really strong. On hearing this, the elephant released the girl and rushed upon the prince in full fury. The prince at once took out his wrapper and raised it like a wall with both his hands. The elephant struck on it with its tusks. The prince now caught hold of the tusks and jumped on them, and in no time he was seated on the crest of the elephant striking it severely with an iron hook. This soon pulled the elephant down. The prince then tied him to a pillar. When the king heard the account, he became happy at the prince's bravery. This soon became a talk of the whole city. The girl saved by the prince happened to be the daughter of a merchant named Dhana. Her own name was Dhanavati. She was charmed at the prince's bravery. The merchant, her father, took this chance to settle her in marriage with the prince.

Now, it so happened that the prince's physical grace and manliness was a pet topic for gossip among the ladies of the city. This was very much detested by the business community. To get rid of the prince, therefore, the merchants made false allegations against him, and, at their suggestion, the king prohibited his open movement in the city.

This was an encroachment on the prince's freedom of movement, which he bitterly detested, the more so since he never cared to look at women-folk and had no weakness for them. He preferred to leave the city and regain his freedom.

once again. He took his wife into confidence and she approved of the idea and offered to go with him

So the two left the palace one night, and, reaching the sea shore, they went on a voyage. Unfortunately, the ship was caught in a terrible storm. The captain tried his best to save it, but then a gust of wind sealed its fate and the ship was broken to pieces. Most of the people on board were drowned. Separated from her husband, Dhanavati, supporting herself on a floating plank, was washed ashore to a place near the city of Kusumpura.

In that city, there was a temple dedicated to a *jaksa* named Priyamelaka. His speciality was that, if propitiated, he helped to bring together people separated by accident. Dhanavati heard about this temple, went there and started her penance to propitiate the deity.

Meanwhile, her husband, Prince Singhal caught another plank and was washed ashore to a place near the city of Ratnapur. There reigned King Ratnaprabha whose wife was Ratnasundari and whose daughter was Ratnavati. About the time the prince had reached the city, the princess suffered from a snake bite, and when all other remedies failed, it was the prince who cured her. This little episode ended in a marriage between the two.

The day there was ship-wreck, and the prince was separated from Dhanavati, he undertook the vow to remain celibate till he was reunited with her, and hence the marriage with Ratnavati created a real problem for him. It was the first night after the marriage and the bride was waiting in her decorated chamber at the seventh floor. The prince came, but he lay on the floor. This raised all sorts of suspicion in Ratnavati's mind. She could not remain silent for long and asked the prince the reason for his quaint behaviour. The prince, however, suppressed the fact and said,

"My dear ! When I started on the last voyage, I took the vow not to indulge in sex behaviour till I saw my respected father "

"Sir ! Thou art noble, thou art worthy, to have such a high regard for thy parent," said the princess.

To the king, his father-in-law, however, he tendered a correct account, and expressed a desire to go out in search of his first wife. The king heartily approved, and lent him the service of a minister, Rudradatta, to assist him in his search. So one day, Prince Singhal, his wife Ratnavatī, and the minister Rudradatta, all the three were again on board a ship.

Now, as the minister saw Ratnavatī, he felt a weakness for her and soon he hatched a plan to throw the prince into the sea so that the lady would be his. He was only waiting for a chance. The chance came one night when, as everybody else was fast asleep, the prince came on board and stood near the brim, and the minister, unperceived, pushed him into the sea. As soon as the plan was executed, he raised an alarm, but it was too late and no trace of the prince could be found. When Ratnavatī came to know of the tragedy, she was very sorry. Rudradatta came to console her and promised her all happiness if she was prepared to live with him.

This was a new danger for the princess. But being alone in the ship, she was helpless. Still she contrived a plan and said,

“But I must perform the last rites of my departed husband before I can start a new life with you. Don’t you think, therefore, that I value not your offer.”

This raised high hopes in the mind of the minister who started building castles in the air. It was a pleasant thought for him that he would be able to call a princess his own. The ship was now not very far from the coast when it dashed against a hidden rock and broke into pieces. In their bid to save themselves from drowning, the passengers tried to catch at the floating objects and swim ashore. Ratnavatī also did the same. With the support of a floating plank, she reached the coast near Kusumpur, and, therefrom, she reached the same temple where Dhanavatī was already seated in penance.

It was a co-incidence that the minister, Rudra, too reached Kusumpur where he accepted service as a minister to the king.

When Prince Singhal was thrown into the sea, some unknown power had picked him up and placed him safely into

a hermitage, The hermit was highly pleased to see a bright young man in his compound with distinct marks on his body that signified a bright future for him as a king. He had a daughter named Rupavati for whom, he felt, the stranger-lad would make a nice groom. So he made the proposal and the prince readily agreed. At the marriage ritual, the hermit bestowed on the prince a magic blanket yielding one hundred coins per day and a flying cot. The prince now sat on the cot with his new bride and directed it to carry him where Dhanavati was. The cot descended in the central park of Kusumpur.

Life is an arena of unions and separations. At a moment of the greatest expectation creeps in the greatest despair. When the two had alighted in the park, the lady felt thirsty, and the prince went to the well to fetch water. As he threw the bucket inside, he heard a human voice saying,

“Please take me out.”

The prince looked in and saw a snake. At once, he hurled his wrapper in and the next moment the snake was crawling on the ground. The first thing it did was to pin a sting on its benefactor. This was a great set-back for the prince who said,

“Oh king of the snakes ! That is a nice gesture of gratitude you have made !”

“Mind it not, sir. I shall help you in difficulty.”

So saying, he disappeared.

The prince, however, did not die of the venom; but he turned into a hunchback.

As Rupavati saw a hunchback approach her with water, she refused to accept it, nor would she recognise the man as her husband. She took him to be a rogue come to deceive her. So she did not even look at him and started a search for her missing husband. But as she could find him nowhere, she too took the way to the *yaksa* temple and started her penance.

Soon it became the talk of the town that three ladies were simultaneously propitiating the deity and would talk with none. The news reached the king's ears. He himself came to

the temple to ascertain the reason of their penance, but the ladies did not open their lips. An announcement was, therefore, issued at once to the effect that anyone who would make the ladies speak would win the princess royal. But no one came forward despite this attractive offer.

At last, the proclamation reached the ears of the hunchback. He now prepared a voluminous book whose pages were filled up with white ink and wrapped it in a fresh cloth. Then he came to the court. He told the king that if he were given a chance, he would try to make the ladies speak. Said he,

“Sire ! I have this curious book which contains the detailed account of the earth, its past, present and future. Each event is faithfully recorded in it. Now, if the relevant events are read out, I have no doubt that the ladies will speak.”

So they all shifted to the temple where the ladies were on fast and silent. The hunchback started reading from his book.

“Prince Singhal of Singhal island started with his wife Dhanavati on a voyage and was involved in a shipwreck.”

He stopped.

Hearing her own account, Dhanavati spoke out, “Sir ! You are very wise. Read what happened next.”

Everybody was surprised to hear the lady speak. No less so was the king himself. The hunchback started again.

“The prince caught hold of a plank and swam ashore near Ratnapur where he married Ratnavati and again went out to the sea. This time, a minister, Rudradatta by name, accompanied him. But he betrayed the prince to get his wife. He threw him into the sea one night.”

So saying, he stopped and started winding up. Now Ratnavati spoke out,

“Sir ! Stop not at that. What happened next ?”

The king now joined with the lady to repeat the request, and the hunchback started again :

"The prince was lifted up by some unknown power even before he touched the water and placed in a hermit's compound where he was married with the hermit's daughter named Rupavati. The hermit gave him a magic blanket and a flying cot. The prince came with his bride to this very city, Kusumpur, where the cot landed in the park. As the lady became thirsty, the prince went to fetch some water from the well, but as ill-luck would have it, he suffered from a snake bite."

So saying, he sighed a deep sigh and became silent. Now, Rupavati broke the silence and said,

"Sir ! It is painful to me that you have stopped at this point. I am interested to know what happened next."

The hunchback said nothing. He picked up his book and looked at the king who had promised, as per proclamation, to give the princess in marriage to one who would make the ladies speak. He had fulfilled it.

This was an unequal match and was disliked by the members of the king's household. But the king did not budge and celebrated the marriage at once.

The insuspicious *karma* of Prince Singhal were now on its way to move out and his life was to take a major turn. A god, the very one who had saved him at the sea, appeared and cured the prince of his physical defect, and the prince was his original self again. Thus it became an occasion of great joy, a happy union of so many, for the three ladies, and for the king in particular who had such a nice young man as the husband of his daughter. The four co-wives embraced each other very cordially as sisters.

As the god revealed now, he was the prince's elder brother in the previous birth. He attained a divine life for offering food to a monk. His younger brother then, now Prince Singhal, had also offered cane juice to the monk, but he was not very steadfast in faith and so he suffered so much in his life—separation from his wives, shipwreck, physical defect, etc. He also revealed that it was he who had saved him at the sea when his life was at stake. On hearing these, the prince regained his long memory and saw his previous birth.

Rudradatta, the minister, was now dismissed by the king as a bad man because of his plot to drown the prince.

The prince, now a happy man, thought of returning home with his wives. They all took leave of the king and mounted on the flying cot which brought the party to the prince's insular home, where he was crowned king by his father, who had grown old. King Singhal lived a worthy life and did many things for the well-being of his people.

SAHASRAMALLA

Sahasramalla, the son of a merchant, lived in the city of Kausambi. His life was a pile of sinful deeds. He was an expert in cheating, telling lies and stealing. He spoke several languages and wore diverse dresses to suit each occasion. In brief, he was a complete rogue.

There was a jewel-merchant named Ratnasar who lived in the same city. Dressing like a merchant, Sahasramalla came one day to his shop and made enquiries about precious stones. Ratnasar spread a part of his stock before him, but Sahasramalla was not satisfied. He wanted to see more. Ratnasar had no doubt about his genuineness and he took him to be a substantial customer who had come to buy wholesale. So he displayed his entire stock. Sahasramalla appeared to be satisfied and said :

“My dear sir ! I shall take the entire stock but I shall pay the price to-morrow.”

On hearing this, Ratnasar withdrew the stock saying,

“Sir ! I don't sell on credit ”

Now, during the short time he was in the shop, he made a close observation of the interior. At night, he slipped into the shop through the sky-light. At the sound of something falling, Ratnasar's son, who was sleeping inside, woke up and caught the thief's leg. The thief tried to escape, and there ensued a severe tussle, in which the thief was severely wounded. Then the merchant's son took pity on him and let him go. The thief returned home and narrated the sad experience to his mother. On hearing him, the mother said,

“My son ! Suffering is the thief's lot. It cannot be that you will usurp another's treasure, and yet remain unhurt. Anyone who is afraid of suffering is unworthy of this pro-

fession. And compared with the suffering undergone by Sarana, I must say, yours is nothing. It is a pity that you are so much upset."

On being asked by her son, the mother narrated Sarana's life-story (see next story) and added,

"Now, you understand, my son, how insignificant is your own suffering when compared with that of Sarana. A thief must always be prepared to face situations like this. If you lose nerves, then you are unsuccessful. If you are confident, success is yours."

These words of his mother gave him confidence. One night, he broke into the priest's house and carried away much treasure. Happy at his success, he placed the treasure at the feet of his mother. She was also very happy and she enquired wherefrom he could get so much. The son said,

"Mummy dear ! Ask it not. Rather you go to the city and get me reports and reactions about the theft. Then you will know everything yourself."

In the morning, the mother went out to the city and heard people talk about a daring theft in the priest's house. One lady asked if the thief could be caught and another said that the matter had been reported to the king.

The king called in the police chief and rebuked him for his inefficiency and negligence to duty. Courtiers and leading citizens present at the court, all expressed alarm and promised full co-operation with the authorities in the detection of the thief. The mother collected all these reports from the town and returned home. Warning her son, she said,

"My son ! The whole city is now up and alert to catch the thief. You must be very careful in your movements."

Dressed like a millionaire, Sahasramalla went first to the barber's shop. The barber welcomed such a lucrative client. After haircut, shave, nail-cut, special massage and bath, the client said,

“Barber ! I am highly pleased with you. Send your son with me I intend to send you a suitable reward ”

This raised high expectation in the barber's mind. He sent his son with him at once Sahasramalla now came to the shop of a cloth dealer name Dhanasar who extended him a very cordial welcome He displayed all his costly fabrics before him. Sahasramalla selected a few and said,

“Sir ! I am taking these with me and presently shall I return with the money. My son remains here as security.”

While placing the bundle of clothes before his mother, he said,

“Mummy dear ! Go at once to the city and get me full report about the talk of the town.”

The mother went out and returned with the full report. Meanwhile, the barber and the merchant reported the matter to the king

“The thief has made fools of us ” they said.

A horse dealer was present at the court. He said,

“Your Majesty ! A man whose wealth is increasing must of necessity buy a horse. Besides, a horse is a must for a thief. So the fellow must come to me, and I shall at once get hold of him and bring him to the court ”

A famous harlot, Kamapataka by name, who was also present, said,

“Sire ! A man to whom wealth comes as windfall must visit a public woman I have no doubt that he will come to me to-night or at the earliest opportunity. Your majesty knows how intelligent am I Can there be anything which Kamapataka takes up on hand and finishes not successfully ? The thief cannot hide himself anywhere, not even in the nether world I shall detain him as soon as he comes and send message to the palace ”

Sahasramalla who had full report through the mother thought now of crushing the pride of both who had bragged so much at the court. Now, duly dressed as a cavalier, he

first called on the horse-dealer who had halted outside the city. The dealer welcomed him. In a very cordial tone, Sahasramalla said,

“How is it, sir, that you have halted outside the city ? Worthy man such as you should stay inside the city ”

“Sir ! I am a stranger to this city. I have no particular place in the city where I may stay. So I am comfortable here.”

“What a nice excuse, sir. You are welcome at my residence. You may use it as your own ”

The dealer wanted to change the topic and said,

“Sir ! If a stranger stays with somebody, it creates unnecessary suspicion and gossip. That is not good for the city itself. I am a merchant, interested in selling out my things and buying whatever salable merchandise I may get here So I am quite at home outside the city ”

“Suspicion may be generated, as you say, only if you stay with some well-known notoreity, but where is the scope for this if you stay in the midst of honest people ? If you stay with me, and if that raises unnecessary gossip, then what do I gain in keeping you with me ? I think, you should have no objection in staying with me I can assure you, sir, that there will be no trouble on either side ”

The dealer was very much impressed by his cordiality and he accepted the invitation. Sahasramalla now took him straight to the harlot's home. In confidence, he told the lady,

“This rich horse-dealer is a foreigner and he is now your client. You make suitable arrangement for his reception ”

Kamapataka was in a very high spirit. She allotted a well-furnished room for the dealer's use. Deeply obliged to Sahasramalla, she even offered to wash his feet with her own hands and make him comfortable But said he,

“Wait ! I must see the king at once. Could you help me with some of your valuable ornaments ? I shall soon restore them to you”

The harlot had no reason to doubt the man's credentials who had brought such a substantial client for her. She at once placed all her costly ornaments before him. Sahasramalla placed them in a bag and hurriedly saw the horse-dealer, to whom he said,

"Sir ! I hope, you are comfortable here. I must presently see the king on a very urgent business. Meanwhile, my lady will take care of you. Since time is very important, if you mind not, I may use your horse to reach the palace."

The dealer could not refuse a man who had done so much to make him comfortable.

Thus with one of the finest steeds in the dealer's possession and the harlot's costly ornaments, Sahasramalla turned his steps homeward. He presented the whole booty to his mother and requested her to go to the city again.

When Sahasramalla did not turn up in time, the harlot became restless. She at once reached the palace and made enquires about a man on horse-back but none of the guards could throw any light. She returned home and made enquiries of the new-comer about his companion. Said the harlot,

"You see, sir, he has taken all my valuable ornaments and has not turned up yet."

"He has taken my horse too. Tell me who he is. I am a stranger here. He told me that this was his own house and so I came hither in his company. But now it appears that he was a rouse and I have been deceived."

Now, both the dealer and the lady reached the palace. When he reported the matter to the king, his anger knew no bound. Said he,

"This seems to be an expert thief. He deceives everybody and escapes undetected. If he is not arrested, it will be a great shame for the administration." He sent for the police chief, and said to him,

"I give you five days' time to produce the thief. If you fail, severe punishment will be given to you."

The mother brought the full report for the son.

"You must be particularly careful, my son. The police chief is now after you."

"Mother ! Fear not. He won't be able to touch me even. I shall rob him of all his treasure and make gift unto you. Then, I am sure, you will congratulate me."

Sahasramalla now dressed himself like a brahmin. Passing through the main thoroughfares, he reached a temple. Some people were playing there the game of dice. Sahasramalla joined the group. While on patrol, even the police chief came there, and could not check the temptation of trying his luck. Now, it was a game between the police chief and Sahasramalla, and the former pawned his ring bearing his own name, which he lost. The thief thus earned the ring. Just at that time a messenger came from the court and desired the police chief to see the king at once. The police chief departed in a hurry.

With the ring in his possession, Sahasramalla reached the house of the police chief without delay, met his wife and said,

"Madam ! A colossal tragedy has befallen thee, and I have hurried hither to save thee. Pass on all thy valuables in my safe-keeping lest delay should cause thee much harm."

The lady could not believe her ears. She said,

"Sir ! Wherefrom do you come ? Who has sent you hither ?"

"Madam ! I am coming straight from the police chief."

"Where is he ? What's the tragedy about ?"

"Madam ! The police chief is under arrest under orders from the king. The king's men tied him fast and were taking him when I saw him. For the protection of his valuables, he has deputed me hither, and has advised me to remove them to some safe place. If you have any doubt, here is the ring bearing his name."

So saying he produced the ring.

enchanted words (*mantras*), and they are veterans in wisdom. I am sure, they may suggest something worthwhile "

The suggestion at once appealed to the king and it was given effect to immediately. A number of holy men were called in and were requested to give their advice in the matter. All of them tried their enchanted words, but Sahasramalla was so very intelligent that he escaped.

Repeated successes emboldened the thief and made him undaunted and reckless. There was a panic in the city. Anybody who challenged him lost his life. He had no scruple even to rob the weaker sex, as if he had a complete licence. This was a source of great anxiety for the king and the entire administration.

In the midst of this widespread gloom, there appeared a streak of light when there came a monk, Visuddha by name, who possessed *kevala jnana*. The king came to pay homage to the monk, and so also came the people from the whole city. Even Sahasramalla did not keep aside. Kevali Visuddha said in his sermon :

"To kill, to lie, to indulge in sex behaviour, to have reckless acquisition—these characterise an impious soul. Such a person behaves wrongly with others, but he should know that whatever is painful to self is also painful to others. So one must not be bad in his behaviour to others. If you have right to joys of life, everyone else has a similar right."

The sermon had a great impact on everybody, but the greatest on the thief, whose whole life now lay before him, like an open book and he felt the highest remorse for all that he had done. The most dominant thought in his mind now was that he had acquired the greatest of sins. In depriving others of their all, he felt, he himself had been the most deprived. The trend of his thought was now inward. When other people had departed, he came near the monk and made the following submission :

"Very noble sire ! There is no vile activity on earth which these stained hands had not perpetrated. They have acquired such a notoreity that they now never shrink from

them. But I am thrilled by thy holy words, and my rock-like heart is now melted. Please save me and show me the way."

The Kevali said,

"My dear fellow ! Religion is a quick and intense remedy even for the worst sinner. Ennoble thy soul by restraint and be pure"

"Holy sire ! I am ready to do whatever you suggest But I have one very humble request. You repair from here to somewhere else and there fix me in restraint. The king here is very much after me. If by any chance he comes to know of me, I will forfeit opportunity to improve. I am a well-known thief of this city and I have thrown dust into the eyes of everybody, including the king."

The Kevali admonished,

"So long as you have fear, my dear fellow, you cannot practise restraint. Have, therefore, no fear from the king or the people. You have to make a frank confession Confession rightly done changes the whole situation, and you benefit in the end. Even the adversary's mind changes and age-old feelings are washed away. To-morrow you will come at the time of my sermon. You will get chance to confess and then get fixed in restraint."

Sahasramalla agreed. Next day, the congregation met as usual, and the king and thousands of citizens were assembled. Through his sermon, the Kevali wiped out the doubts of everybody about the past, the present and the future. When the sermon was over, the king made his submission about the thief and sought guidance about his detection.

The Kevali ordained,

"Oh king ! He is no longer a thief. The agony of your city is now ended. You tried your best to detect him but you did not succeed. Have no more worry now. He is turned into an honest man."

"*Bhante !* How did it happen ?"

The lady now became extremely nervous and handed over all her valuables to him. Sahasramalla took no time to disappear with them

When the police chief returned home, his wife said,

“My dear ! How have you been freed so soon ? Did you get somebody’s assistance ? Has anybody stood surety for you ?”

“Why, who did arrest me ?”

“Well, the king himself, I am told ”

“Who did tell you like that ?”

“Why, just a while ago, you had yourself deputed a man who carried your own ring. He asked me to keep all our valuables into his safe-keeping ”

“But have you given him everything ?”

“Yes, I have done ”

The police chief’s head was now reeling He saw darkness all around. Sighing deeply he said,

“I am undone. I had an assignment to arrest him within five days on pain of severe penalty, and now I have been robbed myself. What shall I do now ? How shall I show my face to the king.”

His grief knew no bound He came to the king. On hearing him, the king said,

“You are all a worthless lot. Now it is my turn to hunt him out I shall leave no stone unturned to detect him, wherever he may be on the earth, in heaven or in the nether world I have to assure protection to my own people.”

Very humbly the police chief submitted,

“Your Majesty ! I have no doubt that you will be able to catch him When the monarch himself moves, that’s a sure protection ”

Sahasramalla again got the report from the mother and became forewarned Said he to his mother,

"Mother ! How fortunate am I that I have been able to mobilise the king himself "

Sahasramalla was not merely an expert in changing robes, he was also an expert in many arts. He dressed himself like a masseur and reached the palace-gate. He sought an interview with the king. Soon he was in his majesty's presence. He bowed low before the king and said,

"Your Majesty ! I have sought this audience with thee to get a chance to lay my expertise at thy feet May your majesty be pleased to allow me to demonstrate my ability !"

The king agreed. He removed his costly robes and ornaments, placed them aside and became ready He lay on a couch and Sahasramalla started the trick of his hands The comfort soon lulled him to sleep. Sahasramalla did not miss the chance He picked up the king's robes and ornaments, put them into a bag and returned home He placed the booty at the feet of his mother and narrated that day's experience

When the king got up, he looked around. There was neither the man nor his royal robes and jewellery The king took no time to perceive that he had been deceived in his own palace. His face turned pale He came to the court but could scarcely settle his mind on anything. The ministers, officers, nobles and others did not understand the cause of this change in the king At last, someone gathered courage and made enquiries about the king's health. The king then narrated the previous night's episode. Then said the minister :

"Sire ! This is no ordinary thief, He can't be caught by the power of the police, it seems Some suitable strategy or enchanted words must be used for this purpose "

"Minister ! Till he is caught, I find no peace. Think seriously of some way leading to his immediate arrest "

Thinking a while, the minister said,

"I suggest, sire, in this difficult job, we must seek the assistance of holy men They have in their possession

"Oh king ! His heart is changed. He is repentant and on the way to burn his past sins. He is seated beside you on your left-hand side. You allay your hatred of him and approve of his desire to court restraint."

The king now cordially received Sahasramalla and the latter, in his turn, fell at his feet and begged to be forgiven. Both had tears in their eyes, but these were tears of affection. Sahasramalla on his own part invited the king to his own house to receive the entire treasure he had amassed through his life-time. Said he,

"Sire ! I have no need of this. I shall be relieved to lay all this at thy feet. They may be restored to their rightful owners."

This was done as desired.

Sahasramalla now came back to the Kevali in the company of his mother and both were inducted in the holy order as monk and nun. To wash off his past sins, Sahasramalla went on fast for a month. The body which was so long instrumental in the acquisition of sins (*karma*) now became ready for liberation therefrom. The vast accumulation of dreadful sins started decumulating and the soul was on the road to perfection. In this way, through sincere perseverance, clean intentions and auspicious tinges, the soul became free of the wrappings of *karma* and attained *kevala jnana*. In that state, he stayed on the earth for some time, and then, plugging wholly the activities of body, mind and expression, he fixed himself rock-like, ultimately entering into liberation.

SARANA

Sarana, a well-known dice-player, was a resident of the city of Avantī. Dice was, so to say, a passion with him, and in this, he squandered his all. He was now literally starving, and yet he could not start any business for want of capital. So he turned into a house-breaker. One day, he reached the house of a merchant where the father and the son were talking, as follows :

Father—"I want to store ten thousand gold coins in some safe place to be used in case of unforeseen contingencies."

Son—"It is a laudable idea, sir, but what will be the safe place for this ?"

Father—"I think the cremation ground "

Sarana at once transferred himself to the cremation ground, and attired like a monk, he controlled his respirations and lay like a corpse in one corner.

Meanwhile, the merchant and his son came there. The merchant asked his son to check around carefully, for, he knew that if anybody was in hiding in the neighbourhood, his whole plan would fall through. In fulfilling his assignment, the son carefully searched the entire neighbourhood but found no living person anywhere, except a corpse. He checked him carefully, touched him, turned him, but found no trace of life, though the body bore no mark of any wound. The son came back and apprised his father. The merchant said at once, "Maybe he is an expert cheat. You go again and examine him once more."

The son returned and examined the body again, this time more carefully than before, but found nothing to alter his previous finding. Then he held his leg and dragged him to some distance. Sarana bore everything with patience and

did not give up control on his respiration. The son came back and reported to the father. Said the father,

"Surely this fellow is a class one rogue He has carefully spread his trap to cheat us We need be very careful about him. So go again, my son, and cut his nose and ears this time. If he is alive, he will give a shriek. If he does nothing, then we shall be fully assured.

The son did as instructed but Sarana bore even the cut and did neither move nor shriek. Now, the merchant had no doubt that it was a corpse and not a living being So the father and the son dug a ditch, buried the treasure and returned home.

After they had left, Sarana did his own job He dug out the entire treasure and brought it home.

Days passed. One day, the merchant sent his son to check if the treasure was in tact, but the son discovered only an empty ditch. Very much depressed, he came back home and reported. The merchant said,

"Surely, that one was a cheat and not a dead man. He had very effectively spread the trap to rob us He must be a very strong fellow that he patiently bore the physical pain of the nose-cut and the ear-cut Now, in the city, we must be on the look-out for a man who is without a nose and ears That will be the easy way to detect the thief."

In a few days, the merchant caught the man he was looking for He held him by the hand, took him aside and said,

"You must be a great guy Such a daring act is not possible for an ordinary mortal I know, man, how you lost your nose and ears "

The man was neither ashamed nor alarmed, nor did he strive to hide anything In a very normal tone, he retorted,

"Sir, no pain is high enough to acquire a treasure "

"Worthy hero ! May I make you a request ? Whatever

still remains unspent or unsquandered, you should restore to me. I shall properly reward you."

"You may take the whole of it, sir, but let it not reach the king's ears."

The merchant rewarded the thief and reacquired whatever portion of his treasure was still there.

DHISTA

Prince Sura lived in the city of Dhara. His wife, Chatura, was a shrew with a sharp tongue. Sura was very sorry for her behaviour. He tried his best to improve her but there was no outcome. So he thought of taking another wife and was on the look-out for a suitable bride. One day, he reached the house of an old woman in the city of Avanti. She had a beautiful daughter named Sundari. When Sura made the proposal to marry her, the woman said,

“I shall give my daughter to one who agrees to look after me. This daughter is my only support.”

Sura agreed, got married and brought the newly-married wife home. Chatura became furious to know this, but she was helpless. So now she applied the only instrument at her disposal. She would torture the co-wife, often quarrel with her and use harsh words. Soon Sundari became disgusted. The prince then housed them in separate buildings, but still there could be no peace. Chatura would often come to Sundari's house to quarrel with her, to beat her, to bite her with her teeth, to scratch her skin with her nails. The situation went out of control.

Sura now housed Sundari at a distance of 10 *kosas* (20 miles). The mother lived with her, Sura often visiting.

One day, as Sura was about to go to her house, Chatura came to know of it. She lauded the idea in so many words and gave her husband some *modaka* to be taken on the way. When Sura reached the bank of a river, he sat down to rest and ate the *modaka*. This was an enchanted staff and no sooner had he taken it than he changed into a dog. Now, instead of proceeding to Sundari, the dog returned to Chatura. She tied the dog and beat him half-dead.

“Will you go again to Sundari?” she said in anger.

Then she restored the dog to human form. It took Sura a whole month to recover.

But he could not check the temptation of visiting Sundari for long, nor could he keep his plan a secret, so that this time Chatura gave him another sweet named *karamba* to be taken on the way. As previously, Sura reached the bank of the river and was about to eat the sweet, when a hermit with matted hairs came there and sought the whole of it. Now, no sooner had the hermit taken it than he turned into an ass. And the ass took the road to Chatura's house, Sura following from behind.

As the ass reached Chatura's house, she tied it fast and showered all her passion on its back. The animal brayed bitterly but Chatura would take no respite till it was half dead. Then the ass was released and turned into a human being. And lo behold ! It was a hermit in matted hairs. Chatura was terrified on the realisation of what she had done to a holy man. She fell at his feet and begged sincerely to be forgiven. These are the only words the hermit uttered while departing :

"Correct is the saying, '*Whosoever eats karamba undergoes pain*'."

Fear always haunts a sinful soul. Chatura was afraid that whatever her machination, her husband could not love her. This anguish always tortured her. So she hatched a plan at once to get rid of her husband. She arranged a sacrifice to propitiate the deity and she was successful. As she dropped her offerings into the fire, a snake came out and said,

"What can I do for you, madam ? I am pleased with your propitiation and I am at your service "

Chatura was happy. She said,

"My husband goes to another woman. I cannot bear this. So you deprive him of his life."

"I shall do this as you desire, but it will take a little time. I tell you, at the end of six months, your husband will fall a dead man "

So saying, the snake departed

Sura witnessed the whole thing from a distance and thought,

“How mean is the woman’s conduct, not even the Brahma can fathom its depth”

After all this, he had no courage to return home, and he directed his steps towards Sundari’s residence, where he settled from that day, and decided not to see Charuta any more

Sundari tried her best to make him happy through conversation, dance and music, but Sura remained indifferent all the time. If someone is unhappy in the family, even others cannot be happy. So one day, Sura’s mother-in-law said,

“My son ! What’s wrong with you ?”

“Mother ! What’s the use of stating it when it’s beyond cure ?”

“But, my son, sometimes the affection of the near-and-dear ones may hit upon something that may help. What’s the harm in your telling me ? Maybe when the disease is diagnosed, a remedy may come up.”

Still Sura wanted to suppress, but in the face of an overwhelming affection, he could not. He gave a full account and said,

“On the completion of six months from that fateful day, I must die.”

“Don’t you worry about it. You leave it to me and I shall set it right. Be happy from now. My own ward’s happiness is linked up with you”

Sura felt somewhat relieved but could not be fully assured. Chatura’s words would often ring into his ears and he could find no rest

Sundari and her mother painted two peacocks on the wall outside. They were so life-like. Both the ladies duly worshipped the two everyday. Thus six months passed and the

fateful day arrived when Sura was to die of snake bite. He was restless, but the two ladies gave him courage and Sundari said,

“You see our power, my dear. If there be some Power on earth that kills, there’s a greater Power that saves”

The ladies now cleaned a spot in the room and purified it. Then they placed a cushion at the centre and on it sat the prince. The two ladies now, with enchanted rice in their hands, looked around for the snake. Soon their eyes detected one and at once they hurled their rice at the peacocks. What a wonder ! They were no longer a coat of paint, but one of them actually descended from the wall, picked up the snake and flew away in the sky. Sura witnessed all this dumb and amazed. He saw the infallible power of the enchanted words. He felt as if he had acquired a fresh life.

Chatura’s plan was thus upset. She got a report from a traveller that Sura was hale and hearty, living happily and making charities everyday. She now turned herself into a white cat and reached Sundari’s house. When the mother and the daughter saw the cat in their house and read into its intentions, they themselves became two black cats and chased the white one. But the white one jumped on both, tearing each with sharp claws. Even the combined strength of the two was no match for the strength of the white cat. After scratching them severely, the white cat returned home.

When Sura asked all about it, the ladies said,

“The cat was none other than your first wife who had come to chastise us. But as it commanded a greater power, it overpowered us both and escaped unhurt”

Sura was again depressed and wanted now to get rid of all the three ladies. Hardly a month had passed when the white cat appeared again and the same scene repeated, with similar outcome. After the encounter was over, Sundari came to her husband and said,

“My dear ! When the white cat comes next time, you will have to help us. When we shall be fighting, you only

say, 'Black cats, kill the white cat'. At once our power will increase and we shall throw it on the ground "

This time the white cat came earlier. It had gained confidence by her previous successes. Now, as soon as the fight started, Sura came up and said,

"Black cats ! Kill the white cat."

At once their power increased tremendously and the white cat was down rolling on the ground beneath them, and the black cats pressed so hard at its neck that it was about to die Now, Sura thought,

"If my words can give strength to the black cats, similar words may give strength to the white one, and I may be rid of all the three Let me try." And he said aloud,

"White cat ! Kill the black ones."

And the black cats soon lay dead. Even the white cat didn't live long thereafter.

When all the three were thus dead and gone, Sura felt relieved. He performed the last rites for all the three, and came straight to his brother's house where he was received by his sister-in law Destiny is so powerful that it pursues a man wherever he may go One day, as Sura was sitted and his sister-in-law was standing beside him, a man came from the farm to announce the death of a bull while ploughing the land. He said that if it was not immediately replaced by a new bull, the work of cultivation would suffer. As soon as the lady heard this, she at once showered some powder on Sura's head which at once turned him into a bull It was then led to the farm and yoked to the plough

Poor Sura ! What a miserable life started for him ! Days passed. One day, the hook in his nose broke and fell down. This at once dispelled the charm and Sura regained his human form At once he slipped away from the farm. On the highway, he met his brother who expressed a deep concern at the severe wounds on his body and requested him to accompany him home Declining the offer, Sura said,

"My brother ! Let thy home be sweet unto thee My

sister-in-law is a devil in carnate She turned me into a bull and yoked me at the plough. The wounds you see have been derived therefrom Now I shall go to your home only when I desire to be changed into a bull Till then let me keep afar from your home For me, even life in the forest is more covetable. It seems that all homes are haunted by the devil ”

So saying, Sura turned his steps towards the forest, and soon he was in the very depth of it There he saw six men attired in costly robes with a load of grass on each head It caused him surprise. When he made enquiry, the men said,

“Here lives an old lady in the forest, who is crippled in body, but is the very embodiment of kindness At her bid, we take these bundles of grass for her, and in exchange, we are given rich and fresh robes. This has made our life happy ”

Sura said,

“My dear friends ! I shall be obliged to see the lady. Will you be good enough to accept me in your company and introduce me to her ?”

They agreed. Sura now gathered a load of grass and started with them When they reached the lady, she enquired about the stranger. The men said

“Madam ! We met him in the forest We have it from him that his name is Dhista. He desires to join with us in supplying you grass. May we hope that you will kindly accept him ?”

The lady looked very much pleased She patted on Dhista’s back and said,

“My son ! You are very weak. You stay with me and have a nice time,”

Dhista said,

“Mother ! I am very unfortunate. In rolling through a hard life, I have reached here. Now, I want to spend the rest of my life at thy feet.”

The lady cast a very affectionate glance at him, at which Dhista felt obliged. He took bath, wore fresh clothes and ate delicious dishes.

A mood of enquiry invariably unlocks fresh avenues of knowledge. Dhista felt inquisitive as to what the lady did with such a huge quantity of grass. At night, he lay with his companions but did not sleep. At mid-night, the lady got up and checked everybody. She made sure that everybody was fast asleep. Then, with the help of chanted words, she changed herself into a mare, ate the whole stock of grass and thereafter became a beautiful damsel. She then put on the best dress and ornaments and started. Dhista followed her in disguise. She now reached a cave where she was received by a few female spirits, who asked,

“What offer you have prepared for us ?”

“Have patience. I have gathered seven men for you, six of whom are fat and plump. Only the seventh man is lean and weak. He is a recent arrival. However, I have started feeding him well and I have no doubt that he will put on sufficient flesh by the fourteenth day (of the fortnight). He is also meant for you.”

The devils were highly pleased. But Dhista was alarmed. For, death was following him so closely on his heels. He had no doubt that this lady, herself a devil, would put him to death at the earliest available opportunity. In the morning, as usual, they all started for cutting grass. On the way, as Dhista narrated his night's experience, all the six protested,

“We haven't detected any evil intention in the lady's behaviour so far.”

Dhista—“My dear friends ! A comfortable life has blinded you ; but you won't escape from her trap, I tell you. I am not going to stay here even for a moment.”

The six—“Stay for a day more, and let us make sure of what you say. If your apprehension proves true, we shall go with you.”

Dhista agreed. The day passed as usual. At night, all

the seven did not sleep, and, following the lady incognito, they had a corroboration of what Dhista had said. They now sat thinking about a suitable plan. Dhista suggested that such an evil character must not be allowed to live, and since she was too powerful for anyone of them, they must pull up their whole strength together and put her to death. There was unanimity among all the seven and the action started at once. Two men held the lady by the legs, two held her head fast and one of them beat her so severely with a club that the poor witch breathed her last. Now, there was nothing to be afraid of, and so the seven friends started from there. Passing through a forest, they reached the bank of the Sipra, and therefrom, a fine city on its bank; but to their surprise, they found it wholly deserted. They entered into it and reached at last the palace gate, where sat an old lady. The lady at once received them and said,

“Good fellows ! Here are seven beautiful damsels for you. You accept them.”

Dhista—“But, mother, tell us first who they are, and wherefrom do they come. The whole city is deserted, and the presence of seven damsels in such a lonely place causes us both surprise and suspicion.”

The lady—“My good fellows ! These are *vidyadhara* girls. One day, their father had enquired of an astrologer about their prospective husbands. The astrologer suggested that the girls should be entrusted to me and that the husband would come without seeking. So I am here. You now relieve me of my charge by accepting the girls.”

Continued the lady,

“Here you have everything that makes life pleasant—finest cushions, dressing rooms and bed chambers, and most beautiful damsels. You enjoy life in their company. There are seven fine steeds in the stable, and you enjoy a ride on their back in any direction save the east. I bid thee strictly not to go in the eastern direction even by mistake.”

The offer seemed attractive and the seven agreed. It was a pleasant life for them in the company of *vidyadhara*

girls Sometimes they would be on the swings dangling in the air, sometimes in the garden plucking beautiful flowers, and sometimes in the lake enjoying a bath in the company of the girls. One day the seven met together to consider the taboo imposed on their movement in the eastern direction, and they decided to go thither to unfold the mystery behind it. They started on horse back, all the seven together. Hardly they had gone some distance, they saw piles of human bones as far as the eyes could reach. They now looked at each other. Just at that moment, the hoof of one of the horses struck against a skull and the skull at once laughed aloud and said,

“I too once enjoyed the same horses and the same girls ”

Everybody was afraid and surprised. But Dhista gathered courage and said,

“Who are these horses, pray, and who are these girls ? Who was the lady we met at the palace gate and how is this place so much infested with human bones ?”

The skull—“This shameless witch is a notorious devil. She has killed us all. If you have love for your life, fly away at once.”

At these words, all the seven got so much terrified that they ran at once. Without so much as turning their faces even once, all the seven were on their horses till the sun was high up in the middle of the sky.

Finding the men not come back, the seven girls at once reported to the guardian lady. She at once picked up her enchanted drum and reached the top of the mansion. Therefrom she could detect at a great distance all the seven men fleeing. She started beating on the drum to turn the horses and she was readily effective. The seven tried to jump down from their horses but could not. They now sat helpless on their horses as the lady recalled them near her and thundered,

“Fools ! Why did you flee from my trap ? Try it again if you can.”



“ ..These are your last moments . ”

So saying, she displayed her long bloody tongue, and with an unsheathed sword in her hand, she trampled Dhista beneath her heels and said,

“Confess, ye fool, whither bound you were on horse-back ? These are your last moments on the earth. Remember your creator ”

For a moment, Dhista felt nervous, but soon he gathered courage and said,

“Old devil ! ‘But tell me first who did cut thy nose ?’”

The question pleased the lady who released him at once and said,

“Lucky man ! Let me give you an account. In the land of Bharata, there is a city named Manorama where reigned King Manorath. His queen Manimala gave birth to seven sons and one daughter I am that daughter When I reached the threshold of youth, I developed a test for spells and enchantments and soon mastered all the arts leading to hypnotism, mesmorism, slaughter, maddening, demon-arts, moving to heaven, hiding in the nether world, attracting planets, etc I also acquired the art of making alive a corpse With these special powers, I reached one day the court of Indra, the king of gods, where I met many heavenly stage-players, and learnt from them the art of dramatics This soon brought me a chance to dance at Indra’s court and I pleased him by my performance. When he desired me to ask for a boon, what else could I ask for but seek Indra as my husband ? And to this he kindly agreed Henceforth I became a regular visitor to heaven and had a very nice time there ”

The lady further continued her account :

“You do not know, my dear fellow, how life at times takes a major turn without giving any notice One day, my gardener, whom I favoured, desired to go to heaven with me and see the stage performance there with his own eyes I couldn’t disoblige him I turned him into a black bee who stuck at my petticoat, and with him thus I reached heaven The performance started and I was on the stage,

but I couldn't fully exert myself because of the load on my pettycoat and my dance was thus spoiled. This infuriated Indra who cursed me not to go to heaven any more but to live on the earth and suffer for my error. At that time, he cut my nose. I was perplexed and couldn't conceive for a moment that I could be in a situation like that. I fell at Indra's fit begging pitiously to be forgiven, and humbly sought about the time of my deliverance. At this, Indra took pity on me and prescribed human flesh for my daily intake and said, 'The day a human would tell thee—woman, who did cut thy nose,—that thou shalt attain deliverance.' So I descended on this city, and with the help of these girls and horses, I deceived all the residents here and lived on their flesh. I didn't even spare the strangers visiting the city. But none so far did dare to ask me the question you did to-day. None had ever thought of it. You did a very right thing, and by dint of it, you are my deliveror. I am grateful to you. I now very gladly bestow on you the use of these girls, the horses and the city."

Dhista—"Thank you, madam, for the kind offer; but tell me what shall I do with a deserted city?"

The lady—"Sir! With my arts, if I know to kill, I also know to make dead men alive. The kingdom I offer thee cannot be a desert."

The lady now applied her art and the city was back to life again. She handed over the administration to Dhista and disappeared, never to be seen again.

Dhista took over the reign of the highest office and gave very high positions in the state to his companions.

One day, an acharya came to that city. He gave his sermons, after which King Dhista expressed his inquisitiveness about the devils' traps that were so often laid in the course of his life. So said the monk:

"Oh king! In your previous birth, you were a brahmin named Haridatta in the city of Pratisthanapur. The brahmin had six servants. His daily hobby was to attract spirits and tease them, in which the six servants were his

accomplices. Fortunately, a *muni* came to that city, whose words influenced all the seven and gave them a chance to acquire pious *karma*. Now you see, you seven are brought together here; and since in your previous births, you so much teased and troubled the spirits, they paid you back in your own coins in this life."

These words restored the long memory to Dhista, who could find a corroboration of the monk's words in his previous life. This gave a mighty turn to the course of his life, which, needless to add, he made a worthy thing, and at death, attained a higher stage.

KULADHWAJA

King Sankha was the king of Ajodhya. His queen was Dharini. She gave birth to a son named Kuladhwaja who was highly obedient to his parents and bore a flawless conduct. One day, as he went to the park, he saw there seated Acharya Manatunga, surrounded by fellow monks, under the shade of a leafy tree. The prince paid him homage and obeisance and listened to his holy words wherein the Acharya revealed the virtue of a celibate life. When the sermon was over, the prince said,

‘Holy sire ! A wholly celibate life is an impossibility for me ; but I take the vow to remain contented with my own wife and never to touch another woman.’

As the prince was coming back, he met two ladies who were quarreling with each other. When the prince enquired about the source of trouble between them, said one,

“I am the wife of a blacksmith and my name is Saubhagya-kandalī. I came here to take water from this well. As I was going back, herein came this lady named Kanak-manjarī, the wife of a carpenter, with an empty jar on the same errand. It was a narrow lane and we stood face to face. Even though my jar was full and hers was empty, she didn’t clear the way for me. Hence, sir, this heated exchange.”

She didn’t stop at that but added,

“This lady should know how great a craftsman my man is in deference to which alone she should have given me precedence. There is no art, on earth of which my husband is not a master.”

The prince—“Noble lady ! What’s the field of thy husband’s specialisation. I am curious to know about it.”

"Sir, the name of my husband is Band-deva. He makes an iron fish, which floats in the air, dives in the deep sea, picks up the most precious pearls and returns to its own place "

Kanak-manjari could no longer hold her tongue

"Is it worth calling an art ? My dear sir, a real craftsman alone knows what a true art is. This is nothing when compared with the art my husband is master of "

The prince—"Lady ! Tender a full account of thy husband's expertise."

Displaying full pride in her husband's great merit, the second lady started her account

"My husband Kandarpa is a great carpenter who makes a wooden horse, on whose back one may roam in the air for six months"

The prince was highly pleased to know of the existence of such skilled craftsmen in the kingdom, and he brought it to the notice of the king, who sent for both. He offered them the necessary material, and asked them to demonstrate their skill at the court. The blacksmith produced the fish, fixed a chamber on its back and fitted two keys, and presented it to the king. The blacksmith took the king on its back to give him an aerial view of the landscape, after which it descended of the sea shore. The two then entered into the chamber. The fish then went deep inside the water where it collected precious pearls at its heart's content and then it returned to the palace. As the pearls were unloaded, there were piles of them. The king was very much surprised. He asked the smith many questions, particularly on motion and rest of an iron fish, and the smith explained that he had acquired this art from a goddess, who had given him two enchanted keys which were fitted on the fish and which were instrumental in collecting so many pearls.

The carpenter now came with the wooden horse which he presented to the king, and requested him or the prince to enjoy a flight in whichever direction he pleased. The prince expressed eagerness to have it and the king agreed. To control the flying horse, the carpenter gave the prince the



“Sir ! My vow is fulfilled ”

use of two keys With the prince on its back, the horse now took off and soon disappeared in the sky. The prince was in the air for a long time and he enjoyed the flight. Then he descended in a park on the outskirts of a city. He took out the keys and lay down, using the horse for his pillow. Now, it so happened that as the horse got fixed, so did the shadow of the tree This was soon observed by the gardener, who took the prince to be a magician He came near him and touched his finger at the leg, and at once the prince sat up. The gardener requested the prince to accept his hospitality. The prince agreed and came to the gardener's house. The horse was placed in a corner in the room In the evening, the prince was out to take a view of the town, when he reached a temple dedicated to Muni Subrata He bowed before the image and sat down in prayer. Just then a lady came in and she turned all men out. Kuladhwaja didn't understand the intention of the lady. So he hid in a corner and began to observe what happened next.

Soon another divine-looking damsel became visible inside, who did worship the image and left. On making enquiry about her, the prince came to know that she was Princess Sundari, whose parents were Queen Jayamala and King Vijaya of that city which was named Ratnapur The prince further learnt that the princess, though of ripe age for her marriage, was still a spinster, and was under a vow to marry a man or a *Vidyadhara* who would reach her in her own chamber at the palace

The prince thought of trying his luck. He returned to his host's residence, made ready his horse and flew straight to the princess' window. The princess was fast asleep. So he spread chewed betel leaf around her bed and came back to his residence, the gardener's house

In the morning, when the princess woke up and saw the chewed staff, she had no doubt that this must be the doing of some *deva* or *Vidyadhara*, and he must visit her again. At night, the princess lay on her bed. The prince came, as during the previous night, and started throwing the chewed leaves. The princess at once sat up and caught the border of his cloth The two were thus together, enjoying a conversation. The princess said,

"Sir ! My vow is fulfilled to-day. I was looking for a daring person, a hero in true sense, and you fulfil my expectation."

The two then got married in the presence of the burning lamp. The prince now came to her window everyday and the princess enjoyed his company. She was at the height of her life's joy.

A life spent in joy gives it a long span, grace and development. Already having a divine frame, her physical grace now multiplied manifold, and she showed signs of pregnancy. Her attendants noticed it and reported to the queen, and she in turn brought it to the notice of the king. The king became very angry and said,

"Whoever be the culprit, he must go to hell."

The king immediately returned to the court to decide suitable action. His untimely appearance alarmed everybody, but none could muster courage to ask. At last, a lady ascertained the reason from the king and said,

"Sir ! Have patience. I shall get the culprit arrested and drag him before Your Majesty."

The lady, Bagura by name, applied her ready wit, and, with the assistance of the princess' attendants, got a sufficient quantity of vermillion powder spread on the ground round the princess' chamber. Since the whole thing was done at night and with due precaution, the prince had no inkling of it. He came as usual at mid-night and left in the early hours of the morning, with his feet reddened. In the morning, the lady came to the princess' chamber and examined the foot prints. She had no doubt now that this was a human visitor. Then with the intelligence people of the state, she started the search and before long the culprit was under arrest. He was presented to the king, who ordered his immediate execution. As the prince was being taken for execution, all people felt sympathy for him. A prince of royal blood, he bore the auspicious marks of a prospective king, and people had no doubt that the king had made a mistake by awarding him capital punishment. They further

felt that since the princess was involved, the matter should have been hushed up, instead of being given this much public exposure. Now, on his way to the execution ground, as the prince reached near the gardener's house, he said to the executioner,

"Look here, my good fellow, my family diety is enshrined here. Since these are my last moments on this earth, if you permit me, I may say my last prayer."

This was a very normal request and the executioner agreed. The prince came inside the house, made ready his horse and soon he was in the sky. He came straight to the princess' chamber, took her with him and was in the sky again. They landed near the sea-shore. By this time, the prince was very hungry. So the princess said,

"My dear ! You stay here. Let me return to my chamber on horse-back and get you some sweets. I shall be back in a moment."

Man proposes, but destiny proposes otherwise. The princess placed the horse at the window and went in to collect some sweets. When she returned, she found the horse dashed against the ground by a gust of wind and broken into pieces. Now she knew not how to get back to the prince. She started weeping and blaming her ill-luck.

When the princess returned not for a very long time, the prince became anxious on her score. Restlessly he was pacing on the sea shore. This attracted the notice of a *Vidyadhara* princess, who was flying overhead in search of her husband. She came down at once and offered to help the prince. The prince asked her who she was, ^h wherefrom she came and whither was she going. In revealing ^a her identity, the lady said that she was the queen of *Vidjadhara* ^a Manichuda of the Baitadhyia hills. Since her husband had been stolen by his adversaries, she was out to rescue him from their hands.

The prince accepted the offer. The lady was, however, charmed at the prince's beauty and manliness and made lusty overtures. But the prince, bound by the vow of restricted

celibacy as he was, did not respond, but told her frankly of the position. This very much annoyed the lady who picked him up at once, and threw him in the sea. There he was saved by the water goddess who was charmed at his steadfastness and helped his restoration in the princess' chamber. People in the palace soon came to know of the prince's presence there. When the king came to know the whole situation, even his anger was pacified. The king was convinced that the man courted by the princess was no ordinary person. Kuladhwaja stayed there for a few days, and then, he thought of coming back to his own city. He came back with the newly married wife to the joy of everybody. His father Sankha now abdicated in his favour and placed him on the throne. Kuladhwaja had a glorious reign in course of which he wavered not from the prescribed course of conduct, and attained, at death, a high status.

DAMANAKA

In the city of Rajpur, there lived a man named Kulaputra. Jinadasa, a Jaina *sravaka*, was his fast friend. In the company of his friend, Kulaputra came in touch with the Jaina monks and undertook the vow not to take fish.

Once a terrible famine broke out in the city and people started living on fish. Even the staunchest vegetarians changed their diet and there was hardly a household where fish was not a staple food. Now, Kulaputra's vow was on a severe trial. Said his wife to him one day,

‘Don’t you see, sir, there is no food even for the children and they are starving? And yet you are so very indifferent. Won’t you buy me some fish? I cannot do without them.’

Kulaputra—“You see, my dear, I have no desire to deprive other living beings of their life just to save my own. Grains are our food. I cannot extend my hands to fish. I have affection for my children, but I have a similar affection for everyone else. I cannot overlook this.”

Kulaputra's brother-in-law forced him to accompany him to the river bank in order to catch fish. Very reluctantly he went with him and very indifferently did he throw his net in the water. But what a wonder! He had the largest catch. When Kulaputra saw that the aquatics were very uneasy and restless outside the water, he at once released them in the stream. He tried thrice but on each occasion the outcome was the same, and he released the aquatics into the stream on all the three occasions. Burdened with diverse thought moving up and down in his mind, he went on fast unto death and was liberated of the mortal frame. He was born in the family of a merchant named Manihar in the city of Rajagriha and was given the name Damanaka.

Manihar was a man of great wealth and fortune. But by the time Damanaka was eight years old, there broke out an epidemic in which all members of the merchant's family save

Damanaka died. He had now no guardian to look after him and the vast property took no time to disappear. At last, the orphan took shelter with another merchant, Sagarpoat by name.

One day, some monks came to Sagarpoat's house to seek food. The eldest of them, when he saw the boy, casually observed to his fellow monks that the boy's auspicious *karma* was not now very far from coming up and that eventually he would be the head of that very household.

Naturally, the observation could not be relished by the merchant, particularly so when he had a son to inherit his fortune. So at once he thought out a plan to kill him. He sent for the butcher and gave him the assignment. The butcher took the boy to a deep forest. But as he looked at his face, he took pity on him and could not withhold his disgust of the merchant who had given him a cruel assignment. He pierced Damanaka's finger, took a few drops of blood, and released him. He asked him to flee at once and never to show his face in that region.

When all alone in the forest, and deeply afflicted by terror, Damanaka met a cow-herd, who heard his account and took him home. Here started a new chapter in his life. He was now assisting the cow-herd and this work he did not dislike.

Many years passed in this way and Damanaka was now a young man. One day, it so happened that the merchant Sagarpoat came to that very place on business. He saw the young man and liked him very much. He learnt on enquiry that this was an orphan whom the cow-herd had picked up from the forest years back.

The merchant had now no doubt that this was the boy whom he had himself condemned years back. His old apprehensions revived and once more he was determined to wipe him out of existence. So he requested the cowherd to lend him the service of the boy to carry an urgent message to his son.

Damanaka reached the outskirts of the city of Rajagriha with the merchant's letter in his hand. He took shelter in a temple to rest and he didn't know when he fell fast asleep. The envelop lay beside him.

Just then, the merchant's daughter Bisa came to the temple. When her eyes fell on an envelop addressed to her own brother, she couldn't check the temptation to pick it up. When she read it, she found that her brother had been commissioned by her father to administer dreadful venom to the bearer thereof as soon as he reached him.

Bisa looked at the young man and read the letter again and again looked at him. She didn't understand why her father had given such a cruel order. Now, poison is called '*bis*' in the north Indian dialects, and the girl, by a gentle stroke of the pen, changed '*bis*' into '*bisa*', which was her own name. Then she redeposited the letter from where she had picked it up and silently departed.

The letter was duly delivered to the merchant's son, and the merchant's wishes were duly honoured to the very letter of the note. When the merchant returned home, he found to his greatest disgust that the young man he had condemned had turned into the next of his kin. He felt so helpless and bitter.

A minor stroke of pen thus changed into a major stroke of fortune. But the merchant didn't change. He was still bent on liquidating the young man, even though that would be a great misfortune for his own daughter. So he instructed some of his faithful men to be on the look-out for a suitable opportunity to liquidate him.

When the auspicious *karma* is up, what to speak of killing, none can do as much as to bend one's hair. The men were unsuccessful in their assignment.

One day, the whole family, including Damanaka, had gone to a friend's house to participate in an occasion. Damanaka returned somewhat early. But since the entrance door was locked, he lay outside on a cot. Somehow he felt restless, got up and went on pacing up and down.

Meanwhile returned his brother-in-law. But since the entrance was still locked, he lay on the same cot and was soon asleep. Now, the merchant's men, who were after Damanaka, had seen him lying on the cot outside, but they

did not notice him moving out and being replaced by his brother-in-law. By the time they returned with sharp weapons, the person on the cot had changed and now the most unfortunate victim of the merchant's order was none other than his own dear son.

Thus one knows not how a ditch dug for another may turn out to be a big well for the digger himself

Having lost his only son, the merchant had now no other alternative but to change his attitude towards his son-in law. He discussed the matter with his wife and the two were unanimous that Damanaka should be entrusted with full responsibility of running the household

Mysterious is the turn of *karma* Damanaka who was born in a rich family, and had lost his all was again in command of a huge fortune One day, a few singers came to Damanaka's house and sang The theme was very much in tune with the ups and downs of Damanaka's own life. Damanaka was greatly impressed and rewarded the singers

For many years, Damanaka enjoyed the prosperity and happiness of the earthly life Then he adopted the vows of a *śrāvaka* and followed them rigorously, enriching thereby his life on earth, and, at death, finding a place among the celestial beings.

ASANGMATA

King Atimardan reigned in the city of Ratnapur. His son's name was Lalitanga. Lalitanga was not only a worthy son but was highly accomplished.

It was spring and people had flocked in a public park. The prince was there too, and so was the minister's young and charming wife. It was an accident that their four eyes met.

The prince sent one of his peers to enquire of the lady when he could meet her alone. The lady sent back the following message :

“Such a thing is by no means easy. My husband is so suspicious that he rarely lets me go out alone, nor does he allow anybody to come to our home. But there is one way. There is a dry well adjacent to our house. Let the prince dig a tunnel linking the well to his palace-chamber. Once this is done, I shall take opportunity to quarrel with my husband and jump into the well. I shall then take the tunnel and be with the prince. That will be, not a short meeting, but a permanent union.”

The prince did accordingly. When the tunnel was ready, on an appointed day, the lady quarrelled with her husband and jumped into the well. From there, she took the tunnel and soon she was at the prince's chamber.

Now, as the lady jumped into the well, none had seen her. So there started a complete search of the city and its suburbia. Even the well was not spared, but the lady was found nowhere, dead or alive. When the matter reached the ears of the king, he held the minister guilty of murdering his wife and ordered for him imprisonment for life and forfeiture of his entire property. When the prince heard of the king's order, he was afraid and mortified. He knew more

than anyone else that he had been the cause of the poor minister's fall. But more than that he was apprehensive on his own score. His entire reputation would go to mud the moment it were known that the minister's wife was the prince's concubine. Thus thoroughly shaken, the prince fled the palace at once and entered into a forest, where he saw a monk, to whom he said,

"Holy sir ! I am a culprit. Can I be absolved of my guilt ?"

The monk saw a rich soul in the prince and encouraged him to join the holy order. The prince agreed, and thus started a new chapter in his life.

Once Monk Lalitanga reached a park outside the city of Khsempur. There, on the bank of the river, he started *kayotsarga*. Now, in the same city, there lived an atheist named Asangmata who had neither respect for parents, elders and superiors, nor faith in the sacred canons. By nature, he was very haughty.

Now, it so happened that the river at that time was in spate, and the whole area was merged under deep water except the ground where stood the monk. The news took no time to reach the city and people flocked to see this wonder. Many touched his feet and many derived inspiration from his conduct.

This roused a tremendous jealousy in the atheist. Men like him are no better than flies who appreciate not the real beauty but relish sitting on the sores. He at once reached the bank of the river, tied the monk with a chain, piled logs round him and set fire to them. The monk took at ease the fire-bath and the flames could do him no harm.

When, next morning, the atheist saw it with his own eyes, he was shaken to the core. He realised the great power of penance and bent his head low in reverence before the monk. There he stood, calm and fixed, reviewing within himself the whole situation. He was a wholly changed man now, changed in thought and in conduct, and the process was so quick that almost in a moment the shackles of *karma* were gone and he still stood, facing the monk, in possession of *kevala jnana*.

BHIMKUMAR

King Narabahan reigned in the city of Kamalpur. His queen's name was Malati and that of his son Bhim. The prince was well known for his physical vigour. One day, he saw a *muni* in the garden and sat down near him. The *muni* discovered a mature soul in the prince and revealed to him the secrets of religion. The prince felt so inspired at this that he took the vows of a *śrāvaka*.

One day, a heretical monk of the *kapalika* order came to the prince. He carried some fruits and flowers in his hand. He placed them before the prince and said,

"The great do not refuse a seeker. I have come to you with a request. May I hope that you will fulfil it?"

He continued,

"It is twelve years from now as you move back in the past that I started the propitiation of an art. It will reach its completion on the next *chaturdasi* day. Now, on that day, I need someone to assist me, and, in my opinion, none is more competent than you for that purpose. Hence I am here. What do you say, sir?"

The prince was never afraid of adventures. He agreed and on the appointed day, he went out with him. The minister's son, who happened to be his friend, tried to prevent him, but the prince could not be dissuaded. With an ensheathed sword in his hand, the prince reached the cremation ground. The *kapalika* marked a plot for his use, propitiated the goddess and extended his hand to catch the prince's head. The prince, who was very alert, thundered at once :

"Hold apart and mind thy own business. One step more towards me, and your dead body will roll on the ground. You should know for certain that not even the *devas* are capable of facing me."

This upset the *kapalika's* entire plan. So he thought of exerting strength, and attacked the prince with an open knife in his hand.

Kapalika—‘ Prince ! Remember thy diety. You didn’t respond to my persuasion. So I must subdue you by force But your head I must have. This is so essential for the propitiation of my art ’

The prince laughed at him without showing any concern :

“ Fool ! Only the weak have submitted to your threats. The head of a lion is never within the reach of a jackal like you ”

A duel started at once. The prince gave such a severe blow on the heretic’s head that he fell on the ground and the prince was on his neck. Once he thought of severing it, but the next moment he took pity on the poor soul and released him after giving a good thrashing. Once free, the ungrateful *kapalika* caught the prince unaware and hurled him in the sky. The prince was at once held by a *yaksa’s* wife, Kamala by name, who was at that moment flying overhead. She liked him very much and brought him straight to her abode on the Vaitadhya hills.

The prince was under a vow of restricted celibacy and did not respond to the lusty overtures of the *yaksa* lady. Kamala was a good soul. She appreciated the steadfastness in the prince and praised him eloquently.

When the two were in conversation, the prince heard some musical instruments being played in accompaniment with some chantings. On enquiry, the prince learnt that a few monks were there in the neighbourhood. He expressed keenness to see them. As he was escorted there, a demon made a sudden appearance and snatched away the prince’s sword. The prince at once caught him and mounted on his back to bring him down. But the demon had great physical strength. With the prince on his back, he flew in the sky and landed him near a temple.

Inside the temple stood the *kapalika* holding a young man by his hairs and thundering :

"Remember your diety. These are your last moments. I shall cut your head with this sword."

Undaunted by the terrible environment, the youth was heard saying :

"I seek refuge with the Jinas who are free from lust and attachment. Bhimkumar is my saviour ; I beseech refuge with him too "

At these words, the *kapauka's* rage reached its peak. He shouted,

"Mention not his name, ye wretch. He is a coward and you should be ashamed in beseeching refuge with him Had he been really powerful, he wouldn't have hidden from my gaze."

Just then the prince made his appearance and said,
"Rascal ! Why do you kill him ?"

When *kapalika* saw Bhim, he released the young man and ran after him They caught one another and there started a deadly battle between the two. But soon the prince got the upper hand, and held the heretic against the ground, telling him,

"My dear fellow ! In your life, you have asked many to remember their diety. Now it's your turn to do the same. There's none to save you."

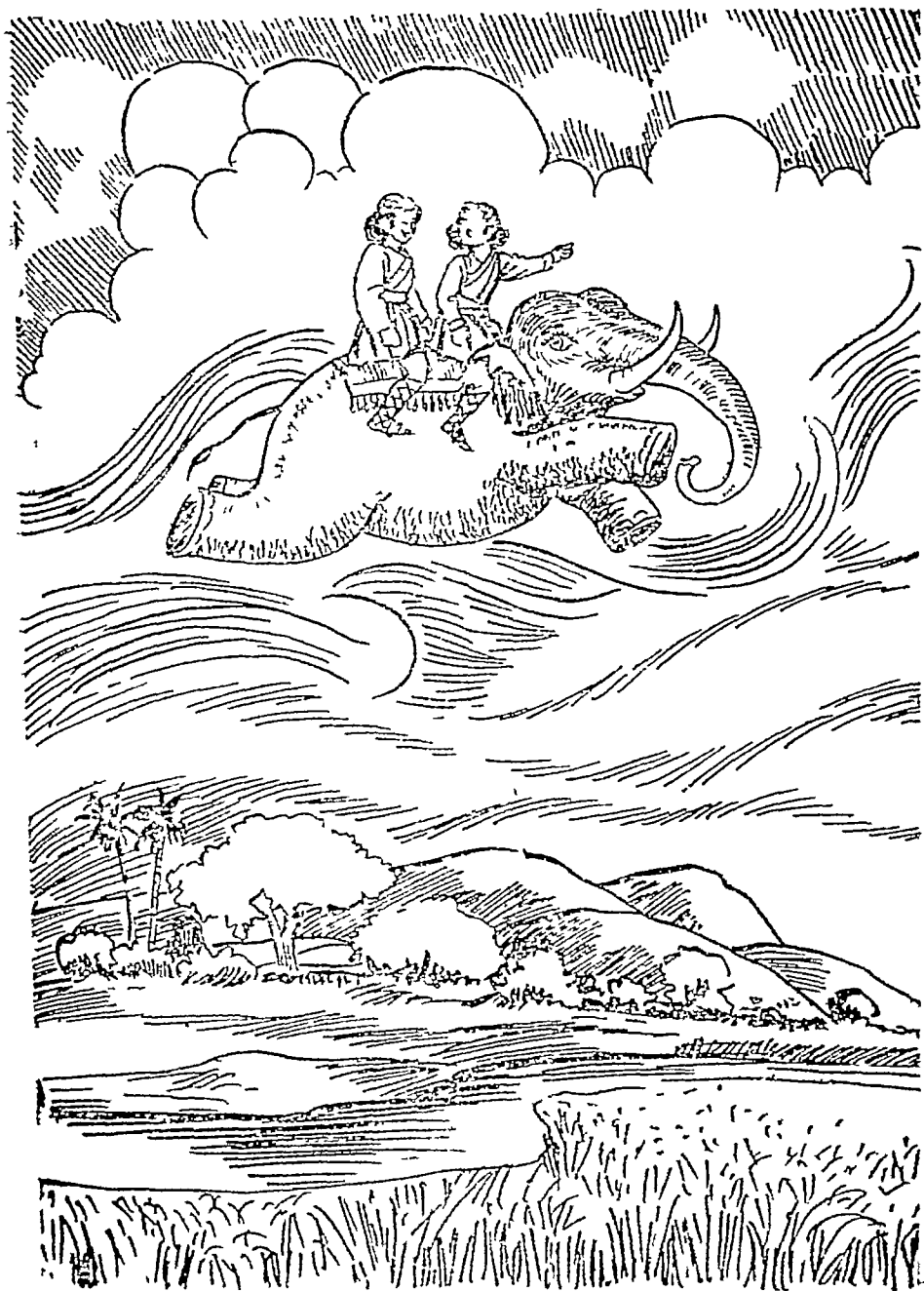
Just then the goddess, whom the *kapalika* worshipped, came down from the image, and, addressing the prince, said,

"Prince ! I am impressed by thy courage I beseech thee to release my devotee. Please spare his life. I am here to give you a boon"

The prince appeared at his finest at this moment. Said he,

"Goddess ! If you are really pleased with me and desire to give me a boon, then I pray you desist from this carnage from to-day on. You should agree, life is dear to everybody. I beseech nothing else " The goddess agreed and disappeared.

The prince now turned to the young man and was delighted to find that it was the minister's son. He at once took him in embrace and said,



The elephant picked up the two on its back and flew away.

"My dear friend ! This heretic was no stranger to thee. How then did ye step into his trap ?"

The minister's son—"Prince ! Since you disappeared, we had a very anxious time. Searches were made everywhere and in all directions, but without result. Then the family, deny was propitiated and we had it from her that you were safe and would soon return home with great laurels. Now, as I was out to hear the talk of the town about you, this scoundrel caught me and brought me here.

As the two were having a tete-a-tete, there appeared a colossal elephant. With its stout trunk, it picked up the two on its back and flew away. The two were placed outside a deserted city. The elephant then disappeared. Leaving the minister's son outside the city, the prince moved in. There he met a man-lion who had the face of a human being but the body of a lion. He held a beautiful man between his teeth, and the man was bitterly weeping. When the prince asked the animal to release the man, the animal said,

"I am very hungry for a long time. After a long gap, I have my food. How can I let it go ?"

The prince—"It appears to me, my dear fellow, that you have a fluid (*vaikritya*) body. I wonder how it (the body) takes a human being as its food !"

The man-lion—"You are right, sir. But he is my inveterate enemy from the previous birth. How do you think can I release him ? I will kill him and that alone will pacify my anger."

The prince tried utmost persuasion, but when that failed, he applied force. He rescued the man from the animal's mouth, and bit the animal so severely that he fled for life.

Now, with the same vehemence, he reached the palace. There he was very cordially received by several waitresses. One produced a jar full of pure water, another washed the prince's feet, a third desired to take him to bath, a fourth offered him food and a fifth decorated him in costly robes and ornaments. The prince silently obliged all. Just then a *dava* came, and, on a point of enquiry from the prince, made the following observation :

"This city is named Kanakpur, where once reigned King Kanakrath. His priest Sudatta was a fallen man and was very much despised by the residents of this city. Since the priest would not improve, the matter was reported to the king, who severely chastised the priest. Unfortunately, the priest died of depression. That priest is now born as a demon. I am he, and sometime earlier, you saw me as a man-lion. The man whom you rescued from my mouth was the king himself. But I congratulate you for your courage. It is I who arranged for your reception at the palace. It is my great power again that has made the residents of this city invisible."

Just then a *kevali* arrived at the city park. The prince, the minister's son and the *deva*, all the three came to him. Even the elephant came there trumpeting wildly and dangling his trunk. The *kevali* who was in the midst of his sermon, changed his topic and said,

"This elephant is really a *yaksa*, who was the grand-father of King Kanakrath. He brought Bhimkumar to this place for the rescue of his grandson. As Bhimkumar has saved the king, the *yaksa* is under a debt of gratitude to him."

The elephant now changed into a *yaksa* and lent support to the words of the *kevali*. The *yaksa* then turned to the prince and requested him to return to his city from which he was absent for long. His parents were very much in distress ever since his disappearance in the company of the *kapalika*. The *yaksa* even offered to help him to return.

Then at the prince's request, he built an air-chariot on which mounted the prince and the minister's son. They soon returned to their own city. The king and the queen were very happy to see their lost son. At the right moment, Bhim was placed on the throne, the king abdicating in his favour. Needless to add, Bhim had a glorious reign, and he spent his last days in the holy order of monks, attaining liberation at death.

SAGARCHANDRA

Amitchandra was the king of Malaypur. His queen's name was Chandrakala and that of his son Sagarchandra. The prince had a manly physique and was wholly undaunted of elephants and demons alike. One day, while roaming in the city, he met a man with a bamboo pole in his hand, atop which there was a piece of paper, on which was scribbled something. When he asked the man what it could be, he said,

"The paper has a nice couplet written on it. He who pays five hundred gold coins gets it."

The prince paid the money and bought the couplet which was as follows :

*"Without notice to living beings come pleasure and pain
Delay not thy religious practice to tranquilise 'em."*

The couplet created a stir in the prince and was henceforth uppermost in his mind.

One day, some invisible power picked up the prince and dropped him into the sea. He caught a floating log and was in that state struggling for life for eight days. On the ninth day, he was washed ashore an island named Amar. Once on the shore, he rubbed himself with cocoanut water to allay his fatigue. Though alone on the island, the couplet was his companion and he did not feel stranded and lonely. His first task now was to pluck some fruits and appease his hunger. Then he started to survey the island. Suddenly, he heard a lady crying at a distance and he hurried his steps in that direction. As he drew near the spot, he could distinctly hear the lady's voice,

"In my next birth, at least, I must have Sagarchandra as my husband."

The prince was surprised to hear his own name at this place. As he drew near her, he saw a lady with a loop round her neck ready to commit suicide. With a swift movement of his hand, the prince cut the loop at once.

The lady was surprised to see a human being in that situation. No less surprised was the prince himself to see a *Vidyadhara* standing in front of him. The *Vidyadhara* said,

“Sir, you have done me a lot of good by saving this lady’s life”

The prince felt inquisitive about the whole drama. The *Vidyadhara* started his account to enlighten the prince :

“Sir ! In this Amar Island, there is a city named Amarapur where reigns King Bhuvanabhanu His queen’s name is Chandravadana and that of the princess Kamalamala This young lady is the princess herself I am her maternal uncle Amitateja. On the basis of very high reports about a certain prince, Sagarchandra by name, this lady is mad after him. She is determined to marry this prince and none else If the situation proved otherwise, she would not even hesitate to court death On the other hand, a certain *Vidyadhara*, Surasena by name, is mad after this lady. It is he who picked her up and brought her here. As he was about to apply force on her, I came here by sheer chance and knocked him out ”

Meanwhile, Amitateja’s wife, Vidyullata, joined them, and she at once recognised the prince :

“Why ! This is surely Sagarchandra I know him It can’t be a mistake I saw him on my way to the Nandisvara Island ”

At the mention of the prince’s name, the lady regained a new life, so to say Right on the spot, the uncle performed the marriage of the princess with Sagarchandra.

The prince now proceeded to meet his father-in-law, King Bhuvanabhanu, at his own city. The king accorded him a ceremonial reception.

One night, as the prince lay in his bed chamber, some

invisible hand removed him, and in the morning, when the prince woke, he found himself on the top of a hill, all by himself, far away from Amarpur, he knew not where. It was indeed a cruel joke, but he remembered the couplet and was not particularly in distress. He now started getting acquainted with the new situation. Under an *asoka* tree, he saw a monk in *kayotsarga* posture, and felt enlightened and enriched from within. After the monk's meditation was over, the prince put the following question to him :

"Holy sir! How does a living being experience happiness?"

The monk made sure that the stranger was a right recipient and said,

"Religion is the surest road to happiness. What to speak of happiness, in the absence of religion, even wealth and desires do no fructify. And equanimity is the first step to religion."

Sagarchandra courted equanimity from that day. He had a few more queries for the monk, but before he could formulate them, the monk had disappeared, and he found himself encircled by a large band of soldiers. Their leader ordered :

"Hurry up. Kill this sinful man."

Sagarchandra was all alone and without any arm. He at once invoked the couplet and was all strength. At once, he jumped upon a soldier, snatched his sword and chased after the whole group. Many were killed and many fled for life. They could not stand for long before a determined fighter.

Seeing the situation going out of hand, the leader, a prince himself, Samarvijaya by name, took the field.

Now, this was a duel between equals which lasted for a long time none yielding the ground. So, to change the situation, Sagarchandra invoked his special skill, which his adversary could not comprehend, and soon he was a captive in Sagarchandra's hands. Sagarchandra, however, did no disrespect to a worthy adversary, but released him with his own hands.

But one point was not clear to Sagarchandra—it was the cause of Samarvijaya's animosity for which he hunted him.



Now, this was a duel between equals.

out in such a out-of-the-way place and challenged him with full force.

Just at that moment a lady appeared on the scene who threw light on the whole situation :

“King Kamalchandra of Kusalvardhana has a daughter named Bhuvanakanta. The princess has heard from some source eulogies about Sagarchandra, and she is decided to have him, and none else, as her husband, Now, at Sholapur, there is another king named Sudarsana and he has a son named Samarvijaya who stands yonder King Sudarsana sent a request to King Kamalchandra seeking the hands of Bhuvanakanta for his son but the request has been turned down So Samarvijaya marched on the city of Kusalvardhana. He even stole the princess, but she has escaped to this forest I am her nurse I have recognised you and my earnest request is that you accept her and be a source of great joy to all of us ”

Samarvijaya hang down his head in shame at this double defeat Sagarchandra accepted the princess, if not for anything else, to establish his superiority and victory on his adversary. The ritual was organised by the nurse

Now, Sagarchandra started to meet his new father-in-law. In the way, he heard music from some instruments Proceeding alone in the direction, he soon reached a mansion, at the seventh floor of which there were five damsels, who received him When Sagarchandra expressed inquisitiveness about the existence of five girls, all by themselves, in such a lonely forest, they gave the following account :

“We are, sir, Kamala, Shri, Rambha, Vimala and Tara, all daughters of a *Vidyadhara* king named Singhanada at the Vaitadhya hills Once an astrologer had made a forecast telling our father that a prince named Sagarchandra, the son of King Amitchandra would husband us, and that he would come of himself to this forest without our seeking So our father has built this mansion, and we are waiting here for the arrival of our man.

Sagarchandra remembered the couplet. Since destiny had allotted these girls to him, he accepted them

And what happened next ?

In the twinkling of an eye, everything disappeared, the girls and the mansion, and the prince stood all alone. He returned to the place where he had left Bhuvanakanta, but even she was not there. The whole thing appeared like a magic and the prince knew not what to make of it

It was now useless to waste his time there. So the prince sat down to rest and to concentrate on the couplet

The temple became the venue of two very happy meetings.

King Sudharma of Mangalpurī came there with his daughter to offer her to the prince as per a previous forecast. The king knew beforehand that he would meet the prince in the temple.

King Singhanada came with his five daughters. As the *Vidyadhara* king revealed, soon after their marriage with Sagarchandra, they were stolen by a prince name Utpala, son of a certain king named Amitateja, from whom they had been just rescued by the father. The *Vidyadhara* king further revealed that the prince's first wife, Bhuvanakanta, whom he had left in the forest, had been carried away by Kamal, who happened to be Utpal's brother, and that at that moment, she was on the Vaitadhya hills struggling to protect herself from the rogue.

Now, the prince's first duty was to rescue Bhuvanakanta. His father-in-law Singhanada equipped him with special powers that might be of help to the prince in the ensuing encounter. Bhuvanakanta was duly rescued, and in the company of all his wives, the prince returned to his city, to the great joy of his parents and his people.

One day, Kevalī Bhuvanananda came to the city. King Amitchandra and Prince Sagarchandra came to see him. After the sermon the king made the following submission to the Kevalī :

“Holy sire ! We do not know yet how and by whom my son was picked up and dropped into the sea, and why ?”

Throwing light on the past, the Kevalī said :

"Oh king ! It is a long story, In Mahavideha, there lived a merchant who had two sons, both being highly accomplished. One day, the elder brother went abroad on business. During his absence, the younger one told his sister-in-law in joke one day that his brother had been murdered by robbers. This was a great shock to the lady who died of a broken heart. At this unexpected incident, the younger brother became heartily sorry.

"When the elder brother returned and came to know of his brother's hand in the premature death of his wife, he became very angry with his brother, and no amount of regret by the latter was able to pacify him. The elder then joined the order of heretical monks, and at death, was born as an Asurakumara. The younger joined the Jaina holy order.

"The elder, now an Asurakumara, came to the younger one day to take revenge. He picked him up and dashed him against a rock, killing him on the spot. He earned a heavenly life, and is now born as your son, Prince Sagarchandra.

"The Asurakumara is still after his younger brother. It is he who picked up Sagarchandra and dropped him in the sea. He is not pacified yet and is likely to cause further troubles, but at no time now he will be able to overpower the prince."

This revelation of the past gave enlightenment to the royal couple and the prince, all three of whom were initiated into the holy order. Deeply impressed by the great power of the couplet in his possession that always stood by him at the most difficult moments of life, as a monk Sagarchandra now turned to the holy texts and soon mastered them. Later, he headed the order. Knowing his last moment not very far, Sagarchandra courted fast unto death and sat in deep meditation. At this moment, the Asurakumara caused him great affliction which he bore unconcerned. In this state, at a very supreme moment, he acquired the knowledge of the free, and entered into liberation, the most coveted state, wherefrom there is no gliding back and forth by the soul in the cycle of life and death.

GLOSSARY

Adinatha Risabha—The first *tirthankara* of the Jain order who was not only the first monarch on earth, but was first in all respects because of which he is called Adinatha or Lord of Genesis. He taught men arts and crafts, and gave them the first Canons and the Brahmi script

Acharya—Head of the holy order of the Jainas

Asana-pana-khadim-swadim—Four food items as follows :

- (i) cereals that constitute the principal meal ;
- (ii) all drinks ;
- (iii) fruits ; and
- (iv) betel, chewing spices taken after meal, jaggery, honey, etc.

Ahimsa—Non-injury, non-slaughter, by words, mind and deeds This is the first principal vow of Jain religion. In its broad connotation, it covers the remaining four vows of non-lie, non-sex, non-theft, non-possession.

Adattadana—See *Vratas*

Arihanta—Jina, literally, conqueror of inner enemies, like passion, hatred, greed, attachment, etc

Asrava—See *Navatattva*

Asurakumaras—A species of peripatetic celestial beings
See *Devas*

Avadhi-jnana—See *Jnana*

Bhante—A form of address inviting the attention of the *Acharya*, Sanskrit *bhadanta*, *bhavanta*, *bhayanta*, i.e., one who helps end transmigration, etc.

Bharanda bird—A giant-sized bird with two mouths and one belly Traders used to go to the Valley of Diamonds with their help These birds have been praised in the Jain literature for their extreme steadfastness

Brahma—A god of Hindu mythology linked with creation.

Byantara—See *Deva*.

Chaitra—Name of a month in the Indian calendar, extending roughly from the middle of March to the middle of April

Chaturdasi—Fourteenth day of the fortnight in the month. It is a very special day in the Jaina life for fasting and other penances

Deva—A celestial being. There are four broad categories of celestial beings as follows :

(1) Bhavanapatis (residential), (2) Byantaras (Peripatetic) (3) Jyotiskas (stellar bodies) and (4) Vaimanikas (heavenly bodies)

The following are the Bhavanapati *devas* :

Asurakumaras, Nagakumaras, Vidyutkumaras, Suparnakumaras, Agnikumaras, Vataakumaras, Stanitkumaras, Udadhikumaras, Dwipkumaras and Dikkumaras

The following are the Byantara *devas* :

Kinnaras, Kimpurisas, Moharagas, Gandharvas, Yaksas, Raksasas, Bhutas and Pisachas

Jyotiska *devas* include the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, etc,

Vaimanikas are of two types : Kalpotpannas and Kalpatitas. The former live in heavens just above the Jyotiska *devas* and the latter live farther beyond

Bhavanapatis and Byantaras live just above or below the earth.

Dharma—Law, religion. Technically, the Jainas have used the term to signify 'motion', as *adharma* signifies 'rest'.

Dharma-dhyana—Meditating on spiritual objects, like the words of the *tirthankaras*, images of the *tirthankaras*, etc. The Jainas have conceived four types of meditation, of which two are common to all worldly beings and two are followed by those who are on the spiritual path. They are :

(1) *Arta-dhyana* which is meditating on earthly objects for one's own happiness ;

- (2) *Raudra-dhyana* which is meditating on doing harm to another or others for one's own happiness ,
 - (3) *Dharma-dhyana* as above , and
 - (4) *Sukla-dhyana* which is meditating on one's own self.
- Dig-virati*—See *Dikparimana* under *Vratas*

Gandharva marriage—One of the eight forms of marriage in vogue in ancient India, in which, without the consent of their parents and the elders, a boy and a girl got married by a simple exchange of garlands

Jnana—Knowledge The Jainas have conceived five kinds of knowledge as follows :

- (1) *Matī* or ordinary cognition by the sense organs and the mind ;
- (2) *Sruta* or knowledge derived with the help of signs, symbols, or words (expressions) ,
- (3) *Avadhi* or direct knowledge of corporeal things without the help of the sense organs and the mind, but within some limit of space and time ,
- (4) *Manahparyaya* or direct knowledge of the thought of others without the help of the sense organs and the mind, but within some limit of space and time ;
- (5) *Kevala* or knowledge which completely reveals, without any limitation of space and time, the truth about all things in the universe, corporeal as well as non-corporeal, with all their attributes and modifications, past, present and future.

Kalpas—Heavens According to the Jainas, there are 12 or 16 *kalpas* as follows :

Saudharma & Aisana (paired)

Sanatkumara & Mahendra (paired)

Above them, in the centre, one above another, are :

Brahmaloka

Lantaka

Mahasukra

Sahasrara

And then, above them, in pairs again :

Anata & Pranata

Arana & Achyuta

The Digambaras add Brahmottara before Lantaka, Kapis-
tha and Sukra before Mahasukra, and Satara before Sahasrara
making a total of 16

Kalpa tree—It was a variety of flora, now wholly extinct,
which supplied everyday requirements of human beings,
subsistence in particular, before they devised various arts
and crafts.

Karma—It is a substantive force, matter in very subtle
form. These matter-particles called *pudgalas* fill all cosmic
space. The soul, by its communication with the outer world,
becomes literally penetrated with by these matter-particles.
These in turn become *karma*, and build up a special body
called *karman sarira*, which does not leave the soul till its
final liberation. *Karma* works in such a way that every
action leaves a mark of its own which is retained and built
in into the organism to serve as the basis of future action.

Kopalika—A sect of heretical monks in the Sakti cult
prevalent all over India at one time. The *kapalika* mode of
propitiation, is not very dominant now, though there are
many Saktas in India to this day. They usually believe in
animal slaughter.

Kayotsarga—A standing posture of meditation, peculiar
to the Jaina monks. Literally, it means giving up (attach-
ment to) the body.

Kesariya modaka—A sweet prepared from wheat flour,
sugar and clarified butter called *ghee* with sufficient addition
of saffron to impart colour and flavour.

Kevala jnana—See *Jnana*

Kinnara—See *Deva*

Muni—A Jaina monk, literally, one who keeps control
of the tongue, vow of non-speaking.

Muni Subrata—Twentieth *tirthankara* of the Jainas.

Nandana-vana—A forest, well-known for its beauty,
said to be located somewhere between Mount Meru and
Devakuru.

Narakas—Hells As per the Jaina view of cosmos, there are seven hells as follows :

- (1) Ratnaprabha
- (2) Sarkaraprabha
- (3) Valukaprabha
- (4) Pankaprabha
- (5) Dhumaprabha
- (6) Tamahprabha
- (7) Mahatamahprabha

Navakara, namokara, or simply namaskara—This is the core *mantra* of the Jainas, if it can be called by that name Translated into English, it's only an obeisance to the five agents of well-being, called *pancha-paramesthi*, as follows :

- obeisance to the *arihantas* (*Jinas*, victors)
- obeisance to the *siddhas* (liberated souls)
- obeisance to the *acharya* (spiritual head)
- obeisance to the *udadhyayas* (religious preceptors)
- obeisance to the *sadhus* (monks)
- in all the *lokas* (worlds)

Navatattva—Nine fundamental principles of Jainism A precise knowledge about these is essential for the liberation of the soul which is in bondage. These are :

- (1) *Jiva* (souls)
- (2) *Ajiva* (non-living substances) In this group are *dharma* (motion), *adharma* (rest), *akasa* (space), *kala* (time) and *pudgala* (matter-particles)
- (3) *Asrava* (influx of *karma* in the form of matter-particles which stick to the soul spaces and act as fetters)
- (4) *Bandha* (bondage)
- (5) *Punya* (virtue).
- (6) *Papa* (vice)
- (7) *Samvara* (arresting *karma* influx).
- (8) *Nirjara* (exhausting accumulated *karma*).
- (9) *Moksa* (liberation, which takes place when the soul is liberated, perfected and enlightened because of the total release from the clutches of matter-particles)

These nine can be reduced to two, *jiva* and *ajiva*, which are the very basic of basic principles. Others simply help to understand the process of *karma* bondage till liberation.

Pausadha—See *Vrata*

Pratikramana—A confession for lapses, omissions and commissions to himself. This is to be done daily, fortnightly and yearly.

Samayika—See *Vrata*

Sasan-devi—Attending deity of the *tirthankaras*. These have male counterparts too, called *Sasan deva*. They are also called *yaksa* and *yaksini*. Since the *tirthankaras* are free from attachment (*vitaraṅga*), they do not help their devotees. It is from the attending deity that the devotee receives help.

Saudharma loka—See *Kalpas*.

Siddhas—Liberated souls who reside in the top-most region of the spheres called *Siddhasila*.

Sravaka, sravika—Lay follower of the Jain order, male and female. They are required to observe 12 vows (see vows) in order to be so called. Mere birth in a Jain household does not entitle one to be called a *sravaka* or *sravika* unless he/she fulfils the 12 vows.

Sresthi—A merchant, literally, the best (among men). Merchants were so designated in India because of the valuable service they could render to the society by dint of their wealth holding.

Sulsa—A famous *sravika* of the time of Mahavira. She was the wife of a chariot driver named Naga who was related to King Prasenajit. At first, she had no son. Later 32 sons were born to her, all with the same life-span. They were in the service of King Srenika of Rajagriha. Lord Mahavira praised this lady for her devotion and steadfastness.

Svadyaya—To ruminate on the lessons received from the spiritual preceptor (*upadhyaya*).

Talaputa—A species of snake which is extremely venomous.

Tirthankara—Founder of the Jain order. *Tirtha* means order, which is four-fold, consisting of the monks, nuns,

lay-followers male as well as female In the present time-cycle, as conceived by the Jainas, there have in all been 24 *tirthankaras* headed by Adinatha Rishabha The last three, Aristanemi, a contemporary of Krishna of the line of Yadu, Parsva, a prince from Kasi, and Mahavira, the senior contemporary of Gautama Buddha, are historical persons.

Upadhyaya—Spiritual preceptor who teaches holy texts.

Vaikriya (*sarira*)—Fluid (body) Other four body forms are (1) *audarika* (gross), (2) *aharaka* (assimilative) (3) *taijasa* (caloric) and (4) *karman* (made of *karma* particles)

Vidyadhara—A species of human beings They were so called because they were in possession of certain *vidyas* e.g., flying through the sky, which were bestowed on them by the first *tirthankara* Rishabha

Vratas—Vows. Five Great Vows (*mahavratas*) are

- (1) *Ahimsa* (to kill not)
- (2) *Amrisa* (to tell not a lie)
- (3) *Achaurya* (to steal not)
- (4) *Amathuna* (to indulge not in sex behaviour)
- (5) *Aparigraha* (to have no attachment/possession)

These are to be followed in their most rigorous form, and without lapse, by the monks and nuns The same five, when prescribed for members of the lay order male as well as female become somewhat lenient, when they are called Lesser Vows (*anuvratas*) and then they take the following names :

- (1) *Pranatipata viramana* (to desist from killing)
- (2) *Mirsavada viramana* (to desist from telling a lie)
- (3) *Adattadana viramana* (to accept not when not rightly bestowed)
- (4) *Maithuna viramana* (to desist from sex behaviour)
- (5) *Parigraha parimana* (to fix the size of acquisition).

To illustrate, a householder is permitted to cook food even though this may mean some slaughter of minute animals. A householder is permitted to indulge in sex behaviour with his wife, but not with any other woman And so on This

is a restricted form of the vow for the layfollowers, consistent with the fulfilment of their responsibility as householders. But to atone for these relaxations, seven more vows have been added for the followers as follows :

- (1) *Bhogopabhoga parimana* or limiting objects to be used.
- (2) *Dik parimana* or limiting the sphere/direction of movement
- (3) *Anartha-danda viramana* or not to indulge in sinful acts not necessary for one's own or family maintenance
- (4) *Samayika* or concentrating for a duration of 48 minutes on spiritual themes, which may be repeated several times a day.
- (5) *Desavahasika* or setting new limits everyday within the limits already imposed, thereby restricting further and further one's free life.
- (6) *Pausadha* or living for a day like a monk, or even for a day and night, raising the restricted vow to the level of total vows
- (7) *Atithi-sambibhaga* or serving monks, nuns and other deserving guests

Of these seven, the first three are called *guna-vratas* because they intensify five *anuvratas*, and the last four are *siksavratas*, because they are preliminary disciplines for entering into the life of a monk

Apart from observing the five Great Vows, the monks are required to practise ten 'virtues', specifically mentioned, and practise elaborate meditation

Yaksa— A species of peripatetic celestial being residing on the uppermost strata of the Ratnaprabha hell, just bordering the earth

Yojana—About 8 English miles 2 miles make one *kosa*, and 4 *kosas* make one *yojana*

