

BOOK V: CHATURDĀRIKĀ

Chapter XXVI

29. *Story of the Golden City*

The next morning, while Śaktideva was dwelling in the monastery, in the island of Utsthala, Satyavrata, the king of the fishermen, came to him and said to him in accordance with the promise which he had made before: “Brāhman, I have thought of a device for accomplishing your wish. There is a fair isle in the middle of the sea named Ratnakūta, and in it there is a temple of the adorable Vishnu founded by the Ocean, and on the twelfth day of the white fortnight of Āshādha there is a festival there, with a procession, and people come there diligently from all the islands to offer worship. It is possible that someone there might know about the Golden City, so come let us go there, for that day is near.”

When Satyavrata made this proposal, Śaktideva consented gladly, and took with him the provisions for the journey furnished by Vishnudatta. Then he went on board the ship brought by Satyavrata and quickly set out with him on the ocean-path; and as he was going with Satyavrata on the home of marvels[1] in which the monsters resembled islands, he asked the king, who was steering the ship: “What is this enormous object which is seen in the sea far off in this direction, looking like a huge mountain equipped with wings rising at will out of the sea?” Then Satyavrata said: “Brāhman, this is a banyan-tree[2]; underneath it they say that there is a gigantic whirlpool, the mouth of the submarine fire. And we must take care in passing this way to avoid that spot, for those who once enter that whirlpool never return again.” While Satyavrata was thus speaking, the ship began to be carried in that very direction by the force of the wind.[3]

When Satyavrata saw this he again said to Śaktideva: “Brāhman, it is clear that the time of our destruction has now arrived, for see, this ship suddenly drifts[4] in that direction. And now I cannot anyhow prevent it, so we are certain to be cast into that deep whirlpool, as into the mouth of death, by the sea which draws us on as if it were mighty Fate, the result of our deeds. And it grieves me not for myself; for whose body is continuing? But it grieves me to think that your desire has not been accomplished in spite of all your toils, so while I keep back this ship for a moment quickly climb on to the boughs of this banyan-tree;

perhaps some expedient may present itself for saving the life of one of such noble form; for who can calculate the caprices of Fate or the waves of the sea?”

While the heroic Satyavrata was saying this the ship drew near the tree; at that moment Śaktideva made a leap in his terror^[5] and caught a broad branch of that marine banyan-tree,^[6] but Satyavrata’s body and ship, which he offered for another, were swept down into the whirlpool, and he entered the mouth of the submarine fire. But Śaktideva, though he had escaped to the bough of that tree, which filled the regions with its branches, was full of despair, and reflected: “I have not beheld that Golden City, and I am perishing in an uninhabited place; moreover, I have also brought about the death of that king of the fishermen. Or, rather, who can resist the awful Goddess of Destiny, that ever places her foot upon the heads of all men?”^[7] While the Brāhman youth was thus revolving thoughts suited to the occasion on the trunk of the tree the day came to an end. And in the evening he saw many enormous birds, of the nature of vultures, coming into that banyan-tree from all quarters, filling the sides of heaven with their cries, and the waves of the sea, that was lashed by the wind of their broad wings, appeared as if running to meet them out of affection produced by long acquaintance.

Then he, concealed by the dense leaves, overheard^[8] the conversation of those birds perched in the branches, which was carried on in human language. One described some distant island, another a mountain, another a distant region, as the place where he had gone to roam during the day, but an old bird among them said: “I went to-day to the Golden City to disport myself, and to-morrow morning I shall go there again to feed at my ease; for what is the use of my taking a long and fatiguing journey?”

The City of Gold at last
Śaktideva’s sorrow was removed by that speech of the bird’s, which resembled a sudden shower of nectar, and he thought to himself: “Bravo! that city does exist, and now I have an instrument for reaching it--this gigantic bird, given me as a means of conveyance.” Thinking thus, Śaktideva slowly advanced and hid himself among the backfeathers of that bird while it was asleep, and next morning, when the other birds went off in different directions, that vulture, exhibiting a strange partiality to the Brāhman like destiny,^[9] carrying Śaktideva on his back where he had climbed up, went immediately to the Golden City to feed again.^[10] Then the bird alighted in a garden, and Śaktideva got down from its back unobserved and left it, but while he was roaming about there he saw two women engaged in gathering flowers; he approached them slowly, who were astonished at his appearance, and he asked them: “What place is this, good ladies, and who are you?”, And they said to him: “Friend, this is a city called the Golden City, a seat of the Vidyādharas, and in it there dwells a Vidyādhari, named Chandraprabhā, and know that we are the gardeners in her garden, and we are gathering these flowers for her.” Then the Brāhman said: “Obtain for me an interview with your

mistress here.” When they heard this, they consented, and the two women conducted the young man to the palace in their city.

When he reached it, he saw that it was glittering with pillars of precious stones, and had walls of gold,[11] as it were the very rendezvous of prosperity. And all the attendants, when they saw him arrived there, went and told Chandraprabhā the marvellous tidings of the arrival of a mortal; then she gave a command to the warder, and immediately had the Brāhman brought into the palace and conducted into her presence. When he entered he beheld her there giving a feast to his eyes, like the creator’s ability to create marvels represented in bodily form. And she rose from her jewelled couch, while he was still far off, and honoured him with a welcome herself, overpowered by beholding him. And when he had taken a seat she asked him: “Auspicious sir, who are you that have come here in such guise, and how did you reach this land inaccessible to men?” When Chandraprabhā in her curiosity asked him this question, Śaktideva told her his country and his birth and his name, and he related to her how he had come in order to obtain the Princess Kanakarekhā as the reward of beholding the Golden City.

When Chandraprabhā heard that, she thought a little and heaved a deep sigh, and said to Śaktideva in private: “Listen, I am about to tell you something, fortunate sir. There is in this land a king of the Vidyādhara named Śaśikhanda, and we four daughters were born to him in due course; I am the eldest, Chandraprabhā, and the next is Chandrarekhā, and the third is Śaśirekhā, and the fourth Śaśiprabhā. We gradually grew up to womanhood in our father’s house, and once upon a time those three sisters of mine went together to the shore of the Ganges to bathe, while I was detained at home by illness; then they began to play in the water, and in the insolence of youth they sprinkled with water a hermit named Agryatapas while he was in the stream. That hermit in his wrath cursed those girls, who had carried their merriment too far,[12] saying: ‘You wicked maidens, be born all of you in the world of mortals.’ When our father heard that, he went and pacified the great hermit, and the hermit told how the curse of each of them severally should end, and appointed to each of them in her mortal condition the power of remembering her former existence, supplemented with divine insight. Then, they having left their bodies and gone to the world of men, my father bestowed on me this city, and in his grief went to the forest; but while I was dwelling here the goddess Durgā informed me in a dream that a mortal should become my husband. For this reason, though my father has recommended to me many Vidyādhara suitors, I have rejected them all and remained unmarried to this day. But now I am subdued by your wonderful arrival and by your handsome form, and I give myself to you; so I will go on the approaching fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight to the great mountain called Rishabha to entreat my father for your sake, for all the most excellent Vidyādhara assemble there from all quarters on that day to worship the god Śiva,

and my father comes there too, and after I have obtained his permission I will return here quickly; then marry me. Now rise up.”

Having said this, Chandraprabhā supplied Śaktideva with various kinds of luxuries suited to Vidyādhara, and while he remained there he was as much refreshed as one heated by a forest conflagration would be by bathing in a lake of nectar. And when the fourteenth day had arrived Chandraprabhā said to him: “To-day I go to entreat my father’s permission to marry you, and all my attendants will go with me. But you must not be grieved at being left alone for two days; moreover, while you remain alone in this palace, you must by no means ascend the middle terrace.”

When Chandraprabhā had said this to that young Brāhman she set out on her journey, leaving her heart with him, and escorted on her way by his. And Śaktideva, remaining there alone, wandered from one magnificent part of the palace to another to delight his mind; and then he felt a curiosity to know why that daughter of the Vidyādhara had forbidden him to ascend the roof of the palace, and so he ascended that middle terrace of the palace; for men are generally inclined to do that which is forbidden. And when he had ascended it he saw three concealed pavilions, and he entered one of them, the door of which was open; and when he had entered it he saw a certain woman lying on a magnificently jewelled sofa, on which there was a mattress placed, whose body was hidden by a sheet. But when he lifted up the sheet and looked he beheld lying dead in that guise that beautiful maiden, the daughter of King Paropakārin; and when he saw her there he thought: “What is this great wonder? Is she sleeping a sleep from which there is no awaking, or is it a complete delusion on my part? That woman, for whose sake I have travelled to this foreign land, is lying here without breath, though she is alive in my own country, and she still retains her beauty unimpaired, so I may be certain that this is all a magic show, which the creator for some reason or other exhibits to beguile me.”

Thinking thus, he proceeded to enter in succession those other two pavilions, and he beheld within them in the same way two other maidens. Then he went in his astonishment out of the palace, and sitting down he remained looking at a very beautiful lake below it, and on its bank he beheld a horse with a jewelled saddle; so he descended immediately from where he was, and out of curiosity approached its side; and seeing that it had no rider on it, he tried to mount it, and that horse struck him with its heel and flung him into the lake. And after he had sunk beneath the surface of the lake he quickly rose up to his astonishment from the middle of a garden lake in his own city of Vardhamāna; and he saw himself suddenly standing in the water of a lake in his own native city, like the *kamuda* plants, miserable without the light of the moons.[13] He reflected: “How different is this city of Vardhamāna from that city of the Vidyādhara! Alas! what is this great display of marvellous delusion? Alas! I, ill-fated wretch, am wonderfully deceived by some strange power; or rather, who on this earth knows

what is the nature of destiny?" Thus reflecting, Śaktideva rose from the midst of the lake, and went in a state of wonder to his own father's house. There he made a false representation, giving as an excuse for his absence that he had been himself going about with a drum, and being gladly welcomed by his father he remained with his delighted relations; and on the second day he went outside his house, and heard again those words being proclaimed in the city by beat of drum: "Let whoever, being a Brāhman or a Kshatriya, has really seen the Golden City say so: the king will give him his daughter and make him crown prince."

Then Śaktideva hearing that, having successfully accomplished the task, again went and said to those who were proclaiming this by beat of drum: "I have seen that city." And they took him before that king, and the king, recognising him, supposed that he was again saying what was untrue, as he had done before. But he said: "If I say what is false, and if I have not really seen that city, I desire now to be punished with death; let the princess herself examine me." When he said this the king went and had his daughter summoned by his servants. She, when she saw that Brāhman, whom she had seen before, again said to the king: "My father, he will tell us some falsehood again." Then Śaktideva said to her: "Princess, whether I speak truly or falsely, be pleased to explain this point which excites my curiosity. How is it that I saw you lying dead on a sofa in the Golden City and yet see you here alive?"

When the Princess Kanakarekhā had been asked this question by Śaktideva, and furnished with this token of his truth, she said in the presence of her father: "It is true that this great-hearted one has seen that city, and in a short time he will be my husband, when I return to dwell there. And there he will marry my other three sisters; and he will govern as king the Vidyādhara in that city. But I must to-day enter my own body and that city, for I have been born here in your house owing to the curse of a hermit, who moreover appointed that my curse should end in the following way: 'When you shall be wearing a human form, and a man, having beheld your body in the Golden City, shall reveal the truth, then you shall be freed from your curse, and that man shall become your husband.' And though I am in a human body I remember my origin, and I possess supernatural knowledge, so I will now depart to my own Vidyādhara home, to a happy fortune." Saving this, the princess left her body, and vanished, and a confused cry arose in the palace.

And Śaktideva, who had now lost both the maidens, thinking over the two beloved ones whom he had gained by various difficult toils, and who yet were not gained, and not only grieved but blaming himself, with his desire not accomplished, left the king's palace and in a moment went through the following train of thought:--"Kanakarekhā said that I should attain my desire; so why do I despond, for success depends upon courage? I will again go to the Golden City by the same path, and destiny will without doubt again provide me with a means of getting there."

Thus reflecting, Śaktideva set out from that city; for resolute men who have once undertaken a project do not turn back without accomplishing their object. And journeying on, he again reached after a long time that city named *Śaktideva sets out again* Vitankapura, situated on the shore of the sea. And there he saw the merchant coming to meet him, with whom he originally went to sea, and whose ship was wrecked there. He thought: “Can this be Samudradatta, and how can he have escaped after falling into the sea? But how can it be otherwise? I myself am a strange illustration of its possibility.” While he approached the merchant thinking thus, the merchant recognised him, and embraced him in his delight; and he took him to his own house and after entertaining him asked him: “When the ship foundered, how did you escape from the sea?”

Śaktideva then told him his whole history, how, after being swallowed by a fish, he first reached the island of Utsthala; and then he asked the good merchant in his turn: “Tell me also how you escaped from the sea.” Then the merchant said: “After I fell into the sea that time, I remained floating for three days supported on a plank. Then a ship suddenly came that way, and I, crying out, was descried by those in her, and taken on board her. And when I got on board I saw my own father, who had gone to a distant island long before, and was now returning after a long absence. My father, when he saw me, recognised me, and embracing me asked my story with tears, and I told it him as follows:— ‘My father, you had been away for a long time and had not returned, and so I set about trading myself, thinking it was my proper employment; then on my way to a distant island my ship was wrecked, and I was plunged in the sea, and you have found me and rescued me.’ When I had said this to him, my father asked me reproachfully: ‘Why do you run such risks? For I possess wealth, my son, and I am engaged in acquiring it; see, I have brought you back this ship full of gold.’ Thus spoke my father to me, and comforting me, took me home in that very ship to my own dwelling in Vitankapura.”

When Śaktideva had heard this account from the merchant, and had rested that night, he said to him on the next day: “Great merchant, I must once more go to the island of Utsthala, so tell me how I can get there now.” The merchant said to him, “Some agents of mine are preparing to go there to-day, so go on board the ship, and set out with them.” Thereupon the Brāhman set out with the merchant’s agents to go to that island of Utsthala, and by chance the sons of the king of the fishermen saw him there, and when they were near him they recognised him, and said: “Brāhman, you went with our father to search here and there[14] for the Golden City, and how is it that you have come back here to-day alone?” Then Śaktideva said: “Your father, when out at sea, fell into the mouth of the submarine fire, his ship having been dragged down by the current.” When those sons of the fisher-king heard that, they were angry, and said to their servants: “Bind this wicked man, for he has murdered our father. Otherwise how

could it have happened that, when two men were in the same ship, one should have fallen into the mouth of the submarine fire and the other escaped it? So we must to-morrow morning sacrifice our father's murderer in front of the goddess Durgā, treating him as a victim." *And has strange Adventures* Having said this to their servants, those sons of the fisher-king bound Śaktideva, and took him off to the awful temple of Durgā, the belly of which was enlarged, as if it continually swallowed many lives, and which was like the mouth of Death devouring *tamāla* with projecting teeth.[15]

There Śaktideva remained bound during the night, in fear of his life, and he thus prayed to the goddess Durgā: "Adorable one, granter of boons, thou didst deliver the world with thy form, which was like the orb of the rising sun, appearing as if it had drunk its fill of the blood gushing freely from the throat of the giant Ruru[16]; therefore deliver me, thy constant votary, who have come a long distance out of desire to obtain my beloved, but am now fallen without cause into the power of my enemies." Thus he prayed to the goddess, and with difficulty went off to sleep; and in the night he saw a woman come out of the inner cell of the temple; that woman of heavenly beauty came up to him, and said in a compassionate manner: "Do not fear, Śaktideva, no harm shall happen to you. The sons of that fisher-king have a sister named Vindumatī; that maiden shall see you in the morning, and claim you for a husband, and you must agree to that; she will bring about your deliverance: and she is not of the fisher caste: for she is a celestial female degraded in consequence of a curse." When he heard this he woke up, and in the morning that fisher-maiden came to the temple, a shower of nectar to his eyes. And announcing herself, she came up to him and said in her eagerness: "I will have you released from this prison, therefore do what I desire. For I have refused all these suitors approved of by my brothers, but the moment I saw you, love arose in my soul; therefore marry me." When Vindumatī, the daughter of the fisher-king, said this to him, Śaktideva, remembering his dream, accepted her proposal gladly; she procured his release, and he married that fair one, whose wish was gratified by her brothers receiving the command to do so from Durgā in a dream. And he lived there with that heavenly creature that had assumed a human form, obtained solely by his merits in a former life, as if with happy success.

And one day, as he was standing upon the roof of his palace, he saw a Chandala coming along with a load of cow's flesh and he said to his beloved: "Look, slender one! how can this evil-doer eat the flesh of cows, those animals that are the object of veneration[17] to the three worlds?" Then Vindumatī, hearing that, said to her husband: "The wickedness of this act is inconceivable; what can we say in palliation of it? I have been born in this race of fishermen for a very small offence owing to the might of cows, but what can atone for this man's sin?" When she said this, Śaktideva said to her: "That is wonderful. Tell me, my beloved, who are you, and how came you to be born in a family of fishermen?"

When he asked this with much importunity, she said to him: “I will tell you, though it is a secret, if you promise to do what I ask you.” He affirmed with an oath: “Yes, I will do what you ask me.”

She then told him first what she desired him to do: “In this island you will soon marry another wife, and she, my husband, will soon become pregnant, and in the eighth month of her pregnancy you must cut her open and take out the child,^[18] and you must feel no compunction about it.” Thus she said, and he was astonished, exclaiming: “What can this mean?” And he was full of horror; but that daughter of the fisher-king went on to say: “This request of mine you must perform for a certain reason. Now hear who I am and how I came to be born in a family of fishermen. Long ago in a former birth I was a certain Vidyādhari, and now I have fallen into the world of men in consequence of a curse. For when I was a Vidyādhari I bit asunder some strings with my teeth and fastened them to lyres, and it is owing to that that I have been born here in the house of a fisherman. So, if such a degradation is brought about by touching the mouth with the dry sinew of a cow, much more terrible must be the results of eating cow’s flesh!” While she was saying this, one of her brothers rushed in in a state of perturbation and said to Śaktideva: “Rise up! an enormous boar has appeared from somewhere or other, and after slaying innumerable persons is coming this way in its pride, towards us.” When Śaktideva heard that, he descended from his palace, and mounting a horse, spear in hand,^[19] he galloped to meet the boar, and struck it the moment he saw it; but when the hero attacked him the boar fled, and managed, though wounded, to enter a cavern; and Śaktideva entered there in pursuit of him, and immediately beheld a great garden shrubbery with a house. And when he was there he beheld a maiden of very wonderful beauty, coming in a state of agitation to meet him, as if it were the goddess of the wood advancing to receive him out of love.

And he asked her: “Auspicious lady, who are you, and why are you perturbed?” Hearing that, the lovely one thus answered him: “There is a king of the name of Chandavikrama, lord of the southern region. I am his daughter, auspicious sir, a maiden named Vindurekhā. But a wicked Daitya, with flaming eyes, carried me off by treachery from my father’s house to-day and brought me here. And he, desiring flesh, assumed the form of a boar, and sallied out; but while he was still hungry he was pierced with a spear to-day by some hero; and as soon as he was pierced he came in here and died. And I rushed out and escaped without being outraged by him.” Then Śaktideva said to her: “Then why all this perturbation? For I slew that boar with a spear, princess.” Then she said,

He marries Vindurekhā “Tell me who you are,” and he answered her, “I am a Brāhman named Śaktideva.” Then she said to him, “You must accordingly become my husband,” and the hero consenting went out of the cavern with her. And when he arrived at home he told it to his wife Vindumatī, and with her consent he married that Princess Vindurekhā. So, while Śaktideva

was living there with his two wives, one of his wives, Vindurekhā, became pregnant; and in the eighth month of her pregnancy, the first wife Vindumatī came up to him of her own accord and said to him: “Hero, remember what you promised me; this is the eighth month of the pregnancy of your second wife; so go and cut her open and bring the child here, for you cannot act contrary to your word of honour.” When she said this to Śaktideva, he was bewildered by affection and compassion; but being bound by his promise he remained for a short time unable to give an answer; at last he departed in a state of agitation and went to Vindurekhā; and she seeing him come with troubled air said to him: “Husband, why are you despondent to-day? Surely I know: you have been commissioned by Vindumatī to take out the child with which I am pregnant; and that you must certainly do, for there is a certain object in view, and there is no cruelty in it, so do not feel compassion; in proof of it hear the following story of Devadatta:

29D. *Devadatta the Gambler*

Long ago there lived in the city of Kambuka a Brāhman named Haridatta; and the son of that auspicious man, who was named Devadatta, though he studied in his boyhood, was, as a young man, exclusively addicted to the vice of gaming. As he had lost his clothes and everything by gambling,^[20] he was not able to return to his father’s house, so he entered once on a time an empty temple. And there he saw alone a great ascetic, named Jālapāda, who had attained many objects by magic, and he was muttering spells in a corner. So he went up to him slowly and bowed before him, and the ascetic, abandoning his habit of not speaking to anyone, greeted him with a welcome; and after he had remained there a moment, the ascetic, seeing his trouble, asked him the cause, and he told him of his affliction produced by the loss of his wealth, which had been dissipated in gambling. Then the ascetic said to Devadatta: “My child, there is not wealth enough in the whole world to satisfy gamblers; but if you desire to escape from your calamity, do what I tell you, for I have made preparations to attain the rank of a Vidyādhara; so help me to accomplish this, O man of fortunate destiny,^[21] you have only to obey my orders and then your calamities will be at an end.” When the ascetic said this to him, Devadatta promised to obey him, and immediately took up his residence with him.

And the next day the ascetic went into a corner of the cemetery and performed worship by night under a banyan-tree, and offered rice boiled in milk, and flung portions of the oblation towards the four cardinal points, after worshipping them, and said to the Brāhman, who was in attendance on him: “You must worship here in this style every day, and say: ‘Vidyutprabhā, accept this worship.’ And then I am certain that we shall both attain our ends.” Having said this, the ascetic went with him to his own house. Then Devadatta, consenting, went every day and duly performed worship at the foot of that tree, according to

his instructions. And one day, at the end of his worship, the tree suddenly clave open, and a heavenly nymph came out of it before his eyes, and said: “My good sir, my mistress summons you to come to her.” And then she introduced him into the middle of that tree. When he entered it he beheld a heavenly palace made of jewels, and a beautiful lady within it reclining upon a sofa. And he immediately thought: “This may be the success of our enterprise incarnate in bodily form”; but while he was thinking thus that beautiful lady, receiving him graciously, rose with limbs on which the ornaments rang as if to welcome him, and seated him on her own sofa. And she said to him: “Illustrious sir, I am the maiden daughter of a king of the Yakshas, named Ratnavarsha, and I am known by the name of Vidyutprabhā; and this great ascetic Jālapāda was endeavouring to gain my favour; to him I will give the attainment of his ends, but you are the lord of my life. So, as you see my affection, marry me.” When she said this, Devadatta consented, and did so. And he remained there some time, but when she became pregnant he went to the great ascetic with the intention of returning, and in a state of terror he told him all that had happened, and the ascetic, desiring his own success, said to him: “My good sir, you have acted quite rightly, but go and cut open that Yakshī and, taking out the embryo, bring it quickly here.” The ascetic said this to him, and then reminded him of his previous promise; and being dismissed by him, the Brāhman returned to his beloved, and while he stood there despondent with reflecting on what he had to do the Yakshī Vidyutprabhā of her own accord said to him: “My husband, why are you cast down? I know Jālapāda has ordered you to cut me open, so cut me open and take out this child, and if you refuse I will do it myself, for there is an object in it.” Though she said this to him, the Brāhman could not bring himself to do it; then she cut herself open and took out the child and flung it down before him, and said: “Take this, which will enable him who consumes it to obtain the rank of a Vidyādhara. But I, though properly a Vidyādhari, have been born as a Yakshī owing to a curse, and this is the appointed end of my curse, strange as it is, for I remember my former existence. Now I depart to my proper home, but we two shall meet again in that place.” Saying this, Vidyutprabhā vanished from his eyes. And Devadatta took the child with sorrowful mind and went to that ascetic Jālapāda and gave it to him, as that which would ensure the success of his incantations; for good men do not even in calamity give way to selfishness.

The great ascetic divided the child’s flesh, and sent Devadatta to the wood to worship Durgā in her terrific form. And when the Brāhman came back after presenting an oblation, he saw that the ascetic had made away with all the flesh. And while he said, “What! have you consumed it all?” the treacherous Jālapāda, having become a Vidyādhara, ascended to heaven. When he had flown up, with sword blue as the sky, adorned with necklace and bracelet, Devadatta reflected: “Alas, how I have been deceived by this evil-minded one! Or, rather, on whom does not excessive compliance^[22] entail misfortune? So how can I revenge myself

on him for this ill turn, and how can I reach him who has become a Vidyādhara? Well! I have no other resource in this matter except propitiating a Vetāla.” After he had made up his mind to do this, he went at night to the cemetery. There he summoned at the foot of a tree a Vetāla into the body of a man, and after worshipping him he made an oblation of human flesh to him. And as that Vetāla was not satisfied, and would not wait for him to bring more, he prepared to cut off his own flesh to gratify him. And immediately that Vetāla said to that brave man: “I am pleased with this courage of yours; do not act recklessly. So, my good sir, what desire have you for me to accomplish for you?” When the Vetāla said this the hero answered him: “Take me to the dwelling-place of the Vidyādharas, where is the ascetic Jālapāda, who deceives those that repose confidence in him, in order that I may punish him.” The Vetāla consented, and placing him on his shoulder, carried him through the air in a moment to the dwelling of the Vidyādharas. And there he saw Jālapāda in a palace, seated on a jewelled throne, elated at being a king among the Vidyādharas, endeavouring by various speeches to induce that Vidyutprabhā,[\[23\]](#) who had obtained the rank of a Vidyādhari, to marry him in spite of her reluctance. And the moment that the young man saw this he attacked him, with the help of the Vetāla, being to the eyes of the delighted Vidyutprabhā what the moon, the repository of nectar, is to the partridges.[\[24\]](#) And Jālapāda beholding him suddenly arrived in this way, dropped his sword in his fright, and fell from his throne on the floor. But Devadatta, though he had obtained his sword, did not slay him; for the great-hearted feel pity even for their enemies when they are terrified.

And when the Vetāla wanted to kill him, he dissuaded him, and said: “Of what use will it be to us to kill this miserable heretic? So take him and place him in his own house on earth; it is better that this wicked, skull-bearing ascetic should remain there.” At the very moment that Devadatta was saying this the goddess Durgā descended from heaven and appeared to him, and said to him who bent before her: “My son, I am satisfied with thee now, on account of this incomparable courage of thine, so I give thee on the spot the rank of King of the Vidyādharas.” Having said this, she bestowed the magic sciences[\[25\]](#) on him and immediately disappeared. And the Vetāla immediately took Jālapāda, whose splendour fell from him, and placed him on earth (wickedness does not long ensure success); and Devadatta, accompanied by Vidyutprabhā, having obtained that sovereignty of the Vidyādharas, flourished in his kingdom.

29. *Story of the Golden City*

Having told this story to her husband Śaktideva, the softly speaking Vindurekhā again said to him with eagerness: “Such necessities do arise, so cut out this child of mine as Vindumatī told you, without remorse.” When Vindurekhā said this, Śaktideva was afraid of doing wrong, but a voice sounded from heaven at this

juncture: “O Śaktideva, take out this child without fear, and seize it by the neck with your hand, then it will turn into a sword.” Having heard this divine voice, he cut her open, and quickly taking out the child he seized it by the throat with his hand; and no sooner did he seize it than it became a sword in his hand; like the long hair of Good Fortune seized by him with an abiding grasp.[26]

Then that Brāhman quickly became a Vidyādhara, and Vindurekhā that moment disappeared.[27] And when he saw that, he went, as he was, to his second wife Vindumatī and told her the whole story. She said to him: “My lord, we are three sisters, the daughters of a king of the Vidyādharas, who have been banished from Kanakapurī in consequence of a curse. The first was Kanakarekhā, the termination of whose curse you beheld in the city of Vardhamāna; and she has gone to that city of hers, her proper home. For such was the strange end of her curse, according to the dispensation of Fate, and I am the third sister, and now my curse is at an end. And this very day I must go to that city of mine, my beloved, for there our Vidyādhara bodies remain. And my elder sister, Chandraprabhā, is dwelling there; so you also must come there quickly by virtue of the magic power of your sword. And you shall rule in that city, after obtaining all four of us as wives, bestowed upon you by our father, who has retired to the forest, and others in addition to us.”

Thus Vindumatī declared the truth about herself, and Śaktideva, consenting, went again to the City of Gold, this time through the air, together with that Vindumatī. And when he arrived he again saw those three darlings of his bending before him, Kanakarekhā and the others, after entering with their souls, as was fitting, those heavenly female bodies, which he saw on a former occasion extended lifeless on the couches in those three pavilions. And he saw that fourth sister there, Chandraprabhā, who had performed auspicious ceremonies, and was drinking in his form with an eye rendered eager by seeing him after so long an absence.

His arrival was joyfully hailed by the servants, who were occupied in their several duties, as well as by the ladies, and when he entered the private apartments that Chandraprabhā said to him: “Noble sir, here is that Princess Kanakarekhā, who was seen by you in the city of Vardhamāna, my sister called Chandrarekhā. And here is that daughter of the fisher-king, Vindumatī, whom you first married in the island of Utsthala, my sister Śāsirekhā. And here is my youngest sister Śāsiprabhā, the princess, who after that was brought there by the Dānava and then became your wife. So now come, successful hero, with us into the presence of our father, and quickly marry us all, when bestowed upon you by him.”

When Chandraprabhā had swiftly and boldly uttered this decree of Kāma, Śaktideva went with those four to the recesses of the wood to meet their father; and their father, the King of the Vidyādharas, having been informed of the facts

by all his daughters, who bowed at his feet, and also moved by a divine voice, with delighted soul gave them all at once to Śaktideva. Immediately after that he bestowed on Śaktideva his opulent realm in the City of Gold, and all his magic sciences; and he gave the successful hero his name,[28] by which he was henceforth known among his Vidyādharas. And he said to him: “No one else shall conquer thee, but from the mighty lord of Vatsa there shall spring a universal emperor, who shall reign among you here under the title of Naravāhanadatta and be thy superior; to him alone wilt thou have to submit.” With these words the mighty lord of the Vidyādharas, named Śaśikhandapada, dismissed his son-in-law from the wood where he was practising asceticism, after entertaining him kindly, that he might go with his wives to his own capital. Then that Śaktivega, having become a king, entered the City of Gold, that glory of the Vidyādhara world, proceeding thither with his wives. Living in that city, the palaces of which gleamed with fabric of gold, which seemed on account of its great height to be the condensed rays of the sun falling in brightness, he enjoyed exceeding happiness with those fair-eyed wives, in charming gardens, the lakes of which had steps made out of jewels.

[M] Having thus related his wonderful history, the eloquent Śaktivega went on to say to the King of Vatsa: “Know me, O lord of Vatsa, ornament of the lunar race, to be that very Śaktideva come here, full of desire to behold the two feet of your son who is just born and is destined to be our new emperor. Thus I have obtained, though originally a man, the rank of sovereign among the Vidyādharas by the favour of Śiva: and now, O King, I return to my own home. I have seen our future lord; may you enjoy unending felicity.”

After finishing his tale, Śaktivega said this with clasped hands, and receiving permission to depart, immediately flew up into the sky like the moon in brightness; and then the King of Vatsa, in the company of his wives, surrounded by his ministers, and with his young son, enjoyed, in his own capital, a state of indescribable felicity.

[Previous](#) 



[Ocean Home](#)

 [Next](#)



[Home](#)

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END.

ENDNOTES

[1] *I.e.* the Ocean. <[back](#)>

[2] *Cf.* the ἐρινεδ μέγας τεθηώς in the *Odyssey*, [Book XII, 103](#). <[back](#)>

[3] The metre of this line is incorrect. There is a superfluous syllable. Perhaps we ought to read *ambuvegatah*, “by the current.”--The D. text shows Tawney’s guess was quite correct.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[4] I think we ought to read *adhah*, “downwards.” <[back](#)>

[5] Brockhaus does injustice to Śaktideva, who was no coward in the greatest dangers. The D. text reads *visādhvasah*, “fearless,” instead of ‘*tha sādvasāt*.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[6] *Cf.* *Odyssey*, [xii, 432](#):

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ ποτὶ μακρὸν ἐρινεδὺ ὕψοσ’ ἀερθεῖς
ἠφ προσφύς ἐχόμεν ὡς νυκτερίς.

— Similarly Sindbad saves himself by bestriding a tub which carried him under the lee of a lofty island, with trees overhanging the tide. Thereupon (*Nights*, Burton, [vol. vi, p. 7](#)) “I caught hold of a branch and by its aid clambered up on to the land, after coming nigh unto death.”— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[7] ἀλλ’ ἄρα ἦγε κατ’ ἀνδρῶν κράατα βαίνει, *Iliad*, [xix, v. 93](#). <[back](#)>

[8] Here we have another example of the “overhearing” *motif*. See [Chapter 5, note 4](#), (page 46) and the note on p. 252 ([Chapter 20, note 23](#)) of this volume. As stated in this latter reference, I shall give further variants in a note in Vol. III, [Chapter XXIX](#).— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[9] *Pakshapāta* also means “flapping of wings.” So there is probably a pun here. <[back](#)>

[10] So in the Swedish tale, “The Beautiful Palace East of the Sun and North of the Earth,” the phoenix carries the youth on his back to the palace. *Cf.* the halcyon in Lucian’s *Vera Historia*, Book II, 40 (see Fowler’s translation, Oxford, 1905, [vol. ii, p. 169](#)), whose nest is seven miles in circumference, and whose egg

is probably the prototype of that in the *Arabian Nights*. Cf. also the Glücksvogel in Prym and Socin, *Syrische Märchen*, p. 269, and the eagle which carries Chaucer in [The House of Fame](#).

In the *Kathākoṣa* (Tawney, pp. [29](#), [30](#)) the hero Nāgadatta climbs up a banyan-tree and sounds gongs in order to scare away enormous *bhārunda* birds, who, by the wind produced by the flapping of their wings, cause a stranded ship to continue on its course. In the same collection of Jain stories (pp. [164](#), [165](#)) Lalitānga, having overheard a valuable secret from the conversation of two birds, crawled in among the feathers of one of the birds and lay there. “At the hour of dawn they all went to the city of Champā. Lalitānga crept out of the bird’s feathers, and entered the city.”

Our old friend Sindbad makes similar use of the *rukḥ* when stranded on a desert island. The great bird suddenly alighted on a great white dome, its egg, “and brooded over it with its wings covering it and its legs stretched out behind it on the ground, and in this posture it fell asleep, glory be to Him who sleepeth not! When I saw this, I arose and, unwinding my turband from my head, doubled it and twisted it into a rope, with which I girt my middle and bound my waist fast to the legs of the *rukḥ*, saying in myself: ‘Peradventure, this bird may carry me to a land of cities and inhabitants, and that will be better than abiding in this desert island’” (*Nights*, Burton, [vol. vi, p. 17](#)). I have already given ([Annex 5](#)) full references to the Garuda bird, *rukḥ*, etc.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[11] We should read *sauvarnabhitti*. <[back](#)>

[12] It looks as if Tawney guessed at the more correct *atinirbandhinīḥ* of the D. text, which means “over-insisting,” “with excessive insistence”; the *atinirvartinīḥ* of Brockhaus would mean “feeling satisfaction,” “coming into being,” or “coming to completion,” all of which are quite inappropriate here.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[13] Or Chandraprabhā, whose name means “light of the moon.” The forbidden chamber will at once remind the reader of Perrault’s *La Barbe Bleue*. The lake incident is exactly similar to one in [Chapter LXXXI](#) of this work and to that of Kandarpaketu in the *Hitopadeśa*. In Wirt Sikes’ *British Goblins*, [p. 84](#), a draught from a forbidden well has the same effect. See Ralston’s *Russian Folk-Tales*, [p. 99](#). He refers to this story and gives many European equivalents. See also Veckenstedt’s *Wendische Sagen*, [p. 214](#). Many parallels will be found in the notes to Grimm’s *Märchen*, Nos. 3 and 46, to which Ralston refers in his exhaustive note.

The “forbidden chamber” *motif* has already been ably discussed by Sidney Hartland (“[The Forbidden Chamber](#),” *Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. iii, 1885, pp. 193-242), so that there is no need to go into any great detail here. One of the closest accounts to that in our text occurs in the third Kalandar’s tale (*Nights*, Burton,

[vol. I, p. 160](#)). In this story Ajīb, son of Khazīb, is entrusted with the keys of a palace containing forty chambers all of which he can open except one, and he is warned that if he does, he and his beloved will be separated for ever. However, as usual, curiosity overcomes him, and as soon as he opens the door a wonderful perfume meets his nose which immediately sends him into a faint. After a time he recovers and inspects the room, which is lit with lamps of gold diffusing a scent of musk and ambergris. “Presently,” he says when relating the story, “I espied a noble steed, black as the murks of night when murkiest, standing, ready saddled and bridled (and his saddle was of red gold) before two mangers, one of clear crystal wherein was husked sesame, and the other also of crystal containing water of the rose scented with musk. When I saw this I marvelled and said to myself, ‘Doubtless in this animal must be some wondrous mystery’; and Satan cozened me, so I led him without the palace and mounted him; but he would not stir from his place. So I hammered his sides with my heels, but he moved not, and then I took the rein-whip and struck him withal. When he felt the blow, he neighed a neigh with a sound like deafening thunder, and opening a pair of wings flew up with me in the firmament of heaven far beyond the eyesight of man. After a full hour of flight he descended and alighted on a terrace roof and shaking me off his back lashed me on the face with his tail and gouged out my left eye, causing it roll along my cheek. Then he flew away.” He then goes down from the terrace and finds himself among the ten one-eyed youths who had met with similar adventures themselves, and through whom Ajīb had originally started on his adventure.

Reference should be made to W. Kirby (who wrote some of the analogues in Burton’s edition of the *Nights*, vol. x, [appendix 2](#), and Supp., vol. vi, [appendix 3](#), [appendix 4](#)), “[The Forbidden Doors of the Thousand and one Nights](#),” *Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. v, pp. 112-124; Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions*, [vol. I, pp. 198-205](#); ditto, *The Book of Sindibād*, pp. [173](#), [174](#), [308](#), [309](#); J. A. Macculloch, *Childhood of Fiction*, [pp. 306-324](#); and V. Chauvin, *op. cit.*, v, [p. 203](#). The whole subject has recently been discussed by P. Saintyves, *Les Contes de Perrault*, 1923, pp. 359-396, which contains a full bibliography. For the identification of Bluebeard with Gil de Rais and Comorre the Cursed see E. A. Vizetelly, [Bluebeard](#), 1902, and *cf.* A. France, [Les Sept Femmes de Barbe Bleu](#), 1909.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[14] Brockhaus’ *tatah* disturbs the sense. The D. text renders the passage *cinwann itas tadā*, “at that time you went ...”— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[15] Following the D. text, Speyer (*op. cit.*, [p. 105](#)) would translate, “whose rows of teeth are adorned with bells.”— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[16] The Dānavas are a class of demons or giants. Ruru was a Dānava slain by Durgā.— See [Appendix I](#).— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[17] For details of the cow-worship of the Hindus see the note at the [end of this chapter](#).— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[18] Once again this extraordinary act is not merely the product of the story-teller's fertile imagination, but is founded on fact. Risley (*Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, vol. I, p. 94) states that among the Bhandāris of Bengal, when a pregnant woman dies before delivery, her body is cut open and the child taken out, both corpses being buried in the same grave. J. S. Campbell (*Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom*, Bombay, 1885) tells us that in Bombay, when a woman dies in pregnancy, her corpse, after being bathed and decked with flowers and ornaments, is carried to the burning-ground. There her husband sprinkles water on her body from the points of a wisp of the sacred *darbha* grass and repeats holy verses. Then he cuts her right side with a sharp weapon and takes out the child. Should it be alive, it is taken home and cared for; should it be dead, it is then and there buried. The hole in the side of the corpse is filled with curds and butter, covered with cotton threads, and then the usual rite of cremation is carried out.

For further details on foeticide and abortion reference should be made to Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, [vol. vi, pp. 605-612](#); Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (2nd edition, 1912), [ch. xvii](#); and A. E. Crawley, "Foeticide," *Hastings' Ency. Rel. Eth.*, vol. vi, pp. 54-57, all of which contain full bibliographical references.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[19] In *śl.* 172B I conjecture *śaktihasto* for Śaktidevo, as we read in *śl.* 181B that the boar was wounded with a *śakti*. <[back](#)>

[20] The Indian has been an inveterate gambler from the earliest times. In a famous hymn of the *Rig-Veda* ([x, 34](#)) a gambler tells of the fatal fascination the dice have had for him, and the consequent ruin and slavery, which was one of the final conditions of the debtor. Details of the play referred to are not described, but scattered allusions seem to show that four, and sometimes five dice were used, and the aim of the gambler was to throw a number which should be a multiple of four (see Lüders, *Das Würfelspiel im alten Indien*; Calvand, *Zeit. d. deutsch. morg. Ges.*, vol. 1xii, p. 123 *et seq.*; and Keith, *Journ. Roy. As. Soc.*, 1908, p. 823 *et seq.*).

Cheating at play appears in the *Rig-Veda* as one of the most frequent of crimes, and the word for "gamester," *kitava* came to mean "cheat" in classical Sanskrit.

In the *Mahābhārata* the vice of gambling is often mentioned. The Kuru prince schemed to overthrow the Pāndus by gambling and the well-known episode of Nala and Damayantī ([iii, 59-61](#)) shows the extent to which it was carried.

The theme also occurs in the *Mrichchhakatika*, where there is a vivid description of a gambler's quarrel in Act II. See also the story of "Nala and Davadantī." (Tawney, *Kathākoṣa*, [p. 201](#), etc.).

Crooke gives some interesting details in the last of his mass of valuable papers, “The Dīvālī, the Lamp Festival of the Hindus,” *Folk-Lore*, vol. xxxiv, 1923, pp. 287, 288. The Nepalese are inveterate gamblers, and a tale is told of a man who cut off his left hand and put it down under a cloth as his stake. When he won he insisted on his opponent cutting off his hand, or else restoring all his winnings (D. Wright, *History of Nepal*, p. 39). In Kashmir nearly all classes gamble at the Dīvālī under the belief that winning will bring them luck during the coming year (F. Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, p. 72; but see W. R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 266). In the Deccan, at the Dīvālī, men and women play chess till midnight in the hope that the goddess Pārvatī will bring them cartloads of treasure (*Bombay Gazetteer*, vol. xviii, part I, p. 251). At their chief festival held in March by the Shans of Upper Burma gambling is permitted to Burmese, Shans and Chinese, but not to natives of India. The gambling booths are put up to auction, and even the Pongyi priests may be seen gambling in the lines of huts outside the gambling enclosure (Sir J. G. Scott, J. P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Part II, vol. I, p. 229). In the Panjāb, success in gambling at the Dīvālī is believed to bring good luck. Native gentlemen gamble only with their wives, so that, whoever wins, they lose nothing. Traders play to find out whether the next year will be lucky or not. If a man wins he speculates freely, but if he loses he confines himself to safe ordinary business (*Panjab Notes and Queries*, vol. ii, p. 152).

For further details see J. L. Paton, “Gambling,” *Hastings’ Ency. Rel. Eth.*, vol. vi, p. 164 and the references there given.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[21] Literally, having auspicious marks. <[back](#)>

[22] The D. text reads “excessive uprightness.” See Speyer, *op. cit.*, p. 107.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[23] I read *Vidyutprabhām* for *Vidyādhārīm*. But perhaps it is unnecessary. <[back](#)>

[24] The Chakora is said to subsist upon moonbeams. <[back](#)>

[25] So making him a Vidyādhara or “magic-knowledge-holder.” <[back](#)>

[26] The D. text reads *sattvatah*, “courage,” instead of Brockhaus’ *satatah*, “abiding.”— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[27] The sudden transformation is doubtless to be attributed to the magical power of steel, for which see [Annex 16](#).— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

[28] The Brockhaus text is not clear here. The meaning (as the D. text shows) is that the king altered the name of his son-in-law a little by changing the last syllable *deva* into *vega*, the latter being a termination found among Vidyādhara. The same thing happened in the case of Aśokadatta and Vijayadatta (see [Chapter 25](#), p.325). It will be noticed that the altered name, Śaktivega, is used a few lines lower down.— N.M.P. <[back](#)>

END.