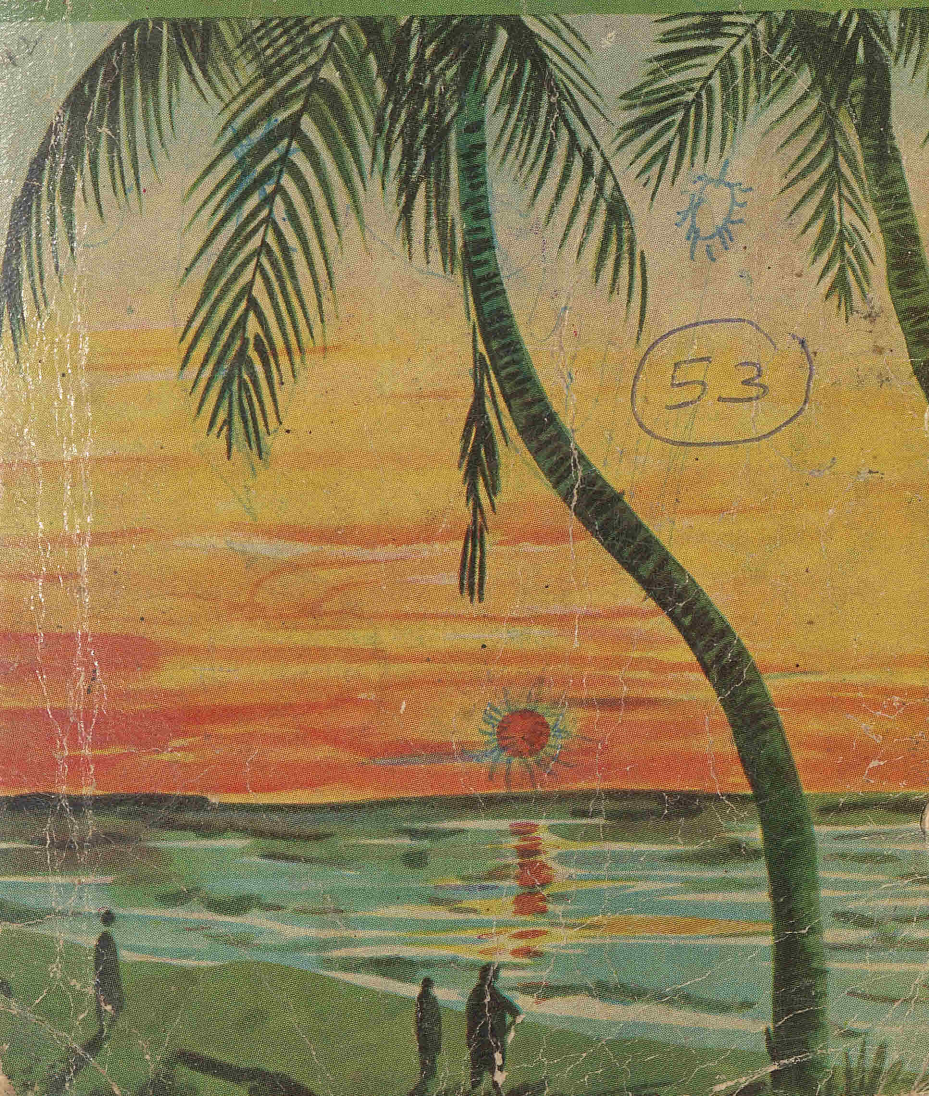
TWILIGHT TALES

TO READ ALOUD



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This is a good book

This story is so good

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MUNAVVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
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TWILIGHT TALES

by

JOHN MARTIS

MUNAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM.



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MUNAVVAR ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
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CONTENTS

	Page
AS YOU SOW, SO SHALL YOU REAP ...	1
THE CLEVER THIEF ...	12
KING MAHAPADMA AND MURLI ...	22
CHITRAKAR AND RAJA JAYADEVA...	42

E/55

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Here we publish for our young readers another set of stories with an Indian background.

The stories take us into the familiar setting of our celebrated Indian rulers—Akbar, Mahapadma, Surya and Jayadeva. They tell us of the wit and wisdom of our great men of yesteryear.

As the title suggests, these stories will provide interesting twilight reading to our readers.

MUNAVVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM.

6/186

AS YOU SOW, SO SHALL YOU REAP

During the reign of the great King Akbar, there lived in Delhi a wealthy merchant called Vinayak. He was a happy and peaceful man, but he had some competitors who were richer and stronger than him and they hated him for no reason and were trying to ruin him by various foul means. The wise merchant therefore left the town together with his wife Padmini, his only son Kanoj and all his wealth and goods. Fearing that a worse thing should happen to him, from Delhi he went to Bodhgaya. There he set up his business again which soon flourished and made him still richer. Vinayak was an honest and respectable man and his wife was a gracious lady and their son endeared himself to everyone by his good ways. Unlike their hometown, all the people in Bodhgaya loved them. For more than seven years Vinayak went about his business and made a fortune honestly.

But after these seven happy years, God took away his wife Padmini who had been

his companion for some thirty years. Vinayak and his son very deeply mourned her death who had cherished them so well. Kanoj cried for his mother for days after her death. Then, to comfort him, his father said to him, "Son, your mother is dead, and we will pray to God that he bless her. But now wipe off your tears because tears cannot bring back your mother. We all have to meet death sometime or other and no one can cheat death for ever. My son, I shall look after you well. You are a young man, and it is time to take yourself a wife, I am very old now; I will now give you a good portion of my wealth so that you can marry a maid from a good family. I will now search for you a bride of a high and honest family and good breeding. You shall not be lacking in wealth."

In the city of Bodhgaya there were three brothers all of whom were great warriors, bearing trophies and honours for their heroic deeds. But these warriors were poor and they had pawned all that they owned to meet their wagers on duels, and hence they were living hard lives. The eldest of these brothers called Digvijaya had a daughter named Dharati, but the mother of the maid was dead. Dharati owned a grand house in Bodhgaya near

the mansion of the wealthy merchant. The house was given to her by her mother, who had kept her in the custody of guardians, so that the house was free from pledge. So the merchant, believing that she was a lady from a high family, asked her hand in marriage for his son Kanoj. Dharati's father then enquired of the merchant about his means and wealth. Vinayak was an honest man and he said frankly, "In merchandise and in money I have nearly ten lakh gold coins. I have besides property worth an equal amount. I shall give my son half of all my wealth."

"I cannot agree to this," said Dharati's father, "if you had become a sanyasi you would have given all your wealth to the temple. I therefore cannot consent to the marriage."

"Tell me then what you would have me do."

"We expect you to offer to your son all your wealth so that neither you nor anyone else may claim any part of it. If you agree to this the marriage may take place, otherwise he shall never marry my daughter."

His son's happiness was everything to Vinayak and pondering over the matter

deeply for some time he replied, "It shall be done according to your wish. You shall give your daughter in marriage to my son and I will grant him all the wealth that I have. I will give him everything I own."

Thus, he gave all his wealth to his son and became utterly poor in the eyes of the world. He now had neither money nor any means for his daily food, excepting what his son gave him. As per the bargain, Dharati was given to his son in marriage.

For two years Kanoj and Dharati lived a happy life. A son was born to her and they loved him very much. With them the old merchant lived, but very soon he found that he had given himself a deadly blow by offering all his wealth to his son to live on the charity of others. Still he remained in their house for more than twelve years. His grandson whom they fondly called Deepak, grew up into a fine boy, and he began to take notice and to remember that which he often heard about his father's marriage and the bargain his grandfather had made for this. He determined himself not to forget this.

Vinayak had now become very old. His

hair had turned silver and bent with age he walked with a stick. His son was tired of him, and would have gladly paid for his funeral if he were to die. His wife, who was proud and scornful, hated the old man. She would often say to her husband, "For the sake of my love, send your father away. I lose all appetite just to see him around the house."

One day Kanoj said to his wife, "I shall send him away according to your wish."

Because of his wife's anger and her repeated demand, he went to his father straightaway, and said, "You shall leave my house at once. You must do the best you can, for we may no longer concern ourselves with you. For more than twelve years we have given you food and lodging in our house. Now all is over, so get up and go away immediately."

When old Vinayak heard these harsh words he wept bitterly, and cursed the situation in which he had placed himself. "Oh, my dearest son," he begged, "what is this you are telling me! For the love of God please do not turn me away from your door. I am so old that you surely cannot grudge

me a little room in your house. I do not ask you for a soft bed of feathers nor rich food. Let me sleep in the attic on a little straw. Please do not throw me out of your house because I eat your food, but feed me without grudging for a few days while I live. For this act of kindness God will bless you a hundredfold."

"Do not preach me what I should do," replied Kanoj, "get out of my house at once so that my wife can be happy."



"My son, where then shall I go? Who will respect me who has nothing?"

Madanmen P.C.

"Go to the town. There among ten thousand others you may very easily find food and shelter. You are very unlucky if you cannot find a way to live. Perhaps some of your friends and acquaintances will welcome you to their houses."

"Son, how will other people take me to their house, when you turn me from the house which I have given you? Why should a stranger welcome an old man whom his son chases from his door? Why should I be received gladly by someone else to whom I have given nothing, when I am badly treated by my rich son for whose sake I go naked?"

"Right or wrong, I take the blame on myself. But you must go because I do not want you here."

Then the father cried bitterly as his heart was broken by his son. Weak as he was, he raised himself to his feet and weeping, he said, "Son, since you want me to go, for the sake of God, give me at least a blanket to protect myself from the cold. I am not asking much; nothing but a piece of blanket to cover myself because I am lightly clad, and I am afraid that I will die of cold."

Shrinking away from his father, Kanoj replied, " I have no cloth to give you."

"My son, I dread the cold so much, my heart trembles. Give me, then, the cloth you spread upon your horse, so that I can keep myself alive in the cold."

Seeing that he might not get rid of his father without granting him a gift, and being eager to see his father go, he called his son to bring the cloth spread upon the horse. When Deepak heard his father's call, he came up immediately and said, "Father, what can I do for you ?"

"Son," he said, "go to the stable and if you find it open give my father the covering that is upon my horse so that he may make himself a cloak."

Deepak who was wise beyond his years, said to the old man, "Grandfather, come with me."

The old man went with him to the stable, feeling very sad and dejected. The boy chose the best cloth that he could find in the stable; this he folded and with his knife, divided the cloth in two. Then he gave his grandfather one half of the cloth.

"My child," said the old man, "what have you done? Why have you cut the cloth that your father has given me? You were told to give me the whole cloth. You have treated me very cruelly. I shall return and complain to your father about it."



"Go and complain if you like," replied Deepak, "I shall not give you anything more than this."

Vinayak went to his son and said, "Son, your child regards your word as nothing but idle talk, and does not fear to disobey your

order. Don't you see that he keeps one half of the cloth?"

"You disobedient boy," cried Kanoj, "give him all the cloth."

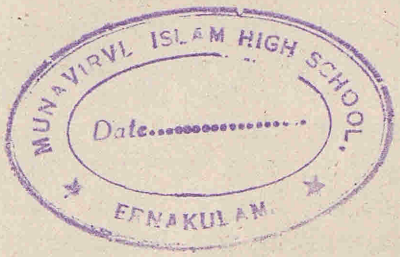
"Certainly not," replied Deepak, "I will not give it to him. If I give it to him, what then shall you be given? I will rather keep the half until I am a grown man, and then give it to you. Just as you have chased him from your house, so I will send you from my door. As he has given you all his wealth, so, in my turn I will want from you all your riches. You shall take from me nothing, except that which you have granted to him. If you leave him to die in suffering, I will wait for my turn and surely will leave you to die likewise."

The boy's father listened to these words with daze and at the end sighed deeply. He repented the evil that he wanted to do his old father, and heeded the words spoken by his child. Turning to his old father, he cried, "Father, return to your house. I was seized by sin and hatred, but God helped me escape from the evil. You are the only master and lord. Please take back all that you have given me. If my wife cannot live with you in

peace, then I shall serve you and protect you elsewhere. From today you will have the best of everything in this house and all the comforts. I vow to God that never will I take a morsel of food until you have taken the better portion. From now onwards you shall live in the chamber, near the fire, clad warmly in fur-clothes. And all this is not charity, but of your right because if I am rich it is because of your wealth and kindness."

Thus, the moral that Deepak taught his father so bravely freed him from the bad thought that he entertained.

6/86



THE CLEVER THIEF

Thousands of years ago, the country was ruled by the mighty King Surya. He was the wealthiest king, possessing great riches and none of the kings equalled his wealth.

For the safe custody of his riches he proposed to build a vast treasury of marble stones, one side of which was to form a part of the outer wall of his palace. He summoned the best mason in the country named Shankar, and said, "I want you to build a vast treasury for me. It should be very strong and fool-proof. Spare no pains and build the best treasury in the world."

Shankar, the mason was a cunning and greedy man and he thought of ways to get some of the king's riches. So he planned as he was making the building, to insert in the wall a stone which could easily be removed from its place by one man.

After many months the vast treasury was completed and the king's money and gold stored away in vessels in the treasury.

After some years Shankar fell sick. Finding his end approaching, he called for his two sons Maruthi and Madhav, and said, "Sons, my end is nearing. Before I die I want you to hear this. While building the king's treasury, I have inserted in the outer wall a stone which could easily be removed from its place by one man. Through this hole you can enter the treasury. You must carefully guard the secret so that you could live in riches as long as you live." Then he gave them directions concerning how to remove the stone and the exact spot where it was.

After a few days Shankar died. Maruthi and Madhav did not waste time in setting to work. They went by night to the palace, found the stone in the wall of the treasury, and having removed it easily, plundered the treasury of a lot of gold and silver.

When King Surya paid a visit to the treasury the next morning he was astonished to see that gold and silver was sunk in some of the vessels. He said to himself, "It seems the gold and silver in some of the vessels has sunk. The treasury is so strong that nobody could ever enter it stealthily. All the seals are intact and the locks secure. I do not know whom to blame for this."

Each time the king visited the treasury, he found to his utter surprise that more gold and silver was missing. Maruthi and Madhav continued to rob the treasury more and more.

At last King Surya, determined to catch the thieves, called the minister and said, "I am at a loss to understand how the gold and silver keeps disappearing from the treasury. I want you to set some deadly traps near the vessels containing gold and silver." Accordingly, the traps were set near the vessels.

On that night Maruthi and Madhav came as usual to the treasury and Maruthi entering through the hole, went straight for the largest vessel and suddenly he found himself caught in one of the traps. Realizing that he was lost, he called out to his brother, "Madhav! Madhav! come here quickly! I am caught in a trap! There is nothing much you can do about it. Please cut off my head so that when my body is discovered it may not be recognized."

Madhav did not want to cut off his brother's head, but Maruthi kept on urging him to do so. "Please," he said, "cut off my head, otherwise the king will recognize me and you also will be put to death." Finally,

very reluctantly Madav cut off his brother's head. After this he fitted the stone into place and went home taking with him his brother's head.

The next morning King Surya came to the treasury and marvelled greatly to see the body of the thief in the trap without a head while the building was intact, and neither entrance nor exit was to be seen anywhere. "This is the work of a very clever thief indeed," exclaimed the king, "I have caught a thief but I cannot recognize who it is. There must be another thief who has cut off this one's head and carried it away. Take away the body and hang it up outside the palace wall, and set the guards to watch it. If any persons are seen weeping or lamenting near the place, seize them and bring them before me."

As per the king's orders, Maruthi's body was hung up outside the palace wall and guards were kept to watch it.

When the mother heard of this exposure of the corpse of her son, she was heart-broken and entreated Madhav, "Son, I do not want to see my son's body hung up like this. Please get back the body to me somehow or other."

"I cannot do this," said Madhav, "if they catch me rescuing the body, we all will be sentenced to death."

"Son," cried his mother, "do not let me die of despair and heart-broken. Go at once and bring me back the body. If you do not bring back the body, I myself will go to the king and tell him the whole story."

Madhav did all he could to persuade her to give up her wish, but in vain. She still continued to trouble him, until at last he yielded to her entreaties.

Filling some skins with **somarasa**, he loaded them on donkeys, which he drove before him till he came to the place where the guards were watching the dead body. Madhav then untied some of the skins' necks and purposely let the **somarasa** pour freely out. He then began to beat his chest and shout with all his might, "Oh, my **soma**, my precious **soma** is gone! What am I to do now?"

When the guards saw the **soma** running, they rushed to the road, each with some vessel or other, and drank the liquor as it was spilling. Madhav pretended to be very angry and abused the guards. "You wretched

people," he shouted, "you have robbed my **soma**. I shall go to the king and report it to him."

The guards did their best to pacify him until at last he calmed down. The guards then tried to humour him and he quite readily befriended them. "Here, take this," he said, handing them over one of the skins, "and drink to your heart's content. This is my gift to you."

The guards were very pleased to receive the **soma** bag and they then sat down and started drinking the liquid and begged Madhav to remain and drink with them. Madhav let himself be persuaded and stayed.

As the drinking went on, they grew very friendly. So Madhav, giving them another skin, said, "Here is another skin. Let us drink and be merry." This they drank completely, and growing drowsy, lay down, and fell asleep on the spot.

Madhav waited till it was midnight, and then took down the body of his brother. After that, in mockery, he shaved off the right side of all the soldiers' beards, and left

them. Laying his brother's body upon one of the asses, he carried it home to his mother, having thus accomplished his mother's wish.



When King Surya heard that the thief's body was stolen away, he was very angry. Wishing, therefore, whatever it might cost, to catch the man who had played the trick, he ordered the minister, "Let this be announced throughout the length and breadth of my kingdom: 'I will give my daughter Mandakini in marriage to the man who would narrate to her the best story of the cleverest and wickedest thing done by him-

self.' " If anyone told her the story of the thief, she was to lay hold of him, and not allow him to get away.

Princess Mandakini did as her father wished. Madhav, who was well aware of the king's motive, felt a desire to outdo him. So, he obtained the corpse of a man lately dead, and cutting off one of the arms, put it under his coat and went to the princess.

Princess Mandakini was sitting in a room with very dim light. After Madhav paid his respects to her, as she had done to all the rest, she said, "Tell me your story."

"The wickedest thing," narrated Madhav, "I had ever done was cutting off my brother's head when he was caught in a trap in the treasury of your father, and the cleverest was making the guards drunk and carrying off my brother's body which was hung up on the palace wall."

As he spoke, Princess Mandakini thrust out her hands to catch him and raised an alarm, but Madhav took advantage of the darkness to hold out to her the hand of the corpse. Imagining it to be his own hand,

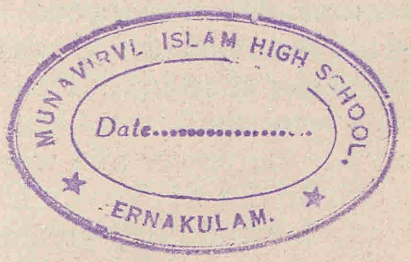
the princess seized and held it fast, while Madhav leaving it in her grasp, escaped.



When King Surya came to know of this fresh success of the culprit, he was struck with wonder at the cleverness and bravery of the man. He said to the councillors, "The man who did all these tricks is too clever for me. The only way to know who he is, is to proclaim a free pardon for him. Send the messengers throughout my kingdom and announce a free pardon for the man and a rich

reward if he identified himself to me." Accordingly messengers spread the king's proclamation throughout the country.

Madhav took King Surya at his word, and came boldly into his palace, and said, "Your Highness, I am the man you wanted." King Surya, upon seeing Madhav, greatly admired him for his prowess and gave him his daughter Mandakini in marriage. And from then on Madhav gave up his wily tricks and lived happily.



KING MAHAPADMA AND MURLI

When King Mahapadma ruled northern India there was a good merchant and he had a son named Murli. One day, this merchant passed away, leaving to his son vast wealth.

Unlike his father, Murli was given to worldly pleasures. He was proud, vain and a spendthrift. He envied the king and people who were wealthier than him. He often said, "Oh, I wish I were the king of this country! I wish I had all the power and wealth of the king!" Though he did not have the qualities to be the king, he would day-dream about it.

Prodigal as he was, Murli began to spend his vast wealth recklessly. He took as his close friends the sons of the merchants and others, and gave himself up to the delights of worldly life, until all the wealth that he had was spent, save his house and a little money which his mother had kept aside.

So he went to his friends and told them of his sorry state, showing them how little

money was left with him. But none of them paid any attention to him or uttered a word in reply.

Sad and broken-hearted Murli then returned to his mother and told her of the treatment that he had experienced from his friends, that they would neither help him nor even talk to him.

But his mother said, "Oh Murli, so are the sons of this age. They are all fair-weather friends. As long as you have anything, they befriend you; and when you have nothing, they cast you off." She grieved for him and he sighed and wept.

He vowed to himself that he would not in future befriend any of those whom he knew, but only with the stranger, and that he would not be friends with anybody but for one night, and on the following morning would not recognize him.

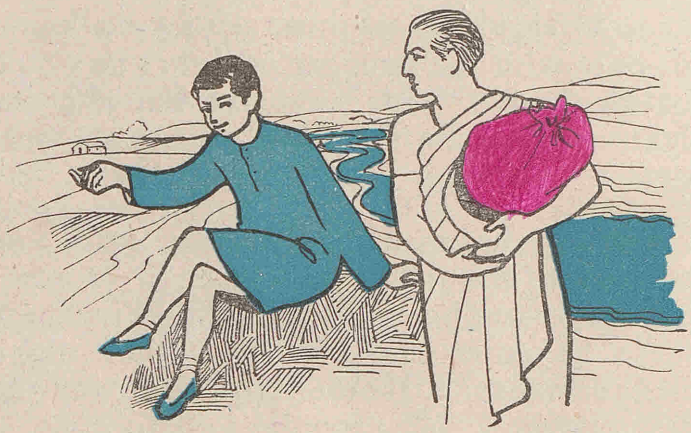
And so every night he went out and sat on the bank of the river. And when a stranger passed by him, he invited him to his house where he entertained him well that night, until the morning. He then sent him away and after that he would not even look at him.

This he carried on for three years. One day as he was sitting on the river bank as usual, to see who might come to him, King Mahapadma and his attendants passed by in disguise. King Mahapadma was feeling bored and he had come out to amuse himself among the people.

Murli did not know that he was King Mahapadma. He stopped the king and said, "Friend, how would you like a feast and entertainment at my house tonight?"

"Well, why not ?" replied King Mahapadma. "Take me to your house."

Murli took King Mahapadma to his house. After he had seated himself, Murli called for



a musician who gave a beautiful recital. King Mahapadma was greatly pleased with the music and wondered at Murli and his entertainment. He then said to Murli, "Young man, who are you? Tell me more about yourself so that I may repay you for your kindness."

But Murli smiled, and said, "Friend, I do not like that what has happened to me should repeat. And I will not be in your company again after this time. So please do not ask me who I am."

"And why won't you acquaint me with yourself? Young man, tell me the reason for this."

Murli told his story, and when King Mahapadma heard it, he laughed, and said, "My brother, you are right in this."

Then Murli served various delicious dishes to the king, and they continued eating until they were satisfied. After this Murli brought **somarasa** and having filled two cups, said, "Friend, let's drink to our friendship."

King Mahapadma was very pleased with him, and thought, "By God, I will certainly repay his generosity!"

They continued drinking and chatting until midnight.

After this King Mahapadma said to Murli, "Oh Murli, is there anything that you would like me to do for you, or any wish that you would have fulfilled ?"

"Well," answered Murli, "I have a great wish : I wish I were the king of this country so that I could enjoy all the power and wealth that goes with it and do what I please."

"May your wish come true !" replied King Mahapadma. And without Murli's knowledge, he put into a cup some herb, and handed it to him. Murli drank the cup and shortly he fell asleep, intoxicated and insensible.

King Mahapadma then called his attendants waiting for him, and he ordered them to carry Murli upon a horse to the palace.

And when King Mahapadma had rested for a while in the palace, he called all the people of his palace, and said, "In the morning when you see this young man seated on the royal couch, pay obedience to him, and respect him as the king, and whatever he commands you, do it." Then going to maid-servants, he asked them to wait upon Murli, and to

address him as Rajadiraja. After this he entered a private room and, having let down a curtain over the entrance, slept.



At dawn when Murli awoke, he found himself on the royal couch with the attendants standing around, and a maid said to him, "Lord, it is time for morning prayer."

Utterly surprised at this and looking round, he saw a chamber whose walls were adorned with gold and silver and the roof spotted with pearls, surrounded by other chambers with curtains of embroidered silk hanging before the doors. And he saw gold vessels

and furniture, and carpets spread, and lighted lamps. Thoroughly confused by this, he said to himself, "By God, either I am dreaming, or this is heaven." And he closed his eyes.

At this an attendant said to him, "Master, this is not your usual custom."

Struck dumb by this he put his head into his coat, and then began to open his eyes slowly, laughing and saying, "What is this state in which I find myself?" And he bit his finger to find out whether he was dreaming. But the bite pained him and he uttered a cry. Then raising his head, he called one of the attendants, who answered him, "At your service, Rajadiraja."

"Do you know in what place I am, and who I am ?" he asked.

"You are Rajadiraja," the attendant replied "sitting in your palace, on the royal couch."

"I don't know what has happened to me," he said to himself. "My reason has departed, and it seems that I am asleep." Then he remembered his guest of the night before and said, "I believe that he is a demon or a wizard, who has played tricks with my reason."

All this time King Mahapadma was observing him from a place where Murli could not see him. Then Murli looked at the chief attendant, and called to him. He came and said, "At your service, Rajadiraja."

"Who is the Rajadiraja?" asked Murli.

"You, my master," he replied.

"You lie," said Murli. And addressing the page, he said, "Tell me, am I the Rajadiraja?"

"Yes, my master," replied the page. "You are the Rajadiraja, and the lord of all men."

And Murli, utterly confused at all he saw, said, "In one night I become the Rajadiraja! Was I not yesterday Murli; and today am I the Rajadiraja?"

He sat there confounded and dazed until the morning, when an attendant came to him and handed to him a pair of shoes of gold, adorned with precious stones and rubies. Murli took them and after examining them a long time, put them into his coat-pocket.

So the attendant said to him, "Master, these are shoes to walk in."

"You are right," replied Murli. "I put them there lest they should be soiled." He

then took them out, and put them on his feet. And shortly after, the servants brought him a basin of gold, an ewer of silver, and poured the water on his hands. When he had performed the ablution, they led him to the prayer-room; and he prayed, meditating and saying to himself, "By God, I am none other than the Rajadiraja; or else this is a dream, and all these things don't occur in a dream." He therefore convinced himself, and determined in his mind that he was the Rajadiraja.

Then they brought him a magnificent dress, and looking at himself as he sat upon the couch, he said, "All this is an illusion, and a trick of the wizard."

And while he was in this state, the page came in and said to him, "Rajadiraja, the councillor is at the door, requesting permission to come in."

"Let him come in," said Murli.

The councillor came in and said, "Peace be on you, Rajadiraja."

Then the page told Murli that the **Senapati** and the Royal Adviser begged permission to enter, and he gave them permission. So they came in and paid respects, each of them

addressing him as Rajadiraja. Vain as he was, he was delighted at this.

He then thought of exercising his power. In his neighbourhood there were four **pujaris** and whenever they heard music or any sport, they incited the authorities against him, and imposed fines on him, and troubled his life. Now he wished to teach the **pujaris** a lesson.

So he called the **Kothawala**, who approached him, and said, "At your service, Rajadiraja !"

"Go immediately to the house of Murli," commanded he, "and give a thousand gold coins to his mother with my compliments. Then take the four **pujaris** and give them each a thousand lashes. And when you have done that, parade them through the town, mounted on donkeys, with their faces to the tails, and proclaim that it is the punishment of those who annoy their neighbours. Also, order them that they shall not reside in that neighbourhood. And do not neglect my orders, or it will be the worse for you."

The **Kothawala** did as he was commanded. And when Murli had exercised his power until the close of the day, he told the councillor and the rest of the attendants to go.

He then called the page who was near at hand, and said, "I am hungry, and want something to eat."

The page led him into the eating chamber, where the attendants placed before him a table of rich food.

Murli looking at one of the maids, asked her, "Tell me, do you know who I am ?"

"Yes, my master. You are the Rajadiraja," she answered.

"You are lying," he cried. "You people are laughing at me."

The maid said, "Oh Rajadiraja, this is your palace and all are your servants."

But he continued to say to himself, "No doubt this is the work of the wizard, and this person who was my guest is the king of the wizards, who saw no way of repaying me for my hospitality to him but by ordering his servants to address me as Rajadiraja."

And while he was thus talking to himself, one of the maids put some potion in his cup and he took it from her and drank it. When it had settled in his stomach, he fell down senseless.

King Mahapadma then gave orders to carry him to his house. So he was taken to his house and laid on his bed, still in a state of insensibility.

At about midnight Murli recovered from his intoxication and found himself in the dark. He called out to the royal attendants but no one answered him. However, his mother heard him shouting, and came, and said to him, "My son, what has happened to you? Have you gone mad?"

When he heard the words of his mother, he said to her, "Who are you, old woman, that you address the Rajadiraja by these names?"

"I am your mother, oh my son," she replied.

"No, I am the Rajadiraja, the lord of this country and people."

"Be quiet," said his mother, "or else your life will be in danger." And she began to pronounce spells and to recite charms over him.

"It seems that you have seen this in a dream, and all this is the trick of the demon," she said. "By the way, I have good news for you."

"And what is it ?" asked Murli.

"King Mahapadma gave orders yesterday to beat the four **pujaris** and that they shall not annoy anyone by their meddling, and he sent me a thousand gold coins with his compliments."

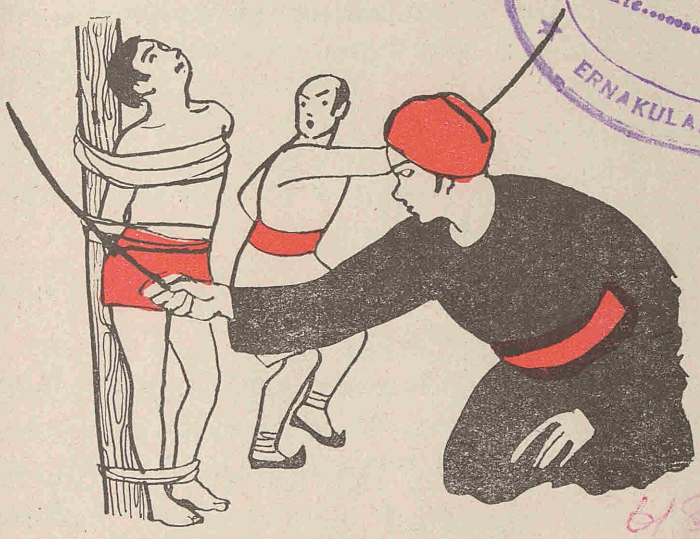
When Murli heard this, he uttered a loud cry, and exclaimed, "I am the one who gave orders to beat the **pujaris**, and who sent you the thousand gold coins, with my compliments, and I am the Rajadiraja."

Murli then shouted at the top of his voice, "I am the Rajadiraja and all shall obey me." And when the people heard his words, they said, "This man has become mad." And so they came in and caught hold of him, bound his hands behind him, and carried him to the madhouse.

There everyday they punished Murli, flogging him with whips and dosing him with medicines, making him a madman in spite of himself. Thus he suffered, stripped of his clothes and chained for a fortnight. After this period, his mother came to see him.

"Oh my son," said his mother. "Live in fear of God. If you were the Rajadiraja, you would not be in this state."

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"You are speaking the truth," replied Murli. "It seems that I was asleep, and dreamed that they made me the king."

He was therefore released from the madhouse. After some days he recovered his health and began to eat. But eating by himself was not pleasant to him. So he said to his mother, "Mother, neither life nor eating by myself is pleasant to me."

"If you desire to repeat what you did before," replied his mother, "you would surely return to the madhouse."

Paying no attention to her advice, he walked to the river bank to find for himself a friend. And while he was sitting there, King Mahapadma came to him disguised as a merchant. From the time of his parting with Murli he came everyday to the river bank, but did not find him till now.

As soon as Murli saw him, he said to him, "Welcome, oh king of Wizards!"

"What have I done to you?" asked King Mahapadma.

"What more is left for you to do, oh scheming wizard? I have suffered lashing, and entered the madhouse, and they pronounced me a madman. For all this you are the cause. I took you to my house, and gave you the best of food. And after that you gave your devils and servants entire power over me, to play tricks with me from morning till night. Go away from me."

King Mahapadma smiled at this, and seating himself by his side, said politely, "Oh my friend, when I left you, I left the door open by mistake, and probably the demon went in to you."

And Murli told King Mahapadma all that

had happened to him from the beginning, while the king had a concealed laugh.

"I will not take you again as my friend," said Murli. "He who stumbles against a stone and returns to it, has himself to blame. So I will not entertain you nor will I keep company with you since I have not found peace after your visit."

"But," said King Mahapadma, "I have helped you to accomplish your wish. Perhaps something will happen to you that will bring you the light of reason and happiness."

"Well," said Murli, "then what do you want from me?"

"I wish to be your guest tonight," answered King Mahapadma.

And finally Murli said, "Very well, I will take you as my guest but on one condition: that you promise me that you will not make your accomplices play tricks with me."

King Mahapadma agreed to this.

And so Murli took King Mahapadma to his house and served him sumptuous food and entertained him. They continued eating until they were satisfied, then they drank

somarasa until it made them thoroughly intoxicated.

Then Murli said to the king, "My friend, I am still confused about what happened to me. I became the king overnight and then in a day I lost my kingdom."

"That was the result of confused dreams," said King Mahapadma, and then, without Murli's knowledge, he dropped some potion into his cup and said, "Drink this cup."

Murli took the cup, and when he had drunk it he fell down senseless again. King Mahapadma then called his attendants and ordered them to carry Murli to the palace, and to lay him on the royal couch, and commanded all the attendants to stand around him. He then hid himself in a place where Murli could not see him, and ordered the court musicians to sing and play on their instruments before him.

It was then midnight, and Murli, awakening, and hearing the music and singing, cried out, "Where am I?"

The attendants replied, "At your service, Rajadiraja."

Murli was struck dumb with surprise. He then remembered all that had happened to him, and how he had been taken to the madhouse, and he saw the marks of the lashing he had suffered there.

Looking at the attendants surrounding him, he said, "These are the accomplices of the King of the Wizards, in the form of human beings."

And looking at an attendant by his side, he said to him, "Bite my finger so that I may know if I am dreaming or awake."

"How shall I bite your finger," said the attendant, "when you are the master?"

"Do as I have ordered you," replied Murli, "or I will cut off your head."

So the attendant bit his finger until his teeth dug into it, and Murli uttered a loud shriek. King Mahapadma, who was watching him from behind a curtain, laughed till his sides ached.

The other attendants said to the one who bit Murli's finger, "Are you mad, that you bite the king's finger?"

"Is it not enough, you wretched accomplices of the chief of the Wizards? But it's not

your fault; the fault is your chief's, who transformed you into the form of human beings. This is the punishment for my vanity and conceit. Oh how I wish I never desired to be the king!"

Then King Mahapadma exclaimed from behind the curtain, "Don't panic, Murli. You are safe."

And Murli recognized the voice as that of his wily guest, and exclaimed, "How can I trust you who have subjected me to so much torture and wizardry?"

"Believe me, Murli, I am not a wizard nor a sorcerer," said King Mahapadma. "I am King Mahapadma himself. Don't you recognize your king?" And he stood over Murli dressed in his resplendent regal dress.

Murli could not believe his eyes when he saw that his guest was none other than King Mahapadma himself. Recovering from the shock, he said, "Oh Rajadiraja, truly you have shown me how foolish I was to crave for power. I beg your forgiveness for my insolence and greed. May your glory increase and your life prolong."

Then taking him by the hand, King Mahapadma said, "Oh Murli, I am glad that you

have realized your vanity and that you repent for it." He then clad Murli in a rich dress, gave him a large purse of gold, and made him his bosom friend.



CHITRAKAR AND RAJA JAYADEVA

Chitrakar was a painter who lived during the days of Raja Jayadeva. He was a poor but wise man. One fine morning, dressed in his ragged clothes, he came upon his ass to the palace of Raja Jayadeva to ask him to employ him as a painter. He saw the **senapati** and the king's councillor playing chess in the outer house of the palace and he approached them.

"What do you want, you wretched fellow?" asked the **senapati**.

"I am very hungry," answered Chitrakar, "and if I look wretched, it is not my fault."

"If you are hungry," said the **senapati**, "go and work for a living like everybody else."

"I am a painter by profession. I have come to show Raja Jayadeva one of my pictures," replied Chitrakar.

Pitying the painter the senapati said, "If you are a painter, come in and I will take you to the king."

When he had been brought before Raja Jayadeva, Chitrakar saluted him three times.

"May it please Your Highness," said Chitrakar, "I have come here to show Your Highness one of my best pictures." Then he showed the king a beautiful picture of a princess which he had painted. Raja Jayadeva inspected the picture and was greatly impressed by it.

"I see from the picture," said the king, "that you are a fine painter. I would certainly make you my court painter. You shall have the privilege of living in the palace and you shall be well paid."

"May it please Your Highness," answered Chitrakar, "my donkey has dined very well on thistles, but as for me, I have seen nothing but misery the last three days and have nothing to nourish myself."

"You shall soon have better fare," said Raja Jayadeva, "but where is the donkey of yours?"

"I left him outside the palace, and I shall be most obliged if he could be given lodging for the night, some straw, and a little fodder."

Raja Jayadeva immediately gave orders to one of his pages that Chitrakar's donkey should be treated as his own.

The hour for supper arrived, and the meal was like a wedding festival. Hot spicy dishes smoked, **somarasa** flowed like water, and Chitrakar became very merry, but the king was somewhat sad.

"Our painter," said the king, "will have to paint my portrait, for it will be a great satisfaction to me to give my descendants the memory of my face after my death."

"Your Highness," answered Chitrakar, "your will is my pleasure. However, I cannot help feeling sorry at the thought that if I paint a portrait of Your Highness only, Your Highness will perhaps feel lonely in the portrait in solitary state through the ages to come. Surely Your Highness should be accompanied by the noble queen, by the councillors and **senapati**, and other noblemen and ladies of the court. In their midst Your Highness and the queen will shine like twin suns surrounded by lanterns."

"Well, Chitrakar, and how much shall I have to pay you for this great work of art?"

"One thousand gold coins, either now or later, just as you please."

"Here they are, in advance," said Raja Jayadeva beaming.

"Most generous king," said Chitrakar as he took the money, "you have filled my lamp with oil, and now it shall burn bright in your honour."



On the next day Chitrakar asked Raja Jayadeva to let him see those persons who were to be painted. Accordingly, first came

the **senapati** of the king's army. He was a fat man who carried his great paunch with difficulty. He went up to Chitrakar and whispered in his ear, "When you paint my portrait, see that you take off half my fat at least or else I will order my soldiers to hang you."

Next day there came a noble lady with a hump on her back. "Chitrakar," she said, "unless you remove the hump on my back, I will have you dragged by the horses and beaten as if you were a prisoner."

Next day a young and beautiful maid whose only defect was that her three front teeth were missing, came to him and said, "Chitrakar, if you do not paint me smiling and showing through my parted lips a perfect set of teeth, I will have you chopped up into small pieces at the hands of my gallant warrior."

The procession continued until at last Chitrakar was left alone with the king. The king said to him, "My friend, let me warn you that if your painting does not picture all these people exactly as they are, I will have your throat cut as if you were a chicken."

"If I am to have my head cut off," thought Chitrakar, "if I am to be drawn by horses

and beaten, chopped up into small pieces and finally hung, I should do better to paint no portrait at all. I must think of a plan to tackle all these people."

He then asked the king, "And where is the hall which I am to adorn with all these portraits?"

"Come with me," said Raja Jayadeva. And he brought him to a large chamber with great bare walls. "This is the hall," he said.

"I should be most obliged," said Chitrakar, "if some curtains could be hung right along the walls, so that my paintings may be protected from dust and flies."

"Certainly," said the king.

When the curtains had been hung as directed, Chitrakar asked Raja Jayadeva, "Your Highness, may I have three apprentices to help me with the mixing of the colours?"

This was done, and for a month Chitrakar and the apprentices spent the whole of their time feasting and enjoying most extravagantly at the expense of the king. The king looked on it all. But at last on the

thirty-first day, he came and peeped inside the door of the chamber where Chitrakar had asked him not to enter.

"Well, Chitrakar," said Raja Jayadeva, "where are the portraits?"

"They are not finished," replied Chitrakar.

"When will they be finished?"

"Not just yet," said Chitrakar.

On the sixty-first day Raja Jayadeva again peeped into the chamber and asked, "Well, Chitrakar, are they ready now?"

"Ah, Your Highness," said Chitrakar, "the portraits are getting on."

On the ninety-first day Raja Jayadeva grew very angry and coming right into the chamber, he cried, "Show me the portraits at once."

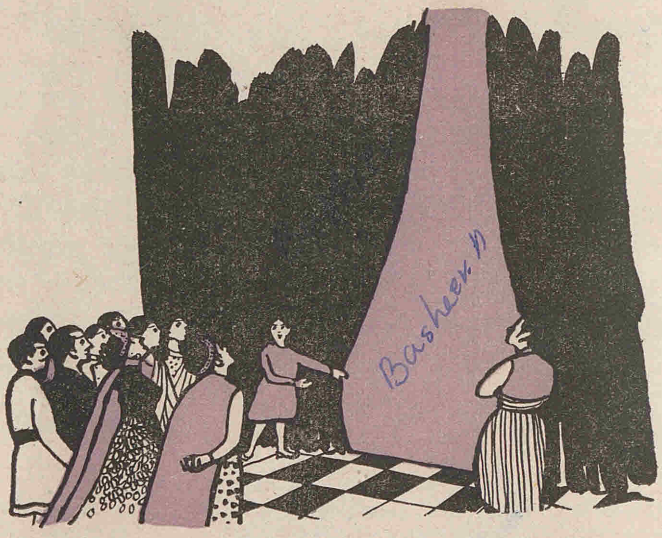
"I will do so," replied Chitrakar, "but I beg Your Highness not to draw the curtains until Your Highness has called here all the noble people of the court who are in the portraits along with Your Highness."

"Very well," said Raja Jayadeva, and at his command all the noble people of the court appeared at the chamber. Chitrakar then stood in front of the curtains, which were still carefully drawn.

"Your Highness the king and the queen, **senapati** and councillors, and you others—noble ladies and warriors, behind these curtains I have portrayed to the best of my abilities, your faces, every one warlike or gentle, as the case may be. It will be quite easy for everyone of you to recognize himself or herself. It is only natural that you are anxious to see your portraits. But I beg you to pay attention to what I say before the curtains are drawn. Noble people of the court, all of you who are of noble blood shall see my paintings and rejoice. But if there is anyone among you who is of low or humble birth, that person will see nothing but a blank wall. And now, open wide your noble eyes." And so saying, Chitrakar drew the curtains.

"Remember," he said again, "only those who are of noble birth can see my portraits. He who is of low birth is blind to my portraits, but he who clearly sees, that man is a nobleman without a doubt.

At that, everyone present opened their eyes wide, pretending to see, and failing to recognize any portrait but a blank wall. They



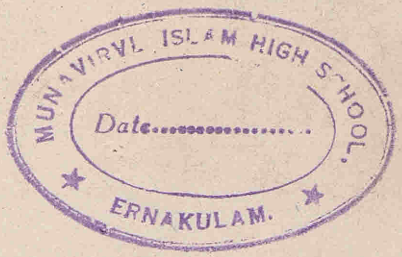
pointed to one another their pictures on the wall which were not there. And for this they were each and all secretly ashamed.

Raja Jayadeva said beaming happily to Chitrakar, "Well done, Chitrakar. These paintings are truly great since only the noble people can see them. For this great work of art I shall give you precious stones and gold equal to your weight."

All the noble people who came to see their portraits in their turn pretended to be very glad to see such a great work of art.

Thus, clever Chitrakar fooled the king and the noble people and became a rich man.

6186





6186

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6186

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