

## II. Who was Vikramadithya?

Retold by

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Once upon a time, there was a very learned man called Samudhra Guptha. He learned all the Vedas and all that is known to all the teachers of India. He was not satisfied. He felt that there must be some thing more, which I have not learned. So he was wandering all over India in search of teacher who knew more than him. One day he reached a forest near Ujjain. He was tired. So he took bath in a river in the forest and slept in the shade of a big Banyan tree. On the top of the Banyan tree there lived a ghost (Brahma Rakshas). Seeing Samudhra Guptha, the ghost was terribly attracted. It then woke up Samudhra Guptha and asked him, "Brahmin, who are you. Why have you come to this dense forest? On the other shore of the river, there is the town of Ujjain. If you go there you will get food and also proper resting place." Samudhra Guptha replied. "I do not know who you are? My name is Samudhra Guptha. I am in search of a teacher who knows more than me and learn from all that he knows. Till I meet such a person, I am not interested in food or rest."

The ghost replied, "Samudhra Guptha, I know much, much more than you. I am willing to teach you all that I know. It would take six months night and day, for me to teach. But during these six months, you should neither take food nor sleep. I would give you the power not to take food and also not get sleep. But once I finish my teaching and you leave this forest, you would be as hungry as you have not taken food for six months and you will get sleep as if you have not slept for six months. If it is agreeable to you, I will immediately start the lessons." Samudhra Guptha agreed to this. The ghost wrote each lesson on the leaf of the Banyan tree and dropped it down. As soon as he learned one lesson, the next lesson was given. In six months time Samudhra Guptha had learned all that the ghost knew. He thanked the ghost and started towards Ujjain.

But as soon as he crossed the forest, he became a bundle of mere bones covered by a skin and started sleeping as if he has never slept. One lady called Alangara valli who passed by the way saw him. She took him to her home. When the doctor came he told, "This man has not eaten any food for six months. Neither has he slept for six months. If you want to save him, cook lot of rice. Then keep on massaging his body with the cooked rice. If you do it like this for three months, he would wake up." Alangara valli agreed and kept on massaging Samudhra Guptha with cooked rice. After three months, Samudhra Guptha woke up. Then he asked, "Where m I? I want to go to my home." Alangara valli then told him all that happened and requested Samudhra Guptha to marry him." Samudhra Guptha was not willing. Then Alangara valli complained about Samudhra Guptha to the king. The King after hearing the story of Samudhra Guptha wanted him to marry his daughter also. His minister as well as the king's priest wanted him to marry their daughters also. Samudhra Guptha married all the four ladies. The priests daughter became mother too a son called Vara Ruchi, the kings daughter became mother to a son called Vikramadithya, the minister's daughter became mother to a son called Bhatti and Alangara Valli became mother to a son called Bharthruhari.

The king gave his kingdom to Samudhra Guptha and left to the forest .Samudhra Guptha ruled over the country in a very nice manner. After all his children were well grown up, Samudhra Guptha became sick and was about to die. He was seen crying by his sons. Then Bharthruhari who was the eldest son asked him, "Father, why are you crying?" Samudhra Guptha replied, "Being the eldest, you will become king after me. But since you mother is a low caste woman, if you get children, I would surely go to hell." Bharthruhari then told his father, "Father do not worry at all. I may marry but I will see to it that, I never have any children." Samudhra Guptha died a happy man.

Bharthuhari the king

Bharthruhari married one thousand queens and was ruling the country in a great manner. Among them he was particular fond of a very pretty Ananga Sena. During this time one Brahmin did great austerity (thapas ) to please Goddess earth. At last , pleased with his devotion, she came in person and asked him, "Oh Brahmin, I am greatly pleased with your devotion. What can I do for you?"

The Brahmin replied , "goddess , I am worried that I am getting old and weak. I want you to make me young always and forever,."

Goddess earth gave him a golden pomegranate fruit and told him, "By eating this you would be young forever" and disappeared.. Then the Brahmin thought, " I am extremely poor. What is the use of my remaining young forever. Instead of eating this, I would make a present of this fruit to the great king Bhatruhari." He did like that. The king was pleased and gave him lot of wealth and comforts.

But the king did not want to eat the fruit himself. He thought, it would be great if his queen Ananga Sena was young forever. He called and gave her the golden pomegranate. But the queen had a secret lover- The driver of the kings Chariots. She gave it to him. That driver had another lover. She was the maid servant who was cleaning the horse stables of the king,. He gave it to her. That lady kept the fruit in the top of her basket and was returning home. The king who was passing that way identified the divine fruit. He got dejected with life and decided to become a saint. So he made his younger brother Vikramadhithya , the king and another younger brother Bhatti as his Prime minister.

How Vikramadhithya built his capital

Vikramadhithya was a very intelligent and valorous king. Bhatti was very cunning and wise. They ruled the country well. After some time Vikramadhithya wanted to build a new capital city. So whenever they got time, Vikramadhithya and Bhatti went on searching for a good place to establish their capital city. One day they came across a very suitable spot in a place called Vachana giri. There was a beautiful river called Gunavathi flowing by its side. There was also a temple for Goddess Kali in the adjoining forest. When Bhatti went inside the forest and examining it,, he saw an inscription on a stone in the temple. It was written. " There is a big Banyan tree near the temple pond. There are seven hanging shelves made of rope on the tree. In the middle of the pond , there is a big and sharp spear. Suppose a man can cut off , all the seven rope shelves in one cut and fall head first on the spear in the pond, The goddess of this temple would bless him." He then told Vikramadhithya to climb on the tree, hold on to one shelf, keep his feet on the opposite shelf and rotate. By doing this the rope holding all the shelves would become

joined. Then with his sword he can cut the rope and fall on the Spear in the pond, head first. Vikrama agreed . He did as instructed by Bhatti . But when he was about to be killed by the spear, Goddess Kali herself came and saved him. He blessed him as follows.” You would build your capital city , in this place with the treasure buried in this city and call it Ujjain. You would become a great king and become the emperor of all India” . Vikramadhithya Buily a new city in Ujjain and became a great king. How Vikramadhithya got the throne?

When this was going on, Devendra the king of heavens had a problem. He had several dancers in his court. Of them Rambha and Urvasi were the best. But they were jealous of each other. Since both of them were equally pretty and equally adept in dancing, King Devendra could not decide as to who should be made the Chief Dander of his court. His minister suggested , “Sir, There is a great and intelligent king in Ujjain called Vikramadhithya. Possibly he can help you in taking the decision” . Devendra then sent his chariot to Ujjain. At that time , it was evening and Vikramadhithya was alone. He immediately accepted the invitation of devendra and came back to Heaven, in the chariot sent by Devendra,

First day he made Ramba and Urvasi dance. He was not able to see any difference. He told them ,”I will see you both dance once more tomorrow and then take the decision.” .He went to his lodgings and made two flower Bouquets. Within each bouquet , he put some stinging bees , in both the flower bouquets. Next day he requested Ramba and Urvasi to do a fast dance , keeping the flower bouquet in their hand. When they danced after some time, the dance movements became very vigorous. At that time Ramba sghirieked with pain , because the bees in the bouquet, Vikramadhithya stopped the dance competition and told Devendra, “Sir Urvasi is a better dancer , because she was having stylish and soft movement of her limbs and did not hurt the bees. Ramba , though a good dancer, lost her tender movements when she was dancing vigorously.”

DEvendra became happy and presented him with a gem studded throne with 32 steps. Each step was being protected by a divine doll. He blessed him to rule over India sitting on the throne for another 1000 years. Vikramadhithya was greatly pleased and came back along with the throne.

Country six months and forest six months.

When he called and narrated all this to Bhatti he asked him, “That is fine. But I will die early and not live for one thousand years. “ Vikramadhithya became sad on hearing this. Bhatti said that he would find out some method to live for one thousand years. That night Bhatti went to the Kali temple. When he went Goddess Kali had gone out for a walk outside the temple. He waited for her. Goddess Kali returned at mid night. She was surprised on seeing Bhatti and asked him, “Bhatti why have you come here sat this time?” Bhatti replied, “goddess, I want to live for one thousand years. Kali told him, “I can give you the boon provided , you bring me the cut head of Vikramadhithya. “ Bhatti immediately agreed and went inside the palace. And woke up Vikramadhithya. He told him, Brother, I want your cut head urgently.” Vikramadhithya agreed. Bhatti cut the head of Vikramadhithya and took it to the Kali Temple. The goddess was pleased, and told him , “You will live up to 200 years.” As soon as he heard the boon , Bhatti started laughing and told the Goddess, “My brother got the boon to live for one thousand years only a week back and now he is dead. I do not really know when I will die?”

Goddess got angry and told him, “do not equate me with Devendra. Both you and your brother will live for 2000 years. “ and she gave life back to vikramadhithya.

The brothers now had a problem. Both of them would live for 200 years but Vikramadhithya would be king for only one thousand years. Bhatti found out a solution, Vikramadhithya would rule the country for six months ( country six months) and the he would spend the next six months in the forest (forest six months). It was a great idea and they both ruled India for two thousand years.

Then the doll asked Bhija, “king, do you think you are as great as Vikramadhithya?” By that time , it was evening and Bhoja went to his palace.