

Vikramadhithya and Vetala –I

Retold by

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On the second day king Bhoja again worshipped the throne and tried to climb the steps. Then the doll in the second step started laughing and King Bhoja asked the doll, why it was laughing. Then that doll said, “Are you as valorous as Vikramadhithya to occupy this throne?” King Bhoja replied, “I do not know much about Vikramadhithya. Can you tell some thing about him?” Then the second doll whose name was Madanabhisheka valli started telling:-

In times of yore, when Vikramadhithya was ruling this country, two miles away from the town of Ujjaini, there used to be a Kali temple. Near the temple was a cremation ground. In that cremation ground, there was a drumstick tree. In that drum stick tree, a corpse was hanging upside down. Inside, the corpse was a great Vetala (ghoul). Any body who controls the Vetala could almost attain anything he wants.

Near by an evil sage called Gnanaseela was trying be very powerful. He went on meditating in the Kali temple. Kali, being pleased came in front of him and asked, “Oh sage, what do you want?”, Then the sage replied, “Devi, I want all the wealth of this world and want to be the most powerful man of the world.” Kali replied “For getting that you have to do a great fire sacrifice and offer the heads of thousand kings. You also have to control, the Vetala of the drumstick tree.”

The sage immediately started the fire sacrifice. He could easily catch hold of 999 kings, cut off their head and put it in the fire. He wanted to sacrifice the head of Vikramadhithya next. So he started going to the court of Vikramadhithya. Daily he would present the king, a pomegranate fruit. King without bothering about it, asked is minister to store it. One day the minister had gone away. The pomegranate fruit was in the king’s chamber. The pet monkey of the king, broke open, the fruit. From inside the fruit red gems started falling. Then the king examined all the fruits given by the sage. All the fruits had invaluable gems in side them. So when the sage came next day, Vikramadhithya asked him, “Oh sage, why are you giving me such invaluable presents? What can I do for you? The sage replied, “King, I am giving the fruits because I like you. I have only one request. I live in the nearby Kali temple. Tomorrow at mid night, you should come alone there.” The king agreed. The next day, king Vikramadhithya went o to the temple. When he went there, the devils and ghosts were dancing in the temple. Because Vikramadhithya was bold, he did not bother about them. The sage who was in the temple asked Vikramadhithya, “Dear king, I want a help from you. Near this temple, there is a cremation ground. In that ground, there is a drum stick tree. On the drum stick tree, a corpse would be hanging upside down. Please go and get it for me.” Vikramadhithya did not even wait for a moment and went to the cremation ground and approached the drumstick tree. He took his sword and cut off the corpse from the tree. Though he heard sound of it falling, it went back to the tree again. Now he climbed the tree, untied the corpse and holding it tightly started walking towards the Kali temple. Then the Vetala inside the corpse started speaking, “King, I am a powerful Vetala. If you are going to carry me, there is a condition. On the way, I would tell you a story. At the end of the

story, I would ask you a question. If you know the answer and do not tell it, then your head will break in to thousand pieces. But if you tell the correct answer, I would escape from you and start hanging in the drum stick tree again.” Vikramadhithya agreed to this condition. The Vetala started telling its first story.

I The story of the just king.

There was a great king called Vichara, He had only one son. The prince one day went for hunting in the forest riding a horse. He chased animals deep in the forest. He was feeling very thirsty. He went in search of a pond. At last he found it. He saw a sage sitting there. The prince told the sage, “I am the prince of this country. I want to drink water in the pond. Please hold this horse till I come back.” Then the sage told, “do you think, I am your servant? I cannot hold the horse for you?” The prince got very angry and beat the sage with his whip. The sage was wounded and went and complained to the king against the prince. The king immediately ordered the minister, to cut off the hand of the prince. When the minister told that it was not necessary, the king told, “The prince has behaved very harshly with the sage. What he has not done is not proper. Please cut off his hand.”

The sage who was listening to all this pleaded with the king to excuse the prince. The king agreed with him and excused the prince.

The Vetala asked, “who is greater-the king or the Vetala?”

Vikramadhithya replied, “Ofcourse, the king, because he wanted to punish the prince, in spite of him being his only son.”

The Vetala immediately went back to the cremation ground and started hanging upside down on the drumstick tree.