

## Imprudence

The fifth strategy begins with the following verse:

“Whoever without judgment  
Does what the foolish barber  
In this chapter did  
Comes to eternal grief.”

This is the story that shows how true is the above verse. Manibhadra was a merchant living in the southern city of Pataliputra. He was a man of principles who had lost all his wealth. His poverty made him very sad and one night he reflected on his condition and thought:

“Neither character nor patience  
Neither humility nor pedigree  
Dispels a poor man's gloom.”

Even if a man has merit, the pressures of earning a livelihood overshadow such merit. The need to look after the family wears out one's brilliance. A poor man's house is like a sky without stars, a lake without water.

“A poor man is shunned even if  
He has character and pedigree.  
A wealthy man shines in society  
Without merit and caste roots.  
What he does is never shameful  
But to be poor is always a crime.”



After thinking a lot about his condition, Manibhadra decided that death alone could solve his problems. With these thoughts he fell asleep and saw a dream. In his dream, a Jain monk appeared and said, “O merchant, don't give in to self-pity. I am Padmanidhi, the treasure collected by your ancestors. Tomorrow morning when I will visit you in this guise, you will hit my head with a stick and I will turn into gold. You can live happily ever after.”

When the merchant woke up next morning he wondered whether what he saw in the dream was real or unreal. “This may not be true. It could just be an illusion because I have been thinking about money all the time,” he thought and remembered the following poem:

“Their dreams never come true  
Who are sick, grief stricken,  
Lovelorn and infatuated.”

Meanwhile, a barber came to the merchant's house because his wife had called him for pedicure. Very soon came the Jain monk who appeared in the merchant's dream. Manibhadra was happy to see him and at once reached for the stick and struck him on his head. The monk turned into a statue of gold. The merchant then gave clothes and money to the barber and told him not to pass this information to anyone.

The barber went home and thought, "if a monk turns into gold if I strike him, I will invite all the monks and kill them and I can have lots of money." He passed the night with great difficulty. Next morning he went to the Jain monastery, went round its precincts three times and prostrated before the idol of Jinendra and sang the praise of the Jains thus:

"Victory to the Jain monks  
Who keep lust and love at bay  
Who turn the mind into a desert  
Where desire does not grow.  
Blessed are the hands that worship  
The enlightened Jinendra  
And blessed is the tongue  
That praises the great Saint."

After this prayer, the barber met the chief monk and knelt before him seeking his blessings. The monk blessed him and asked the barber the reason that brought him to the monastery. The barber pleaded humbly that the chief monk and others should accept his hospitality.

The chief monk said, "O my son, we are not Brahmins who are invited home to be honoured. We are mendicants who visit Jain homes and accept what is necessary to keep us alive. Please go away and don't embarrass me."

Disappointed, the barber said, "O great seer, I have made all preparations to receive you. Yet I cannot press you. You will do what you think is best."

The barber went home and kept a stick ready after checking the exits of the house. He went to the monastery again and stood there pleading with the monks to accept his offerings. Taking pity on the barber, the monks agreed to visit his home. The elders have rightly said:

"Man becomes old and infirm,  
Loses his hair and teeth and  
Cannot even hear and see properly.  
Everything in his body  
Degenerates but not desire."

When the poor monks trooped into his house, the barber closed all the exits and began assaulting them. Some of them died while some were crying with pain. The sheriff, passing by, heard this commotion and asked his men to immediately find out what was happening. The men saw what the barber had done and presented him before a magistrate. The barber admitted that he had killed some of the monks. The magistrate ordered that the barber be impaled.

The judges then said that no one should do like the barber without understanding the situation for the learned have said that he who does things without discretion or prudence regrets his action like the **Brahmin's wife**.

## The Brahmani and The Mongoose



In a city in the north lived a Brahmin whose name was Deva Sarma. His wife delivered a son at the same time as a she-mongoose gave birth to a male child. The Brahmani (Brahmin's wife) adopted the mongoose's son and began bringing him as she would her own son. Yet the Brahmani never left her son alone because she did not trust the mongoose, fearing that she would some day harm her son. The elders have said that one's own son, however immoral, ugly, foolish and wicked, are his parent's darling. It is said that

**"The bonds of a son are stronger than  
The bonds of a friend, father, or well wisher."**

One day, leaving for the lake to bring water, the Brahmin's wife told her husband to keep a watch on their son. Soon, a cobra entered the house. Fearing danger to the son of the Brahmin, the mongoose attacked the cobra and killed him. Hearing the footfalls of his mother Brahmani, the mongoose, with a mouth smeared by blood, went to greet her. When the mother saw the mongoose with his mouth oozing blood, thought that what she had feared had happened. Without a second thought, the Brahmin's wife threw the pot of water on the mongoose and the mongoose died as a result.



Mourning the death of the mongoose, the woman entered the house and found that her child was soundly sleeping in the cradle and also the cobra bitten to pieces by the mongoose. The woman was struck by grief that she had killed the mongoose that was like a son to her. Meanwhile, her husband returned and she began cursing him, "You miser, you didn't heed my word and went out for alms. Self-interest is good. Too much of it will earn a man the fate of Chakradhara," the Brahmani said.

"Who is Chakradhara and what is his story?" asked the husband. Following is his story as told by the Brahmin's wife.

Four young Brahmins were living in a city, suffering utter poverty.

Unable to bear it, they thought, "It is better to live in a forest where only wild animals live and no human beings than to suffer poverty. Sleeping on a bed of grass is better than leading forever a life of want and suffering."

So, they packed their bags and set out in search of prosperity and happiness. The learned have always said that the grief-stricken man always gives up truth, relatives, mother and even motherland. It was no wonder that the four Brahmins left their place and after several sojourns reached the great city of Ujjain. They bathed in Sipra river and went to the Maha Kaleswar temple. When they emerged from the temple after the worship of Kaleswar, Bhairavananda Swami, a sadhu, greeted them. All of them prostrated before him in reverence and accompanied him to his monastery.

The Swamiji asked the young men, "From where are you coming and where are you going? What brought you here?"

"We are in search of prosperity. For us, it is either death or wealth. You know that adventurous people achieve their goals even if they have to sacrifice their lives. Destiny is all-powerful. Still, nothing can be achieved without human effort. Wells, tanks and ponds become full when it rains. But man too brings water out of the earth by digging deep wells. So, please show us a way to achieve our goal," the Brahmin boys pleaded with the Swamiji.

Moved by their plight and determination, the Swamiji gave them four sanctified tablets and told them, "Each one of you takes a tablet and travel towards the Himalayas. Stop where the tablet slips out of your hand and look at that spot for treasures. Dig the treasures out and bring them back home and be happy."

They began their journey and after some days of travel, the tablet dropped from the hand of one of the four Brahmins. They stopped there and after digging the earth, they found plenty of copper. The first Brahmin told the others that all of them could mine as much copper as they could and take it home. The others said, "What is there in copper. Let's go ahead." The first Brahmin said they could go if they wanted but he would go home taking all the copper he could carry.

The other three continued their journey till a tablet dropped to the ground from the hand of one of the three. They dug there and found plenty of silver. The second Brahmin suggested that they should be happy with the silver they found and go home. The other two said he could take all the silver if he wanted. They would, however, continue their search for gold. The second Brahmin, happy with what he had found, took silver and went home.

Now, the remaining two Brahmins trekked some more distance until a third tablet dropped. The two dug there and found gold. The third man said that gold was better than copper and silver and they must now go back because there was nothing more precious than gold. The fourth Brahmin did not agree and replied that he would continue his search. The third man took the gold and went home.

It was now the turn of the fourth man. He was now tired and thirsty, and on top of it he had lost his way and began wandering aimlessly. Then he saw a man completely soaked in blood and a wheel whirring over his head like a halo. The Brahmin went near him and asked, "Sir, who are you and what is this wheel over your head? Can you show me a place where water is available?" As he finished his questions, the wheel shifted from the stranger's head and came over the Brahmin's head.

Then followed a dialogue:

"What is this wheel which has come over my head," asked the Brahmin.

"I have no idea. It tormented me as it is doing to you now," the stranger said.

"At least tell me how I can get rid of it. It is so painful."

"If any person like you with a tablet comes here and talks to you, the wheel will shift on to his head."

"How long have you been bearing this hurt," asked the Brahmin.

"I have no idea. But I think it was in the reign of Lord Rama," said the stranger.

"Who gave you food and water?"



“This place is where Kubera has stored all his wealth. Those who trespass on this area will have no thirst or hunger but a lot of pain inflicted by this wheel. Only such persons who have a magic tablet like you had can come here,” said the stranger and took leave of the Brahmin.

When the last Brahmin, whose name was Chakradhara, did not return, his friend Suvarnasiddhi went back following the trail left by his friend and found him bleeding and in great pain with a wheel over his head. He asked him how he got into that plight. Chakradhara told him what had happened so far.

Suvarnasiddhi then said, “I told you in many ways not to be greedy. You did not heed my word. You are learned but not wise. Wisdom is always superior to learning. Foolish people perish like the Brahmin boys who brought the lion to life.”

“How is that?” asked Chakradhara.

## The Lion That Sprang to Life

Four friends lived in a city. Three of them were very learned in all sciences but had no common sense. The fourth boy named Subuddhi was not well-versed in scriptures or sciences but had a fund of common sense. One day all of them thought that there was no use of their learning unless it brought them money to live happily. Therefore, they decided to go out and seek the patronage of kings. They set out to meet patrons of learning.

On the way, the eldest of them pointing out to the fourth man told the others, “Friends, this fellow is an unlettered fool. He has common sense and nothing else. I am not going to share my earnings with this fellow. Let him go home.”

The second man also supported the eldest boy's suggestion.

But the third boy said, “Friends, it is not proper to send him back. We played together and he is one of us. Let us share our gains with him because elders have said:

“He who has a narrow mind  
Thinks this is mine, this is his.  
To a large-hearted person  
The whole world is his family.”



In the end, the other two agreed with the third boy's suggestion and let the common sense man accompany them. As they continued to travel they reached a forest where they saw a heap of bones. One of them told the rest, “Look, here is an opportunity to test our learning. Some animal is dead. Let us bring it to life using the knowledge we have acquired.”

The first man said, “Okay, I will use my learning to assemble the bones into a skeleton.” With the power of learning he ordered all the bones to come together and become a skeleton.

When the skeleton was ready, the second man commanded flesh and blood to fill the skeleton and skin to cover it.

When the third man was about to bring life to the body, Subuddhi, who had only common sense, warned him, "Look, this looks like the body of a lion. If it comes to life, he will kill all of us."

The man who was to put life into the body of the animal told Subuddhi, "You are a fool. Do you think I will lose this opportunity to test my learning."



Subuddhi then told him to wait so that he could climb up a tree for safety and went up a tree. When the first man gave him life, the lion came alive and killed all the three learned men.

Suvarnabuddhi continued, That's why I have always said:

"Even if one is very learned  
 If he is without common sense  
 Becomes the butt of ridicule  
 Like the learned in this story."

"What is that story? Please tell me," asked Chakradhara. Suvarnasiddhi began to tell the story.

There lived four young Brahmin boys in a city. They were good friends eager to go out and acquire knowledge. They went to a place called Kanyakubj. They joined a monastery and began studying sciences and scriptures. After twelve years of learning they thought it was time to go home and asked their guru for permission to leave the monastery. After taking his permission, they started their homeward journey.

After a few days of travel, they reached a point where the road forked. They were not sure which road would take them home. Then they saw a funeral procession. One of the boys opened his book of learning and read out "Follow the path taken by great men."

The boy told his other friends, "Let us join and follow these great men leading the funeral procession."

They thus followed the procession to the cremation ground where they met a donkey.

The second Brahmin boy opened his book of shastras and found this verse in it:

"He who comes to your aid  
 In times of danger, famine,  
 Cremation and invasion  
 Is truly a friend in deed."

Then he told his friends that the donkey was, therefore, their best friend. At once one of them held on to the neck of the donkey. Another washed his feet. After this ceremony, they looked around and found a camel. The four of them began figuring out what the animal is. The third man opened his book of knowledge and read out, "What moves fast is righteousness" and decided that the camel must be the embodiment of righteousness.

The fourth man referred to his book and found that righteousness and friendship should always be together. They then tied the donkey and the camel together. Informed of this, the donkey's owner rushed to beat the four Brahmins. But they escaped before he came. They continued to travel till they reached a river and found a big leaf floating over the water.

One of them saw it and, remembering a line from a verse describing how a leaf helped a man cross the river, jumped on it and was being carried down by the current. A second Brahmin saw his friend in distress and remembered a verse:

"When total loss stares in the face  
A wise man sacrifices half and  
Manages with what remains."

So, with a view to save half of his friend, the second Brahmin cut off the head of the drowning man.

The remaining three resumed their travel only to stop when three villagers invited them for a feast. When the host served a dish resembling noodles to the first Brahmin, he thought "what is long should be discarded" and left the place without food.

The second man was served pancakes. He thought, "What spreads is not good for health" and refused to eat.

Doughnuts were served to the third Brahmin. He remembered that "There is peril where there is a hole" and left. The three Brahmins later went home.

Suvarnasiddhi ended the story and turned to Chakradhara and told him:

"Even if one is very learned  
If he is without common sense  
Becomes the butt of ridicule  
Like the learned in this story."

Chakradhara protested, "That is not true," and quoted this verse:

"What God chooses to save  
Survives sans human effort and  
No human effort can save  
What God ordains to perish."

As the frog said, "the one with thousand tricks sat on the head of the fisherman, the one with hundred tricks is hanging by the fisherman's arm and I with only one trick am happily swimming in the water."

"How is that?" asked Suvarnasiddhi. Chakradhara begins the story.

## The Tale of Two Fish and a Frog

Two fish named Sahasrabuddhi and Satabuddhi made a lake their home. They had a frog as a friend whose name was Ekabuddhi. Every day, they used to meet on the bank of the lake and discuss everything under the sun and disperse at sunset. One day, they saw some fishermen equipped with nets and each carrying a basket full of fish came that way and saw the lake and noticed that it was full of good fish. They told themselves that they should come early the next morning and bait the fish.

The fish heard their conversation and were very worried. Then the frog asked Satabuddhi for advice.



“O Satabuddhi, you have heard what the fishermen were planning. Now tell us what we should do. Should we remain in the lake or go somewhere else.”

Sahsrabuddhi answered the question, “Don’t worry. You should not be scared by just words. The learned have said “The world is still safe because the dreams of snakes and wicked men never come true.” The fishermen may not even come tomorrow. If they come, I am here to save you.”

Satabuddhi said, “You are a genius. What you say is correct. There is nothing that accomplished men cannot conquer. Remember how Chanakya had killed all the armed Nandas.

“Where one cannot pierce sun and wind  
 The wits of a resourceful man enter.  
 One should not leave motherland, for,  
 Nothing is happier than one’s own land.”

Then, Ekabuddhi, the frog, said, “Friends, flight is the only thing I know. So, I and my wife will leave this place tonight itself.”

Accordingly, the frog left the lake immediately. Next day, the fishermen came and netted lot of fish, frogs, crabs, turtles etc. and also Satabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi and killed all of them. One of them carried Satabuddhi on his head because he was heavier and slung Sahsrabuddhi to his arm because he was long.

Ekabuddhi showed this scene to his wife and said, “Didn’t I tell you what the fishermen will do? Now, see the plight of Satabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi.”

At the end, Chakradhara said, “O Suvarnasiddhi, you said that wisdom is superior to knowledge. But I say that wisdom alone without education does not serve any purpose.”

“True,” said Suvarnasiddhi. “But it is not wise to rule out the advice of a friend. Greed made you ignore my advice. Haven’t you heard how the donkey ignored the advice of the jackal and got a millstone around his neck?”

There was a donkey named Uddhata living in a village, carrying clothes and other burdens for his master. At night when there was no work, he used to trespass into farms outside the village and would come home at dawn for fear of assault by farm owners. One day Uddhata happened to meet a jackal in a farm outside the village and both soon became friends.

Every night they would go together to the cucumber farms and sumptuously feed on cucumber. At dawn, they would go home after they had their fill. One day, in a happy mood, the donkey told the jackal, “My son, look, how pleasantly serene the night is. It inspires me to sing. Tell me what raaga would you like me to begin with?”



The jackal said, "Uncle, why do you unnecessarily invite a peril? We have come here to stealthily rampage cucumber crop. Pimps and thieves must always observe silence. Haven't the learned said:

**"He who cannot control cough  
Or cannot keep sleep at bay  
Or cannot resist good food  
Should not burgle a house."**

"Your music has no melody. One can hear it like a trumpet from a mile. The watchmen here are asleep. If your music wakes them, they will either impound us or kill us. So, give up that bright idea and let us eat these sweet cucumbers."

"You stupid child, you live in the wilderness. That's why you don't know to enjoy music. It is only the very lucky people who are destined to listen to music sung in moonlight," said Uddhata.

The jackal replied, "True. But you do not know what is music. You know only to bray loudly. So, please give up your foolish idea."

The donkey was angry and retorted, "You are an idiot to say that I don't know music. Sage Bharata was the author of music, which is regarded as the fifth Veda with hundred and eighty-five notational patterns. To Gods, nothing is dearer than music. It is through music that Ravana won favours from Lord Shiva."

The jackal said, "All right uncle, let me first get out of this farm and keep a watch outside to alert you if anyone comes this way. You can then leisurely sing to your heart's content." The jackal then left the scene quietly.

The moment the donkey began singing, one of the watchmen woke up and struck it with a stick till he dropped to the ground. The watchman then brought an old millstone and hung it to the donkey's neck. The donkey soon recovered from the blows the watchman showered on him and managed to run with the millstone around his neck.

The jackal saw his plight and said, "You haven't paid heed to my advice. See how you have got a millstone around your neck."

After he finished this story, Suvarnasiddhi said, "Friend, you haven't cared to listen to me."

Chakradhara agreed with him and said, "What you say is true. The learned have said:

**"He who has no wits of his own  
Or does not heed advice of friends  
Perishes like the weaver, Mandhara."**

On Suvarnasiddhi showing interest, Chakradhara began Mandharaka's story.

## **The Story of The Weaver**



There was a weaver called Mandharaka in a southern city. One day, when he was weaving clothes, the wooden frames necessary for weaving were totally damaged. He went to the forest to bring wood to make new frames. From the forest he drifted towards the seashore where he saw a gigantic tree and thought that if he could cut wood from the tree it would stand him in good stead throughout his life.

As he started to cut the tree, a Yaksha living on that tree said, "O weaver, this tree is my home. So I have to protect it. I am very comfortable here enjoying the cool breeze coming from the sea."

Mandharaka said, "Sir, If I do not cut the tree and take home its wood, my family will starve and die. So, please go somewhere else. I have to cut this tree."

"All right, if you do not cut the tree, I will give you a boon of your choice," said the Yaksha.

The weaver said, "Sir, in that case, I will go home and consult my wife and friends. You can give me the boon later."



On the Yaksha agreeing to it, Mandharaka went home and on his way he met his friend who was a barber and asked him, "Friend, a Yaksha has given me a boon of my choice and gave me time to consult friends and my wife. What boon do you want me to ask him?"

"Ask him to give you a kingdom. You will be the king and I will be your minister. Both of us can enjoy life here and hereafter," said the barber.

"True. But let me ask my wife also," said Mandharaka. The barber warned the weaver against consulting his wife and said quoting learned people:

**"A wise man can give to his woman  
Fine clothes, pearls and diamonds;  
But never consult her on his affairs  
Because women have low wits."**

And as Shankaracharya said that home that is run by women or children or tricksters will meet ruin in the end."

The weaver gently ignored the advice of the barber saying that he would nevertheless consult his wife and went home. He told his wife the whole story of the Yaksha and the boon he had offered.

Mandharaka also told his wife that his friend, the barber, had advised him to ask for a kingdom. His wife said, "O my lord, how intelligent is a barber? Never listen to his word. No wise man would consult children or barbers or servants or beggars. Also,

**"Kingship has too many problems;  
Conspiracies take away your peace.  
With the crown come not only thorns  
But also sinister plots and treason."**

It was for the sake of kingdom  
Lord Rama lived in the woods,  
Pandava brothers fled into exile,  
The Yadava dynasty disappeared,  
King Nala embraced anonymity.”

“Therefore, no wise man will invite kingship that leads to killing brothers, friends and relatives,” said the weaver’s wife.

The weaver replied, “My dear, what you say is true. But you haven’t told me what boon I should choose.”

The wife said, “Every day you are able to weave a single piece of cloth. That’s barely enough to meet our daily needs. Therefore ask the Yaksha to give you another head and two more hands. That helps you to weave two pieces of cloth every day instead of one. The first piece will help us meet our daily needs. The second one will help us meet special needs. We can sail through life comfortably and happily.”



The weaver was happy with the advice his wife gave and went to the Yaksha and prayed to him, “Sir, you have kindly given me a choice. I request you to give me two more hands and an extra head.”

At once, he had four hands and two heads. Happily, he began his homeward journey. On the way people saw him and mistaking him for some monster hammered him with sticks and stones. The poor weaver died on the spot.

Chakradhara continued, “That’s why, as I have said earlier:

“He who has no wits of his own  
Or does not heed advice of friends  
Perishes like the weaver, Mandhara.”

“When the devil of greed dances on their head, people will become objects of ridicule like me.” The elders have said:

“He who covets the impossible  
Or builds castles in the air  
Comes to certain grief like  
Poor Soma Sarma’s father.”

Suvarnasiddhi asked him how. Chakradhara tells him the following story about Soma Sarma’s father.

## The Miserly Father



Swabhavakripan was a Brahmin living in a city in the south. He was known for his miserliness. Every day, he would go out begging and save some corn flour people gave him as alms. He stored such flour in an earthen pot and when it was full he hung the pot to a peg above his bed so that he could keep an eye on it.

He returned home one day very tired and went to sleep and began dreaming: "This pot is full of flour and if there is a famine it would fetch me a very high price. With that money, I will buy two she goats that in course of time will become a big herd. I will sell them for a huge profit and buy cows with that money. Then I will buy buffaloes and later horses. And, when the stables are full of horses I will sell them and buy lots of gold."

"With this gold, I will build a huge house with four floors. Seeing my riches one Brahmin will offer the hand of his beautiful daughter to me. She will soon deliver a son and I will name him Soma Sarma. When he is a year old, I will go and hide in the stable and call out to him to find me out. But the son drifts dangerously towards the horses. I shout at my wife to come and take him away. Busy with domestic chores she ignores my call. Then I shall kick her."



The dream shattered when he kicked the pot of flour hanging from the peg and spilled all its contents over his body. He now looked like a white ghost.

Chakradhara resumed, "That is why, I said:

"He who covets the impossible  
 Or builds castles in the air  
 Comes to certain grief like  
 Poor Soma Sarma's father."

"I don't see anything in this to blame you," said Suvarnasiddhi. "Every one becomes a slave to greed. As the learned have said,



**“He who is overwhelmed by greed  
And doesn't weigh its consequences,  
Will become a victim of deceit  
Like King Chandra in this story.”**

Suvarnasiddhi then told the story of King Chandra to Chakradhara.

Once upon a time there was a king named Chandra ruling a small state. His children were fond of playing with monkeys. So the king ordered a number of monkeys to be brought to the palace and asked his servants to feed them well and look after their needs. The leader of the monkeys was an old scholar well versed in statecraft, specially the works of Sukracharya, Brihaspati and Chanakya. The old monkey trained the younger ones also in statecraft.

The king had a stable of goats that his young sons used to ride. One of the goats was fond of food and would daily sneak into the kitchen at any time of the day and make a clean sweep of whatever was available in the kitchen. If the cook chanced to see him stealing food, he would throw at it whatever was handy, a stick or a brass pot.

The monkey leader saw this drama between the cook and the wily goat and thought: “I am sure this tussle between the cook and the goat will lead to the ruin of my tribe. This goat has become a slave to food. The cook will throw at it whatever is nearby. It may be a stick or if it is not readily available he may use an ember from the hearth to throw at the goat. This will set ablaze the goat's fur-covered body making him run into the stable that would soon catch fire and burn the horses. The great veterinarian Salihotra has said the fat of monkeys is the best medicine for burns. That will be the end of monkeys.”

The monkey leader then summoned all the younger ones and told them that the feud between the cook and the goat would certainly do harm to them. In their own interest they should leave the palace as early as possible. He quoted the scholars saying:

**“He who wants to live in peace  
Must leave a house of daily strife.  
Conflict breaks up kingdoms  
Like bad words separate friends”**

The younger ones, however, refused to listen to the advice of the old monkey. They told the leader, “Sir, you have become old and senile. We are not going to leave this palace where we have the best food available. What do we get there to eat in the jungles? We cannot eat the indifferent food in the forest.”

Extremely unhappy at their response, the old monkey said, “You have no idea of the price you will pay for the comforts of the palace. They won't last long. I cannot see the end of our tribe. I am leaving. He who spares himself the spectacle of a friend in distress, of his house occupied by an enemy or of the division of his country, is the happiest.”

The old monkey left all of them with a heavy heart.

Some days later, the wily goat entered the royal kitchen and the cook, failing to see anything handy to punish it, took out a burning piece of wood from the hearth and hurled it at the goat. His fur afire, he ran in panic into the stable where his burning body set ablaze the hay stacked there. Several horses perished in the fire. The king consulted expert veterinarians who advised him to use monkey fat as unguent for horses suffering from burns.

The king ordered all monkeys to be killed and their fat used to heal the burns of the horses. The old monkey was distressed by the death of her progeny and began planning as to how he could take revenge on the king for killing all monkeys. Wandering restlessly in the forest, the old monkey saw a lake full of lotuses. On deeper inspection of the lake, the senior monkey found footprints of animals and human beings entering the lake but not footprints leaving the lake.

The monkey at once realised that there must be some wicked crocodile in the lake and that it was better to drink water with the tube of a lotus. As he began drinking water, a monster emerged from the lake wearing a pearl

necklace. The monster addressed the monkey and said, "You seem to be an intelligent chap. You drank water without entering the lake. I am impressed by the presence of your mind. Ask anything you want."

The monkey asked, "Sir, how many lives can you take in one go?"

The monster said, "I can swallow tens, hundreds and thousands at one time. All this I can do only when they enter the lake. Outside the water, even a jackal can challenge me."

The monkey said, "I have to settle scores with a king. If you can lend me the pearl necklace on your body, I will somehow persuade the king and all his men to enter the lake for hidden wealth. Then you can kill all of them."

Trusting the monkey, the monster gave him the pearl necklace. The monkey reached the kingdom of Chandra. People saw the dazzling necklace and asked him how he got it. The monkey told them about the lake. When the word reached the king, he sent for the monkey and asked him how he got the necklace.

On the monkey telling him everything about the lake, the king, led by the monkey, and accompanied by his family, ministers and followers, reached the lake. The monkey told the king that it was better that all his men entered the lake at the same time at dawn. But the monkey told the king, "My lord, you will not go with them. I will take you separately to a spot where you can get a large store of pearl necklaces."

According to the plan, all the king's men entered the lake at the same time and were killed by the monster. When nobody came out of the water for a long time, the king became suspicious and asked the monkey about the delay in his men coming out of the lake. The monkey immediately sprang to the top of a tree and told the king:

"O king, the monster inside the lake has killed all your people. You have killed my people. This is my reply to that treachery."

Suvarnasiddhi concluded the story by repeating the earlier verse:

"He who is overwhelmed by greed  
And doesn't weigh its consequences,  
Will become a victim of deceit  
Like King Chandra in this story."

Suvarnasiddhi then asked Chakradhara for permission to leave. Chakradhara said that it was not good to desert a friend in distress.

Suvarnasiddhi said, "What you say is true. Yet, it is always better to do according to what the wise men advise. Otherwise, I will have to repent later like you. As the learned have said, "Those who are not united will perish like the great bird which had two heads on a single torso but ate different fruits."

On Chakradhara's request Suvarnasiddhi began telling that story.

## Tale Of The Bird With Two Heads



A great bird named Bharunda lived on the banks of a lake. He had two heads but a single body. One day, as the bird was wandering on the bank of the lake, he found a fruit, which was as delicious as ambrosia. One of his heads mumbled, "Oh what a fruit. I am sure the heavens have sent it for me. I am so lucky."

Hearing this, the second head said, "O brother, let me also taste the fruit you are praising so much."

The first head laughed and said, "Both of us have the same stomach. It makes no difference whether I eat it or you eat it. I shall give it to our beloved. She will be very happy." Bharunda thus gave the fruit to his wife. The second head was disappointed at this action of the first head.

One day, the second head found a poisonous fruit and told the first head, "You treacherous fellow. For what you have done to me, I will eat this poisonous fruit and avenge your insult."

The second head said, "You fool, if you eat that, both of us will die because we have the same body."



Ignoring his warning, the second head ate the poisonous fruit and both of them died.

After listening to the story, Chakradhara said, "Friend, what you say is true. You can go home but don't go alone. Haven't our elders said:

"Alone, do not eat delicious food,  
Do not sleep when others are awake,  
Neither should you travel alone  
Nor ponder alone over matters."

"See how the Brahmin has survived because he had heeded his mother's advice and took a crab as his travelling companion."

"How was that?" asked Suvarnasiddhi.

Brahmadatta was a Brahmin boy living in a city with his old mother. One day, when he was planning to travel to another village, his mother told him not to travel alone but take someone with him. The boy said that the way to the village was safe and that he was leaving on an urgent business. He asked her not to be afraid.

Knowing that he was determined to go, the mother went to the well in the backyard and took out a crab and asked his son to keep the crab with him during his travel. The boy then put the crab in a camphor box and put that box in a vessel and set out on his journey. That being summer, the day was very hot and the Brahmin halted and took rest under a big tree.

From the hollow of the tree, a snake emerged and, attracted by the fragrance of camphor, swallowed the box containing the crab. The crab came out of the box and sliced the head of the snake and killed him. The Brahmin boy woke and found the dead snake and the camphor box. When he saw the crab coming out of the box alive, he at once realised what had happened.

He then remembered the words of his mother and thought he did well by heeding her advice that saved him from death. He also recalled the words of the elders:

“Those who feed on the rich  
Do not help them in distress.  
When their wealth is in tact  
Everyone hovers around the rich.”

Chakradhara concluded his story telling Suvarnasiddhi how important to always have a companion. He then agreed to Suvarnasiddhi taking leave of him.

Thus ends the fifth strategy Vishnu Sharman narrated to the sons of Amarashakti.