

## CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

*The Departure of Ghaṭotkaca to Prāgjyotiṣa*

*Śaunaka said:*

1-3. O Sūta, the extremely wonderful, unparalleled *Guptakṣetra* has been glorified. It enhances delight.

Previously while you were glorifying Siddhalinga, you said thus: "By the grace of Siddhamātā ('Siddha mother') and through the assistance of Caṇḍila, a meritorious soul named Vijaya will achieve *Siddhis*."

Who is this one named Caṇḍila? Who is the person named Vijaya?

4-6a. How did he achieve *Siddhi* by the favour of Siddha mother? Recount this accurately. Indeed we have great curiosity for hearing it. Who is not enthusiastic in the matter of listening to the conduct of good people?

*Ugraśravas narrated:*

You have asked well. It is a long time since I heard the story from Dvaipāyana directly, O Brāhmaṇas, yet I shall recount it to you.

6b-11. Formerly, after obtaining the daughter of king Dru-pada (in the *Svayamvara*), the sons of Pāṇḍu established themselves later on in Indraprastha at the suggestion of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They were then protected by Vāsudeva. Once the Pāṇḍavas were sitting together in the assembly and conversing on various topics. While the exploits of Devas, Sages, Piṭṛs and ghosts as well as kings were being talked about Ghaṭotkaca, the son of Bhīma, came there.

On seeing him, the five brothers and the valorous Vāsudeva suddenly got up from their seats and joyously embraced him. The humble son of Bhīma bowed down and saluted them. After blessing him, the king made him sit on his lap. With great affection he sniffed him on his head and told him (openly) in the assembly of the people:

*Yudhiṣṭhira said:*

12-15. Whence are you coming, dear son? Where have

you been diverting yourself so long? I hope you happily rule the kingdom inherited from your (maternal) uncle. O son of Hiḍambī, I hope you never misbehave towards Brāhmaṇas, good men, cows and gods. It is pleasing to Hari and us. The entire forest of Hiḍamba and his army of Rākṣasas are being protected by you, O good (son), and (I hope) then the prosperity of the people is on the increase. I hope your mother is very happy. She has done (many things) pleasing to us. Even as a virgin, she cast off all false prestige and resorted to Bhīma as her husband.

16-20. On being enquired thus by king Dharma (i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira) the son of Hiḍambī replied smilingly:

“When my wicked uncle was killed, I was appointed to rule the kingdom. I have since then placed the kingdom under good administration, killing the vicious people.

My mother, the gentle lady of divine penance, is quite happy. She always used to tell me, ‘O dear son, be devoted to your father and uncles.’

On hearing her words I have come from the region at the foot of Meru<sup>1</sup> for bowing down to you all, with devout and humble mind. I wish that you engage me in some noble task, since there is great benefit in it. If the son is always obedient to his parents and uncles, he will conquer the worlds above and will be famous here in this world.”

*Sūta said:*

21. As his son said thus, the king Dharma embraced him again and again with tears of joy, and said to him with his voice choked:

22-24. “You alone are our devout helper. It is for this purpose, O son of Hiḍambī, that good persons wish for sons. Sons of that sort redeem them here and hereafter. Certainly a son is like his mother; your mother is greatly devoted to us. You too are like that.

1. From Mbh *Ādi*, Ch. 150, it is clear that Hiḍimba-Vana was near Vārāṇasī as Pāṇḍavas came out of the tunnel from Lākṣāgrha (‘House of Lac’) and found themselves in the Kingdom of Hiḍimba. Mount Meru (the Pamirs) is far away from it. The words ‘from the foot of Meru’ show the ignorance of the author about the exact location of ‘Hiḍimba-Vana’.

25. Oh! this dear wife of my brother has surpassed the glory of her husband (since) she has undertaken penance.

26-27. Certainly my sister-in-law's activities are not at all prompted by lust or desire to enjoy worldly pleasures. It is because she seeks the happiness of her son that she has resorted to penance, the (main) purpose of which is the attainment of the other world. If a girl even of a low family is herself devoted and gives birth to a devout son, I consider her to be an excellent one belonging to a noble family."

28. After speaking many such (complimentary) sentences, Dharmarāja spoke thus to Keśava:

29-32. "O lotus-eyed Lord, you know how he was born to Bhīma and how, as soon as he was born, he became a mighty youth. In the case of eight divine species birth and attainment of youth occur simultaneously. Hence he attained youth immediately. So, Kṛṣṇa, I am always worried about getting a suitable wife for him. Wherefrom can I get a suitable wife for the son of Hiḍambī? O Lord Kṛṣṇa, O omniscient one, you know the whole of the three worlds. O scion of the family of Yadu, it behoves you to suggest a wife suitable for the son of Hiḍambī."

*Sūta said:*

33. On being told thus by king Dharma, Janārdana thought for a while and spoke these words:

34. "There is one, O king. I shall tell you about a girl splendid and suitable for him. Now she lives in the beautiful and excellent city of Prāgjyotiṣa.<sup>1</sup>

35. O son of Pṛthā, she is the daughter of Muru<sup>2</sup> of wonderful exploits. He was a friend of Naraka as dear to him as his life.

36. You know it all that that terrible Daitya was killed and his fortress made of nooses destroyed by me and that he was a wicked one.

1. Prāgjyotiṣapura—Kāmarūpa or Kāmākhyā in Assam.

2. Muru or Mura—An Asura, Defence Officer of Naraka. He built round the city of Prāgjyotiṣa his nooses. Kṛṣṇa destroyed that network and killed Mura (Mbh, *Sabhā* 38.29).

37. Then, after Muru, the Daitya, had been killed by me, his terrible daughter Kāmakaṭaṅkaṭā came to fight with me because she was extremely mighty and vigorous.

38. She held a sword and a shield. In the great battle I fought with her by means of great arrows discharged from the excellent bow Śārṅga.

39. With her sword the daughter of Muru cut off my arrows. Approaching (me), she struck Garuḍa with her sword.

40. Overcome with fainting sensation, Garuḍa became unconscious. Thereupon, the discus was taken up by me for killing her.

41. On seeing that the discus was raised by me on the battle ground, the goddess named Kāmākhyā stood before me and spoke these words:

42. 'O Puruṣottama, it does not behove you to kill her. Protect her. Invincibility has been granted to her by me along with a sword and a shield.

43. She was granted unparalleled intellect and the greatest might in battle. That was why even in three days the daughter of Muru has not been subdued by you.'

44. On being told thus, I spoke these words to the goddess, 'Here I have withdrawn, O splendid lady, (now you) stop her too.'

45-48. Thereafter Kāmākhyā embraced her, her own devotee, and spoke these words to her: 'O gentle lady, refrain from fighting. He cannot be killed by anyone in battle. Mādhava is invincible in war. There is no one, there will never be one and there never was anyone who could vanquish him in battle. Even the Three-eyed Lord, O daughter, cannot defeat him. How can anyone else (do so)? Hence, O splendid lady, bow down to him. Turn away from this fight. This is clearly proper on your part. You will become the daughter-in-law of Bhīma, his brother (i.e. cousin).

49. Hence, O gentle lady, honour Janārdana, your father-in-law. O learned lady, you must not grieve over your (dead) father.

50-52. Death is inevitable for a person who is born and re-birth is inevitable for one who dies. Many know this. Say, by whom can it be prevented? Whom does not Death assail at the proper time? (Even) sages, Devas, great Asuras, men with the

learning of the three Vedas and kings (cannot escape). Death does assail them. A person conversant with the superior and inferior or prior and posterior things does not become deluded anywhere. The death of your father at the hand of this Janārdana is praiseworthy. He has become liberated from all sins and has gone to the abode of Viṣṇu.'

53-56. On being told by Kāmākhyā thus, Kāmakaṭaṅkaṭā gave up her anger, covered her limbs and bowed down to me. After granting her my blessing, I spoke to her, O leading member of the family of Bharata:

'Stay here in this city, duly honoured by Bhagadatta. Bhagadatta has been made the king by me as well as by goddess Earth. He will honour you in diverse ways as though you are his sister. Staying here you will attain the son of Hiḍambī as your husband.'

After consoling that gentle lady, the daughter of Muru, in this manner, I bade farewell to her.

57. She stayed in that city and I went to the abode of Śakra. Then I came to Dvāravatī and met you.

58-64. Thus she is the splendid and befitting wife to the son of Hiḍambī. In that battle connected with Kāmākhyā, she shone like a terrible lightning. Her beauty is not extolled by me as it is improper for a father-in-law (to do so). Indeed it is not proper for a good person to describe in detail all women.

Further, a condition has been stipulated by her. Listen to it: 'A man who conquers me by silencing me with questions (in disputations) as well as by fighting with me, shall be my husband.'

On hearing this stipulation, many Daityas and Rākṣasas went there in order to win her over. But they were (all) conquered and slain by her.

No one who has gone to her has returned alive as in the case of a swarm of locusts that enters bright fire (never to return). If Ghaṭotkaca of great vigour and might dares to conquer the daughter of Muru, she will certainly be his wife."

*Yudhiṣṭhira said:*

65-67. She may very well have many good qualities but she has one great defect. What is the use of that milk which is mixed with poison?