Kathānī Kūhā: Of Friendship, Love, and Memory

Parmeshvara Kathānī Kūhā, Sirco Village, Raipur District, Madhya Pradesh
October 12, 1981

P = Parmeshvara
A = Audience members
LAUGH = laughter of audience

[Performer places a lit kerosene lantern on a basket in the middle of the performance clearing.]

[Sung vandanā]

A—h, A—h, A—h
Ram, Ram, Shri Hari Ram.
If you repeat Ram’s name,
All your pain will be destroyed.
He who is the first cause of the yogis.
He who takes away pain from the saints.

Mother Kunti held to Ram’s name.
Her five sons became famous.

Yudhishtira held to Ram’s name.
His body was taken to heaven.

1 The indented lines are songs. The breaks within the songs are conceptual breaks to aid the reader of the printed text, not performative ones, that is, the rāg (melodic structure) indicates line breaks, but no discrete verse breaks.
Arjun held to Ram's name.
With his bow, he supported the earth.

Bhim held to Ram's name.
With his club, he destroyed the army of the Kauravas.

Nakula held to Ram's name.
With the heart of Kunti, he made the earth one.

Sahadev held to Ram's name.
He knew politics and the impossible.

Draupadi held to Ram's name.
She was saved in the court of the Kauravas.

The pigeon held to Ram's name.
He was saved from the mouth of the crocodile.

The Baula cow held to Ram's name.
She was saved from the mouth of the tiger.

Prahlad held to Ram's name.
He killed Hikhya and was given Indra's heaven.

Sugriv held to Ram's name.
He was made the king of Kishkinda.

Vibhishan held to Ram's name.
He was given the kingdom of Lanka.

Hanuman held to Ram's name.
He was saved in the womb of the demoness.

Vibhishan held to Ram's name.
He was given the kingdom of Lanka.

Ahalya held to Ram's name.
She received salvation at the touch of his feet.

Ram, Ram, Shri Hari Ram
Ram, Ram Shri Hari Ram,
Whose vehicle is Garud,
Who is the son of Kaushalya.

By holding to Ram's name,
By reciting the lord's name,
The god of death will not touch you.
He will not touch you.
The koyal bird, the koyal has thirty-two āg.
Give me your voice, oh koyal,
Give me part of your voice.

I salute Sarasvati;
I salute Samlai.
Give me a verse;
Show me the way.

I salute Sarla;
I salute Mangla.
Play in my throat;
Open my throat.

The black pepper tree is black.
The black pepper tree is black.
Look at my ignorance,
That of a child.

I salute my mother and father.
I salute the village gods.
I salute the east and the west.
I salute the north and the south.
I salute those gathered here.

I take refuge.
I sing a song.
I take refuge.

If Sarla is there, she will play in my throat;
She will play in my heart.

I fall at your feet, Mother Sarasvati.
Listen to my one request.
Victory to Mother India, I fall at your feet.
Listen to my plea of sorrow.
Lord, listen to my plea of sorrow.

I have neither wisdom nor knowledge; I am foolish.
I have neither wisdom nor knowledge; I am foolish.
So I fall at your feet.
I fall at your feet.

Lord Narayan, I take refuge at your feet.
Listen to my one request,
That my throat may be strong.
Lord Narayan, I take refuge at your feet.
Hari, listen to my one plea.
You went and stayed in the queen's palace.
You killed the demon Kamsa.
You made Ugrasena king.
Asking for sweetened milk, you annihilated Putna.
The greatest sinner was gone,
Taking refuge in your name.

Hari, listen to my one plea.
I am foolish and unknowing.
I take refuge in you.
I am singing,
Taking refuge in your name.

Take me across this ocean of mundane existence.
I am singing, joining verse to verse.
Hari, listen to my one plea.

[Lengthy break in performance, during which the lantern is removed from the basket and turned off; the audience members and performer converse.]

P. There was a bus station. There was a bus station. And what happens to the buses at that station? They gather there and go out in all directions. People get off at that station, and what do they do?

A. [Give indiscernible answer, so performer asks again.]

P. People get off at that station, and what else do they do?

A. They go here and there.

P. They also get on. Right? They do both. They get off and they get on. At that station, they get on and off. At the station, there's no other food, only fried snacks.

So, what happens?

A. A bus came from the east and a bus came from the west. And, at that station, what happened to the two buses?

A. They were standing there.

P. They were standing there. Yes, they were standing there. There was the station. The buses were standing. The buses were standing there, and then the people from one bus got off and the people from the other bus also got off. Right?

A. Right.

P. Or didn't they get off?

A. They got off.
P. OK. The people from both buses got off. One man got off one bus and another man got off the other, and what did they do? One sat under the shade of a tree. Both sat under the shade of the same tree. Sitting in the shade, one man said, "Brother, I've come a long distance. I had matches, but they're all gone. I have only biři [leaf cigarettes]."

"Brother, I bought new matches, but my biři are all gone. I have only matches," he said.

Both of them took out their matches and biři. They smoked them there, and there they introduced themselves to each other. Both of them smoked their biĩi, and then what did they do? They introduced themselves to each other. What does "introduction" mean?

A. To get to know each other, to know.

P. Where are you from? Where are you going? This is the way an introduction is made. There, they both introduced themselves to each other.

[Song]
Tāre tāre tāre re tāre tāre re re nāre nāre re.
[These semantically empty syllables introduce the melodic structure of the song.]

"From which place have you come?
From which place have you come?
You've gotten off at the station, brother.
Where are you going?
Introduce yourself, bābū,
Introduce yourself."

"I've come from the east.
I'm going to the west.
I've learned a skill, brother;
I'm getting its worth.
I'm going from place to place.
I'm using my skill.
And you, from which direction have you come?
Why are you asking me?
To which place will you go?
To which city will you go?"

"I have no mother; I have no home village.
I have no father; I have no place to go.
Where should I go, brother?
Where should I go?
I've learned a skill.
I'm going from place to place."
I’m taking contracts, brother.
I’m taking contracts.”

P. Yes. — LAUGH — “What kinds of work can you do? You said you are from the east, from the Oriya region. What kinds of skills have you learned?”

“Count them. I make gold and silver half-moon earrings, round earrings, earrings for the inner ear, necklaces, and nose rings. Are you counting? I have that many skills. That’s why I’ve come from the east to the west. Whatever work I find, I’ll do it and collect my wages. That’s what I do. Will you take contracts from anyone?” he said.

“I know how to do woodworking,” he said. “Do you know what I’m called? I’m called a carpenter. I know how to do woodworking, brother. What do I do with big buildings? I make them. I make big buildings; and I also collect my wages. I’m like you; but you’re a little—just this much—of a liar.”

“What! What have I done to you that you’re calling me a liar?”

P. “Say yes. Say yes; say yes. You’re a bit of a liar; say yes. Don’t lift your ass and shake it in front of me [that is, don’t insult and challenge me]. This world is greedy and sinful. What don’t people covet? Even if there’s only one beautiful leaf left, they pick it and take it home. And you’re greedy for gold, aren’t you? You’ll weigh it. There’s sand inside, isn’t there [to make it heavier]. If you said yes, it wouldn’t be right. Then why are you shaking it in front of me? ”

“You’re a nice person!”

“How’s that?”

“Trees and plants give fruit only because of truth; and because of truth, the seven oceans don’t overflow their shores. If the ocean were a liar, then this American couldn’t come and sit here. Could she sit here? If the ocean were a liar? How could she cross it? Right? If people came out of the ocean, how could you cross the ocean? That’s why I’m saying, the trees give fruit and the seven oceans don’t overflow their shores because of truth. What wrong has the tree done? It’s just there, and its mind is on god; and god is merciful to it. Then that tree bears fruit in bunches.”

Tarē tāre tāre tāre tānā tāre tāre tānā tānā.

The carpenter was strong.
Slowly, slowly, the argument grew.
He took hold of his wooden hammer,
Took his wooden hammer.
He struck [the goldsmith] twice.
He struck three times.
He went behind the bābū.
He went in front of him.
Then he left him.
Then he left him.
The son [goldsmith] fled.
Look, he fled.

King Manicandra was seated.
King Manicandra was seated.
King Manicandra was seated.
He was dispensing justice.
He was seated in the assembly.
Manicandra of Madhukatak.
Manicandra of Madhukatak.
He is the king.
He cares for his subjects.
He is a virtuous king.
He cares for his subjects.

He went to that assembly.
He fled to that assembly.
Behind him was the carpenter,
Was the carpenter.
Manicandra saw them.
Manicandra saw them, brother.
"Wait! Stop!" the king said.
He forbid them [from coming forward].

P. Of the two, who was the stronger? Who was fighting?
A. The carpenter and the goldsmith.
P. The carpenter and goldsmith were fighting; so of the two, who was the stronger?
A. The carpenter.
P. OK. He was a woodworker, right? The carpenter was stronger than the goldsmith. OK. So who was beaten?
A. The goldsmith.
P. The goldsmith was beaten. Having been beaten, where did he flee in fear?
A. To the king.
P. He reached the place where King Manicandra was dispensing justice to his subjects. The goldsmith went there and said, "I'll be saved here," he said. "If not, I have no chance," he said. He had been beaten badly. That's why he went to the court, to the place of justice.

There, the king saw him and said, "Look, one man is following behind; one man is fleeing without looking where he is going. [to the two men] Stop! Watch out!" He forbid them. He stood up and finished the case over which
he was presiding. He finished it and said, “Come, come, come,” and he called them. “Come, come, come,” he said; and he put one of them on each side of him. And he said, “One person was ahead, and one person was behind. Why were you ahead? Tell me that. Then I’ll ask the one who was behind. Why were you in front? Tell me that. If you don’t tell me, it won’t work.”

[Crying] “Oh king, I got off the bus and he, also, got off, and both of us sat down in the same place. We smoked biṭṭī and introduced ourselves to each other. I said I was a goldsmith from the east. He said he was a carpenter from the west. That’s what we said. I’m telling the truth, oh king. He gestured with his fingers like this and said, ‘You’re this much of a liar.’ I hadn’t done anything wrong to him. I said, “How can you talk like that?” and, as I sat down, I lifted my ass a little. Then he said, ‘Say yes; don’t lift your ass toward me.’ And he said, ‘This world is greedy and sinful. Whoever is not greedy in this world, his eyes are not pure [that is, he’s a liar].’ And, oh king, he said, ‘You weigh it, and there’s sand inside, isn’t there?’”

“That then I said, ‘You’re a nice person!’ And he asked, ‘How’s that?’ And, sitting down, I said, ‘The trees and plants give fruit because of truth. Because of truth, the seven oceans don’t overflow their shores. And that tree, right where it is, bears fruit in bunches. What wrong has it done that you are cutting it, breaking it into pieces, and piercing it, just to feed your stomach?’”

“I was sitting there and I started to get up. He got angry and gestured like this, and what did I think? I thought he would say, ‘Go, go away,’ but, oh king, that didn’t happen! He struck me here [pointing to his ass] twice. I’ve never been beaten like that in my life. Oh king, I bow to you. Decide justly on this, or I won’t be saved.”

The king was amazed. —LAUGH— Of the two, who was the liar? I ask you, who?

A. The goldsmith was the liar.

P. You’ll explain that, won’t you? —LAUGH— If he’s a liar, then what happens? This is hardly a lie. Then, did he lie? You’ll explain that, won’t you? Did he? —LAUGH— Of the two, both men were liars, and neither was a liar.

The king didn’t see the difference between the two. He thought, “Whom should I make small, and whom should I make big? What the carpenter has said is true; and what the goldsmith has said, that, too, is true. How will I decide justly? And between them, whom will I make small? Now their blood is hot. I’ll tell the carpenter, ‘You’re a liar’ and saying that, I’ll say, ‘The goldsmith has been beaten. My decision is that you’ll live like a louse [that is, as a parasite].’ No, it will be very difficult. I’ll have to make that decision again.”

No, what did the king do? He said, “Go, both of you be present at the hearing on the fifteenth.” He said, “Go, be present at the hearing on the fifteenth day of this month,” and gave this order. Because of this order, the
two who had been going out to work didn't go to work. Each returned to his own place. Each returned to his own country. The goldsmith had money. He bought a ticket and reached home quickly. The unlucky carpenter had no money. He was only a woodworker. It was all gone. What did he do? "No," he said, "If I go by way of Basna, it will take me a long time. I'll take the shortcut through the jungle." Right?

A. Right.
P. He wasn't afraid. The jungle was his playground. Because of that, he avoided the road on which he would have to spend money. He thought, "If I go by bus, I'll reach home by evening; and if I go this way, I'll reach home quickly and won't have to eat anything." Right?

Tāre tāre tāre re tāre tāre re nāre nā re.

The son was going on the jungle road. He was going on the forest road. The son was looking at the trees. He was looking at the plants. The son was approaching them. He was looking at the trees.

"I could use these. I could use these," The son said to himself.

He entered the jungle. The bābū entered the forest. He was walking in the jungle. He was going on and on in the jungle.

The son looked at one tree. He looked at the wood. It was a sandalwood tree. It was a sandalwood tree. Carrying it, the son brought it [and] He put it in his house.

P. He reached home. What did he find in the jungle?
A. Sandalwood, sandalwood.
P. He looked at many trees while he was returning, right? Seeing this tree, what did he say? "You're a beautiful tree; I could use you. What can I say?" he said. Right? He was praising the tree. What was he looking at?

A. The sandalwood.
P. He looked at the sandalwood tree. He looked at the sandalwood tree. He
admired it. He looked at it and kicked it with his foot. It moved, and he said, "Now I can pick it up." That's the way it was; that was his custom. Yes. He went to pick up the tree. "If I can kick it and it moves," he said, "then I'll be able to pick it up easily. If not, it will have to stay there. —LAUGH— I know I would get too tired [carrying it]."

What did he do first? He kicked it. Right? He kicked it and the tree moved. Yes. It moved and he picked it up. He had one wish—to be able to pick it up. Do you understand? He had one wish; and he brought the tree and put it in his house. He put it there. When was his court hearing?

A. The fifteenth.

P. He had to be present on the fifteenth. He had to be present on the fifteenth.

Then what happened? It was the season for weddings in that country. It was the season for weddings in that country, but there was no good goldsmith. He was returning home.

[A customer arrives at the goldsmith's house.]

"Oh, daughter of Haldipali!" [the goldsmith's wife].

"What is it?"

"Where has your bābū gone?"

"Oh God! He went out yesterday. For the whole night I didn't blow out the lamp. Welcome, sir. He hasn't been home since yesterday. He went away."

"Where did he go?"

"He went over there. He told me, 'If I get work, if I get work over there, then I'll send for you,' he said. And he went yesterday. I've been sitting here waiting. What should I do? I've never left the house. Oh, why do I have such bad luck!"

[Performing the following lines, P. goes around collecting money from members of the audience.]

"If you've received old rice," she said, "then give old rice. If you've received new rice," she said, "then give new rice. If you've received a rupee," she said, "then give a rupee. If you only like change," she said, "then give it."

"We two old people, husband and wife, decided that we'll have ornaments made for both our son and daughter. We didn't even wait a day. We came right away."

"If you'd told me then, he wouldn't have gone away. Today he's gone, and now you've come. What should I do! [sobbing] I'm about to give birth, and he's gone so far away. What should I do, oh lord! If I stay here, there will soon be two children. I can't imagine how much work there will be! What should I do! These chicks, how can I support these two chicks? They come one after another," she said.

Then, who came holding a bag? —LAUGH— Then, who came? The goldsmith, right? The goldsmith came right up to the door. He came.

"What's happened?"

"May you have a great fortune! I was just talking about you. Take the water
jug and wash,” she said, and filled the jug with water and gave it to him. Right? The one who had been crying now filled the jug with water and gave it to him and was happy. She was happy and washed his feet with the water and sat down.

The old couple came quickly and brought this much. What did they bring?

A. Gold.

P. Gold and silver. They came bringing both. His wife washed the goldsmith’s hands and feet and sat down. Then he went outside and said, “Your daughter is my daughter. Brindavati is your daughter, isn’t she?”

“Yes, yes, she’s my daughter. Make this for Brindavati and this for the man you abused by saying, ‘Where have you come from, you with the pimpled ass.’ Make this for that pimpled-ass one. Will you do it for forty or fifty rupees?”

“Don’t talk about money now, brother. When it goes on her hand, then send a basket of rice. [to himself] It’ll be enough for many days.”

A. A basket full.

P. Yes.

P. He gave the gold and silver [to the goldsmith] and had gone a little ways down the road. [He meets a friend.] “Greetings, mahāprasād.”

The friend answered, “Greetings, mahāprasād. Where are you going?”

“I’ve been to the goldsmith’s. I’m going to bring a wife for my son and give my daughter as a bride. It’s the season for weddings. That’s why I’ve taken gold and silver to him.”

“My family was wrong!”

“Really?”

“Yes. They said he’d gone away. I felt bad. I’ll tell him to make some for me, too,” he said. He said, “I’ll give him the gold ahead of time. How much should I give?”

When he was returning, after leaving the gold, he met another person and greeted him.

“Where have you been, mahāprasād?”

“I’ve taken gold to the goldsmith’s.”

“What happened? They said he’d gone away.”

“No, he’s in his house. He’s returned. He’s returned. Yes, he’s returned.”

“Then I’m going to take him the broken heavy silver necklace. When I tell my daughter-in-law to wear it, she won’t.” Saying this, he, too, took the silver and went to the goldsmith’s.

All the people of the city liked his work. They brought all their silver and gold and gave it to him.

There was a trunk at the goldsmith’s. The trunk was filled, overloaded with gold and silver. Then he told the people to stop, saying, “Now, don’t bring any more. I’ll make all these first. Then bring more. Don’t bring any more
now.” One trunk was filled with gold and silver. It was filled and the days passed. The days passed and the time came closer [for the hearing]. What happened?

_E tāre tāre tāre nāre nāre nāre nāre nāre nā.
Bābū tā nā nā nā nā nā._

He was worried.
“If I give something,
If I fall at the feet of the king,
The king will give me the decree.
He’ll speak on my behalf,”
The son thought to himself,
In his heart.

All the silver in the city,
All the gold in the city,
The goldsmith had collected it.
He had gathered it.
A silver chair,
A silver chair,
A golden image, oh look.

He had seen Manicandra.
He had seen Manicandra.
The goldsmith made his form,
Made his form.
He sat it in the chair.
He made a golden parrot.
The goldsmith put it there.
He put it there.

The son looked at it from a distance.
The son looked at it from a distance.
“The king will take it,” the _bābū_ said.
He was pleased.

“I’ll go one day early.
I’ll meet the king.
I’ll go to the hearing later.
I’ll be present.”

P. He was happy. “Whatever happens,” he said, “I’ll give the king many things; then I’ll beat the bastard.” Who?

A. The carpenter.
The carpenter. "I'll beat the bastard. I'll give the king so much that he'll surely take my side," he said. He made the things and got them all ready. He got everything ready, and there were still two days left. "I'll go three days early," he said. "I'll go now," he said.

Meanwhile, the carpenter couldn't sleep, he couldn't sleep. Why couldn't he sleep? [He was thinking,] "He's a goldsmith. He must have some valuable things. He'll make them and give them to the king, and the king won't take my side. He'll take his side. I don't have any money. I don't have any silver or gold either. What should I do?" That's why the carpenter was worried. He had one worry. There is no medicine for the fever of worry. If you worry, will you be able to sleep?

A. No.
P. What?
A. No.
P. If you worry, will sleep come?
A. No.
P. It won't come. So, sleep didn't come. When sleep didn't come, the poor thing, having slept only three hours, got up. Who?
A. The carpenter's wife.
P. Yes. What do you call something you comb your hair with? What is its name? Paniyā [a comb], right? Yes, the carpenter's kaniyā [low-caste word for wife]. —LAUGH— She woke up after sleeping three hours. She got up, and what did she see? He was sitting there. Sitting and worrying.

"What shall I do? In the king's court, I beat the bastard twice. He shit and pissed [out of fear]. But now what should I do? Oh lord, tell me. What do I have that I can take as a gift to the king? This is hard for me." This is how he worried. The poor thing wasn't sleeping. So, she got up from her peaceful sleep.

A. The queen?
P. No.
A. The kaniyā [his wife].
P. She slept for three hours and then got up; and what did she see? And what did she do? He was sitting and worrying. She saw him and said, "So wise, so wise. —LAUGH— You are so wise. —LAUGH— You are so wise, so wise. You were sitting. I saw you like that and got up." —LAUGH—

"To whom are you faithful?
Oh lord, listen to my request.
Accept my respect.
You are a bee.
You are a bee.
You can sit on a flower.
Oh lord, you can sit on a flower.
Don't get drunk on the juice.
Don't get drunk on the juice.
Come to my house,
Oh lord, listen to my request.
You'll go away.
Oh lord, you'll go away."

P. She's really winning him over, right?
A. Yes.
P. She's winning him over with rasa [sweet words], right?
A. She's winning him over.
P. Has she won him over?
A. No.
P. What?
A. No.
P. That won't do it. What she's saying to win him over, that won't do it. Will it?
A. What will happen?
P.

Tāre tāre tāre re tāre tāre re tāre.

"I went to a foreign country.
I went to a foreign country.
I met, look,
I met
A goldsmith, look,
A goldsmith.
I asked for an introduction.
I asked for an introduction.

When he spoke to me,
He lied.
He lied.
He jumped on me.
He jumped on me.
And the bastard stood up.
He was ready to fight.

I couldn't bear it.
I couldn't bear it.
I beat him twice.
I beat him three times.
He was afraid for his life.
He went to the king.

Now there's a hearing,
A hearing.
I’ll go tomorrow; there’s a hearing.
Worry is eating me up, oh queen.
Worry is eating me.”

P. “Oh lord, one receives the fruits of one’s actions. Can well water be compared to the Ganga?”

“What did you say?”

“One receives the fruits of one’s actions; and, can well water be compared to the Ganga? Do you understand? One receives the fruits of one’s actions. You’re very quarrelsome.”

“How’s that?”

“You went to plow and I went to transplant rice. Do you remember the pouring rain that day? You came home shivering with cold, and I, too, came home shivering. There were leftovers to eat, one and a half bowls. [I said,] ‘Brother-in-law of my sister with the runny nose, let’s eat it with salt and hot peppers.’ —LAUGH— Then, you beat me with the plowing stick. Why? Had I done something wrong? —LAUGH— Had I? Had I? Had I wronged you? Had I abused you or fought with you?

“You’d come home because of your empty stomach, and I’d come home because of my empty stomach. We came home together, and I said, ‘Let’s divide it into two servings and eat it with salt and hot peppers.’ So what had I done wrong? Then you began to beat my back with the plowing stick, harder than the rain falls in the month of śāvay. What a noise it made! Your mother came to intervene, and she got a cut as wide as a finger. Do you remember? What had I done wrong?

“What happened?” your mother said. ‘What’s happened after only three days?’ she asked. ‘My husband took my hand and we got married. Even knowing, he didn’t know; and not knowing, he didn’t know. He beat me only when he saw that I’d done something wrong.’

‘Where will I go from here. Maybe there I’ll get beaten too. Oh my god!’ I said. Then I thought, ‘I have a husband.’ So I cooked the food again and said, ‘Come, eat.’ And didn’t you eat till you were full?

“Do you remember what happened one day later? An aunt who loved me very much died. I’d cooked delicious food for you that day, and you’d said, ‘It is good.’ My aunt was no longer living. My uncle must have been in a bad way. My aunt was young. She wasn’t old at all. When I heard the news, I couldn’t cook. You said, ‘Your aunt has died, but what happens to me? Your aunt has died, but what happens to me?’ And, jumping up, jumping up, you beat me. Do you remember that incident? Since the birth of my oldest son, your hand hasn’t beaten me. So now what’s happened? What? That’s why I said, ‘One receives the fruits of one’s actions.’ I’m your wife. That’s why I’ve
endured all this; that's why I've cooked and given you food. But could he [the goldsmith] bear it? He did the right thing. He couldn't bear it. That's why he went to the king. Now go. You're the one who fights a lot. You're the one who lifts your hand. He did the right thing. Would you like it? No, you wouldn't. The pain lasts for many days, do you know that?" —LAUGH—

P. She's speaking like this, but her heart is sad, isn't it?
A. It is.
P. Saying, "I've made a mistake," her heart was sad, wasn't it? But, she's speaking for the sake of the next time.

Then what happened? Before morning broke and the cock had crowed, he bathed and returned. He bathed and returned; and having returned, he collected all his carpenter's tools, right?
A. Yes.
P. Right?
A. Yes.
P. The ones he trained with. All his tools, he took all his tools outside and put them in his carpenter's workshop.
A. Yes.
P. What?
A. He put them in his carpenter's workshop.
P. And what kind of wood had he brought back?
A. Sandalwood.
P. What kind?
A. Sandalwood.
P. Sandalwood. He'd picked it up and brought it from the jungle, right? He brought the wood and now was working on it. The carpenter was working. He climbed up on the sandalwood he had brought and began to work. He was using all the tools he had, one by one.

Tāre nāre nāre re nāre nāre nāre re nāre nāre.

He recited the name of Narayan.
He recited the name of god.
The son [carpenter] was busy with the wood.
He was busy with the wood.
He made a horse.
He made a horse.
He put a bridle on it.
He put a bridle on it.

He held the bridle with his left hand.
He held the bridle with his left hand.
The horse flew into the sky,
Flew into the sky.
He held it with his right hand.
The horse came back to earth,
The son was pleased,
And he gave thanks.

P. “Whatever happens, at least I’ve got one more chance,” he said. “I remembered god and got one more chance. If I take this and put it in the king’s courtyard, then in my favor, the king will—”

A. “Settle the case.”
P. “The king will settle the case in my favor. He’ll certainly settle the case,” he said. And he got ready. He got ready, and a day and a night passed. Then it was the morning of the hearing. The day the carpenter had gotten the horse ready, the goldsmith had arrived at the king’s palace.

Manicandra was seated.
He joined his hands in respect.
“I’m a poor son.
I fall at your feet, oh king,
And join my hands.
Grant my entreaty, oh king.
Accept my respectful bow.
Have pity on me, oh king.
Fifteen days have passed,
But the pain of my body has not gone away. —LAUGH—
I fear for my life.”

“May you be blessed, goldsmith.
You are the creator of the world,
The creator of the world.
You have made my image.
You have made my image.
Look how much gold you have used,
How much wealth you have used.
You’re giving me a bribe,
Giving me a bribe.
As long as I live,
I will worship you.”
The king took it
And put it away.

P. Was he greedy? Was he? Or wasn’t he?
A. He was.

P. Yes, he was. Then he took it inside, didn’t he? He was greedy and took it inside.

“He y you who loves to fight, shouldn’t your wife go too? Your wife. If not, what will you do?”

“I’ve thought about my wife and made a plan. You should stay at home and pray like this, ‘Oh god, oh eternal lord, oh powerful lord of the world, feed my husband pān and bring him from that place,’ and he’ll give me the decree.”

She answered, “Āā-ū-go! Who do you think I am? A big basket’s worth of mahuā [kind of wild jungle fruit] has fallen. Why should I stay sitting at home? Won’t I lose a basket of mahuā? I’m going to pick up mahuā.”

“So, has your mahuā collecting become so important?”

“Yes.”

“Is he there when you pick up mahuā?”

“Who?”

“God.”

“Yes, of course he is, isn’t he?”

“Show me that he’s there.”

“I’ll pick up one mahuā and say, ‘Oh god,’ and do it again the next time.”—LAUGH—“I’ll gather my mahuā, and do something for you at the same time. Why should I lose a big basket of mahuā? Āā-ū-go! I’m going to pick up mahuā.” Right?

A. She did the right thing.

P. Did she go?

A. Yes.

P. She went to collect mahuā. When she went to collect mahuā, he went to bathe. “It will take me only a minute to get there,” he said. “It will only take me a second,” he said. “I’ll pull the reins and I’ll be there.” He said this, didn’t he?

He leisurely bathed and came back. He ate a bowl of bāsī and pasiyā [leftovers] and went to the horse and said, “Look, I’m bowing to you and asking you, don’t stop anywhere else until you stand in the king’s courtyard. Then I’ll try to lead you to the side, but stay in the middle. Look, I’m bowing to you and asking you to do this.”
He sat on the horse.
The son [carpenter] pulled the reins.
He pulled the reins.
He pulled to the left.
The horse flew up into the sky,
The king [carpenter] was moving through the sky.
He was flying.
The harder he pulled,
The faster he flew.
The king was flying through the sky.
He was flying.

When he arrived at the king’s court,
He stopped the horse.
He got off the horse.
He put the reins on his shoulder.
The son went to the king.
He joined his hands in respect.
"May you be blessed, carpenter.
May you be strong, carpenter.
You’ve come on your horse, carpenter.
You are a god."
The king praised him.
He said, “Aha!”
He went to the court. —LAUGH—
He placed them on each side of him. —LAUGH—

"Decide in my favor, oh king.
Decide in my favor."
The king had one son.
Manicandra had one son.
The prince’s name was Malya Basant,
Malya Basant.
The son was eighteen.
The son was eighteen.
He was sitting inside.
He was eating.
The son had been born as the result of [austerities].
The queen didn't give him leftovers.
She fed him herself.
She sat down and fed him.
The son finished eating.
He came out of the palace.
The prince went to the courtyard.
He went to the courtyard.
The prince saw the horse.
He saw the horse and was drawn to it.
The prince walked all around the horse.
First he looked at the horse's tail.
Then he looked at the ears.
He looked at the feet.
He looked at the head.

"You're not a living thing!
You're not a living thing! [If you were,]
I would race you.
I would make you fly into the sky.
I would race you.
I would make you fly into the sky."
He was thinking and thinking this.
He was thinking and thinking this.
The prince could no longer bear it.
"I'll just sit on it and then get off.
I'll just sit on it and then get off;"
The prince thought to himself.
He walked around it
And sat down on it.
The reins were on the shoulder.
He picked up the left rein.
The prince pulled it.
He pulled it.
The prince flew up into the sky,
Flew into the sky.
"If I hurt him, he'll come down," he thought.
But the horse flew into the sky,
Flew into the sky.

P. "He's alive!" he said. Right?
A. Right, he is.
P. “He’s alive! How will I get off?” he thought.
A. He pulled.
P. Yes. He pulled with all his strength. “If I hurt him, he’ll come down,” he said.
Will he come down?
A. He won’t come down; he’ll climb higher.
P. He’ll climb higher; he won’t come down. And he pulled harder, and the horse was—
A. Flying faster.
P. He was flying. *sar sar sar, SAR SAR SAR, SAR SAR SAR* was the sound of his flight.
P. “Oh my god! My son was eating just now and now is outside. So what happened? There’s the sound of *sar, sar, sar, sar*. Maybe my son’s urinating outside,” she said.
—LAUGH— And she went outside. —LAUGH— Who?
A. His mother.
P. She went outside. She went outside, but she didn’t see anything. She lifted her head, and what was there?
A. He was flying on the horse.
P.
“May my black karma be burned away!
May my birth into this caste burn!
Why haven’t I died, lord?
Why hasn’t the god of death eaten me?
I practiced so many austerities.
I recited the name of god.
I received a son, oh lord.
I received a son, oh lord.
Oh son, I’m already dead.
I’m already dead.

You’ll fall on some mountain.
You’ll drown in some ocean.
You won’t return, my son.
You won’t return.
You’ve done me wrong, my son.
You’ve done me wrong.
The damn carpenter fought.
The damn carpenter fought,
And he’s ruined my lineage.
He’s ruined my name.”

P. She was crying. Why was she crying?
A. For her son.
P. What was she doing for her son?
A. She was crying.
P. She was crying. At that time, the neighbors asked, “Oh king, what are you looking at?”

“What happened?”

“What did these damn people bring for your son, that has taken him and flown off? You only had one son, and you’re looking at him,” they said. “How is it that your son is flying off like an airplane, like an airplane? Look, what did they bring? Who brought it? We don’t know them; and you’ve placed them on each side of you and are flattering them. Your lineage is ruined; your son has died. Your wife over there isn’t going to survive either; and what are you looking at?”

This is what they said, and what did the king do to the two men? He grabbed them immediately; he grabbed both of them. He grabbed them, and then what did he do? He tied them up. He tied them up and judged them. He judged them, and then what did the king say? He said, “But among all of us, I am the liar.” Who was the liar among all of them?

A. The king.
P. “I am,” he said. “Between these two, the carpenter and the goldsmith, I am the liar.” He said, “Why should I hang them on the gallows?” he said. “I won’t hang them on the gallows. But all this has happened because of them; so, as long as there is breath in their bodies, what will they do? They’ll remain in captivity.” The meaning of “captivity” is to be punished in jail. “As long as they live, what will they do? They’ll remain in this jail.”

“Go,” he said. He gave the order; and giving the order, he said, “My queen, why do you exhaust yourself [by lamenting]? Worship at the feet of god. There is no god greater than Karma [fate].

She understood, but said, “The reward for truth is [indiscernible on tape].”

“If this is a reward for truth, then he’ll come back one day; and if this is a reward for falsehood, he’ll keep going over there. Don’t cry and wail uselessly. If you think he has died, then give the grain to be husked. After tomorrow, the next day, I’ll perform his third-day death ceremony. Do you understand? What use is your crying and wailing?” What? Did he say the right thing? Did he?

A. He said the right thing.
P. He said the right thing. Now, all the people from the city began to lament, and the king and queen began to cry. He was their only son. As much as he [the king] explained to them [the futility of their wailing], how could they obey him?

A. They couldn’t obey him.
They couldn’t obey. They’re like we are. Even after he explained, could they obey?

They couldn’t obey.

What?

They couldn’t obey.

Their mourning was beyond description.

So, with one hand... What kind of rider was he [the prince]? A rider who guided with one hand.

Three days and three nights [passed].

Three days and three nights.

He couldn’t bear it,

Couldn’t bear it.

The son changed hands.

He changed hands.

He held on with his right hand.

He held on with his right hand.

The horse came down,

Came down.

The prince was pleased.

He was pleased.

“Be blessed, carpenter.

Be blessed, carpenter.

Carpenter, I’ll go back to my country.

I’ll go to the city.

Carpenter, I’ll give you a village.

I’ll give you a village.

Carpenter, enjoy yourself.

You’ve learned your trade.”

What was he saying? Whom was he praising?

The carpenter.

The carpenter. “Very good, carpenter,” he said. Right?

Yes, yes.

“You’ve learned your trade very well,” he said. Right?

Yes, yes.

“Very well. I’m going back to my country, so what should I give you?” he said. Right?

“I’ll give a village.”

“I’ll give you a village. I’ll give a village,” he said. Right? “I’ll give you a village, and you’ll be made the owner and you’ll enjoy it. Well done, carpenter. You’re a skilled carpenter,” he said. Right?

Yes, yes.
P. "Look how far he took me and is bringing me back," he said. He was praising the carpenter. It wasn't the horse that he was praising. Whom was he praising?

A. The carpenter.

P. He was praising the carpenter. "Well done, carpenter," he said. "I'll certainly give you a village," he said. And the horse slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly . . . Where was he when he was praising him?

A. He was coming down.

P. He was coming down, that's where he was praising him. On the ground?

A. No, he was still above.

P. He was above, and he was praising the carpenter. He hadn't come down. Now he was coming down.

_Tāre tāre tāre tāre tāre tāre tāre tāre_
_Tāre tāre tāre tā tāre nā tāre nā nāre nā._

Slowly, slowly, the son came down.
The son stood on the ground.
He stood on the ground,
In the king's garden.
In the king's garden.
The horse came down.

In that flower garden,
There was a Shiva temple.
They were _worshipping_ Shiva there,
Doing penance.
That's where he got down.
He looked in the Shiva temple.
He went to the bathing _ghāṭ._
He bathed.
He bathed and paid respects to his ancestors.
He looked in the Shiva temple.
He admired the Shiva temple.
He admired it.

"I don't have a water jug in my hand.
I don't have a water jug in my hand.
What shall I do, Lord Shiva,
To give you water?"
He thought about it.

P. From a distance, he sprinkled water with the palm of his hand.

A. He gave water to Shiva.

P. How?

A. He sprinkled it with the palm of his hand.
Right. He didn't have anything with him. How could he dip it [the water] out? Could he take it out and pour it? That's why he sprinkled continuously.

—LAUGH— It flowed. Didn't the water flow?

A. It [the god] became soaked.

P. It became soaked. There were flowers. He picked them and offered them to both of them [Shiva and Parvati]. He offered them to both of them. He offered them and went out of the temple. Then he went up again. He went up and what happened then?

There was a four-storied building there. A building of four stories had been built there. How long had it been since he'd eaten?

A. Three days.

P. Three days, right? He'd last eaten the day he left.

A. Yes, yes.

P. So, his stomach was growling. Wasn't it looking for something to eat?

A. Yes.

P. So, he thought to himself, "A house has been made here. Where there's a house, there are fields," he said. "Wherever there's a house, there must be fields. There must be something here," he said. "I'll go inside," he said, and he went to the door. There was a lock on it. —LAUGH— Wasn't there?

Tāre tāre tāre tā nā tāre tāre tāre tā nā
Tāre tāre tāre tāre nānā tāre nā nāre nā.

He grabbed it with his left hand.
He grabbed it with his left hand.
He shook it back and forth. —LAUGH—
The prince shook it off and threw it away.
He entered the building.
He saw the pītāmbar [yellow silk] cloth.
The bābū pulled at it and took it.
He put it on.
The prince climbed to the second floor,
Climbed to the second floor.
There, he saw some oil.
There, he saw some oil.
The son became pleased.
He was happy.
There was oil in a white bottle.
He turned the bottle upside down.
The bābū patted it on his head.
He patted it.
The bottle was dry, empty of oil.
He put it on a shelf.
He rubbed the oil from his feet up.
The bābū—laugh—rubbed it in.

P. There was a comb. There was a mirror. He combed his hair. His wet hair left oil on the comb. It sprayed the mirror like a shower. He combed his hair. He combed his hair and climbed up to the third floor. There, beautifully laid out . . . in all four directions, —laugh— in all four directions, . . . What had been spread out? Only sweets. Just sweet things [to eat]: laḍḍū, peṛā, jalebī, candy, and things like bundī, sev, and what all do they call those things? I don’t know. I’m just an Oriya man. So, everything was there: rasgullā, gulāb jāmun, and all kinds of things. Everything had been put there.

“What should I eat? What should I eat? What should I eat?” he said. He went round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, taking one of everything. He took one of everything and became full to the brim. He became full to the brim and said, “I enjoyed that. Whatever happens now, at least I’m satisfied. I’m the son of a king; I’ve eaten the food of a king,” he said.

He was content. Content, he climbed to the fourth floor, and what happened? There were four beds on which four comforters had been spread. There were four ivory beds, and there were pillows and cushions about this high. They were spread out and he was full to the brim. Now what did he need?

A. He needed to rest.

P. He needed to rest, right? That’s what he needed. “I need to see what this is like. It looks so thick; how strong is it?” he said. And he gave it a push. It moved this much. —laugh— It was cotton, right?

A. Yes.

P.

Tāre tāre . . .

The son lay down on the bed.
The boy lay down on the bed.
He hadn’t slept for three nights.
The bābū fell asleep.
He fell asleep.
The time was seven gharī [unit of twenty-four minutes].
The time was seven gharī.

2 Here and in the songs that follow, I have not provided the full lines of semantically empty syllables that introduce the melodic structure of the song, since their variation is meaningless in printed transliteration. The melodic introduction will henceforth be indicated by Tāre tāre . . .
The bābū was sleeping.
He was sleeping.

There were twelve ahead and twelve behind.
There were twelve ahead and twelve behind.
The daughter was going very slowly.
The daughter of a king,
Of a king.
Her name was Mohini [literally, enchanting one].
Her name was Mohini.
Twelve and twelve, twenty-four companions.
The daughter was coming and bringing them with her.
They were meeting there.

P. Where? At the ghāṭ. Why were they going to the building? Twelve ahead and twelve behind, and where was she?
A. In the middle.

P. In the middle. What had been built there? A gardener’s tower had been built. The twelve ahead and twelve behind, they were all on an outing.
A. On an outing.

P. Did they own the building, or did they give money and rent it?
A. They owned it.

P. That’s how it was. Then what happened? They were taking her there to bathe. At that time, they went there; they went to the ghāṭ. Wouldn’t they go there?
A. They would.

P. They went to the ghāṭ and said, “What! Why is it wet at this time of day? It must still be from yesterday,” they said. “The water is still rippling.” They bathed her and then she said, “Now all of you go. When it’s time for me to go back, come and get me. Now go,” she said. “Go home,” she said.

They used to accompany her there and then go back; then at four o’clock, they used to come and bring her back with them. She used to stay in the building and rest there. She used to bathe there and not go right home. That’s why the building had been built there.

The four necessities were there, in the building. It was made that way. What does the “four necessities” mean? The pītāmbar cloth—that’s the first necessity. Something to rub oneself with [oil] is the second necessity. Something to eat is the third necessity. And something to sleep on is the fourth necessity. So the four necessities were put there. So she went, and where did she go after bathing? She went to the Shiva temple. She went to the Shiva temple. Someone had just poured water there. Would it be dry then? “What! A horse must have kicked it!” Right? —LAUGH—

Tāre tāre . . .
"Yesterday I poured water here.
Yesterday I poured water here.
Lord Shiva, you got so wet.
You got so wet.
You didn't get any heat from the sun.
No gusts of wind blew on you.
Lord Shiva, your body didn't dry.
Your limbs didn't dry.
That's what I did, " the daughter said.
She had brought water and poured it.

P. When did she say it was from?
A. Yesterday.

P. "Yesterday I poured water here. Who would have come here? I poured it yesterday, so it's wet. Yesterday the sun didn't hit it, and the breeze didn't blow here. That's why it isn't dry," she said. And she brought water again and poured it. She brought flowers and offered them and prostrated herself.
Wouldn't she prostrate?
A. She would prostrate.

P. "I've done penance for twelve years. I've fasted for thirteen full moons. Lord Shiva, I've worshiped you. I've served you. Lord Shiva, I've been chaste. I've been chaste. Lord Shiva, give me a husband. Listen to my entreaty. Fulfill my desires and give me a husband. Fulfill my desires and give me a husband. Lord Shiva, listen to my entreaty. Accept my worship to you."

P. She went. She saw that the lock on the door had been broken open. "What!" she said. "This is so strong; how did this happen? Oh well, it's OK," she said and then went in. She entered and saw the cloth, and wouldn't it look different?
A. It would.

P. He had stood there and pulled it. She hadn't done that. He had stood and pulled it. —LAUGH— She looked at it and said, "What! OK. I might have done that yesterday." She took it down. Right? OK.

Then she climbed the last step and saw that all the sweets were half-eaten. Nothing was left untouched. Everything was in pieces. Where he had taken a
handful, the plate was clean. —LAUGH— Right? —LAUGH— He had taken a handful so there was nothing left in that place. That's how he picked them up, squeezed them, and filled his mouth. Then he went to the next plate and took a handful from the edge and swallowed it. This way, everything was half-eaten. Wherever she looked, it was half-eaten. She looked and said, "How did this happen? How? These are taken from the side. I eat from the middle, and everything in sight is half-eaten. —LAUGH— What should I do? Perhaps Mahadev [Shiva] has given me a husband, and that's why my mind is spinning. Maybe I did eat a little of everything. No, it must have been me. I'm going crazy uselessly," she said, and she, too, began to eat. —LAUGH—

Tare tare . . .

She finished the food in the building.
She finished the food in the dwelling.
She climbed to the next floor.
The daughter saw the bed,
The bed.
It was an ivory bed,
Filled like the one at home.

The son was sleeping.
He was fast asleep.
The daughter looked at him from a distance.
The daughter looked at him from a distance.
"He went to sleep.
He fell asleep."
That's what she thought to herself.
That's what she thought in her heart.

Sundari [the beautiful one] ran up to him,
Ran up to him.
Sundari looked at his feet.
She looked at his hands.
Sundari looked at his teeth.
She looked at his teeth.
She looked at these three things.
She looked at these three things.

"He's from a good family," Sundari said.
"He's from a good family.
I won't abuse him.
I won't insult him.
I'll call to him lovingly.
I'll call to him lovingly.
I'll get to know him,
Get to know him.”

P. She got to know him. Where all did she look? —LAUGH— She looked at his feet; she looked at his hands. What else did she look at? She looked at his teeth. She looked at these three things and said, “He’s from a good house. I won’t abuse him without a reason. He’s from a good house, and that’s why he entered so courageously. Right? He’s from a good house and that’s why he entered so courageously. He came and then what happened?”

“He was hungry and thirsty; he was sleepy. That’s why he came. What’s wrong with that? Even if I’d been here and he’d come, I would have given him the bed. No, even if I’d been here and he’d come, I would have been hospitable and given him the bed. He slept and then what happened? No,” she said, “I’ll call him. If I didn’t say something, then it would be a different matter.”

“Listen, foreigner.
Listen, stranger.
Listen to my call.
Listen to my voice.
Pay attention.
Remember what happened.

Tell me who you are, brother.
Tell me who you are.
Listen to my call.
Listen to my voice.
Pay attention.
Remember what happened.
Listen to my call.
Listen to my voice.”

Calling and calling, she got tired.
Calling and calling, she got tired.
He didn’t pay attention.
He didn’t remember.
He hadn’t slept for three days.
He hadn’t slept for three days.
The bābū was sleeping.
He was asleep.

Calling and calling, she got tired.
Calling and calling, she got tired.
Sundari began to abuse him.
She insulted him.
"You were wise.
You had a good plan.
Look how you're keeping quiet.
Look how you're keeping quiet,
When I call out and say, 'Get up!'
When my hand touches you,
You'll say, 'You're mine.'
Then you'll sit up."

P. "You're quiet," she said. Right? "You're asleep, and what have you done?"
A. "You're keeping quiet."

P. "'Until she takes my hand to wake me, I won't get up.' That's what you've
planned and so are keeping quiet. OK. You're wise, but what? If I would
extend my hand, you'd say, 'You're mine.' That's your plan. —LAUGH—I won't
touch you. I won't touch you. I won't touch you. I won't touch you. I won't
touch you. What are you thinking? 'She'll touch me,'
you're saying. —LAUGH—I won't touch you. I won't touch you."

As much as she tried,
As much as she planned,
When she called him, her nose began to run. —LAUGH—
The son didn't pay attention.
He didn't remember.
There was an iron rod in the building.
There was an iron rod in the building.
The daughter picked it up and brought it.
She lifted it up and brought it.
She put it on his rib.
She poked it a little.
Startled, the son woke up.
Startled, he woke up.
His sleep had been broken.

He saw the girl.
He saw Sundari.
The son fell in love with her,
Fell in love.
He saw the rod in her hand.
He saw the rod in her hand.
The son thought, "Maybe she'll hit me again."

He quickly ran away.
He went outside.
His horse was in the garden.
His horse was in the garden.
The son climbed on it
And flew away.

P. He looked from above. Wouldn’t she see him from the window?
A. Yes.
P. What happened?

“May my black karma be burned away!
May my birth into this caste burn!
Why didn’t I die, lord?
Why hasn’t death eaten me?

“The son of Indra, Citrasen,
The son of Indra, Citrasen,
Came from heaven,
Came from heaven.
He didn’t receive my service.
He didn’t receive my welcome.
He fled, lord.
He fled.

“I didn’t get a husband in this world.
The creator sent him from heaven.
He didn’t receive my service, lord.
He didn’t receive my respect.”

—LAUGH—

P. “I’ve been made into a stick; I’ve been made into stone. That’s why I picked up the iron rod. If I hadn’t picked it up, but had held out my hand and touched him with my middle finger, then everything would have been alright. What should I do? I’ve kicked a priceless jewel with my feet. Oh creator, I didn’t get a husband in this world. That’s why you sent him from heaven. My karma is broken. I’m cursed. I didn’t touch him with my hand, but picked up the iron rod. Oh my god!”

She didn’t put on the lock. She didn’t close the door, didn’t close the door. She got up and ran out. —LAUGH— Where?

A. To her house.
P. To which house?
A. To her father’s house.
P. Right? To her father’s house. She ran there. Had her companions come to get her? In one breath, she came running, and inside the seven-storied palace, she pulled down her bed and, without putting on any bedding, laid down.

“I did this stupid thing without any reason,” she thought to herself. “I
won't get another husband in this world. I hadn't gotten one in this world. That's why the elephant Airavat brought Indra's son, Citrasen. Then, cursed that I am, I picked up the iron rod. My karma is broken!" she said.

Her tears kept falling. _LAUGH_— She gave up food; she gave up water. She quit getting up and sitting up. Everything.

He [the prince] went and went and went, and after going a long ways, he said, "I lost my chance. She's a fox and I'm a tiger, but I was afraid of her and ran away. Even if she did have a weapon in her hand, I have no equal. But, seeing the weapon, I became afraid and ran away in my sleep. Why does she live like that, next to the ghāṭ? If I'd stayed and asked her at least that much, . . . I left for no reason." Saying this, he turned the horse around.

A. That horse.

P. 

_Tāre tāre_ . . .

Slowly, slowly, the son went.
He went and came back.
The son entered the building.
He entered the dwelling.
He left the horse in the flower garden,
Under a _semar_ [semal, silk-cotton] tree,³
Under a _semar_ tree.
The _semar_ was laden with flowers and leaves.
He put him there.
The son entered the building.
Entered the building.

"I'll sleep here tonight.
I'll sleep here tonight.
I'll get up when the cock crows.
I'll get up when the cock crows.
I'll be awake when she comes.
I'll close both eyes.
If she picks up the iron rod,
Picks up the rod,
I'll be ready.
I'll brace myself and pull.
She'll fall with force.
She'll fall with force."

P. Right? Did he say the right thing? He, too, was a prince, right?

³ The _semal_ tree is "proverbial in poetry as a disappointment to birds attracted by the tree's large, red flowers" (McGregor 1993:1038).
A. Yes, yes.

P. "At that time, I'll say, 'You didn't touch me, so how did it happen? How did it happen that you fell on top of me?' " Saying this, he got ready. What? Did he get ready or not?

A. He got ready.

P. If that had happened, would he have run away? He got ready. "Why did you fall? I'll say." Saying this, he got ready. He chose his food and ate until he was full to the brim and then slept well. Thinking, "I'll get up in the morning," he slept well.

How could she sleep? How could she sleep? Her eyes were wide open.

"Get up, young girl," they said when it was time to bathe.

"Go away. My nose is running and—sneeze! —laugh— How can I go to bathe?" she said. "I went to bathe and that's why I'm in this condition. Why should I go bathe?" And she didn't go to bathe. So, she passed the night somehow.

His sleep broke, and he woke up. He had slept soundly. At seven o'clock, the poor thing got ready and combed his hair. "That other day, I wasn't ready, and she woke me up with a rod. Today, I'll be ready." Saying this, he combed his hair. He combed his hair and lay down. And when she was supposed to come he closed his eyes. He closed his eyes. He squeezed his eyelids shut and when they hurt, peeked out. He squeezed his eyelids shut and when they hurt, peeked out. But, there was no one there.

"Young girl, get up! The village wives have already bathed and come back and are ready to cook. And what's happened to you? You don't want to bathe. Come on, at least let us bathe you with lukewarm water. Why aren't you getting up? Get up!"

"Go away! My nose has been running since yesterday. I won't bathe. —laugh— I won't bathe." Her nose had been running for three days.

Half the day had passed. He was still squeezing his eyelids shut. —laugh—

What time had he met her?

A. Seven in the morning.

P. It was afternoon. He was still closing his eyes. But there was no one there.

"She must not come every day. She must come once every three days," he said. Today has passed. For sure she'll come tomorrow," he said. He stayed overnight again.

A. Everything was there: food, water, everything.

P. What else did he need? He stayed again. Again, he closed his eyes.

They were trying to get her up, but did she get up? When it was afternoon again, he said, "She won't come. Three days have passed. If she comes every three days, then after one day, she would have come, on the third day. She must come every seven days. If I stay seven days, then what will happen to the food in this building?"

A. "It will be finished."
P. “It will be finished, and she’ll scold me. ‘A hungry, thirsty person has come from somewhere, and look, he’s eaten all the food.’ ”

A. That’s what she’ll say.

P. “‘He’s licked the plates clean,’ she’ll say. And what will she think of me? She’ll think I’m hungry and a glutton. I won’t stay that many days. Surely, somewhere, she must be sitting on a stool, braiding her hair,” he said. “I’ll go and look for her.” Eating pan, he went and looked for her all around, all around, all around, all around. But, she didn’t come outside, so how could he see her?

He saw one lākh [100,000] of women.

He saw one lākh of women.

“It’s not her,” the son said.

His time was up,

But, he didn’t see the princess.

With a sad heart, he returned.

With a sad heart, he returned.

The prince entered the building,

And he ate.

He thought of a plan.

He thought of a plan.

“What can I do to meet her?”

He thought of a plan.

He thought of a plan.

“I’ll dress like a yogī [ascetic].

I’ll dress like a saṃyāśī [renunciant].

I’ll enter every house.

I’ll ask for alms.

I’ll sing verses and beg.

I’ll sing verses and beg.

They’ll have mercy on me.

They’ll hear my verses and give alms.

They’ll come outside,

Come outside.”

A. He went to beg.

P. He ate until he was full to the brim. He ate until he was full to the brim. He ate until he was full to the brim. Then he tore off a loincloth with his teeth and wrapped it around his waist. Isn’t that what he would do?

A. Yes, yes.

P. It was long. He wrapped it around his waist and put on a sacred thread. He
put on the sacred thread, and then what did he do? He rubbed dust and ashes all over his body. He became dirty.

A. Yes.

P. Wouldn't he become dirty?

A. Yes, yes.

P. He became dirty, and then what did he do? There was a copper vessel. What does a “copper vessel” mean? It was a small bucket. Where?

A. In the building.

P. What kind of bucket was in the building?

A. A brass one.

P. Copper. There was a copper bucket. So he took that bucket and went. He took the bucket and tied his hair up. And, carrying the bucket, he entered the city. When he reached the city, he went to one house and said, “Sita Ram, Sita Ram.”

“Go away! Get out! I'll first throw out the dog shit and then come. What kind of ‘Sita Ram’ is this!”

Wouldn't he die? Would she [first householder] give anything to him or come out? Then he went to a second house.

“My child has been crying since early this morning. Now I'm nursing him and putting him to sleep. Go over there. Who are you?”

Was his spirit broken? —LAUGH— Did he get anything from her [second householder]?

Tāre tāre . . .

“Even reciting the name of Ram,
People in this country abuse you.
They insult you.
If I sing and beg,
Will I get any alms?
Will I see the queen?”

He thought this way to himself.
He thought this way to himself.
The son began to beg for alms,
Began to beg for alms.

P. “Hari [Krishna] goes ahead and Arjun follows behind. Playing the saraṅgī [kind of violin], they charm people's hearts. There's a famine in our kingdom. Mother, that's why I'm wandering from house to house, asking for alms. Mother, if you can give, give; if not, don't. I'll ask for alms at ten doors. My father's name is Suresan; my mother's name is Sushila. My aunt's name is Campavati, the one who caused so much trouble. She ground me with a
grinding stone and tried to cut me in pieces under the thresher. When I didn’t
die, she tried to poison me. The moon is rising; Raja Danddhar [Yama, the
god of death].

The son was wandering from house to house,
Was wandering from house to house.
The son was begging.
The son had become a beggar.
The son was begging.
The son had become a beggar.
The son, singing and singing, was begging,
Was a beggar.

P. “Hari goes ahead and Arjun follows behind. Playing the sārangi. They charm
people’s hearts. There’s a famine in our kingdom. Mother, that’s why I’m
wandering from house to house, asking for alms. Mother, if you can give,
give; if not, don’t. I’ll ask for alms at ten doors. My father’s name is Suresan;
my mother’s name is Sushila. My aunt’s name is Campavati, the one who
caused so much trouble. She ground me with a grinding stone and tried to cut
me in pieces under the thresher. When I didn’t die, she tried to poison me.
The moon is rising; Raja Danddhar.

He wandered from house to house.
He wandered from door to door.
The old flowerseller had made a garland.
She delivered it and was coming back.
The old woman met a trusted friend.
She met a friend,
On the same road the son was walking on.
The flowerseller was on that road.
The old woman stopped her [her friend].
“Don’t tell anyone,” she said.
The prince was listening.
The boy was listening.

P. “Why would I tell anyone? Why would I tell anyone? I’m the mother of three
children, living and dead. Have you ever heard, seen or known me to tell?
—LAUGH— Why would I tell anyone?”

“Oh daughter, blooming flowers give a good smell. [In a whisper] I’m
telling you; you’re my daughter. For this reason, don’t say anything. But, the
daughter of the king went to bathe. Who knows if a water snake bit her, or a
black bug bit her, or whom she saw at the ghāṭ. She came back from there and
is sleeping. She isn’t eating or getting up, or sitting up or bathing. [Normal,
loud voice] Blooming flowers surely give a good smell. Don’t tell anyone.”
He heard this conversation.
He wandered around and then came to her.
He fell at her feet.
He joined his hands together.

"Listen to my entreaty.
Accept my greetings.
Mother, teach me,
Teach me.
Mother, listen to my entreaty.
Accept my greetings.

I've taken the initiation of a bhramacāri [religious student, the first of four stages of life].
I've wandered from country to country.
I've stayed in village after village.
Mother, I don't know anything.
I don't know anything.
Mother, teach me,
Tell me what you know."

P. "This isn't right! You've taken the initiation of a bhramacāri and what is it that you're asking me? What are you asking me to give? If I kick you, you'll fly far, don't you know that? You're asking me about my ancestors, whom you don't know, my ancestors, whom you don't know. Is this some kind of magic that I should teach you? You bastard! Look how you've fallen at my feet, saying, 'Teach me.' Is this some kind of magic?"

"I bow to you, Mother. What I want to know, you can teach me. That's why I fell at your feet. You're saying, 'No.' Then, why did I fall at your feet? What were you whispering and saying, 'Don't tell anyone.' What was that? I thought you could teach me that."

"You bastard! Was that some kind of magical incantation?"

"Then, what was it?"

"You bastard! Three days ago, the king's daughter, Mohini, —LAUGH— went to bathe and after coming back from that ghāt, she's been sleeping in the seven-storied palace. She isn't getting up, isn't sitting, isn't eating, isn't bathing. You bastard! That's what I was saying. Was I teaching a magical incantation? So, have I taught you something?"

Did she teach something, —LAUGH— or didn't she teach anything?

A. She taught very cleverly.

P. And wasn't she telling?

A. Who was telling?

P. The old flowerseller. —LAUGH— But she taught him. She said, "No," and then taught him.
A. Yes. She first said, “No,” and later she taught him.

P. Yes. “Old flowerseller, on which street do you live?”
   “Go away! —LAUGH— Why are you asking my neighborhood? You’ve
taken the initiation of a bhramacārī. So, why are you asking my
neighborhood?”
   “Yes, yes. You’re like my mother. What harm is there in telling me?”
   “That’s it over there, that small alley. Do you see it? They call it ‘the hut.’
   That’s it.”
A. “That’s the one.”

P. “That one is mine.”

He came back from that place.
He came back from there.
The son went to that building,
To that building.
He threw off his yogī dress.
He had gold in his hand.
The son went to the store.
He sold it.
It was worth nine thousand rupees.
The son sold it.

For his head, he bought some [fake] hair,
For his feet, shoes.
For his hands, he bought bangles,
For his forehead, a gold ornament.
For his nose, he bought a nose ring,
To decorate his feet, some colored powder,
He was like a bride for whom austerities had been done [to find a husband].
That boy looked like that.
He looked like that.

He wore a pīṭāmbarī [yellow silk] sari.
He bought flowers.
The son put them in his hair.
He braided his hair.

P. Was he ready?
A. Yes, he was ready.

P. Yes, he was ready. He found these things and got ready in that building.
   Where was he? At the old flowerseller’s place, right?
A. Yes.

P. She was there [on the road]; that’s why all this happened. If she hadn’t been,
then what would have happened? Could that much have happened when he
was begging? It couldn’t have happened. But he was nearby, and that’s why so much happened so quickly. He was ready.

_It was seven o’clock._

It was seven o’clock.
The boy was holding a bag, Holding a bag.
He walked very, very slowly.
He bowed his head.
He saw the house of the old flowerseller.
The prince met her **there**.
He met her there.
The old woman had picked flowers and brought them.
She was sitting on a broken cot.
She was breaking off a thread.
She was making a flower garland.
She had made only two or three garlands.
When he reached there,
She looked at the feet of the boy.
She looked at his feet.
She quit making the garland.
The old woman looked closely.
—LAUGH—

P. She looked closely. “You husband-eating daughter! Who are you, daughter? I don’t recognize you. Who are you? I don’t recognize you.”

“Weren’t you calling to Phenki? I’m that Phenki, or do you think I’m someone else?”

“May I die, daughter! Daughter, I thought you would be short. You’re taller than I am! What! May I die, daughter! Daughter, you went to Bhilai [an industrial city near Raipur], so I thought you must be working as a day laborer. Daughter, look how beautiful you look.”

“Go on! What do we do for rich Marwaris, Punjabis, or Bengalis? We make garlands. Yes, we make garlands. Do you understand? We don’t work like common people. I sent two or three letters. Didn’t they arrive?
—LAUGH— Did they arrive?”

“Daughter, I couldn’t go to Bhilai. May I die, daughter! You’re so robust, so tall. What! May I die! Daughter, you’re a city dweller. I’m going to get sugar and jaggery. Make some good strong tea and drink it. I’ll make the garlands and take them to the king’s house. I’ll bring some rice and **dāl** from there. Both of us, mother and daughter, will cook and eat it. Make a little city food, and I’ll eat it.” —LAUGH— What did she go to buy?
A. Jaggery and tea leaves.
P. She went to buy them. There were two or three garlands on that thread already made. He took them off and threw them away. And he made a garland without a thread and put it aside.

A. He made a garland.
P. He made it, and making two more, put them aside. He put them in a basket. Of course, he had paper. He took out a little. He took out a little and wrote the letter s on it and above it put the vowel e. So what was it?

A. E? E?
P. What do you have when the vowel e is put above s?

A. Se.
P. That’s all. That’s all he wrote, nothing else. He wrote s and put the vowel e above it and put the piece of paper in the flower garland and sat there quietly.

A. Yes, yes. —Laugh—
P. So, she brought back the jaggery and tea. “My daughter, make some tea. My daughter, make some tea.” She was pleased. “My daughter, make some tea,” she said. “I’ll make the garlands.” She put down the tea and jaggery and went to the flowers. What had happened to the flowers?

A. They’d already been made into garlands.
P. They’d already been made into garlands. “What!” she said. “Daughter, you didn’t use a single thread. May I die! Daughter, you didn’t even use a single thread. Daughter, teach me how and then go back.” She said this and the girl was pleased.

When she took the basket of flower garlands and was ready to go, [he asked], “What will you tell them?”

“I’ll tell them, ‘Look, my daughter made these.’ ”

“That’s OK. Go.”

A. “Tell them that.”
P. What?

A. He said, “Tell them that.”
P. “Go, if you’ll say that, then go.”

“Yes, I’m going right now. I’ll bring back some rice and dāl.” She went quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly.

—Laugh—

A. She arrived there.
P. She arrived there.

She arrived at the king’s courtyard.
She arrived at the king’s courtyard.
The old woman gave the flower garlands,
Gave the flower garlands.
The girl saw the flowers.
She was startled.

The daughter got up and stood up.
She stood up.
The daughter took a garland.
She put it on.
The daughter took a garland.
She put it on.
The daughter took another garland.
She saw the letter.
She took the letter out.
She took it out and looked at it.
No name was visible.
No work was visible.

P. "Old woman, what have you brought with the flowers? Is this a letter or what? Don't you think the person should write his name and village? What is this? Old flowerseller, what is this, mother?"
A. She was startled.
P. "Who made this garland and has written se on the left side?" Would she ask this, or not? —LAUGH—
A. She'd ask.
P. He could hardly write, "I was asleep, was asleep. You brought an iron rod and poked my ribs. It was me. I've come and I'm here."
A. How could he write that?
P. How could he write that much? "Old flowerseller?"
   "Yes."
   "Who made the garlands today? You've never made ones like these before and written se on the left side."
A. It's become difficult. —LAUGH—
P. What? —LAUGH— It was good. He had enticed her.
A. He had enticed her.
P. Why did he need to write all the details?
A. Yes.
P. He sent the right thing. He knew she would ask. She would ask. That's why he made s into se. She would know and understand the se.
   "Why are you asking? Whoever it is, give the rice and dal. Then I'll tell you."
   "Tell me the name. Only then can you take the rice and dal. Who is it? Tell me."
   "Who? She was born here; she grew up here. These days, she's gone and
lives in the city. My sister and oldest daughter. My oldest daughter has come from Bhilai. She made this flower garland."—LAUGH—

"Yes. What does she look like?"

"What can I say? Your lips aren't equal to her heel. —LAUGH— Yes. That's what she looks like. Yes."

"So, she's your oldest daughter? Go, call her here."

"Why?"

"I want to form mahāprasād with her. I want to form mahāprasād. Go."

"First, give me some rice and dāl. We're dying of hunger and thirst. We'll eat first and then come. Then you can form mahāprasād or talk together. Give me my rice and dāl."

"No, it'll be too late. I'll give you your rice and dāl, you cook it, and in that much time, we'll form the mahāprasād. Then, both the mahāprasād will be finished and the cooking of your food will be finished. Both tasks will be finished. Go, call her here. I won't give it now."

A. She won't give it. She won't give it.

P. "Daughter?"

"Yes?"

"You've broken our karma!"

"What happened?"

"If we hadn't made garlands today, then there wouldn't have been any trouble."—LAUGH— If we hadn't made garlands today, then there wouldn't have been any trouble. You've broken our karma!"

"What happened?"

"I told her my oldest daughter made these garlands. Then she sent me to call you. She said, 'If you don't go, I won't give you your rice and dāl.' I'm going to die of hunger because of you, and you, too, will die of hunger. Daughter, what will we do?"

"We'll go. We've worked, so why shouldn't we collect our pay? We'll go."

Didn't she say the right thing?

A. She said the right thing.

P. She didn't say the wrong thing?

A. She said the right thing.

P. She said the right thing. They'd made the garlands, and she'd worn them, right? Why should they remain in debt?

"We'll go."

"OK. Then, let's go. Have you seen the palace? Then, follow behind me."

Quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly. They went quickly. —LAUGH—

The minister's son and the barber's son
Were seated on their stools on the verandah.
They saw the old flowerseller.
They said, “Old woman, come here.”
They called her.

“I’ll beat you bastards! I’ll beat you!”
The old woman abused them.
She insulted them.
The boy was following behind her.
He was coming behind.

Cow dung was brought.
It was plastered in front of the doorway.
There, a ritual design was drawn.
The daughter [princess] placed a low stool there.
She put down a brass plate.
The daughter put milk and water there
And stood, waiting.

The girl [prince] was walking.
The daughter was walking.
The flowerseller brought her.
She stood in front of the courtyard.
The girl took hold of her hand.
She pulled and brought her toward her.
The daughter stood her there,
Stood her there.

The flowerseller was watching,
Thinking, “What will she do with my daughter?” —LAUGH—

The king [prince] was standing there,
Was standing there.
She washed his feet with water.
She washed his feet with water.
She patted it on her head.
The daughter washed them with milk.
She threw it on her womb.
The daughter prostrated at his feet.
She joined her hands together.
The daughter stood up and
She took his hand.
The daughter took him with her,
Took him with her.

The flowerseller was watching.
The flowerseller was watching.
The old woman went around her.  
She stopped her. —LAUGH—

“I, too, have formed [mahāprasād].  
I've seen others seat it.  
There’s an equal giving and taking.  
What kind of mahāprasād have you seated,  
In which only you have prostrated?  
Young girl, tell me this,  
Then take us inside.”

A. The prostration wasn’t equal, right? Why did only she prostrate?  
P. He stood there like an old tree. The girl had done everything. The old flowerseller was watching him. “What! I, too, have seated friendships and seen those of others. And people feed each other, give drinks to each other, and prostrate before each other. Why is my daughter standing there like a tree? Only the princess has done the necessary ritual.” This is what the old woman was thinking. How could she know about the difference inside? —LAUGH—

A. About the se inside.  
P. How could she know what se was? When the old woman asked about the inequality, then everything became confused, right?  
A. Yes, yes.  
P. It became difficult. The princess would die if she told and die if she didn’t. If she didn’t tell, they couldn’t go inside. If she told, everything would be spoiled. What did she say?  
“Flowerseller, listen. I’m a princess. Your daughter has come to my house, and that’s why I’m serving her. When I come to your house, I’ll stand up and what will you do?”

A. “You, too, will serve me like this.”  
P. “You, too, will serve me like this. Haven’t we seated a beautiful mahāprasād? One day, I’ll certainly come to your place. I won’t come everyday, but one day, I’ll certainly come, and you’ll serve me. Now, don’t block my way. Let me take my mahāprasād,” she said. She took him into the seven-storied palace and left him there. And, in a grain basket, she brought a basket of rice and gave it to the old woman.

A. Yes. She said, “Go and cook this.”  
P. The old woman picked it up quickly but couldn’t put it on her head. The old woman was weak. The old woman couldn’t put it right on her head. First she put it on her shoulder, then, with difficulty, she put it on her head. When it was on her head, the old woman was so pleased that I can’t describe it.

“If my daughter stays eight days,  
If my daughter stays fifteen days,  
There won’t be room at my place [for all the rice].
There won't be room.
If there's this feeling everyday,
She'll keep giving this much everyday.
Where will I put it?"

P. Where?
A. She was looking for a place to put it.
P. "She's giving this much at the beginning," she said. "If my daughter stays eight or ten days, then she'll give this much everyday. Where will I put it?"
A. "She'll give this much everyday."
P. She was worrying and saying, "She'll give this much everyday."
A. Yes. "Where to put it?"
P. She was looking for a place to put it. The old woman went away. Then she [the princess] said, "Oh no! You must be hungry." She cooked him all kinds of foods and vegetables. She showed him where to sit. She showed him where to sit and said, "Come and eat." The boy sat down quickly.
A. Yes, yes.
P. Didn't he sit down?
A. If he was being served food, of course he'd sit down. He was hungry. What happened?
P. "Come and eat," she said, and he sat down quickly. Then she went behind him and didn't give him any [food].

"Come on! You haven't brought any!"

"You gave hope and then took it away.
You gave hope and then took it away.
You're standing behind me,
Standing behind me.
Queen, I'm dying of hunger.
I'm thirsty."

"You wrote something with the flowers.
You sent it to me.
Where did you put se?
Where did you put it?
Until I see that form,
Until I see that dress,
Master, I won't give you the meal.
I won't give the food.
If I give the meal,
I won't see that form.
Then, we'll eat together.
Then, we'll eat together."
P. Did she feed him? —LAUGH— Did she feed him?
A. Why would she feed him? She didn’t feed him.
P. “If you stay in this disguise,” she said, “what will we do?”
   “We’ll eat,” he said. “We’ll form mahāprasād.”
   Did she feed him?
A. Why would she feed him?
P. She didn’t feed him. That’s natural. By not showing himself, he would feel badly, too, wouldn’t he?
A. He would.
P. He would. What did he write and give to her? —LAUGH— “Look,” he said, “to save my life, to see you, to meet you, I made this plan. I spent a lot of money. Don’t take away my life,” he said. “I, too, am a prince. I’m Malya Basant, the son of King Manicandra of Madhukatak. Do you understand?” he said. “Now don’t kill me. Save me. I’m the son of a king’s family. I made this plan to save my life.”
   “When your life ends, mine will end,” she said. “Why should I stay alive?”
A. “Saying this, I’m going now.”
P. “Saying this, I’m going. When yours ends, by that time, mine will have already ended. If you show some finger . . .” she said.
   What did he think? Why was he so afraid?
   “Show it. I’m hungry.” —LAUGH—

Tāre tāre . . .

He threw his clothes right there.
He threw his clothes right there.
The bābū showed his true form,
Showed his true form.
The daughter’s heart was satisfied.
She brought a brass plate and served him.
The daughter brought another plate.
He ate with his hand.

“I’ll eat his leftovers,” she thought.
“I’ve given him too much.” —LAUGH—
The daughter was serving the meal,
Was serving the meal.

The prince’s heart was satisfied.
The bābū’s heart was satisfied.
The bābū ate all the food.
He ate it all.
If it had been scrubbed, it wouldn’t have been cleaner.
If it had been washed, it wouldn’t have been cleaner.
The boy ate like that.
He ate like that.

A. OK.
P. He finished eating.
A. He made it absolutely clean.
P. He made it absolutely clean. How many doors were there?
A. Seven.
P. Seven doors. He stayed behind the doors. He stayed with her all night, and
during the day, he stayed with her companions. She gave him a key and locked
her room. No one knew about this. Someone had come, broken in and
entered, and no one knew about it. —LAUGH—

Four months passed.
Six months passed.
She was five months pregnant.
The daughter began to look different,
Began to look different.
Twelve and twelve, twenty-four girls,
Twelve and twelve, twenty-four girls,
Stayed with the daughter,
Stayed with her.
But the girls didn't know.
No one knew.

P. Wasn't there anyone? There wasn't. Everyone was the same. But, one girl was
clever.
A. Yes.
P. "Look! The princess is becoming very fat," she said. "How fat she looks!" She
had a suspicion, and the suspicion was right. She was right. She said, "This is
the right time. I won't get this chance again. If there's no conflict now, I'll be
insulted later," she said. "Saying, 'Our daughter shouldn't get into trouble or
be distressed,' her mother and father are giving us one hundred, sixty, eighty,
ninety rupees and have hired us, and now this has happened. They'll surely
say, 'Why didn't you tell us?' and will scold us. I'm going."
P. Did she go?
A. She went.
P. "Oh queen!"
"Yes."
"If you want me to, I'll take whatever oath you ask, whatever oath. I don't
know, but I think your daughter is four or five months pregnant. Doesn't she
look pregnant?"
"What!"
A. What did she say?
P. What did she say? —LAUGH— “I’ve told you this, but go and see what you think, if it’s true or not. Then tell me. No one knows about this, only you and me.”

“Oh god! May I die! May both my eyes burst! —LAUGH— Where is she?”

“She’s on the cot. Where else would she be? She’s sitting on the cot.”

When she [her mother] went, her [the daughter’s] hair was loosened. What hair? The hair on her head. She went up from behind her.

“If she’d had only two or three companions, my daughter would have been ruined even more. She had twelve and twelve, twenty-four companions, and even so she’s been ruined. Look how bad she looks! Her hair is loose. At least she could braid her hair!” —LAUGH—

A. She was looking at her.
P. What?
A. She was looking at her.
P. Yes.
A. She was pretending to look at her hair, right?
P. What?
A. She was pretending to look at her hair.
P. She was combing her hair, and what was her mother doing?
A. She was looking at her.
P. She was looking at her, right? She saw her and believed it. She combed her hair and braided it. At last she said, “Daughter, look, listen to my words. Whose union is with the best, she knows the best thing to do. This is a fact in this world, daughter,” she said. “This isn’t only true for you and me, daughter, but also for the big, big households. Whose union is with the best, she knows the best thing to do. Do you understand? If he’s from the best house, then we’ll make the best plan, and if he’s from a bad house, we’ll make a bad plan. But, tell me truthfully if he is or isn’t.”

What did she say? What did she say? What did she say?

“I’ll tell you truthfully. What is the situation, toothless woman? What is the situation, toothless one? Why are you coming and asking me, having taken out your teeth? Get up and go away!”

“Daughter, I’m your mother. I won’t trick you. Daughter, when a cow becomes pregnant and can’t bear it, she sleeps. When a woman becomes pregnant, it stays in the middle, and she sticks out in front. Why are you being so obstinate? —LAUGH— Today it’s small, so no one knows. But when it grows, it can’t be hidden; it sticks out in front. Why are you hiding it from me? Do you think there aren’t any bricks here to throw? —LAUGH— People would say, ‘She fell, broke her teeth, began to bleed, and was taken to the hospital.’ There we would tell the doctor, ‘If you give her a shot, she’ll die.’
What do you think? You've brought a bad name on my house! You've brought shame on me!"

"Oh king!"
"Yes."
"Something very shameful has happened."
"Who did it?"
"Our daughter."
"How did she do it?"
"She's five-months pregnant."
"Thū—re! —laugh— Why has the bitch come here? Thū—re! Is it true?"
"It's true."
"Go now, go."

He called the minister. He called the minister. He called the minister, Birupakhya, and said, "Minister, someone has stolen and eaten a priceless treasure from my seven-storied palace. Catch him within three days and bring him in front of me. If you don't catch him, what will happen to you? I'll have you hung from the gallows by your backside," he said. "Go now."

But the minister shit and peed [out of fear]. Now what did the minister do? He divided the city into neighborhoods. Is that what he did?

A. He did.
P. He divided it into neighborhoods and said, "Brothers, there's priceless gold in the king's seven-storied palace. Someone has stolen and eaten it. Catch him for me." Would people obey his order or not?

A. They would.
P. What?
A. They would.
P. They surrounded the palace walls for the entire night. What did they surround?

A. The wall and its shadow.
P. And whom did they surround?
A. Whom did they surround?
P. That poor thing couldn't get out. Everything they needed was inside: a place to go to the bathroom, things to eat, to drink, to wear, everything. Right?

A. Yes.
P. In the seven-storied palace. It was all surrounded, so where could he go?

—laugh—
A. Where were they looking for him?
P. They were looking. Morning broke; morning broke. They each went back to their own houses.

"Brother-in-law of the nose-blower, tell the truth. You surrounded it, so what did you see?"
"I saw only the shadow and that wall."
"What did you see?"
"I surrounded it all night, but I saw only the shadow and the wall."
"Why didn’t you look inside the house? You should have looked there."
That was the king’s order.
"Chh! Who knows since when and from where he’s come and since when he’s been staying in the house, surrounded?" That day passed.

A. Yes, yes.
P. The next day, it was the turn of the next neighborhood. “Go, brothers.” They went. They did the same thing. What?
A. They surrounded the shadow and the wall.
P. It became morning.
A. Two nights passed.
P. They went again. Two nights passed.
A. Yes.
P. The last neighborhood, on the edge, was left.
A. Yes.
P. He brought them. For the third night, they circled the shadow and the wall. It became morning. When it was morning, the minister said, “Citizens, greetings to your mothers and fathers and greetings to you, too. I brought you here for the entire night and put you to a lot of trouble. It was useless. We didn’t catch anything. So, I’m leaving, sons. Whomever I’ve helped, say ‘He was good’; whomever I’ve harmed, say ‘He’s gone.’ Fathers, go now, go back to your own work. Today I’ll go. Now go.”
A. The minister was talking.
P. “You’re telling us to go and saying ‘I’m going today.’ What? Won’t you stay here? Won’t you go home?”
   “I won’t go to my mud house.”
   “Where will you go?”
   “I’m going to my house in heaven.”
   “Is your life over today, father?”
   “Yes, it’s over.” —LAUGH—
   “You see and know death. That’s why you were made minister,” they said, and they went away. They went away, and then what did he do? He didn’t go on the open road. “Ohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh,” he groaned. He snuck out through the garden path. —LAUGH— Yes. He snuck out through the garden path. There was a broken cot lying there. He put the broken cot upright and laid down, groaning, “Ohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh.” He knew when the king found out—
A. He’d hang him on the gallows. That’s why he got a fever, from his worry.
P. [The minister’s daughter-in-law said to his son,] “Hey, cardplayer! Hey, cardplayer! Hey, cardplayer! The old man hasn’t eaten since yesterday. He went
out at night, and now it's noon, one o'clock. The two children are calling, 'Grandpa, grandpa, grandpa, grandpa,' and who knows where the old man has gone?"

"People are so stupid. If they don't see someone for a minute, they go crazy. And the old man has only been gone since yesterday. If I don't go to play cards today, the least I'll get is a beating. Wait and see." —LAUGH— Go, go. He must be at the king's house."

"Because the old man isn't here today, I haven't cleaned the brass [vessel] yet. Usually, by now I would have washed it three times. Look how dirty it is, lying over there," she said and went behind the house and began to wash it. She scrubbed it vigorously with ashes. Because of that noise, she couldn't hear anything else. When she quit scrubbing with the ashes and began washing with water, she heard the moaning, "Ohhhh, ohhhh, ohhhh."

—LAUGH— She heard that noise. Whose?

A. The minister's.
P. The minister's. She left the brass pot and said, "Where has that son-eating bitch given birth this time?" And she peered out. Whom did she see?

A. The minister.
P. How was he related to her?
A. He was her father-in-law.
P. Her father-in-law. "Who's there?"

"Oh, mother, it's me."

"Why are you sleeping here?"

"This is the last time we're going to meet."

"Are you going away today?"

"Yes."

"Then be sure to write the office of the minister in your son's name."

—LAUGH—

"That'll happen of its own accord. I don't have ten sons! It'll be written of its own accord. I'm going away today."

"Is that why you have this fever?"

"Yes."

"Then come. Don't spend money on the road unnecessarily. Take some food with you. And why do you have a fever, tell me? Tell me why you've got a fever."

"There was an order that I had to obey within three days. For three days, I made an encirclement. I couldn't catch the fox. So today, as soon as I reach the palace, the king will hang me from the gallows by the seat of my pants."

—LAUGH— It'll be good for you. It'll be good for you."

"Why would the king hang you from the gallows by your seat?"

"His daughter has met a man, and he'll hang me from the gallows from my seat. —LAUGH— It's good for you."
"Why is it good?"

"I was just going to tell you that, when I thought of something. My son is always with five people [playing cards]. It'll be morning; he always stays out until sunrise. My eyes are getting bigger and bigger, and I'm going to swear."


"Who was it, mother? Who else could it be! The minister can go to the king's house, and the king to the minister's. No one else can come and go like that. Why wouldn't I get a fever? —LAUGH— Thinking, 'It's your son' has brought on a little more fever."

"Get up, go and eat some food." Would he eat?

A. Where else would he eat?
P. What?
A. Where else would he eat?
P. He would have eaten if it concerned himself, but whom were they talking about?
A. They were talking about his son.
P. They were talking about his son. So, she didn't feed him. He ate this much [indicating a handful].

"Did you eat?"

"You didn't feed me, daughter, so what should I do? Should I take it to my son?"

"Where?"

"At the king's house."

"What bastard has asked you to take it? He went without even telling his daughter, or did he just go? Go, tell him that. Even if you are old. What? Should I go? Let him come here."

"Whatever you're planning, you're going to destroy the entire lineage because of it. —LAUGH— You're going to destroy the entire lineage."

"Father-in-law?"

"Yes."

"A king has eight qualities [gun], and a minister has sixteen qualities. That's what people say. So, why are you a minister?"

"What do you mean?"

"A fever has gripped you over such a little thing, and you're asking death to come get you. What will you do when something more important happens?"

"What?"

"Go tell the king this. If you give me two and a half measures of gold and one measure of silver, I'll catch him within seven days."

[The king to the minister.] "Minister!"

"Yes."

"What happened?"
“He slipped away. If you give me a measure of gold and a measure of silver, I’ll catch the thief within seven days.”

“Go, weigh it and take it. Go, weigh it and take it.”

He weighed it and brought it home. “Mother, here’s what you asked for,” he said. He gave it to his bahū. When he gave it to his bahū, what happened?

“Call all the servants and give each one his share, and give them each a rock. Tell them to scrub their share of the silver and gold.”

So, the silver and gold were given to the servants of the household. They made gold paste and they also made silver paste, and on the sixth day, they mixed them together. They mixed them both and made a sandalwood paste. Both of them. They made both of them into a sandal paste. They put both on a plate, and what did they do then? She wrote on a sheet of paper, “Oh daughter of the king, ever since I got married and came here, I haven’t met you. But, I’m coming to your place to meet you.”

A. “Come.”

P. “Come today at four.” She was happy. “Today the minister’s bahū is coming to meet me,” she said, and she was happy. “She’s the mother of two children,” and she was happy.

She [the bahū] put the children to sleep. She put them down, having fed them until they were full. She took the plate of sandal paste and went at four o’clock. The king’s daughter was ready. “She’ll come,” she said.

As soon as she arrived, [the princess] took the plate of sandal paste and took it inside. She had the bahū’s hands and feet washed. She greeted and welcomed her. She made tea and breads. They ate and drank, then sat together for an hour.

“Queen, I only came for this much time. Now, I must go.”

She got up quickly and went away. She went away quickly and said, “Father-in-law, call everyone in the city today, and what should you do? Put a watchman wherever there’s water. Grab and bring whoever comes at night to bathe. Do this until morning.”

A. “Until the cock crows.”

P. “Only after it’s morning should the watchmen leave and stop bringing anyone who’s come to bathe at night.”

The minister heard her order and put a watchman at every bathing place. What had they kept watch over for three days? They’d kept watch over the house and wall.

A. The wall.

P. Today they kept watch over the bathing places. Inside the seven-storied palace, when the meal was over and everyone was asleep in their beds, she [the princess] got a chance to serve him. “Listen,” she said. “The minister’s bahū came to meet me today. If she’d brought something to eat, it would have come out already. If it had been something to eat, I couldn’t bring it to you now. But
it wasn't something to eat. I've saved it. Come, I'll rub some sandal paste on your body, then a little on mine, too."

A.  "I'll rub some paste."

P.  "I'll rub it on." She took off his clothes and made him lie down, and began to rub on the paste.

A.  The sandal paste.

P.  She began to rub the sandal paste on his whole body. She rubbed it on, and what was left, she put on her own body.

A.  She rubbed it on.

P.  She rubbed on the paste.

When it dried,
When it dried,
How did the boy look?
He began to sparkle.
The son himself knew,
"I won't survive.
My death has come.
My death has come."

P.  "They'll see. They'll see this form. Today my death will come."

"How?"

"What is this? Look! How will I survive? Again and again I told you, 'Save me. Don't take my life.' Look at this! You made this plan to kill me. Now look!" he said. "Yours will go away. What will happen to mine? Now look! They've caught me. That thief. You thought no one knew. That's why, in order to catch me—"

A.  "You made this plan."

P.  "Go, go to the pond with the small pebbles. Bathe there and clean yourself; then come back," she said. There, too, there were watchmen. Weren't they watching?

A.  There were watchmen.

P.  They were also at that bathing place. He went and saw them. So, at the edge, what did he do at the edge? "I'll immerse myself," he said. And he entered the water and went all the way in. He went in, and when he came out he shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, shone and sparkled, and they saw him. Wouldn't he shine?

A.  He would.

P.  "Snake, snake! Snake, snake!" Those who were watching the bathing place called out, "Snake, snake! Snake, snake! —LAUGH— It's a cobra snake!" they called out.

He sat by the edge of the water. It was the pond with small pebbles. He
took a handful of pebbles and scrubbed himself. He scrubbed himself so hard that one layer of skin came off. What did he do after scrubbing himself? He washed himself with water, so that he made a noise. Wouldn't there be a noise?

A. There would.

P. When he was washing, they looked two or three times and said, "What! What is that? If it were some kind of cat drinking water, it would have made the noise chakal, chakal. Why is it making the noise ghablak? —LAUGH— Let's go around and see," they said, and they went around. So that poor thing had scrubbed himself and was bathing.

A. He was sitting down.

P. He was sitting down.

They surrounded him on all four sides.
They caught the prince.
They tied him and brought him,
Tied him and brought him.
They tied him up for the night.
They tied him up for the night.
"This is the thief," they said.
"This is the thief."

It was seven o'clock.
The sun rose.
The minister's bahū knew it was him.
"Take him," she said.
The bahū said, "This is the thief;
Take him."

P. "Is this the one?"
"It is. Yes. Take him."
"Oh king!"
"Yes."
"This is the thief. This is he. Yes."
"Are you the thief? From whom did you steal?"
"From who else? I stole from the king."
"OK. So you're giving me an answer. You're giving me an answer about my things. How strange!" he said. "Oh Kam, Ram, Sam, and Dam [king's henchmen, later identified as grasscutters], take him and finish off his life on the crossroads, where the road divides."

A. The daughter had sent the prince, and if he didn't come back by sunrise—

P. She would think that he must be cleaning himself. And she was cleaning herself inside, but it wasn't coming off. —LAUGH— She would think that he
was still cleaning himself. The paste stuck like cement sticks to bricks. She'd given it to him. It dried and then it wouldn't come off. She thought he was still scrubbing himself, and that's why the sun had already risen.

"Go and grab the bastard! If you've got anything with you, now's your chance. We're going to take you to the crossroads and will kill you with a sword. If you've got anything with you, give it to us. Now's your chance to keep your name alive."

"I have nothing. Look. I'm ruined! I have nothing."

"You must have something. The king's daughter is very clever." They pulled and pulled on everything. "You must have something. You're a naked bābā."

"When I left my country,
When I left my country,
The mother who gave me birth thought,
My mother deliberated in her heart.
And she went to her storeroom.
She gave me this much.
My mother gave me this much.

I brought that gold.
I brought that gold.
I've hidden it far away, brothers,
Hidden it far away.
If you believe me,
Come with me and see.
I'll give it to you and die,
Give it to you and die.
You'll remember me for seven generations.
You'll remember me for seven generations.
My name will live on.
My name will live on."

P. "The water pot [kumbh] is this big, isn't it, father? The water pot is this big, isn't it, father?"

"Yes. It's like a baithī bowl [type of Oriya vessel]."

"Is it pure gold?"

"Yes, pure gold."

A. "It's gold."

P. "It's pure gold."

"Then where did you put it? Then where did you put it? Then where did you put it?"

"I put it at the top of a tree. I didn't put it on the ground. I thought maybe white ants would eat it, so I put it up high."
“Let’s go. Hey, Kam?”

“Yes.”

“You’ll be the one to climb the tree. Go quickly, take it out and bring it down. Go and climb up there. The prince will show you where it is,” he said.

“Where is it?”

“It’s here.”

“Climb up.”

Kam climbed up quickly, quickly.

“Oh, stop, stop, stop, stop!” he said.

“Why?”

“There’s a magical amulet around it. If you know how to take it off, it’s OK; otherwise, if you don’t know how to take off the amulet, both your eyes will burst, bābū, they’ll burst.”

“Kam, come down, come down, come down! Don’t climb up there!”

Would he come down?

A. Of course, he’d come down.

P. He came down.

“Yes. Surround me on all sides of the tree, you four people. Surround me, and I’ll climb up, take it out and bring it. If you surround me, how can I escape?”

He said the right thing, the prince. —LAUGH—

“Surround me, Kam; Ram, surround me; Dam, surround me,” he said.

They surrounded him. He climbed slowly, slowly. He climbed slowly, slowly.

He reached the place.

A. Near the horse.

P. Near the horse. He put one leg on one side and one leg on the other, and what did he do? He sat himself in the middle, sat himself in the middle. Two fingerwidths, three fingerwidths, four fingerwidths.


Tāre nāre . . .

He pulled hard. He clung to its [the horse’s] body.

The son flew up into the sky, Flew into the sky.

The ghāsiyā [grasscutters] were watching.

They threw up their hands;

They beat themselves.

“Bastard! What have you done to us?

How did you trick us?

You said, ‘There’s lots of gold,’ and tricked us.
You said, 'There's lots of gold,' and tricked us.
Bastard, you flew into the sky,
Flew into the sky."

P. "Kam, what should we do?"
A. "What should we do?"

P. "What should we do? Go, bring a lamb. Bring it and come back. We'll cut it up and send it." He went. He brought back a young lamb, one that was in the house. They killed it, and there was lots of blood, and they went back.

"Oh king!"
"Yes."
"We obeyed your order."
"OK. Go, you're free to go now. Go."
"Look, don't any of you bastards say anything. —Laugh— Remember then, if anyone tells, then..." Didn't they do it well?

A. They did it well.

P. "You're very clever. You're very clever."
"How so?"
"The poor boy, what a beautiful boy he was. You hid and kept him. You got pregnant by him. Today, the ghāsiyā cut the poor boy into three or four pieces. The ghāsiyā Kam, Ram, Dam, and Sam have come back. Do you understand?"
"Where?"
"At the crossroads."

A. Is the minister saying this?

P. No, the king. "You had such a great plan. Today, you knowingly had someone else's son killed. Did you act properly? He was living with you, and we didn't know it. Do you understand?"
"I had him killed? Whom did I have killed?"
"You had your lover killed, whom else would you have had killed? We caught the poor boy. Will you ever get such a beautiful boy again?"
"Did I have him killed?"
"Yes. You had him killed."

"Oh father, listen to me.
Oh father, listen to me.
Accept my entreaty, father,
I beg of you.
Bring back my lord.
Bring back my master.
Accept my entreaty,
I beg of you.
If you don't bring him back,
If you don't bring him back,
And I'm nine months pregnant,
I'm eight months pregnant,
To whom will you give me,
And cause your name to be written?"

P. Wasn't she mocking him?
A. She was.

P. Hadn't he already died? “Daughter, I myself entreat you a thousand times; I beg of you. Don't say this to me. They've already killed him; they've already killed him. I'll call kings from all directions, and whomever you want, what will I do? I'll marry you to him. Whatever you say, and nothing else.”

“If my lord had died,
If my master had died,
My heart would have throbbed;
Tears would have streamed from my eyes.
My gold bracelets would have turned black;
I wouldn't have been able to sleep.
My lord is alive.”
She made her plan.

P. “Queen, oh queen!”
“Yes.”
“Call someone who knows how to blow [a healer], and have him blow on your daughter. She's gone crazy. She's gone crazy. She says the boy who was killed is alive. She's gone crazy. She's gone out of her mind.”

A. “She's gone out of her mind.” Will the ghāsiyā be spared?

P. Will they be spared, or won’t they be spared?

“Who do you think is crazy? What are you planning to do? Why do you think I've gone crazy? My husband is still living; he hasn’t died.”
“Where is he?”
“He's in this country.”
“Even if he's in this country, I won’t be able to recognize him.”
“You may not be able to recognize him, but I'll recognize him. You may not be able to, but I'll recognize him. Make every man in this country come, turn by turn. Look, the king’s daughter will know her husband. Make them stand in line.”

[Conversation between two men called for the lineup.]
“Hey, mahāprasād!”
“Yes.”
“You know that necklace your grandfather used to wear? Wear it and come sit by the side of the road.”
“Why? What's happening?”
They were standing in lines: the old men and young boys, mature men and middle-aged men, line after line. Who was going to look at them?

“Make a platform over there,” she said. “Make a platform over there,” she said. They made a platform. “No,” she said, “he’s alive.” She said, “Go now.” She insisted, “Go, go and call them, the ghāsiyā.”

“The king has ordered you to come.”

“Oh, my house is ruined! Someone told! —LAUGH— Oh woman from Haldipali!”

“Yes.”

“Give me your hand; I’m going to spit in your palm.” —LAUGH—

“Where are you going that you want to spit in my hand first?”

“I’m going away today and won’t come back. I’ll stay at the king’s house. Do you understand? Find the children. You used to always say, ‘I’m going to my mother’s place,’ and you couldn’t go. Take the children now. I’m going away.”

“Where?”

“The king is calling me.”

“So, what will happen?”

“He’ll have us hung by our seats from the gallows.”

“Who?”

“He’ll have us four brothers hung by our seats from the gallows.”

[The king asks,] “Have they come?”

“Yes.”

“Sit down.” As they [the ghāsiyā] sat down, they shit in their pants; that’s how afraid they were.

“Why are you afraid? Tell the truth. Did you kill him or let him go; tell the truth. Did you kill him or let him go; tell the truth. If you killed him, nothing will happen, and if you let him go, nothing will happen. But tell the truth. You’re thinking, ‘We’ll flatter him and tell him. We’ll flatter and appease him.’ What will you save through flattery? Tell me the truth,” he said.

“Oh king, he escaped. He flew away and escaped.”

“How?”

“We don’t know. He said he’d put a lot of gold at the top of a tree, and he flew away and escaped. We didn’t kill him. He got away.”

“OK, OK, OK, it’s OK. It’s OK,” he said. “It’s OK. Go now, go. Bathe and wash; cook your food and eat,” he said and called them.

A. Who?

P. The village watchmen. He gave the order, “Bring out all the men of the city,” he said. They brought everyone out, including the one sitting on the edge of the road wearing the necklace. They set up a platform facing north. And she looked, but was he there? What? Was he?
A. No. Why would he be there? He'd escaped; he'd flown away. Would he have stayed there?

P. He wasn't there. He'd flown away. So what did he do? He flew away but turned around, changed his clothes, and went to the old flowerseller's place.

A. Poor thing.

P. "Mother, greetings."

A. He went back again. —LAUGH—

P. The old flowerseller's eyes popped out. "Who are you?" He was wearing long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, underwear, and an undershirt. "Who are you?"

"You bastard of an old woman! You said you were my mother, so I got married. Didn't you send me three letters? We got married. Where did she go? Today I came myself, and your eyes popped out. Where did she go?"

"Who?"

"Your oldest daughter. Hasn't she come back?"

"Yes, she came, my son."

"Then quickly show her to me, or else I'll lose my job."

A. "Show her quickly."

P. "My house is ruined! That child-eater left such a beautiful son and went with her mahāprasād. Sit down, my son," she said. "I'm going to bring jaggery and tea leaves. I'll make tea, you drink it and stay seated here. I'll go bring her. She's somewhere else, at the house of her mahāprasād.

"I won't drink any tea. My eyes won't be satisfied until I see her. Bring her quickly!"

A. "Go, go quickly!" She went quickly. The boy had come.

P. "Princess!"

"Yes."

"Her husband has come!"

"Who's come?"

"Her husband! Her husband! Her husband!"

"Mother, is he the wirelike man?" —LAUGH—

"What kind of wire?"

"Are you saying the wire husband, that tall one?"

"Yes, I'm saying that wire, your mahāprasād's husband, has come."

"So, what should I do?"

"Bring her out. He wants to see her."

"Who?"

"Your mahāprasād."

"Where is she? Isn't she with you? Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"What answer am I supposed to give?" —LAUGH—

"She left a long time ago. Before your vegetables had even cooked, we'd formed our mahāprasād, and she left."
“Ohh, my dharma is broken! The minister’s son had called out to her [as we were coming here]. Maybe he ran off with her somewhere.” —LAUGH—
“Where is she?”
“Son, she’s a loose woman. She ran away somewhere. She’s not here,” she said.
“Oh dear! I’ve lost my job and my wife, too! What should I do?” he said.
“As long as you’re going to stay here, stay at my house and eat my rice and dāl, if you’ve lost your job. Are you going to be a day laborer now?”
Whose was he?
A. He was her’s.
P. He was her’s. Right? He had stayed. Over here, people were standing in line after line.
“All those standing here are crows and herons. All those standing here are crows and herons. There’s not one swan among them, father. There’s not one swan among them.”
“Are there any others in any other house? Maybe there are some visitors, so go and look.” —LAUGH—
“Yesterday, in our neighborhood, at the old flowerseller’s house, [I heard], ‘I’ll give, and you eat. Here, take a little more.’ She was saying, ‘Here.’ But I can’t say who it is.”
“Go to the old flowerseller’s and ask if there’s a man there, or what.”
“Old flowerseller!”
“Yes.”
“Is there someone in your house?”
“Yes.”
“Who is it?”
“My own son-in-law.” —LAUGH— Wasn’t she giving the right answer?
A. She was giving the right one.
P. “Is he your son-in-law?”
“Yes.”
“Well, here’s an order from the king. Bring him outside.”
“Why? Why should he go?”
“The king’s daughter is identifying her husband. She said, ‘He’s the one in the old flowerseller’s house.’ ”
“No, he’s not.”
“Then why should he go?”
“He just came yesterday, and she [the princess] is about to deliver her baby. So why should he go? And if she says so, then tell her this.”
“You’re right.”
“Then go back.”
“What should we do? The old woman’s logic is right. What did she say?
‘He came yesterday, and she’s about to deliver. So why should he go?’ she said.
She's right. Let's go." They went back. She didn't let him go.

"Let's go, mahâprasad. Let's find out what happened, why the flowerseller won't let him come. I'm going to see."

A. Who's saying this?

P. Some other people. All the people of the city had gathered there, right?

"Let's go. 'Old flowerseller!'"

"Yes."

"Take a small bowl of thick castor oil and apply it around your waist."

"Who's talking?"

"It's the king's order. He told us to tell the old flowerseller this. He said you should leave everything else, get some oil, and apply it around your waist."

"That will be very difficult to do. It's thick oil, castor oil, —laugh— bâbûl!"

"Yes."

"Whose order is it? The king's? What did he say?"

"He said, 'Tell the old flowerseller to get some thick oil and apply it around her waist. I'm coming to see if she obeyed.' His whip is new. It's very hard, not at all soft. That's why he sent this order."

"What will he do with the whip?"

"He'll beat you, of course. —laugh—"

"Why would he beat me?"

"Because you're not bringing me out," [the prince said].

"Then get up and get out! You're going to get me whipped! Get out! Hey, come get him! Come get him!" she said.

They were going back after having said that much, right? They said that she should bring him outside. What an ingenious plan they had, so that he would come out of his own accord. They got him to come out; they got him to come out and called him over. When they called him over, the princess came and grabbed his hand. This is him," she said. Isn't that what she would say?

A. It is.

P. "This is him," she said. "This is my husband," she said. "Now all of you go and bathe," she said.

A. She sent everyone to bathe.

P. "This is my husband," she said and grabbed his hand. And everyone believed her. Everyone believed her, and the king said, "Daughter, you did this of your own will, not my will. People are gathered here now, so I'm going to end this public shame," he said. And what did he do? He joined their hands and gave his daughter's hand to the boy and also put the kingdom in his name. He said, "You've been given this wealth, the kingdom, and my daughter. Look, I've handed them over to you. I've given them to you." And he joined their hands there.

A. OK. Now the prince is married. What's happening to his mother and father back in their kingdom?
OK. What time is it? [With this question, the performer shifts out of the narrative world into the village performance setting.]

It's twelve o'clock. Will he go back or not?

He'll go back.

Then tell the rest quickly.

I'll tell it quickly.

Take him back to his own kingdom.

OK. Then, when the king had handed over the kingdom, the prince said, "As they say, 'A dog eating his own rice is greedy for the rice of others.' There's a big problem. If my relatives lived here, then I'd say it's good. But who's here to enjoy it? And why should I enjoy the belongings of others here when they're still worried over there?" He was worried, and what did the prince say?

"Mohini, listen. I'm the son of a king. I'm an only child. My mother and father must be worrying about me. They don't know if I'm dead or alive. You stay here; I'll go for a little while."

"I'll come right back."

"I'm only going for a little while. You stay here. I'll come back in two or three days. I won't leave you," he said.

"Oh no!" she said. "Don't talk like that. Don't talk like that," she said. "Why should I stay here in someone else's house and leave my own house [that is, now identifying with her husband's house as her own]. I'll give birth there [in his parent's house]. If I give birth in my mother's house, will my name live on?" she said. "I'll go, too. I won't stay in a house that's not my own."

She spoke the truth.

What?

She spoke the truth.

Would he say no?

Why would he?

He sat her down. On what?

On the horse.

On the wooden horse, right? He seated her and told the people of the city, "Take care of the old man and woman [the king and queen]. I'm going. I promise to come back one day," he said. Then both of them sat down, and he pulled the reins of the horse. As they were going, would the horse be able to fly like he used to, quickly, quickly, quickly, quickly?

He wouldn't be able to.

Slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly, slowly, they arrived after three days and three nights.

Then it was the same [as the time it took the prince to come there].

Yes.

It was the same.

What was the same?
A. His journey.

P. It was the same: three days and three nights. It was the same. Morning broke, and he [the horse] came down. After three days and three nights, he came down. In what kind of place did he come down? In Sirco [the village of the performance]. He came down this far from that dam. He came down, and why did he come down? Her labor pains had begun as they were flying in the sky. Her labor pains had begun, and that's why he came down in that grove. After they came down, what happened?

She gave birth right away. She gave birth to a boy. Yes. She gave birth to a boy. It was a boy, and he thought, "Oh no! After this, her body must be cold. I have to warm her; then she'll be all right," he said. And what did he do?

You could see it [the village] from there. He climbed on the horse right away and flew away. "I'm coming right back. Take care of the child," he said. He went quickly. There was a prostitute's house there. There was a prostitute's house, and when he reached there, she saw that he was handsome, right?

A. Yes.

P. The prostitute saw he was a handsome man. She said, "Of all the men that I've enjoyed, I've never seen a man like this; I haven't seen one," she said. And what did she do? She quickly made some pān and gave it to him to eat. He forgot everything. He forgot everything. He stayed in the prostitute's house and didn't go back.

The princess saw that it was becoming evening. She thought to herself, "He said he was bringing sunthī and pipal [postpartum village medicines] and went to his country. I wonder what he's doing there. He must be bringing a car for me to go back in."

Where was the car?

A. He'd forgotten her.

P. Then what did she do? Night fell. Night fell, and she put the child to sleep with her and went to sleep herself. There where she'd gone to sleep, Mayabati Rani of the country of Mayab, who was several months pregnant, miscarried. It was a boy, and he died. Her companions were going to bury him at the graveyard. As they were going to bury him, the [other] baby cried, and what was the mother doing?

A. She was sleeping.

P. She was sleeping. As they were going, holding the dead baby, they thought they'd heard a witch. What kind of witch? They went to look, and what did they see? She was sleeping, and the baby was crying. So what did they do there? They left the dead baby and took the living baby and returned. They brought it and gave it to Mayabati Rani. They gave it to Mayabati Rani. Wouldn't the princess begin to look for him?

A. What else? Wouldn't she begin to look for him? And did she [Mayabati Rani] have to look for anything?

P. Right. She didn't need anything. She didn't need to worry about feeding,
looking after, or putting the baby to sleep. She was happy. "My son had become quiet; now there's life again. That's why they've brought him back. They've done the right thing," she said. She was happy. "So, where's he from?" she said.

"The mother was dead, and the baby was crying, so that's why we put the dead one in the arms of the dead and brought this one for you. Take care of him," they said.

She was happy, and she took care of him. As she was taking care of him, the other woman woke up.

A. The queen, Mohini Rani.

P. Mohini woke up. She woke up, and what happened? It was a dead baby. The baby had died.

"Oh no!" she said. "Mine was living. Mine was living. Where did this dead one come from?" she said. "Mine was living. Where did this dead one come from? Something terrible has happened!" she said. "This isn't him," she said. Wouldn't she recognize him?

A. Of course she would. Why wouldn't she recognize her own son?

P.

"May my black karma burn!
May my birth into this caste burn.
Why haven't I died, lord?
Why hasn't Yama [god of death] eaten me?
I didn't obey my mother's words.
I didn't obey my father's words.
I didn't obey my husband's words.
I listened only to myself, lord.
Where did my lord go?
Where is my master?
Where did my son go?
Who took him?"

P. "My husband went away and didn't come back. I had a son; where is he?"

A. "He went away."

P. "He went away, and a dead one has replaced him. A terrible thing has happened! How can I keep living? I'm going to enter the jungle, and surely a tiger or snake—"

A. "Will eat me."

P. "Will eat me," she said, and she entered the jungle. But not even a fox showed itself.

The old Brahmin of that country, whose name was Haridas, had gone out to ask for alms. After spending the night in a village, he was returning. She was sitting there crying in the jungle. A beautiful woman was sitting there crying.
She was Mohini Rani. The Brahmin came and saw her and said, “You’re such a beautiful daughter. Why are you sitting and crying in this dense jungle? Tell me why,” he said.

“I have no mother or father, no place to stay. That’s why I’m crying,” she said.

“And I have no fruit or flower [descendant]. Come with me. I’ll make you my daughter and take care of you,” he said.

“OK,” she said.

The people of that country saw her coming with the Brahmin Haridas and said, “Old Brahmin woman! There’s your man. Your forehead has split open!” [“You poor thing!”]

Wiping her forehead, [she asked], “Where is the blood?”

“No, not literally! He’s bringing someone else.”

“What is she like?”

“Mayabati Rani doesn’t even compare to her; that’s what she’s like.”

“He has no skin on his seat and no hair on his head. What does she see in him?”

A. “She’s coming.”

P. “She’s coming. Maybe she’s coming for innocent reasons. Why am I listening to all the talk of these people?” she said. And she stayed there. She saw he was bringing her behind him. As he came closer to her, he said, “Old woman, this is our daughter.”

“If I’d listened to the gossip of the other women, I would have been partner to sin today,” she said. And what did she do? She took her into her lap right away, took her inside the house and loved her very much. She [the princess] forgot her husband and son and stayed in the Brahmin’s house. She stayed in the Brahmin’s house.

And he [the prince] was in the prostitute’s house.

A. And she stayed in the Brahmin’s house.

P. She stayed in the Brahmin’s house. He stayed in the prostitute’s house. In the king’s house—

A. Their son was living.

P. Their son was living. Their son grew day by day, day by day, day by day. As he grew, he also studied. After he’d finished his education, what did he begin to wonder? “How far is the city? How many streets are there? How many alleys are there? I don’t know. Until now, I’ve been kept busy with my education. I’m going out today, and what will I do in this country? I’ll walk all around it.” Saying this, what did he do?

He put on royal dress. He ate breakfast. And as he was going from street to street, street to street, alley to alley, what happened?

Having bathed, [the Brahmin’s daughter] had loosened her hair and was combing it. At that time he entered their street. A woman saw him and said,
"Hey, the king's son is coming! Tie up your hair. It isn't good to have loose hair. Tie it up! Tie it up!" she said.

"OK," she said. And with her left hand, she tied it up, and the king's son came and stood there. At that time, he stood there. He stood there and saw her and said, "I've seen all the women in the city, but such a woman I've—"

A. "I've never seen."

P. "I've never seen. I've never seen a woman like this," he said and quickly went back to his house. He returned quickly and inside his house, he laid down on his cot and went to sleep. He laid down on his cot and went to sleep. While he was sleeping, his mother and father saw him.

"My son went to wander around in the city, so why is he lying down on his cot now and sleeping?" Calling and calling to him, they got tired.

Upon his return, he'd gotten obstinate. They tried to feed him, but he wouldn't eat. Finally, they called an old matchmaker. They called the old woman and said, "Why won't our son eat? Make him happy," they said.

The old matchmaker, the old grandmother made many preparations. She made many plans. "Hey, old woman," he said, "why are you making so many plans here and there. Why are you looking here and there, here and there?" he said. "Go and tell them that only if I marry that Brahmin's daughter will my life be saved. Otherwise, I'll die," he said.

"How sad! Here you are, a great king, and following the desire of your own heart, you fell in love with the daughter of a mendicant," she said. "Call Haridas," she said.

"Oh Haridas!"

"Yes."

"My son loves your daughter. Will you give her to him or not?"

"I can't say. I'll go and ask my daughter."

"Why did the king call you?"

"The king's son has fallen in love with you and says he'll marry you. What answer should I give to them?" he said.

"Tell them 'No.'"

"If I say 'No,' they'll drag you there."

"What do you mean, they'll drag me there."

A. "What do you mean?"

P. "They'll drag you there," he said. "What kind of father am I that I can protect you?" Didn't he say the right thing?

A. He did.

P. "OK. Tell them to give a calf and a cow of the same color. This evening the king's son should come to my house, and I'll give an answer," she said.

And he said, "King, my daughter will get married, but she wants to give the answer to your son. He should come to our house at sunset and bring with him a cow and a calf of the same color."
“OK,” [the king] said.
“And bring two hundred rupees.”

Instead of two hundred, he gave four hundred. And he gave a calf and a cow of the same color. When evening fell, he put on royal clothes and shoes.

“You called me,” he said. And as he knocked, knocked, knocked, knocked, what did she do? She lit four lamps in the four corners and made up a bed and prepared all kinds of food. What was the king’s son going to do?

A. He was going to sit inside.
P. Thinking, “He’ll come to my house,” she got ready. She got ready. When he came, they were tied in front of the door. Who were tied?

A. The horse, cow, and calf.
P. He jumped down on one foot, and it landed on the calf’s tail. He was standing on it. He was about to put down the other foot when the calf said, “Mother, he’s crushing me with his foot! Mother, he’s crushing me with his foot!”

“He’s crushing you, but what can I do? Can a mother seize her son?”

Hearing this, would he step down with his other foot? He turned around and went back. He turned around and went back. He went home and said, “There’s something strange. The cow talks. Why did she say this?” he said. As he wondered about this, the night passed; he didn’t sleep at all. Morning broke.

Mayabati Rani saw him. She said, “My son has gone to the Brahmin’s house,” and she made all kinds of food and said, “Get up, son, and brush your teeth.”

“Mother, I won’t eat and I won’t stay here. If you tell me the truth, I’ll stay; otherwise, I won’t stay.”

“Tell me what happened. Tell me. Why would I lie to you?”

“Was I born through your womb, or did you find me somewhere else and raise me? Tell me this.”

A. “Tell the truth.”
P. “Tell the truth.”

“Son, I didn’t give birth to you and raise you,” she said. “I found you and raised you. What happened to the one born through my womb?”

A. “He died.”
P. “He died. My companions went to bury him. Your mother had died there. So they brought you and gave you to me and put the dead one there.”

“Then the cow spoke the truth, didn’t she?”

A. Yes, yes.
P. “The cow is my mother. That’s why the cow couldn’t act, and that’s why she spoke the truth. This isn’t my mother,” he said.

“Who is she?”

A. “She’s my mother.”
"She’s my mother. Call the old Brahmin."

"Brahmin!"

"Yes."

"Tell the truth. Is this really your daughter?"

"I had gone begging, and she was sitting in the jungle crying. So, I brought her back with me."

"Call her here."

"Where are you from? Tell me who you are. The old Brahmin said you’re not his. Where are you from?"

"The son of King Manicandra of Madhukatak, Malya Basant. The son of King Manicandra of Madhukatak, Malya Basant. I’m a king’s daughter, of the lineage of the sun, Surya. My name is Mohini. I was going with my husband on a flying wooden horse. I had labor pains and gave birth to a son in the jungle. My husband brought us to this country. If he went to his own country or stayed in this country, I can’t say. I went to sleep, holding my son, in the jungle that night. Who brought a dead son and put him there, and who took my living son?"

A. "Took him."

P. "Who took him," right?

A. Yes.

P. "I’m that son.” Isn’t that what he’d say? “I’m that son, but who are you? You’re my mother. You’re my mother, and I’m that son. So how will the people of this country believe this?"

The proverb says, “Have faith in the truth, and you’ll receive hidden wealth.”

“If you’re my mother, and I’m the son born of your womb, then if I say, ‘Mother!’ and open my mouth, milk will flow from your breast into my mouth.”

Her breasts had been dry for eighteen years, but when he opened his mouth, a stream of milk began to flow. Calling on god, the mother and son stood there, and everyone knew—

A. They were mother and son.

P. They knew they were mother and son. They knew for sure that they were mother and son. They met each other. After they met, the boy asked, "Mother, where did my father go?"

She said, “Son, your father came to this country, to this city, to get some medicine. After getting the medicine, he went somewhere, but where, I can’t say.”

“Mother,” he said, “my father must be in this country. I won’t be able to recognize him, but you’ll recognize him.”

“Yes,” she said.

They called all the men of the city. They called all the men of the city.
They called them all, and did she recognize him? Did she?

A. Who knew where he was?
P. Was he there?
A. He was at the prostitute's house; he must have been at the prostitute's house.
P. "Look, are there any other men somewhere else?"
   Then what did someone say? "There's someone in the prostitute's house."
   "There's someone in the prostitute's house."
   "Go and tell the prostitute to bring him outside."
   "Oh Hirabati!"
   "Yes."
   "It's the king's order that you bring out whoever is in your house."
   "Who's talking? I'll shit on his face!"
   What did she say?

Tāre nāre . . .

Slowly, slowly, they all went there.
Slowly, slowly, they all went there.
The daughter [prostitute] swore at them;
She insulted them.
The king couldn't bear it.

He asked for a new whip.
The king went there himself.
He went there himself.
He called Hirabati.
He called Hirabati.
He hit her with the whip.
He hit her twice.
He hit her three times.
The prostitute's navel burst.
With pain, she sat up.
The prostitute crawled, crawled over to him.

She wiped it [the spell] off.
The prince began to remember.
He began to remember.

P. The horse was in the courtyard.
A. Yes.
P. He came, sat down on it, and flew off. Where did he go?
A. To the jungle.
P. To that jungle where the child had been born, that's where he flew to. When he arrived there, he began to roll around on the ground and cry. —LAUGH—
A. Why would he find them there?
P. “Why did I leave you and go away? A tiger must have come and swallowed both mother and son!” he said. He was rolling around on the ground and crying. They ran after him. “That’s him!” they said, and they ran after him. They ran and—
A. Grabbed him.
P. They grabbed him and brought him. She said, “Look, this is your son, and here I am and here you are. The three of us have met. Don’t be out of your mind.”
A. “Yes,” he said, “the three of us have met. Yes, this is my son. But, look how big he is! Look how big he is!”
P. “That’s natural. We’re talking in the present, so that’s why he’s so big. You’re talking as if he were born today.” —LAUGH—
A. “Fourteen years have passed.”
P. He’s a boy of eighteen.
A. “Eighteen years have passed.”
P. “All right, then let’s go back to our country.”

But the king, joining his hands together, begged them to stay. “This country is all yours,” he said.

“A, this country, too, will be mine,” he said. When he left them, he said, “I promise to come back one day and be your king.”

The three of them climbed on the horse. They climbed on the horse and went to their own country. Here, the old man and old woman [king and queen] had been very worried. The old man and old woman were very worried. They were worried, and when they heard the news, they were relieved. And in a beautiful way—
A. The five of them met.
P. The five of them met. The king was happy, the queen was happy, and they all ate together, content and happy.
A. They stayed there and lived. Did they let the thieves [carpenter and goldsmith] go, or not?
P. They let them go.

[Performer removes the lantern from the basket and turns it off.]