

Gems from Katha Sarit Sagara-1

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(From Aphorisms and Proverbs in The Kathasaritsagara by L.Sternbach, Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad, Lucknow, Vol.1, 1980)

Part 1- Compiled by London Swaminathan from the above book.

Please read my earlier post 'The Largest Story Collection in the World' in this blog.

Every quote given below has got similar quotes in Ramayana, Mahabharata and Tirukkural in Tamil.

"Somadeva's Katha Sarit Sagara is vivid and pleasant to read. It is of superior quality, as far as the style and the art of storytelling concerned, it is superior to Ksemendra's Brhat Katha Manjari. Both of them used different sources for their stories. Brhat Katha of Gunadhya was probably the main source for these stories. Inscriptions in Cambodia mention his name. But his work was destroyed by fire. Gunadhya lived around 400 AD.

Ksemendra's Brhat Katha Manjari has been written in 1037 AD and Somadeva's Katha Sarit Sagara some thirty years later.

Ksemendra's Brhat Katha Manjari is divided into 18 lambakas and 23 guchas and contains 7561 verses.

Katha Sarit Sagara is divided into 18 lambakas and 134 tarangas and contains 21,388 verses. This is one of the longest collections of stories to our times.

Quotes on Gods

- 1.The Creator is never tired of producing marvels, since even after creating Tilottama, he has produced a far superior beauty (Adventures of Anangadeva)
- 2.Visnu does not neglect the sufferings of those who are devoted to him (Story of Urvashi)

3.The will of Siva EFFECTS EVERYTHING (Story of the Ancestors and Parents of Udayana)

4.Even the Gods are not successful without honouring Ganesa (Story of Phalabhuti).

(He broke the axle of the wheel of Lord Shiva for not remembering him before starting his journey. The reference is in Tiruppukaz of Arunagirinathar).

Good and Evil Deeds

5.Joy springs from good deeds, and pain from evil deeds; these are their only sources (Vetala Story 22)

6.Hatred and affection are commonly produced in living being in this world owing to their continually recalling the impression of a past state of existence (Story of Simhaparakrama)

7.The tree of good deeds produces to the righteous inconceivably glorious fruits (The Story of King Dharmadatta and his wife Nagasri)

8.Patient men escape from the world of births (Story of the patient Hermit Subhanaya)

9.Actions which are really distinguished by great courage produce fruit, since prosperity follows on courage (Story of Two Ascetics)

Fate & Destiny

10.A creature receives the form of that which it was contemplating at the moment of death.

11.A person attains similarity to that which he thinks of (Introduction to; and Story of Lavanyamanjari)

12.Whatever lot is written for a man by Fate in the inscription on his forehead, infallibly befalls him, however improbable (Vetala Story 12)

13.No one can resist the awful goddess Destiny, that ever places her foot upon the heads of all men (Story of Saktivega King)

14.No one can escape from the shadow of his own head, or the course of Destiny.

15.A task which is very difficult in itself, succeeds in this world, if the gods are propitious (Story of Lavanyamanjari)

16.It s better to live for one moment, bound by the bonds of righteousness, than to live unrighteous for hundreds of ‘Kalpas’ (Story o King Mahasena and his minister Gunasarman)

17.The righteous does not sin (Story of King Tribhuvana).

18.Even untruth, in the case of those mighty in contemplation, becomes true (Story of the persevering Brahmana)

19.Charity here averts misery in the next life, so bestow wealth in charity (Story of the Miserly King)

20.It is better that a little be given in time, than much when it is too late (Story of King Laksha data)

21.The ungrateful does not prosper (Story of King Brahmadatta)

22.The greatness of great ones consists in this very thing that they swerve not from what they have engaged to do, even though their lives are in danger.

(Vetala Story 25 of Katha Sarit Sagara)

23.In this world all things perish in an instant, but the pure glory of the great alone endures till the end of the Kalpa. (Story of Jimutavahana, KSS)

24.Great hearted feel pity even for their enemies when they are terrified (Story of Devadatta)

25.This is the innate tendency of the great, to have mercy upon the wretched (Story of Asokadatta and Vijayadatta)

Contact swami_48@yahoo.com

Contd. In Part 2