

Caitanya Reader Book Six

The Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa A Children's Reader

Adapted from the writings of
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ISKCON Children's Press

Gurukula English Series 2:1 A

Contents

Dhenukāsura

One bright beautiful day, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Their cowherd boyfriends were playing in the forest. The cowherd boys were feeling hungry and they began to speak to the brothers.

“Dear Balarāma, You are very powerful, Your arms are very strong. Dear Kṛṣṇa, You are very expert in killing all kinds of demons. Just near this place is a forest named Tālavana. This forest is full of palm trees and all the trees are filled with fruits; some are falling on the ground and some are ripe on the trees.

“It is a very nice place but because of the demon Dhenukāsura, we cannot go there. This demon takes the form of an ass and he has many ass-shaped friends. All of them are very strong so we cannot get to the trees to pick the fruits. Not even animals go to that forest; no birds sleep there. Everyone is afraid of the demon.

“Except for You two, no one can enter that forest. We are desiring to taste those sweet fruits. Dear Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, let us go there and enjoy those fruits.”

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were happy to please Their boyfriends. Together they went into the Tālavana forest. As soon as they entered the forest, Balarāma began to yank the trees, just like a strong elephant. Because of this jerking, all of the ripe fruits fell onto the ground.

Upon hearing the sound of the boys and the falling fruits, Dhenukāsura began to run through the forest, shaking the ground and the trees. The demon attacked Balarāma and began to kick his chest with his back legs.

At first, Balarāma didn't say anything but as Dhenukāsura kicked Him more and more, Balarāma caught one of his back legs and wheeled him around in the sky. He then threw the demon into the treetops. While he was being around by Balarāma, the demon lost his life.

When Balarāma threw Dhenukāsura into the treetops, his body was so heavy that it knocked down several trees. Those trees knocked down other trees as well. It looked like a great

wind had passed through the forest and had blown down all of the trees.

When Dhenukāsura was dead, all of his demon friends came to kill Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma caught each of the asses by the back legs and wheeled him around. They killed all of the demons by throwing them into the palm trees.

Hearing of this great feat, the demigods began to shower flowers on the two brothers and beat drums in happiness.

Questions

1. Why did the cowherd boys want to go to the Tālavana forest?
2. Why didn't any birds or animals live in that forest?
3. What did Balarāma do when He entered the forest?
4. How were the ass demons killed?

New Words

Dhenukāsura
except

Tālavana
feat

Kṛṣṇa's Friends Help

When Kṛṣṇa was holding up Govardhana Hill, His friends came near Him and said:

“My dear friend, Kṛṣṇa, You have been holding this hill for seven days and nights without any rest. This is troublesome for us because we think the task is too difficult for You.

Please transfer the hill to the hand of Sudāmā. We do not want You to become tired. If you think Sudāmā cannot hold the hill, then please transfer the hill to Your right hand so we can massage Your left hand.

New Words

troublesome
massage

transfer
task

Govardhana Pūjā

The cowherd men of Vṛndāvana once prepared a nice sacrifice for Lord Indra. At that time the child Kṛṣṇa approached His father and asked, “My dear father, who is this sacrifice meant for? Why are you holding it? Please tell Me everything about the sacrifice.”

“My dear son,” said Nanda Mahārāja, “the rainfall is very important for our lives. We cannot farm without rainfall so we must repay the person who gives us the rain. That person is Lord Indra.”

“But father, there is no need to worship the demigods for material results. Any mercy that is given from the demigods really comes from the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu. There is no for you to worship Lord Indra. I beg you to begin a sacrifice for the satisfaction of the local brāhmaṇas and Govardhana Hill. Let us have nothing to do with Indra.

“We can hold the sacrifice like this: first prepare nice foodstuffs from ghee and grains. Ask all the brāhmaṇas to

come and take part. We will chant vedic hymns and offer grains to the brāhmaṇas.

“Then decorate the cows and feed them well. After this you may give money to the brāhmaṇas in charity. You may give prasādam to the dogs and the lower class people and give nice grass to the cows. In this way, we can begin the Govardhana Pūjā.”

Following the orders of the boy Kṛṣṇa, everyone fed and decorated his cows. Keeping the cows in front, they began to walk around Govardhana Hill.

Kṛṣṇa was more than pleased with the Govardhana Pūjā. In His happiness, He began to eat all of the foodstuffs offered in the sacrifice. He said, “Govardhana Hill and I are non-different. Anyone who does not worship Govardhana Hill will be bitten by all of the snakes on the hill.”

Therefore, all of the cowherd men worshiped Govardhana Hill and the local brāhmaṇas every year for the good fortune of the cows.

Questions

1. Why was Nanda Mahārāja going to worship Lord Indra?
2. Was that important, according to Kṛṣṇa?
3. What were the instructions Kṛṣṇa gave on how to worship Govardhana Hill and the local brāhmaṇas?
4. What happens to someone who doesn't worship Govardhana Hill?

New Words

sacrifice
charity

hymns
ghee

Lord Indra's Wrath

All of the residents of Vṛndāvana were happy when they held the Govardhana Pūjā. The cows and brāhmaṇas were satisfied and cowherd men and woman felt very peaceful. Only Lord Indra was unhappy because of the sacrifice. Being very puffed-up, Lord Indra could not understand why the residents of Vṛndāvana were not worshiping him. He became overly angry and wanted to destroy all of Vṛndāvana with a mighty flood.

Lord Indra said, “These cowherd men have neglected me on the orders of this talkative boy Kṛṣṇa, who is nothing but a child. By believing Him, they have made me very angry! They must all be destroyed, along with their cows.”

Ordered by Lord Indra, a sky full of dark and frightening clouds appeared over Vṛndāvana. They began to pour down rain with all their strength and power. There was constant lightning and thunder, a strong wind and constant rain that fell like sharp arrows. The clouds poured water as thick as pillars and soon the land of Vṛndāvana was flooded.

Being cold and frightened, the animals and the people in Vṛndāvana took shelter of their dear friend Govinda. Even the cows took their calves and went to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They all said, “Dear Kṛṣṇa, You are all-powerful and You are very kind to Your devotees. Please protect us from the wrath of Indra.”

Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach Lord Indra a good lesson. He also wanted to protect the devotees. So, without waiting, He picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand, just as a child picks up a mushroom from the ground.

“My dear brother, My dear father, My dear residents of Vṛndāvana, you can now safely enter under the umbrella of Govardhana Hill which I have just lifted. Do not be afraid of the ill and think that it will fall from My hand. You have been frightened because of the heavy rain and the strong wind; therefore, I have lifted this hill to protect you, just like a huge umbrella. Bring your animals and be happy under this umbrella.”

The residents of Vṛndāvana stayed under Kṛṣṇa's umbrella for seven days without feeling any hunger or thirst. They were all surprised to see how Kṛṣṇa could hold up the mountain with the little finger of His left hand.

Lord Indra was also surprised. He called for all the clouds and asked them to stop raining. When the sky was clear and the sun was shining, Kṛṣṇa said, "My dear cowherd men, now you can leave because everything is ended. Please take your wives, children, cows and wealth. You may all go."

When everything was cleared, Kṛṣṇa slowly replaced Govardhana Hill just as it had been before. At that time, all of the Vṛndāvana residents approached Kṛṣṇa and began to offer Him nice prayers. They all embraced Him and blessed Him over and over again. The demigods poured showers of flowers on the earth and sounded many different conch shells. Along with His friends and the cows, Kṛṣṇa returned peacefully to His home in Vṛndāvana.

Questions

1. Describe the storm sent by Lord Indra
2. How long did Kṛṣṇa hold the hill?
3. What did the demigods do after the storm?

New Words

wrath	neglect
talkative	umbrella
mushroom	understand

Word Study

Read and Spell

rain	rainbow	mist
snow	clouds	thunder
hail	tornado	sunshine
sleet	fog	cloudburst
wind	hurricane	lightning
blizzard	whirlwind	typhoon

Read and Answer

1. In which of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes was there a lot of rain?
2. Name as many other pastimes as you can where the weather played an important part in the story.

Write

Write five sentences and in each sentence use one of the words listed above.

Arjuna Catches the Arrows

When Kṛṣṇa and His friend Arjuna were on the great battlefield, a rascal named Aśvatthāmā decided to attack Kṛṣṇa and kill Him.

Aśvatthāmā sent a river of arrows toward Kṛṣṇa. When Arjuna saw that his friend might be hurt, he jumped in front of Kṛṣṇa and let all of the arrows strike his body.

Although Arjuna was being hurt by those arrows, he was thinking of his dearest friend, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the arrows did not give him pain. They felt like a shower of flowers.

Happiness

The cowherd friends of Kṛṣṇa are so happy that once they spoke to Him, saying, “Oh dear Kṛṣṇa, You are always busy tending the cows who are scattered all over beautiful Vṛndāvana. You have a beautiful garland, a small conch shell, a peacock feather on Your turban, a yellow-coloured silk dhoti and flower decorations on Your ears. When You appear to be so beautiful and You pretend to fight with us, we receive great pleasure.

Kṛṣṇa Saves the Gopīs

One beautiful night in Vṛndāvana the moon was shining in the sky. The stars were glittering around it and the breeze carried the sweet smell of the mallika flower.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to sing and dance with the gopīs. In Their pleasure, neither Kṛṣṇa nor Balarāma saw the demon named Śaṅkāsura. This demon had a large jewel shaped like a conch shell on his forehead. He was puffed-up because he was a friend of a very rich demigod.

“I should be dancing with all these girls,” thought Śaṅkāsura. “These two cowherd boys are not as great as I am.”

Without caring about the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the demon began to lead the girls away to the north. Out of fear, the gopīs cried, “Oh Kṛṣṇa! Oh Balarāma! Please save us!”

The two brothers picked up big logs and began to follow Śaṅkāsura. “Don’t be afraid. Don’t be afraid, “They called. “We’re coming to punish this demon.”

When Śaṅkāsura saw the two brothers coming after him, he left the gopīs and began to run away but Kṛṣṇa would not let him go.

“You stay and protect the gopīs, Balarāma, I’ll catch this demon,” said Kṛṣṇa.

Śaṅkāsura ran and ran but Kṛṣṇa followed him closely. At last Kṛṣṇa caught him and struck the demon’s head with His fist. When the demon was dead, Kṛṣṇa took the valuable jewel from his forehead. In the presence of the gopīs, He gave the jewel to Balarāma.

New Words

valuable	presence
punish	Mallika
Śaṅkāsura	

Mura

A great five-headed demon named Mura once slept deep within the water near a fort. Kṛṣṇa wanted to attack the fort so He blew on His great conch shell. The blowing, which sounded like a thunderbolt, awakened the demon from his sleep and he came out to see what had happened.

Mura, the demon, was as brilliant as the sun and his temper was just like fire. His body was so dazzling that no one could look at him with opened eyes.

The angry demon decided to attack Lord Kṛṣṇa and His carrier, Garuḍa. He whirled his trident and began to roar like a lion from all of his five mouths. His roaring could be heard all over the world.

Kṛṣṇa saw that the trident was rushing at Garuḍa. He quickly grabbed two arrows and threw them towards the trident, breaking it into pieces.

Mura then attacked Him with his club but Kṛṣṇa broke Mura's weapon with His own club. After that, Mura tried to hurt Kṛṣṇa with his strong arms, Kṛṣṇa called for His cakra and quickly cut off all five heads of the dazzling demon. Mura fell into the water, just as a mountain top falls into the sea when it is hit by a thunderbolt.

The seven sons of the Mura demon decided to kill Kṛṣṇa. They all got weapons and, in great anger, came before Kṛṣṇa. They showered Him with swords, clubs, arrows, lances and tridents but Kṛṣṇa was never afraid. He cut all of their weapons apart like small pieces of grain. He then sent all of them to the house of death.

New Words

Mura	trident
brilliant	cakra
trident	lance

Dvividā

A wild gorilla, named Dvividā, once decided to cause great trouble to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa had killed so many of his demon friends that Dvividā wanted to make Kṛṣṇa suffer.

Dvividā was as powerful as ten-thousand elephants. He liked to ruin the holy places and the quiet homes of the sages. He like to steal men and woman from their homes and hide them in mountain caves. Everywhere he went, he tried to cause trouble.

Once Dvividā heard sweet music coming from a quiet place. When he went to that place, he saw Balarāma singing and dancing with many beautiful girls.

Dvividā climbed into a nearby tree and began to jerk the branches, crying, “Kīla! Kīla!” He even came near the women and began to show his teeth and move his eyebrows.

Balarāma did not like the demon gorilla. He picked up a stone and threw it at the gorilla. Dvidida began to tear off the beautiful clothes worn by Balarāma and the girls.

At this time, Balarāma became angry and decided to kill the demon. He took His club in His hand and began to run at the gorilla. Dvidida uprooted an oak tree and struck Lord Balarāma over the head. Balarāma was not hurt but out of anger he struck Dvidida many times with His club.

The wild gorilla uprooted one tree after another to fight with Balarāma but each tree was smashed by the Lord. Soon the forest had no more trees.

Dvidida then began to throw huge stones at Balarāma. Balarāma easily smashed the huge stones into tiny pebbles. Soon there were no trees and no large stones for the gorilla. Full of anger, he began to beat Balarāma's chest with his fists. Balarāma wanted to kill the gorilla so He put down His weapons. With only His fist, He struck the collarbone of Dvidida and the demon gorilla fell down on the ground. When he fell, all the hills and forests moved.

The demigods began to shower flowers on Lord Balarāma, saying, “All glories to Balarāma. All glories to Balarāma. You have killed the demon Dvividā!”

Questions

1. Why did Dvividā want to cause trouble to Kṛṣṇa?
2. Describe the fight between Dvividā and Balarāma.
3. How did Balarāma finally kill Dvividā

New Words

Dvividā	ruin
collarbone	gorilla
uproot	

When Kṛṣṇa Returns

When Kṛṣṇa returns from the forest, He wears a garland of tulāsi leaves. He puts His hand on the shoulder of His cowherd boyfriends and He plays His flute. Everyone in Vṛndāvana forgets His sadness and thinks of the glory of Kṛṣṇa.

Word Study

Read and Spell

plum	banana	apricot
mango	pear	lemon
orange	potato	corn
spinach	squash	peas
lime	grapefruit	carrots
apple	peach	beans

Read and Answer

1. Which of the words above are names of fruits?
2. Which are vegetables?
3. Which vegetables grow under the ground? Which grow above?

Write

Write five sentences and in each sentence use one of the words listed above.

Bakāsura

When the calves went to the Yamuna to drink water, the cowherd boys would go along. They would all drink the water and play on the bank of the river.

One day, they all saw something in the water that looked like a duck and was as big as a hill. Its top was as strong as a thunderbolt. As they looked at the beast, they became afraid. It was actually the demon Bakāsura in the form of a duck.

Quickly Bakāsura attacked Kṛṣṇa with his pointed sharp beak and swallowed Him up but the glow from Kṛṣṇa's body was so hot that the demon spit Him out in a hurry. He then tried to pinch Kṛṣṇa with his beak but Kṛṣṇa got away.

To make a good show for His boyfriends, Kṛṣṇa grabbed the beak of the duck-demon and pulled them apart, just as a child splits a blade of grass.

When the demon was dead, flowers fell from the sky and the sound of bugles, drums and conch shells was heard from the heavens.

Kṛṣṇa's Birthday

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wanted to play with Their friends in the pasture one day. They played and played and They didn't even want to come home to eat.

“Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, please come home now,” called Mother Rohiṇī. “You must come and eat.”

The two boys did not come when she called. The Mother Yaśodā called. “My dear child Kṛṣṇa, please come back home. Your time for lunch is already past. Your father Nanda Mahārāja is waiting for You.”

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma heard that Nanda Mahārāja was waiting for Them, They started to return. Their other playmates were very sad. “Next time we will not let You lay,” shouted one boy.

“No, next time we won't let You leave,” shouted another.

“Without You our playing is spoiled,” they said.

Kṛṣṇa became afraid when His friends said they would not let Him play with them. Instead of going home, He went back to the river with His friends.

Feeling mildly angry, Mother Yaśodā scolded her child, saying, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, do You think You are a street boy? You have no home? Please come back to Your home. Your body is dirty and You must take Your bath. Today is Your birthday and we should celebrate.”

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came home at last. Mother Yaśodā bathed them and dressed Them nicely with jewels. She then called for the brāhmaṇas and gave away many cows in charity for Kṛṣṇa’s birthday.

Questions

1. Did Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma want to go home when Their mothers called Them?
 2. Who was waiting for Them at home?
-

New Words

Rohiṇī

Vatsāsura

Once, when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were playing on the bank of the Yamuna, a demon came there desiring to kill the two boys. He took the form of a calf and began to mingle with the other calves.

Kṛṣṇa, however, knows each and every calf that He cares from and when He saw Vatsāsura, He knew the calf was a demon. He had come from Kamsa and was going to try to kill Him.

“Just see that demon who has taken the form of a calf, “said Kṛṣṇa to Balarāma. “Let’s catch him!”

The two brothers sneaked up behind Vatsāsura. Kṛṣṇa grabbed his back legs and whirled the demon calf in the air. He then threw the calf body into the treetops. Vatsāsura lost his life and fell down to the ground. All of Kṛṣṇa’s playmates praised Him and the demigods showered flowers. All glories to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma!

Word Study

Read and Spell

dog	gorilla	sheep
cow	camel	lion
horse	donkey	bear
cat	pig	monkey
deer	wolf	goat
tiger	zebra	elephant
fox	giraffe	rabbit

Read and Answer

1. Name the animals that have had a pastime with Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya
2. Which animal is the most important to the devotee? Why?

Write

Write five sentences and in each sentence use one of the words listed above.

Important Words from this Reader

feat	presence	collarbone
hymns	punish	gorilla
ghee	trident	wrath
brilliant	valuable	lance
cakra	temper	except
ruin	neglect	uproot
mushroom	scatter	sacrifice
dhoti	remember	charity
receive	talkative	simply
umbrella	beneath	understand
command	battlefield	auspiciousness

