

**AYUSHA ERDYNEEV**

**STORIES ABOUT ELEPHANT  
CALF LANCHENKAR**



**Ayusha Erdyneev**  
**Stories about elephant**  
**calf Lanchenkar**

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**Аннотация**

A wise baby-elephant Lanchenkar and his friends will come across a Chinese Emperor and a King of Siam, a talking parrot, and a kangaroo-who-reads-the books. Thanks to these socials, Lanchenkar and our dear readers as well will discover how infinitely diverse this world is. Games and riddles of the jungle inhabitants, the keen mind of the Lanchenkar and his unrelenting desire to help everyone will surely find a response from all the readers, because the child lives in the soul of each of us.

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# Stories about elephant calf Lanchenkar

**Ayusha Erdyneev**

*Illustrator* Maria Kolesnikova

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*TO MY SPIRITUAL TEACHER HIS HOLINESS DALAI  
LAMA XIV.*

*WITH REVERENCE AND LOVE*

# Review

“Tales of Baby Elephant Lanchenkar”, a book by children’s writer Ayusha Erdyneev, is directly linked with Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy. Main characters are identical with Buddhist Jatakas (stories of previous births of Buddha Shakyamuni) and bear Tibetan names. In Buddhist narrative tradition, it was white elephants who practiced and would reach the state of Bodhisattva. Elephants have supreme qualities that make them good examples.

The tale “Saving Parrot” is parable of Tibet’s destiny. White baby elephant Lanchenkar leads his friends (and other jungle folk), as Mahatma Gandhi would do, to the peaceful solving of their problems. He teaches them how to find happiness, that happiness is absence of both your and others’ suffering. Every tale encloses its own feature and its own lesson

Nowadays it is very important to convey onto children genuine values as kindness, open heart, and good will. Children raised with the ideals brought forward by Lanchenkar, there is the hope that the world may become a better, more harmonious place

To make this collection of tales more accessible to younger audience, an animated movie about Lanchenkar’s adventures may be of great help

*Sincerely Robert Thurman, Professor Columbia University*

*in New York City*

# How the White Elephant Calf Lanchenkar Came into This World

In torrid lands, in Hindustan there lived He-Elephant Lanchenpo and She-Elephant Lanchenmo. They were the King and the Queen of all elephants in the woods.

Lanchenpo was a kind and just king. He had ruled for many years, all was well in his elephant kingdom. The elephant population, and other animals, revered and respected the royal couple for their great wisdom.

But there was one thing that saddened King Lanchenpo – he had no heir. Lanchenpo wanted a son who would inherit his kingdom. Before he retired, Lanchenpo wanted to raise as wise and brave a king as himself.

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“Go and ask the All-Knowing Cuckoo,” advised the caring Lanchenmo. “I hope she will help us.”

Lanchenpo did as he was told.

He walked and walked around the forest, lifting his head near tall trees in the hope of spotting the tiny bird.

Finally, in the dark thicket he heard the familiar *cuckoo*. The bird was predicting somebody a long – or short – life. Lanchenpo came closer and soon his small eyes spotted the All-Knowing Cuckoo on a tree branch.

“Hey, Cuckoo,” said the King. “Tell me if I’ll ever have an heir.”

“You will, O Elephant King Lanchenpo,” answered the Cuckoo. “But first you should ask the Old Crane who is going to depart this world soon. The Old Crane is one of the wisest creatures in this forest. He can choose the aspect in which to reincarnate on the Earth. Ask the Old Crane to appear as your son!”

The inspired Elephant King made for the swamp where the recluse Old Crane lived.

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All his life the Old Crane had been seeking the meaning of life and omniscience.<sup>1</sup>

He was looking for the truth inside himself. In a state of profound meditation, he had been standing knee-deep in the swamp, seeing nothing around him. The Old Crane didn’t fly and seldom talked to other forest inhabitants. He would stop eating if he could. But he had to be alive to find the truth and the Crane took one grain of rice a day. The only way to grasp the truth, he believed was self-denial and asceticism<sup>2</sup>.

Forest inhabitants held the Old Crane in great respect and tried not to disturb him without necessity.

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<sup>1</sup> The Old Crane wanted to open all secrets of life and get answers to all questions. He wanted to know what life is about.

<sup>2</sup> In order to make sense of the world the Crane tried to ignore and neglect himself so that his desires and wishes did not overshadow the world.

Standing at the edge of the marsh, the Elephant King was staring at the Crane. He placed his expectations on this bird towering like a statue over the marsh. Lanchenpo trod on slush, knelt down, took off his royal garland and put it on the Crane's head. After that he appealed to the Crane. "O Great Sage, please, appear in our family in your next life!"

The Crane said nothing, but his head drooped with the weight of flowers by way of agreement. Having finally grasped the meaning of life, the Crane's ghost happily left the emaciated body and soared towards the rising sun.

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Two years later a calf was born into the happy royal family. He was white as fresh milk.

“How wonderful this incarnation<sup>3</sup> is! How many great and good deeds I am destined to perform in this world! May all living creatures be happy and have a peace of mind,” uttered the baby elephant once it was born.

“Our son can speak already,” said the wonder-stricken mother and added: “Let’s name you Lanchenkar!”

“Name whom?” asked the newborn.

“You.”

“I don’t need two names.”

“Which names?”

“You and Lanchenkar.”

“But your name is not You,” explained his father.

“So You is not You, Me is not Me? Then who is Lanchenkar?” the baby elephant went on.

“You!” his parents answered, in chorus.

“Aha! So You refers to me, doesn’t it?”

“You’ve totally confused us. Listen, today your mom and dad had a wonderful white calf. They named him Lanchenkar. Get it?” explained the parents patiently.

“Yes, I do. A brother was born to me today!” exclaimed the little elephant happily.

He was so funny, this Lanchenkar.

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<sup>3</sup> The spirit incarnates many times in different bodies. The spirit that dwelt in the Crane’s body reincarnated in the little elephant’s body.

# Crocodile tears: why?

“Dad, why is mom ill?” asked Lanchenkar.

“The terrible King of Crocodiles now lies in wait at our watering place. He attacks all who come for water and eats them. So we have to make do with stagnant marsh water. That’s why your mom, among others, is down with typhus... Well, go on playing and I am going to tend your mother,” said Lanchenpo.

Little Lanchenkar’s heart filled with empathy for the ailing forest inhabitants. He determined to get them pure water at any cost. He had never been at the watering place, so he just followed the animal route.

\*\*\*

As he was walking briskly, Lanchenkar saw a hare who had only one ear. The hare was sitting under a tree and crying.

“Hi, Hare. What happened to your ear?” asked the Little Elephant.

The Hare told his story. He came to the river for watering and the Crocodile came upon him. He got hold of the poor Hare’s ear, the Hare started running and his ear stuck in the monster’s teeth.

“I got away cheap,” the Hare said.

“This Crocodile’s mouth is so big that you can fully go into it.”

“I’m going to see the monster,” Lanchenkar said bravely. The Hare tried to talk him out of it but could not.

As Lanchenkar was approaching the river, the Young Deer, a friend of his, emerged from bushes and stood in his way. The Young Deer was limping.

“I was drinking water and the Crocodile grasped my leg,” he complained. “He very nearly dragged me under water. Oh, how my leg is aching! That Crocodile surely has sharp teeth, get out of here quick, Lanchenkar!”

Those words only fortified the Little Elephant’s spirit. He continued his way, singing an impromptu ditty.

*“Yo, shake and tremble, Crocodile,  
Be ready, O green king!  
As white as milk, I’m Lanchenkar,  
The Elephant Prince. Hear me?  
I’m going to the watering place  
And I have no fear.  
There’ll be pure water for animals.  
I’ll get it. Is that clear?”*

The horror-stricken Hare and the Young Deer were watching the Elephant Prince approach the river. He looked around trying to see the sloping path that led to the watering place. Suddenly the water seethed and a huge head showed up. It was the Crocodile King! Its skin was covered with big green scales and warts. There were widely-set, yellow eyes on the sides of his head.

“Where are you going, O great Lanchenkar?” the Crocodile asked with a grin.

Still not realizing it was the Crocodile King, Lanchenkar answered politely: "I want to get a bucket of water for my sick mother. Would you please tell me where the watering place is?"

"I am the watering place. Just hop into my mouth and get as much water as you wish," said the Crocodile King and opened his mouth as wide as possible.

I will taste a suckling elephant," he thought and closed his eyes in anticipation. He could not close his jaws.

"How tough this Little Elephant is," he said to himself. He shook his head, opened his eyes and was surprised to see the elephant calf on the river bank.

"That's a stick I threw into your mouth. Now you'll never give trouble to anyone," said Lanchenkar loudly.

When he saw those sharp teeth, the Little Elephant understood who it was and knew what to do.

\*\*\*

The Crocodile caught sight of the Hare and swam towards him hoping that the Hare would help him get rid of the stick. But the Hare loped as far as he could: he well remembered how he had lost his ear.

"Well, how does it feel to suffer? Poorly? Did you think about it when you attacked your victims? Serves you right, murderer. Now try and swim with that stick in your mouth," said the Hare and loped into the forest, burning with the desire to tell its inhabitants how Lanchenkar punished the Crocodile.

"So you've been punished for maiming my leg, huh? Now you

want to eat me but you can't, right? It seems to be the time for you to pay for the trouble you gave living creatures," the Young Deer admonished the Crocodile, cautiously advancing towards the watering place.

With the stick in his mouth Crocodile King spent three days. He was angry and hungry.

When they learnt from the one-eared Hare that the "coast" was clear, all animals rushed to the watering place. No longer afraid of the Crocodile King, they drank the river water to their heart's content. The Crocodile was hanging around, stick in his mouth, hoping for help but none volunteered, waiting for Lanchenkar.

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Lanchenkar gave a stern look to the Crocodile, whose mouth

with the stick in it looked like the letter A, and asked:

“So, villain, will you keep hurting and killing the poor animals?”

The Crocodile King shook his head frantically in a fit of false repentance and burst into tears. Looking at the weak and crying Crocodile, the woodfolk felt sorry for him. He no longer appeared to be vicious and dangerous. They believed the Crocodile and asked Lanchenkar to remove the stick.

As he was thanking Lanchenkar, the Crocodile tried not to open his mouth too wide: he feared that Lanchenkar might change his mind.

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Since that time crocodiles never open their mouths wide; and, having finished with their prey, they always shed tears. Everybody knows that they are feigned and false. That is why they are called crocodile tears.

# Riddles

Lanchenkar had a friend Lanchenak, an ordinary grey baby elephant. Lanchenak was fond of riddles. The two made a bargain: if one of them could not solve the riddle he should give a bunch of bananas to the other.

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“Where do elephants hide?” Lanchenak asked his friend.

“In the jungle! Beyond high mountains!” ventured Lanchenkar but was wrong.

“Okay, I don’t know. Where?”

“Give me a bunch of bananas, as agreed, and I’ll tell you.”

“Here it is.”

“Elephants hide in apples,” answered Lanchenak laughing.

“Why haven’t I ever found them there?” wondered Lanchenkar.

“This calls for another bunch,” was the reply. With the bananas in his possession, Lanchenak went on: “You can’t see them; they hide well!”

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“What’s in the middle of an apple?” Lanchenak asked a new question.

“Seeds! Pulp! The elephants’ hiding place!” Lanchenkar said at a venture.

“Wrong! Do you give up?”

“Yes.”

“The letter P is in the middle of *apple*,” replied the implacable Lanchenak.

\*\*\*

Lanchenak offered riddles to woodsfolk every day, collecting sweet tribute and coming home with loads of bananas.

The animals were angry and Lanchenkar decided to teach him a lesson.

He met Lanchenak loaded with new bunches of bananas and said:

“I know a riddle. No one has guessed it so far.”

“Let me try,” said Lanchenak, all agog.

“It’s a special riddle, I can’t tell it to everybody,” announced Lanchenkar with an air of importance.

“Come on, tell me. If I fail, I’ll give you one bunch of bananas or even two!”

“You don’t understand. It’s really a puzzling riddle.”

“I’ll give you all bananas,” persisted Lanchenak.

“Very well. Listen: ‘A trunk at the front, a trunk at the end and ears in between.’”

Lanchenak was thinking hard and long but could not guess. He gave his bananas to Lanchenkar and said:

“It’s a difficult riddle. I don’t know the answer, I give up. You tell me: who?”

“Take one bunch of bananas – I don’t know the answer either. As I told you, no one does,” Lanchenkar replied.

# Reflection

At their next meeting Lanchenkar asked Lanchenak: “Want another riddle?”

“Yes, I do,” answered Lanchenak. “But now the deal is this: one riddle, one bunch of bananas.”

“Good. Listen: ‘My eyes, my ears, my trunk, but it’s not me. When I extend my trunk to it, its trunk extends to me too.’”

“It’s your father! Your mother! An elephant-werewolf! A twin extraterrestrial!” tried his luck Lanchenak.

“You couldn’t find the correct answer. If you want to know it, give me bananas.”

“Take it and tell me what it is.”

“My reflection in the water,” answered Lanchenkar treating himself to bananas.

“I thought so but I was too shy to say it,” muttered Lanchenak and hurried home.

Lanchenak summoned all elephants of his herd and said: “I am going to offer you a riddle. If you don’t guess it, you give me a bunch of bananas each.”

The elephants loved riddles, so they gladly accepted the terms.

“These are my eyes, my ears, and my trunk. When I extend my trunk to him, he extends his trunk to me. But that’s not me. Who’s that?”

Lanchenak’s congeners offered one answer after another, but

all of them were wrong. Finally they said, “All right, Lanchenak, we give up! You are a friend of the wise Lanchenkar; we are no match for you. So take the bananas and give us the answer!”

Lanchenak grabbed his trophies, looked at the crowd of elephants with an air of superiority and said, “Why, there’s nothing to it! Makes me think I live among such a stupid herd! The answer is that it is Lanchenkar’s reflection in the water!”

# Two Elephants

It happened a long time ago when India was a part of Africa. It's hard to believe this but India was not then in south Asia but in the western part of Africa. Millennia ago India broke away and took a long way to join the Asian continent.

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Since Africa and India were one once, similar animals can be found there such as huge elephants with their big, round ears and a long nose which is called the trunk and which they use as an arm and a water pipe.

Elephants inhabit both India and Africa. In India they serve people devotedly: they carry logs for building homes and give a ride to humans on their broad backs. African elephants do not help people. If they are too many, they can destroy all trees around. No less dangerous are African wild elephants for villagers: a herd of 16-foot giants can trample down a village without noticing it.

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So, India was one with Africa, only a narrow river separated the Indian jungle from the African tropical forest.

On the day this happened a scorching wind was blowing from the African shore. It was unbearably hot.

The Indian elephant's calf, Lanchenkar, was taking a walk around the jungle, as usual. It was hot and he was thirsty. He

came to the frontier river, sank his trunk deep to reach the cool stream and quenched his thirst. Like other elephants, he pumped water with his trunk into his mouth.

After that he had a shower. He took in some water, tossed back his head and hosed his hot sides. He felt so good that he even closed his eyes. When he opened them, he saw an African elephant calf on the other bank. The elephant was tall and tanned.

“Look at this underling and his small ears. It’s not an elephant, it’s a dwarf,” the African exclaimed arrogantly.

“What matters is not the size of the body and ears but what’s in your head,” parried Lanchenkar calmly.

“I am the smartest elephant in Africa!”

“Oh really? Then tell me: Was one of us born in Africa?”

“Of course he was!”

“Was one of us born by an elephant?”

“Sure.”

“Is one of us a living creature with his specific features?”

“No doubt.”

“Is one of us one being and not several?”

“Right.”

“Does it follow from this that one of us may be an elephant because he has a trunk?” continued Lanchenkar.

“Granted.”

“Then one of us wasn’t born in Africa!”

“Why not?”

“Because one of us was born in India.”

“Why so?”

“Because *I* am one of us!”

“And who am I then?” asked the African, scratching his head with his trunk pensively.

“I’ll show you that one of us completely depends on me.”

“How’s that?”

“If there is no me, there won’t be one of us, right?”

“I won’t deny that.”

“It means he is my slave.”

“Suppose one of us was born in both Africa and India?”

“Which of them has a trunk?”

“What do you mean?”

“You said one of us has only one trunk, didn’t you?”

“Yes, I did. It means he was born just in one place, not necessarily Africa and India.”

“Right. But since he is an elephant, he should have parents, shouldn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“How can it be if he wasn’t born?”

“How come?”

“He wasn’t born because he wasn’t born in Africa, in India or elsewhere.”

“Well, he does have a place of birth. And I was wrong when I said that one of us has only one trunk,” the African elephant said in confusion.

“Then one of us has two trunks. He must be using one when

eating bananas and the other when drinking water. Where is he? Do you see this monster anywhere around?"

The little African was embarrassed. He had never met any elephants with two trunks. So he decided to agree with Lanchenkar.

"You are right. One of us was born in India, it seems."

"Are you sure?" asked Lanchenkar with a smile.

"I am sure."

"Just in one place?"

"Just in one."

"And where is that place?"

"One of us was born in India."

"Then one of us must be me," concluded Lanchenkar triumphantly.

"Because I was born in India and you were not."

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The befuddled African shook his head. His thoughts were all jumbled up, but one thing was clear: one should not boast of one's size or strength; what matters is one's wits.

“Well, one of us is going to be an African. On the other hand, why should I go there if I wasn't born in Africa?” asked the little African but he still made for his home shakily.

As for Lanchenkar, he headed to the Indian jungle wishing that the heat would subside.

# One Eye

Lanchenkar was curious by nature. It was his mother who most often answered his questions. Wisdom personified, the Queen of All Elephants tried to teach her dear son life subtleties.

Owing to Lanchenmo, the Elephant Prince grew up bright and clever, fathoming things ordinary creatures couldn't.

Since Lanchenkar was not an ordinary elephant and not an ordinary prince, he asked difficult questions.

"Mom, please close one eye. Now tell me: is your eye closed or open?"

"Closed."

"But I see that one eye of yours is open."

The Queen's eye that was open, became round with surprise.

"Don't you see that my eye is shut?"

"Can you see me?"

"I can."

"With just one eye?"

"Yes, of course."

"How can it see you if you closed it?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then, close your eye."

"Yes."

"Is one eye of yours shut?"

"Shut and open."

“How can it be both shut and open? Can a jar of jam be closed and open at once?” Lanchenkar argued.

“No, a jar of jam can never be open and closed at the same time; nor any other things,” replied the Queen.

“So you will agree that one eye is one thing, not two?”

“Absolutely.”

“Then one jar of jam can be either shut or open and there is no third way?”

“Everybody knows it.”

“So what about one eye of yours?”

“It’s neither shut, nor open.”

“That means a jar of jam is neither shut nor open and you can’t eat the jam because if you don’t close the jar, you can’t open it.”

“This makes no sense... What I mean is one jar is closed and the other open.”

“I had in mind just one jar.”

“I was wrong, there was no second jar,” the Queen conceded.

“Let’s begin anew. Is your eye closed or open?”

“It’s open.”

“Now I ask you to close your eye. Tell me is your eye closed now?”

“No, my eye is open.”

“But I see that one eye of yours is closed. No use arguing with you. You don’t honor our bargain to close one eye.”

“Very well, I’ve closed one eye,” said the Queen, and then she cried: “Oh, I can’t see anything!”

# The Tale of Ivan

One day, being in a state of meditation<sup>4</sup>, Lanchenkar acquired a divine auditory gift, when he could hear all sounds in this world.

– Black?

– No, red.

– And why white?

– Because it's green.

After the meditation the Elephant Prince did not forget those phrases. He kept thinking what all that might mean. What things could have so many colors? Lanchenkar asked many wise men but none could give him an answer. It seemed that there could never be such things in this world! But Lanchenkar didn't lose hope and continued his quests.

In this state Lanchenkar could sense things which he otherwise took no notice of.

One day he met a tramp from a faraway Northern land. His name was Ivan. He was a daredevil but kind and openhearted. Lanchenkar asked him to explain those strange words.

“Dear Ivan, do you happen to know a thing that could be described as:

– Black?

– No, red.

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<sup>4</sup> In this state he could feel and understand things he normally didn't and, on the other hand, he was oblivious of the world around him.

– But why white?

– Because it's green.

Perhaps you have it in your north.”

“Sure,” Ivan replied. It's currants. They grow everywhere where I live. We make stewed fruit from them and give them to children in cold winter. What you heard was a dialogue at a bazaar. There are black and red currants. If red currants are not ripe, they are white, others are green. So this is what you heard.

– Black currants?

– Red currants.

– Why are they white?

– Because they are green, not ripe.

After that Ivan became the main hero of the elephants' stories. Speaking about clever people or animals they always added, “Wise as Ivan.”



# Lanchengen

“Dad, tell me a tale,” Lanchenkar asked his father Lanchenpo, the King of Hindustan’s elephants.

“Listen. Once upon a time there lived an elephant named Lanchengen. He was very curious. When he was still a child, he asked his father:

“What will be tomorrow?”

“You’ll be one day older,” his father replied.

“After one year?”, asked Lanchenkar

“You will be one year older”, answered his father

“And eighty years later?”

“I’ll be gone.”

“And mom?”

“She’ll be gone too.”

“What about me? Who will play with me, who will put me to bed, who will tell me bedtime stories?” asked the offended Lanchengen.

“There are no eternal parents and friends. Parting is inevitable when we grow old and die,” his father reassured him.

“I don’t like it,” said Lanchengen.

\*\*\*

Lanchengen pondered over his father’s words. He decided to leave his home and find himself eternal friends. He put his

mother's pie in his knapsack, got his parents' blessing<sup>5</sup> and set out for a journey.

One day Lanchengen saw a Mountain. It was so high that its peak was invisible. Lanchengen came closer.

*"Sister Mountain, you're so high.  
Full of grandeur, full of might.  
Tell me in so many worlds:  
Are you immortal in this world?"*

he asked hopefully.

*"I am so sorry to say  
I am not immortal, nay!  
To my brother Ocean go  
For the answer, he may know,"*

said the Mountain, emerging from clouds.

The indefatigable Lanchengen continued his way. Finally, he came to the edge of the earth where the boundless Ocean noisily played with blue waves.

*"Blue-eyed Brother Ocean, cheers!  
Dire necessity brings me here.  
Tell me in so many words:*

---

<sup>5</sup> His parents approved of his plan and blessed him for his journey.

*“Are you immortal in this world?”*

asked Lanchengen.

*“I am so sorry to say  
I am not immortal, nay!  
Go to my Brother Wind,  
I have heard he has that gift,”*

answered the gray Ocean.

Lanchengen continued his way. He met the Wind.

*“Brother Wind,  
You are strong and full of zeal,  
Tell me in so many words:  
Are you immortal in this world?”*

*“I am so sorry to say,  
I am not immortal, nay!  
If I were, it would be fun.  
Go ask my brother Sun,”*

replied the Wind.

*“Brother Sun, O Brother Sun,  
That sends golden rays down,*

*“Tell me in so many words,  
“Are you immortal in this world?”*

Lanchengen asked the Sun shining on tree tops.

*“I am so sorry to say  
“I am not immortal, nay!  
“To my Father Heaven go,  
“He may be immortal, you know,”*

the Sun replied.

Lanchengen continued his quests. He had trodden the Earth, the Mountains and the Clouds until he met Heaven.

*“Heaven, the Father of ages,  
“The most exalted of all sages,  
“Tell me in so many words:  
“Are you immortal in this world?”*

asked Lanchengen. By now, he almost lost hope of finding immortal friends.

*“Rejoice, O Wanderer, immortal I am!  
“I do have all Time on my hands.  
“I know not a cycle of births and deaths.  
“All transformations I do, yes!”*

Heaven replied.

*"I am glad you are the one  
I looked for tirelessly,  
I want to be your friend  
And live on gloriously,"*

said the inspired Elephant and heard this:

*"What's required is self-denial,  
No property of any kind.  
You'll be a loadstar for lost souls  
And will acquire a peace of mind.  
Your faithful guides  
Will be love and compassion.  
They'll lead you to infinity.  
And you will rise as a shining star,  
Your reward will be Eternity."*

Lanchengen fancied his future life on the Earth and realized that the Heaven had offered him the most rewarding way.

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Lanchengen's parents waited and waited for their son. His mother cried her eyes out. When one night she saw a bright star in the sky, she knew that her son had achieved the desired goal.

Thus Lanchengen immortalized himself: he became the brightest star in the sky! It is called the Polar Star or the guiding star because it is stationary and indicates the North. "Son, watch the Polar Star in the sky and you will never lose your bearings." These were the words the wise Lanchenpo addressed to his son Lanchenkar upon finishing the tale.

# How the Parakeet Was Saved

A long, long time ago there lived a Chinese emperor in his magnificent palace. He had a parakeet that could speak and tell the future.

Many overseas rulers coveted that wonderful bird but the Emperor wouldn't part with him for all the riches of the world. He kept him in three cages. The golden one which was the Parakeet's home, was inside the silver one, which, in turn, was inside the iron cage. The Emperor had the keys to the three cages, and ten brave soldiers guarded them day and night.

One day the Emperor fell ill. Neither the court doctor, nor the famous overseas doctors could heal him and he said to the Parakeet:

“O beloved Parakeet, you are my last hope! Tell me how my terrible ailment can be cured, how I can escape clutches of Death. If you help me, I'll set you free.”

The Parakeet's heart was throbbing excitedly for it was a good chance to acquire freedom. The Parakeet said these words:

“O, great Emperor! Find the poorest man in your country, shower him with your imperial gifts and your illness will pass of itself.”

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Numerous servants were sent out and they soon found the poorest man in China. He was given beautiful presents, dressed

in brocade raiment off the Emperor's back and all his simple wishes were met. Hardly had three days passed, when the Emperor was cured of his bad illness. Yet he didn't fulfill the promise given to the Parakeet.

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No matter how hard the bird tried, the Emperor was implacable. The Parakeet decided to break out. He was thinking hard how to outwit the Emperor but could not come up with any idea: the metal bars were durable and the guards were watchful and vigilant.

"It looks like I am not fated to be free," lamented the Parakeet looking at the azure sky.

At that very time a tiny Hummingbird was flying by. It heard the Parakeet's lamentations and said: "Take counsel from the wise Elephant's Child, Lanchenkar."

"I wish I could. But how? I feel I'll be a prisoner for ever," answered the Parakeet.

"I'll help you," promised the kind-hearted Hummingbird and set course for India, where Lanchenkar lived.

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It was a long journey. It flew across China, over the Tibetan mountains and valleys, and Nepal, and finally reached the jungles in southern India, where the white little elephant Lanchenkar lived. He was known for his sharp mind and the desire to help all living creatures.

It took the Hummingbird long to find the Little Elephant: the

jungles are a wild tropical forest. It is dense and dark as its big trees are intertwined with lianas. Luckily for the bird, one day Lanchenkar felt thirsty and came out into a clearing on the way to the river.

“O wise Lanchenkar! Please help the Parakeet out. The Chinese Emperor keeps him in a cage and he has despaired of being free,” said the Hummingbird.

The little bird was hoping that Lanchenkar would tell it how to free the Parakeet from captivity, but no. The Prince didn't bat an eyelid. Suddenly his legs gave way and he collapsed on the ground. The Hummingbird tried to wake him up, it knew that Lanchenkar was alive. But the Elephant persisted in playing possum. There was nothing the bird could do but fly back to China.



When in the Emperor's garden, the Hummingbird said to the Parakeet: "It looks as if you'll be confined to these cages till your dying day. As soon as I asked Lanchenkar how to save you, he fell to the ground. Try as I would, I could not wake him up."

"Can it be that even the wise Lanchenkar is unable to help me?" asked the Parakeet, thinking about his mode of action and answered himself: "No, it can't be!" All day and all night the Parakeet was lost in thoughts. The next morning terrible news spread all over the palace: "the Emperor's pet is dead!"

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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