



READ AND FIND OUT

Q1. Who is the Tiger King? Why does he get that name?

Ans: The Maharaja of Pratibandapuram was called the Tiger King. At the time of his birth the astrologers declared that the prince would have to die one day. The ten-day-old prince asked the astrologers to reveal the manner of his death. The wise men were baffled at this miracle. The chief astrologer said that his death would come from a tiger. The young prince growled and uttered terrifying words: 'Let tigers beware!' He decided to kill one hundred tigers. He, thus, got the name 'Tiger King'.

Q2. What did the royal infant grow up to be?

Ans: Crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur grew taller and stronger day-by-day. He was brought up by an English nanny and tutored in English by an Englishman. He got the control of his state when he came of age at twenty. He decided to kill tigers. For him it was an act of self-defence, as the astrologers had predicted his death by a tiger

Q3. What will the Maharaja do to find the required number of tigers to kill?

Ans: Within ten years the Maharaja was able to kill seventy tigers. Then the tiger population became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. One day the Maharaja sent for the dewan and asked him if he was aware of the fact that thirty tigers still remained to be shot down by his gun. The dewan shuddered with fear. The Maharaja told him that he had decided to get married. He asked the dewan to draw up statistics of tiger populations in different native states. Then he was to investigate if there was a girl he could marry in the royal family of a state with a large tiger population. This plan was put into practice. The dewan found the right girl from a state which possessed a large number of tigers. The Maharaja killed five or six tigers each time he visited his father-in-law. Thus, he was able to find the required number of tigers to kill. He shot ninety-nine tigers.

Q4. How will the Maharaja prepare himself for the hundredth tiger which was supposed to decide his fate?

Ans: Maharaja's anxiety reached the highest level of excitement when only one tiger remained to be killed. He thought of the hundredth tiger during the day and dreamt of it at night. But tiger farms ran dry even in his father-in-law's kingdom. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. If he could kill just that one single beast, the Maharaja would have no fear left. As the late chief astrologer had said that Maharaja should beware of the hundredth tiger. The Maharaja was sunk in gloom. Then came a happy news. In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village. Surely, a tiger was at work. The villagers ran to inform the Maharaja. The Maharaja announced a three-year exemption from all taxes for that village. He set out on the hunt at once. But the tiger was not easily found. The Maharaja continued camping in the forest and waiting for the tiger.

Q5. What will now happen to the astrologer? Do you think the prophecy was indisputably disproved?

Ans: In order to save his skin, the dewan got an old tiger brought from the People's Park in Madras. It was kept hidden in his house. One midnight with the help of his aged wife, he dragged the tiger to the car and shoved it into the seat. He himself drove the car straight to the forest where the Maharaja was hunting. The dewan hauled the beast out of the car and pushed it down to the ground. Next day, the same old tiger wandered into the Maharaja's presence. The Maharaja was overjoyed. He took careful aim at the beast. The tiger fell down in a crumpled heap. The Maharaja was extremely happy that he had killed the hundredth tiger. The hunters found that the old tiger was not dead. It had only fainted on hearing the sound of the bullet. They did not want the Maharaja to know this fact and lose their jobs. So one of them shot at it and killed it. The dead tiger was taken in procession through the town and buried there. A tomb was erected over it. The prophecy was not disproved as the king met his death with the infection caused by the sliver of a wooden tiger. The astrologer was already dead. He could not be punished or rewarded.

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