

Provisions for Heaven

and Other Stories from the Indian Heartland

Retold & illustrated by
Krishna Shastri

EMESCO

The Shy Son-in-law

A long time ago, in northern India, there lived two friends, Tulsi Ram and Kanshi Ram. Tulsi Ram was shy and quiet while Kanshi was the exact opposite.

Tulsi frequently used to go off on business trips. One such trip that was coming up was to the town where his wife's parents lived. When his wife insisted that he visit her parents during the trip, Tulsi reluctantly agreed. As always, he asked his buddy Kanshi for advice on how to conduct himself.

"I'm quite nervous. I don't want to make a fool of myself," he said to his bachelor friend.

"Don't worry, my friend," replied Kanshi. "Eat very little. Talk very little. As a special favour, I will accompany you, and see that you're okay."

Soon Tulsi and his friend reached the house of his wife's parents. The son-in-law was received with great courtesy and given royal treatment. Following his friend's advice, Tulsi ate very little and barely spoke the whole day. Kanshi, on the other hand, stuffed himself with food and chatted away merrily with the old people.

In the night, Tulsi woke up feeling very hungry. He had hardly eaten anything. He was annoyed to see Kanshi Ram snoring away contentedly, full of food, no doubt. Tulsi shook his friend awake.

"I'm dying of hunger, and it's all your fault," he complained.

As always, Kanshi Ram had a plan ready. "Go to the store-room quietly and find something to eat," he suggested to his friend, and went back to sleep.

