MAHAGIRI

An Elephant Story retold
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ONE OF INDIA'S BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK
Mahagiri was a huge elephant. He was so big that children were afraid to go near him.

Mahagiri belonged to a merchant. The merchant made a lot of money by sending Mahagiri out to work.
He often sent Mahagiri to the forest to carry heavy logs of wood from one place to another.

When there was a wedding he sent Mahagiri to carry the bridegroom to the bride’s house.
When there was a big festival at the temple, he sent Mahagiri to lead the procession.

Once the people of a village wanted to hold a festival at their temple. The festival could not begin till the temple flag was put up. The temple had a flag, but there was no flag-post.
So the villagers went to the nearby forest and cut down a tall teak tree.

They made the tree trunk into a fine flag-post.
The flag-post was very long and heavy. The villagers could not carry it. So they brought Mahagiri and made him carry it to the temple.

The villagers dug a hole in front of the temple. They wanted Mahagiri to put the flag-post in the hole.
Mahagiri carried the flag-post to the hole. Then suddenly he stopped and turned back.

The mahout ordered Mahagiri to put the flag-post in the hole.
But Mahagiri would not move.
The mahout told him again and again, but Mahagiri refused.
The mahaout beat Mahagiri with his hard stick.
But Mahagiri just stood still.
The mahout beat Mahagiri till his stick broke.

The people were angry. They shouted at the mahout and said he was not a good mahout.
The mahout was angry. He took out his sharp knife and stabbed Mahagiri many times on the neck saying, “Now you will do as I tell you.”
Mahagiri could not bear the pain any more.
He was angry. He threw away the flag-post.

Mahagiri cried loudly and shook himself violently. The mahout was thrown off. The people were frightened. They thought the elephant had gone mad. They all ran away.
Mahagiri was alone. He went to the hole and knelt down. Then he put his long trunk into the hole.

He picked up something and gently placed it on the ground. It was a cat! The cat had been hiding in the hole.
The people were watching Mahagiri from a distance. They knew now why he had disobeyed the mahout’s orders. The huge elephant did not want to hurt the little cat. They ran to him in great joy.

Mahagiri then lifted the flag-post, lowered it into the hole, and held it up with his trunk so that the people could fill up the hole with earth.
The people patted Mahagiri with love and affection. They brought him sweets and fruit. They felt very sorry that Mahagiri had been hurt.

From that day Mahagiri became the pet of the people. Children loved him. And they were very happy whenever the merchant allowed them to have a free ride on Mahagiri.