

# The Great Panchatantra Tales

*(For more than two and a half millennia, the Panchatantra tales have regaled children and adults alike with a moral at the end of every story. Some believe that they are as old as the RigVeda. There is also another story about these fables. According to it, these are stories Shiva told his consort Parvati. The present series is based on the Sanskrit original. )*

A king, worried that his three sons are without the wisdom to live in a world of wile and guile, asks a learned man called Vishnu Sharman to teach them the ways of the world.

Since his wards are dimwits, Vishnu Sharman decides to pass on wisdom to them in the form of stories. In these stories, he makes animals speak like human beings. Panchatantra is a collection of attractively told stories about the five ways that help the human being succeed in life. Pancha means five and tantra means ways or strategies or principles. Addressed to the king's children, the stories are primarily about statecraft and are popular throughout the world. The five strategies are:

1. Discord among friends
2. Gaining friends
3. Of crows and owls
4. Loss of gains
5. Imprudence

The stories have been translated into nearly every language in the world that has a script. The story form appeals to children while the wisdom in them attracts adults. The Panchatantra collection represents the earliest folk tale form in the world of literature. There are several versions of Panchatantra tales in circulation in the world but the one that is popular in India is the Sanskrit original of Vishnu Sharman.

Very soon, Hamarashehar.Com will bring to netizens the oldest collection of tales in the world as told by an 80-year-old teacher to his royal wards. The translation seeks to be as close to the Sanskrit original as possible in spirit.

The stories will appear in five sections, each representing a strategy for getting over problems in life. They are of interest not just for the ruling class but also for every person. They are all about survival in a complicated world and the several ways to get over problems. The stories based as they are on human nature have an eternal relevance.

The series begins with a parent story that unfolds story after story; each strung to the other by a narrator.

Now, it is your turn to enjoy these stories as immortal and fragrant as the soil of India.

## **The Loss of Friends**

Once upon a time, Amarasakti ruled the city-state of Mahilaropyam in the south of India. He had three witless sons who became a matter of endless worry for him. Realizing that his sons had no interest in learning, the king summoned his ministers and said:

“You know I am not happy with my sons. According to men of learning an unborn son and a stillborn son are better than a son who is a dimwit. What good is a barren cow? A son who is stupid will bring dishonour to his father. How can I make them fit to be my successors? I turn to you for advice.”

One of the ministers suggested the name of Vishnu Sharman, a great scholar enjoying the respect of hundreds of his disciples. “He is the most competent person to tutor your children. Entrust them to his care and very soon you will see the change.”

The king summoned Vishnu Sharman and pleaded with him “Oh, venerable scholar, take pity on me and please train my sons into great scholars and I will make you the lord of hundred villages.”

Vishnu Sharman said “Oh, king, listen to my pledge. Hundred villages do not tempt me to vend learning. Count six months from today. If I do not make your children great scholars, you can ask me to change my name.”

The king immediately called his sons and handed them to the care of the learned man. Sharman took them to his monastery where he started teaching them the five strategies (Panchatantra). Keeping his word, he finished the task the king entrusted him in six months. Since then, Panchatantra became popular all over the world as children's guide in solving problems of life.

Now begins the Loss of Friends (first of the five strategies) series. These are stories that figure in a dialogue between two jackals named Karataka and Damanaka.

Long, long ago, a merchant named Vardhaman lived in a town in the south of India. As he was resting on his bed one day it struck him that money was the axis of the world and that the more he had of it the more he would be powerful. Even enemies seek the friendship of a rich man, he told himself. The old become young if they have riches and the young become old if they do not have wealth. Business is one of the six ways that help man amass wealth. This was his logic.

Mobilizing all his wares, Vardhaman set out on an auspicious day for Madhura in search of markets for his goods. He began his travel in a gaily-decorated cart drawn by two bullocks. On the way, tired of the long haul, one of the bullocks named Sanjeevaka collapsed in the middle of a jungle near river Jamuna. But the merchant continued his journey asking some of his servants to take care of the animal. But the servants

abandoned the bullock soon after their master had left. Joining him later, they told him that the bullock was dead.

In fact, Sanjeevaka was not dead. Feeding on the abundant fresh and tender grass in the forest, he regained strength and began to merrily explore the jungle, dancing and singing in joy. In the same forest lived Pingalaka, the lion. Sanjeevaka, content with his new life in the jungle would waltz and sing uproariously with joy. One day, Pingalaka and other animals were drinking water in the Jamuna when the lion heard the frightening bellow of the bullock. In panic, the lion withdrew into the forest and sat deeply lost in thought and surrounded by other animals.

Sensing the predicament of their king, two jackals, Karataka and Damanaka, sons of two dismissed ministers, were clueless as to what had happened to their king.

“What could have happened to the lord of the forest,” asked Damanaka.

“Why should we poke our nose into affairs that are not our concern? Haven't you heard the story of the monkey which pulled out the wedge from the log,” asked Damanaka.

“Sounds interesting. Why don't you tell me what happened to the monkey,” pleaded Damanaka.

“Now, listen,” said Damanaka and began narrating the story of the monkey.

## **1.The Monkey And The Wedge**

A merchant once started building a temple in the middle of his garden. Many masons and carpenters were working for the merchant. They took time off every day to go to the town for their lunch. One day, when the workers left for lunch a batch of monkeys landed at the temple site and began playing with whatever caught their fancy. One of the monkeys saw a partly sawed log of wood and a wedge fixed in it so that it does not close up.

Curious to know what it is, the monkey began furiously tugging at the wedge. At last the wedge came off, not before trapping the legs of the monkey into the rift of the log. Very soon, not able to get his legs out of the closed wood, the monkey died.

“Therefore,” Karataka told Damanaka, “it is not wise to poke our nose into affairs that are not our concern. We have a food store. Why should we bother ourselves about this lion?”

Damanaka retorted, "Food is not the centre of our life. The elders have said that wise men seek the help of the king to help friends and harm foes. There are hundred ways of collecting food. What matters is a life full of learning, courage and wealth. If living somehow is the goal, even the crow lives long eating leftovers."

"True, but we are not ministers any more. The elders have always said that the stupid person who offers uncalled for advice to the king invites not only insult but also deceit," said Karataka.

"No," Damanaka said, "anyone who serves the king with devotion is bound to earn his favour in the long run. The one who does not remains where he is. Those who understand why the king is angry or generous will one-day rise in office. It is necessary to be in the good books of the king."

"Okay, what do you want to do now?" asked Karataka.

"You know the king is scared now. We will ask him what frightens him and using the six ways of diplomacy get close to him."

"How do you know the king is scared?"

"Changes in posture, signs, pace, actions, conversation, looks and expression indicate the working of the mind. I will approach the fear-struck king today and with my intelligence, I will dispel his fear and once again become his minister," said Damanaka.

"How can you do it when you do not know principles of service?" asked Karataka.

Damanaka told him all he knew and learnt about what makes a good and loyal servant in the service of the king.

"In that case, I wish you all good luck," said Karataka.

Taking leave of Karataka, Damanaka then called on the king. Recognizing that he was the son of his old minister, King Pingalaka told his sentry to bring him into his presence. Damanaka came down on his knees to pay respects to the king.

"We haven't seen you for a long time," the king said.

"I don't know of what use I can be to you, my lord. Yet, according to the learned, there are occasions when every person however high or low will be of use to the king. For generations we have served the king with devotion. Yet I am out of your majesty's favour."

"All right, competent or incompetent you are the son of our old minister. Go ahead and tell me whatever you have in your mind," the king ordered Damanaka.

“May I ask you humbly, my lord, what made you come back from the lake without drinking water,” asked Damanaka reluctantly.

“O’ Damanaka, haven’t you heard the great and frightening sounds in the distance? I want to leave this forest. The strange animal that could make such sounds ought to be as powerful as the sounds he makes.”

“Your majesty, if it is only sound that is your problem; I wish to submit that sounds are misleading. I can tell you the story of the jackal, how it overcame the fear of sound.”

Let us hear it, said the king.

## **2.The Jackal And The Drum**

A hungry jackal set out in search of food and ended up at an abandoned battlefield whence he heard loud and strange sounds. Scared, he thought, “I must disappear from here before the man who is making these sounds gets me.” After a while he told himself, “I must not run away like that. Let me find out what really the sounds are and who is making them because whether it is fear or happiness one must know its cause. Such a person will never regret his actions. So, let me first look for the source of these noises.”

Warily, the jackal marched in the direction of the sounds and found a drum there. It was this drum, which was sending the sounds whenever the branches of the tree above brushed against it. Relieved, the jackal began playing the drum and thought that there could be food inside it. The jackal entered the drum by piercing its side. He was disappointed to find no food in it. Yet he consoled himself saying that he rid himself of the fear of sound.

“Therefore”, Damanaka told king Pingalaka, “your majesty should not be afraid of sounds. I seek your permission to go and see what the sounds are.”

“Okay,” said the king. Taking leave of the king, Damanaka proceeded in the direction of the sound.

The king now began worrying himself about Damanaka's intentions. “He may have a grudge against me for dismissing him once. Such persons seek revenge. I should not have taken him into confidence. Let me keep an eye on him. Wise men have always maintained that it is difficult to kill even a weak man who does not easily trust others but easy to kill a strong man who readily trusts others,” the king thought.

As the king kept an eye on him, Damanaka moved slowly towards Sanjeevaka, the bullock, and found that he was after all an animal and thought, “This is a good omen. This will help me to get back into the good books of the king. Kings never follow the advice of their ministers unless they are in peril or grief. Just as a healthy man never thinks of a doctor, a strong and secure king also never remembers the need for a minister.”

Assured that what he saw was only a bullock, Damanaka returned to the king and told him what he saw.

“Is it true?” the king asked.

“The king is God. The man who lies to a king perishes. He alone has the power to grant favors.”

“I believe you. Great men do not harm weaker people. They take on only their equals. That is what is unique about brave people.”

“What your majesty says is true. Sanjeevaka is great. If your lordship permits me, I will persuade him to be one of your servants.”

“All right, I am taking you back as a minister,” said the king, pleased.

Damanaka at once hurried back to Sanjeevaka and told him to stop bellowing and come and meet his king. But the bullock wanted who this Pingalaka was. “What? You do not know our lord? Wait, you will know shortly the cost of this ignorance. There he is, surrounded by his retinue under the banyan tree.” Sanjeevaka thought his days were numbered and pleaded with Damanaka, “Sir, you seem to be a man of great wisdom and wit. You alone can save me. I can come only if you can assure me that no harm will come to me.” Damanaka told the bullock to wait for the right time to meet the king.

Returning to the king, Damanaka told him “My lord, he is not an ordinary being. He is the vehicle of Lord Shiva. He told me that Lord Shiva had permitted him to feed on the tender grass in the neighborhood of Jamuna. But I told him that the forest belonged to our lion king who is the vehicle of goddess Chandika. You are our guest. You can see our king and seek a separate space for you to graze. He agreed to this plan provided he has an assurance from your majesty.”

“Yes, certainly. But I will need assurance from him in return. Bring him here,” the king told Damanaka. Going back to the bullock Damanaka advised him, “You have the assurance of the king. But this new position should not go to your head. We have to work together. That is how we can prosper. Otherwise, he who does not respect everyone, however high or low, will forfeit the favour of kings like Dantila.”

“What about Dantila?” asked Sanjeevaka.

### **3.The Fall And Rise Of A Merchant**

In the city of Vardhaman, there lived a wealthy merchant named ***Dantila***. He held a great reception for his wedding attended by the king, the queen, their ministers and all the rich and influential persons in the city. Present at the reception was Gorambha, a lowly sweeper in the royal household. When Dantila saw him occupying a seat reserved for the nobles of the king, he ordered his servants to throw him out of his house.

Thus insulted, Gorambha thought to himself, "I am a poor man and so cannot give a fitting reply to such a wealthy person as Dantila. I must some how see that the king stops his favours to him." Then he hit upon a plan to take revenge on Dantila.

One early morning when the king was still in sleep, Gorambha pretending to sweep the king's bedroom began loudly murmuring, "Oh, how arrogant is Dantila! He has the cheek to lock the queen in his embrace." Hearing this, the king demanded to know whether what Gorambh was murmuring is true. Did Dantila embrace the queen?

"Oh, your majesty, I don't remember nor do I know what I was saying because I was drowsy having spent the entire night in gambling," the sweeper told the king.

Not satisfied with his reply the king thought that it was possible that the sweeper had seen Dantila, who had equal access to the royal household as Gorambha, embracing the queen. He remembered wise men saying that men were likely to talk in their sleep about what they did, saw and desired in the day. Women were chaste because men were not within reach or they were afraid of prying servants. Convinced that Dantila had indeed embraced the queen, the king barred Dantila from entering the royal household.

The merchant began grieving his fate though he had not done any harm to the king or his relatives even in his dreams. One day as Dantila was trying to enter the king's palace he was barred by the king's men. Seeing this Gorambha told them, "You fools, you are barring the great Dantila who has won the king's favours. He is powerful. If you stop him, you will meet with the same fate as I did at the hands of Dantila one day."

The merchant thought that it would do him good to make Gorambha happy and win his confidence. One evening he invited the sweeper for tea and presented him with expensive clothes and told him, "Friend, I had never meant to insult you. You had occupied a seat I had set apart for the learned. Kindly pardon me."

Pleased, the sweeper promised to win the king's favour for Dantila again. The next day, Gorambha repeated the same drama of pretending to talk irrelevantly, raving that the king was eating cucumber in the rest room. "What nonsense are you talking? Did you ever see me doing such things?" the king demanded to know. "No, your majesty. I do not know nor do I remember what I was saying because I was drowsy having spent the entire night in gambling," the sweeper said.

The king then realized that if what the sweeper had said about him was not true what he had said about Dantila also could not be true. A person like Dantila could not have done what Gorambha had told him. The king also found that without Dantila the affairs of the state had suffered and civic administration had come to a standstill. The king immediately summoned the merchant to his palace and restored to him all the authority he had enjoyed before he fell out of king's favour.

Damanaka resumed, "That is why we must know that pride goes before fall." Sanjeevaka agreed. Taking him to the lion king, Damanaka introduced Sanjeevaka to Pingalaka. After exchanging pleasantries, the king asked him to relate his past and the purpose of staying in that jungle. On the bullock relating his story, the king said, "Friend, don't be afraid. I assure you that I will protect you from wild animals here because even stronger animals feel insecure here."

Since then, the king asked Karataka and Damanaka to look after the affairs of the state and began happily spending his time in the company of Sanjeevaka. But the jackals were worried that after Sanjeevaka had become a good friend of the king, the king gave up his royal sports and pastime and became a saint.

The jackal twins thought, “the king has stopped taking us into confidence after Sanjeevaka became his best friend. He is also indifferent to his kingly duties. What shall we do now?”

Karataka said, “The king may not heed our advice. But it is our duty to advise him on it if it is good for him. Elders have always held that even if the king is not willing to heed good advice, it is the duty of his ministers to offer him advice. “You are right,” said Damanaka. “The mistake is mine. What happened to the sage and the jackal should not happen to us.”

Karataka then pleaded with him to tell the story of the sage and the jackal. Damanaka began telling him.

#### **4.The Foolish Sage And The Jackal**

In a monastery far away from human habitation lived a saint called Deva Sarma. He amassed a lot of wealth by selling clothes gifted to him by well-wishers and disciples. It became a burden for him to guard that wealth. Since he did not trust anyone, he put all his money into a bag and carried it with him wherever he went. Ashadhabhooti, an experienced cheat, noticed Deva Sarma carrying his bag always with him and assuming that it certainly contained something valuable, began planning to snatch it from him.

One day, the cheat met the saint and promptly fell on his feet and said, “Oh, know-all, I have realized that this life is an illusion; youth is fleeting and all familial ties are like a dream. Please show me the correct path that delivers me from all worldly ties.”

Pleased with his humility, Deva Sarma said, “Child, you are the blessed one who has thought of renouncing worldly pleasures. Listen, however low his caste is, the person that chants “Om Namahsivayah' and smears holy ash on his forehead, becomes Siva himself and knows no rebirth. I shall accept you as my protégé but you must not enter the hermitage in the night because company is forbidden for saints. After initiation, you have to live in the hut at the entrance of the monastery.”

Ashadhabhooti promised the saint that he would consider every sign from him as a command and carry it out. Satisfied, the saint accepted the cheat as his disciple. Ashadhabhooti too began making Deva Sarma happy by attending to every need of his. But seeing that the saint never separated the money-bag from his person, Ashadhabhooti thought, “the old man is very crafty and keeps the bag always with him. How can I snatch it from him? Shall I kill him?”

As the cheat was at a loss to achieve his goal, the son of a disciple came calling on the sage. The visitor invited Deva Sarma to come to his village and perform the sacred thread ceremony of his son. The saint accepted the invitation and set out for the village taking Ashadhabhooti with him.

On the way, the guru and his disciple had to cross a river. After bathing in the river and wanting to rest for a while, Deva Sarma took the money bag and pushed it into a quilt he was carrying and told the disciple, “I

have to respond to nature's call. I am leaving this holy quilt of Siva here. Keep an eye on it." The moment the guru went out of his sight, Ashadhabhooti collected the bag and fled the place.

With great trust in his disciple, Deva Sarma decided to spend time by joining a crowd watching two well-fed goats fighting ferociously. As blood was running down their heads, a jackal came there to feast on the blood the two goats were shedding. Deva Sarma saw the jackal entering the scene and thought that the jackal would surely die caught between the two warring goats. His surmise came true and the jackal died, gored by the two goats.

Brooding over the demise of the jackal, Deva Sarma returned to where he had left the money-bag with Ashadhabhooti and panicked when he found Ashadhabhooti missing. The holy quilt was there but not the money-bag in it. He began wailing, "Oh, trickster, what have you done? I have lost everything in this world." After a vain search for the trickster, the foolish saint returned home dejected.

Damanaka asked Karataka, "What do you learn from this episode?"

"You alone can tell me."

"The sage and the jackal have none to blame except themselves."

"In a similar situation, what should we do?"

Damanaka said, "Yes, I know what to do now. With my cunning I will create a rift between king Pingalaka and Sanjeevaka. Haven't you heard that though you cannot subdue the enemy with a volley of arrows, you can destroy him by your wit?"

"Wait," said Karataka. "Suppose the lion king and the roving bullock comes to know of your plans to separate them, get ready to meet your end."

"My friend, you are too pessimistic. When time and tide are against you, don't give up. Wise men keep on trying till they succeed in getting what they want. Haven't you heard the elders saying?"

"The Goddess of Wealth favours the man who persists.  
Pray God by all means, but put in your own effort.  
Even if you don't succeed, you will be free of blame."

Karataka was not convinced that Damanaka could create rift between the fierce lion king and the wise bullock.

Damanaka told him, "Here is how through cunning two crows, husband and wife, managed to save their children from a cobra. Every time, the wife hatched the eggs, a cobra would come and feast on the offspring. The couple asked a jackal who was their friend to show them the way. The jackal told the crow not to despair

for there is nothing that a trick cannot achieve. That is how a crab killed a greedy crane that was preying on the fish in the lake. The female crow asked the jackal how the crab had killed the crane.”

Damanaka then asked Karataka to listen to the story of the crane and the crab.

## **5.The Crafty Crane And The Craftier Crab**

Once upon a time an old crane lived on the rim of a large lake in the middle of a jungle. Because of age, it was not able to prey on fish and other insects. Unable to suffer hunger, the crane stood on the edge of the lake and began crying pitiably. Moved at the sight, a crab passing by asked the crane:

“Friend, what is the matter? Why are you not hunting for food today?”

“Son, you have correctly guessed. I am feeling guilty because I have swallowed too many fish. I have decided to fast unto death and am not harming even the fish that are within my reach,” said the crane.

“But why are you so philosophical today,” asked the crab.

“What shall I tell you? I have heard that there will be no rains for the coming twelve years. Astrologers have forecast an evil conjunction of the planets. As a result, there won't be rains on this earth for another twelve years. All these years we have all played and lived together. I am now worried about the fate waiting for these poor fish and other creatures in the lake. They will die and I will be alone and without them.”

“Is there no way we can save ourselves?”

“At present, fish and other water creatures in other lakes are migrating to bigger lakes with the help of their relatives. Here, nobody seems to worry about the dark future. At this rate, there won't be any kind of fish left.”

The crab carried this information to all the fish and other water creatures in the lake. Alarmed, all of them came to the crane and pleaded with him to show them the way to overcome this danger.

“Why not. There is a big lake not far from here that has plenty of water throughout the year and lotuses always in bloom. That lake does not go dry even if there are no rains for twenty-four years. I can ferry all of you one by one to that lake.”

The poor fish and other water creatures at once put all the trust in the crane and agreed to be ferried. Every day, the crane would take one of them at a time to a lonely place, smash them against a stone and eat them. He would return to the lake and repeat the trick every day.

One day the crab asked the crane, “Uncle, you are taking everyone to the faraway lake and not me. Why don't you take me there today and save my life?”

Tired with eating fish every day, the crane too was happy to carry the crab to the lake that did not exist. The crab was happy and mounted on the back of the crane. As the crane was flying close to the spot where he ate all the fish, the crab saw a heap of fish bones and asked the crane, “Uncle, we have come a long distance and I see no lake anywhere. Tell me, where is the lake?”

“You are a fool to trust me. There is no lake. Nor is there water. Say your prayers now; I am going to kill you.” The crafty crab at once caught the neck of the crane in his claws and tore through it to death. Slowly, carrying the crane's neck, the crab reached the lake where all his friends, worried that the crane did not come back, asked him what made him come back.

The crab said, “you fools, that crane was taking all of us to a lonely place where it would smash the victims against a rock and have them for lunch. I found out his mischief and saved myself by slicing his neck. From today, all of us can live happily without fear.”

Then the crows asked the jackal how they could get rid of the cobra that was feasting on their offspring. The jackal told them to go to a big city and snatch any item of jewellery from a palace and drop it in the hollow of the tree that is the cobra's home. In search of the jewellery, the king's men would reach the tree and kill the cobra.

The crow couple flew off to a lake where the women in the king's harem were revealing in water. Before entering water, the women left their jewellery and clothes on the waterside. The female crow skillfully dived and snatched a gold necklace and began slowly flying towards the cobra's hideout. The king's men who saw the crow fly off with the necklace followed the female crow and saw it dropping the necklace into the hollow of the tree. They ran to the tree and pulling it out killed the cobra.

“That's why,” Damanaka told Karataka, “elders say that he who is wise is stronger than the strong. That is how a small hare killed the almighty lion.”

“How is that?” asked Karataka.

“That is another story,” said Damanaka.

## **6.The Cunning Hare and The Witless Lion**

Bhasuraka was a lion lording over the jungle, killing deer, boars, rabbits, bisons, etc. Yet he was not happy with his kill. The victims too were unhappy and met the lion one day in a delegation. “Oh, lord,” they said, “why do you kill so many animals every day when you need only one for your food? Let us come to an understanding. From today, you need not move from your place. We will send an animal every day to you. That will spare you the trouble of hunting and us our lives.”

“Our forebears have said that the duty of the king is to rule and not to destroy. Just as a seed sprouts, grows into a tree and yields fruit, a people protected by the king come to his rescue in times of need.”

“What you say is true,” the lion said and added a condition. “If you fail to send one animal every day, I shall kill all of you.”

“Agreed,” said the animals and began roaming the forest without fear and sending one of their own folk to the lion for his lunch. One day it was the turn of a hare. He started leisurely on his last journey and saw a big well on the way and saw his own reflection when he peeped into the well from curiosity.

Suddenly an idea struck the hare. “I will somehow tempt the lion to the well and persuade him to jump into it,” the hare thought to himself. It was late in the evening when the hare reached the lion's den. The lion was hungry and so angry and decided to kill all the animals when the hare came and knelt before him.

“First, you are too small for my lunch. Second, you have come late. I shall kill you and all the others too,” the lion warned the hare.

“My lord, it is not my fault or the fault of other animals.”

“Let me know who it is who delayed you and I will kill him at once.”

“Our folks have decided that it is my turn today. Since I do not make a full meal, they have sent three more hares with me for your meal. As we were all coming to you, a big lion came out of his den and demanded to know where we were all going.”

“We are all going to Bhasuraka as his meal according to our arrangement, we said. The big lion said that this jungle belonged to him and that all animals obeyed its orders. He also told us that you are a cheat and asked us to bring you to him for a trial of strength. Whoever is the victor will become the king. He commanded me to summon you to his fort. That's why I am late. It is now for you to decide,” the hare told the lion.

“In that case,” Bhasuraka told the hare, “show me that lion. I will kill him and have him for lunch. According to the elders territory, friendship and gold are the rewards of war. Wise men do not go to war unless there are gains.”

“Yes, my lord,” said the hare, “what you say is true. But the big lion lives in a fort. He knows that the king without a fort is like a cobra without fangs and an elephant without heat.”

“Stop that nonsense and bring him here. Don't you know that you have to crush the enemy and disease at the first opportunity? Otherwise, they will grow in strength and crush you.”

“But the big lion seems to be very strong. Haven't you heard elders saying that one should not go to war without assessing one's own strength and the strength of the enemy? He who meets the enemy in haste will

perish like the locusts in a fire.”

Growing impatient, the lion roared, “why all this tall talk. Show him to me.” Asking the lion to accompany him, the hare took him to the well. He told the lion that the big lion was there in that fort and showed him the well. The lion then peeped into the well and mistaking his reflection in the water for the big lion jumped into the well to kill him. Thus the foolish lion perished and all the animals in the jungle lived happily ever after.

Damanaka resumed, “This is how with my skills I will create a rift between Pingalaka and Sanjeevaka.”

“All right, best of luck to you,” said Karataka.

One day when Pingalaka was alone, Damanaka visited him and bowed to him.

“We haven't seen you for a long time,” said Pingalaka. “Of what use am I to you? Yet, when your rule is breaking up, I thought I should inform you. Even without asking, offer good advice to him whom you want to protect from indignity, said our elders.”

“Whatever you want to say, say it without hesitation.”

Gathering courage, Damanaka said, “My lord, Sanjeevaka wants to harm you. Taking me into confidence, he once told me that he would kill you, become the king and make me a minister.”

“But Sanjeevaka is a trusted friend of mine. Why should he think of harming me?”

“There is no loyal or disloyal servant. There is no servant who does not covet power. My lord, what made you to take Sanjeevaka into confidence? Don't think he is a strong animal able to kill your enemies. This will not happen because he is a vegetarian and my lord feasts on meat. It is better to get rid of him.”

“You remember I gave him the word on your advice. How can I kill him who has won assurance from me.”

“My lord, according to wise men, you should not make friends with people you do not know. You know how an innocent flea died for the fault of a bug.”

Pingalaka demanded to know the story. Damanaka began to relate.

## **7.The Bug and The Poor Flea**

Once upon a time a bug named Mandavisarpini made for itself a small home in the folds of the milk-white sheets of linen spread on the king's ornamental bed. One day, the bug saw a flea drifting into the king's bedroom and told the flea that he had come to a wrong place and asked him to leave before somebody

noticed him.

The flea, whose name was Agnimukha, said, “Oh venerable sir, it is not proper for you to ask a guest to leave even if he is a wicked person. You must welcome him, ask him about his health, say words that comfort him and request him to take rest. That is how good hosts treat their guests. Besides, I have tasted the blood of a variety of men and animals. Never did I taste royal blood. The king's blood is a compound of rich foods and is bound to taste rich. Please permit me to relish this delicacy.”

The flea continued, “Everything we do in this world we do to slake our hunger. I have come to you in search of food. It is not proper for you to siphon off the king's blood all alone. You should share it with me also.”

The bug told him, “oh, flea, I suck the blood of the king when he is fast asleep. You are impatient. You have to wait till I finish my job. After me, you can have your fill.” The flea agreed.

Meanwhile, the king entered his bedroom to sleep. But the impatient flea began feasting on the king's blood even before he went to sleep. Stung by his bite, the king rose from his bed and asked his servants to look for what was in the bed that caused him discomfort. The king's men pulled the linen off the bed and examined it closely. Before they could him, the flea sneaked into a recess of the bed. The servants found the poor bug and killed him at once.

Damanaka told Pingalaka, “This is why you should kill Sanjeevaka before he could kill you. He who abandons a trusted confidant and trusts an outsider will die like sage Kakudruma.”

“How did he die?” Pinagalaka asked him.

## **8. The Story of The Blue Jackal**

Chandaraka was a jackal living in a forest. One day, driven by hunger, he came to a nearby town in search of food. Seeing him, a group of mongrels began chasing and attacking him whenever possible. The jackal fled in panic and entering the house of a washer man hid in a vat full of blue used for bleaching clothes. When he came out, he became a blue animal. Thinking that he was not the jackal they chased, the mongrels dispersed.

The jackal came back to the forest with his body dyed in blue. When the lions, tigers, panthers, wolves and other animals in the forest saw him, they took fright and ran in all directions. They thought to themselves, “We do not know his power and strength. It is better we keep a distance from him. Haven't the elders warned not to trust him whose conduct, caste and courage are not known.”

Seeing them scared, the dyed jackal said, “Why do you run away like that. There is no need to fear. I am a special creation of God. He told me that the animals in the jungle here had no ruler and that he was nominating me as your king. He named me as Kakudruma and told me to rule all of you. Therefore all of you can live safely under the umbrella of my protection.”

All the animals in the jungle accepted him as the king. He in turn appointed the lion as his minister, the tiger as his chamberlain and the wolf as the gatekeeper. After distributing office to the animals, the new king Kakudruma banished all the jackals in the forest. The lions, tigers and the wolves killed other animals and brought them as food for the king. Taking his share, Kakudruma would distribute the rest of the kill among his subjects.

One day when the blue jackal was holding court, he heard a gang of jackals howling. Thrilled by the sound of his own ilk, Kakudruma began loudly responding in his natural voice. The lions and other animals immediately recognized that their king was after all a jackal and not a Godsend. They at once pounced on the blue jackal and killed him.

“The moral is,” Damanaka said, “he who abandons his own folk will perish.”

“But how do I believe that Sanjeevaka has evil intentions,” asked Pingalaka.

“He told me today that he would kill you tomorrow. If you notice him carefully tomorrow, you will find him red-eyed and occupying a seat he does not deserve. He would stare at you angrily. If what I say comes true, it is for you what to do with Pingalaka,” said Damanaka.

After this meeting with the lion king, Damanaka went to meet Pingalaka. The bullock received him with courtesy and said, “We are meeting after a long time. What can I do for you? They are the blessed who are visited by friends.”

“You are right, sir. But where is rest for servants. They have lost their freedom for the sake of money. They know no sleep, no interest in food nor can they speak without fear. Yet they live. Somebody has rightly compared service to a dog's life,” said Damanaka.

“Come to the point, my friend” The bullock was now impatient.

Damanaka said, “Sir, a minister is not supposed to give bad advice. He cannot also disclose state secrets. If he does, he will go to hell after his death. But in the cause of your friendship, I have revealed a secret. It is on my suggestion that you have taken up service in the royal household. Pingalaka has evil designs against you. When we were alone, he told me he would kill you and bring happiness to everyone in the palace.

“I told the king that this was stabbing a friend in the back,” Damanaka continued. “The king was angry and said that you were a vegetarian and he lived on a diet of meat and so there was natural discord between you and him. He said that this was enough reason for him to kill you. This is a secret I have kept to myself for a long time. It is now for you to do what is necessary.”

Sanjeevaka fainted on hearing these words. Recovering after some time, he said, “It is truly said that a person who serves the king is like a bullock without horns. It is difficult to know the mind of a king who has different ideas. It is not easy to serve a king. Even sages could not read the minds of kings. I think some servants who were jealous of my friendship with the king must have poisoned his mind.”

“Don't worry,” Damanaka said. “Forget what tales the servants carried to the king. You can still win his favour by your sweet words.”

“That is not true. It is impossible to live with wicked people, however small they are. They can always think of a hundred ways to get you in the same manner the jackal and crow trapped the camel.”

“Sounds interesting. Let me know what happened to the camel,” asked Damanaka.

Sanjeevaka began to tell him the story.

## **9.The Camel, The Jackal And The Crow**

In a far off forest, there lived a lion named Madotkata served by a leopard, a jackal and a crow. One day they sighted Kradanaka, a camel who lost his way. Thinking the camel they saw was an unusual animal, the lion asked his assistants to find out if he was a wild animal or domestic animal.

The crow said that the camel was a domestic animal fit to be killed and eaten. Refusing to eat Kradanaka, the lion said:

“I shall not kill someone who came seeking hospitality. According to our elders, you cannot kill even an enemy who came trusting you. He who kills so commits the sin of killing hundred Brahmins. Assure him of safety and bring him to me.”

The three assistants brought the camel to the presence of the lion. On the lion asking the camel to relate his story, Kradanaka told him how he was part of a trade caravan and how he had lost his way. The lion told the camel, “Kradanaka, why do you go back to your village and become once again a beast of burden? Remain with us without any hesitation and feast on this tender grass.” Thereafter, the camel stayed on to live happily with the lion and his three assistants.

One day, the lion was locked in a battle with an elephant. The tusker gored Madotkata and badly injured him. He became too weak to hunt. Without food he was in no position to do anything. Then, the lion asked the assistants to go out and look for some animal for his meal. “Bring the animal here. I will kill him somehow and provide food for you all,” said the lion.

The leopard, the jackal, and the camel looked everywhere for an animal but could not find anyone. The jackal told the crow aside:

“Friend, what is the use of wasting time like this? We have Kradanaka, our lord's loyal friend. Let us kill him and survive.” “That is fine. Yet we cannot kill him because our lord has assured him protection,” said the crow.”

“Leave it to me. I shall convince Madotkata to kill the camel. Wait here. I will meet the lord and get his permission,” said the jackal and left to meet the lion.

The jackal told his lord, “Oh, lord, we went to every nook and corner of the forest. We could not find a single animal. We are tired, weak and hungry. Since my lord is also in the same condition, I humbly suggest that we make a meal of this camel.”

Highly annoyed, the lion said, “You sinner, if you repeat these words, I shall first kill you. I have given him my word. How can I kill him? Haven't our elders said that no gift of land or cow or food is greater than the gift of an assurance?”

“You are right my lord. It is a sin to kill him who has your word. But if the camel voluntarily offers himself as food it is no sin to accept the offer. If he does not volunteer, you can kill anyone of us. You are hungry and close to your end. If we are not of use to you at this time what value have our lives? If anything undesirable happens to our lord, we will immolate ourselves.”

“This seems to be more reasonable,” said the lion.

The jackal told the other two assistants, “Friends, our lord is in a pitiable condition. There is now no one to protect us from others. Instead of aimlessly searching the forest for food, let us offer our bodies to him. That will deliver us from the burden of debt. The servant who is witness to the helpless death of his master will go to hell.”

After the jackal's plea, all of them called on the lion with tears in their eyes. “What's the matter? Did you find an animal?” asked the lion.

“No, my lord. We searched every place, every inch of the forest. We are not lucky. We found nothing. But I request the lord to have me for his meal. That will mean two birds with one shot. The lord will survive and I will go to heaven. He who lays down his life to save his lord will have no rebirth,” said the crow.

It was now the turn of the jackal to show his loyalty. He said, “My friend, crow. Your body is too small to slake the hunger of my lord. It amounts to starving him and that is a sin. Get out of my way. I have to submit a plea to my lord.”

Addressing the lion, the jackal said, “Lord, I request you to have me for your meal and ensure me a place in heaven. The lord has rights of life and death over his servants. Therefore, it is no sin in exercising his rights.”

The leopard intervened and said, “You jackal, you are no great personality. Let me plead with the lord.” Addressing Madotkata, the leopard said, “Oh lord, let me give away my life to save your life. Please permit me to earn a permanent berth in heaven. My sacrifice will win fame for me on earth.”

All this set Kradanaka thinking, “All these servants of the lord have said what they wanted to say. Still, the lion did not kill anyone of them. Let me also offer to be the lord's food today. I am sure my friends will

support me.' He then turned to the leopard and said, "What you have said is right and proper. But you are a carnivorous animal and belong to the same species as the master does. How can he kill you? Let me offer myself."

The camel then came forward and requested the lion to have him for that day's meal. At once, the jackal and the leopard pounced on him tore him to pieces and all of them had a sumptuous feast.

As the story ended Sanjeevaka told Damanaka, "Wicked people surround the king. Good men should not serve such masters. I will need your advice to get out of this problem."

"The best course is to leave the country," said Damanaka.

"It is not wise to leave when the king is still angry. He can reach me anywhere I go. The only alternative I have is to go to war with the king."

Damanaka was afraid that if Sanjeevaka chose to fight Pingalaka the lion might die and that would be a disaster. Let me persuade the bullock to leave the forest, he thought.

"Going to war is all right. But how can there be a war between a servant and a king? If you underestimate the strength of your enemy you will meet the same fate as the Sea met at the hands of the bird pair."

Curious, Sanjeeva asked, "What happened to the birds?"

## **10. The Bird Pair and The Sea**

Once upon a time, a pair of pheasants lived close to the Sea. They spent their time happily singing and dancing on the branches of the trees by the Sea. One day the female pheasant told her husband that she was expecting their baby and he must look for a safe place to lay the eggs. The husband said, "My dear, this Seaside is enchanting and it is better you lay eggs here only."

The wife said, "When it is full moon, the Sea tide can wash away even wild elephants. Let us go elsewhere."

Amused, the husband said, "What you say is true. But the Sea has no power to harm us. Haven't you heard that there is no fool who could stop the flight of a bird or a fool who would enter fire recklessly. Will anyone be brash enough to challenge Yama (the Lord of Death) to take his life if he can? You can lay your eggs here only."

Listening to this dialogue, the Sea thought, "How vain is this bird which is as small as a worm! Let me drown these eggs and see what he can do."

After laying eggs, the female bird went in search of food. In her absence, the Sea sent a wave that sucked the eggs into the waters. The female returned to the nest and, not finding the eggs there, told the husband, "You are a fool. I told you that the waves would wash away the eggs. Those who do not heed the good words of a friend will perish like the turtle that fell off the stick."

"What's that turtle and what is that stick?" asked the husband.

Once upon a time a turtle called Kambugriva lived in a pond. He had two swans, Sankat and Vikat, as good friends. Every day they would meet on the rim of the pond and discuss legends of yore. They would disperse with sunset. That year there were no rains and the water in the pond began slowly disappearing.

Worried, the swans told the turtle, "Friend, What will happen to you? We are concerned."

"I appreciate your interest in me. There is trouble ahead. Please find a way out of this crisis. But it is important that we should not give in to despair. According to Manu, all good men should come to the rescue of friends and relatives in times of need. Look for a stick or a rope. I will hang on to it as both of you hold the two sides of the stick or rope and ferry me to safety."

"We shall do as you say," the swans said. "But you have to shut your mouth. Otherwise, you will crash to the ground."

On Kambugriva agreeing to the plan, the swans brought a stick and asked the turtle to hold it with his teeth. When everything was ready, the swans flew off with the turtle hanging from it. On the way people saw this sight and exclaimed, "see, how clever the birds are." In trying to respond to the people, the turtle opened his mouth and fell to the ground and the people at once killed him.

"The lesson is that those who do not heed the advice of their well-wishers meet their end like the turtle. Any day, the survivors are those who foresee a danger in time and those who deal with it when it comes. Those who leave things to fate and believe in luck will destroy themselves like Yadbhavishya," said the female pheasant.

"What happened to Yadbhavishya?" asked the male bird.

## **11. Tale of The Three Fish**

Three fish lived in a pond. Their names were Anagatavidhata, Pratyutpannamati and Yadbhavishya. Some fishermen passing by the pond wondered, "Hey, we have never seen this pond. It seems to be full of fish. It is now evening. Let us come at dawn tomorrow and bag as many fish as we can."

Hearing the fisherman, Anagatavidhata (the one who foresees a danger in time) called a meeting of all the

fish and told them, "Haven't you heard what the fishermen were saying? We must move out of this pond tonight itself. As the wise men have said weak men should flee when a strong man invades or seek refuge in a fort. There is no alternative."

"The fisherman will come tomorrow. I think we should not be here for even a moment more," said Anagatavidhata.

"That's true. I endorse your suggestion," said Pratyutpannamati. "Let's go elsewhere. Those who are afraid of foreign lands and those who are bound to their soil will die in their own country. He who can prosper anywhere does not die in his own land clinging to sentiment."

Loudly laughing, Yadbhavishya said, "Your plans are not good. Why should we leave this pond, ancient home of our forefathers, because the fishermen have evil intentions. If it is destined, we cannot escape death even if we go elsewhere. Everything is in the hands of God. You cannot dispose what he proposes. Without his blessings people will die even if they have protection. With his blessings nobody can kill them even if they do not have protection.

Unable to convince him, the other two fish left the pond. Coming the next day, the fishermen took a big catch of fish in the pond. Yadbhavishya was one among them.

The female pheasant resumed, "That is why I told you that those who foresee the problem and those who deal with the problem when it arises are always victors and those who trust their luck are the losers."

Her husband asked, "In that case do you think I am as stupid as that Yadbhavishya? Wait and see what I can do. I will siphon off all the water in the Sea and leave him dry."

"Don't try to settle scores with the Sea. It will do no good to you. A weak man's anger will hurt him in the end."

"Don't discourage me. Those who have confidence can confront stronger men. Doesn't the lion that is small in size slash the crown of the mighty elephant? Doesn't a small wick repel darkness? He who has courage is the stronger person. See how I will siphon off all the water in the Sea and make him dry," said the male."

"But hundreds of rivers flow into the sea. Your beak is just as big as a drop of the sea. How can you consume all the water in the Sea? Stop this tall talk," advised the female.

"Not to despair is to win the Goddess of Wealth. I have an iron beak. I will toil day and night to siphon of all the water."

The wife said, "Okay, if you want to engage the Sea, call all of your friends and try to do the job together. When they are united, it is difficult to defeat even a band of weak men. Even blades of slender grass can bind an elephant if they are woven into a rope. Haven't you heard the story of how a sparrow, a woodpecker, a fly and a frog killed an elephant?"

“Let me know how they did it,” asked the male pheasant.

The wife began telling the story.

## **12. The Elephant and The Sparrow**

Two sparrows, husband and wife, built a nest on a banyan tree where the female sparrow laid eggs. One afternoon a wild elephant came to the tree seeking shelter from the sun. Unable to bear the heat, the tusker suddenly went berserk and snapped a big branch of the tree, crushing the sparrow's eggs in the nest. The sparrow pair somehow escaped the fury of the elephant but the wife began crying for her eggs.

A woodpecker, a close friend of the sparrow, heard her crying and moved by her grief asked her, “Why are you crying, my friend? Wise men do not grieve what is lost or what is dead or what is past. That is the difference between a learned person and an unlettered man.”

The female sparrow said, “The wicked elephant has destroyed my offspring. If you are a true friend of mine suggest a way to kill him. In my view, he who harms a person in trouble or he who ridicules a person in sorrow deserves to be punished and he who punishes such a person has no rebirth.”

“What you say is right,” said the woodpecker. “He is a friend who comes to your aid when you are in need. Everyone tries to be friendly when you are prospering. You will see how resourceful I am. I have a friend who is a fly. With his help we can kill the elephant.”

Taking the female sparrow with him, the woodpecker called on the fly and told him, “This is my dearest friend. A wild elephant has squashed her eggs. You must somehow find a way to kill that elephant. We need your help.”

The fly said, “I have a friend who is a frog. Let us go to him and seek his help also.” The female sparrow, the woodpecker and the fly went to the frog and narrated the entire story of the sparrow's grief.

The frog said, “What is an elephant before a united crowd like us? Do as I tell you. O' fly, go to the elephant when the sun is high in the sky and hum a sweet tune into his ears. When he closes his eyes in ecstasy, the woodpecker will scoop his eyes out. He becomes blind and thirsty and will look for water. I will go to a quicksand and begin croaking there. Thinking that there is water, the elephant will come there and sink into the quicksand and die.”

All the four played out their roles according to the frog's plan and caused the death of the elephant.”

At the end of the story, the female pheasant told her husband, “That is how together the four friends killed the elephant.”

Impressed by his wife's wisdom, the husband said, "Okay, we will call our friends and with their help crush the Sea.' As their friends, the cranes, the peacocks, the cuckoos and other birds, gathered, the male pheasant told them the story of how the Sea had killed their offspring and how necessary it was to drain him out. At the end, he said, "We cannot do this job. Let us go to Garuda, Lord Vishnu's vehicle, and tell him all that has happened. He will be angry over what the Sea has done to his species. He will surely take revenge on the Sea."

Wailing and weeping, all the birds went to meet Garuda and told him, "O lord, we need your help. The Sea has destroyed the eggs of the pheasant pair. This is a blow to all the bird community. If you do not intervene, he will destroy our entire tribe. Wise men have always said that one wicked person will be an inspiration to all others with evil intentions."

Moved by their story of grief, Garuda thought to himself, "These birds have a legitimate grievance. I will go and punish the Sea.' Meanwhile, an envoy from Lord Vishnu came and told Garuda that the Lord had sent him as He wanted to travel to Amaravathi on a divine mission. The envoy asked Garuda to accompany him at once.

Garuda told the envoy, "No, I cannot come. I am not a useful servant. Let him take someone else. Please convey my regards to the Lord."

Surprised at Garuda's words, the envoy said, "O Garuda, you have never uttered such words about the Lord. Did the Lord slight you in any manner? Let me know."

"See, this Sea, the Lord's habitat, has swallowed the eggs of the pheasant pair. If the Lord does not punish the Sea for this, I shall not serve Him. This is my decision and you may convey this to the Lord," said Garuda.

Informed of Garuda's pique, Vishnu told himself, "Garuda has reason to be annoyed with me. I shall go myself and receive him with respect. If the king is satisfied he can give only money. But when the master honours his servant, the servant is ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the master. Therefore, it is wise that I should visit and appease him."

When Vishnu arrived to meet him, Garuda felt guilty that he had said harsh words about the Lord and said, "O Lord, the Sea who enjoys your protection has stolen the eggs of my servants and thus insulted me. Because of respect for you, I delayed taking action against him."

"True, learned men say that a master is responsible for the misdeeds of his servants. Such misdeeds hurt the master more than the servant. Come with me. I shall recover those eggs from the Sea and make the pheasant pair happy again. Later we will go to Amaravathi," said Lord Vishnu.

The Lord then took out his thunderbolt and aiming it at the Sea warned him, "You wicked man, return the eggs to the bird pair. Otherwise, I will turn the sea into a desert."

Frightened, the Sea returned the eggs to the pheasants. The male bird handed them to his wife.

“From this story,” Damanaka told Sanjeevaka, “it is evident that he who challenges an enemy without knowing his strength perishes in the end.”

“True, but how do I know that Pingalaka has evil designs against me? We have been very friendly. That makes it difficult for me think of killing him,” said Sanjeevaka.

Damanaka said, “He stares at you in anger if he has evil thoughts in his mind. Otherwise, you may safely think he is the same old affectionate friend. But if you decide to leave the place do it after sunset. Our elders have said that one must sacrifice an individual for the good of the community, give up caste for the good of the village and surrender a village for the good of the country. It is desirable to save money so that one can spend it in a crisis, spend money to save his wife and give up both his wealth and wife to save himself.”

After he gave this advice to Sanjeevaka, Damanaka went to see Karataka. Hailing him, Karataka said, “What happened to your mission?”

“I have just finished sowing the seeds of discord among the two friends. The rest is in the hands of God,” said Damanaka.

“Let me know how you did it.”

“I have carried tales from one to the other and succeeded in dividing the friends. You will not see them again together.”

“Oh, you have not done anything good. You have separated two good friends. You have made them hate each other. A wicked person knows only to harm but not mend.”

“You do not know political science. However strong you are, unless you kill the enemy or the disease at the very outset, your enemy or the disease will kill you in the end. Sanjeevaka stole the ministership from us and so he is our enemy. I won the king's assurance for him and brought him to the court of the king. Today, he has ousted us from our office. That is why I have plans to kill him. If he wants to save himself, he should leave this place. Wise men, like Chaturaka, do not hesitate to torment others to achieve their goal. Fools like the lion cannot enjoy even what they have won.”

On Karataka's request, Damanaka began telling that story.

### **13. The Lion and The Jackal**

Vajradanstra was a lion living in a forest. He had two friends, a jackal named Chaturaka and a wolf named Kravyamukha. Because of their friendship with the lion, the jackal and the wolf had a free run of the forest. One day the lion found a female camel separated from its caravan and in labour pains. The lion killed the camel and found a live baby camel inside her womb. The lion and his friends fed on the dead camel but spared the baby. The lion adopted the baby and brought him home.

The lion told the baby camel, "You are now my child. Nobody can harm you. You can freely roam about the forest and have a nice time. You have ears which look like a pair of conches. So I will call you Sankhukarna."

As days passed, Sankhukarna became a young and energetic animal. He was always to be seen in the company of Vajradanstra. One day the lion had to confront a wild elephant and in the fight the elephant badly injured the lion. Now the lion was too weak to go out and hunt. He called his friends, the jackal and the wolf, and the camel and told them, "Look for an animal. I will kill it and all of us can have a good meal."

The three scoured the entire forest but could not find an animal. In despair, the jackal thought, "If we can kill this camel we will have a sure meal for several days. But he is a favorite of our king. He will not agree to kill the camel. Yet with my cunning I will see that the lion kills him. The learned have said there is nothing impossible or forbidden for an intelligent being."

The jackal told the camel, "O Sankhukarna, our lord has been without food for a long time and he may die of hunger. His death will mean a disaster for all of us. I have a plan to get over this problem. Listen."

"Go ahead. Let me know what you have in mind. I shall certainly do whatever I can for the lord because if we do good to our master we will reap a reward hundred times more valuable than what we gave to the master," said the camel.

Chaturaka, the jackal said, "O young camel, offer your body to the lord at the double the profit. Your body also will grow in size and the lord also will continue to live."

The camel replied, "I am ready. Let the lord know that he can have my body provided the Lord of Duty is a witness to my sacrifice."

The jackal, the wolf and the camel then called on the lion to inform him of the camel's decision. The jackal told the lion, "We searched the entire forest without sighting even a small animal. It is already sunset now. The camel is prepared to offer his body if you are ready to increase the size of his body and invite the Lord of Duty to be a witness."

On the lion agreeing to the proposal, the jackal and the wolf at once pounced on the camel and tore him to pieces.

Vajradanstra, the lion, told the jackal, "I am going to the river to take a bath and worship the deities. Till I come back, keep an eye on this food." The minute the lion left the scene, the jackal thought of a plan to have the camel all to himself. He told Kravyamukha, the wolf, "You seem to be very hungry. Go ahead and feast on the camel meat. When the lion comes I shall convince him about your innocence."

As the wolf started to taste the meat, the jackal alerted him and told him that the lord was coming and to allay any suspicion he should stop eating and leave the place. When the lion came, he saw that the heart of the camel was missing. Angrily, the lion roared and said, "Who is the culprit, I will kill him."

The wolf then looked at the jackal suggesting that the jackal should convince the lion of his innocence. But the cunning jackal said, "You did not heed my warning and ate the meat. Why do you now expect me to help you?" Realizing the danger, the wolf fled the scene to save his life.

Meanwhile, a caravan of camels passing by stopped where the lion and the jackal were planning the next move. The lead camel had a big bell tied to his neck. Frightened by the sound of the bell, the lion asked the jackal to find out what the sound was all about. He had not heard such sounds in his life. Pretending to find out, the jackal went out of the lion's sight and shouted from there, "O lord, run for your life."

"What's the matter," the lion asked him. "Why are you frightening me? Let me know clearly what's happening."

The jackal said, "My lord, the Lord of Death is angry that you have killed the camel before its death was due. He is upset and vowed that he would get from you one thousand times more than the value of the camel we have killed. It is the Lord of Death who hung a bell in the lead camel's neck. He also brought with him all the ancestors of the camel."

The jackal thus tricked the lion into hurriedly fleeing the place, leaving the camel's body all to himself to feast upon.

Damanaka continued, "That is why I told you that a wise man protects his interest even if it is to torment others and never shares his secrets with others as Chaturaka, the jackal did in the above story."

Sanjeevaka began pondering, "Why did I do like this. A vegetarian serving a meat eater! What shall I do and where shall I go? Perhaps, Pingalaka may spare me because he had given me assurance. Trouble may sometimes come to people who walk the path of ethical conduct. Every living being does good and sometimes bad deeds. He will reap the consequences in the next birth. So, we cannot escape what fate has in store for us."

With these thoughts on his mind Sanjeevaka went to see Pingalaka, the lion, and sat down without greeting him. The lion also was surprised at the bullock's arrogance and, believing what Damanaka had told him about Sanjeevaka, pounced on him tearing him with his claws. Sanjeevaka too began goring the lion with his horns.

Seeing that the jackal and the lion were determined to fight to the end, Karataka admonished Damanaka, "You fool! You have created a rift between the two friends. If the lord dies, how can you be a minister? How do you aspire to be a minister when you do not know the principles of diplomacy? War mongers like you can never reach their goals. You should not use force where there is still room for peace. One of the two is bound to die. Save the situation if you can. No, it is my folly to tell you what is good and what is bad. Elders have said that one should not preach to one who is not a disciple. You have the example of the bird Suchimukha."

"I am eager to know what it is," said Damanaka.

## 14. Suchimukha and The Monkey

A gang of monkeys made their home in a mountain slope. When winter came, it brought not only severe cold but also heavy rains. Unable to stand the cold, the monkeys collected red berries wildly growing in the mountain slope. They gathered around the berries and began blowing air at them thinking they were embers.

Watching their vain effort in amusement, Suchimukha, a bird, told them, “You fool, they are not embers but red berries. Why do you waste your energy on them? This will not save you from cold. Go and look for a shelter in a cave or a place free from wind. The clouds are thick and there will be no immediate relief from rain.”

An old member of the monkey gang angrily told the bird, “Why do you poke your nose in our affairs? Go away. Haven't the elders said that he who cherishes his welfare should not talk to a gambler or an inefficient workman. So is the person a fool who talks to an idiot or a pleasure seeker.”

Disregarding the old monkey's anger and not giving room to any other monkey to talk, Suchimukha went on repeating his advice to them to seek shelter elsewhere. Tired with the bird's unwanted advice, one of the monkeys sprang at the bird and bashed him against a rock till he was dead.

Karataka said at the end of the story, “If you counsel a fool it will only provoke him and not pacify. If you feed milk to a snake it will increase its store of poison. That's why you should not offer advice to everyone. Look, how two good sparrows lost their home, all due to a foolish monkey.”

At Damanaka's request, Karataka began telling the story of the evil monkey.

## 15. How a Sparrow Came to Grief

A pair of sparrows made their home on a branch of a big tree and lived happily there. Soon it was winter and it began to rain heavily. Frequent gusts of wind made the cold unbearable. At this time, a monkey completely drenched in the rain and shivering from cold, came scurrying to the tree for cover.

Seeing the condition of the monkey, the female sparrow said, “Gentleman, with your feet and hands you seem to be a human being. Why didn't you build a house for yourself?” Angered by this uncalled for advice, the monkey said, “you stupid, why do not you shut up and mind your business?” The monkey told himself, “My, what impudence! This bit of a creature has the cheek to offer me advice. Makes fun of me. Unnecessary prattle. I must teach her a lesson. Why shouldn't I kill her?”

Turning to the female, the monkey said, “How does it help you to worry about my plight? Haven't you heard this saying of the elders that you should offer advice to those who seek it and cherish it? Advice to him who

is indifferent is like a cry in the wilderness. Don't try to do that.”

When the female persisted, the monkey climbed up the tree and broke up the nest of the sparrow pair.

“That's why,” said Karataka to Damanaka, “you should be careful in offering advice. You are a fool who does not understand the essence of my advice. That is not your mistake. Fools ignore advice and wise men follow it and benefit by it. It is clear that you haven't heard the story of Dharmabuddhi and his son Papabuddhi, the story of how the father was killed by smoke due to the son's thoughtlessness.”

“Why don't you tell me that story,” asked Damanaka.

In a city in the north, lived two friends named Dharmabuddhi and Papabuddhi. One day, Papa thought, “I am a man without worldly wisdom and added to that I am also poor. Let me persuade Dharma to take me to far off lands and earn lots of money through his business skills. Later I will deprive him of all his wealth and live happily ever after.”

With these plans on his mind, Papa told Dharma, “My friend, you are growing old and cannot manage your business. Unless you go out into the wide world how can you tell your children about the wonders of the world? Elders have said that he is born in vain who does not see the countries in the world, learn several languages and know the dress styles of other people. You cannot earn wealth and knowledge without wide travel.”

Dharma liked this advice and taking the blessings of his teachers set out on overseas travel, taking Papa with him. Both of them earned a lot of money abroad due to the business talent of Dharma. It was time for them to return home because it is natural for people who go abroad in search of wealth and learning to think of home when they have achieved both.

As they were entering their native place, Papa told Dharma, “It is not safe to take home all this wealth because relatives and friends in need will seek help if they know about our riches. We shall bury most of our money in some secret place in this forest. Whenever we need money, we can come here and take whatever we need. You know that money tempts even saints.”

Dharma agreed to Papa's plan and went home after both of them dug a pit and covered it after burying most of their earnings in it. One midnight Papa went to the secret place in the forest and stole all the money and brought it home. Next morning, he went to Dharma and suggested that they should go to the forest because he was in need of money.

When both of them arrived at the secret spot in the forest and dug there, they found the pit empty. At once Papa began shouting loudly, “Dharma, you stole the money and nobody else. The pit was carefully covered. You must give me half of what we have buried here.’ Though Dharma denied it, Papa insisted that they should take the dispute to a court of law.

When the case came before the court, the judge asked them to take oath in the name of God. But Papa quoted experts as saying that relevant documents should be produced first as proof, then witnesses would be

summoned to give evidence and oath in the name of God is taken when neither documents nor witnesses are available.

"I can produce the gods of the forest as witnesses. They will determine who is guilty and who is innocent," said Papa. Impressed by this plan, the judges asked both the parties to be present next morning at the forest for a hearing. Happy at the judges' order, Papa went home and told his father, "Father, I have stolen all Dharma's money. There is a case in the court that I can win only with your help. Otherwise, my life will be in danger."

"What have I to do to get that money, son," asked his father.

"There is a big tree there. You have to go now and hide in the hollow of that tree. Tomorrow morning when the judges and others assemble there, I will ask you to tell the truth. Then it is your turn to declare that Dharma is the thief," said the son.

The father left at once for the forest to hide in the hollow of the tree. The morning of the next day, the son took a bath and went to the tree taking Dharma and the judges with him. Papa went near the tree and shouted, "O sun, moon, air, fire, earth, water, the God of Death, day and night, you are all witnesses to the history of humanity. O Goddess of the Forest, declare who among us is guilty."

The father shouted back from inside the hollow of the tree, "Listen all of you, it is Dharma who stole the money." The judges and the king's men heard the verdict and sat down to decide what punishment they should give Dharma. Meanwhile, Dharma filled the hollow with rags and hay, poured oil on them and threw a matchstick into it. The fire forced the half-burnt father to come out of the tree.

"All this is the work of Papa's evil mind," said the father and soon collapsed and died. The king's men at once bound Papa hand and foot and hung him to a tree. They said, "Our elders have always said that wise men should not only be resourceful but also know the consequences of being resourceful. You have the story of how a mongoose killed all the offspring of the crane before his own eyes."

When Dharma asked them to tell the story, the king's men began relating the story.

## **16.The Foolish Crane and The Mongoose**

A big banyan tree was home to a number of cranes in a forest. In the hollow of that tree lived a cobra, which used to feed on the young cranes which did not yet learn to fly. When the mother crane saw the cobra killing her offspring, she began crying. Seeing the sorrowing crane, a crab asked her what made her cry.

The crane told the crab, "Every day, the cobra living in this tree is killing my children. I am not able to contain my grief. Please show me some way to get rid of this cobra."

The crab then thought, “These cranes are our born enemies. I shall give her advice that is misleading and suicidal. That will see the end of all these cranes. Elders have always said that if you want to wipe out your enemy your words should be soft like butter and your heart like a stone.

Then the crab told the crane, “Uncle, strew pieces of meat from the mongoose's burrow to the hollow of the cobra. The mongoose will follow the trail of meat to the cobra burrow and will kill it.”

The crane did as the crab advised her. The mongoose came following the meat trail and killed not only the cobra but also all the cranes on the tree. “That is why,” the king's men said, “if you have a strategy, you must also know what the strategy would lead to. Papabuddhi considered only the crooked plan but not what would follow. He reaped the consequences.”

Karataka told Damanaka, “That's why like Papabuddhi you haven't foreseen what will happen if you went ahead with your plans. You have an evil mind. I knew it from your plans to endanger the life of our lord. Your place is not with us. If a rat had a 1000-pound scale for its lunch, is it any wonder that a kite carried away a child?”

“What about it,” asked Damanaka. Karataka told him the following story.

Jeernadhana was the son of a rich merchant. But he had lost all his wealth. He thought he should go abroad, for, he told himself that he who had once prospered should not live in the same place as a poor man. People who respected him once would now look down upon him and shun him. Deciding to go abroad to seek his fortune, he mortgaged with a local merchant the 1000-pound balance his ancestors had left behind.

He went abroad with the money the merchant gave him and after several years came home and asked the merchant to return him the balance.

The merchant said, “O my, where is the balance? The rats have gnawed at it for food.”

Jeernadhana replied without emotion, “I cannot blame you for what the rats have done. The world is like that. Nothing really is permanent. Any way, I am going to the river to take the purificatory bath. Please send with me your son Dhanadeva to look after my needs.”

Afraid that Jeernadeva would accuse him of theft, the merchant called his son and told him, “Son, your uncle is going to the river for a bath. You accompany him taking with you all the things he needs to take his bath. Men offer help not only out of kindness but also out of fear, greed etc. If one offers help for reasons other than this, you have to be wary of such a person.”

The merchant's son followed Jeernadeva to the river. After taking bath, he led the boy into a nearby cave and, pushing the boy inside, closed it with a huge boulder. When Jeernadeva returned from the river, the merchant asked him, “O honoured guest, didn't you bring back my son? Where is he? Please tell me.”

Jeernadeva told him, “A kite has carried away your boy. There was nothing I could do.”

“You cheat, is this possible? How can a kite carry away a boy? Bring my boy back. Otherwise, I will go to the king and complain.”

“Yes, just as a kite cannot carry away a boy, rats also cannot eat away heavy iron balance. If you want your boy, give me back my balance,” said Jeernadeva.

Both of them took the dispute to the king's court. The merchant complained to the judges that Jeernadeva had kidnapped his child. The judges ordered him to return the boy to the merchant. Jeernadeva told the judges the entire story. Thereupon, the judges ordered Jeernadeva to return the boy and the merchant to give back the balance to Jeernadeva.

Karataka then told Damanaka, “You have done this foul deed because you were jealous of the king's friendship with Sanjeevaka. It is not without reason that our elders have said:

“Fools hate the learned  
The poor blame the rich  
The miser riles the giver  
The wicked abhor the virtuous”

“You have tried to help us. But you have hurt us. It is like the well-meaning monkey killing the king,” said Karataka.

“What did the monkey do?” asked Damanaka.

## **17.The King and The Foolish Monkey**

Once upon a time, there was a king who kept a monkey as a pet. The monkey served the king in whatever way he could. He had a free run of the royal household because he was the king's pet. One hot day the monkey sat fanning by the side of the king who was sleeping. He noticed a fly on the chest of the king and tried to swish it away. The fly would go away for the moment and come back again to sit on the king's chest.

The monkey could take it no longer and decided to teach the fly a lesson. He looked for a dagger to kill it and when he found it brought it down with all force on the fly. The fly flew away but the king died as result of the dagger blow delivered by the monkey.

Karataka said, “Therefore, the lesson is that a king who cares for his life should not have a fool as his servant.’ He went on to relate a second story to show how shrewd people save the lives of others.

Once upon a time a Brahmin lived in a big city and as a result of his misdeeds in his previous birth he became a thief. He saw four other Brahmins from another city selling a variety of goods in his city. He

thought he should somehow deprive the four Brahmins of their money and through sweet words become their good friend. He was useful to them in whatever way he could. True, it comes naturally for women of vice to act coy and for charlatans to pretend to be learned.

The four visitors sold all their goods and with the money from the sales bought pearls and precious jewels. The Brahmin thief was keeping an eye on what they were doing even as he pretended to serve them faithfully. One day, in the presence of the Brahmin, the traders cut open their thighs and storing the jewels and pearls inside the thighs sewed them back.

The Brahmin was disappointed that they did not give him even a small part of their wealth. He immediately decided to follow them and kill them in the middle of their journey back home and take all that wealth from them.

He told the traders with tears in his eyes, "Friends, you seem to be ready to leave me behind. My heart is broken because it is difficult for me to snap the bonds of friendship with you. If you will be so kind as to take me with you, I will be very grateful to you."

Moved by his request, the traders started their homeward journey accompanied by the Brahmin thief. They passed through several villages, towns and cities before they reached a village inhabited by thugs. Suddenly, they heard a group of crows loudly shouting, "You thugs, very rich people are coming. Come, kill them and become rich."

The thugs at once attacked the Brahmin traders with sticks and began examining their bags. But they found nothing. They were surprised because this was the first time that the words of the crows turned out to be false. They told the traders, "O traders, the crows always tell the truth. You have the money with you somewhere. Take it out or we will cut every limb of yours and bring it out."

The Brahmin thief pondered, "These thugs will certainly pierce the body of the traders to grab the jewels. My turn also will come. It is better I offer myself to these thugs and save the lives of the Brahmins. There is no point in fearing death because it will come today or after hundred years. One cannot escape it."

With these thoughts on his mind, the Brahmin thief asked the thugs to first kill him and see if there was anything valuable on his body. The thugs accepted the offer and found nothing on him after they pierced his body. They let go the other four Brahmins thinking that they also did not have anything precious on their bodies.

As Karataka and Damanaka were discussing the ways of the world, Sanjeevaka engaged Pingalaka in a short battle in which Pingalaka clawed him to death. But the lion was immediately struck by remorse and, recalling the good days he had spent with the bullock, began repenting:

"O I have committed a great sin by killing my friend. There cannot be a greater sin than killing a trusted friend. They who forget a favour or breach a trust or let down a friend will all go to hell as long as the sun and the moon shine in the sky. A king will perish whether what he loses is his kingdom or a faithful servant. A servant and a kingdom are not the same because you can always win back the kingdom but not a trusted servant. In the court, I have always praised Pingalaka. How can I explain his death to the courtiers?"

Damanaka approached the grief-stricken king and told him, “O lord, ruing the death of a grass eater is cowardice. It is not good for a king like you. The learned have always said that it is not a sin to kill a person for treason even if that person is a father, brother, son, wife or a friend. Similarly, one must abandon a tender-hearted king, a Brahmin who eats all kinds of food, an immodest woman, a wicked assistant, a disobedient servant and an ungrateful person.”

Damanaka continued, “You are mourning the death of someone who does not deserve sympathy. Though you are talking like a learned man, you forget that learned men do not think of the past or the dead.”

These words of Damanaka worked like a tonic providing relief to Pingalaka’s troubled mind. Pleased with this advice, the lion king reappointed Damanaka as his minister and continued to rule the forest.

## **Second Strategy: Gaining Friends**

*This is the second strategy of Panchatantra known as Gaining Friends beginning with this stanza:*

*Even without the wherewithal  
Learned men and intellectuals  
Achieve what they want like  
The crow, the rat, the deer and the turtle.*

**Now the story.** There was a city called Mahilaropyam in the south not far off from where was a large banyan tree. Many species of birds came there to eat the tree’s fruit. In the hollow of the great tree lived poisonous reptiles like snakes and scorpions. Travelers found the tree a great shelter in their journeys.

A crow called Laghupatanaka made this tree his home. As he was flying one day towards the city for collecting food, he sighted a hunter carrying a net and approaching the tree like a messenger of death. The crow at once sensed danger and, sure that the hunter came to trap the birds on the tree, told all the birds,

“Friends, this wicked hunter have seeds in his bag that he will scatter to lure you. don’t trust him and avoid the seeds like poison.” The hunter came, sowed the seeds and spread the net. He left the spot and sat elsewhere not to arouse the suspicion of the birds. Warned by Laghupatanaka, the birds stayed away from the seeds as though they were poisonous berries.

Meanwhile, Chitrgriva, king of doves, saw the seeds from a distance and landed there with his retinue of one thousand doves. They came to eat the seeds ignoring the warnings of Laghupatanaka and soon the hunter spread his net and trapped all of them. That is why elders have said that fools can never foresee peril. People often lose sense when danger lurks in the corner.

Chitrigriva and his retinue, however, kept their cool in the face of danger. He appealed to his friends not to panic. Elders have said that they tide over dangers, who are not scared by crisis. “Let us fly together and land elsewhere where the hunter cannot reach us. We can then plan a strategy to get out of this net. If we don’t fly now, we are all doomed,” said Chitrigriva. Thereupon, all of them flew together.

The hunter followed the flight of the doves and looking upwards chanted, “They are flying together. But the moment there is a break in their unity they will crash to the ground.” Laghupatanaka, the crow, also followed the flying doves to see what they would do. When he lost sight of the birds, the hunter gave up and went home rueing that he had lost his net also.

When he was sure that the hunter had failed to chase them, the king of the doves told his friends, “The hunter has disappeared. Let us all now fly towards Mahilaropyam where I have a friend Hiranyaka, who is a rat. He is our only hope. It is only a friend who will come to the aid of those in trouble.” The birds, heeding the advice of the king, flew to the fort of Hiranyaka in Mahilaropyam.

Standing outside the fort, Chitrigriva shouted,

“O friend, come quickly. We are in great trouble.”

Without coming out, Hiranyaka shouted back, “Who are you sir and what do you want from me? What is the kind of trouble that is bothering you? Let me know.”

“I am your friend Chitrigriva, king of the doves. Come out soon.”

Hiranyaka came out and was happy to see Chitrigriva with his retinue and asked what the matter was. The king of the doves said,

“Whatever man does for whatever reasons,  
in whatever manner and wherever in his last birth.  
He reaps the consequences for the same reasons,  
in the same manner and in the same place.”

“All of us are trapped in this net because of our weakness for food. Come at once and free us from this trap,” urged Chitrigriva.

Hiranyaka said, “It is rightly said that a bird can recognize food from fifty miles but cannot see the danger lurking next to him.”

After delivering this sermon, the rat set out to free Chitrigriva first. But the king of doves pleaded with him to first liberate his friends. The rat was angry and reminded Chitrigriva that it was fair that the king became free first and then the servants. “No, it is not like that,” countered Chitrigriva. “They are all dedicated to my service and have left their families behind to come with me. I have to repay that debt,” he said.

Pleased with his friend's love for his servants, Hiranyaka said, "Friend, I know the duties of a king. I was only testing you. I will free everyone now. This will win more doves for your retinue." With the help of his servants, the rat then bit off the entire net and all the doves came out. Hiranyaka saw off Chitrigriva and retinue and went back into his fort.

Seeing the whole drama of Hiranyaka liberating Chitrigriva and his friends, Laghupatanaka, the crow, thought, "I don't trust anyone. On top of it, I have a fickle mind. I will seek his friendship. Our ancestors have always said that even if a wise man has everything he needs, he should still seek friends. Even if all the rivers flow into the Sea, the Sea still waits for the Moon to come out."

## 1. The Crow-Rat Discourse

After he saw how Hiranyaka had helped Chitrigriva, Lagupatanaka came down from his tree perch and called out the rat in a voice resembling that of Chitrigriva. The rat thought, "What happened? Did I forget to free any bird? The dove king must be calling me for the same purpose."

Not sure who was calling him, the rat shouted from inside his fort, "Who are you?"

"I am Laghupatanaka, the crow."

The rat further retreated into his fort and said, "Go away at once, I don't know who you are."

"I have come on an important business. Why don't you meet me?"

"What do I gain by meeting you?"

"Sir, I have seen you liberating Chitrigriva and his retinue. I thought friendship with you would be useful in such a crisis. I am seeking your hand."

"Very odd! You are the diner and I am the dinner. How can there be amity between the two? Where there is enmity, there cannot be friendship. Didn't you hear the elders say:

Friendship or marriage is always  
between equals in caste and wealth.  
There cannot be any sort of bond  
between the weak and the strong.

"He who seeks friendship with someone who is not an equal will earn ridicule. So, please go."

The crow replied, “Hiranyaka, I am waiting here at your doorstep. If you reject my hand, I will starve here to death.”

“But friendship with you is not possible. However hot the water, it still kills the fire.”

“We haven’t even seen each other. How can there be enmity between both of us?”

Hiranyaka then explained, “Enmity is of two kinds. The first is natural and the second is artificial. The second kind disappears when what caused it disappears. But natural enmity ends only with the death of one of the two enemies.”

“Can you make it clearer, asked Laghupatanaka.

“Yes, artificial enmity is always based on some reason. Natural enmity is like the one between a snake and a mongoose, water and fire, Devas and Rakshasas, dogs and cats, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, between women of virtue and vice.”

The crow then pleaded, “Sir, what you say is unreasonable. There is always a reason behind friendship and enmity. That is why a wise man should always seek friendship and not enmity.”

“True, it is foolish to think that you will not come to harm because you are a man of character. People who are blinded by ignorance and anger do not consider your character,” said the rat.

“Friendship with bad men is like a pot of clay easy to break but difficult to rejoin. With good men it is like pot of gold, difficult to break but easy to mend. I pledge that you will have no reason to fear danger from me,” said the crow.

Hiranyaka said, “I have no faith in pledges. don’t trust an enemy with whom you have made peace. Even if the hole is small, water seeping through it can sink a ship.

don’t trust a person untrustworthy  
Faith has its own limits  
The evil that trust brings  
Leaves you totally destroyed  
Him who is highly skeptical  
The mighty cannot put an end to  
Him who trusts others easily  
Even the weakest can kill.

After this long sermon, Laghupatanaka didn’t know how to reply. Hiranyaka, he thought, was a very knowledgeable being and that was a strong reason for him to seek his friendship. Turning to the rat, he said, “Seven words are enough to bring two good people together. We have already talked a lot, which makes us good friends. That’s why please believe what I say. If it is not possible, I will stay out and you can talk to me

from within your stronghold.”

Impressed by his sincerity, Hiranyaka said, “Okay, you should not step inside my fort.” When Laghupatanaka agreed to that condition, the two became friends and enjoyed their daily meetings and long talks. They helped each other, the crow bringing pieces of meat and relics of offerings to God at temples for the rat and the rat in turn bringing for Hiranyaka grains of paddy and food items. Thus they became great and inseparable friends.

## **2.Meeting a New Friend**

Hiranyaka, the mouse, and Laghupatanaka, the crow, became great friends. One day, the crow came calling on the mouse with eyes full of tears. Worried, the mouse asked,

“What’s the matter? Why are you so sad?”

“I am thoroughly fed up with this country. I want to go elsewhere,” replied the crow.

“But what is the reason for this sudden change of mind,” asked the mouse.

“There is a famine here. People are dying like locusts. No one is offering cooked rice for the peace of the dead. So, I don’t have food. Hunters are busy trapping birds in their nets. I have escaped narrowly. I don’t know when my turn will come. I want to leave this country before it comes,” said the crow.

“What are your travel plans then,” asked the mouse.

“There is a big lake in the middle of a vast forest in the south. I have a friend there, a turtle whose name is Mandharaka. He is a great host who will feed me with fish, pieces of meat etc. I will spend my time happily with him daily discussing small and big things in the world. I don’t want to die miserably in a hunter’s net.”

Laghupatanaka continued, “Elders have always said that they are happy who are fortunate not to witness the destruction of crops and the decline of the people. Nothing is impossible for a competent person. There is no land that does not respond to effort. For a scholar every country is his own country and there is no enemy for a sweet-tongued person. Learning and power are not the same. Remember that the king is respected only in his country but a scholar is honoured everywhere.”

Hiranyaka said, “If that is so, I will also follow you. I am also very sad.”

“Why are you sad?” asked the crow.

“It is a long story. I shall tell you when I reach your friend’s place,” said the mouse.

“But how can you come with me,” asked the crow. “I am a bird and can fly. You cannot do that,” said the crow.

“That is no problem. I will sit on your back and we can fly off,” suggested the mouse.

“That’s an idea. I will be doubly happy there because I have the company of the turtle and also yours. Come, get on to my back. We will fly together,” said the crow.

On a fine day, the crow with the mouse on his back flew to the great lake in the middle of the forest. His friend Mandharaka, the turtle, saw him with the mouse on his back and thought, “This crow is not an ordinary crow. It is better I hide from him.” The turtle immediately ducked under water. But the crow saw the turtle going down and understood that his friend did not recognize him. The crow then left the mouse at the bottom of a tree and flying to the top of it loudly addressed the turtle, “O Mandharaka, I am your friend Laghupatanaka. Come out and welcome me who has come to see an old friend after a long time.”

Recognizing his friend’s voice, Mandharaka came out of the water and with tears of joy in his eyes, said, “O Laghupatanaka, I am so happy you have come. Come and hug me. We are meeting after a long time and that’s why I could not immediately recognize you. You know the saying that you should not make friends with him whose power and pedigree are not known to you.”

The crow then came down from the tree and the two of them embraced each other in joy. They began telling each other about what happened in the long interval of their separation. The mouse, Hiranyaka, too came out of the hole he was hiding in, greeted the turtle and sat by the crow’s side. The turtle asked the crow, “O Laghupatanaka, who is this little friend of yours? Why did you bring him here on your back though he is your food.”

“He is my friend Hiranyaka. I can’t live without him. Just as you can’t count the stars in the sky and the sands on the seashore, I can’t recount his great qualities. He is fed up with this world. That is why he has followed me on my visit to you,” said the crow.

“But there should be some reason for his despair,” said the turtle. The crow replied, “I have asked him to tell me the reasons. He said he would tell us after meeting you.” Turning to the mouse, the crow asked him, “Now it is your turn to tell us why you are so fed up with the world.

Hiranyaka began telling his story.

### **3.The Hermit and The Mouse**

“In the southern city of Mahilaropya,” said Hiranyaka, “lived a hermit named Tamrachud in a Shiva temple on the outskirts of the city. Every day, he would go out into the city, collect alms and cook his food. After the meal, he would store whatever is left in his begging bowl and hang it to a peg and go to sleep. He would give

the leftovers to poor people in return for services rendered to the temple. They would every day wash it, clean it and decorate it with patterns of chalk.”

“One day, some of my relatives complained to me, “O lord, the hermit is storing the food in his bowl and hanging it high to a peg. We are not able to nibble at it. You alone can reach any place. Why should we go anywhere else when you are there? Let’s go to the hermit’s place and with your help feed ourselves.”

“Accompanied by my relatives, I went to the hermit’s place and springing at the bowl brought the stored food down. All of us then had a good meal. We repeated this act every day till the hermit found what we were doing. He brought a split bamboo and began striking the food bowl with it. That noise used to frighten us and we would spend the whole night waiting for a respite from this noise. But the hermit never stopped striking the bamboo.”

“Meanwhile, a visitor named Brihat came calling on the hermit. Tamrachud received him with great respect and did whatever he could to make the honoured guest happy. At night, the guest would relate to the hermit tales about his travels. But Tamrachud, busy scaring the mice with his bamboo, would not pay much attention to what his guest was narrating. In the middle of the story, the guest would ask him questions to which he would give indifferent replies.

“Angry with Tamrachud’s absent mindedness, the visitor told him, “Tamrachud, you are not a great friend of mine because you are not attentive to what I am telling you. I will leave your place tonight and seek shelter elsewhere. The elders have always said that you must not accept the hospitality of such a host who does not welcome you gladly, does not offer you a proper seat and does not make inquiries about your well-being.”

“Status has gone to your head. You do not any more care for my friendship. You do not know that this conduct will take you to hell. I am really sorry for what has happened to you. You have become vain and proud. I am leaving this temple at once,” Brihat said.

“Frightened at his visitor’s words, Tamrachud pleaded with him, “O worshipful guest, please don’t be harsh on me. I don’t have any friends other than you. Here is the reason why I was not attentive to your discourse on religion. There is this mouse, which every day steals my food however high I keep it. As a result, I am not able to feed the poor people who do the job of keeping the temple clean. The temple is now in a bad shape. To scare this culprit, I have to keep tapping the food bowl with the bamboo stick I keep with me. This is why I was not able to pay attention to the great and learned tales you have been relating.”

“Realizing what really was the problem, the visitor asked the hermit, “Do you know where the mouse lives?”

“Sir, I have no idea,” said Tamrachud.

“The visitor said, “This mouse must have stored a lot of food somewhere. It is this plenty that gives him the energy to jump so high and eat all your food. When a man earns a lot of wealth, that pile of money increases his strength and confidence.”

“Brihat continued, “There is an explanation for everything in this world. There is a reason for Shandili trying

to exchange husked sesame seeds in return for degraded sesame seeds.”

“Tamrachud asked Brihat to tell him who this Shandili was and the story of sesame seeds.”

## **4. Shandili and Sesame Seeds**

“Brihat began telling the story. "I sought the hospitality of a Brahmin one day for sacred ceremonies connected with the monsoon season. He was kind enough to offer me space in his house and in return I used to render services he found useful in his rituals. As this arrangement continued, one fine morning I heard the Brahmin and his wife Shandili discussing what they should do for the day. The husband told his wife, “Today is the time when the Sun begins his northward journey and a time when the rich and pious people offer gifts to Brahmins. I am going to the next village to receive the offerings. You will do well to invite a Brahmin as guest today and offer him food in the name of the Sun.”

“The wife flew into a rage and told him, “How can I offer anything to anyone in your poverty-stricken house? Aren’t you ashamed to make such a suggestion? I have wasted my entire life as your wife. I haven’t tasted a good meal so far even on a single day. Nor do I have any jewellery.”

“Though taken aback, the Brahmin quickly recovered and said, “Such words are not becoming of you. The learned say that if you share even half of your meal with a mendicant, you will get whatever you wish in life. What good the rich reap by liberally giving away, the poor get by parting with even a cent they have. The giver deserves to be served even if he is poor. But a rich miser is shunned. It is like the well and the sea. People drink the water from the well and not the sea. We must always give to him who deserves. Greed can only destroy a person.”

“How is it?” asked the wife.

“The husband then told Shandili the story of the hunter and the greedy jackal.

A hunter went to the forest in search of a kill. Spotting a well-fed boar he took his bow and aimed a sharp arrow at the boar. Though severely wounded, the boar made a wild charge at the hunter goring him to death. The boar too died later from the wounds inflicted by the hunter.”

“Meanwhile, a hungry jackal, not knowing that he was doomed to die, came on the scene where the bodies of the hunter and the boar lay. He was thrilled by the sight of so much food and thought, “God has favored me today. That’s why he has sent so much food for me. It is not without reason that the learned have said that he who has done a good deed in a previous birth is rewarded in this birth even if he does not make any effort. This great feast is certainly the result of some good I have done in a previous birth. But a man must enjoy his wealth in small doses. Therefore, I will begin my meal with this gut of the bow.”

The jackal went close to the body of the hunter and began nibbling at the gut of the bow. The gut suddenly snapped with great force killing the jackal in the end. “That’s why,” the Brahmin told his wife, “Haven’t you heard that a man’s longevity, destiny, wealth, learning and death are predetermined by God even as the child

is in the womb of the mother.”

“If that is the case,” Shandili said, “I have some unhusked sesame seeds in the house. I will make a cake from it and serve it to a Brahmin.” Happy at his wife’s words, the Brahmin left for the next village. The wife soaked the seeds in warm water, removed their husk and left them on a cloth to dry in the sun. As the Brahmin’s wife was busy with other chores, a dog came and peed on the seeds left on the cloth to dry.”

“When the wife saw what the dog had done, she felt miserable that all her effort had gone in vain. She thought that nobody could undo God’s will. She thought, “These seeds cannot now be given away to anyone. I will see if I can exchange them for unhusked seeds. Anybody will agree to this swap.”

“Brihat continued his story, “The Brahmin’s wife came to the same house which I was visiting to accept offerings. She offered to exchange the husked seeds to anyone ready to accept them. Then the woman in the house came out and was ready to accept the husked seeds from the Brahmin’s wife. But her son intervened and told her, “Mother, these seeds are not good. Why should anyone give away good husked seeds for the raw seeds? There must be some reason for it.” The housewife at once gave up the idea of taking husked seeds from the Brahmin’s wife.”

“After Brihat completed the story, he asked Tamrachud, “Do you know the route he (Hiranyaka) takes to come here?”

“I have no idea,” said Tamrachud.

“Have you any tool to dig?” asked the visitor.

“Yes, I have a dibble with me.”

“In that case, let us follow the mouse trail before it is erased,” said the visitor.

Hiranyaka resumed his account and said, “Listening to the conversation between Tamrachud and Brihat, I thought that my end had come. Just as he had found my food store, he is capable of tracking my fort. Learned men can measure the strength of the rival by just looking at him. I decided immediately to take a new route and was on my way with the other mice when a fat cat sighted us. He immediately pounced on us and killed a number of my retinue.”

“Excepting me, those of the bloodied mice who escaped being killed by the cat took the same old route to the fort. The visitor saw the trail of blood the fleeing mice left behind and following it reached my fort. There, Brihat and Tamrachud dug and found the food store. The visitor told Tamrachud, “Here is the secret of the mouse’s energy. Now, you can sleep in peace.” Then they took the store to the temple, the home of Tamrachud.”

“I went back to where I had stored food. It was now like a desert. Without food, the spot was a ghastly scene. I did not know where to go and what to do to get back my peace of mind. Somehow, I spent the day in

sorrow and when it was dawn went to the temple followed by what remained of my retinue. Alerted by the noise we made, Tamrachud again began striking the food bowl with the bamboo. Brihat, the visitor, asked him why he was doing so. Tamrachud told him about our return.”

“The visitor laughed and told Tamrachud, “Friend, don’t be afraid now. The mouse has lost his energy. It cannot do any mischief now.” When I heard this, I was angry and tried again to jump at the food bowl and crashed to the ground before I could reach the bowl.”

“I was dejected by this failure. But my sadness increased when I heard my retinue telling each other that I was no more capable of earning food for them and they should immediately give up serving me. I then realized the importance of riches and decided to somehow steal it back from Tamrachud. When I made another attempt, the visitor saw me and banged the bamboo on my head. I somehow managed to escape.”

“Elders have always said that man gets what he is destined to. Even God cannot alter destiny. So, I stopped brooding over what has happened because what is ours can never become others”.

“Explain that to us,” asked Laghpatanaka and Mandharaka.

## **5. Story of The Merchant’s Son**

“Sagargupta was a merchant living in one of the country’s big cities. He had a son, who, one day purchased a book whose only content was a single verse. The verse read:

“Man gets what is in his destiny  
Even God cannot prevent it  
To me it makes no difference  
What’s mine can never become others.”

“What is the price of this book,” the father asked.

“Hundred rupees,” said the son.

The father flew into a rage and said, “You are a fool. You have paid hundred rupees for a book that has only one verse. You can never come up in life. Leave my house at once. It has no place for you.”

“Thrown out of the house, the boy went to another city and began fresh life there. One day, a neighbor asked him, “What is your native place and what is your name?”

The boy replied, “Man gets what he is destined to.” He gave the same answer to whoever asked for his name.

From that day onwards, people began calling him Praptavya, meaning the same line he was reciting to indicate his name.

“The summer came and the city was celebrating it with a big fair. One of the visitors to the fair was the city’s princess Chandravati and her maids. Chandravati was young and beautiful. As she was making the rounds of the fair, she saw an extremely handsome warrior and immediately fell in love with him. She told one of her maids, “It is your job to see that both of us meet.”

The maid ran to the warrior and told him, “I have a message for you from our princess. She says she will die if you do not meet her today.”

“But tell me where and how I can see her. How can I enter the harem?” asked the warrior.

The maid told him, “Come to the palace and you will see a rope hanging from the high wall. Climb and jump over the wall with the help of the rope.”

“All right, I will try to do it tonight,” said the warrior.

When the night came, the warrior lost his nerve and thought, “O this is an improper thing to do. The elders have said, “He who has liaison with the daughter of a teacher, wife of a friend or of a master or of a servant commits the sin of killing a Brahmin. Also, don’t do what brings you a bad name or what denies you a place in heaven.” In the end, the warrior decided not to meet the princess and stayed back at home.

“Coming out for a walk in the night, Prapta noticed the rope outside the royal palace and curious to know what it is, went up the rope that took him inside the princess’ bedroom. The princess mistook him for the warrior and served him dinner and with great ecstasy told Prapta, “I have fallen in love with you at the very first sight. I am yours. You are in my heart and nobody except you can be my husband. Why don’t you say something.”

“He replied, “Man gets what he is destined to.” The princess immediately realized that this man was not the warrior she saw in the day and asked him to leave the palace at once. She made sure that he climbed back the way he came. Prapta left the place and slept that night in a rundown temple.

“The sheriff of the city came to the same temple where he had arranged to meet a woman of vice. He saw Prapta sleeping there and to keep his meeting a secret, he asked Prapta who he was. Prapta recited the verse about destiny. The sheriff then said, “Sir, this is a bad place to sleep. You can go to my house and sleep there tonight in my place.” The merchant’s son agreed to the proposal.

“At the sheriff’s house, his young and beautiful daughter Vinayawati had asked her lover to come and meet her secretly there in the night. When Prapta came there following the sheriff’s advice, Vinayawati mistook him in the darkness for her secret lover. She arranged a feast for him and married him according to Gandharva tradition. Noticing that Prapta did not utter a word, the sheriff’s daughter asked him to say something. Prapta recited his usual verse. Vinayawati realized her mistake and asked him to leave at once.

“As Prapta once again took to the street, he saw a marriage procession entering the city led by the bridegroom named Varakirti. He joined the procession. The bride was the daughter of a very wealthy merchant of the city. This procession reached the wedding hall sometime before the scheduled time for the wedding.

“The bride’s father set up a costly and gaily decorated dais for the wedding. The bridal party came to the scene of wedding a bit in advance. In the meantime, an elephant went berserk and killing the mahout headed for the marriage venue. The bridegroom and his party joined the frightened people who were fleeing the scene of marriage.

“Prapta happened to see the frightened bride alone and abandoned on the dais shivering in fear. He jumped on to the dais and told the merchant’s daughter that she need not fear for her life and that he would save her at any cost. With great courage and presence of mind he approached the elephant with a stick and began to threaten him. The elephant luckily left the scene. Prapta took the bride’s hand into his as a token of assurance.

“When peace returned, Varakirti and his friends and relatives also returned to the dais and seeing the bride’s hand in the hand of a stranger, addressed the merchant, “Sir, you have pledged the hand of your daughter to me. But I see that you have given her away to someone else. This is improper.” The merchant replied, “My son, I don’t know anything. I also ran away from the dais. Let me ask my daughter.”

The daughter told her father, “This brave man saved me from the mad elephant. He is my savior. I won’t marry anyone but him.” It was now dawn and hearing the commotion the royal princess also came to the wedding venue to see what happened. The sheriff’s daughter also came there learning what had happened. The king also came there and asked Prapta to tell him everything without fear. Prapta as usual recited the verse.

This verse rang a bell in the princess head. She remembered what happened in the night and thought “Even God cannot undo what is destined.” The sheriff’s daughter also recalled the events of the night and thought “There is nothing to regret nor cause for surprise.” Listening to what Prapta said, the merchant’s daughter also thought “nobody can take away what destiny gives me.”

“The king now knew everything and the mystery of the verse. He then gave away his daughter in marriage to Prapta and also a thousand villages as gift. He also crowned Prapta as the prince. The sheriff also married his daughter to Prapta. The merchant’s son lived happily ever after with his wives and parents.

Hiranyaka, the mouse, thus ended his story of troubles and said:

“Even God cannot undo  
What is destined  
There is nothing to regret  
Nor cause for surprise  
Nobody can take away  
What destiny gives me.”

"I am disillusioned. That is why my friend Laghupatanaka brought me to you," said the mouse.

Addressing the mouse, Mandharaka, the turtle said, "O Hiranyaka, the crow is your true friend. Though he was hungry and you were his meal, he did not kill you. On the other hand, he brought you here on his back. You must make a friend of him who is uncorrupted by wealth and who stands by you in time of trouble."

The turtle continued, "Therefore, stay here without fear or hesitation. Forget the loss of wealth and shelter. Remember, the shade of a passing cloud, friendship of the wicked, a cooked meal, youth and wealth do not stay for long. Learned men are never attached to wealth. It does not come with you even for a few feet in your last journey. There is a lot of pain in earning money and protecting it. Money, therefore, brings grief."

"What is not ours will not stay with us. Haven't you heard the story of Somilaka who earned a lot of wealth but could not keep it?"

"How is that?" asked Hiranyaka.

Mandharaka began telling Hiranyaka the story of the unlucky weaver.

## **6.The Unlucky Weaver**

Somilaka was a weaver living on the edge of the city. He was an expert at making fine garments worthy of kings and princes. He enjoyed the patronage of the nobility. Despite all this, he was poorer than those weavers who were making coarse cloth for the common people. Worried at his condition, he told his wife, "Look dear, how rich these weavers of coarse cloth have become. There is something wrong with this place. I am not a success here. I will go elsewhere."

"No dear. It is not true that you can be successful elsewhere. Our luck is linked to what we have done in a previous birth. If you have done a good deed in your previous birth, you will reap the harvest in this birth without your effort. If you don't have it in your destiny, you will not get it even with effort. Just as sun and shade are inseparable, cause and effect are also linked to each other."

Somilaka did not agree with her. He said, "Without effort, you can achieve nothing. Without cause there is no effect. Even if you get a good meal as a result of a good deed in the past, you have to use your hand to eat it. Wealth comes to a person who toils. There is no point in chanting the name of God. You must do your bit first. If you are not successful despite your effort, you are not to blame. Therefore, I have decided to go abroad."

Ignoring his wife's pleas, Somilaka left his place and reached Vardhamanapuram. Working day and night, he earned three hundred gold sovereigns within three years. He thought he should go home now and started the homeward trek. At dusk he found himself in the middle of a forest. Wild animals began their hunt for prey. The weaver climbed a tall tree and went to sleep on a big branch. He saw a dream:

The God of Action and the God of Destiny were talking to each other. Destiny asked Action, “The weaver is not destined to live in luxury. Why did you give him three hundred sovereigns?” Action replied, “I have to give to those who try and toil. Whether the weaver can keep it or not is in your hands.”

The dream jolted the weaver. He looked into his bag and found the sovereigns missing. Heart-broken, Somilaka began crying, “Oh I have lost what I have earned in three years with great effort. I have become a poor man again. I cannot go home in this condition and show my face to my wife.” He saw no point in brooding over what has happened and decided to go to Vardhamanapuram and try again.

This time, he could collect five hundred sovereigns in one year. He stored all this money in a small bag and began his homeward journey. When it was sundown, he had already entered a forest. This time, he did not sleep, afraid that he would lose his money. He continued to walk through the forest. This time also he saw those two persons he saw earlier in his dream coming in his direction.

They repeated the same conversation about God rewarding a hardworking person and destiny denying it. He immediately looked into his bag and found there was no gold in it. This time Somilaka lost his courage and thought he should commit suicide. He made a strong rope with the fibers he found in the forest. He tied one end of the rope to a high branch of the tree and made a noose of the other end. Everything was ready for his suicide when he heard a voice in the skies:

“O Somilaka, don’t be rash. I am destiny who took away your wealth. I cannot give you more than what is necessary for your bare needs. Not a single cent more. But I am pleased with your adventurous spirit. Ask for a boon. I shall give it.”

“Please give me lots of wealth,” said the weaver.

“What do you do with so much money,” asked the voice.

The weaver replied, “People serve him who is rich even if he is a miser.”

“In that case, go back to Vardhamanapuram where two wealthy merchants, Guptadhana and Upabhuktadhana are doing business. After studying them well, decide who you want to become, Guptadhana, the man who earns a lot of money but does not spend a cent of it or Upabhuktadhana, the man who earns but also enjoys the wealth he has amassed.”

Somilaka followed their advice and went back to Vardhamanapuram reaching the place in the evening after a tiring journey. With great difficulty he traced Guptadhana’s house and entered it despite resistance from the merchant’s family. When the time for dinner came, the merchant grudgingly gave food to Somilaka, suggesting that he was an unwanted guest. The weaver found a corner in the house where he could sleep.

Somilaka again had the same dream in which Action and Destiny were debating Guptadhana giving food to him.

Destiny told Action, “You have made Guptadhana give food to Somilaka.”

Action said, “You cannot blame me. I had to ensure that Somalika was fed. It is for you to decide who deserved what.”

Next day, Destiny saw to it that Guptadhana had an attack of cholera and had to miss his meal. In this manner what was given away was saved.

Later, Somilaka visited Upabhuktadhana’s house where the host welcomed him with great love and respect. The weaver had a good meal and slept. He had a dream as usual, the same two figures appearing in the dream.

Destiny told Action, “O Action, the host has spent a lot of money to entertain Somilaka. He even borrowed to make the guest happy. It is not in his destiny to have surplus. How will he repay what he has borrowed?”

Action replied, “My job is to see Somilaka got what he deserved. If Upabhuktadhana crossed the limits in entertaining his guest, that is not my fault. It is for you to decide what should be done.”

Next day, a messenger from the royal household came to Upabhuktadhana and gave him a big sum of money on behalf of the king.

Somilaka thought, “It is better to be like Upabhuktadhana. He enjoys life with whatever he has. What’s the use of being rich but miserly? I will better be Upabhuktadhana.” Pleased, the Gods showered on him the wealth that he needed to enjoy life.

## **7.The Rescue of a Deer**

Mandharaka ended the story of Somilaka telling Hiranyaka and Laghupatanaka that a rich person who does not spend money is as poor as any poor person can be. Not being able to enjoy is common to both the poor and the miserly rich. Nothing on this earth is greater than charity and there is no greater enemy than miserliness.

The crow then advised Hiranyaka, “Listen to what the turtle is saying. Elders have said that it is easier to get friends who talk sweetly but difficult to find friends who venture to tell you the truth however bitter it is. The latter alone deserve to be called friends.

The crow and the mouse put a brake to their conversation when they saw a frightened deer darting towards the lake. The crow flew to the top of a tree. The mouse scampered into his hole and the turtle sank into the water. From the treetop, the crow could see the deer now clearly and told his other friends, “Friends, he is

only a deer who is thirsty. These footfalls are not those of a man.”

The turtle replied, “The deer is panting. It seems someone is chasing him. He has not come to quench his thirst. Surely, some hunter might be after him. Please go to the top of the tree and look if you can find any hunter.”

Assured that these are friends only, the deer named Chitranga, now said, “Friend, you have guessed correctly. I have escaped the arrow of the hunter and reached here with difficulty. I am in search of a shelter the hunter cannot reach. Please show me a place safe from the hunter.”

Mandharaka, the turtle, said, “the scriptures have mentioned two ways of escaping danger. One is to use your muscle power and another is to run as fast as you can. Now, run into the forest before the hunter could come.”

“That is not necessary,” said Laghupatanaka, the crow.

“I have seen the hunters taking a good catch of food and going the way they came. O Mandharaka, you can now come out of the water.”

With Chitranga, the deer, they became now four friends, happily spending time in each other’s company. The learned have said that when you have plenty of cordial conversation, to be happy you do not need a woman. The man who has no store of good words is not capable of uttering them.

One day, Chitranga had not come when the other three had gathered at the lakeside for their daily discourse. They thought, “Poor Chitranga has not come so far. Is it possible that a lion or a hunter has killed him? Or, is it possible that he has fallen into a pit?” Well-wishers naturally suspect the worst when their near and dear ones are not seen for a while.

Mandharaka told the crow, “Friend, you know neither Hiranyaka nor I can move fast. You alone can fly and see more things than we can. Please go immediately and find out what is happening to our friend.”

The crow did not fly too long before he saw Chitranga trapped in a hunter’s net near a small pond. Moved by his plight, the crow said, “Friend, what happened to you?” Trying to check tears in his eyes, the deer said, “Death is chasing me. It is good that you came to see me.”

The crow said, “Friend, don’t lose courage when we are here. I will rush back and bring Hiranyaka here.” Laghupatanaka flew fast to where the mouse and the turtle were anxiously waiting for him to come and tell them what happened to the deer. On hearing his account, Hiranyaka immediately decided that he should go and bite off the strings of the hunter’s net.

He got on to the back of the crow and together they flew to the spot where the deer lay helplessly in the hunter’s net. When the deer saw his friends rushing to his aid, he realized how necessary it was to collect good friends and how nobody could overcome troubles without the help of good friends.

Hiranyaka asked the deer, “How did you, such a learned being, get into this hole?” The deer replied, “Friend, this is not a time for a debate. The hunter may come any time. First, get me out of this net.” The mouse laughed and said, “Why are you scared of the hunter when I am here? But tell me how did you let yourself trapped in this way?”

The deer replied, “Friend, when luck is not with you, you will lose discretion. As the elders say when death is lurking for you and when wickedness overtakes you, your thoughts too take a crooked path. Nobody can save you from what God has in store for you.”

As they were discussing their plan to escape, Laghupatanaka and Hiranyaka saw that the turtle also was coming. The crow said, “Look, this slow-footed guy is coming. Neither can we save the deer or ourselves. See this fellow’s foolishness. If the hunter comes, I can fly away and you can beat a fast retreat. But how can this turtle escape?”

The hunter came when they were debating this point. The mouse did a fast job of biting off the strings of the net and the deer rushed into the thick forest. The mouse too disappeared into the nearest hole. But the poor turtle was slowly plodding its way to safety. But the hunter saw him and bound him to his bow and slung it across his shoulder and began going home.

Hiranyaka saw this from a distance and began reflecting, “Troubles do not come in singles. I have already lost everything I have. I have lost my relatives and my retinue. Now, this loss of a great friend! We come close to each other only to part. Everything in this world is temporary. Yet, I am grateful to God, for, he has created this sweet relationship we call friendship.”

Meanwhile, the deer and the crow came, disturbing the mouse’s reverie. Recovering, Hiranyaka said, “Let’s not brood over the past. Let us first look for a way to rescue the turtle.” The crow said, “Listen, and do as I tell you. Chitranga will go to a small lake on the hunter’s way taking him home. He should pretend he is dead and I will sit on his head and pretend pecking his eyes. Seeing the motionless deer, the hunter will then rest the turtle on the ground and reach for the deer. Hiranyaka should at once reach the turtle and bite off the strings binding him to the bow.”

“All right, we will do as you say,” said the mouse and the deer. Meanwhile, the hunter, seeing the motionless deer, thought it was dead. Leaving the turtle on the ground, he came to the deer. The deer at once ran away and the crow flew away. At the other end, the mouse bit off the strings binding the turtle to the bow. The turtle entered water and the mouse ran to his hole.

Disappointed, the hunter returned to where he had rested the turtle. When he found that the turtle had escaped, he cried bitterly and went home. After making sure that they were far away from the hunter’s reach, the four friends gathered and celebrated their reunion.

Concluding his discourse, Hiranyaka said, “It is a lesson to mankind on the value of friendship. One should not try to cheat friends. The elders have said that he who is faithful to his friends shall never taste defeat”. Thus we come to the end of the second part of Panchatantra called Gaining Friends.

## Third Strategy: Of Crows And Owls

*This third part of the Panchatantra begins with a verse:*

*Trust not even a close friend  
Who earlier was your enemy.*

*This is the story of how the crows burnt the home of a trusting pack of owls.*

Once upon a time all the crows in a town called Mahilaropya made a huge banyan tree their home. The tree had hundreds of branches. Their king, known as Meghavarna, set up strong fortifications to ensure security for his brood. Similarly, the owls of the town made a nearby cave their colony. They also had a king, called Arimardana, who ruled with the help of a strong and cunning army.

The owl king kept a close eye on the banyan tree and on account of previous enmity killed every night any crow he sighted outside the tree. Slowly, the owl king managed to kill all crows that could be seen outside the tree. That is why wise men had always said that whoever neglects disease or the enemy perishes in their hands.

Alarmed at the loss of his flock, Meghavarna assembled his ministers and asked them to prepare a plan to fight the owls. He placed before them six strategies and asked them to name the best of the six. The first minister suggested compromise as a tactic because one had first to survive to gather strength and later destroy the enemy. The elders have said,

“Bend to the enemy when he is strong  
Attack him when he is vulnerable.  
Don’t wage a war if it doesn’t bring  
Power, or wealth or friendship.”

The second minister ruled out compromise and offered trickery as a formula. He cited the example of how Bheema in the Mahabharata had killed Keechaka in the disguise of a woman. He also quoted elders saying,

“Never accept peace with  
An enemy who is not just  
For, he will break his word  
And stab you in the back.”

The minister referred to the learned as saying that it is easy to defeat an enemy who is a tyrant, a miser, an idler, a liar, a coward and a fool. Words of peace will only inflame an enemy blinded by anger.

The third minister said, “O lord, our enemy is not only strong but also wicked. Neither compromise nor trickery will work with him. Exile is the best way. We shall wait and strike when the enemy becomes weak.”

“Neither peace nor bravado  
Can subdue a strong enemy  
Where these two do not work  
Flight is the best alternative.”

The fourth minister opposed all these tactics and suggested the king of crows should stay in his own fort, mobilize support from friends and then attack the enemy. He quoted the learned as saying,

“A king who flees is like  
A cobra without fangs.  
A crocodile in water  
Can haul an elephant.”

Therefore, the minister said, “An ally is what wind is to fire. The king must stay where he is and gather allies for support.”

The fifth minister offered a strategy similar to that of the fourth and said, “Stay in your fort and seek the help of an ally stronger than the enemy. It also pays to form an axis of less strong allies.”

After listening to all the ministers, Meghavarna turned to the wisest and senior most among his counsels, Sthirajeevi, and asked him for his advice. The wise man told Meghavarna,

“Oh, king of crows, this is the time to use duplicity to finish the enemy. You can thus keep your throne.”

“But learned sir, we have no idea of where Arimardana lives and of what his failings are.”

“That is not difficult. Send your spies and gather information on the key men advising the king of owls. The next step is to divide them by setting one against the other.”

“Tell me why did the crows and owls fall out in the first place,” asked Meghavarna.

Sthirajeevi said, “That is another story. Long, long ago all the birds in the jungle—swans, parrots, cranes, nightingales, owls, peacocks, pigeons, pheasants, sparrows, crows etc.—assembled and expressed anguish that their king Garuda had become indifferent to their welfare and failed to save them from poachers. Believing that people without a protector were like passengers in a ship without a captain, they decided to elect a new king. They chose an owl as their king.

As the owl was being crowned, a crow flew into the assembly and asked them why and what they were celebrating. When the birds told him the details, the crow told them, the owl is a wicked and ugly bird and it is unwise to choose another leader when Garuda is still alive. To crush enemies it is enough if you mentioned Garuda's name or for that matter the name of anyone who is great. That was how the hares managed to live happily by taking the name of the moon."

The birds asked the visiting crow, "Tell us how this has happened."

"I will tell you," said the crow and began telling them the story of the hares and the elephants.

## **1. Elephants and Hares**

Once upon a time a great elephant called Chaturdanta ruled over a vast stretch of forest as the king of his subjects. They were not happy because for several years there had been no rains and all the lakes, tanks, ponds and water holes in the forest became arid. The subjects went in a delegation to the king and appealed to him, "O mighty king, there is no water to drink in the forest. Many of the younger ones are on the verge of extinction. Please look for a lake full of water and save us."

The king told them, "I know of a hidden lake that is always full of water. Let us go there and save ourselves."

The elephants then set off for the hidden lake and after plodding through the jungle for five nights reached the great lake. They colonized the land around the lake and once again started their revelry in water. But as the elephants daily marched their way to the lake, they trampled upon hundreds of hares that made the land around the lake their home. Hundreds of them died and thousands more were maimed.

One day the hares assembled to chalk out a plan to save themselves from the menace of the wayward elephants. An older one among them said, "these elephants will come every day and every day many of us will die. We must find a solution to this problem."

A wiser one among them said, "The great Manu had said that it was better to abandon a person to save the whole community, abandon the community to save the village and abandon the village to save the country. Even if the land were fertile, a wise king would abandon it if it were in the interests of his subjects."

But the other hares protested and said, "How can we do that? We have been living here for several generations. Let us find an alternative. Let us see if we can scare the elephants by some means."

Some of them said, "We know of a trick that works with the elephants. However, we need a very intelligent person."

Pressed to reveal the plan, they said, "Our ruler Vijayadatta lives in the lunar sphere. Let us send a messenger to the elephant king. The plan is to tell the elephant king that the Moon does not like the elephants visiting the lake for water because they are killing and maiming hundreds of hares. The Moon has declared the lake out of bounds for the elephants."

Some others agreed and said, “Yes, there is a hare whose name is Lambakarna. He is an expert negotiator. He can do the job with success.”

After a lot of discussions, the hares decided to send Lambakarna to the elephant king. Addressing the king, Lambakarna said, “O heartless king, I live in the lunar sphere. The Moon has sent me as envoy to you. This lake belongs to the Moon. He has forbidden all of you from drinking water from the lake. So, go back.”

“But where is your lord, the Moon,” asked the elephant king.

Lambakarna said, “He is very much in this lake. He has come to console the survivors of your rampage.”

“Then, let me see him,” the elephant king challenged the envoy.

“Come alone with me, I will show you.”

“Let us go then,” said the elephant.

Lambakarna took the elephant king one night to the lake and showed the reflection of the Moon in the lake and said,

“Here he is, our King, the Moon. He is lost in meditation. Move quietly and salute him. Otherwise, you will disturb his meditation and bring upon you his wrath.”

Taking him for the real Moon, the elephant king saluted him and left quietly. The hares breathed a sigh of relief and lived happily ever after.

The crow told the birds gathered to elect a leader, “that is why it is important to choose a wise and experienced person as your leader. If you do not, listen to this story of how a hare and a partridge destroyed themselves because they chose a wicked mediator.”

“Very interesting,” said the birds and asked the visiting crow to tell them the account of the mediator.

The visiting crow began narrating the story:

## **2.The Cunning Mediator**

A sparrow was living in the hollow of a big tree that I had made my home. His name was Kapinjala. We became good friends and used to spend our time discussing characters in our literature and the unusual things we saw in our travels. One day, my friend left the tree with other sparrows in search of food and did not

return even after nightfall. I began to worry. “What happened to him? Did any hunter take him away? He never leaves my company even for a while.”

Days passed without any trace of my friend Kapinjala. One fine morning, a hare named Sighragha, came and silently occupied the hollow that my friend made his home. It did not worry me because there was no word about Kapinjala and I had lost all hopes of his return. But one day, he returned looking healthier than he was when he had left and found that the hare had taken his place.

Kapinjala told the hare, “O hare, what you have done is improper. You have displaced me. Leave the place immediately.”

Sighragha hit back saying, “What are you talking? This is my place. Haven’t you heard the elders saying that nobody has rights over a public well, a temple, a pond and a tree? Whoever enjoys land for more than ten years also becomes its owner. That needs no evidence or documents of proof. This place is not yours any more.”

The sparrow told him, “Oh, you are quoting legal scriptures! Let us go to an expert in law and ethics. We will abide by his ruling.”

The hare agreed to this proposal and both of them went in search of an expert. Curious to see what would happen, I also followed them. Meanwhile, word about their quarrel had reached a wicked and wild cat. Knowing the route that the hare and the sparrow would take, the cat set up a camp on the way. He spread a mat of grass on the ground and went into a posture of meditation. Facing the sun and raising his hands in worship, the cat began reciting scriptures,

“This world has no essence. Life is passing. All liaisons with lovers are like a dream. Your ties with the family are illusory. There is no alternative to following the right path. The learned have said,”

“This wretched body will soon perish  
Material wealth is not permanent  
Death is knocking at your door  
Free thyself from earthly chains  
He who abandons the right path  
Is the same as the living dead.”

“I will end this long discourse and tell you in a nutshell what the right path is. Doing good to others is virtue. Tormenting others is vice. This is the essence of our philosophy. I am in the service of God and have given up all desires. I will not do you any harm. After hearing your account, I will decide who among you is the rightful owner of the place in the tree. But I am now very old and cannot hear you properly. So, please come close to me and narrate your story.”

When the poor and innocent sparrow and hare came within the reach of the cat, he pounced on them and

grabbed the sparrow in his teeth and slashed the body of the hare with his jaws and killed them.

The visiting crow then told the birds, “That is why I tell you if you rest your faith in this wicked and blind owl, you will meet the same end as the hare and the sparrow.” The birds then dispersed, deciding to discuss the matter again carefully before electing the owl as the king.

Meanwhile, the owl was sitting restlessly on the throne waiting for his coronation.

He asked his wife Krikalika, “What is all this delay in crowning me.”

The wife told him, “My lord, it is this crow which has sabotaged the coronation. All the birds have dispersed. Only this crow is lingering here. Come, let us go. I will take you home.”

Furious, the owl shouted at the crow, “You wicked crow, what harm have I done to you? You have wrecked the coronation. This is enough reason that from today there shall be enmity between owls and crows. One can heal wounds inflicted on the body but not the heart.”

Dejected, the owl went home with his wife.

The crow began reflecting, “Oh, what a foolish thing have I done? Unnecessarily, I have made enemies. I should not have advised the birds not to elect the owl as the king. Elders have aptly said,

“Words out of tune with times  
Words that bring grief in the end  
Words that bring pain to others  
Are, any day, as good as poison.”

Regretting what he had said and done, the visiting crow also went home. This is how enmity began between the owls and the crows.

After listening to the story, Meghavarna asked Sthirajeevi, “What should we do in such a situation? Sthirajeevi, the wise crow, told him, “There is a strategy better than the six I had already told you. With its help, I will myself go and conquer the owl king. The learned have said that men with great common sense and a little bit of cunning can subdue stronger enemies like the tricksters who cheated the gullible Brahmin of his lamb.”

On Meghavarna’s request, Sthirajeevi began telling him the Brahmin’s story.

### 3.The Brahmin and The Crooks

Mitra Sarma was a Brahmin living in a small village. He used to daily worship Fire. It was the month of Magha (February). The sky was full of clouds and it had already started raining. Sarma left for a neighboring village at that time to seek the gift of a sacrificial lamb from some rich man. He called on a well-to-do man in the village and requested him to make him a gift of a healthy lamb for sacrifice to Gods. The wealthy man gave him one of the well-fed lambs he had.

Carrying the lamb on his shoulders, the Brahmin began his homeward journey. Three crooks, very hungry and emaciated, crossed his path and seeing the healthy lamb on the Brahmin's shoulders thought, "Ah, God has sent us good food. Let us trick the Brahmin into parting with it and free us from hunger and cold." At once, they began to act.

One of them changed into a disguise, and overtaking the Brahmin by another route, stopped him and said, "O what a fool you are? Such a great worshipper of Fire, why are you carrying this dog on your shoulders? This will bring you ridicule. Don't you know that it is a sin to touch a dog, or a rooster, or a donkey?"

The Brahmin lost his temper and said, "You stupid fellow, are you blind? Why do you call a lamb a dog?"

The first crook replied, "Don't be angry, if you think he is not a dog, please carry on. I have no objection."

The Brahmin hardly walked a little distance when the second crook greeted him and said,

"O respected sir, it is highly regrettable that you are carrying a dead calf on your shoulders, however dear it is to you. The man who touches dead animals or birds has to undergo purification rites."

The Brahmin challenged him, "Are you too blind? This is a live sacrificial lamb and you say he is a dead calf."

The second crook said, "All right, sir. Please excuse me. I am an ignorant fool. Do as it pleases you."

Now it was the turn of the third crook to cross the Brahmin's path.

Turning to the Brahmin, the crook said, "Sir, it is highly improper. You are carrying a donkey on your shoulders. This is not done. The elders have said he who touches a donkey, knowingly or otherwise, has to take a bath fully dressed. So, please leave him before anybody notices it."

Thinking that he was really carrying a donkey, the poor Brahmin threw the lamb to the ground and went home. Sthirajeevi, continuing his advice to Meghavarna, said,

"There is hardly any person

Who is not misled by  
The servility of a new servant or  
The sweet words of a guest or  
The mock tears of a wily woman.”

“Also, remember not to quarrel with weak men when they are united because they cannot be defeated. See, for example, how a deadly snake becomes prey of a united army of ants. That is why I want to tell you a few words of caution. Follow them.”

“We shall do as you command us,” said Meghavarna.

Sthirajeevi then began revealing his plan, “Apart from the four strategies I had told you, there is a fifth one. In the presence of everyone, abuse me and punish me branding me as the friend of your enemy. That will convince the spies of our enemy that you don’t trust me any more. Bring some blood and spray it on my body. Then exile to the Rishyamooka hills.”

“I shall remain here bruised and when the enemy comes, I will try to earn his mercy and trust by blaming you. You stay in the hills till I find their fort and give you a signal when all the owls are sleeping in the day. Then you can come and with the help of your army kill all the owls. This plan is the result of great thought. We have no alternative.”

On Meghavarna approving the plan, Sthirajeevi started a mock fight with the king of crows. The king’s men and others, mistaking it for a real duel, were ready to kill Sthirajeevi when Meghavarna told them, “Don’t interfere. Go away. I will have the pleasure of punishing this unfaithful fellow.” Meghavarna then pretended to attack Sthirajeevi with his beak and doused him in blood he brought with him and left for the hills.

Then Krikalika, wife of the pretender who was spying on the crow camp, carried this news of the assault on minister Sthirajeevi and the king’s departure for the hills, to the owl king Arimardana. Soon after sunset, the owl king, accompanied by his ministers and followers, set out to kill all the crows. They reached the tree, home of the crows, and surrounded it.

Not finding a single crow there and happy for that reason, Arimardana told his men to look for the crows so that they could chase them and kill them. Meanwhile, Sthirajeevi, who suffered mock injuries, began weakly moaning to attract the attention of the owls.

When the owls saw this and rushed to kill him, he pleaded, “Sir, my name is Sthirajeevi and I am minister of Meghavarna, the king of crows. Before you kill me, I have something to convey to your king.”

Arimardana came to see the minister at once and asked him the reason for his plight. Sthirajeevi told him, “Our king wanted to avenge the massacre of his subjects by your men. When I knew he was bent upon waging a war with you, I advised him not to be rash and not go to war with you. I asked him to sign peace with you. My king thought that I was on your side and in great anger inflicted these injuries on me. As soon as I recover, I will show you where he and his men are hiding. You can destroy them.”

The king of owls called a meeting of his elders and his five ministers for consultations. He asked his first minister, Raktaksha, "Friend, our enemy's minister is in our custody. What shall we do with him?"

The minister said, "What is there to discuss? Kill him instantly without hesitation. It is always better to destroy the enemy before he acquires strength. Such opportunities come once in a while. If you lose it now, you will never get it back. Don't be carried away by Meghavarna's minister's show of affection. Because once lost, love never returns."

To drive home the point, Raktaksha related to the king of owls the story of a cobra and a Brahmin.

## **4. The Brahmin and The Cobra**

Haridatta was a Brahmin living in a hamlet. He was a farmer but the piece of land he cultivated gave him very little to survive. One day, unable to stand the heat of the summer sun, he went to a big tree in his land to rest for a while. Before he could spread himself on the ground he saw in the nearby anthill a huge cobra swaying with his hood open.

He thought, "This cobra must really be the Goddess of this land. I have never worshipped her, which is why I am not able to get anything from the land. From today, I will worship her."

At once he went back to his village and returned with a glass full of milk.

He poured it in a bowl and turning to the anthill said, "O ruler of the land, I did not know you were living in this anthill. That is why I have not paid my tribute to you. Please excuse me and accept this humble offering."

He then placed the bowl of milk at the anthill and left the place.

Next day when the Brahmin came to his land before the Sun was up, he saw a gold coin in the bowl he had left at the anthill. Henceforth, he came alone every dawn, collected the coin, offered the milk in the bowl and left. One day the Brahmin, leaving for another village on business, asked his son to go to the anthill and offer milk. When the son went the next day, he found a gold coin in the bowl.

He collected the coin and thought, "This anthill must be full of gold. If I kill the cobra, I can collect all the gold in one go instead of coming here every day."

He then struck the cobra with a big stick. But the cobra deftly dodged the blow but stung the son to death with his poisonous fangs. Returning to his village the next day, Haridatta heard the story of his son's death and at once realized that greed was behind it.

The Brahmin went to the anthill the day after his son's cremation and offered milk to the cobra. Without coming out of his hole, the cobra told Haridatta,

“You have come here for gold forgetting that you had lost a son and that you were in mourning. The reason is greed, pure greed. From today, there is no meaning in our relationship. Blinded by his youth, your son has struck me and I bit him back. How can I forget that blow? How can you suffer the grief of your son's death? Finally, I am giving you this diamond, don't come back again.”

Ending the story of the Brahmin and the cobra, Raktaksha told Arimardana, “The lesson is that love once betrayed cannot be regained. If you kill this minister (Sthirajeevi) you will have no problems left.”

After listening to Raktaksha patiently, the king of owls turned to his second minister Kruraksha and asked him for his opinion.

The second minister said, “O my lord, I don't agree with the advice Raktaksha gave you. It is very unkind. We should never kill a person seeking asylum. There is a fine story about how, knowing that a hunter who sought shelter had in fact come to kill him, a dove offered himself as food to the hunter.”

On the king asking him to relate that story, Kruraksha told him the following tale.

Once upon a time there lived a merciless hunter in the heart of a forest, terrorizing birds and animals. Because of his cruel nature he had no friends or relatives. The elders have said,

“It is unwise to be close to  
Men who are wicked and cruel.  
Avoid such heinous persons as  
You avoid poisonous snakes.”

The hunter went out into the forest every morning with a stick and net. One day, he threw his net and trapped a female dove in it. Soon, thick and black clouds appeared in the sky and it began raining cats and dogs. Scared and shivering, the hunter looked for shelter and found it under a huge banyan tree. The rain and wind stopped suddenly. The skies became clear with stars shining. The hunter said loudly,

“If there is anyone on the tree, I seek shelter and food from him. I am hungry and may faint any moment. Please save me.”

At the same time, a dove that had his nest on the same tree was worried that his wife who had gone out had not come back. He prayed to Gods that his wife should not come to any harm in this wind and rain. He began telling himself,

“Blessed and happy is the man  
With a caring and loving wife.  
A home is not a home without a wife;

A wifeless home is like a jungle.”

The wife trapped in the hunter’s net heard her husband’s sorrowful words and, happy that her husband loved her so much, thought,

“Don’t call her a woman  
Whose husband is unhappy;  
Where happy husbands live  
Heavens shower blessings.”

Later, addressing her husband, the female dove said, “Listen to me, my dear. Even at the cost of your life, you must come to the rescue of someone seeking shelter. This hunter is suffering from cold and hunger and has sought shelter under our tree. You must serve him with devotion. Don’t hate him because he has trapped your beloved wife. In reality, the strings of destiny have bound me. Give up all thoughts of revenge and serve the hunter with care.”

In accordance with his wife’s desire, the dove suppressed grief and told the hunter, “Sir, you are welcome to our modest home. Please let me know what I can do for you. Treat this as own home and feel free to command me.”

The hunter told the dove that he was suffering from cold and needed relief. The dove flew out, brought fire from somewhere and lit a small fire with dry twigs and asked the hunter to warm himself.

The dove told the hunter, “Because of my past deeds, I am born poor and unfortunate and do not have enough to feed myself. What is the point in a host living if he cannot entertain a guest? It is better he renounce this world.”

Yet he thought that it was better to die than say no to a host. Determined to die, the dove told the hunter to wait for a while and that soon he will have food. Then circling over the fire, the dove jumped into the fire he lit for the benefit of the hunter.

Moved by this sacrifice, the hunter told himself, “I am responsible for this tragedy. I will no doubt go to hell. This dove is a great soul, he has shown me the right path. Hereafter, I will give up all wants and desires and slowly destroy this body. Nothing, neither cold nor sun nor wind, matters to me. I will fast and see my slow end.”

The hunter then threw his net and stick and released the female dove from the net.

The wife then saw how her husband had jumped into the fire to provide food for the hunter. She thought that life without her husband was worse than death and at once jumped into the same fire that consumed her husband. After her death, she saw her husband in the heaven wearing royal regalia.

On seeing her, the husband said, “O my darling, you have done well to follow me into the fire. Women like

you live happily with their husbands for 35 million years.”

The dove couple lived happily ever after. The hunter, shunning worldly pleasures, went to a forest for realizing God. As penance had cleansed him of all desires, the hunter burnt himself in a forest fire and attained nirvana.

After Kruraksha ended telling the king the hunter’s story, Arimardana asked a third minister, Deeptaksha for his advice on dealing with Sthirajeevi.

The minister told the king, “My lord, Sthirajeevi does not deserve to be killed. He will be of use to us in revealing the secrets of the enemy. There is this story of how even a thief could help an old man.”

On the king commanding him, Deeptaksha began telling him the story of the old man, his young wife and the thief.

## **5.The Old Man, His Young Wife and The Thief**

There lived an old widowed merchant in a city in the south. Though old, he did not give-up his desire for another wife. Therefore, he gave lots of money to a poor merchant and married his young daughter. She never loved her old husband. One day, when the husband and wife were sleeping on different sides of the bed, a thief entered their house. Shocked by the sight of the thief, the wife embraced her husband in fear.

The husband was both thrilled and surprised by the embrace and began thinking about what made her do so. He searched every nook and corner of the house and at last found the thief lurking in a corner. He then realized that his wife had embraced him because the thief had frightened her. The husband told the thief, “My dear young man, today I had the fortune of being hugged by my wife. Thanks to you. Take away whatever you want.”

The thief replied, “My dear sir, I do not find anything in your house that I could take with me. But I will come back soon and see if there is anything to carry away. Or, you could call whenever you need love from your wife.”

“That is why,” Deeptaksha said, “when even a thief could do some good for someone, why not this Sthirajeevi who has sought asylum? He will give us useful information about the handicaps of the enemy. Therefore, in my view he should not be killed.”

Then Arimardana turned to another minister, Vakranasa, and asked him, “Tell me what should we do with this crow?” Vakranasa told him that “the refugee’s life should be spared because it may benefit us when two rivals fight each other like the quarrel between a thief and a monster had saved the life of a Brahmin and his two calves.”

“How was that?” asked the owl king.

Vakranasa narrated him the following story.

Drona was a poor Brahmin who was living in a small town. He was so poor that he never wore good clothes, or used cosmetics, or indulged in the luxury of eating *apaan* (betel leaves). He had matted hair, an unshaven beard and uncut nails. He was extremely weak and emaciated because he had no cover from cold, sun or wind or rain. Taking pity on him, a rich man donated two calves to him.

With all care and love, he fed them well with butter oil and grass. The calves grew into two fine and healthy animals. A thief set his eyes on them and decided that he should somehow steal them. As he set out for the Brahmin's house, he saw on the way an awesome figure with loose teeth as long and sharp as fangs, an arched nose and blood-red eyes. He had a lean body with varicose veins and his hair and beard looked like two torches.

Though he was frightened, the thief asked him, "Who are you, sir?"

"I am Satyavachana, a monster. Let me know who you are."

"I am a thief. My name is Kroorakarma. I am going to steal the calves of the Brahmin."

The monster trusted the words of the thief and told him that he took only one meal a day in the evening and that he would kill the Brahmin for his dinner.

Both of them went to the Brahmin's house that night and waited for the Brahmin to go to sleep. When they were sure that the Brahmin had slept, the monster stepped in to kill the poor Brahmin. The thief held him back saying it was unjust to kill the Brahmin before he (the thief) could take away the two calves.

The monster said, "If the sound of the resisting calves disturbs the sleep of the Brahmin, all our effort will be in vain."

The thief replied, "Suppose there is some obstacle in your killing him, I cannot take the calves. Therefore, wait till I finish my job first."

The thief and the monster began quarrelling about who should be the first to finish his job.

The Brahmin woke up due to the commotion they were making and asked them who they were and what was the matter.

The thief told him, "This monster wants to kill you."

The monster denied and said, "O Brahmin, this thief wants to steal your calves."

The Brahmin then invoked his deity through prayer and the power of the prayer forced the monster to flee. The Brahmin then took a stick and drove off the thief.

“That is why,” Vakranasa said, “I had told you that if two rivals quarrel among themselves, we would be the beneficiaries.” Then the king asked his fourth minister, Prakarakarna for his opinion.

The minister said, “My lord, I think we should spare the life of the crow. It is possible that he will co-operate with us and that will be a gain for us. Where there is no co-operation, people will perish like the two snakes.”

The king said, “In that case, let us hear that story.”

## **6. The Tale of Two Snakes**

Once upon a time there was a king named Devasakti. He had a son who was very weak and growing weaker by the day. It was found that he had a snake in his stomach. Experts, physicians and surgeons tried to nurse him back to health without success. Dejected, the son left his palace one night and took shelter in a lonely and dilapidated temple in another town ruled by a monarch called Bali. Every day, the son would go out to beg and return to the temple in the night.

King Bali had two daughters who came of age. Following a tradition, the two daughters would get up every dawn and touch the feet of their father in reverence.

One day, after paying respects to the king one of his daughters said, “Victory to the king. We are happy in every way.”

The second daughter said, “O king, reap the harvest of your actions.”

The king, very angry at the words of the second daughter, called his ministers and told them, “Take this foul-mouthed woman away and marry her off to some stranger. Let her reap the consequences of her actions.”

In compliance with the orders of the king, the ministers took her away and married her without pomp or ceremony to Devasakti’s son living in the old temple. The daughter considered the king’s son as God’s gift and after persuading him, left for another country.

The princess and the son of Devasakti reached a city where they camped close to a lake. She asked her husband to take care of the camp and went into the city with her maids to buy daily needs like rice, salt, butter oil and vegetables. After shopping, she returned to the lake where she saw a surprising spectacle.

The prince was sleeping, resting his head on an anthill. The serpent in his stomach came out to breathe fresh air. Then another serpent emerged from the anthill for the same reason. Both of them glared at each other.

The anthill inmate said, "You wicked creature, why do you torment such a handsome prince."

The other serpent retorted, "Why are you polluting the two golden urns in your hole."

Thus in their row, they revealed the secrets of each other.

The serpent in the anthill told the other serpent, "Don't be arrogant. Who does not know the secret of your death? If the prince drinks a concoction made of gruel and mustard you will die unsung."

"Oh, is that so? You will also perish if someone pours hot oil or hot water in your anthill. Don't be too proud," said the serpent in the prince's stomach.

The princess, who heard all that passed between the two serpents, poured hot oil into the anthill and took the two golden urns and gave the mustard concoction to her husband and killed the serpent inside his stomach. Both Divyasakti's son and his daughter-in-law returned to his kingdom and lived happily ever after.

After listening to this story, owl king Arimardana accepted his advice that Sthirajeevi's life should be spared.

Raktaksha, the first minister, was sad and told the ministers, "You have misled the king by giving wrong advice and paved the way for his destruction. The learned have said that where wicked men are honoured and wise men are insulted, there will be fear, famine and death."

Disregarding the warning of Raktaksha, the king's men set out to take Sthirajeevi to their fortress.

On the way, Sthirajeevi said, "My lord, in my condition, I cannot be of any help to you. Why do you unnecessarily carry me to the fortress? I will jump into a fire and perish. Please permit me to do that."

Sensing his internal thoughts, Raktaksha asked him why he would want to end up in fire.

Sthirajeevi said, "It is for your cause I met this fate in the hands of Meghavarna."

Raktaksha said, "You are a cheat, good at spinning words. You were really born as a crow and even if you are born as an owl in your next birth, you will still be a crow in nature. Haven't you heard the story of the mouse, which even when she was born as a girl in another birth, chose to marry not a human being but another male mouse?"

The ministers and other king's men pressed Raktaksha to tell them that story.

There was a hermitage belonging to the sage Salankayana. He went one morning to river Ganga to bathe. As he was reciting stanzas in praise of the Sun, he saw a kite carrying a mouse in its claws. At once, the sage

aimed a stone at the kite. Hit by the stone, the kite released its prey and the mouse at once ran to the sage asking him for protection.

The kite addressed Salankayana and said, “O sage, you have hit me with a stone, which is not proper. Are you not afraid of God? Surrender that mouse to me or you will go to hell.”

The sage said, “You wretched bird, my duty is to save God’s creations, to punish the wicked, to respect the good, to honor the teacher and worship the Gods. Why do you preach all those irrelevant rules of conduct to me?”

The kite delivered a big lecture to the sage on the right path. “You have no idea of what is good and what is bad. God created all of us and at the time of creation also prescribed what should be our food. God has marked mice, other rodents and insects to be food for us. Why do you blame me for seeking what God has meant for me? There is nothing wrong for anyone to eat the food marked for him. The danger comes when one eats what is not food for him. What is meat for someone is poison for someone else.”

“It is not proper for sages to be violent. They are not presumed to notice what is happening around them. They are detached from this world. Nothing that happens in the material world should interest them. They should not discriminate between vice and virtue. They are above everything. But by your deed today you have lost all the gains of your penance. Learn from this story of three brothers how to attain that state of detachment.”

Salankayana asked the kite to relate that story to him. The kite told him the following story.

## **7.The Wedding of The Mouse**

Once upon a time, three sages, who were also brothers, chose a riverbank to do penance. Their names were Ekata, Dwita and Trita. The clothes they washed every day used to dry in the sky without a clothesline lest they should drop and become soiled. One day a kite was carrying a female frog like I (the kite) carried a female mouse.

Ekata saw this and shouted at the kite, “Leave it, Leave it.”

At once his clothes drying in the sky dropped down to the ground.

When Dwita saw this, he shouted at the kite, “Don’t leave it, Don’t leave it” and soon his clothes also came down hurtling.

When Trita saw that the clothes of his elder brothers fell down, he thought it would be better not to say

anything and remained silent. That is why it is better not to notice the happenings around and concentrate on self.

The sage Salankayana replied, “O foolish kite, your story has happened in the Age of Truth when even if you spoke to a wicked person you became a sinner. The clothes came down because the first two sages addressed the wicked kite. We are now living in the Age of Kali, an age in which everyone is a born sinner. In this age only those who commit a sin become sinners and not those who speak to sinners. Now, don’t waste my time. Disperse or face my curse.”

The kite flew away disappointed.

The female mouse then prayed Salankayana, “O sage, please give me shelter in your hermitage. Otherwise, some wicked bird will kill me. I will spend the rest of my life with whatever leftovers you choose to feed me with.”

The female mouse’s prayer moved the sage but he thought that if he took her home, people would laugh at him. So, he turned the mouse into a beautiful girl and took her home.

“What is this you have brought,” asked the sage’s wife. Where did you bring this girl from?”

“She is a female mouse. She needed protection from wicked birds. That’s why I turned her into a girl and brought her home. You will need to shower all care on her. I will make her a mouse again,” said the sage.

“Please don’t do that,” pleaded his wife, “You have saved her life and therefore you have become her father. I don’t have a child. Since you are her father, she becomes my daughter.” The sage accepted her plea.

The girl grew into a beautiful woman and became an eligible bride. Salankayana told his wife, “The girl has come of age. It is not proper for her to remain in our house. The learned have said,

He who keeps an eligible bride in his house  
Forfeits a place in heaven. So do his ancestors.

“It’s all right. Look for a boy,” said his wife.

Salankayana immediately summoned the Sun and told him, “This is my daughter. If she is willing to marry you, get ready to marry her.”

He then showed the Sun to his daughter and asked her if she would marry him. She said that the Sun was very hot and she would prefer someone else. The sage then summoned the God of Clouds, the God of Wind and the God of Mountains. The girl rejected every one of them on one ground or the other.

Then the God of Mountains told the sage, “The most suitable candidate for your daughter is a mouse. He is more powerful than I am.”

The sage then turned her into a mouse and gave her away to a king of mice in marriage.

“That’s why,” Raktaksha resumed, “I want you know that a crow is a crow and cannot become an owl.”

Yet, disregarding Raktaksha’s warnings, the king’s men took away Sthirajeevi to their fortress not knowing that they were bringing ruin upon themselves and the king. Sthirajeevi thought on the way to his destination, “This man (Raktaksha) alone advised the king to kill me. Of all of the king’s men he alone knows statecraft. If they had heeded his word and killed me the king would have escaped disaster.”

When Sthirajeevi’s procession arrived at the entrance of the fortress, king Arimardana ordered his men to accommodate him in a comfortable place of his choice. But Sthirajeevi had other ideas. If he had to hatch a plan to kill the king, it was not possible within the fort because he and his movements would be constantly under watch. That would alert his hosts. So, he thought, it was better to be outside the fort.

He told the king, “My lord, I am grateful for your generosity. But I am a politician and belong to the enemy camp. Yet I am your devotee and faithful servant. It does not become of me to live inside the palace. I will stay at the entrance of the fort and every day sanctify my body with the dust of your feet.”

The king of owls accepted his request and let him stay where he wanted to. The king’s men took extraordinary care of his needs and very soon Sthirajeevi became as strong as a wrestler. Seeing Sthirajeevi’s new personality, Raktaksha told the king and other ministers, “I regard all of you as very unwise. Haven’t you heard the learned often repeating the words of the bird Sindhuka? The bird used to say, ““First, I am a fool. Then the hunter and then the king and his ministers.”

“How was that?” asked the ministers and Raktaksha began telling them the story of Sindhuka.

## **8. Tale of The Golden Droppings**

On a big tree in the lap of a mountain lived a bird named Sindhuka. His droppings used to turn into gold as soon as they hit the ground. One day, a hunter came to the tree in search of prey and saw Sindhuka’s droppings hit the ground and turn into gold.

The hunter, struck by wonder, thought, “I have been hunting birds and small animals since I was a boy. I am now eighty years old. I have never seen in my life this kind of miracle.”

He decided to get the bird some how and set a noose for him. Not aware of the trap, the bird stayed on the branch merrily singing. Soon, the noose tightened and the hunter caught the bird and pushed him into his

cage.

The hunter took it home and considered, "If the king comes to know of this wonder, he will certainly take away the bird from me. Instead, I will go to the king and present the unique bird to him."

The hunter took the bird the following day to the king and presented it to him with great reverence. The king was extremely happy and told his men to keep the bird in safe custody and feed him with the best bird food. But his minister was reluctant to accept the bird.

He said, "O Rajah, There is no use in trusting the word of this hunter and accepting the bird. Has anyone seen a bird dropping gold? Therefore, I request you to release the bird from the cage."

The king ordered the bird to be set free. As soon as the door of the cage opened, the bird perched himself on a nearby doorway and defecated. The dropping immediately turned into gold. Sindhuka then recited that line about fools, "First, I was a fool. Then the hunter and then the king and his ministers."

Raktaksha continued, "That's why I tell you that we are all fools in sparing the life of this minister of the crows, Sthirajeevi." Despite Raktaksha's warnings, the owls continued to look after Sthirajeevi with great devotion. The crow minister became strong and powerful. Giving up all hopes of reforming his king and ministers, Raktaksha called his close colleagues and told them,

"Friends, our king and his men are beyond reform. We have given whatever advice a minister has to give. We shall now leave this dangerous place and pitch our tents elsewhere. The elders have said, "He prospers who anticipates danger and escapes it. He who does not destroys himself." I have been living in this jungle for so long, I have become old. Yet, in all my life I have never heard a cave speaking like a human being."

"What, a cave speaking like a human being! Surprising. We have never heard of it. Please tell us all about it," asked his followers.

Raktaksha then told them the following story.

Deep in the rain forest lived a lion named Kharanakara. One day, he was very hungry and looked for a prey in every nook and corner of the forest. There was no animal, big or small, as far as he could see. As he was wandering in search of food he found a big cave and thought, "There must be some animal living here. If so, it is bound to return to the cave in the evening. I will hide myself in the cave and when the animal returns, pounce on him and have a good meal."

Then as sun began to set, Dadhiputchha, a jackal, came to the cave that was his home and saw the footprints of the lion entering the cave. There were, however, no traces of footprints to show that the lion had left. Scared, the jackal wanted to make sure that it was a lion or some big animal that went into the cave. But how should he know? He hit upon a brilliant idea.

The jackal went near the cave and began shouting, "Hello cave, I am your friend here." There was no reply

from the cave. He did not know what to do. He again shouted, “Hello cave, don’t you remember the arrangement we made? I have to shout when I arrive at the cave and you will ask me to come in. Without your green signal I do not enter the cave. Since you are silent, I will go to some other cave.”

The lion heard the jackal speaking and thought, “Ah, there seems to be an arrangement between the cave and this animal. Let me get him into my trap. I will shout back a welcome to him and he will walk in happily.”

The lion then roared, “Hi jackal, come in. You are welcome.”

The jackal at once knew it was a lion inside the cave and hurriedly fled the place, remembering the lines of the learned,

“He survives who anticipates a danger and acts to avert it,  
He who does not comes to grief.”

Raktaksha said, “That is how we must also anticipate danger and act. Let us leave now before it is too late.”

Listening to his advice, his ministers and others followed him to a far off place.

Seeing that the main obstacle in his way has disappeared and that the remaining king’s men were all stupid, Sthirajeevi began piling up twigs on the pretext of building a nest. He heaped them at the entrance of the cave in which the king and other owls lived. When the pile was big enough, he waited for daybreak when the owls would become blind. Then he flew off to Meghavarna and told him that before word could reach the enemy camp of this plan, he and his followers should accompany him (Sthirajeevi) each carrying a piece of burning wood.

Accordingly, Meghavarna and his men followed Sthirajeevi, each carrying a burning twig in his beak. When they reached the entrance of the cave, which was now blocked by the pile of twigs Sthirajeevi built, they threw the burning twigs on the pile, which began to burn fiercely killing all the owls trapped inside.

When Megahvarna and his men returned to their kingdom, he asked Sthirajeevi to tell him how he could plan to kill the enemy.

Sthirajeevi said, “It was not an easy job living in the enemy camp. Luckily, except Raktaksha, every one of Arimardana’s ministers was a fool. Yet it was like walking on the edge of a sword. But if you want to achieve your goal you will have to put up with all inconvenience and discomfort like the snake which carried the frogs on its back.”

## 9.Frogs That Rode a Snake

A black snake named Mandavishya lived in a forest on the Varuna hills. He was becoming old and worried that he would not be able to snare frogs any more and that would make him weak and bring his end closer. With a plan in his head, he went to a lake and resting on its edge pretended that he had lost all interest in worldly matters.

A frog in the lake came out and asked him, “Uncle, why are you not preying for food as used you to do in the past?”

The snake said, “Listen, my son, I am very unfortunate. How can I have any fervor for food? Last night when I was on my rounds looking for food I sighted a frog. When I tried to get at him, he jumped into the middle of a group of Brahmins reciting the Vedas. I could not track him. But soon I saw something like a frog near the Brahmins and at once jumped at him and bit him. It turned out to be the thumb of a Brahmin boy. The boy died immediately.”

“When his father found that I had killed his son, he cursed me, “You wicked snake, you have killed my innocent son. From now onwards you will serve as a vehicle for all frogs. Your life will be at their mercy.” I have now decided to serve my sentence. That is why I am here,” said the snake.

The frog ran into the lake and told every one about the snake and his offer to serve as a vehicle. Happy at the prospect, all the frogs went and met their king Jalapada and told him about the snake. “What a wonderful news,” thought the king and trooped out of the lake with his ministers and subjects. The king was the first to get on to the hood of the snake, followed by his ministers. In the order of seniority and prominence, the kings’ subjects also climbed the back of the snake. Those unfortunate frogs that could not find space on the vehicle followed the snake in a procession. To entertain them, Mandavishya showed several feats he could do.

Thrilled by the experience of riding a deadly snake, Jalapada, the king of the frogs, thought that the ride had no parallel. No ride, whether on an elephant or a horse or a chariot or a palanquin, can match this experience, he thought.

On the second day, Mandavishya slowed down the pace of his haul. Noticing the change of pace, Jalapada asked the snake why he was not moving as briskly as he used to. The snake told the king of frogs that he had no food that day and being weak he was not able to carry so much load.

Jalapada, taking pity on the snake, said, “You can have the younger frogs for your food.”

Thrilled at this offer, the snake said, “O king of frogs, my plight is due to the curse the Brahmin gave me. Your magnanimous concession has released me today from the curse. I am so happy.”

The snake thus began eating a few frogs every day and soon became strong and healthy. He was also worried that if he began eating the frogs at that rate there would not be any frogs left for him in the future.

Meanwhile, a big cobra chanced to come that way and seeing the snake carrying the frogs and struck by wonder asked the snake, "This is very unique though unnatural. How is it you have become a vehicle for frogs which are our natural food?"

"That's a long story resembling the story of the Brahmin who pretended to have become blind after eating the good food his wife had made," said Mandavishya.

The cobra asked the snake to relate that story.

Once upon a time, a Brahmin named Yagnadatta lived in a city. He had a wife who was not trustworthy. She had a lover to whom she would secretly send every day delicious food she made. One day, her husband found out what she was doing.

He asked her, "My dear, you are making every day some special dish or the other and taking it out of the house. Tell me, what is the truth."

With great presence of mind, she told Yagnadatta, "Every day I am fasting and taking this food to offer to the Goddess." To allay suspicion, she collected food and telling her husband that she was leaving for the temple, left home. The husband began following her secretly and when she went to the tank to bathe, he went to the temple of the Goddess and hid behind the idol.

After taking bath in the tank, the Brahmin's wife came to the temple from the tank and began praying the Goddess, "O mother, tell me how can I render my husband blind?"

The Brahmin, hiding behind the idol, changed his voice and said, "O great devotee, you feed your husband daily with good and delicious food. Very soon he will become blind."

From then onwards, the wife began feeding her husband with delicacies. Soon, the Brahmin complained to the wife that he was not able to see clearly. The wife thought that the Goddess had at last fulfilled her desire.

Encouraged by the Brahmin's blindness, his wife's lover began visiting her without any fear. One day, Yagnadatta saw him and his wife together. The lover ignored him thinking the Brahmin was blind. Yagnadatta then thrashed the lover so hard that he died. The Brahmin then cut the nose of his wife.

"That's why," Mandavishya told the cobra, "I am pretending to be friendly with the frogs." Jalapada, the king of frogs overheard this conversation and asked Mandavishya if what he had heard was true. The snake at once realized his mistake and told the king of frogs that it was all fun. The king of frogs foolishly believed the words of the snake and the snake slowly swallowed all the frogs.

Sthirajeevi told Meghavarna that he followed the tactics of Mandavishya in misleading his enemies. Pleased, the king of crows said, “What you have said is correct. Great men do not give up what they have begun even in the face of obstacles. Cowards, afraid of failure, do not venture at all. There are some that begin a task and give it up when there is a problem. But courageous people do not give up whatever dangers they face.”

“You (Sthirajeevi) have crushed the enemies and brought security to my kingdom. The learned have said,

“It is dangerous to leave  
A fire unextinguished  
A debt unredeemed  
An enemy uncrushed and  
A disease untreated.”

Sthirajeevi said, “My lord, virtue belongs to him who is charitable, learned, courageous and friendly. Virtue brings wealth. Wealth brings power. It is a king with these qualities who can rule and expand his kingdom. I have done my duty. I need rest. But I humbly seek to offer one word of advice. All this power should not go to your head. Follow the path of duty and rule your subjects for a hundred years. May God bless you.”

This is the end of the third strategy Vishnu Sarma disclosed to his royal wards.

### **Fourth Strategy: Loss Of Gains:**

*Vishnu Sarma begins his fourth Tantra with the following stanza:*

*“He overcomes all problems  
Who does not lose his cool  
Even in the face of adversity  
Like the monkey in the water.”*

#### **1.The Croc and The Monkey**

Raktamukha was a monkey living on a blackberry tree near the coast. That tree was always full of fruits. One day a crocodile named Karalamukha came out of the waters and loitering on the sands came to the tree.

Seeing the croc, the monkey said, “O croc, you are my guest. I will feed you with these delicious blackberries. Enjoy the fare. The learned have said,

“That man is blessed who hosts  
A lover or an enemy or a fool.  
Angels will desert the home  
That fails to host a guest.”

The monkey then gave the croc a lot of berries. After he had his fill, Karalamukha went home. Thereafter, it became a habit with the croc to daily visit Raktamukha, enjoy the fruit he offered, spend time with him discussing the world and then go home.

One day, the croc’s wife asked her husband, “Where do you get this fruit, they are so sweet. I have never tasted such mouth-watering fruit.”

“I have a close friend, a monkey, who gives me the fruit every day,” said the husband.

“If the fruit are so sweet, the heart of your friend who eats them everyday must be as delicious as the fruit. Please get his heart for me, if you have love left for me. I will always be young and immortal if I eat that fruit,” said the wife.

“My dear, it is improper for you to speak like that. I have accepted him as my brother. It is not possible for me to kill such a host. Please be reasonable. The elders have said,

“From mother we get our first relative,  
A good word brings the second relative  
Who is more precious than a brother.”

Angry, the wife said, “You have never defied my word. It must be a female monkey who is your friend. That’s why you are spending so much time with him every day. I have now understood you thoroughly. Your heart is full of that monkey. You are a cheat.”

Karalamukha, wanting to pacify his wife, said, ““My dear, why are you angry? I am your most obedient servant and ready to carry out your order at any time.”

“No, she is dear to you. If you really love me, why don’t you kill her and get me her heart. If you don’t get it, I will fast and die,” threatened the wife.

Worried, the croc went to the monkey. Seeing that the croc was late for his daily meeting, Raktamukha said, “You are late and do not seem to be cheerful. What’s the matter?”

“O my friend, how can I tell you what happened at home. My wife is very angry. She told me that I am an

ungrateful friend and that every day I eat the fruit you offer but never had the courtesy of inviting you home. You have no redemption; she told me and warned me that if I did not bring you home, I would see her only in the other world. These arguments with her have delayed me. Please come with me. My wife has decorated the house fit to receive you. She has hung welcome buntings at the entrance. She is eagerly waiting for me to bring you home.”

The monkey said, “Your wife has said the proper thing. You should leave a man who loves you for your wealth like the spider attracts his prey. She might as well have quoted the elders saying,

“Where there is no give and take  
Where there is no exchange of secrets  
And of hospitality either  
There is no true friendship.”

“There is a problem, however. We are all land animals. You live in water. It may not be possible for me to accept your kind invitation. I advise you to bring her here,” said the monkey.

“It’s really no problem,” said the croc. “Our house is on a sandbank. It’s a beautiful place. Sit on my back. I will carry you.”

The monkey happily sat on the back of the croc and the journey began. As the croc was entering deep waters, the monkey got scared and told the croc to go slowly.

Thinking that the monkey was his prisoner now, Karalamukha told Raktamukha, “It is now safe to tell you our plan. My wife wanted me to create trust in you first and persuade you to accept our invitation and then kill you so that we may have the good fortune of feasting on your heart.”

With great presence of mind, the monkey said, “My friend, if this is what you and your wife wanted, why didn’t you tell me in the beginning itself? My heart is safely stored in the burrow of the tree. What is the use of your taking me home without my heart? Let us go back. There is nothing happier for me than giving my heart to your wife.” Happy, the croc turned back and brought the monkey to the shore.

The monkey at once leapt to the top of the blackberry tree and thought, “We should not trust an untrustworthy person, even if we did, it should not be total. Such trust will destroy us completely. This is a rebirth for me.”

The croc was in a hurry and asked the monkey, “What is the delay? Get you heart. My wife will be very happy.”

The monkey angrily told him, “You idiot, have you seen anyone who has two hearts? You are ungrateful. Get out of my sight and never come this way again. People who are hungry stoop to any level like Priyadarsana.” The croc asked him to tell the story of Priyadarsana.

Raktamukha told him the following story.

## 2.The Greedy Cobra and The King Of Frogs

A big well was the home of Gangadatta, king of frogs. Unable to bear harassment by his relatives, the king abandoned his kingdom and came out of the well and thought,

“He who certainly retaliates  
Him who harmed him in peril  
And ridiculed him in misery  
Is a man without rebirth.”

Deeply lost in such thoughts, the frog king saw a big cobra entering the burrow of a tree and thought, “We must set an enemy to fight an enemy, set a strong person to crush another strong person. Their end will bring us happiness.”

With this aim in view, he went to the burrow and called the cobra, “Priyadarsana, please come out.”

The cobra, however, was careful. He thought, “Who is this fellow? He does not seem to be one of us. I don’t have any friends outside my circle. I will stay inside and find out who the caller is. He could be a magician or someone seeking my help in killing his enemy.”

Then, the cobra shouted from inside, “Who are you, sir?”

“I am Gangadatta, king of frogs. I have come to seek your help,” said the caller.

“I cannot believe you. Can there be friendship between a blade of dry grass and fire? Haven’t the learned said that he, who is natural prey to the predator never, even in a dream, gets closer to him? I cannot trust your words,” said the cobra.

“O Priyadarsana, what I tell you is true. You are my born enemy. But I have come to you seeking help to avenge my humiliation. The learned have said,

“When your life is under threat  
When danger stares you in the face  
It is better to bend before an enemy  
And save life and property.”

“Who humiliated you,” asked the cobra.

“It is my relatives.”

“Where do you live? Is it a well or a pond or a tank?”

“It is a well with stone walls.”

“But I have no legs. How can I reach the well and kill your enemies?”

“Sir, please don’t say no. I will show you how to enter the well. There is a crevice in the wall that opens into the well. It’s a nice hiding place for you. Come, I will show you,” said Gangadatta, king of frogs.

The cobra then thought, “I have become old. Rarely can I get a frog to eat. This fellow has come to give me a new lease of life. I will go with him and have a daily feast of frogs.”

Addressing the king of frogs, the cobra said, “Let’s go.”

“But there is a condition,” said Gangadatta, “Priyadarsana, I will take you there and show you the place. But you should spare frogs that are close to me. You should eat only those I select as food for you.”

The cobra replied, “You are now my friend. I give you my word. I will eat only those marked by you as my food.”

The cobra then emerged from its burrow and accompanied the king of frogs to the well. The frog king showed him the crevice in the well and his relatives who deserved to be killed. The cobra happily settled in the crevice and finished in course of time all those frogs their king had marked for extermination.

Now, without frogs to eat, the cobra told the king, “I have destroyed all your enemies. Now show me prey for food. It is you who brought me here.”

Gangadatta told him, “You have done your job to help me. Now, it is time for you to leave this place.”

“How can I leave?” protested the cobra. “Someone else will occupy my place. So, I will not go, I will stay here only. You offer me one frog every day from your circle of relatives.”

Repenting for making friends with a natural enemy, Gangadatta thought it was better to offer the cobra one friend a day, remembering the saying that “he who befriends a stronger enemy invites certain death. A wise man does not lose all his wealth to save a paltry sum.”

Accordingly, the king of frogs began offering the cobra a frog a day. But the wicked cobra swallowed all the frogs. One day, it was the turn of Yamunadatta, son of the king of frogs. The king cried bitterly over the loss of his son. His wife then told him that there was no point in crying over the past and that he should immediately leave the place and look for ways to end the menace of the cobra.

As days passed, the cobra finished off the entire tribe of frogs with the exception of king Gangadatta. So, he asked Gangadatta, "Look, my friend, there is now no frog left for me to eat. I am very hungry. Show me where and how can sate my hunger."

The king replied, "Priyadarsana, don't worry about food as long as I am your friend. You get me out of this well. I will go and look for wells full of frogs. I will tempt them to come here and you can have your fill."

The cobra said, "You are like a brother to me, Gangadatta. I can't kill you. But if you bring me food, you will be as good as my father. I will get you out of this well." Thus, the king came out and disappeared. The cobra was eagerly waiting for the king to bring him food. When Gangadatta failed to turn up even after a long time, the cobra sought the help of a chameleon.

"My friend, you know Gangadatta very well. Please go to him and tell him that it does not matter if he cannot bring me a frog. Let him come. I cannot live without such a trusted friend."

The chameleon carried the message of the cobra to the king of frogs and told him, "Your friend Priyadarsana is eagerly looking for you to return."

Gangadatta told him, "Excuse me sir, who can trust a hungry man. You may please go."

Concluding the story, Raktamukha, the monkey, told the crocodile, "You wicked creature, I will never visit your home."

Karalamukha, the croc, pleaded with him, "My friend, this is not proper. Please come and sanctify my home. Otherwise, I will be guilty of ingratitude. If you don't come, I will fast and die."

The monkey said, "You are an idiot to think that I would, like Lambakarna, invite death knowingly."

"O my friend, let me hear that story of Lambakarana," asked the croc.

Then the monkey told the croc the story of Lambakarna.

### 3.The Lion and The Foolish Donkey

A lion named Karalakesara was living in a forest, loyally served by Dhoosaraka, a jackal that used to accompany the lion wherever he went. One day, an elephant badly injured the lion in a fight. The injuries were so serious that the lion could not go out hunting. As a result, the jackal also had to go without food. Both the master and the servant became very weak. Unable to bear hunger, the jackal pleaded with the lion to get him some food.

“You know my plight. I cannot move out of this place. However, if you manage to lure some animal to come here, I will kill him and both of us can have a good meal,” said the lion.

So, the jackal set out in search of some animal and saw a donkey feeding himself on weeds. The jackal approached him and said, “O my friend, please accept my regards. I have not seen you for a long time. You have become very weak. What is the reason?”

The donkey said in sad tones, “How shall I tell you my suffering? The washer man is tormenting me by placing too much weight on my back. He does not feed me at all. I exist on weeds. That is why my body is weak.”

The jackal said, “If that is the case, why don’t you come with me? I shall show you a place where you can have your heart’s fill of green and fresh grass. We can happily spend our time there.”

“You have given me good news. But there is a problem. We are domestic animals and you are all wild animals. One of them will certainly kill me,” said the donkey whose name was Lambakarna.

Allaying his fears, the jackal said, “O uncle, don’t say like that. This place is in my control. Nobody can enter this area. Just like you are suffering at the hands of the washer man, there are three female donkeys in this area, which are waiting for a suitable husband. They are all young and told me, “If you are really our uncle, go and get a suitable husband for us.” It is on that mission I have come here and seen you.”

The donkey replied, “If that is the case, let’s go now.”

That is why the elders have said,

“If the very thought of a woman  
Brings ecstasy to a young man  
How thrilled would he be?  
If he actually is in her presence.”

In the end, the jackal and the donkey reached the forest and came to the lion. When Lambakarna saw the ailing Karalakesara, the lion, he began running away from him. The lion made a great effort to reach him and strike him with his paw but failed to get the donkey.

Angry at the lion's failure, Dhoosaraka, the jackal protested, "O my lord, you are useless. If you cannot tackle a foolish donkey, how can you fight an elephant? I have now realized how powerful you are."

Ashamed, the lion told the jackal quietly, "O my friend, I was not ready for attack. Otherwise, even an elephant cannot escape my strike."

Satisfied, the jackal said, "All right, let us forget the past. I will bring the donkey here again. You must be ready and strike him this time."

"But how can Lambakarna forget his experience and come back here again," asked the lion.

"You leave it to me," said the jackal and set off to look for the donkey. Lambakarna was there on the bank of a lake feeding on grass.

He came to the jackal and said, "Friend, you have taken me to a nice place. I escaped death by inches. Who is that animal who had nearly killed me?"

"You are mistaken," said Dhoosaraka, "It is, after all, the female donkey I promised to take you to. She was getting up to come and embrace you. You ran away in scare. She cannot live without you and so was trying to reach out to you. She told me that if you do not marry her, she would commit suicide. So please come and spare me the sin of causing the death of a woman. The God of Love will punish you if you do not heed my word."

Beguiled, the donkey followed the jackal. The lion was prepared for the attack this time and when the donkey came; he fell on him and killed him instantly. The lion asked the jackal to keep an eye on the donkey's body and left to take a bath in the river. Unable to resist the temptation of fresh flesh, the jackal snipped off the ears of the donkey and scooped his heart out and made a good meal of them. When the lion returned, he noticed that the ears and heart of the donkey were missing.

The lion angrily asked the jackal to tell him what had happened to the ears and heart of the donkey. Dhoosaraka told him that the donkey had no ears and heart. If he had, he would not have come again. The foolish lion believed every word of the jackal and shared the donkey with him.

"So, like the donkey in the story, you too are a fool," said Raktamukha, the monkey to Karalamukha, the croc.

"You have deceived me but like Yudhishtira in the story I am going to tell you, you too spoke the truth when you ought not to and lost everything."

“Please tell me everything about this Yudhishtira,” pleaded the croc.

## 4. The Story of The Potter

Once upon a time, there lived in a village a potter named Yudhishtira. One day, he drank a lot of liquor and got intoxicated and began running. He lost his balance and fell on broken pieces of a pitcher. The sharp edges of the pot pieces cut a big and bloody gash in his forehead. Somehow, he got up and went home. The wound took a long time to heal because he neglected to follow the instructions of the doctor.

Suddenly, a famine struck the whole country. The potter left the country with some others of the royal household. In the new country, he found a job with the king of that country. The king saw the mark of the big wound on his face and thought that Yudhishtira must have been a great warrior who suffered wounds in a battle. The king began showering special attention and affection on the potter, which the king’s sons envied. They could not harm him because he was the king’s favorite.

When everything was going smoothly for the potter, a war came and the king was summoning all known warriors to honor them and prepare them for the war. The king’s men were readying the elephants and horses for the combat while the soldiers were busy staging rehearsals. It was now time for the king to know everything about Yudhishtira.

He sent for the potter and asked him when no one was around, “What is your name, o warrior? In what battle were you injured?”

The potter told the king, “My lord, this is not a wound inflicted on me in a battle. I am a potter and my name is Yudhishtira. One day, when I was drunk, I ran and fell on sharp pieces of a broken pot. This scar on my face is the result of that fall.”

Ashamed that he deceived himself by the speech and garments of the potter, the king asked his servants to throw out the potter.

But Yudhishtira appealed to the king, “My lord, please don’t throw me out. See how well I will fight.”

The king said, “I admit you are a warrior. But you are born in a potter community and hence cannot kill an elephant.”

“How is that,” asked the potter.

The king then told him the following story.

A lion couple lived in a forest. In course of time, the lioness delivered two lion cubs. Every day, the lion went

out and brought food for the lioness. One day, the lion wandered all over the forest in search of food but could not find any prey at all. At sunset, the lion gave up his search and was returning home when he found a jackal cub. The lion took a fancy for him and took him home and gave him to his wife.

The lioness asked her husband, "Did you get us any food today?"

"I found this cub. That's all," said the lion.

"I haven't killed him because he is a child. But if you are very hungry, you can have this child for your meal."

The lioness was angry and asked her husband, "How can I kill him when you spared him his life?"

The elders have said:

"Don't do an unworthy deed  
Even in the face of death;  
Don't give up a worthy deed  
Even if it means suicide."

"I will treat him like my third son," said the lioness.

Thereafter, the new jackal cub became one of the family and the three ate, drank, played and slept together. One day when they were playing, an elephant passed by. At once, the two lion cubs got ready to attack the elephant. The jackal cub told them that the elephant was an enemy of the lions and that it was better for them to leave. The lion cubs were disappointed at the words of their jackal brother.

They went home and told their father the details of how the jackal brother fled from the scene. The father was not happy with his children and admonished them. The lion took the jackal cub aside and told him not to discourage the lion cubs who, she said, were his younger brothers.

The jackal was hurt and asked his lion mother, "How am I different from them in beauty or education or bravery? Why should the two ridicule me? I will kill both of them."

Amused by the words of the jackal cub and wishing him long life, the lioness said, "You are still a child. I brought you up taking pity on you. Your brothers are also young. Before they grow old and know that you are different from them, leave this place and join your own folk."

Realizing the danger ahead, the jackal cub left the lion family in search of his own folk.

"That's why, before other warriors find out that you do not belong to the warrior caste, leave this place," the

king advised Yudhishtira. The potter immediately left the palace.

Raktamukha, the monkey, told Karalamukha, the croc, “You have tried to kill me heeding your wife’s plea. But one should never trust women. I deserted my family for the sake of a woman and gave her half of my life. But in the end she left me to join a lame lover. That’s why never trust a woman.”

“Interesting,” said the croc and asked the monkey to tell him that story.

## **5.A Three-in-One Story**

Once upon a time, there was a popular king called Nanda. His people respected him for his learning and valor. He had a prime minister called Vararuchi who was well versed in diplomacy and statecraft. Vararuchi’s wife was one day annoyed with her husband and kept away from him. Extremely fond of his wife, the prime minister tried to please her. It was no use. He did not know what to do to regain her affection.

He pleaded with her, “Tell me what can I do to make you happy.”

The wife at last opened her mouth and said, “Shave your head cleanly and prostrate before me if you want to regain my love.”

The prime minister complied with her wish and succeeded in winning back her favour.

The king’s wife also played the same drama of shunning his company. Nanda tried every trick he knew to win her affection without success.

When everything failed, the king fell on her feet and prayed her, “My darling, I cannot live without you even for a while. Tell me what should I do to win back your love?”

The queen said, “I will be happy if you pretend to be a horse, agree to be bridled and to let me ride you. While racing you must neigh like a horse. Is this acceptable to you?”

“Yes,” said the king and did, as his wife demanded.

Next day, the king saw his prime minister with a shaven head and asked him, “Vararuchi, why did you have your head shaved on a day when tonsure is forbidden.”

Vararuchi replied, “O king, is there anything that a woman does not demand and a man does not readily concede? He would do anything, shave his head or neigh like a horse.”

Raktamukha, the monkey, then told Karalamukha, the croc, “You wicked croc, you are a slave of your wife like Nanda and Vararuchi. You tried to kill me but your chatter gave away your plans.”

That’s why the learned have said,

“Parrots sing and betray  
Their presence to the hunter.  
The crane eludes the hunter  
By keeping his beak tightly shut.”

“See how a donkey despite his disguise in a tiger skin betrayed his origin by braying and got killed. Here is the story if you want to know,” said Raktamukha and began telling the story of the donkey.

In a small village lived a washer man named Suddhapata. He had a donkey that was very weak because he did not feed the animal regularly. One day, the washer man found the dead body of a tiger while he was collecting wood from the forest. Suddhapata was very happy and thought, “I am lucky. I can skin the animal and cover my donkey with that skin and drive it into wheat farms where he will have plenty to graze. Thinking that he is a tiger, people will keep away from him. This way, my donkey will have plenty of food.”

He acted on his plan and the donkey would go to the wheat farm every evening, have his day’s fill and return to his master’s house in the morning. This went on for sometime. The donkey became so strong and sturdy that it became difficult for the washer man to pull him to the peg and tie him to it.

One day, when he was happily grazing at the wheat farm, the donkey heard the voice of a female donkey and began to respond to it in ecstasy. Then the watchman and others at the farm at once recognized him as a donkey in a tiger skin and killed him.

Raktamukha then addressed the croc and told him, “You have seen how the donkey met his end because he opened his mouth where he should not. Now, will you leave me or do you want to meet with the same fate as Syamalaka?”

“No, please. I want to know the story of Syamalaka,” said Karalamukha, the croc. Raktamukha told him the following story.

A very wealthy merchant named Eswara lived in a city called Vikantapuram. One day, his four sons-in-law arrived from Ujjain with their families to enjoy the hospitality of their father-in-law. Eswara did everything to make them happy and contented. Six months passed but the sons-in-law did not show any sign of leaving for Ujjain. Eswara was angry but could not directly tell his sons-in-law that they had overstayed.

One day, the father-in-law told his wife, “These guys are enjoying their stay here and are reluctant to leave. I

am sure they will not leave unless we offend them in some way. Tomorrow, when they come for dinner, don't offer them water to wash their feet. They will regard this as an insult and will certainly leave."

Eswara's wife did, as her husband wanted her to do.

The first son-in-law was offended because water was not ready for him to wash his feet and left in a huff.

The second son-in-law was not happy with the place assigned to him at the table and left ranting.

The third complained about the quality of food and packed his bags.

Syamalaka, the fourth son-in-law, however, did not mind these insults and stayed on. The father-in-law had, therefore, to throw him out of his house by force.

"I have seen how wicked you are and I am not a fool to still trust you like the carpenter," said Raktamukha. At once Karalamukha insisted on hearing that story.

## **6.The Carpenter's Wife**

Once upon a time, a carpenter lived in a village with his wife. He had heard bad stories about her and wanted to know the truth about those rumors.

Next day, pretending he was going to the village nearby, he told his wife, "I have to leave the place early morning tomorrow for a village not far away from here. I may have to stay there for a few days. Please get things ready for my travel."

The wife's joy knew no bounds. She cooked his favorite dishes and packed some of it for his travel.

Next morning the carpenter left. His wife put on her best clothes, daubed perfume on her body and thrust flowers in her hair and spent the rest of the day with great difficulty.

When it was dusk, she went to her lover's house and told him, "My wicked husband has left for some place and will not come back for a few days. So, come to my place after every one has gone to sleep and we will have a happy time."

After this invitation, she returned home.

Meanwhile, the carpenter spent the day in a nearby forest and came back before his wife had returned from her lover's place. He hid himself under a cot. Soon, his wife's lover came and joined her. As the wife was

talking to her lover on the bed, her dangling legs hit something hard. She at once thought it could be her husband hiding under the bed to test her.

“I will show my husband how clever I am,” she thought.

When her lover moved close to her, she told him through signs that her husband was under the bed and said, “Sir, you should not touch me. I am a very faithful wife. If you touch me I will turn you into ash.”

“In that case, why did you invite me,” he asked her angrily.

“Please listen, this morning, I went to the temple of the goddess where I heard a divine voice saying, “O woman, I know you are my devotee. But you will become a widow in six months.”

Then I prayed her to tell me a way by which I could save my husband and make him live for hundred years.

“There is a way which is in your hands,” the goddess told me.

“If that is so, I would give my life to save my husband”, I told the goddess.

She told me, “If you go to bed with a stranger, the danger to your husband’s life will shift to the stranger who will die soon.”

The foolish carpenter believed every word of his wife and happy that he had such a faithful wife, he came out of his hiding and told her, “O sacred woman, I paid heed to rumors about you and doubted your character. I wanted to test you and put you on the wrong track making you believe I had left the village. Now I have seen what you are. Come, let us enjoy,” he said and embraced her. In that happiness he carried his wife and the carpenter on his shoulders and paraded the streets of the village.

At this stage Raktamukha, the monkey, told Karalamukha, the croc, “O wicked croc, I now know your evil thoughts. How can I come to your place? It is your nature to be wicked. Friendship with good men will not change your nature. You are too attached to your woman. You are her slave. Such people never hesitate to lose their wealth and friends for her sake.”

As the monkey was telling this story of the carpenter to the croc, someone from the sea came and told the croc that his wife who was fasting had died. The croc felt that living in a house without a wife was like living in a jungle.

He told the monkey, “Friend, pardon me. I have done you harm. So, I have lost my wife. I deserve to die.”

The monkey said, “I know you are a hen-pecked husband. But this is no time for grief because you are rid of a greedy wife. You must celebrate.” The elders have said:

“Consider that evil woman  
Who has no character and  
Who always quarrels with you  
As a curse in the form of a wife.  
That man who wants to be happy  
Should not even take her name.  
He who loves a woman of vice  
Perishes like a moth kissing fire.”

The croc said in grief, “My friend, I have lost your friendship and also my wife. All this is the result of betraying a friend like you. I think I am wise. But it is like the wisdom of the foolish woman who lost her lover and her husband also.”

“How is it?” asked the monkey.

The croc began telling him the story.

There was an old farmer who had a young wife, who always had other men on her mind. She never attended to household jobs. She was always looking for younger men to spend time. One day, a trickster saw her and seeing that she was alone went to her and prayed, “O beauty, I am a widower. The minute I saw you I lost my heart to you. Please give me the pleasure of your company.”

Delighted, the woman told him, “O handsome, my husband has a lot of wealth. He is old and of no use to me. I will bring all the money and jewellery at home to you. Let us run away to a far off place and live there happily ever after.”

The trickster was very happy and asked her to bring all that money and gold to a place where he would be waiting for her. “We will then leave the place quietly,” he told her.

The farmer’s wife waited till it was dark and when her husband fell asleep stole all the money and gold, packed it in a bag and left the house at dawn to meet the trickster at a place he had indicated. The trickster took the bag full of money and gold from her on the pretext that he would carry it and began their journey. After two miles, they stopped because there was a river to cross.

The trickster thought, “What do I do with a woman? If someone else were to set eyes on her, I have to protect her. It is better I give her up but take the money with me.”

With these thoughts in mind he told the woman, “Look, my dear, it is very difficult to cross the river. I will first ferry the money bag to the other side of the river and keeping it there I will come back and carry you on my back.”

She said, “Okay” and gave the bag to the trickster. He asked her to give her clothes also because he said clothes would hinder swimming. She gave away her clothes also. The trickster left with the bag and her clothes.

Covering her naked body with her hands, the woman began waiting restlessly for the trickster to return. Just then a jackal with a piece of meat in his mouth happened to pass by. The jackal saw a fish that had come out of water and in trying to get at it he dropped the meat piece and ran towards it. But the fish, seeing the rushing jackal, jumped back into water. Disappointed, the jackal went back to pick up the piece of meat. But a kite dived down fast and took it away before the jackal could reach it.

The woman laughed at the jackal that had lost the fish and also the piece of meat. Hurt by the woman's behavior, the jackal said, "You may be twice as intelligent as I am. But what is the use? You have lost your husband, your lover and your wealth also."

In the middle of the story, some one from the sea came and disturbed Karalamukha and told him that another big croc had occupied his house. The croc did not know what to do. He had lost a friend (Raktamukha), his wife and the house. He began to wonder how he could throw out the big croc from his house. He went to the monkey who had already climbed back to the top of the tree and asked him for his advice.

Raktamukha told the croc, "You fool, why do you still bother me? You have tried to kill me to make your wife happy. Now, you have come for advice. I cannot give it to such fools like you who ask for advice but do not follow it. He who does not heed the advice of wise men will perish like the camel at the hands of the lion."

Without any shame, the croc asked the monkey to tell him that story. The monkey told him the following story.

## **7.The Price of Indiscretion**

In the city of Nagara, there was a carpenter whose name was Ujjwalaka and who was extremely poor. One day he was pained to realize that every one else in his profession was rich and happy and that he alone was very poor. He thought Nagara was not the proper place for him to prosper and that he must go out and seek his fortune elsewhere. Then he left that city and began his journey to a new country. When the sun was fading, he reached a cave in a forest.

There he saw a female camel that separated from her caravan and just then delivered a child. The carpenter gave up his plans to go to another country and went home taking the camel and her calf with him. Every day he would go into the forest and bring back with him bundles of tender leaves for the camel and her child to eat. The she camel regained and her strength and the calf now became an adult. The carpenter began selling camel milk and making good money.

Ujjwalaka loved the camel so much that he bought a bell and hung it to her neck. One day he thought to himself, "If one camel can bring so much money for me, how much more would I earn if I buy more camels and sell their milk?" He told his wife that he would borrow some money to go to Gujarat and buy a she camel and that she should take care of the she camel and her calf till he returned from Gujarat.

He went to Gujarat and returned home with a she camel. Slowly, the number of camels he had increased several times. He appointed a keeper to take care of the camel herd he had on the condition that he would give one camel to the keeper every year as remuneration. The keeper was also free to drink camel milk twice a day. Now, everything was fine for the carpenter and he and his wife thus lived happily ever after.

The camels used to go every day to a nearby forest to feed on the fresh green leaves available in plenty in the forest. After spending a lot of time in the forest, eating and playing, the camels trekked back home. But the senior she camel stayed on in the forest and joined the herd later. The other camels thought that the she camel was a fool to go her separate ways and what would she do if a wild animal attacked her.

One day a lion saw all the camels leaving the forest in a herd and the she camel staying back and loafing about. By the time she finished her leisurely grazing, the others left and reached home. The she camel lost her way and was in panic when the lion, which was following her, pounced on her and soon tore her to pieces.

“That’s why I tell you that he who does not follow the advice of wise men perishes like the camel,” said the monkey.

The croc replied, “You are right, if you follow advice given for your good you will face no danger either here or in the heaven above. Yet, what is great about doing good to a person who is good? He who helps a person who has done him harm is considered great by learned people. That’s why take pity on me and give me advice.”

The monkey said, “In that case, you go and fight that big croc who has occupied your home. If you die in that battle, you will go to heaven. If you win the battle, you will get back your house. Know this from me:

“Conquer a good man with humility,  
Vanquish a hero with strategy,  
Overcome the poor through small gifts  
And crush equals with power.”

“How is that possible?” Karalamukha asked Raktamukha. Another story begins.

## **8.The Jackal’s Strategy**

Mahachataraka was a jackal living in a forest. One day, he found the body of an elephant and was happy that it would have food for many days. However, he was not able to bite into the thick hide of the elephant and was circling around the body when a lion came that way. The jackal humbly prostrated before the lion and said, “My lord, I am your obedient servant. At your command, I am keeping a vigil on the body of the elephant. Please help yourself.”

The lion said, "You know my friend, I do not eat something others have killed. You may take it as my gift to you."

"I am touched by your magnanimity, my lord," said the jackal.

After the lion had left, a tiger came on the scene. The jackal thought, "I got rid of one menace through humility. How do I escape this fellow? He will not yield to any strategy I know. The only way of keeping him at bay is cunning. Let me try it."

The jackal then went half way to greet the tiger and said, "O uncle, why are you entering this area of death? The lion has killed this elephant and asked me to keep watch on it. He has gone to take bath. Before going, he told me to inform him if any tiger happened to come here. He vowed to kill all the tigers because long time ago a tiger had nibbled at an elephant he had killed. He told me that from that day he had sworn to kill all tigers."

These words frightened the tiger.

He told the jackal, "Son, save my life. When the lion comes, don't tell him I had come this way. Please."

On receiving an assurance from the jackal, the tiger hurriedly left the scene. Then came a leopard.

The Jackal thought, "This fellow has strong and sharp teeth. I will persuade him to pierce the hide of the elephant."

Addressing the leopard, the jackal said, "My son, you have come this way after a long time. You seem to be hungry. Why don't you be my guest? See this body of the elephant killed by the lion. He has asked me to keep an eye on the body. So, have a feast before he returns."

The leopard said, "Uncle, how can I accept your invitation. If I want to live long I should not touch this elephant. I will leave now."

The jackal assured him, "Don't worry, you go ahead. I will alert you when the lion comes."

The leopard then began attacking the elephant and when he tore the hide, the jackal cried, "Run. The lion is coming."

In this way, the jackal managed to get rid of the leopard also.

When the jackal began feasting on the elephant flesh, another jackal came that way. He was very angry and looked very strong. The first jackal remembered the last line of the stanza "crush equals with power" and attacked the trespasser with great ferocity and killed him.

Raktamukha told Karalamukha, “In the manner of the jackal in the story, you also kill that encroaching croc. Otherwise, it will be your end. But you must be wary like Chitranga, the dog, of your own kith and kin.”

“Who is this Chitranga? Can I learn anything from his story,” asked the croc.

“Why not?” said the monkey and began telling him the story of Chitranga.

Chitranga was a dog living in a city in the south visited by famine for many years. Dogs began dying by the hundreds because there was no food. There was a danger that they would disappear as species. So, Chitranga left that city and came to a far-off city in search of food. There he found the house of a wealthy man whose wife was a lazy and careless woman who would not close the doors of the house.

Every day, Chitranga would sneak into the open house and have his fill. But he really could not enjoy his food because as soon as he came out of the house, street mongrels attacked him and severely wounded him.

Chitranga thought, “Oh, I made a mistake in coming here. Home was better even if there was no food. There was no struggle like this for food. Let me go home.”

In the end, Chitranga left that city and returned home.

Seeing him return from abroad, Chitranga’s friends asked him, “Tell us everything about the country you have visited. How are the people there? What is their culture?”

The dog said, “The less said the better about that country. Everything is freely available because the women are careless. Yet your own kith and kin deprive you of this joy.”

The croc was then impressed by the monkey’s good advice and decided to fight the encroaching croc. He fought his enemy with great valor and killed him and regained the house occupied by him. The elders have said:

“There is no true happiness in  
What you get without effort.  
Even an old bullock survives  
On food that comes his way.”

Thus ended the dialogue between Raktamukha and Karalamukha. With that ends the fourth Tantra of Vishnu Sarma.

## **PART 5: Last Strategy**

*The fifth strategy begins with the following verse:*

*“Whoever without judgment  
Does what the foolish barber  
In this chapter did  
Comes to eternal grief.”*

### **1.Imprudence**

This is the story that shows how true is the above verse.

Manibhadra was a merchant living in the southern city of Pataliputra. He was a man of principles who had lost all his wealth. His poverty made him very sad and one night he reflected on his condition and thought:

“Neither character nor patience  
Neither humility nor pedigree  
Dispels a poor man’s gloom.”

Even if a man has merit, the pressures of earning a livelihood overshadow such merit. The need to look after the family wears out one’s brilliance. A poor man’s house is like a sky without stars, a lake without water.

“A poor man is shunned even if  
He has character and pedigree.  
A wealthy man shines in society  
Without merit and caste roots.  
What he does is never shameful  
But to be poor is always a crime.”

After thinking a lot about his condition, Manibhadra decided that death alone could solve his problems. With these thoughts he fell asleep and saw a dream. In his dream, a Jain monk appeared and said, “O merchant, don’t give in to self-pity. I am Padmanidhi, the treasure collected by your ancestors. Tomorrow morning when I will visit you in this guise, you will hit my head with a stick and I will turn into gold. You can live happily ever after.”

When the merchant woke up next morning he wondered whether what he saw in the dream was real or

unreal. "This may not be true. It could just be an illusion because I have been thinking about money all the time," he thought and remembered the following poem:

"Their dreams never come true  
Who are sick, grief stricken,  
Lovelorn and infatuated."

Meanwhile, a barber came to the merchant's house because his wife had called him for pedicure. Very soon came the Jain monk who appeared in the merchant's dream. Manibhadra was happy to see him and at once reached for the stick and struck him on his head. The monk turned into a statue of gold. The merchant then gave clothes and money to the barber and told him not to pass this information to anyone.

The barber went home and thought, "if a monk turns into gold if I strike him, I will invite all the monks and kill them and I can have lots of money." He passed the night with great difficulty. Next morning he went to the Jain monastery, went round its precincts three times and prostrated before the idol of Jinendra and sang the praise of the Jains thus:

"Victory to the Jain monks  
Who keep lust and love at bay  
Who turn the mind into a desert  
Where desire does not grow.  
Blessed are the hands that worship  
The enlightened Jinendra  
And blessed is the tongue  
That praises the great Saint."

After this prayer, the barber met the chief monk and knelt before him seeking his blessings. The monk blessed him and asked the barber the reason that brought him to the monastery. The barber pleaded humbly that the chief monk and others should accept his hospitality.

The chief monk said, "O my son, we are not Brahmins who are invited home to be honoured. We are mendicants who visit Jain homes and accept what is necessary to keep us alive. Please go away and don't embarrass me."

Disappointed, the barber said, "O great seer, I have made all preparations to receive you. Yet I cannot press you. You will do what you think is best."

The barber went home and kept a stick ready after checking the exits of the house. He went to the monastery again and stood there pleading with the monks to accept his offerings. Taking pity on the barber, the monks agreed to visit his home. The elders have rightly said:

"Man becomes old and infirm,  
Loses his hair and teeth and  
Cannot even hear and see properly.  
Everything in his body

Degenerates but not desire.”

When the poor monks trooped into his house, the barber closed all the exits and began assaulting them. Some of them died while some were crying with pain. The sheriff, passing by, heard this commotion and asked his men to immediately find out what was happening. The men saw what the barber had done and presented him before a magistrate. The barber admitted that he had killed some of the monks. The magistrate ordered that the barber be impaled.

The judges then said that no one should do like the barber without understanding the situation for the learned have said that he who does things without discretion or prudence regrets his action like the Brahmin’s wife.

## **2.The Brahmani and The Mongoose**

In a city in the north lived a Brahmin whose name was Deva Sarma. His wife delivered a son at the same time as a she-mongoose gave birth to a male child. The Brahmani (Brahmin’s wife) adopted the mongoose’s son and began bringing him as she would her own son. Yet the Brahmani never left her son alone because she did not trust the mongoose, fearing that she would some day harm her son. The elders have said that one’s own son, however immoral, ugly, foolish and wicked, are his parent’s darling. It is said that

“The bonds of a son are stronger than  
The bonds of a friend, father, or well wisher.”

One day, leaving for the lake to bring water, the Brahmin’s wife told her husband to keep a watch on their son. Soon, a cobra entered the house. Fearing danger to the son of the Brahmin, the mongoose attacked the cobra and killed him. Hearing the footfalls of his mother Brahmani, the mongoose, with a mouth smeared by blood, went to greet her. When the mother saw the mongoose with his mouth oozing blood, thought that what she had feared had happened. Without a second thought, the Brahmin’s wife threw the pot of water on the mongoose and the mongoose died as a result.

Mourning the death of the mongoose, the woman entered the house and found that her child was soundly sleeping in the cradle and also the cobra bitten to pieces by the mongoose. The woman was struck by grief that she had killed the mongoose that was like a son to her. Meanwhile, her husband returned and she began cursing him, “You miser, you didn’t heed my word and went out for alms. Self-interest is good. Too much of it will earn a man the fate of Chakradhara,” the Brahmani said.

“Who is Chakradhara and what is his story?” asked the husband. Following is his story as told by the Brahmin’s wife.

Four young Brahmins were living in a city, suffering utter poverty.

Unable to bear it, they thought, “It is better to live in a forest where only wild animals live and no human

beings than to suffer poverty. Sleeping on a bed of grass is better than leading forever a life of want and suffering.”

So, they packed their bags and set out in search of prosperity and happiness. The learned have always said that the grief-stricken man always gives up truth, relatives, mother and even motherland. It was no wonder that the four Brahmins left their place and after several sojourns reached the great city of Ujjain. They bathed in Sipra river and went to the Maha Kaleswar temple. When they emerged from the temple after the worship of Kaleswar, Bhairavananda Swami, a sadhu, greeted them. All of them prostrated before him in reverence and accompanied him to his monastery.

The Swamiji asked the young men, “From where are you coming and where are you going? What brought you here?”

“We are in search of prosperity. For us, it is either death or wealth. You know that adventurous people achieve their goals even if they have to sacrifice their lives. Destiny is all-powerful. Still, nothing can be achieved without human effort. Wells, tanks and ponds become full when it rains. But man too brings water out of the earth by digging deep wells. So, please show us a way to achieve our goal,” the Brahmin boys pleaded with the Swamiji.

Moved by their plight and determination, the Swamiji gave them four sanctified tablets and told them, “Each one of you takes a tablet and travel towards the Himalayas. Stop where the tablet slips out of your hand and look at that spot for treasures. Dig the treasures out and bring them back home and be happy.”

They began their journey and after some days of travel, the tablet dropped from the hand of one of the four Brahmins. They stopped there and after digging the earth, they found plenty of copper. The first Brahmin told the others that all of them could mine as much copper as they could and take it home. The others said, “What is there in copper. Let’s go ahead.” The first Brahmin said they could go if they wanted but he would go home taking all the copper he could carry.

The other three continued their journey till a tablet dropped to the ground from the hand of one of the three. They dug there and found plenty of silver. The second Brahmin suggested that they should be happy with the silver they found and go home. The other two said he could take all the silver if he wanted. They would, however, continue their search for gold. The second Brahmin, happy with what he had found, took silver and went home.

Now, the remaining two Brahmins trekked some more distance until a third tablet dropped. The two dug there and found gold. The third man said that gold was better than copper and silver and they must now go back because there was nothing more precious than gold. The fourth Brahmin did not agree and replied that he would continue his search. The third man took the gold and went home.

It was now the turn of the fourth man. He was now tired and thirsty, and on top of it he had lost his way and began wandering aimlessly. Then he saw a man completely soaked in blood and a wheel whirring over his head like a halo. The Brahmin went near him and asked, “Sir, who are you and what is this wheel over your head? Can you show me a place where water is available?” As he finished his questions, the wheel shifted from the stranger’s head and came over the Brahmin’s head.

Then followed a dialogue:

“What is this wheel which has come over my head,” asked the Brahmin.

“I have no idea. It tormented me as it is doing to you now,” the stranger said.

“At least tell me how I can get rid of it. It is so painful.”

“If any person like you with a tablet comes here and talks to you, the wheel will shift on to his head.”

“How long have you been bearing this hurt,” asked the Brahmin.

“I have no idea. But I think it was in the reign of Lord Rama,” said the stranger.

“Who gave you food and water?”

“This place is where Kubera has stored all his wealth. Those who trespass on this area will have no thirst or hunger but a lot of pain inflicted by this wheel. Only such persons who have a magic tablet like you had can come here,” said the stranger and took leave of the Brahmin.

When the last Brahmin, whose name was Chakradhara, did not return, his friend Suvarnasiddhi went back following the trail left by his friend and found him bleeding and in great pain with a wheel over his head. He asked him how he got into that plight. Chakradhara told him what had happened so far.

Suvarnasiddhi then said, “I told you in many ways not to be greedy. You did not heed my word. You are learned but not wise. Wisdom is always superior to learning. Foolish people perish like the Brahmin boys who brought the lion to life.”

“How is that?” asked Chakradhara.

### 3.

#### **The Lion That Sprang to Life**

Four friends lived in a city. Three of them were very learned in all sciences but had no common sense. The fourth boy named Subuddhi was not well-versed in scriptures or sciences but had a fund of common sense. One day all of them thought that there was no use of their learning unless it brought them money to live happily. Therefore, they decided to go out and seek the patronage of kings. They set out to meet patrons of

learning.

On the way, the eldest of them pointing out to the fourth man told the others, “Friends, this fellow is an unlettered fool. He has common sense and nothing else. I am not going to share my earnings with this fellow. Let him go home.”

The second man also supported the eldest boy’s suggestion.

But the third boy said, “Friends, it is not proper to send him back. We played together and he is one of us. Let us share our gains with him because elders have said:

“He who has a narrow mind  
Thinks this is mine, this is his.  
To a large-hearted person  
The whole world is his family.”

In the end, the other two agreed with the third boy’s suggestion and let the common sense man accompany them. As they continued to travel they reached a forest where they saw a heap of bones. One of them told the rest, “Look, here is an opportunity to test our learning. Some animal is dead. Let us bring it to life using the knowledge we have acquired.”

The first man said, “Okay, I will use my learning to assemble the bones into a skeleton.” With the power of learning he ordered all the bones to come together and become a skeleton.

When the skeleton was ready, the second man commanded flesh and blood to fill the skeleton and skin to cover it.

When the third man was about to bring life to the body, Subuddhi, who had only common sense, warned him, “Look, this looks like the body of a lion. If it comes to life, he will kill all of us.”

The man who was to put life into the body of the animal told Subuddhi, “You are a fool. Do you think I will lose this opportunity to test my learning.”

Subuddhi then told him to wait so that he could climb up a tree for safety and went up a tree. When the first man gave him life, the lion came alive and killed all the three learned men.

Suvarnabuddhi continued, That’s why I have always said:

“Even if one is very learned  
If he is without common sense  
Becomes the butt of ridicule  
Like the learned in this story.”

“What is that story? Please tell me,” asked Chakradhara. Suvarnasiddhi began to tell the story.

There lived four young Brahmin boys in a city. They were good friends eager to go out and acquire knowledge. They went to a place called Kanyakubj. They joined a monastery and began studying sciences and scriptures. After twelve years of learning they thought it was time to go home and asked their guru for permission to leave the monastery. After taking his permission, they started their homeward journey.

After a few days of travel, they reached a point where the road forked. They were not sure which road would take them home. Then they saw a funeral procession. One of the boys opened his book of learning and read out “Follow the path taken by great men.”

The boy told his other friends, “Let us join and follow these great men leading the funeral procession.”

They thus followed the procession to the cremation ground where they met a donkey.

The second Brahmin boy opened his book of shastras and found this verse in it:

“He who comes to your aid  
In times of danger, famine,  
Cremation and invasion  
Is truly a friend in deed.”

Then he told his friends that the donkey was, therefore, their best friend. At once one of them held on to the neck of the donkey. Another washed his feet. After this ceremony, they looked around and found a camel. The four of them began figuring out what the animal is. The third man opened his book of knowledge and read out, “What moves fast is righteousness” and decided that the camel must be the embodiment of righteousness.

The fourth man referred to his book and found that righteousness and friendship should always be together. They then tied the donkey and the camel together. Informed of this, the donkey’s owner rushed to beat the four Brahmins. But they escaped before he came. They continued to travel till they reached a river and found a big leaf floating over the water.

One of them saw it and, remembering a line from a verse describing how a leaf helped a man cross the river, jumped on it and was being carried down by the current. A second Brahmin saw his friend in distress and remembered a verse:

“When total loss stares in the face  
A wise man sacrifices half and  
Manages with what remains.”

So, with a view to save half of his friend, the second Brahmin cut off the head of the drowning man.

The remaining three resumed their travel only to stop when three villagers invited them for a feast. When the host served a dish resembling noodles to the first Brahmin, he thought “what is long should be discarded” and left the place without food.

The second man was served pancakes. He thought, “What spreads is not good for health” and refused to eat.

Doughnuts were served to the third Brahmin. He remembered that “There is peril where there is a hole” and left. The three Brahmins later went home.

Suvarnasiddhi ended the story and turned to Chakradhara and told him:

“Even if one is very learned  
If he is without common sense  
Becomes the butt of ridicule  
Like the learned in this story.”

Chakradhara protested, “That is not true,” and quoted this verse:

“What God chooses to save  
Survives sans human effort and  
No human effort can save  
What God ordains to perish.”

As the frog said, “the one with thousand tricks sat on the head of the fisherman, the one with hundred tricks is hanging by the fisherman’s arm and I with only one trick am happily swimming in the water.”

“How is that?” asked Suvarnasiddhi. Chakradhara begins the story.

## **4. The Tale of Two Fish and a Frog**

Two fish named Sahasrabuddhi and Satabuddhi made a lake their home. They had a frog as a friend whose name was Ekabuddhi. Every day, they used to meet on the bank of the lake and discuss everything under the sun and disperse at sunset. One day, they saw some fishermen equipped with nets and each carrying a basket full of fish came that way and saw the lake and noticed that it was full of good fish. They told themselves that they should come early the next morning and bait the fish.

The fish heard their conversation and were very worried. Then the frog asked Satabuddhi for advice.

“O Satabuddhi, you have heard what the fishermen were planning. Now tell us what we should do. Should

we remain in the lake or go somewhere else.”

Sahsrabuddhi answered the question, “Don’t worry. You should not be scared by just words. The learned have said “The world is still safe because the dreams of snakes and wicked men never come true.” The fishermen may not even come tomorrow. If they come, I am here to save you.”

Satabuddhi said, “You are a genius. What you say is correct. There is nothing that accomplished men cannot conquer. Remember how Chanakya had killed all the armed Nandas.

“Where one cannot pierce sun and wind  
The wits of a resourceful man enter.  
One should not leave motherland, for,  
Nothing is happier than one’s own land.”

Then, Ekabuddhi, the frog, said, “Friends, flight is the only thing I know. So, I and my wife will leave this place tonight itself.”

Accordingly, the frog left the lake immediately. Next day, the fishermen came and netted lot of fish, frogs, crabs, turtles etc. and also Satabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi and killed all of them. One of them carried Satabuddhi on his head because he was heavier and slung Sahsrabuddhi to his arm because he was long.

Ekabuddhi showed this scene to his wife and said, “Didn’t I tell you what the fishermen will do? Now, see the plight of Satabuddhi and Sahasrabuddhi.”

At the end, Chakradhara said, “O Suvarnasiddhi, you said that wisdom is superior to knowledge. But I say that wisdom alone without education does not serve any purpose.”

“True,” said Suvarnasiddhi. “But it is not wise to rule out the advice of a friend. Greed made you ignore my advice. Haven’t you heard how the donkey ignored the advice of the jackal and got a millstone around his neck?”

There was a donkey named Uddhata living in a village, carrying clothes and other burdens for his master. At night when there was no work, he used to trespass into farms outside the village and would come home at dawn for fear of assault by farm owners. One day Uddhata happened to meet a jackal in a farm outside the village and both soon became friends.

Every night they would go together to the cucumber farms and sumptuously feed on cucumber. At dawn, they would go home after they had their fill. One day, in a happy mood, the donkey told the jackal, “My son, look, how pleasantly serene the night is. It inspires me to sing. Tell me what raaga would you like me to begin with?”

The jackal said, “Uncle, why do you unnecessarily invite a peril? We have come here to stealthily rampage cucumber crop. Pimps and thieves must always observe silence. Haven’t the learned said:

“He who cannot control cough  
Or cannot keep sleep at bay  
Or cannot resist good food  
Should not burgle a house.”

“Your music has no melody. One can hear it like a trumpet from a mile. The watchmen here are asleep. If your music wakes them, they will either impound us or kill us. So, give up that bright idea and let us eat these sweet cucumbers.”

“You stupid child, you live in the wilderness. That’s why you don’t know to enjoy music. It is only the very lucky people who are destined to listen to music sung in moonlight,” said Uddhata.

The jackal replied, “True. But you do not know what is music. You know only to bray loudly. So, please give up your foolish idea.”

The donkey was angry and retorted, “You are an idiot to say that I don’t know music. Sage Bharata was the author of music, which is regarded as the fifth Veda with hundred and eighty-five notational patterns. To Gods, nothing is dearer than music. It is through music that Ravana won favours from Lord Shiva.”

The jackal said, “All right uncle, let me first get out of this farm and keep a watch outside to alert you if anyone comes this way. You can then leisurely sing to your heart’s content.” The jackal then left the scene quietly.

The moment the donkey began singing, one of the watchmen woke up and struck it with a stick till he dropped to the ground. The watchman then brought an old millstone and hung it to the donkey’s neck. The donkey soon recovered from the blows the watchman showered on him and managed to run with the millstone around his neck.

The jackal saw his plight and said, “You haven’t paid heed to my advice. See how you have got a millstone around your neck.”

After he finished this story, Suvarnasiddhi said, “Friend, you haven’t cared to listen to me.”

Chakradhara agreed with him and said, “What you say is true. The learned have said:

“He who has no wits of his own  
Or does not heed advice of friends  
Perishes like the weaver, Mandhara.”

On Suvarnasiddhi showing interest, Chakradhara began Mandharaka’s story.

## 5.The Story of The Weaver

There was a weaver called Mandharaka in a southern city. One day, when he was weaving clothes, the wooden frames necessary for weaving were totally damaged. He went to the forest to bring wood to make new frames. From the forest he drifted towards the seashore where he saw a gigantic tree and thought that if he could cut wood from the tree it would stand him in good stead throughout his life.

As he started to cut the tree, a Yaksha living on that tree said, “O weaver, this tree is my home. So I have to protect it. I am very comfortable here enjoying the cool breeze coming from the sea.”

Mandharaka said, “Sir, If I do not cut the tree and take home its wood, my family will starve and die. So, please go somewhere else. I have to cut this tree.”

“All right, if you do not cut the tree, I will give you a boon of your choice,” said the Yaksha.

The weaver said, “Sir, in that case, I will go home and consult my wife and friends. You can give me the boon later.”

On the Yaksha agreeing to it, Mandharaka went home and on his way he met his friend who was a barber and asked him, “Friend, a Yaksha has given me a boon of my choice and gave me time to consult friends and my wife. What boon do you want me to ask him?”

“Ask him to give you a kingdom. You will be the king and I will be your minister. Both of us can enjoy life here and hereafter,” said the barber.

“True. But let me ask my wife also,” said Mandharaka. The barber warned the weaver against consulting his wife and said quoting learned people:

“A wise man can give to his woman  
Fine clothes, pearls and diamonds;  
But never consult her on his affairs  
Because women have low wits.”

And as Shankaracharya said that home that is run by women or children or tricksters will meet ruin in the end.”

The weaver gently ignored the advice of the barber saying that he would nevertheless consult his wife and went home. He told his wife the whole story of the Yaksha and the boon he had offered.

Mandharaka also told his wife that his friend, the barber, had advised him to ask for a kingdom. His wife said, “O my lord, how intelligent is a barber? Never listen to his word. No wise man would consult children or barbers or servants or beggars. Also,

“Kingship has too many problems;  
Conspiracies take away your peace.  
With the crown come not only thorns  
But also sinister plots and treason.  
It was for the sake of kingdom  
Lord Rama lived in the woods,  
Pandava brothers fled into exile,  
The Yadava dynasty disappeared,  
King Nala embraced anonymity.”

“Therefore, no wise man will invite kingship that leads to killing brothers, friends and relatives,” said the weaver’s wife.

The weaver replied, “My dear, what you say is true. But you haven’t told me what boon I should choose.”

The wife said, “Every day you are able to weave a single piece of cloth. That’s barely enough to meet our daily needs. Therefore ask the Yaksha to give you another head and two more hands. That helps you to weave two pieces of cloth every day instead of one. The first piece will help us meet our daily needs. The second one will help us meet special needs. We can sail through life comfortably and happily.”

The weaver was happy with the advice his wife gave and went to the Yaksha and prayed to him, “Sir, you have kindly given me a choice. I request you to give me two more hands and an extra head.”

At once, he had four hands and two heads. Happily, he began his homeward journey. On the way people saw him and mistaking him for some monster hammered him with sticks and stones. The poor weaver died on the spot,

Chakradhara continued, “That’s why, as I have said earlier:

“He who has no wits of his own  
Or does not heed advice of friends  
Perishes like the weaver, Mandhara.”

“When the devil of greed dances on their head, people will become objects of ridicule like me.” The elders have said:

“He who covets the impossible  
Or builds castles in the air  
Comes to certain grief like  
Poor Soma Sarma’s father.”

Suvarnasiddhi asked him how. Chakradhara tells him the following story about Soma Sarma's father.

## 6. The Miserly Father

Swabhavakripan was a Brahmin living in a city in the south. He was known for his miserliness. Every day, he would go out begging and save some corn flour people gave him as alms. He stored such flour in an earthen pot and when it was full he hung the pot to a peg above his bed so that he could keep an eye on it.

He returned home one day very tired and went to sleep and began dreaming: "This pot is full of flour and if there is a famine it would fetch me a very high price. With that money, I will buy two she goats that in course of time will become a big herd. I will sell them for a huge profit and buy cows with that money. Then I will buy buffaloes and later horses. And, when the stables are full of horses I will sell them and buy lots of gold."

"With this gold, I will build a huge house with four floors. Seeing my riches one Brahmin will offer the hand of his beautiful daughter to me. She will soon deliver a son and I will name him Soma Sarma. When he is a year old, I will go and hide in the stable and call out to him to find me out. But the son drifts dangerously towards the horses. I shout at my wife to come and take him away. Busy with domestic chores she ignores my call. Then I shall kick her."

The dream shattered when he kicked the pot of flour hanging from the peg and spilled all its contents over his body. He now looked like a white ghost.

Chakradhara resumed, "That is why, I said:

"He who covets the impossible  
Or builds castles in the air  
Comes to certain grief like  
Poor Soma Sarma's father."

"I don't see anything in this to blame you," said Suvarnasiddhi. "Every one becomes a slave to greed. As the learned have said,

"He who is overwhelmed by greed  
And doesn't weigh its consequences,  
Will become a victim of deceit  
Like King Chandra in this story."

Suvarnasiddhi then told the story of King Chandra to Chakradhara.

Once upon a time there was a king named Chandra ruling a small state. His children were fond of playing with monkeys. So the king ordered a number of monkeys to be brought to the palace and asked his servants to feed them well and look after their needs. The leader of the monkeys was an old scholar well versed in statecraft, specially the works of Sukracharya, Brihaspati and Chanakya. The old monkey trained the younger ones also in statecraft.

The king had a stable of goats that his young sons used to ride. One of the goats was fond of food and would daily sneak into the kitchen at any time of the day and make a clean sweep of whatever was available in the kitchen. If the cook chanced to see him stealing food, he would throw at it whatever was handy, a stick or a brass pot.

The monkey leader saw this drama between the cook and the wily goat and thought: "I am sure this tussle between the cook and the goat will lead to the ruin of my tribe. This goat has become a slave to food. The cook will throw at it whatever is nearby. It may be a stick or if it is not readily available he may use an ember from the hearth to throw at the goat. This will set ablaze the goat's fur-covered body making him run into the stable that would soon catch fire and burn the horses. The great veterinarian Salihotra has said the fat of monkeys is the best medicine for burns. That will be the end of monkeys."

The monkey leader then summoned all the younger ones and told them that the feud between the cook and the goat would certainly do harm to them. In their own interest they should leave the palace as early as possible. He quoted the scholars saying:

"He who wants to live in peace  
Must leave a house of daily strife.  
Conflict breaks up kingdoms  
Like bad words separate friends"

The younger ones, however, refused to listen to the advice of the old monkey. They told the leader, "Sir, you have become old and senile. We are not going to leave this palace where we have the best food available. What do we get there to eat in the jungles? We cannot eat the indifferent food in the forest."

Extremely unhappy at their response, the old monkey said, "You have no idea of the price you will pay for the comforts of the palace. They won't last long. I cannot see the end of our tribe. I am leaving. He who spares himself the spectacle of a friend in distress, of his house occupied by an enemy or of the division of his country, is the happiest."

The old monkey left all of them with a heavy heart.

Some days later, the wily goat entered the royal kitchen and the cook, failing to see anything handy to punish it, took out a burning piece of wood from the hearth and hurled it at the goat. His fur afire, he ran in panic into the stable where his burning body set ablaze the hay stacked there. Several horses perished in the fire. The king consulted expert veterinarians who advised him to use monkey fat as unguent for horses suffering from burns.

The king ordered all monkeys to be killed and their fat used to heal the burns of the horses. The old monkey

was distressed by the death of her progeny and began planning as to how he could take revenge on the king for killing all monkeys. Wandering restlessly in the forest, the old monkey saw a lake full of lotuses. On deeper inspection of the lake, the senior monkey found footprints of animals and human beings entering the lake but not footprints leaving the lake.

The monkey at once realized that there must be some wicked crocodile in the lake and that it was better to drink water with the tube of a lotus. As he began drinking water, a monster emerged from the lake wearing a pearl necklace. The monster addressed the monkey and said, "You seem to be an intelligent chap. You drank water without entering the lake. I am impressed by the presence of your mind. Ask anything you want."

The monkey asked, "Sir, how many lives can you take in one go?"

The monster said, "I can swallow tens, hundreds and thousands at one time. All this I can do only when they enter the lake. Outside the water, even a jackal can challenge me."

The monkey said, "I have to settle scores with a king. If you can lend me the pearl necklace on your body, I will somehow persuade the king and all his men to enter the lake for hidden wealth. Then you can kill all of them."

Trusting the monkey, the monster gave him the pearl necklace. The monkey reached the kingdom of Chandra. People saw the dazzling necklace and asked him how he got it. The monkey told them about the lake. When the word reached the king, he sent for the monkey and asked him how he got the necklace.

On the monkey telling him everything about the lake, the king, led by the monkey, and accompanied by his family, ministers and followers, reached the lake. The monkey told the king that it was better that all his men entered the lake at the same time at dawn. But the monkey told the king, "My lord, you will not go with them. I will take you separately to a spot where you can get a large store of pearl necklaces."

According to the plan, all the king's men entered the lake at the same time and were killed by the monster. When nobody came out of the water for a long time, the king became suspicious and asked the monkey about the delay in his men coming out of the lake. The monkey immediately sprang to the top of a tree and told the king:

"O king, the monster inside the lake has killed all your people. You have killed my people. This is my reply to that treachery."

Suvarnasiddhi concluded the story by repeating the earlier verse:

"He who is overwhelmed by greed  
And doesn't weigh its consequences,  
Will become a victim of deceit  
Like King Chandra in this story."

Suvarnasiddhi then asked Chakradhara for permission to leave. Chakradhara said that it was not good to desert a friend in distress.

Suvarnasiddhi said, “What you say is true. Yet, it is always better to do according to what the wise men advise. Otherwise, I will have to repent later like you. As the learned have said, “Those who are not united will perish like the great bird which had two heads on a single torso but ate different fruits.”

On Chakradhara’s request Suvarnasiddhi began telling that story.

## **7. Tale Of The Bird With Two Heads**

A great bird named Bharunda lived on the banks of a lake. He had two heads but a single body. One day, as the bird was wandering on the bank of the lake, he found a fruit, which was as delicious as ambrosia. One of his heads mumbled, “Oh what a fruit. I am sure the heavens have sent it for me. I am so lucky.”

Hearing this, the second head said, “O brother, let me also taste the fruit you are praising so much.”

The first head laughed and said, “Both of us have the same stomach. It makes no difference whether I eat it or you eat it. I shall give it to our beloved. She will be very happy.” Bharunda thus gave the fruit to his wife. The second head was disappointed at this action of the first head.

One day, the second head found a poisonous fruit and told the first head, “You treacherous fellow. For what you have done to me, I will eat this poisonous fruit and avenge your insult.”

The second head said, “You fool, if you eat that, both of us will die because we have the same body.”

Ignoring his warning, the second head ate the poisonous fruit and both of them died.

After listening to the story, Chakradhara said, “Friend, what you say is true. You can go home but don’t go alone. Haven’t our elders said:

“Alone, do not eat delicious food,  
Do not sleep when others are awake,  
Neither should you travel alone  
Nor ponder alone over matters.”

“See how the Brahmin has survived because he had heeded his mother’s advice and took a crab as his traveling companion.”

“How was that?” asked Suvarnasiddhi.

Brahmadatta was a Brahmin boy living in a city with his old mother. One day, when he was planning to travel to another village, his mother told him not to travel alone but take someone with him. The boy said that the way to the village was safe and that he was leaving on an urgent business. He asked her not to be afraid.

Knowing that he was determined to go, the mother went to the well in the backyard and took out a crab and asked his son to keep the crab with him during his travel. The boy then put the crab in a camphor box and put that box in a vessel and set out on his journey. That being summer, the day was very hot and the Brahmin halted and took rest under a big tree.

From the hollow of the tree, a snake emerged and, attracted by the fragrance of camphor, swallowed the box containing the crab. The crab came out of the box and sliced the head of the snake and killed him. The Brahmin boy woke and found the dead snake and the camphor box. When he saw the crab coming out of the box alive, he at once realized what had happened.

He then remembered the words of his mother and thought he did well by heeding her advice that saved him from death. He also recalled the words of the elders:

“Those who feed on the rich  
Do not help them in distress.  
When their wealth is in tact  
Everyone hovers around the rich.”

Chakradhara concluded his story telling Suvarnasiddhi how important to always have a companion. He then agreed to Suvarnasiddhi taking leave of him.

*Thus ends the fifth strategy Vishnu Sharman narrated to the sons of Amarashakti.*