

# **Shreemaan Hanumaan Jee Kaa Jeevan Charitra**

Thaakur Sukharaam Daas Chauhan  
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## **Note**

I stumbled upon the reference of this forgotten gem of literature in footnotes of a Raamaayaṇa. The subject matter though controversial appeared very interesting. Thanks to the internet, I was able to find an almost complete digitized copy. Though, it did pose a problem. This book was originally written in Urdu script which I was not familiar with. However, where there is a will there is way. The desire of reading this book was so strong that I quickly took some basic lessons in Urdu and jumped right into it.

I must definitely acknowledge and thank my wife Alpana and some open minded Muslim friends, for there tremendous help during this effort.

I hope that everyone, ignoring the biases that they have been brought up with, will read this book with an open mind and benefit from it.

Sincerely  
Sanjay Mohan Mittal

## **An Introduction by the Author**

Raamaayaṇa is such an inspiring book that anyone who reads it starts singing Shree Raamachandra's praises. He is the one who had set an example of moral ethics for everyone to follow. He shunned material pleasures and happily assumed a fourteen year exile into the forests just to fulfill his father's promise. He is hailed as the true follower of the vaidik dharma. However, when we read about the Army General of this great king, some irreconcilable stories surface. On one hand we have a great, scholarly warrior king Shree Raamachandra and on the other hand his Army General Hanumaan, is known to be an animal, a monkey to be precise!

Does this surprise anyone? Do the deeds performed by Hanumaan indicate that he was indeed a monkey? Absolutely not! Looking at his deeds we can clearly see that he was a very brave, scholarly and intelligent person. Also, when we look at his parents, it is evident that neither they nor Hanumaan were monkeys. Let's explore a few facts related to him and his parents and also the opinion of Shree Raamachandra about Hanumaan and see what conclusion can be drawn from them.

First: Though Vaalmeeki and Tulasee Raamaayaṇa disagree on many aspects, they, however, agree that Pavan was Hanumaan's father and Añjanaa his mother. Vaanara Kesaree has been identified as his foster father. Añjanaa was beautiful as a fairy and was Kesaree's wife. It is hard to conceive and is against the laws of nature as well that a lady as beautiful as Añjanaa would choose a monkey as her husband. This by itself proves that Kesaree was a human. Kashyap ṛiṣhi also implies that Kesaree and Añjanaa were humans, not monkeys. Kesaree was the king of that forest and after he killed an elephant gone berserk, Kashyap ṛiṣhi called him the "Protector and Sustainer of Brahmins" a title that can only be applicable to humans. Animals have hard time protecting themselves, how could they protect Brahmins?

Second: Vaalmeeki Raamaayaṇa also mentions that after infuriating a ṛiṣhi, Añjanaa was cursed to become a monkey. However, the ṛiṣhi after taking pity on Añjanaa gave her a boon that she could at will change herself into woman as beautiful as a fairy. Utilizing that boon she would have turned herself immediately back into a beautiful woman, as no one would really like to remain like an animal even for smallest interval of time. Further, it is written that Añjanaa was sitting on the mountain top wearing beautiful clothes, ornaments and makeup, where she met

Pavan (Hanumaan's father). Fact to ponder on is this, would a monkey have sense of wearing beautiful clothes, ornaments and makeup? Again it does not seem plausible.

Third: It is almost unanimous in all of the Raamaayaṇas that Pavan, the Wind God, was Hanumaan's biological father. How could a God's son be an animal? Similarly Shiva Puraṇa says that Hanumaan was born from Lord Shiva's semen. This again brings us back to prior doubt.

Fourth: When Shree Raamachandra and Sugreeva entered the bond of friendship, Hanumaan lit a fire. Both Shree Raamachandra and Sugreeva circumambulated the holy fire taking the vows of friendship. Can a monkey ignite a fire? Again the answer is an emphatic "no". This again points to Hanumaan being a human.

Fifth: According to Shree Raamachandra, Hanumaan was a scholar who had mastered Ṛigveda, Yajurveda and Samaveda. He had also mastered Sanskrit grammar. He was also the bravest amongst the braves. Whatever, qualities are attributed to paṇḍits in our scriptures, Hanumaan had all of them. It is a pity that instead of trusting the statements from Shree Raamachandra, Hanumaan was deemed a monkey. Even if we try to somehow overlook the first four arguments, there is no way to believe that a monkey had the knowledge of scriptures and Sanskrit grammar. We hence conclude that Hanumaan was a human, not a monkey.

Our brave Hanumaan has also been linked with Sugreeva, who is also deemed a monkey. Let's look at circumstances around Sugreeva as mentioned in Raamaayaṇa. Both Sugreeva and his brother Baalee had a God as their biological father. This again leads us to believe that they were not monkeys either. However, here are few incidents from Raamaayaṇa that confirm our conclusion.

1. When Raavaṇa came to attack Baalee, Baalee was performing meditation (Sandhyaa). Would an animal know the process of performing Sandhyaa?
2. When Shree Raamachandra killed Baalee with an arrow, Baalee asked Shree Raamachandra the justification of his attack. Shree Raamachandra replied that Baalee had copulated with his brother Sugreeva's wife. This act is against the code of ethics and hence killing Baalee was a justifiable deed. Do animals have the institution of marriage? The code of ethics is applicable only to humans. Animals do copulate without any regard to biological relations. Shree Raamachandra knowing this would have never killed Baalee if he didn't

deem Baalee to be a human, otherwise, just to be fair, he would have to kill all the animals in the world.

3. After Baalee died, his son Aṅgad performed his last rites as per the scriptures. Do you still think that they were monkeys? If yes, please show as an example where you have seen an animal cremating or burying their dead. They don't have that sense. Their body decays wherever the death happens. There is no cremation or burial. And forget about last rites as per scriptures altogether!
4. When Shree Raamachandra attacked Laṅkaa, he dispatched Baalee's son Aṅgad as his emissary to hold talks with Raavaṇa and bring him to senses so that the war could be avoided. Could Shree Raamachandra have chosen a monkey for this delicate task?
5. After the victory over Laṅkaa, Shree Raamachandra assumed the throne of Ayodhya and held a religious congress in which scholars from all directions were invited. Hanumaan, Vibheśhaṇ, Jaamavant, Aṅgad etc. also participated in this discussion. Would Shree Raamachandra have allowed animals to enter into a discussion with scholars and paṇḍits?
6. After Shree Raamachandra's coronation the whole Vaanara clan went back to their homes. They were bestowed with numerous gifts including clothes, jewels and ornaments. Seetaajee herself gave her pearl necklace to Hanumaan. Of what use are all of these clothes, jewels and ornaments to monkeys?

This is all because of our lack of understanding of the facts. In fact, Vaanara was a tribe who used to live in forests and in those days supported Shree Raamachandra in his war against Raavaṇa. We will now elaborate a little more on this word Vaanara.

Why did a sage like Vaalmeeki call Hanumaan a Vaanara? Did he think of Hanumaan to be an animal? Raamaayaṇa clearly tells us that Vaalmeeki never thought of them as animals. If we look at Sanskrit dictionary, Vaanara is defined as "those who live in forest and obtain their nutrition from wild fruits". In fact these were tribes spending majority of their lives in the forests. If we look at "Picture of India by Mr. Arkat page 291", there was region between Nasik and Mumbai that was a dense forest and its human inhabitants were known as Vaanara. In those days this word Vaanara was in common use and hence Vaalmeeki did not consider it necessary to clarify this word further.

As the ages of ignorance dawned upon us and traditions of learning were compromised, we lost some of that knowledge. At that point, out of ignorance, the meaning of Vaanara was reduced to “bandar” i.e. a monkey, and then our creativity took over, magnifying that error manifold. Instead of glorifying Hanumaan’s deeds, multitude of miracles were assigned him. Even though most people think that they are glorifying Hanumaan by treating him like a God, we are inadvertently demeaning him by calling him a monkey.

To illustrate this, we will provide an example. We nowadays have an esteemed lawyer by the name of Laalaa Raamadaas Sooree. Due to his accomplishment he is listed as one of the top lawyers in the city. We all know that Sooree is one of the title bestowed to kshtriyaas. However, after many centuries when the languages have changed and this family title is no longer in use, someone, who gets a hold of that list of lawyer may start claiming that long time ago animals like soor (pig) used to advocate in courts. Howsoever ludicrous this example may sound, this is exactly what we have done to the word Vaanara. Oh! When will we wake up from the slumber of ignorance? Thanks to this slumber we are happily calling our bravest of the braves, monkeys. And if someone tries to provide a plausible explanation, that person is abused and shouted down!

In the first part, this life story will focus on the circumstances and events faced by Hanumaan’s parents before and during his birth. We think this is necessary to prove our preposition. These facts have been obtained after a prolonged research and many of them have been obtained from the Raamaayana in Gujaraati.

Initially we thought of just simply enumerating the facts. However, to make it interesting to read, the story was dramatized. Even though extensive prose has been added, we have not compromised on the facts.

Before closing this introduction, I extend my sincere thanks to Thaakur Balajeet Singh Sahib, Thaakur Ichchharachand and Laalaa Jasavanta Raay.

**Thaakur Sukharaam Daas Chauhaan**  
**Lahore**

## Shree Hanumaan



Image as perceived by masses



Actual image

# 1

## Mahendrapur

Our story starts about eight hundred thousand years ago, in the era of the Raamaayana, in a small kingdom named Mahendrapur where King Mahendra Raay is the ruler.

One fine morning, at the time of sunrise when cold breeze is blowing, Princess Añjanaa Deveen is walking in the royal garden with her friends. While admiring the beauty of Mother Nature, her eyes stopped at a very bright flower and after staring at it for a while she said to her friend Basantamaalaa.

Añjanaa Deveen: “O Friend! Take a look at these attractive flowers. They are so beautiful that I can’t take my eyes off them. And then also look at these wilted flowers that have fallen on the ground. At a time these were in full bloom as well. That is how our life is from childhood to youth and from youth to old age. However, youth is the best phase when humans can achieve anything they want. Desire increases manifold during youth. However, brave is the human who does not succumb to the material desires. Otherwise there remains no difference between humans and animals. Humans need to control their senses and spend their life helping others. Or they will repent in old age like these rotting flowers. One who considers happiness and sorrow as phases in life and maintains a steadfast faith in God, is the one who always keeps his/her head in place.”

Basantamaalaa was about to say something when Indramaṇi interrupted.

Indramaṇi: “O Princess! You are very scholarly. It is easy when you are at your parents’ home. Once you leave your parents’ home and go to the in-laws then you will get busy with life and forget all of this wisdom.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “We will see when that time comes. No one can change what is written in the destiny.”

While the princess and her friends were engaged in these discussions, the King along with his prime minister and other senators, came to the garden. Seeing King’s party, princess and her friends went inside the palace. However, the King suddenly realized that the Princess has now come of age and that he must now start the search for a suitable suitor for her.



## 2

### Search for a groom

Sun is casting his last glance on earth and is rapidly going down the western horizon. And we along with our thoughts have come to a mountain range in the south of river Godaavaree. This mountain range is known as Rokiyaaho in Raamaayana. While admiring the natural beauty we see some mansions on the right side. Our curiosity takes us to that side and we notice a small town, where most of the houses are single storied. The mansion we had noticed earlier turns out to be that royal compound.

The crowd in the bazar has swelled up so much that it is difficult even to walk a few steps. Villagers are buying groceries; some are buying flour and some lentils. As we come to the town square, we hear some cries “Make way! Make way!” On inquiry we find that Prime Minister Buddha Prakaash is going towards the palace of King Mahendra Raay. Hearing the name of King Mahendra Raay, our curiosity gets better of us and we started following the Prime Minister’s convoy. After some distance, we see a big gate guarded by two swordsmen. Seeing the Prime Minister the gate is quickly opened and the convoy is let through. We too somehow, along with the convoy, sneaked into the palace.

Inside we see several big buildings and a big courtyard with surrounding white walls shinning like white marble. There is a beautiful chandelier whose light is so bright that it feels like daylight. On the red carpet there is a silken mattress on which King Mahendra Raay is sitting and discussing the affairs of the kingdom with his senators. Seeing the Prime Minister the King welcomed him and said

King: “Welcome! I was thinking about you just now.”

Prime Minister after paying his respect “And here I am!” And then he took out several portraits of various princes and laid them in front of the King. Out of these he picked two portraits in his hands and then said to the King.

Prime Minister: “Your Highness! Though we received portraits of many suiters for the Princess, I personally think these two would be the most appropriate for her.”

The King kept on looking at those two portraits for a while and then took them to his wife, Queen Begamohinee.

King: "O Dear! Out of these two, who do you think will be more suitable for Princess Añjanaa Deveen? This one, with yellow dress, who is Haranadayaal Vidyaadhar's son Viduparva; or the second one, who is Prahlada Vidyaadhar's son Pavan."

Queen Begamohinee: "Both of them appear good. However the first one, Viduparva, appears to be too slim. He probably is very lucky and scholarly. Second one, Pavan, appears to be very brave as well as scholarly."

King: "Our horoscope specialist says that Viduparva may not have a long life."

Queen: "My Lord! In that case, let's not take any chances."

King: "O Dear! Do you think I am a novice? I have only one daughter. I shall inquire about every aspect before finalizing."

Queen: "Very rightly so! This is a very delicate matter and Añjanaa Deveen's entire life depends on our diligence at this moment."

King: "Absolutely! As you rightly said, this is a very delicate matter. Ok! What are your thoughts on Pavan? In my opinion he would be most suitable for Añjanaa Deveen."

Queen: "My Lord! He looks good. If you have already done your due diligence then do send the proposal. But please tell the senator carrying the proposal, to secretly inquire about him over there before making any commitments."

King: "O Dear! Please do not worry. That it how it shall be done."

The King then came back to the Prime Minister and instructed him to send an intelligent senator with the proposal, the very next day. And also to instruct this person to validate the facts before making any commitment.

### 3

#### **Pavan is a brilliant young man**

It is the month of January and the rain has just stopped. We see a traveler in Ratnapur's bazar. See that old white clad traveler shivering due to cold, riding a horse. We can tell that he has travelled some distance and is wearing expensive clothes. However, he is really not prepared for this kind of cold.

It seems that it is going to rain again. The traveler appears to be in a hurry to find shelter and has increased his horse's speed. But there is a stray dog on the road, who seeing the horse, suddenly started barking. Its sudden bark was sufficient to startle the horse. The old man lost his balance and came crashing down in the puddle of mud. His shawl that was protecting him from the cold is now wrapped around him and is preventing him from regaining his balance. People rushed towards him and one of them helped him stand up and said "O Senator! Are you hurt?"

Oh! This is the senator from Mahendrapur who has come to Ratnapur with Añjanaa Devee's marriage proposal.

Senator: "Oh Harijee! I am in a lot of pain."

Harijee: "Your highness! You should not be taking the pain of travelling such distances at this age, especially in this weather."

Harijee brought the Senator to his house. After a few hours when the Senator had regained his strength, Harijee inquired "Senator! What is that important task that made you travel in this weather?"

Senator: "O friend! That task needs to be taken care of quickly."

Harijee: "Is it a confidential matter?"

Senator: "No my friend! Our King's daughter has come of age and everyone thinks Pavan would be most suitable for her. That is why I came here to make some inquiries about him."

Harijee: "Great! Pavan (meaning air) is a very brilliant young man who justifies his name. He is a life savior and takes care of the poor. All of the subjects adore him.

He is also very brave and an excellent horse rider and warrior. He also quickly wins over everyone's heart in any congregation. May God bless him with a long life!"

After listening to Harijee's testimony, the Senator forgot his pain. The very next morning he went to see the King Prahlada Vidyaadhar. Seeing him the King said.

King: "Welcome Senator! You have come after a very long time. I hope all is well with your King."

Senator: "With your blessings everything is good."

In the meantime Pavan Kumar came there and quietly sat down.

King: "Senator! Few days ago your King had requisitioned Pavan's portrait. Is there any progress on that matter?"

Senator: "Congratulations your highness! I have come for that very purpose." And he handed Anjanaa Deevi's portrait to Pavan.

Pavan looked at the portrait and quietly bent his head down. Immediately everyone started congratulating the king and the crown prince. The Senator, as per the custom, bestowed several gifts including jewels and ornaments, which Pavan respectfully accepted.

The whole city started celebrating and after three-four days the Senator left for Mahendrapur with a lot of gifts.

## 4

### Is this really her portrait?

The sun has set and Pavan is sitting on a golden chair, looking at the portrait in candle light. Again and again same thought keeps on coming to his mind “Is this really her portrait? Can anyone be this beautiful?” And the doubts start surfacing “Probably the painter made a mistake while making this portrait.” Then he thinks “Oh! This is not possible. Mahendrapur’s painter is famous for his integrity.” Ultimately he decides to go to Mahendrapur to verify the facts and eagerly awaits the night to be over. In the morning he called his advisor and said.

Pavan: “Senator! I want to go to Mahendrapur urgently and want you to come with me”.

Senator: “Very well your highness”.

Both of them left for Mahendrapur and arrived there by the evening on the next day. Carefully disguised they started going around in the city but after three days, when they could not find a way to see the princess, Pavan said.

Pavan: “Senator! What a pity that we could not achieve our heart’s desire! It will be very shameful if someone finds us out.”

Senator: “You are correct! We shouldn’t stay here too long. If someone finds out your marriage could be jeopardized as well.”

Pavan: “Alright! We will leave tomorrow.”

That evening they went out in the city and happened to pass close to a big house near the eastern wall of the palace. Walls of this house were beautifully decorated with the pictures of warriors and other ornamentations. It was hard to take eyes off this decoration. On inquiry they found out that it was Princess Añjanaa Deveen’s palace.

Alas! The colors on Pavan’s face changed and he happily thought that today he would get to see her. He was staring at the wall when he heard some girls talking in the balcony and his ears automatically got inclined to hear their conversation.

One of the girls was saying “Viduparva is very intelligent and handsome. That girl would be very lucky who gets him as her husband”. Second one said “O Friend!

Don't you think Pavan is the same?" Third one jokingly said "One sip of nectar is better than the ocean of poison!"

This last comment infuriated Pavan. His body started trembling and eyes turned red with rage. He pulled his sword from scabbard and said.

Pavan: "Senator! Did you hear that? What did the Princess just say?"

Senator: "Your highness! Yes! I heard that someone made an undesirable comment but I am not sure who said it".

Pavan: "Can't you tell that the previous two voices had crude mannerism. However, the last one was very refined. That one was definitely the Princess. She is arrogant due to her beauty. And out of her arrogance she has compared me to an ocean of poison!" Showing his sword. "I will finish her off right now, so that everyone knows better not to insult a warrior."

Senator holding Pavan's hand "Oh! Don't act hastily. How can we be sure that the Princess said those words? Do you want to use your sword on the innocent?"

Pavan still trembling with anger "Senator! Do you think I am a novice? I am absolutely sure that it was the Princess who said it. If she has this attitude then what can I expect from her in future. I agree that she is extremely beautiful. However, that does not mean that she can insult others out of her arrogance."

Senator: "Firstly, we can not be sure that who said those words. And even if the Princess said it, the act of killing someone is not for a righteous person like you."

During this talk Pavan's temper cooled down a bit. He thought for a bit and within his thoughts he made a pledge "if I marry her, I will not talk to or come close to her for 12 years!"

Many would deem this to be unreasonable for an intelligent person like Pavan making such pledge without verifying the facts. However, this is what destiny does.

## 5

### Wedding

It is evening and the sun has already set. Darkness from night is taking over. However, Mahendrapur is all lit up bathing in the light of the candles. Look at the decorations throughout the city. Chandeliers are hanging from different locations. Songs of wellbeing can be heard from every home. Musicals bands are playing at every corner. And Palace is even more beautifully decorated. Every citizen, young or old, is walking towards the southern gate of the city.

Today is the Princess' wedding and all of these are going towards the city gate to welcome the baraata (groom's party). And the groom's party has finally arrived! In the front is the cavalry, followed by a chariot in which Pavan is sitting in beautiful saffron cloths and a crown on his head. King Prahlada Vidyaadhar and his senators are following mounted on horses and elephants. Behind them is a unit of soldiers in uniforms. The crowd has swelled up to see groom's procession. Everyone is trying to get a glimpse of the groom. The groom however appears sad.

The whole environment is filled with energy. People are laughing and talking to each other in loud voices. Musical instruments are playing. It is really hard to hear anything and people are mostly using gestures for communication. The procession reached the town square where King Mahendra Raay is waiting along with his senators to welcome the groom's party. Both of the Kings are hugging each other and exchanging greetings. Finally the groom's party arrives at a palace where arrangements for their stay has been made. Everyone's hands and feet are washed. Everyone is provided with comfortable cushions for them to relax and relieve the stress of a long journey. Different kind of drinks, snacks and sweets are being offered. After this everyone went to bed.

At the time of wedding rites, Pavan is brought to the altar and is seated on a comfortable cushion. Añjanaa Devee's friends also brought her, beautifully dressed in clothes and ornaments, to altar. Pandits started the havan (offerings in the holy fire) chanting the mantras from Vedas. Bride and the groom exchanged garlands. When Añjanaa Devee garlanded Pavan, his face was red with anger. The words of insult kept on ringing in his ears.

Then the paṇḍits chanted a mantra from the Vedas which implied a promise that the groom or the bride shall not believe into faults or misdeed of each other without verifying the facts. This mantra changed Pavan thought process. The melodious wedding songs being sung by ladies and the constant showering of petals done by bride's friends made his anger completely go away. He is happily making offerings in the holy fire. Finally the paṇḍits completed the wedding ceremony with the peace chant. Sounds of congratulations started echoing from all directions. Bride's friends took her back to her palace and Pavan came back to join his party.

For three days the groom's party stayed at Mahendrapur. King Mahendra Raay had made impeccable arrangement during their stay. Whatever anyone wanted was made immediately available.

Fourth day the groom's party was given a lot of gifts and dowry. King Mahendra Raay with folded hands requested King Prahlada Vidyaadhar to take good care of Añjanaa Deveen, to treat her like his own child and to ignore all of her faults. King Prahlada Vidyaadhar assured him not to worry.

And finally it was the moment to bid adieu. Teary eyed everyone wished them well. Añjanaa Deveen's friends remembered all the moments they had spent with her and started crying. Everyone was standing at the city gate till the groom's party could not longer be seen.

Next day they reached Ratnapur. Same kind of excitement was in the air. Everyone came running to the city door. Smaller children are running the fastest, without the fear of falling down. The procession finally entered the city. The sounds of congratulations were coming from all directions.

The bride and groom finally reached the Palace. At the gate, Queen Kitumatee welcomed them by circumambulating a pot filled with water around their heads. She was mesmerized by Añjanaa Deveen's beauty and kept on looking at her.

Añjanaa Deveen thanked God for all the blessings she received.



## 6

### Irony of fate

It is dawn and some of the stars can still be seen. Añjanaa Deveen got up from bed and after daily routine and bath, performed Sandhyaa (Meditation). After prayers, she and Basantamaalaa were laughing and talking when they heard someone's footsteps. They thought that it is probably Pavan. However, a short woman with round face, darker color and with disheveled hairs, wearing a flowery scarf came and paid her respect. Her name is Lalitaa. Basantamaalaa asked her to take a seat.

Lalitaa: "I have something to say to the Princess."

Añjanaa Deveen: "Sure. But first please take a seat."

Lalitaa: "If you insist." And sat down.

Añjanaa Deveen: "What do you have to say?"

Lalitaa: "The crown prince has sent a palanquin for you and has asked that you move to another palace which is nearby."

Añjanaa Deveen was surprised hearing this. But Basantamaalaa jokingly said.

Basantamaalaa: "Ooh! A palace of your own! In your husband's love and pampering, please don't forget me my friend. I left my own home just to keep you company."

Añjanaa Deveen: "Why! Don't you want to come with me to the new palace? You had vowed to keep me company till the last breath. Please don't scare me with these silly humors."

Both of them left in the palanquin.

Añjanaa Deveen had no clue, that her fate is about to take a turn. For a while the days of happiness were over and sorrow is about to take over. Pavan has started to fulfill the pledge he has taken earlier.

At the new palace, Añjanaa Deveen found no one except the guards at the gate. She thought that Pavan will probably come a little later. The whole day passed by. In the evening they lit the candles and Añjanaa Deveen performed Sandhyaa. Even then, other than Basantamaalaa, there was no sign of anyone else. She started

getting a little worried now and asked Basantamaalaa “Do you know why he has not come to see me yet and why have they asked me to live in a separate palace?”

Basantamaalaa: “Añjanaa Deveen! There is no reason to worry. He must have been caught into some urgent work. That’s probably why he did not come yet. The prince nowadays don’t want to live with their parents after marriage. That may be the reason he asked you to move to a separate palace.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “I thought that I was very lucky that I got a mother-in-law, whose love made me forget my mother in just one day. I wish I could have stayed with her longer. Since I came here my husband has not talked to me or seen me. There is something else going on!” And started crying.

Basantamaalaa tried to calm her down but to no avail. Añjanaa Deveen started fearing the worst and was anxious like a fish without water. The empty palace started scaring her and she couldn’t even sleep during the night. Sometime she would try to lay on the bed and then she would get up and go sit near the window. And then she would again and again ask Basantamaalaa “Why hasn’t he come yet? Who should I ask?”

Somehow the night passed. In the morning after bath Añjanaa Deveen performed Sandhyaa. As she finished, same woman named Lalitaa came over.

Añjanaa Deveen in a very sad voice “Sister! What instructions have you brought for us now?”

Lalitaa: “I was going to the garden. Just thought that I will stop here on the way and inquire about your well being.”

Basantamaalaa: “Sister! Where is Pavan jee?”

Lalitaa: “He left after performing Sandhyaa.”

Basantamaalaa in a sad voice “Dear sister! Can you tell us why the crown prince has asked Añjanaa Deveen to stay in this secluded palace and why has he not come himself? Even the queen mother has not bothered to inquire about her. Añjanaa Deveen has been continuously crying since yesterday.”

Lalitaa looked at Añjanaa Deveen, let out a sigh and said nothing. This made Basantamaalaa very suspicious and concerned.

Basantamaalaa: “Oh my God! What happened?” She then put her arms around Lalitaa and said “Sister! Tell us what the matter is?”

Lalitaa: “What should I tell you?” slapping her hand on her own forehead “Añjanaa Deveen! Your luck has been cursed. Crown Prince, for reasons he refuses to disclose, has taken a pledge to stay away from you for twelve years. He has even asked his mother to not to talk to you at all.”

Lalitaa after dropping this bombshell left Añjanaa Deveen in a state of shock. She suddenly lost consciousness and fell on the floor. Basantamaalaa sat down and took Añjanaa Deveen’s head in her lap and then tried to bring her back to conscious state. When there was no response, she got very scared herself and started crying. She got up and brought some water. She sprinkled water on Añjanaa Deveen’s face. When Añjanaa Deveen regained consciousness she said “Oh! My heart’s desires are left unfulfilled” and went quiet again.

Basantamaalaa again shook Añjanaa Deveen’s head and said “O friend! Why are you so anxious? To see you like this really scares me. We don’t know anyone in this city who can go and talk to Pavanjee and try to reason with him. I know that you have done nothing wrong but, who will listen to me. Now we have to maintain our faith on God. My dear you are yourself a very intelligent and sensible person. Needless to say that I can’t do much here except being with you and cry with you.”

Añjanaa Deveen opened her eyes and looked at Basantamaalaa. Basantamaalaa continued “O dear! Compose yourself and have faith in God. Remember what you used to say in the garden in Mahendrapur, *One who considers happiness and sorrow as phases in life and maintains a steadfast faith in God, is the one who always keeps his/her head in place.*”

Añjanaa Deveen said in a very feeble voice “I know everything. It is nobody’s fault but an outcome of my own karma. But when I remember that servant lady’s words, my heart uncontrollably starts to sink. I am not worried about anything else but I just want to know why the Crown Prince has made this horrendous pledge. There must be a reason to it. As far as I can remember, in my life I have never ever even uttered any words that could have been detrimental to anybody. I don’t know why is he so upset with me? I can’t fathom it.”

Basantamaalaa: "You are correct! But losing faith is not going to help in these circumstances."

Añjanaa Deveen: "This is all due to my deeds in some prior incarnation. It is nobody's fault." And tears started rolling down her cheeks.

Many years passed like this with Añjanaa Deveen getting more helpless and depressed. One day after performing Sandhyaa, she was praying to God and started crying. She said in a very sad voice "O my dear! Please have mercy on me. Apart from you who else can I call mine here. My lord! What did I do to make you suspicious towards me and undertake this pledge? I have not even looked at your face properly. You have not even given me any chance to serve you that may have done something to infuriate you."

Incidentally, Pavan was passing near this palace at this time and listened to Añjanaa Deveen's sad voice. For a moment he uncontrollably started going towards Añjanaa Deveen's palace. But after a few steps he stopped in tracks and thought "I had taken a pledge to stay away from her for twelve year and so far only eleven years have passed. It feels like I may have made my pledge in haste without checking the facts. That was a very unintelligent think to do. However, now I am caught in a bind. I can't turn my back on my pledge as well. If I do, future generations will use my example as an excuse for them for not being true to their own pledges. No! I can't go to meet Añjanaa Deveen till twelve years are over." And he left.

## 7

### Heart's desire

It is afternoon and things are unusually quiet in King Prahlaad Vidyaadhar's court. Both the King and the Crown Prince are ready to leave. The officers of the court are eagerly waiting for them to leave, so that they could leave as well. The King was about to leave when a soldier entered and after paying his respect, handed a letter to the King and then stood on the side awaiting further orders.

The King kept on reading the letter several times and then sat down. He would look at the letter again and again and then go back into deep thoughts. Everyone in the court is wondering about the letter but no one dared to ask the King about it. After a while the King himself turned towards the Prime Minister and said.

King: "King Raavaṇa states that he was engaged in a battle with King Varuṇa of Duramatinagar. In that battle King Varuṇa won and captured Khara and Dooshana. Both of them are now King Varuṇa's prisoners. King Raavaṇa is now thinking of engaging in another battle for the release of his brothers. He has summoned all the subordinate kings and hence has asked us to join the battle as well. Now I am debating whether I should go myself or send Pavan."

Prime Minister was about to say something when Pavan came forward and said.

Pavan: "Your Highness! This matter does not need your attention. Also, when I am here then you should not have to worry about these small matters. I request you to permit me to go for this incursion."

Prime Minister also supported Pavan's preposition and then other senators joined as well. After some thought the King said to the Prime Minister.

King: "Alright! Order the army to be ready so that Pavan could leave tomorrow itself."

Next morning five hundred soldiers, fully prepared, carrying swords, bow and arrows met at the southern gate of the city eagerly waiting for someone. Shortly after, Pavan wearing a crown, arrived on a horse. The battalion saluted their commander and then left the place. Pavan along with a Senator was riding in the front. His troop leader Dohanaraveer was ensuring that the soldier maintained a consistent pace.

After travelling the whole day, the sun finally took refuge in the west and made way for the Moon. The army found a suitable place and made a stop. Some of the soldiers were appointed as night watchman and rest of them went to sleep. Pavan and the Senator were still talking. Suddenly they heard the cries of a bird. Pavan inquired about that strange sound and the Senator replied.

Senator: "Your Highness! This is the chukar female bird. During the day both male and female bird live together. However, at night the male mesmerized by moon's beauty leaves the female. It is female bird that is crying, calling its mate."

Pavan: "How weird! Why can't they be together at night as well?"

Senator: "That is how the nature is."

Pavan: "This bird's cries are taking my thoughts in a different direction. After marriage, I have not seen Añjanaa Devee even once. If this bird is crying like this after a short separation, how would Añjanaa Devee be feeling? She may not say anything but in her heart she must be feeling very lonely and sad."

Senator: (surprised) "What! Why did you do so?"

Pavan: "Don't you remember that incident in Mahendrapur. When we went there before marriage, what did Añjanaa Devee say! That day I pledged that I would not see her for twelve years after marriage."

Senator: (very calmly) "If you acted based on that voice, then it is a very tough pledge you have taken on some unverified suppositions. At that time too I implored you to not act in haste. But alas! You paid no heed to my advice, and tormented that kind lady for nothing. My wife went to see Añjanaa Devee multiple times and not even once did she complain or mention this to her. You have carried out a grave injustice indeed!"

Senator: "Nothing can be done about the time that has passed. But we are still not too far from Ratnapur. You should go and meet her. I will lead the army to Raamnaatha and you can meet us there after a few days."

Pavan: (happily) "Today, twelve years of my pledge are over. However, if I go now everyone will think that I came back due to the fear of the battle and make fun of me"

Senator: “You should leave immediately. And you don’t have to meet anyone else. Just be with Añjanaa Deveen for a couple of days and then come back.”

Pavan liked the Senator’s advice and immediately mounted his horse. Within a moment he could not be seen anymore.

## 8

### Wishes Fulfilled

It is late after midnight and Añjanaa Deveen after being awake throughout the night finally went to sleep. She is still sleeping after dawn. Basantamaalaa came to her room only to find that the candle is still burning and Añjanaa Deveen is fast asleep. She had never seen Añjanaa Deveen sleeping like this before. She gets a little scared and is about to wake her up when she sees that Añjanaa Deveen's lips are curved in a smile. It appears that she is having a very sweet dream. Finally she realized that the time for Sandhyaa is about to pass and decided to wake her up.

Basantamaalaa: "O friend! It is the time for Sandhyaa and you are still asleep. Don't you want to get up today?"

Añjanaa Deveen opened her eyes and then closed them again. This surprised Basantamaalaa.

Basantamaalaa: "O friend! What is the matter? Don't you want to see my face? Should I get out of this room?"

Añjanaa Deveen: (happily) "In my dreams I saw that the Crown Prince has come to see me."

Basantamaalaa was about to say something when they heard a knock on the door. She went and looked through the window and saw Pavan standing at the door. Immediately she went and opened the doors and respectfully brought him inside. As soon as Añjanaa Deveen saw him, she fell on his feet and said "Blessed is the day today that I finally get to see you. I don't know what I did that you decided to stay away for so long. I left my parents and came to your protection. I don't have anybody apart from you. Please have mercy on me!" and started crying.

Pavan: "O dear! I am not at fault. It is all due to the words of ridicule that you had said. A little while before your marriage, sitting on the terrace of your palace you had compared me to an ocean of poison while praising the other suitor Viduparva."

Añjanaa Deveen was very surprised to hear this when Basantamaalaa intervened and said.



Basantamaalaa: “I remember that moment. The Princess was not even there. Myself and some other friends were joking and having fun. Your Highness! I seek your forgiveness. It was I who said those words in a very light vein without thinking about the consequences. I beg your pardon for being disrespectful. But, please keep in mind that Añjanaa Deveen has nothing to do with this.” Then after a moment’s pause she said “O friend! Don’t you want to perform Sandhyaa today?”

Hearing this both Pavan and Añjanaa Deveen got up, took a bath and then performed Sandhyaa. After that they started talking to each other.

At this time Añjanaa Deveen’s beautiful face, which had lost its vigor in last twelve years, suddenly was pink and full of vitality again and had started showing her true beauty. The palace that was used to listening to the cries is now suddenly echoing with laughter. Bird’s chirping which was irritating till now suddenly sounded so musical. Basantamaalaa has made flower garlands for both Pavan and Añjanaa Deveen. She is making sure that both of them are comfortable and happy.

After three days passed like this, Pavan got ready to leave and join the army back. Then Añjanaa Deveen said “Wouldn’t you be going to meet your parents before leaving for the battlefield?”

Pavan: “O dear! Not right now. The troops are waiting for me and I must join them as soon as possible in Raamanaatha”

Añjanaa Deveen: “Your highness! When they will learn about your visit, they will think that I stopped you from meeting them.”

Pavan: “O dear! If I go to see them now, everyone shall laugh at me saying that I came back because of the fear of the battlefield.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “If you don’t want to go yourself, at least send a messenger. I hope that our coming together will be fruitful and bloom into a new flower. If they don’t know about your arrival, they may get suspicious about me.”

Pavan gives her a ring from his finger and says “O dear! Keep this ring and if they doubt, show them this ring.” And he hastily left the palace.

Even though, Pavan does not want to be away from Añjanaa Deveen for a moment, at this time in order to answer to his duty, he is riding his horse at a very fast pace towards Raamanaatha.

From Raamanaatha he took his battalion and reached Laṅkaa. When all of the kings who have been summoned arrived with their armies, Raavaṇa attacked Varuṇa.

## 9

### Bad luck again

In Pavan's absence Añjanaa Devee is cherishing the moments she had spent with Pavan. Five months have passed and Basantamaalaa noticing some changes said.

Basantamaalaa: "O friend! I see some signs of a new life. Am I correct in my assertion?"

Añjanaa Devee: "Why are you teasing me like that?"

Basantamaalaa: "No! I am not teasing. And if I am correct, then we have to make sure that you are happy all of the time so that there is no adverse impact on the baby."

Añjanaa Devee: "I am very happy. Though sometimes I get scary thoughts that my mother-in-law may not believe me when I show her this ring."

Basantamaalaa: "Don't worry! In case they don't believe the ring then they can ask their own son."

Añjanaa Devee out of happiness is distributing alms at her palace gate. Everyone is being given his/her heart's desire. Some are taking food, some clothes and some others are taking money. While Añjanaa Devee is busy helping the poor, let's go to Queen Kitumati's palace and check on the temperature there.

Queen Kitumati's palace is also very elegant. All doors are beautifully carved with beautiful tapestry decorating the sides. A red carpet adores the floor. And we see the servant lady Lalitaa standing near the queen.

Queen: "Is it true that Añjanaa Devee wants to run away from her Palace and is distributing all the royal wealth before eloping?"

Lalitaa: "Yes your highness! That's what I have heard."

Hearing this the Queen is visibly upset. She thinks for a while and then gestures Lalitaa.

Queen: "Go and ask them to bring the palanquin immediately."

Lalitaa: "Yes your highness!" and ran outside. She comes back after some time and says "O Queen mother! Palanquin has arrived."

Queen immediately left on the palanquin and reached Añjanaa Deveen's palace. As soon as Añjanaa Deveen saw queen mother, she rushed to welcome her and fell on her feet.

Añjanaa Deveen: "Blessed is the day today that you have decided to come here. I am really thankful to you."

Queen instead of responding to her courtesies started looking at her belly and asked "Are you expecting or is it some sickness?"

Añjanaa Deveen said nothing and lowered her head.

Queen pointing to Añjanaa Deveen's belly "How come? Your husband is gone for the battle and you..... How shameful!"

Añjanaa Deveen was taken aback by these words. Blood drained out of her face. Teary eyed she composed herself and said "O mother! Crown Prince came here and stayed for three days before going to the battleground. I asked him to meet you before leaving, but he was in such a hurry and gave me this ring." Shows the ring. "And asked me to show it to you so that you would believe me."

Queen was not impressed and said "Do you want me to believe your story? Pavan hasn't even talked to you since marriage. And now he came here and stayed for three whole days and didn't even bother to meet us! You are a very clever woman. Now you show me a ring and are trying to hide your sin. Go away! You are banished from our kingdom."

Añjanaa Deveen could not even believe her ears. In a state of shock she was not even able to think clearly. And now Basantamaalaa fell on Queen's feet and said "Your highness! I am a witness. Crown Prince did come here and stayed for three days." The Queen kicked her and said

Queen: "You are hand in glove with this wretched shameless woman. You think you can use Pavan's name and tarnish the honor of our family. Both of you, remove yourself from my sight." She gestured the servant lady and said "Go! Get the prisoner's carriage."

Añjanaa Deveen: "O mother! Please let me be here till the Crown Prince comes back. He shall testify that I have not sinned. Leaving in this state would bring a lot of ill-repute to both you and my parents."

Queen: "O clever woman! I understand your game plan. Leave immediately."

The servant lady comes back and leaves a black dress in front of Añjanaa Deveen gesturing her to wear it and says "The prisoner's carriage has arrived."

Añjanaa Deveen is looking at everyone and hoping that someone will come and reason with the queen. But alas! No one came forward to help her or not even to advise the Queen to wait till Pavan is back from the battlefield.

Both Añjanaa Deveen and Basantamaalaa made repeated appeals but to no avail. Queen went to the King and asked him to write a letter to King Mahendra Raay detailing the circumstances that led to Añjanaa Deveen's exile.

## 10

### Continued Misfortune

The weather is hot and devastated Añjanaa Deveen along with Basantamaalaa has left Ratnapur in a prisoner's carriage for Mahendrapur. After the treatment of her mother-in-law, Añjanaa Deveen is not sure how her own parents are going to react to it. She is contemplating, whether she should even go there but ultimately decide to go to her parents' home.

Let's go and see if King Prahlada Vidyaadhar's letter has reached King Mahendra Raay or not. We see King Mahendra Raay sitting on a chair in his palace in a very pensive mood. Queen Begamohinee is right by his side. King has a letter in his hand.

Queen: "Your highness! What happened? Añjanaa Deveen used to be a very responsible and sensible girl."

King: "O dear! I don't know what happened. Why would King Prahlada Vidyaadhar write such harsh words against Añjanaa Deveen?"

Queen: "Please look at the letter and make sure it is authentic. Probably some enemy planted it. My Añjanaa Deveen is not capable of such behavior."

King looks at the letter again and says "O dear! The letter is authentic. King Prahlada Vidyaadhar is a very sensible man. He must have written this only after ensuring all the facts. Don't you think he would care about his family's honor! Oh! I don't even want to see Añjanaa Deveen's face. I also forbid you to show any mercy on her. She has tarnished our family's honor forever." And the teary eyed King left the palace.

After hearing the King's order the Queen's face turned pale. She started thinking about all of the childhood memories of Añjanaa Deveen. The King who would get very anxious if he did not see Añjanaa Deveen in the palace for a minute, now does not want to see her face at all. Thinking this her heart started sinking and she lost consciousness. A servant lady rushed to her and sprinkled some herbal essence on Queen's face and helped her regain consciousness. In the meantime another servant lady came and announced "Añjanaa Deveen has arrived."

Añjanaa Deveen rushed towards Queen, hugged her tightly and started crying uncontrollably. Initially the Queen hugged her and cried as well. Then she thought of something and said "Añjanaa!" pointing towards her black dress "Why did you

do this? You shameless wretched girl! I never expected this kind of behavior from you. You have tarnished the name and honor of our ancestors. You would have been better if you were never born! Leave this place immediately. You have no place in our kingdom.”

Añjanaa Deveen was stunned hearing these words from her mother. Whatever remainder hopes she had, they were dashed as well. At this point she couldn't even cry anymore. Somehow, while trying to maintain her composure she said.

Añjanaa Deveen: “Mother! I am innocent. You are my last resort. Where would I go if you disown me like this? Apart from you, I don't have anyone who can help me in these dire circumstances. A lady has only three shelters, her husband, her parents and her parent-in-laws. Everyone has turned against me because my husband has gone to distant lands. So far, I still had a little hope and now hearing your rebuke, I don't know what to do. O fate! You have turned my mother's warm heart into stone as well! Oh Mother! Please let me stay here till my husband comes back.”

Queen: “Añjanaa! I am bound by King's orders. In other circumstances, I would have given my life for you. But you have performed such a shameless act that I don't want to see your face anymore. Leave immediately!”

Hearing this, couple of servant ladies forced Añjanaa Deveen out of the palace. A few steps ahead she saw a middle aged person, royally dressed. She rushed towards him, hugged him and started crying again. This person is her brother Prince Prasanna Keerti.

Prasanna Keerti: “Añjanaa! Please compose yourself. I wish I could do something for you but I am helpless and bound by King's orders. If father sees me like this then I shall be in a lot of trouble as well.” And he quickly leaves for his palace.

Lot of men and women gathered to see Añjanaa Deveen but no one came forward to help or to even offer any words of solace. Añjanaa Deveen along with Basantamaalaa quietly walked towards to periphery of the city.

## 11

### Where should I go now?

It is the same unfortunate day that does not seem to end. Añjanaa Deveen is following a pedestrian pathway in the north of the city. Basantamaalaa has been the only person who has been with her through thick and thin. After two to three furlongs, they saw the road diverging into three distinct pathways and a big question puzzled her brain “Where should I go now?” The left and right pathways had the signs of a lot of traffic. The middle path was the least travelled. She looked at her black dress and decided not to go towards any human habitation. She took the middle pathway that led to the Pashumukhaa forest.

She had probably travelled just a few miles and the mountain range was visible between the trees. The colors of the sky also started changing and the sun light started getting dimmer. Basantamaalaa was scared and said.

Basantamaalaa: “O friend! It appears that the sun is about to set. I see nothing but the jungle in all directions. Let’s hurry up and look for a shelter for tonight.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “O dear! It does not matter that the sun is setting. It has already set on my luck, plunging my heart in darkness. Now, I prefer this jungle over any human habitation, because over here there is no one who can emotionally hurt me again. We have nowhere to go so what is the point in hurrying up.”

Basantamaalaa: “You are correct. However, the colors of life keep on changing. Our happiness was temporary and I believe our sorrows shall be temporary too. One day lady luck shall shine on us again.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “I used to believe the same. However, now it is the thirteenth year of persistent sorrows. I have lost all hope that my fortune will ever turn again.”

Basantamaalaa interrupted her “Oh! The sun is already set and the darkness of the night has already set in. Now even the jungle is not properly visible.”

Añjanaa Deveen: “Oh! I still have to perform Sandhyaa.” And she sat beneath a tree and started performing Sandhyaa.

Basantamaalaa in the meantime plucked some wild fruits from the nearby trees and made a cushion of grass. Basantamaalaa is imploring her to eat some fruits but



Añjanaa Deveen does not feel like eating anything. As Basantamaalaa kept on insisting Añjanaa Deveen ate a couple of fruits and laid down on the grass cushion. However, her heavy heart would not let her rest. Somehow the night passed. In the morning she took a bath and performed Sandhyaa.

In the morning they started walking again. They would have walked four to five furlongs when the pathway narrowed down.

Basantamaalaa: "Sister! I don't think we should go any further on this pathway. This appears to be very scary. We don't even know where it leads to. And the light is also very dim here. Let's turn back and find some other place."

Añjanaa Deveen: "O friend! We have nowhere to go. Let's just follow where our destiny takes us. This pathway is probably only another eight to ten miles. There is no point in turning back now."

And they continued on that pathway with determination. The thorns from the bushes on the side of the pathway have wounded their feet which are now bleeding. However, Añjanaa Deveen kept on moving saying "O Lord! May thy will be done!"

The narrow pathway ended and now they see a big open ground. Couple of miles ahead they can see a hut that has been built above the ground level. They decided to spend the night at the hut and kept on walking.

Mother Nature had different plans for them though. Suddenly dark clouds engulfed the sky and the whole forest turned dark as night. Nothing could be seen. They could only hear the frightening sounds of wild animals. Añjanaa Deveen holding Basantamaalaa's hand kept on walking. The ground became uneven. They kept on moving feeling their way through the jungle. Basantamaalaa was clearly upset and said.

Basantamaalaa: "I always used to hear that your father was a very intelligent and sensible person. However, I have not seen anyone who is crueller than the King. He could not even do justice to his own child. How would he take care of the citizens of his kingdom?"

Basantamaalaa's comment made Añjanaa Deveen very angry. She said.

Añjanaa Deveen: "My father is an example of righteous behavior. Parents always want the best for their children. Their stature is next to God. All that is happening with me is due to my own karma."

She was saying so when she fell into a hole in the ground that was probably a water well in past. Along with her Basantamaalaa fell in the hole as well. In the darkness, they could not see anything but only hear the sounds of snakes and scorpions. This would have been enough to scare the bravest of the brave. But, Añjanaa Deveen said.

Añjanaa Deveen: "Basant! This is how sorrows come. They come one after another. Humans need to learn from these situations and keep performing their actions as per dharma. Everyone has to die one day. If it is our destiny to become food for these animals, then so be it. If it is not our destiny then they can't harm us. There is no reason to have fear. Our persistent faith in God is the only thing that is going to help us."

Both of them thought various ways to climb out of that hole but nothing worked. The weather was worsening and a hurricane passed over them. Nothing else could be heard in the noise of the hurricane. Suddenly, they heard something heavy falling into that hole. Basantamaalaa shrieked thinking that a tiger has jumped into the hole. When the hurricane passed over and the jungle was visible again in the natural light, they saw that a big trunk of a tree had snapped and fallen into the hole. They thanked God and climbed out of the hole using that trunk. They saw a candle light at a distance and started trudging towards that.

They walked through the night. In the morning they reached near the hut. When Añjanaa Deveen glanced at her hand, her heart skipped a beat. The ring that Pavan had given her was no longer on her finger. Both of them searched for the ring but it was nowhere to be found. Exhausted they came back to the hut and Añjanaa Deveen started weeping. Hearing her a sage came out from the hut. After he learnt of her misfortune, the sage said.

Sage: "O daughter! You can stay here in this hut, as long as you want. However, keep in mind that all you get to eat here is only some wild fruits." Both of them profusely thanked the sage.

## 12

### What this matter is?

In the north of Raamanaatha a ship has anchored just now. Many soldiers are getting off the ship. After them a young man with expensive dress got off the ship. This young man is Pavan. He is instructing the leader of the troop.

Pavan: "I will go on along with the senator. You can gather the troops and reach the destination."

Pavan appeared uneasy. At first he speeded his horse and then suddenly pulled the reins so hard that the horse almost lost its balance. Pavan is thinking about a very vivid dream he had last night. Deep in his thoughts he starts to talk to himself "Oh! What a weird dream! I hope and pray that the dream is not true. I barely saw my darling wife. I hope that her worst fear while I was leaving didn't come true. No! She also mentioned that she could be pregnant. That is probably it. She must be in the labor pains. But it has been eighteen months since I left. The child would be eight nine month old as well. Oh God! I don't understand what this matter is?"

The senator sensing Pavan's discomfort inquired about what was bothering him.

Pavan: "I saw a weird dream last night. My beloved wife is in trouble and imploring me to come quickly so that she could see me before her last breath. I don't understand this dream at all."

Senator: "You are correct. Dream of these kind are enough to destroy your mental peace. However, there is no reliability of these dreams."

Pavan: "I know that. However, until I see her with my own eyes my heart shall be uneasy." And they raced their horses towards Ratnapur.

Pavan did not find Añjanaa Devee in her palace. He thought that probably Queen Mother didn't allow her to stay there alone with the child and took Añjanaa Devee to her own palace. With these thoughts racing through his mind he came to Queen Kitumati's palace and touched her feet. Queen Mother kissed his forehead and thanked God.

Queen: "O son! Thank God that you have come back. In your absence we used to talk about you all the time. Were you in Lañkaa all of this time?"

Pavan: “O mother! It was one thing after another. We liberated Khara and Dooshaṇa. Then the Bheel clan attacked the kingdom and after them it was another matter. One and a half years just went by in this skirmish.”

Though Pavan was answering to her mother quickly, his eyes were searching for Añjanaa Deveen and Basantamaalaa. He was getting disappointed when he didn't see them. Finally when the Queen left the room, he asked the servant lady about them.

Pavan: “Where are Añjanaa Deveen and Basantamaalaa? Please inform them as well.”

The servant lady uttered a sigh and did nothing.

Pavan: “Is everything alright?”

The servant lady: “Your highness! It's been a year since they were .....

Hearing this Pavan was in a state of shock and lost his balance. The servant lady quickly ran towards Queen's chambers and brought her here. Seeing his condition the Queen said.

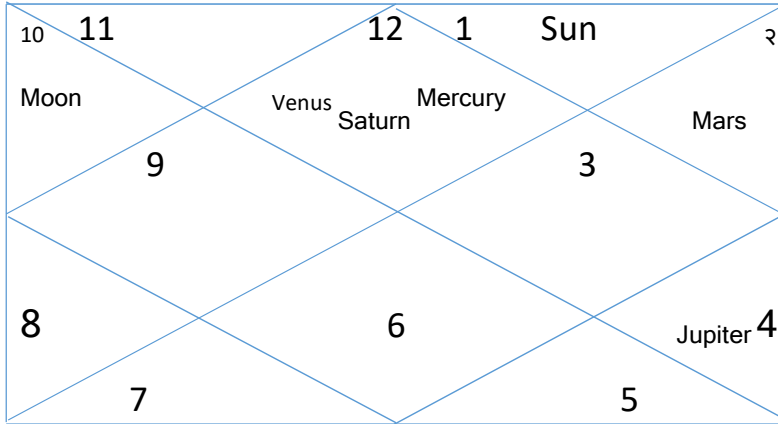
Queen: “O son! I didn't mention this to you earlier on purpose. Don't be sad. Shameless Añjanaa Deveen didn't even think of the dharma. While you were gone she was pregnant. When I asked her she tried to blame you. Clever girl! She tried to show me a ring as the proof. Was I to be fooled by such nonsense? I immediately dispatched her to Mahendrapur.”

Pavan in a fit of rage replied “O mother! What have you done? You wrongfully accused her. I was with her for three days before leaving for the battle. She was saying truth all along.” And he immediately left along with his trusted senator in order to search for Añjanaa Deveen.

## 13

### Birth of a Brave

Añjanaa Deveen has lived in the sage's hut for a few months and then one fine day our brave General was born. The day was the eighth day of Chaitra month under puṣhya nakṣhtra. The sage prepared his horoscope which is recorded here.



The sage kept on staring at the horoscope for a long time. Sometimes he would consult the book of astrology and then kept on thinking. At last Basantamaalaa losing her patience said.

Basantamaalaa: "My lord! Please do tell me something as well."

Sage: "O daughter! Though I am appalled by the misfortune of Añjanaa Deveen. But this horoscope pleases me the most. This child shall be so brave that he can wrestle with a lion. He shall also be a scholar with unparalleled abilities. His behavior shall be righteous. He shall be the protector of the poor and tormentor of the sinners. May God grant him a long life!"

Nine months passed like this. One day when it was raining and the child didn't want to stay in the hut any longer. He started crying. After the rain stopped, Añjanaa Deveen brought him outside the hut. She is trying to divert his attention to the flowers and fruits. Then she diverted his attention to the clouds that were rapidly changing shapes. Suddenly, they saw a very bright thing coming towards them. It was an airborne vehicle<sup>1</sup>. Seeing it Añjanaa Deveen sat down and the child started to cry even louder.

<sup>1</sup> There have been numerous examples quoted in Hindu scriptures about airplanes and ability of individuals to travel in air, suggesting that science of air travel was known in ancient times and was subsequently lost. Even, this

On this airborne vehicle a wealthy individual was talking to his lady companion.

This individual: "O dear! Did you see something?"

The lady: "No my lord! I didn't notice anything."

This individual pointing his finger towards the hut "There! Do you see a lady with a child? The lady appears to be very sad and the child is crying as well."

The lady: "She is probably the sage's daughter. But why is her dress black?"

This individual: "That is what is bothering me as well. Sage's daughter would not wear black clothes. Let's go check."

He stopped his hovercraft beneath a tree and approached Añjanaa Deveen.

This individual: "Who are you and why are you living in this jungle with a child?"

Añjanaa Deveen hearing a familiar voice, looked up and immediately hugged the visitor and started crying profusely. This individual is very confused as to who she could be. After a while he was able to console her and as she let go of him he looked at her face. He is really surprised.

This individual: "Añjanaa! Why are you here?"

This individual happens to be Añjanaa Deveen's maternal Uncle King Preeti Sooryaa. As luck would have it, he happens to be passing through this jungle along with his wife, Queen Ravi Sundaree, at the very same time when Añjanaa Deveen is standing outside the hut.

Añjanaa Deveen was uncontrollably sobbing at this minute. She tried to tell her uncle about the misfortunes but the words coming out of her mouth were not even comprehensible. After a while she calmed down and told him the whole story of her exile and insult. Hearing this King Preeti Sooryaa's face turned red with anger. He said.

King Preeti Sooryaa: "Añjanaa! I cannot do anything about the time that has already passed. However, from now on, no one shall be allowed to insult you. You are coming with me to my palace." And he brought Añjanaa Deveen along with her child

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book was written in India in 1900, few years before Wright brothers conducted the first successful flight test in USA.

and Basantamaalaa to his hovercraft. Queen Ravi Sundaree was quickly made aware of the situation and they all boarded the hovercraft.

Ahaa! Look at the hovercraft. It is in the shape of a ship. It is gilded all over with beautiful carvings. So much so that it is even difficult to look at it in sunlight. The artisan has made big artificial pearls out of gold, almost of the size of a tennis ball. These golden pearls are glittering like the Sun and even more so when the hovercraft has caught speed.

As soon as Añjanaa Deveen's son saw these golden pearls, he jumped out of her lap<sup>2</sup> to get one and fell out of the hovercraft. Everyone was stunned. The hovercraft had travelled some distance so it was turned back, brought to the same location and stopped. King Preeti Sooryaa immediately got off looking for the baby. Añjanaa Deveen and others were scared anticipating the worst.

King Preeti Sooryaa came back carrying the child and said "Añjanaa! Your son's body is made of steel. He fell from such a height on a rock. When I went there he was sitting quietly sucking his thumb." Everyone took a sigh of relief seeing him safe. Queen Ravi Sundaree took him in her lap and said "O son Bajarangee! How far did you travel?" Everyone started calling him Bajarangee henceforth. The hovercraft now left for the King's palace.

Añjanaa Deveen has finally found shelter at her uncle's palace. Let's inquire about Pavan. How is he faring in his search for his beloved Añjanaa Deveen.

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<sup>2</sup> All of us have heard stories about Hanuman leaping towards Sun thinking of it as a fruit. It was most likely this event which has been exaggerated by subsequent poets and writers.

## 14

### What happened to her all of a sudden?

Inside King Mahendra Raay's palace a person has just arrived and is being welcomed by the Queen Begamohinee. She kissed his forehead and made sure that he is comfortably seated. Even though she is acting happy to see the visitor, it is very easy to tell that she is very uneasy and is feeling embarrassed. After making sure that the guest is well taken care of, she quickly leaves for her own chambers. She is thinking "What will I say if he brings up the topic of Añjanaa's indiscretion? O earth! Please part away so that I can hide inside you. I am too embarrassed to talk about Añjanaa." And inside her chambers she quickly falls on the bed.

That guest is Pavan indeed. His eyes are eagerly searching for Añjanaa Deveen and he is surprised to see Queen Begamohinee's behavior. He suddenly sees Prince Prasanna Keerti's son in the yard. He picks him up and eagerly asks "Where is your aunt Añjanaa?"

That boy innocently replies "O aunt! She is not here. I heard that she was crying when she left for Pashumukhaa forest. She came here but grandma very angrily asked her to leave."

This statement dashed all of Pavan's hopes. He is stunned beyond belief for a while. A small mistake on his part became such a big misfortune because neither his parents nor the parents-in-law bothered to check the facts. He started talking to himself "Oh! What did I do? Añjanaa! All of your troubles are because of me. Oh what a misfortune! Even your own parents refused to believe you. You are the best in both beauty and behavior, but look at the destiny. You have suffered the most."

A servant lady overheard him and immediately rushed to see Queen Begamohinee and said to her "O Queen Mother! You are so worried. Please come and listen to what Pavan is saying."

Queen: "Oh! He must be complaining about Añjanaa indiscretion"

Servant lady: "No! On the contrary he is blaming you for being so cruel."

Queen: "What!" And immediately rushed towards guest chambers. There she overheard Pavan's voice. Hearing him she is beyond disbelief and said "What! We



trusted your father's letter and exiled our own Añjanaa. Was she wrongfully accused?"

Pavan: "Yes! She was wrongfully accused. What happened to your own judgement? You trusted some else's letter more than your own daughter."

Hearing this, Añjanaa sad face, as she was leaving the palace, flashed before Queen's eyes and suddenly she lost her consciousness and fell on the ground. Everyone ran scared; someone went to get the doctor and somebody else went to inform the King and the Crown Prince. Pavan, who was versed with Charaka Sañhitaa<sup>3</sup>, immediately got into action. Some herbs were rubbed on her hands and feet and some others were brought close to her nostrils. Queen came back to senses and said "Oh Añjanaa" and couldn't say anymore, as if all of the energy had been drained out of her body. Both King Mahendra Raay and Crown Prince Prasanna Keerti were sitting on her side looking very worried and are saying "What happened to her all of a sudden?"

The Queen remained like this for a long time and then slowly regained some of her strength. She started crying again and the King said.

King Mahendra Raay: "O dear! I know a grave injustice has been done. But, we can not turn back the time. Have faith on God and let's figure out a way to correct the wrong that has been done."

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<sup>3</sup> Ancient book on medicine

## 15

### Where has she gone?

Pavan is thinking about his dream from few days ago and is very worried. He along with his senator immediately left for Pashumukhaa forest.

The senator sensing Pavan's anxiety said "Your highness! There is no doubt that this is a big emotional turmoil that you are facing right now. However, nobody has his/her way against destiny. At this moment let's maintain our cool and search for her."

Pavan: "I understand what you saying. However, I am the reason that Añjanaa Deveen is in this situation. For last thirteen years I have given her nothing but grief. But now I shall search for her and bring her happiness back. And if she is not to be found then I myself shall not leave this forest alive."

By the time they reached the Pashumukhaa forest, it was already night. They found a suitable place beneath a tree and laid down to rest. Somehow the night passed.

In the morning, Pavan told the senator and leaves to find a suitable place for his morning routines. He is thinking about Añjanaa Deveen while walking and is not paying any attention to his surroundings. After a few miles he saw a river. He took a bath and performed Sandhyaa. On his way back, he couldn't recognize the surroundings and was lost. Whole day was spent searching for the senator and horses but to no avail. After the sunset he sat beneath a tree and started thinking about the whole situation. After some time, the exhaustion of the whole day caught on and he went to sleep.

Next morning he started the search again but found neither Añjanaa nor the senator. Four days passed like this and he has been through most of the jungle. In the evening when he rested, he saw a line of trees. Some, voice inside his heart prompted him to go towards them. As he walked, he came across a hole in the ground. He started looking inside the hole and something glittery caught his eyes. He picked up that object.

Oh! He is losing his strength as if all of the blood has been drained out of his body. It is the same ring he had given to Añjanaa Deveen before leaving for the battlefield. His hopes of finding Añjanaa Deveen were completely shattered. He said to himself

“Oh she came to this jungle and some wild animal killed her. O God! I just wanted to meet her and ask for forgiveness. I wanted to restore her back to her honor. But now nothing can be done. My life is worthless and I shall cremate myself this very spot.”

He dragged a lot of woods from the surrounding to that place and arranged then like a funeral bed. Rubbing the stones he generated fire and lit the funeral pyre.

## 16

### Where had my intelligence gone?

It is evening and candles have been lit up at King Prahlaad Vidyaadhar's palace. The mood in the palace is very tense however. Queen Kitumati is sitting on the bed and nearby King Prahlaad Vidyaadhar is sitting on a chair. Some servant ladies are standing quietly at some distance.

King: "Dear! Does Pavan confirms the statements made by Añjanaa Deveen? Where is he now?"

Queen with a sigh "Yes your highness! He left for Mahendrapur immediately after hearing the news of Añjanaa Deveen's exile."

King very angrily "Oh! What a disaster! I have punished an innocent. Where had my intelligence gone? I verified nothing and blindly believed in your statement. Poor Pavan! What must he be thinking about us? How will I ever face King Mahendra Raay now?"

Queen is very quiet and has no words to express the guilt that she has been feeling. Ultimately, the king said "I know you. You could not have done such a grave mistake. Someone must have given you false information."

Queen: "Oh God! I have been deceived by Lalitaa. I don't know how I got trapped in her talk that I lost all my judgement. I have committed a grave sin."

King: "There is no doubt that you have committed a grave mistake and led me into it as well. But now let's look forward and correct the injustice already done." He looked at the servant lady and said "Listen! Send an order for the royal coachman to bring the royal carriage. Both of us shall go to Mahendrapur immediately."

## 17

### King Preeti Sooryaa

It is almost evening and the sun is putting his last glances on the world before hiding in the west. We have come to a town where we see a line of trees laden with fruits. As we go near, we see trees laden with mangoes. A little further we see some mansions. Oh! This is Hanupur where Añjanaa Deveen has arrived at her uncle's palace. Let's inquire how she is feeling now.

There is some kind of celebrations going on at the palace. Musical bands are playing and lot of people have gathered. King Preeti Sooryaa has no children, so what kind of celebrations can be going on here. Ahaa! It is the naming ceremony of Añjanaa Deveen's son. King Preeti Sooryaa named him Hanumaan after his own kingdom.

Añjanaa Deveen is sitting wearing a very pretty dress but her face appears very sad. She does not even like the happy songs sung by ladies. All she is thinking is "Alas! If my husband was here as well for this ceremony. He would have been very happy. I don't know where he is. I don't even know what he thinks about me."

Añjanaa Deveen has been living at the King's palace for sometime now. But her sadness has found no cure. Queen Ravi Sundaree said to the King.

Queen: "Your highness! Añjanaa Deveen remains sad all the time. This is not good for her or her son. I think you should take her to Mahendrapur and leave her there if her parents have realized their mistake."

King: "O dear! I feel the same way." And he left for Mahendrapur along with Añjanaa Deveen, Basantamaalaa and Hanumaan.

## 18

### He has not come back yet

It is noon time and the Sun is shining very brightly. Due to the heat all animals and birds have taken shelter and it is extremely quiet. The only sound one can hear is the rustling of leaves due to wind. Some times a cuckoo bird can be heard as well. Inside this jungle a person donning thick mustaches wearing expensive dress and a turban seems to be eagerly looking for someone. In his worrisome disposition he walks forty to fifty yards in all directions and then comes back. With even a slight sound he immediately starts looking in the direction of the sound. Oh! He is Pavan's senator who is looking for him. Pavan has been gone since morning and hasn't come back yet. After some time he lost his patience. He sat on one of the horses and held the reign of the other and went in the radius of eight ten miles searching for Pavan everywhere.

Next morning when he saw no signs of Pavan he thought "Maybe he found Añjanaa Devee and left for Mahendrapur in a hurry. In all that excitement he probably completely forgot about me". Thinking this he left for Mahendrapur

## 19

### All due to my karma

King Mahendra Raay asked Queen Begamohinee “Where is Pavan? In your illness we completely forgot about him.”

Queen: “My lord! I am not able to control my emotions. I still can’t think, how to get over the injustice that I have done with my own daughter.”

Suddenly a bugle sounded. A servant lady came running and said “O Queen Mother! Añjanaa Deveen has come.”

Everyone’s sad faces suddenly brightened up. The queen very eagerly said “Where is my daughter?”

As she saw Añjanaa Deveen entering the palace, losing patience she lunged forward towards Añjanaa Deveen, hugged her and started to cry. King Preeti Sooryaa is telling King Mahendra Raay about the incident that transpired since Añjanaa Deveen left for the forest.

All of the ladies have gathered around Añjanaa Deveen. They are all happily chatting when a servant lady came and announced the arrival of King Prahlada Vidyaadhar and Queen Kitumati. Hearing this King Mahendra Raay and King Preeti Sooryaa went to welcome them. Añjanaa Deveen and Queen Begamohinee waited in the palace for Queen Kitumati.

As soon as Queen Kitumati steps inside the palace, Añjanaa Deveen ran towards her and fell on her feet.

Añjanaa Deveen: “O mother! Today is a very blessed day that I have the honor of seeing you. I hope you are well?”

Añjanaa Deveen’s courtesy made Queen Kitumati even more ashamed. She is embarrassed beyond words. Queen Kitumati is avoiding everyone’s gaze.

Añjanaa Deveen sensing her discomfort said “O mother! Why don’t you talk to me? Please forgive all my sins. I am your servant. May your blessings be with me forever!”

Queen Kitumati in a very soft voice “You are not at fault. In fact, I am your culprit. Oh! I am responsible for all of your misfortunes.”

Añjanaa Deva: "You should not worry like that. What happened with me was due to my own karma. You had no control over it. Please don't blame yourself."

Seeing that everyone is crying Basantamaalaa stepped in.

Basantamaalaa: "What can anyone achieve by crying now? Whatever had to happen has already happened." Brings Hanumman forward "Take a look at your grandson." And she handed Hanumaan Queen Kitumati's lap. Basantamaalaa snapped her fingers and said "Son Bajarangee! Now you take care of both of your grandmothers." Hearing the sound of Basantamaalaa's fingers snapping, Hanumaan started giggling and everyone diverted their attention towards him.

Both of the Queens have suddenly forgotten all of their sorrows. When Queen Kitumati took Hanumman in her lap, Queen Begamohinee waited eagerly for her turn and when Queen Begamohinee took him Queen Kitumati waited eagerly as well. When Queen Kitumati was playing with Hanumaan, he saw the shining earrings in her ears and pulled them. Queen Kitumati shrieked and everyone started laughing. Queen Kitumati is feeling embarrassed and Añjanaa Deva opens Hanumaan's hand to let go of the earrings.

Let's take our thoughts towards the meeting between the three kings. Let's go to the palace where they are having their discussions.



## 20

### Hasn't he come here?

Oh! The discussions here are also centered on the same hot topic. King Preeti Sooryaa is telling King Mahendra Raay about Añjanaa Deveen's adventures and King Prahlada Vidyaadhar is sitting there quietly. Embarrassment can be clearly seen on his face.

A gentleman interrupted their conversation. Looking at his disheveled appearance it is clear that he has travelled a long distance in a hurry. His eyes are searching for someone.

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "You here! Where is Pavan?"

Senator: "Hasn't he come here?"

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "You were with him. Why don't you know?"

Senator: "Oh my God! What do I do now?"

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "What happened? Is everything alright?"

Senator: "Your highness! We were searching for Añjanaa Deveen in Pashumukhaa forest. We slept under a tree at night. In the morning the Crown Prince left for morning routine but didn't come back. I searched for him everywhere. However, when I couldn't find him, I thought maybe he has found Añjanaa Deveen and came here. But, my thought proved out to be wrong."

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "There is no need to worry. Pavan is very smart and brave. He will come in a couple of days. The person we were more worried about, she is already here."

Senator: "Has Añjanaa Deveen come back?"

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "Yes! She came just before we arrived."

Senator appeared even more worried.

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: "Why are you so quiet? And why is your face losing color?"

Senator: “She has come here, but now Pavan may not be found. The jungle is big and how would he come to know about her arrival.”

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: “He will search for a few days and come back.”

Senator: “He said that if Añjanaa Devei is not found then he will not come back alive from that forest.”

His last comment made King Prahlada Vidyaadhar worried as well.

King Mahendra Raay: “Please don’t worry. Let’s all go together in his search.”

All of them mounted their horse and immediately left for the forest. King Preeti Sooryaa asked everyone to sound their bugle incase they find Pavan so that others can stop looking for him. They searched hither and thither but Pavan was nowhere to be found. Next day, around evening, they saw smoke rising from a distance. Everyone immediately pointed their horses in that direction.

Let’s also go back to the palace and see how Añjanaa Devei and others are coping with this news. This news has again turned the palace back into a gloomy sad place. All of the ladies are crying.

Añjanaa Devei was coming running from the yard smiling, when she heard this news. She has turned into a statue with no movement. Different kind of ominous thoughts have taken hold of her mind.

## 21

### **O my beloved! Where are you?**

It is around midnight and the forest is completely dark. The wild beasts that were roaming around during the day are taking rest now. No human is to be found in the forest at this hour. It is quiet. Sometimes we do hear the hooting of an owl. The clouds cover has dimmed even the faint light from the moon. Even the owl is mostly quiet now. Suddenly we hear the cries of a tormented lady. Oh! Does she have no fear for her life? What is she doing in the jungle at this hour? Hearing her cries we can judge that she must really be in a grave trouble. Again and again she is saying “O my beloved! Where are you? You are my only support. My eyes are keen to see your face.”

We left Añjanaa Deveen at the palace. Who is this, tormented lady? Let’s find out who she is and who has tormented her. Oh! She is Añjanaa Deveen who, hearing the grave news, has come herself in search of her husband.

She is walking through the jungle and saying “O wild animals! O birds! Tell me if you have seen my beloved. O tall trees! O mountain top! You can see everything from due to your height; tell me where my beloved is.”

She is scanning the whole jungle when she saw clouds of smoke emerging behind the trees. She immediately ran towards in that direction. And what she saw sank her heart. A young man was about to enter the fire. She could recognize that the young man was Pavan. She shrieked “No!” and ran in that direction. And the next moment we see her tightly hugging the young man from behind preventing him from entering the fire.

Añjanaa Deveen: “My lord! Please do not act like this.”

Pavan turned around and said “Añjanaa! You are here.”

The search party also reached this location.

King Prahlada Vidyaadhar: “Son! Stay away from the fire.”

King Mahendra Raay: “Son! Braves don’t act like this.”

Pavan was surprised to see everyone. The search party was congratulating each other for having made it, just in time. Everyone was praising Añjanaa Deveen for her faith and courage.

Some saw the funeral pyre as a bad omen. However, King Preeti Sooryaa said “This fire made us find Pavan, otherwise we may not have come in this direction at all.” Then he turned towards King Mahendra Raay and said “Mahendra! This is an auspicious occasion when everyone has been united again. We should perform Havan<sup>4</sup>.”

King Mahendra Raay: “I have already dispatched someone to get the material for Havan.”

After a while this person came back with all the material and they all sat there together and performed the Havan. The whole jungle is fragrant and echoing the chants of Vedic mantras. Pavan and Añjanaa Deveen are happily looking at each other. Añjanaa Deveen’s face that had turned pale with the hardships of past is again looking so fresh and beautiful.

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<sup>4</sup> A Vedic ritual which involves offering of fragrant herbs in the holy fire.

## 22

### Ratnapur

Masses have gathered at the eastern gate of Ratnapur. People are arriving using different kind of carts and vehicles. Prime Minister Ratnaveer is happily conversing with the people gathered there. People are also talking about the injustice Queen Kitumati imposed on Añjanaa Deveen.

One person: “Oh! Añjanaa Deveen had to face grave injustice. Such a shameful and false allegation!”

Second: “I don’t understand how Queen Kitumati could make such a mistake. She is a very intelligent and sensible person.”

Third: “And even more surprising is that King Prahlada Vidyaadhar also let this happen.”

Fourth: “I can tell you why. Queen Kitumati is famous for her intelligence. The King may not have deemed it necessary to question her judgement.”

Fifth: “Whatever you said is correct. Even then, extreme care should be taken if a judgement can make someone’s life miserable. Human ethics calls for full validation of facts before making decisions of this importance.”

Ratnaveer: “They are not to be blamed. It is all due to Lalitaa, who misrepresented the facts in front of the Queen. Our Queen has such a trust in Lalitaa that was betrayed.”

They were talking like this when some of the soldiers riding on horses announced that the royal family is coming. The musical bands started playing and everyone got up in order to welcome them.

They have arrived. There are few soldiers riding horses in the front, followed by King Prahlada Vidyaadhar and Pavan. Both of them have dismounted their horses and are now talking to the people gathered here.

Añjanaa Deveen is thanking God. Our brave Hanumaan’s smile is attracting everyone’s attention. Queen Kitumati is however, avoiding everyone’s gaze.

They finally reached the royal palace.

## 23

### Queen Kitumati

It is morning and Queen Kitumati is quietly sitting in her chambers. She is still thinking about her mistake. She finally decides that she will, from now on, ensure that Añjanaa Deveen is happy all the time. Añjanaa Deveen after finishing Sandhyaa came to Queen's chambers.

Añjanaa Deveen: "O mother! Are you not feeling well? Tell me what I can do for you."

Queen: "My child! There isn't any problem. Thank God that I have a sensible daughter-in-law like you. I have nothing to worry now. There is one matter though. I have gotten old and can't properly manage the affairs of the palace any more. I am hoping that I can pass on that responsibility to you. So that I can spend rest of my life singing God's praises."

Añjanaa Deveen: "Mother! It is not proper for me to assume authority in your presence. However, since it is your wish, I bow and am willing to take the responsibility only if you remain as my guide."

The Queen was very happy to hear this. She handed the keys to the palace treasure chest to Añjanaa Deveen. King Prahlada Vidyaadhar also made Pavan the King and retired.

## 24

### **Vaanaradeep is taken by a storm**

It is dawn and we can still see some of the stars. The birds are sitting on the trees and chirping. Our brave Hanumaan has just woken up and got off his bed. He saw Añjanaa Deveen coming out of the Sandhya chamber. He immediately ran towards her and held her saaree in one hand. With the other hand he is gesturing her to take him in her lap. Añjanaa Deveen is smiling and to him shakes her finger in a gesture of no..no..no... Hanumaan has now made a face as if he is about to cry. Seeing that Añjanaa Deveen immediately lifted him up in his lap.

Hanumaan is now 2 years. However, anyone who looks at him thinks he is five years old. Day by day, as he is growing up, he is raising his parents' hopes up. When he turned seven, a paṇḍit was appointed for his education. To the astonishment of his teacher, in a span of six years and nine months, Hanumaan finished his education, mastering Ṛigveda, Yajurveda and SaamaVeda. He also mastered the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar. Even the most learned scholars treated him with respect. He earned such a fame in wrestling that the whole Vaanaradeep is taken by a storm. Very famous wrestlers were surprised by his bravery and moves. No one dared to wrestle with Hanumaan any more. He excelled in the art of weaponry as well. His battle strategies surprised even the very well experienced generals.

In summary, our brave general Hanumaan has no parallel in any aspect. His bravery is so evident that you can pick any Raamaayaṇa in any language. Authors of each of those Raamaayaṇas are singing Hanumaan's praise and have spent a lot of ink writing about him.

## 25

### I am not a coward

It is almost evening. The shadows are elongating and sunlight is not that intense any more. At this time our thoughts have brought us to Ratnapur's royal court where Pavan is sitting on the throne. He has a letter in his hands. One soldier is standing at a distance waiting for orders. Pavan takes a look at the letter in his hands and then looks at a young man wearing a crown, sitting next to him. Everyone is quiet in the court and is eager to know the contents of that letter but no one is daring to ask the king. Finally our brave General Hanumaan, breaks the silence. Listen to what he is saying.

Hanumaan: "your highness! Your silence is really worrisome. If you deem fit, please tell me what is bothering you."

Pavan: "Son! There is nothing to worry about."

Hanumaan: "Then why are you so silent after reading this letter?"

Pavan: "King Raavana writes that Varuna has revolted again. He has refused to pay his taxes. King Raavana plans to declare a war on Varuna and has asked us to participate. I am thinking if you would be able to take care of the kingdom in my absence or not."

Hanumaan very happily "Father! I want to go for this battle. You shouldn't have to worry about the battlefield when I am here to take care of this matter."

Pavan: "Varuna and his sons are very smart and experienced warriors. You are inexperienced and not ready to face them yet. You have not yet participated in any battle. How can I let you go for this battle?"

Hanumaan: "You are correct. I have not participated in a battle yet. But, I am not a coward. If you permit me to undertake this battle, I shall show what valor is all about. I am sure that I shall make you proud."

Pavan very happily "Indeed! That's what I expected from you. I have no doubt about your bravery. However, Varuna and Punḍareek have seen many battles and are very fierce warriors. They have even defeated the likes of Khara and Dooṣhaṇa. You are still a child."



Hanumaan: "Your repeated utterances about my inexperience show that you have doubt in my valor. But, how will I gain experience of the battlefield if you would not let me fight in one. At one point I will have to fight in some battle."

King's senators also came forward in Hanumaan's support and said "Your highness! May God multiply Crown Prince's bravery manifold. We believe in him. We think that you should let him participate in this battle. Our chief of army shall be there to assist him as needed."

Hearing everyone's counsel and seeing that Hanumaan is determined to go, the King relented. He ordered the army to get ready. Next day, accompanying Hanumaan, a troop of soldiers was dispatched for the battle.

## 26

### Satheem Parvat

This mountain exists in the southeast of Laṅkaa. On the left side there is a big open ground where we can see many fruit laden trees. Behind the tree a tall flag post is visible. When we reach there, on the right hand side we see a river with fresh blue water flowing through it. Some young men who appear to be soldiers are performing Sandhyaa after taking a bath. On the left hand side we see a huge congregation of soldiers.

All of the soldiers have rather dark complexion. They are dressed in different kind of costumes and are chatting amongst themselves. At some distance we see a camp, inside which some officials are engaged in a discussion. Most of them are wearing crowns on their head. They appear to be kings and royals. Let's hear their conversation.

First: "Pavan hasn't come yet, nor has our messenger come back."

Second: "There must be a reason. Otherwise, we don't think he will disobey your orders."

First again: "Pavan is a very experienced warrior. Last time he fought against Varuṇa quite well. But, Varuṇa is so shameless that he keeps on revolting again and again."

Third: "Your highness! We have heard that Pavan's son is a better warrior than Pavan himself. There is no one on the whole Vaanaradeep who can stand against him."

First one, who is Raavaṇa indeed, interrupting the conversation "Ok! Let's wait one more day. We shall leave this place tomorrow. I shall teach Varuṇa a lesson that he would never ever again even dream of revolting against Raavaṇa."

Someone entered the camp and bowed before the first individual and announced "Your highness! Pavan's son Hanumaan is arriving with a big contingent of army."

Raavaṇa very happily "Sugreeva and King Vajrabaahoo, please go and welcome Hanumaan." Both of them went and with due respect welcomed Hanumaan inside the camp. Everyone liked Hanumaan's demeanor and immediately became his fan. It was unanimously decided that the army shall leave the next day.

## 27

### Preparation for the Battle

It is morning. All of the soldiers are getting ready. Their supplies have been loaded on mules and carts. Their commanding officer is running around asking everyone to hurry up. Then a bugle is sounded. Hearing the bugle, Hanumaan is the first to move with his soldiers. Behind him are Sugreeva and King Vajrabaahoo. Raavaṇa is very happy to watch everyone's eagerness for the battle. As they move forward, the faces of soldiers are turning red with excitement.

The whole contingent stops little short of Duramati Nagar and an experienced senator is dispatched to talk to Varuṇa and see if Varuṇa wanted to relent and pay his taxes in order to avoid the war. When the senator reached the grounds of Maṅgalapur, he sees a cantonment with a very large army. All of the soldiers are getting equipped with a variety of weapons. There is a big camp around which several swordsmen are keeping guard. A soldier stops the senator and inquires about his purpose. He asks the senator to wait and disappears inside the camp. After a while he comes out and takes the senator inside with him. King Varuṇa is sitting there with his sons Puṇḍareek and Raajeev and some other counselors.

Senator bows before the king. Varuṇa gestures him to sit and says "Please have a seat. Please state the purpose of your visit."

Senator: "Your highness! King Raavaṇa has sent his message. If you promise to not harm me, I shall convey it to you."

Varuṇa: "Indeed! Messengers are protected against any harm. You can convey the message of your king without any fear."

Senator: "Your highness! A battle would cause loss of life on both sides and the results are uncertain. King Raavaṇa has asked you to pay your taxes and also to undertake a promise of no future revolt. The battle can then be avoided."

Varuṇa very angrily "What does Raavaṇa think of himself? What is he so proud of? He has been charging unjust taxes. Does he think I am Indra, Yama or Kuber<sup>5</sup>? I am Varuṇa." Pointing to his sword "Now this will decide Raavaṇa's fate. If he wants to

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<sup>5</sup> Three very wealthy kings in Hindu history

battle then we are ready as well.” He bid adieu to the senator and ordered Puṇḍareek and Raajeev to prepare for the battle.

Back to Raavaṇa camp.

Raavaṇa: “I was not in the favor of a war and unnecessary bloodshed. But, we have to teach that insolent a lesson otherwise everyone else might start revolting as well.”

Hanumaan: “You are correct your highness. Is it possible that we could tolerate such revolt without any action? Absolutely not! We need steel to cut steel. We will show him his true stature in the battlefield.” Everyone supported Hanumaan’s assertions which made Raavaṇa very happy and he ordered the army to prepare for the battle.

## 28

### Battlefield

It is dawn. Sunlight is chasing the night's darkness away. We are the vast grounds of Maṅgalapur where large armies of both Raavaṇa and Varuṇa are about to face each other. The soldiers are getting ready and waking the others up. Everyone is getting decked up with weapons. Some are testing the sharpness of their swords. Quivers are being filled with arrows. Spears etc. are being checked as well.

Then the bugle is sounded. All soldiers appear ready for the battle, eagerly awaiting the orders of their commanders. In the excitement their faces have turned red.

And the bugle of the war is sounded. Suddenly the arrows that were bracing the bows of the soldiers are seen piercing the chests of the opponents. The ground that appeared so clean till now has suddenly turned red with the blood of the soldiers. Hanumaan's agile hand is raining arrows on the enemy. None of the arrows are wasted. Sugreeva and Vajrabaahoo are also causing havoc in the enemy's forces.

On the other side Puṇḍareek is no less in valor. See how he has cornered Sugreeva's troops. He is making way through enemy's forces. Though some of enemy's arrows have wounded him and his dress is now dyed red. It appears that Varuṇa's forces are gaining ground. Hanumaan sounds his conch shell so loud that the whole battle ground is echoing the sound. Hearing this Raavaṇa's forces have become more aggressive. They are now putting the bows and arrows away and with swords in their hands they are charging on enemies. Varuṇa's force is about to be defeated when the Sun took mercy on them and has set in the west. The battle has to go on for one more day.

### Second Day

As soon as the Sun shines on Raavaṇa's forces, they are ready with their weapons. The swords and spears are appearing very fierce in the sunlight. The braves are eagerly waiting for the battle to start. And the bugle is sounded. Everyone is now lined up for the battle on both sides.

The morale of Varuṇa's forces appear broken. It could be the result of yesterday's losses. Puṇḍareek understood that the morale of his forces appears lower. He said at the top of his lungs.

Puṇḍareek: “It is a pity Varuṇa’s forces are being slow today. Despair is unknown to the brave ones. Battlefield has only one rule, either kill your enemies or get killed yourself. You have defeated Raavaṇa’s forces many times before. Remember the time when you captured Khara and Dooshāṇa as prisoners. If the losses from just one day have dampened your morale, then you are not fit to be called a kṣhatriya. Leave the battlefield and join the ranks of vaishyas and shoodras. Either you kill the enemy and earn fame for lifetime or run away and be called a coward throughout your life. All cowards! Please leave the battlefield immediately. We don’t need the likes of you here!”

Puṇḍareek’s talk worked like magic on his soldiers. They now appear to be eager for the battle as well. Puṇḍareek then went to see his father and said.

Puṇḍareek: “Your highness! Today, you should attack and hold Sugreeva. Raajeev and I shall attack Raavaṇa.” Like this he distributed responsibility to all commanders.

And the bugle for the battle sounded. Within minutes, thousands of soldiers were seen laying on the ground. Wild beasts are greedily watching from a distance. Some soldiers are attacking directly, using swords and others are supporting them with arrows.

Varuṇa and Sugreev are attacking each other and displaying their valor. Hanumaan is quickly moving and helping anyone who is in need. Raavaṇa is aggressively attacking the enemy forces. Corpses of dead are strewn all over.

Varuṇa’s attack appears to be fading. Suddenly Raajeev and Puṇḍareek together attacked Raavaṇa. Hanumaan seeing this arrives there at lightening speed and his attack knocks the senses out of Puṇḍareek, who has now fallen to the ground. Raajeev came to his brother’s rescue but Raavaṇa finishes him off with a spear. Now Hanumaan has tied Puṇḍareek and taken him as a prisoner. Seeing his son’s defeat Varuṇa rushed to attack but Sugreeva attack has knocked wind out of him as well. The remainder of his soldiers are seen running away from him. Raavaṇa’s forces are raising the victory flag.

Everyone returns to the camp. Varuṇa and Puṇḍareek are brought before Raavaṇa.

Raavaṇa: “Varuṇa! How are you feeling?”

Varuṇa has lowered his head and does not reply.

Raavaṇa: “Why are you quiet now? You very well knew that Indra, Yama and Kubera also sought my refuge. But you revolted against me.”

Varuṇa: “It is my mistake.” And lowered his head.

Hanumaan, Sugreeva and others intervened and asked Raavaṇa to forgive Varuṇa. An agreement was carried out. Varuṇa was instructed “This is the last chance given to you. If it happens again there shall be no mercy at all”

Everyone departed from there.

## 29

### **For how long will she remain a spinster?**

We have now arrived in Kishkindhaa, which is located in the northwest of Madras (Chennai) and in the south of Hyderabad. Vishvakarma has especially planned this city. Inside the palace many girls have gathered in princess Padmaraagaa's chambers.

Padmaraagaa is talking to her friend Baalasundaree "O friend! Husband and wife's relationship is like the relationship between the King and his Prime Minister. When they are in harmony we see happiness and prosperity at home and in kingdom. When they are not in harmony or are suspicious of each other, you see destruction everywhere. Hence, it is the duty of both husband and wife to love each other with all of their heart and try to alleviate any bad habits that may cause displeasure to the other spouse. Otherwise, the life shall become a living hell."

Baalasundaree was about to ask something when they heard some footsteps. They saw Padmaraagaa's mother coming towards them. Padmaraagaa bowed before her mother and asked her to stay. However, her mother after seeing all of the girls gathered there decided to not stay. She is now going towards her own chambers and is saying to herself "For how long will she remain a spinster? Though she is very innocent, I have to still think of it." Sugreeva entered the palace and she said to him.

Queen: "My lord! Have you thought about Padmaraagaa? Girls of her age are already married and you have not even started searching for a match."

Sugreeva: "O dear! This is on my mind. However, I have not found a suitable match so far and I don't want to marry her to someone who is less intelligent than her. Her entire life depends on our diligence right now."

Queen: "You are correct. However, now we have to aggressively look for suitor for her. She has already completed her brahmacharya<sup>6</sup> and as per Vedas, should get married now."

Sugreeva is in deep thoughts and suddenly a smile can be seen on his face.

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<sup>6</sup> Student phase of life



Sugreeva: "Ahaa! I remember now. Pavan's son Hanumaan is very intelligent and brave. I am very fond of his qualities. I think I mentioned him to you."

Queen: "Is he the one who participated with you in the battle against Varuṇa?"

Sugreeva: "Yes! That's him."

Queen: "If you think so, then please do not delay."

Sugreeva: "O dear! Do not worry. I shall send a senator tomorrow morning."

Next day a senator left for Ratnapur with the proposal.

## 30

### Grihastha<sup>7</sup> phase is the best phase

Surrounding the Ratnapur's palace there is a very beautiful yard. King Pavan has constructed this yard after spending a lot of money. Artisans from different places were invited to design it. The yard has beautiful carvings and is decorated with mirrors all over. The walls are so white that some think that they are made of white marble.

Different kinds of flowers appear very pleasing to the eyes. In the middle there is a circle of about five yards diameter. This circle is especially very beautifully decorated. Inside the circle is a golden chair on which King Pavan is sitting. Prime Minister Ratnaveer is standing next to him. In the south there is a big gate where two guards are on watch. A person wearing white clothes, a turban on his head, medium height talks to the guards and enters the yard. He pays his respect to King Pavan.

Pavan: "Ahaa Chandragatee! I am seeing you after a long time."

Chandragatee with folded hands "I have come here on a very important mission."

Pavan gestures him to sit "Please have a seat. I hope your king is doing well."

Chandragatee: "All is well, with your blessings."

Pavan: "Tell me. What makes you come here?"

Chandragatee: "Your highness! King Sugreeva is looking for a suiter for his daughter Padmaraagaa. Due to the fame of Hanumaan's bravery, he wants to find out about your thoughts on his marriage."

Pavan happily "Ahaa Padmaraagaa! I am very pleased with this proposal."

Hanumaan who is sitting nearby has bent his head lower and then whispers to Pavan "Your highness! I don't want to get married."

Pavan surprised "Why? Your brahmacharya phase is complete. You have learnt your duties. Then why don't you want to enter the next phase of life i.e. grihastha?"

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<sup>7</sup> Householder

Hanumaan: “This phase puts a human in a lot of bondages. Hence I don’t want to enter it.”

Pavan: “Son! Why do you think so? This phase is the best phase of life. You can achieve a lot by being a householder, which somehow those who are celibate can not achieve. The bride is intelligent and scholarly. She comes from a family of repute.”

Hanumaan: “Your highness! You are correct. But I don’t feel like entering into the bond of marriage.”

Pavan: “Crown Prince! All scholars and ṛishis were born in a household. Our scriptures have given most weight to this phase of life. I am surprised that you, being so intelligent and scholarly, are saying no to this phase.”

Hanumaan thought for a while and realized that not following the scriptures will only bring him ill repute. And he said nothing. Seeing that Hanumaan is quiet Pavan handed him Padmaraagaa’s portrait and said “She is King Sugreeva’s daughter Padmaraagaa. They have proposed her marriage with you.” Hanumaan looked at the portrait and lowered his head. Prime Minister Ratnaveer congratulated them. Next day Chandragatee left with Hanumaan’s portrait.

## 31

### Heart's desires come true

Though every building is Kishkindhaa is praise worthy, but we are specifically looking at the palaces near the Pavaakaranee gate. We have entered the Pavaakaranee gate and we see a huge bazar. There are shops and buildings on both sides. Cleanliness is impeccable, so much so that we can't find a spec of dust anywhere. The floor is made out of red stone. We also see some trees here and there. The bazar is filled with people.

A little further we see a square with beautiful flower garden. Opposite this garden we see a big gate being guarded by two swordsmen. The gate has beautiful gilded carvings. The walls are so white that they seem to be made out of white marble. Inside the gate we see two big palaces. We go towards the left one and we find a yard beautifully decorated with pictures of braves and scholars. Here King Sugreeva is sitting and talking with his queen.

Queen: "My lord! Chandragatee hasn't come back yet."

Sugreeva: "It has been eight days. He should have come back by now."

Queen: "Please send someone to his home and get some news. I am very anxious to see what message he brings back."

In the meantime a guard came and announced that Senator Chandragatee wants permission to come here.

Sugreeva: "Very good! Please send him here."

Chandragatee came inside and paid his respect "Congratulations your highness! Your heart's desire is fulfilled." And handed him Hanumaan's portrait. After giving him some more details the senator left for his home.

Sugreeva very happily "O dear! See how handsome he is."

Queen: "Your highness! That's what it seems from the portrait."

Sugreeva: "O dear! There are many other qualities that are not visible in this portrait. I know him well enough. Please ask Vedavantee to take this portrait to Padmaraagaa and get her consent as well."

Padmaraagaa's teacher Vedavantee was summoned. She took the portrait to Padmaraagaa's chambers. She finds that Padmaraagaa is keenly reading R̥igveda. She is so engrossed in reading that her hairs appear disheveled. When Padmaraagaa heard footsteps she immediately ties up her hairs and looked up. She saw her teacher standing there. "O mother! Please come." And she offered Vedavantee a seat.

Vedavantee: "My child! What are you reading?"

Padmaraagaa shows her the book "I was reading R̥igveda but I could not understand the import behind this mantra. Please explain this to me."

Vedavantee explains the meaning of the mantra and then shows her Hanumaan's portrait."

Vedavantee: "Take a look at this portrait of a very brave warrior."

Padmaraagaa: "Yes mother! He does seem very brave. Who is he?"

Vedavantee: "His name is Hanumaan."

Padmaraagaa: "Hanumaan!" with the portrait in her hands "Is he the one about whom father talks all the time? The one who participated alongside him in the battle against Varuṇa."

Vedavantee: "Yes! He is the one. Do you want to keep this portrait with you?"

Padmaraagaa: "Sure! I will keep it in my room along with other portraits of scholars and warriors."

Vedavantee smiling "Would you like to get married to him?"

Padmaraagaa with her head bent lower "O mother! I don't want to marry. Please don't bring up this topic again." And returned the portrait.

Vedavantee: "What! You would not ever marry! How is that possible? Would your parents allow it? Has anyone kept their daughter a spinster, that they would do it too? One day you will have to marry."

Vedavantee hugging Padmaraagaa "My child! Look at him. A husband like him is very hard to find. You are yourself very intelligent. Think again and then give your reply."

Padmaraagaa has her head bent down and is secretly looking at the portrait.

Vedavantee: “Padma! Please look at me and tell me what you want.”

Padmaraagaa didn't reply. She just smiled and bent her head down again. Vedavantee understood that Padmaraagaa is ready for this marriage. She kissed Padmaraagaa's forehead. Then Vedavantee came to meet Padmaraagaa's parents and congratulated them. Sugreeva was very happy and called a paṇḍit to fix the date of the marriage. Gajendra was dispatched to Ratnapur along with shaguna<sup>8</sup>. Chandragatee was bestowed with Moteemahal palace.

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<sup>8</sup> Ceremonial gifts confirming engagement

## 32

### Marriage

It is early morning and a cold breeze is blowing. A wedding procession (baraata<sup>9</sup>) is forming in Ratnapur. Numerous elephants and horses are lined up before the royal palace. All of the Vidyaadharas<sup>10</sup> and their sons are mounting the elephants. Children sitting on the elephants can't stop chatting. The warriors are mounting the horses. In the middle there is a palanquin being carried by bearers. Inside this palanquin our brave General Hanumaan is sitting with a crown on his head. The palanquin has been so beautifully decorated that it is very difficult to take eyes off it. The procession is huge. On top of that the attraction of the palanquin is making it difficult for everyone to move.

Next day by evening the procession reached Kishkindhaa. Anyone who saw the groom could not take his eyes off him. There are some ladies watching the procession with their eyes on the groom. Their children have fallen from their laps but these ladies don't seem to notice that.

When the procession reached the royal palace King Sugreeva along with his senators came forward to welcome them. The baraata is now diverted towards the Moteemahal palace. Everyone is offered seating. Hanumaan is given a specially crafted golden chair. Different kind of delicacies were offered to them.

At the time of the wedding, Hanumaan is led to the altar where he is given a special golden seat. Padmaraagaa's friends brought her to the altar as well and the knot was tied between the bride and the groom.

At this time the paṇḍits are chanting the mantras from the Vedas and explaining the duties of householder to both the bride and the groom. The ladies are singing God's praises. Now they are performing havan. The bride and the groom are circumambulating the holy fire. For the first 6 circumambulations the ladies are singing a song which is implying "Oh my father and brother! Why are you giving me away to this stranger." However, on the seventh circumambulation a different song was sung which meant "Oh my husband! Now I am all yours. My parents and other relatives have no say over my life anymore. My whole life now depends on you."

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<sup>9</sup> Groom's party

<sup>10</sup> scholars

After the wedding ceremony was over, Padmaraagaa's friends took her to her palace. Hanumaan came back to Moteemahal as well. For three days the baraata stayed at Kishkindhaa. Each and every guest was properly attended too. On fourth day, along with a lot of dowry and gifts, they bid adieu to the baraata.

Padmaraagaa was crying at the thought of leaving her parents home. Her friend Mohinee said to her "O friend! Why do you cry like this? All girls have to go through this. You are lucky that you have Añjanaa Deveen as your mother-in-law and a husband like Hanumaan. Once you experience their love you will forget everything."

Nirmalaa: O friend! This is Padmaraagaa's cleverness. Few days ago she was preaching to Balasundaree and now on her turn she is scaring everyone with her crying. She is such a show off. In her heart she is very happy with a lot of love for her groom Hanumaan."

Padmaraagaa: "O friend! Why are you teasing me? I am really scared to leave my parents's home."

In the meantime Sugreeva came to the palace and sees Padmaraagaa crying. He hugs her and says "My child! Why are you crying? I don't want to be away from you either, but I am bound by the customs of the society. Everyone has to marry their daughters, be it a king or a pauper. You are very intelligent yourself. May God always keep you happy!" And he helps her climb inside the palanquin.

The baraata left for Ratnapur, leaving everyone, standing there, teary eyed.



## 33

### **Congratulations! The bride is here**

The news of the arrival of the bride spread in the whole Ratnapur like wild fire. Everyone rich or poor, old or young, man or woman is coming towards the eastern gate of the city. The ladies of the royal court have gathered at Añjanaa Deveen's palace instead.

Ahaa! Añjanaa Deveen's palace is unique itself. There is a big gate. As we enter we see multiple corridors. Each corridor has a house attached to it. In some of the corridors we see some women. Some of them are cooking. Oh! These are the wives of the soldiers responsible for keeping guard on the palace. Between these corridors we see another gate which leads to a garden. The garden is very picturesque. In front of it is a bigger building which is Añjanaa Deveen's palace. There are beautiful gilded carvings everywhere. When we enter the palace, we pass through a small room and through a bigger room which leads into a big yard. There is a red carpet on which Añjanaa Deveen, Queen Kitumati and some other ladies are sitting. Some others are still coming. Some of them are singing.

A servant lady comes and announces "Congratulations! The bride is here." Hearing this Añjanaa Deveen's heart takes a big leap. She rushed towards the garden and sees the palanquin carrying Hanumaan and Padmaraagaa. Basantamaalaa is helping Padmaraagaa get off the palanquin. Añjanaa Deveen circumambulates a water pot around the bride's and the groom's heads and drinks from it. The sounds of congratulations are echoing from all directions.

While the ladies are welcoming the bride, our brave General has left the palace and it is time for us to leave as well.

Rest of the story at some other time...

**Thaakur Sukh Raam Daas Chauhaan**

**14<sup>th</sup> December 1900**