

The lion replied—Friend, better to part with life than to proceed to do a deed like this. The jackal, too, said the same thing, to which the lion replied that it could not be done. Then the tiger said—Let the master live on my flesh. The lion replied—This can never be proper. Now Chitravarṇa too, having got confidence, made a similar offer of himself. Just as he was saying that, the tiger ripped his side and killed him, after which he was eaten by them all. Hence I say—Surely the mind of the good &c. Then hearing the words of the third villain, the Bráhmaṇa, concluding that his own understanding was in error, threw down the goat, bathed and went home. Hence I say—He who from his own analogy considers a knave &c. The king asked—Meghavarṇa, how could you live so long among the enemies, and how could you win their favour? Meghavarṇa replied—Sire, what can one seeking to execute his master's business or having his own interest at heart not do? Behold:—

Do not people bear, O king, fuel on their heads for burning? The tide of a river, although washing the root of a tree, destroys it. Again it is said—

Having to achieve an object, a wise man should even bear his enemies on his shoulder, just as the frogs were destroyed by an old serpent (by doing so).

The king demanded how it was, and Meghavarṇa related as follows.

FABLE XI.

There was in Jirṇodyāna (an old garden) an old serpent, named Mandavisha. He, unable to look for his food even, on account of his extreme old age, stretched himself on the bank of a lake and so lay there. Then being seen by some frog from a distance he was asked—Why don't you go in quest of your food? The serpent replied—Go your way, friend. What have you to do by questioning me, an unlucky creature? Thereupon, his curiosity being roused, the frog insisted on his telling it. The serpent said—Friend, I, wicked that I was, bit, as ill-luck would have it, the son of Kaundinya, a learned Bráhmaṇa, residing in Brahmapura, who was about twenty years old and endowed with all the virtues. Then seeing his son, whose name was Suśīla, dead, Kaundinya swooned away and rolled on the ground. Now all his relatives residing in Brahmapura came there and sat down. For it is said—