**The Story of Åñyaçåìga**

The instructive story of Åñyaçåìga is found in the Rämäyaëa and Mahäbhärata. Åñyaçåìga was the son of a sage who was determined that his son be brought up as a spotless brahmacäré. Accordingly, from his very birth the child was brought up in a forest atmosphere far away from women or even talk of women. He was trained in meditation, scriptural study and brahminical rituals. Thus, on reaching youth, he had no idea of even the existence of the opposite sex.

Meanwhile, in the neighboring state, a severe drought ensued. The worried king called his court astrologers, who by their mystic insight were able to ascertain the only method by which good fortune could return to the land: the boy-sage Åñyaçåìga, a resident of the nearby jungle, must come to reside in the kingdom. The court astrologers also told how the boy could be brought: he must be enticed by beautiful women.

A few days later, when Åñyaçåìga was alone at his father’s äçrama, he was shocked out of meditation by the sound of laughter and giggling. Opening his eyes, he was amazed to behold a group of young boys playing with a gay frolic and abandon he had never known before. How charming these boys were! Åñyaçåìga’s mind became captivated by the beautiful features of their faces and bodies, their attractive smiles and glances, the tinkle of their voices, and their exulting mood of enjoyment. “Who are you?” he asked.

“We are muni-putras (i.e., sons of forest sages),” they replied—for indeed, these young girls from the city were dressed as brahmacärés. “Come play with us,” they invited. How could Åñyaçåìga refuse? In the course of play, his body touched the bodies of the girls, and again his senses were attracted. Next, the muni-putras shared their deliciously prepared food with Åñyaçåìga. The boy, who had been brought up on forest roots and fruits, was now completely captivated. But all too soon his new-found friends went away.

When Åñyaçåìga’s father returned, he immediately noticed his son’s disturbance of mind. Intuitively understanding that that which he had feared all his life had now come to pass, he demanded that his son relate all that had happened in his absence. On hearing the description of the muni-putras, he strictly forbade Åñyaçåìga to talk with or even look at those boys again, and under no circumstances to go anywhere with them.

But the damage was done. Åñyaçåìga could no longer concentrate on his meditation, for his mind was yearning after his friends. When his father went away again the next day, the muni-putras had little difficulty in enticing the boy-sage to come with them. A boat waiting on the nearby river took them swiftly to the city. Before his father could arrive to protest, the king married Åñyaçåìga to his daughter.

**Some of the morals of this story are:** 1) Association with women awakens and aggravates sexual desire; 2) even though one may be a brahmacäré, he should never consider himself beyond the fascinating power of a woman’s charms; 3) mere avoidance of women is not enough to overcome sexual desire; the negative process must be supplemented by the only positive process sufficient to conquer mäyä, namely Kåñëa consciousness; 4) sexual desire is very deep-rooted and strong.