

to embrace him out of affection he ran away like a fool. The lion knew that the asses were as a class good musicians and the lion himself a great lover of music was anxious to hear the ass sing. The poor ass believed the story and went to the lion along with the fox. When the ass reached the lion's den the lion was waiting for him and the ass in all simplicity bowed before the lion. The lion with one stroke killed the poor beast and leaving the carcass to the care of the fox went for his Sandhyāvandana. When the lion returned the fox had already eaten the heart of the ass. The King of the beasts not finding the heart in its place questioned the fox and the fox replied that the asses do not possess either a heart or neck :

When the monkey concluded his story by adding that never again would he be trapped like this, Śimsūmāra, the crocodile, went its way. Labdhanāśa is the act of losing what came into your possession once.

5) *Asamprekṣyakārita*. This is a tale which explains the danger behind doing things adventurously without properly studying the pros and cons of an issue.

Once upon a time there lived in Gauḍadeśa a brahmin named Devaśarmā. His wife Yajñasenā became pregnant. The father started saying that the son to be born would be a very fortunate boy. One day the wife of the brahmin told him thus :— "It is not good to build castles in the air. Once a brahmacārī walked home carrying the fried grain he got as his dakṣiṇā in a pot on his head. He started thinking thus—"I will sell this fried grain and with the money will buy a lamb. The lamb will grow and give birth to two kids. I will then sell the goat and the kids and buy a cow. The cow will give birth to calves in a short time. I will buy some land to raise paddy. After selling the paddy I will renovate my old house and then I will marry. She will deliver a beautiful son. I will name the child Somaśarmā. At times leaving the child alone my wife will go to milk the cow and then I will hit her like this." So saying the brahmacārī hit with his stick the mud pot on his head containing the fried grain. The pot broke and the whole thing inside fell on the road.

Devaśarmā on hearing the story of Yajñasenā became pensive. After five or six days Yajñasenā delivered a son. Days went by and one morning Yajñasenā went for her bath in the river nearby entrusting the child to the care of her husband. Some moments later a messenger came from the palace asking him to go over there. The brahmin was in a fix. There was nobody around to whose care he could leave the child. He had a mongoose. The brahmin asked the mongoose to look after the child and went to the palace. Some time later a big cobra came creeping towards the child. The mongoose jumped at it and killed it. The mongoose was smeared with blood after that. The brahmin returned hurriedly from the palace only to see the blood-smeared mongoose waiting at the doorstep. Thinking that the mongoose must have killed his son the brahmin thrashed the poor mongoose to death. But on entering the room the brahmin found out his mistake, for there near the child was the dead body of a deadly cobra. The brahmin regretted his foolish act of doing a deed before knowing things well, when Yajñasenā came back after her bath and was

greatly disturbed by the foolish deed of her husband. She said :—"Once there was in a place a very poor brahmin boy. He was an orphan with nobody to help him and he suffered from hunger daily. One night the boy had a dream. He was told that at midday next day three beggars would come to his place and if he slew them they would turn themselves into treasure jars and that the boy could become rich by using the wealth so received. Next day the brahmin boy was having his head shaved when as predicted in the dream three beggars entered his house. The brahmin boy ran away from the barber and taking a stick thrashed the three to death. All the three turned into treasure jars. The barber was astonished. The brahmin boy gave the barber a sovereign taken from the jar as his wages. The barber thought that beggars would turn themselves into treasure jars if they were thrashed to death. So he waited daily in his house for beggars to enter his house. One day after a long waiting three beggars entered his house and the barber with a hard stick which he had kept ready started thrashing the beggars. The beggars shrieked and shouted and ran away abusing the barber. Servants of the King came on hearing this and took the barber away and by the command of the King killed him nailing him on to a spike. Yajñasenā concluded by saying that even death would be the result if one does anything without properly understanding things.

PAÑCATĪRTHA. A holy place. There is a pond at this place. Once a nymph called Vargā with her four companions lived in this pond as crocodiles as a result of a curse. Arjuna came to that pond and rescued them from their curse. From that day onwards the pond came to be known as Pañcatīrtha or Saubhadrakatīrtha (For details see under Vargā and Saubhadrakatīrtha).

PAÑCAVAKTRĀ. A soldier who fought bravely against the asuras on the side of Subrahmaṇya.

PAÑCAVAṬĪ. The sacred place where Śrī Rāma built an āśrama and lived for some time with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa during their exile in the forests. There is a story about Pañcavaṭī in the Kamba Rāmāyaṇa.

Pañcavaṭī is on the southern bank of the Godāvarī. Five Vāṭavṛkṣas (banyan trees) stand here in a circle and therefore, the place got the name Pañcavaṭī. There is a legend about these banyan trees. Once five Gandharva youths encircled the sage Agastya in the forest as a sport and prevented him from moving towards any direction. The enraged sage cursed them to stand in the same position as banyan trees. Thus by obstructing the movements of a divine man they were forced to remain without movement as trees. Before they took the form of trees they begged the sage for deliverance from the curse. Agastya said, "One day Śrī Rāma with his wife and brother will come and stay in an āśrama built in your midst. Their holy presence will give you salvation from my curse."

Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa when they came to that forest decided to build an āśrama in the centre of the circle formed by the five banyan trees. Lakṣmaṇa started to build the hermitage. At first he cut down one of the trees standing tall and straight and to the surprise and astonishment of all the fallen trunk of the tree disappeared and there in its place lay the dead