

him with amorous movements of its body. The farmer knew from its voice that it was a donkey and so removed his disguise and stood before the donkey. The be-fooled donkey got angry and abused the farmer using very vulgar language. The farmer got angry and killed him with an arrow.

Cirañjivī continued:—Once upon a time a few birds joined together and decided to elect their leader. The owl was the bird selected to lead them. An aged crow condemned it. The crow said; "Are you making this ugly bird which is blind all day your leader? If only you make a worthy creature your leader you will be respected. I shall tell you a story to illustrate my point." He then narrated the following story:

Once upon a time there came a period of twelve continuous years without any rain at all on the earth. Wells, ponds, lakes and rivers were all empty. A huge herd of elephants walking in the forests represented to its leader the grave situation and the leader sent messengers to all sides to find out watering places with water. One of the messengers came back and reported that he had found out a beautiful lake full of water and that on its banks lived a number of hares. The elephants immediately went to that place and started enjoying swimming and bathing in the waters of the lake. Many rabbits on the bank of the lake died when trodden upon by the elephants. The aggrieved rabbits sat in a council to consider the steps to be taken to stop this deadly nuisance of the elephants. One of the hares, Vijaya by name, promised to handle the matter by himself. He knew it would be unwise to go anywhere near the elephants. So Vijaya climbed on to the top of a hill near the lake and when he saw the elephants coming to the lake as usual hailed them from the top of the hillock. When the elephants turned their heads to the place from where the sound came they saw a hare speaking to them. The hare bawled out thus: "We are all servants of Candra, the moon-god. This lake has been given to us by him. Candra Bhagavān has deputed me to verify a report which has reached him that some elephants are making the water of the lake muddy. He will surely be cross with you if you again enter the lake. So it is better for you to go away from this place." The elephants were frightened and they all left the place. Cirañjivī added that this happened to the elephants because of the lack of a wise and proper leader.

The aged Cirañjivī continued: "It is unwise to place confidence in small people. I had an experience. Near my abode on a tree there lived a bird called Kapiñjala. We became friends. One day Kapiñjala did not come home as usual. Taking advantage of it a rabbit came to Kapiñjala's abode and started living there. I did not like it and I told the rabbit about it. But the rabbit did not mind it. After four or five days Kapiñjala returned home and on finding a rabbit in his nest got angry and asked him to leave the place. The rabbit refused to go and an argument ensued. The rabbit said that lakes, rivers and trees were for all and did not belong to any particular individual. "He who is in possession of it is its owner," the rabbit argued. So they decided to take the case for arbitration and for that purpose approached a cat named Dadhikarna doing penance on the banks of the river Yamunā. I followed

them curious to know the decision of the ascetic cat. They did not see me. Both of them on approaching him started presenting their case before the cat. The cat pretended to be deaf and asked both of them to come nearer and talk into his ears. They moved nearer and the cat caught hold of them both and ate them. Those poor beings lost their lives by placing too much confidence in the aged cat. That is why I say that we should not select a small being like an owl as our leader.

On hearing the story of the crow the birds withdrew from their first decision of selecting an owl as their leader. The owl was offended and felt insulted and roared that his community would one day wreak vengeance on the crows. A wound made by an arrow would heal in due course and a tree would grow even if its branches are cut but any wound on the pride of an individual is never healed.

Cirañjivī continued:—"This is how the crows and owls became enemies. We have to fight the owls. It is impossible to serve mean people. I shall tell you a story of what would happen if one believes in mean people:—Once a brahmin decided to perform a Yāga to increase the prosperity of the land.

He wanted a goat for the same and some wicked young people knew that he was going to buy one. They worked out a plan to deceive the poor brahmin. They sat hiding at different places on the way the brahmin was returning with the goat. As he came near the first of the wicked young men accosted the brahmin and asked him where he was taking the dog. The brahmin was surprised that the young man mistook his goat for dog and went his way. When he walked some distance more the second of the group came to him and put the same question. This time the brahmin was a bit perplexed that two people should have put the same question which he thought was absurd. When a third man put this question again he became worried and when this same question was repeated two more times the brahmin got mad and left the goat on the road and went his way. The wicked youngsters took the goat cooked it and ate it.

After narrating several such stories and maxims Cirañjivī said he would lead the owls into a trap and come back. Cirañjivī then went to the owls and their friends on the top of Rṣyaśṛṅga.

Cirañjivī shaved his head and smearing the blood of the dead crows on his body went and sat alone on a branch of their former abode, the banyan tree. When night came the owls came and surrounded the tree. Cirañjivī made some pitiable groans and the owls took him before their king. The king questioned Cirañjivī and he said thus:—

"I am Cirañjivī the minister of Meghavarṇa. Once I praised your greatness before my king and he shaved my head and dismissed me from his service." The king of the owls asked his ministers what should be done with Cirañjivī. The minister of the king of owls, Baka, immediately jumped from his seat and said: "Once a fox went to steal the cow of a brahmin. On his way he met a Brahmarākṣasa and they became friends. The Brahmarākṣasa was going to kill and eat the brahmin. Both exchanged their ideas and when they reached the gate of the house of the brahmin the fox said he