



GAINING FRIENDS

Cosmos Ebooks

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The second part of the book also deals with the topic of friendship but in a different context. It glorifies the greatness of true friendship by illustrating through several stories how worldly wise and intelligent persons achieve success even lacking material resources. It makes the point that a person, who gains true friends and never lets them down, will always be successful overcoming all difficulties in life. The main story begins with a crow and a mouse. The crow is led to the mouse by a flock of pigeons in distress and wins his friendship through sheer perseverance. Other nested sub-stories follow.

A Crow, a Flock of Pigeons, and a Mouse

There was a town named Mahilaropya in the south. Just outside the town there was a huge banyan tree. Hundreds of birds made it their home and fed on its fruits and innumerable insects lived in the hollows in its trunk and branches. It provided cool shade for many animals and also travelers. Monkeys frolicked and jumped from branch to branch. Every part of this tree was useful to some or other creature as if its very purpose of existence was to serve all.

A crow named Laghupatnak also lived there. One day he was going towards the town in search of food when he saw a hideous man carrying a snare net for birds and a club; he looked the very incarnation of death. Laghupatnak was scared thinking that the man was out to hunt and going towards his tree to snare and kill birds. He returned to the tree and told all the birds that the man was going to spread rice all over under the net to entice them. He cautioned them to consider the rice as pure poison and not get fooled. The man did come to the tree and did exactly that. They all heeded his advice and did not even look at the rice.

While the hunter was waiting at a distance a flock of pigeons guided by their king named Chitragreeva came that way in search of food. As they were approaching the tree Laghupatnak warned them also, but seeing food in easy grasp they ignored his advice. They alighted to feed on the rice but were immediately snared in the net. The hunter well satisfied with the catch took his club and started walking slowly towards the trapped birds.

Meanwhile Chitragreeva, the king was feverishly thinking of how to get out of the mess they were in; he told all his subjects not to panic. If they all flew synchronized they could fly away with the net and try to alight in some safe place. They did so and the hunter looked wonder-struck at the flying birds and the net. He ran after them for some distance but gave up in disgust. Not only his plan had failed, but he had also lost the net that was a source of livelihood for his family.

Laghupatnak was also watching and just out of curiosity he followed the birds to see what happened next. When Chitragreeva saw the hunter giving up the chase he told his subjects that a fast friend of his – a mouse named Hiranyak lived east of the town. They would fly to his underground nest and he would bite the net and free them all. They adjusted their course and soon alighted at the Hiranyak's abode. Getting to the entrance to his underground fort Chitragreeva called him loudly to please come and help his friend in distress. From the inner safety of his fort Hiranyak called out to him to identify himself unambiguously and tell what kind of calamity he was facing. Chitragreeva told him that he was his fast friend and he with all his subjects was ensnared in a net. They

wanted him to come out and free them. Knowing that it was the friend Hiranyak came out of the hole, was himself distressed to see him and his family in the net, and hurried to bite the net to free him.

But Chitragreeva asked him to free his subjects first. Hiranyak objected that the subjects come after the king and it was not right to free them first. But Chitragreeva said that they were all supposed to be under his protection; he had led them to this disastrous situation and it was his duty to look after their safety first. Besides if Hiranyak by any chance hurt his teeth cutting his side of the net first, they would be helpless. The mouse admired the friend's great concern for his family and hurried to free them all. He asked his friend to go home with his family and not to hesitate to come for help whenever in need. Saying that he entered into the safety of his fort and the pigeons flew back to their place.

Laghupatnak, the crow was watching them from afar. He started thinking of Hiranyak's intelligence, of the construction of the underground fort, and of his deep sense of friendship. In spite of his reluctance to trust anyone and his restless nature he decided to make the mouse his friend. He alighted from the tree and going to the entrance of the underground fort he called out imitating Chitragreeva's voice. Hearing him Hiranyak thought that perhaps some pigeon was still not free and his friend has come back. He came to the entrance and still from inside he asked for identification. The crow said:

"I am a crow named Laghupatnak."

Hiranyak: "Get out of here right away."

"I have come to you for an important purpose, why don't you come and meet me?"

"I don't want to meet you for any purpose. Go away."

"I have seen you cutting Chitragreeva's bondage and developed a great urge for friendship with you so that you can help me in distress."

"We are natural enemies; you are the hunter and I am the hunted, so the friendship between us is impossible. Just go away"

"I am sitting at the entrance of your fort. I will go on hunger strike and remain here until death if you don't become my friend."

"How can I be friend with an enemy? Our natures are contradictory; intrinsic nature does not change, even hot water extinguishes fire."

"I have never seen you, so how can I be your enemy? It is not fair for you to call me one."

"There are two kinds of enmity – natural and causative; you are my natural enemy. The latter can change but the former ends only in death."

"That is not universally true. Listen to me. Friendship comes from helping each other, enmity from hurting. Therefore in this world one should make only friends not enemies.

Also gentlemen become friends just on seeing each other, no cause needed for their friendship and it always grows never decreases. I am like a gentleman and swear to you that you have nothing to fear from me.”

“I don’t believe your swearing and oath. It is well known ruse for gaining confidence and then betraying; there are classic examples of this.”

Laghupatnak could not find any argument against this. But he was now more impressed by Hiranyak’s knowledge of classics and scriptures and his desire to gain him as a friend became stronger. He finally said:

“It is also said that learned persons become friends just by exchanging seven sentences or by taking seven steps together. I have had much longer discussion with you and, therefore, you have already become my friend; so you listen to me. If you don’t trust me, just stay in your fort and we can have discussions and you teach me.”

Hiranyak now started thinking that the crow did seem to be learned and truthful, so it may be proper to make him friend. He then said:

“Fine, but don’t ever try to enter my place.”

The crow said it was fine with him and thereafter the two became fast friends and talked almost daily. The crow used to bring pieces of meat and even pious offerings from temples; the mouse gave him rice and other grains. It is well said that giving, taking, telling and asking secret thoughts, eating, and feeding are six signs of great friendship. Their friendship grew to the extent that at times the mouse used to sit under the wings of the crow while discussing and sharing knowledge.

One day the crow came with tears in his eyes and said to the mouse in a shaking voice: “I have developed an aversion to this land and cannot stay here any longer. I will go somewhere else.”

The mouse asked the reason for his aversion and he said:

“Famine has grasped this region because of lack of rain for a long time. It is hard to find grain even at the temples. People are now turning to meat and catching birds for food. I was also caught but somehow escaped. I do not wish to witness this carnage and want to go away.”

“Well, where are you going?”

“There is a large pond in the middle of a forest far to the south. Another fast friend of mine – a tortoise named Mantharak lives there. He will feed me on fish and I will spend time conversing with him just as we do here.”

“In that case I will also go with you. I am also filled with gloom in this place and will die.”

“What is the reason for your gloom?”

“It is a long story, I will tell you later when we get away from here.”

“But I travel in the sky, how can you go with me?”

“If you want to save me, carry me on your back; there is no other way of my getting there.”

“I am fortunate enough to do that, since I know eight different modes of flying and take to one or the other as needed”

The mouse wanted to know what those modes were and the crow explained. The mouse then got on to the crow’s back and they started on the long journey. As they were approaching the pond Mantharak the tortoise saw and thinking that it was some extra ordinary crow to be avoided, he quickly entered the water. Meanwhile Laghupatnak put Hiranyak in the hollow of a tree trunk and sitting on a branch nearest to the pond called out to Mantharak:

“Hey Mantharak, this is your friend Laghupatnak; have not seen you for a long time, come quick I am anxious to embrace you.”

Recognizing the friend’s voice Mantharak quickly came out of water and the two friends were so happy to see each other that the crow almost forgot about the mouse. But seeing them embracing Hiranyak scampered to the pond and sat beside Laghupatnak. Seeing the mouse Mantharak asked who it was. Laghupatnask said:

“This is my fast friend Hiranyak as dear to me as life. His qualities are beyond description. He has also come here because of his aversion to this worldly life.”

Mantharak asked: “What is the reason for his aversion?”

Laghupatnak: “I had asked him but he had said it was a long story and would tell me after getting here.”

Then turning to Hiranyak he asked him to tell the reason and Hiranyak narrated his story.

Hiranyak and the Hermit

There is a town named Mahilaropya in the south. Close to it there is a Shiva temple where a hermit named Tamrachud used to live. He lived on alms collected from the devotees who gave him different types of food, often more than he could eat. He stored the excess in a pot and at night used to hang it from a hook in the ceiling of his room before sleeping. The next day he used to give it to the workers who used to clean the temple compound. I along with my folks also lived near the temple and had to roam around to forage for food. We knew about his habit of keeping the excess food and yet it was beyond reach. One day my folks came to me and said:

“You are the head of our tribe and we know that nothing is beyond reach for you. If you can get the delicacies from the hanging pot, we do not have to roam around in search of food. Please make our lives easier.”

Reluctantly I agreed and at night we all went to his room. While he was sleeping I jumped to the hanging pot and got the food for all. Then onwards it became a routine. Every night we used to go there, I got the food from the pot, and after everyone had his fill I went home. The hermit tried hanging the pot higher and higher but I always managed to jump to it. In sheer frustration he brought a bamboo stick with soft brush at the end and even while sleeping he used to strike the pot with it to ward me off. Thus he kept awake most of the night. It made my job more difficult but I always found a quiet moment to get to the pot.

One day another hermit came to the temple in course of his wandering. Tamrachud welcomed him as an honored guest. After dinner they spread their beds on the floor and talked about scriptures discussing the philosophy therein. But Tamrachud was preoccupied with his concern for the pot and kept hitting it while the other was talking. He was just adding monosyllables all the time thinking about the pot and me. This annoyed the other hermit who ultimately got angry and said:

“Tamrachud, you are not interested at all in what I am saying and have no respect for me. When the host is not respectful one should never stay with him. Having this temple place to yourself you have become arrogant and have no regard for friends. This is unbecoming for a hermit and you are earning your passage to hell. I will leave right now and go to the other monastery.”

Tamrachud became terrified and said:

“Respected sir, do not be angry. The reason for my indifference is something else. An evil mouse jumps to my pot and takes away all the food. I keep hitting the pot just to ward him off. So I am not able to offer food to the workers and the place does not get cleaned. I am constantly worried about it; no matter how high I keep the pot, he manages to get to it.”

The other hermit asked:

“Do you know where his hole in the ground is?”

“I do not know for sure.”

“It seems that there is a treasure cove under his hole. It is the power of that treasure that gives him this uncanny ability to jump. Wealth can give great strength. Do you know from where he comes and goes to?”

“Yes I know, because he does not come alone but with his numerous family members.”

“Do you have any digging implement?”

“I have this shovel.”

“Good. Early morning we will follow their footprints in the dust and get to their abode.”

I was nearby listening to their conversation stealthily and got scared because he would certainly find our fort just as he had guessed correctly about the treasure. So along with my followers I took a different path to get back to the fort to defeat his plan. But this path was unfamiliar and we encountered a large cat. Seeing our large group it pounced on us. Many died and those escaping blamed me for leading them on a wrong path. They turned back and took the usual path to the fort, while I went another way and watched from afar. The two hermits came as they had planned and started digging. Most of my followers managed to escape through another hole. Finally the hermit found the treasure over which I used to live. The guest said:

“Friend, now you can sleep undisturbed as we have taken away the source that gave the mouse its uncanny ability to jump.”

They took the treasure, put it in a bag, and Tamrachud put it under his pillow every night.

I approached what was our fort and could not bear the sight. I found those of the family that had escaped death and did not know how to console them. I spent the day thinking about what to do now, where to go, and how to provide for the family. After sunset we went to the temple more by way of habit than anything else. When the hermits were asleep I again tried to jump to the pot but fell to the ground without reaching even half way to it. I was disgusted with myself and returned to my ruined home. In the morning I heard my family members talking about me. I could no longer provide them food and staying with me would only bring calamities. They deserted me and joined the camp of my enemy. With my treasure gone and my strength along with it I felt a rush of anger toward the hermit and made a rash decision. I would crawl under his pillow at night and steal the treasure bag. Even if it meant losing my life, it would be better than living in misery.

Having made up my mind I went to his room at midnight and stealthily got under his pillow. But as soon as I started dragging the bag he woke up and hit me on the head with the bamboo stick. I was destined to live longer, so I did not die and somehow got out of the place. I also learnt a great lesson. I will have only what I am destined to; what is not in my destiny will never stay with me. So I do not grieve for what is lost because whatever is not mine will not stay with me and what is really mine can never be someone else's.

The Merchant's Son

In a certain city there lived a merchant named Sagardatta. He had a son who liked to read books. One day he saw a book on sale for a hundred rupees. There was one verse in the book that impressed him and he immediately bought it. The opening line of the verse was:

“A man eventually gets what is due to him. Nothing can stop that.”

When he came home the merchant asked him how much he paid for the book. On hearing the price and especially the reason for buying he went into a fit of rage.

“You idiot, you have no respect for money; if you spend so much money just for one verse. How can you ever earn any money? You will never be a successful merchant with this kind of attitude. Get out of this house and never come back.”

Thus insulted and deserted the son left the city with a sad heart and went to a far away kingdom. He still had the book and the verse was always on his mind. As he was wandering in the unfamiliar city someone asked him his name. Absent minded he just repeated the first line of the verse – One gets what is due.

When others asked his name he repeated the same phrase. Thus in this place he came to be known as ‘Mr. Due’.

The king had an exceedingly beautiful daughter named Chandravati. One day the princess along with her friend was going around the city garden in her carriage. A handsome prince was also taking a stroll in the garden. At the very first sight she was smitten with love and asked the friend to arrange a meeting with the young man at night. The friend approached the prince and told him that the princess was so obsessed with him that she had sent her to invite him to the palace; if he did not come to her at night she would kill herself. As he did not want to have her death on his conscience he asked her how he could get to the palace without being apprehended. She said that they would let a strong rope hang from the window and he could climb to the room. Having arranged the meeting the friend went back to the princess.

When the night came the prince started deliberating if it would be proper for him to meet the princess so stealthily. He would be committing a grave sin; besides this kind of behavior was contrary to his upbringing and would bring disgrace to the family. He thought about it dispassionately and finally decided not to go.

Mean while Mr. Due was also taking a walk in the vicinity of the palace. He saw this rope hanging from one of the windows. He was overcome with curiosity and climbed up and saw the princess in the room who was eagerly waiting. Thinking that it was the prince she gave him a princely welcome and said:

“You won my heart at the very first sight and I am yours for ever.”

She shared the bed with him and was enchanted with his company. But Mr. Due did not say a word during that endearing relationship. She asked:

“You are the only one for me, no one else will ever touch me again. Still you have not spoken to me. I do not even know your name, please talk to me.”

He was still thinking of the verse in the book and repeated the first line. Then she realized her mistake and immediately asked him to go down the way he had come.

He calmly went out and looked around for a place to sleep. Soon he found an old temple with couple of outlying rooms. He went into one and made a makeshift bed for himself. But the constable of that area had made a previous arrangement to meet with his girl friend in that room. He was surprised to find him instead and to hide his embarrassment he asked his name. Mr. Due again now being used to the question repeated his favorite verse. The constable was perplexed but asked him to go and sleep in the other room. Ironically the girl friend had made a bed for her rendezvous in that room and was anxiously waiting for her lover. She bitterly complained to him for making her wait so long but Due kept quiet. Then she asked him why he was not talking to her. He was sleepy and blurted out the verse again. The girl realized he was someone else and turned him out.

It was still not late and Mr. Due walked around town. He saw a marriage party with the band playing and leading the groom toward the bride’s house. Suddenly an out-of-control and errant elephant attacked the party and every one fled. It approached the dais and the bride began trembling with fear. Due showed his metal and called out to the girl:

“Do not be afraid, I will save you.”

Then he took her away from the elephant’s path who went ahead smashing the dais with decorations. The girl clung to him with fear. With the elephant gone the groom and party finally came. The girl was still clinging to Due. Seeing his bride in someone else’s arms the groom asked her father what was going on. The father was also badly shaken but asked the daughter to explain. She said:

“The young man has saved me and now my life belongs to him; I cannot marry anyone else.”

They all argued back and forth for the rest of the night. Hearing about the commotion the princess as well as the constable’s girl friend came there, and eventually the king himself. The king then asked Due to tell the truth offering him immunity, but he again repeated his favorite line of the verse. Hearing that the princess as well as the constable girl recognized him and both told the king what had happened. Due also told all about himself and how he believed the dictum of the verse. Since he had spent time in bed

only with the princess the king also realized that no one can stop the destiny. He made Due his son-in-law and made him his heir.

Somlik, the Weaver

There lived a weaver named Somlik in a certain kingdom. He made colorful and fancy garments for high society people that were worthy of princes. Although he was very good at his work he was only able to earn just sufficient to take care of the basic necessities of life. At the same time other weavers who made only coarse cloth and garment for ordinary people were much better off. One day he said to his wife: "Just see how well-to-do these ordinary weavers are while I am slogging in poverty. This place is no good for me, so I will go to some other town for making money."

She said:

"This is all ordained by fate. You get only what you are destined to. It is all tied to karma from previous lives. What is not to be, will never be yours. Even if you get it, you would never be able to use it or keep it. The person and his karma are tied to each other just like light and shadow."

He countered by saying:

"Just as you cannot clap with one hand destiny cannot bring results unless one works for them. Even the food placed in front cannot get to your stomach unless the hand moves. One has to try; if he is not successful, he should try to figure out what went wrong and try all over again. Therefore I will go somewhere else and try."

Next day he proceeded to a larger town named Vardhamanpur. He stayed there three years and earned three hundred gold coins enough to make him rich for the rest of his life. He started back home. Half way home he was passing through a dense forest when the sun set and it became dark. For the fear of wild animals he climbed a large tree and made himself comfortable to spend the night. Around midnight he had a dream. Two strange looking men were talking to each other. One asked the other:

"O Karman (god in charge of rewarding work) you know that this weaver's destiny does not permit him money beyond that required for sustenance. So why did you give him three hundred gold coins?"

(Fate, I have to reward hard work and cannot do otherwise. It is for you to decide whether he can use it or not. If you want you can take it away.)"

Somlik suddenly woke up and looked for his bag. It was indeed empty. He had worked so hard to earn that money and now it was gone – vanished just like that. How could he face his wife or friends? So he decided to return to the same city to earn again. In a short time he earned five hundred and was again on journey back home. He came upon the same old tree but this time he decided not to sleep at all. Still he dozed off for a while and again he saw the same two men. Like before one asked the other:

"Why did you do this again – give him five hundred? He is not supposed to have anything beyond food and clothes."

The other gave the same reply:

“I am bound to reward hard work. It is for you to let him have it or not.”

The weaver woke up as if jolted and again looked for the gold coins. The bag was empty. Now he was in utter despair. What good was life if he could not get his due even after hard work? He could not bear to live penniless and decided to end it by hanging himself from the tree. As he was preparing to do that he heard the voice again:

“Do not be rash Somlik. I am the one who has taken away your money because it is not in your destiny to be rich and have more than needed for subsistence. SO go home and live as you were. Yet I am very pleased with your courage and will not let your encounter with me go for naught. So ask me anything and I will grant your wish.”

“If so give me lots of money” said Somlik.

“What will you do with money that you cannot use since your destiny does not allow anything more than food and clothes?”

“Even so I want to be rich. When one is rich others honor and serve him despite his being miserly and even of low caste. I will just keep the money for the rest of my life hoping for the best.”

“All right if that is what you want you go back to Vardhamanpur . You will find two sons of a merchant – one named Guptadhan (who is a miser and does not use his money) the other named Upabhuktadhan (who spends money freely for goodwill). You find their real nature and decide which one you want to be like. If you want to be like the former, I will make you rich like him. On the other hand if you want to be like the other and spend money for goodwill, I will make you rich like Upabhuktadhan. “

Having said that the invisible man disappeared leaving Somlik perplexed , still he started back to the town. He arrived there after sunset and was very tired. After making a few enquiries he found Guptadhan’s house but was not welcome. Both the husband and wife tried to push him out but he was already inside the door and just sat there. At dinner time they Guptadhan gave him some food and he slept on the floor. At about midnight he had the same dream of the two men talking. As usual the first complained:

“You made Guptadhan spend more money in feeding the man. How are you going to make it up because he is not destined to spend his money for others?”

“Well, it is for you to figure out. My duty is only to see that a deserving person does not go hungry.”

Guptadhan woke up in the morning with a bad case of dysentery. He could not eat anything that day and that compensated his extra spending on the previous night.

Somlik left the house early morning and went to the house of Upabhuktadhan who welcomed him as an honored guest. They gave him nice meals and a comfortable bed

to sleep at night. He was sleeping soundly but at midnight had the same dream. The first one was again complaining:

"You have made Upabhuktadhan spend too much money in feeding the man. He had to order extra things from outside. He has no money left. How will he manage his usual spending?"

"I let him do things according to his nature. How he will manage later on is for you to figure out."

Next morning two attendants from the King's palace came and gave Upbhuktadhan a large sum. They said that the King had rewarded him for all the good deed that he was doing for people in the kingdom.

Now that he had seen the nature of both sons as suggested by the destiny god and was convinced that it was better to spend money well than hoard it like a miser. He invoked the destiny god and asked him to be made like Upabhuktadhan. Money should be put to use for the benefit of self as well as others. It serves no useful purpose sitting in a collection box. Keeping it unused is like not having any.

At this point the story goes back to the conversation between the three friends – Hiranyak the mouse, Laghupatnak the crow, and Mantharak the tortoise.

Mantharak said:

"So my friend Hiranyak, do not grieve for the money you lost or the fact that you had to leave your native place. Those running after money can never be happy. The real happiness comes from contentment. In this world there is no treasure like charity, no jewelry like noble conduct, and no wealth like contentment.

The crow then added:

"Yes friend, you should always keep these words in mind even though they may be unpleasant. A true friend is one who gives proper advice even if it is not pleasing."

While the three friends were talking a deer named Chitrang running away from hunters entered the pond. They also sensed a danger. The crow flew into a tree, the mouse hid into a nearby bush, and the tortoise went into the pond. The crow looked around and watching the deer still scared and panting he called out to the tortoise:

"Come out friends, the deer has perhaps entered the pond because of being thirsty. There is nothing to fear."

Mantharak said:

"From what I see this deer is not thirsty. The way he is huffing and puffing it seems that he is scared of hunters. So go a little higher and see if anyone is coming."

The deer heard this and said to Mantharak:

"I am Chitrang. You have correctly guessed the cause of my fear. I have escaped the onslaught of the hunters who have probably killed all others in my herd. Please tell me of some place that is safe from the hunters." "Chitrang, there are two strategies for thwarting a belligerent enemy - to use your weapon effectively or to run away as fast as possible. Therefore run into the thick forest before the enemy gets here."

As he was talking the crow came back and reported that he saw the hunter going home with a big load of kill. So he told Chitrang to have no fear and come out of the water. Thus another friend got added to the group and they started their usual life of getting together regularly for discussion.

One day Chitrang did not turn up for discussion and the other three started worrying about his absence. Could something bad have happened to him? People get apprehensive about the welfare of near and dear ones even in normal conditions; their friend went into the thick forest with dangers lurking all the time. Mantharak addressed Laghupatnak:

"Myself and Hiranyak can walk only slowly and cannot do much to find him. Please go and search for him and see if he is alive."

The crow set off immediately and before long he spotted Chitrang caught in a hunter's net at the river bank. Anguished with the friend's condition he asked how he got trapped. Seeing the friend the deer's grief grew further. One's grief and misery increase at the sight of near and dear ones. Checking tears he said: "I am near death, it is good that I could see you before dying. This is a great consolation to me. If out of affection I have said anything unpleasant during our discussions, please forgive me."

"Friend, great souls do not lose patience in the face of a calamity. I will bring Hiranyak right away to set you free."

Saying that he went back to the two friends and told them about the danger Chitrang was in. Mantharak got on his back and he immediately flew to the spot where Chitrang was. Seeing them back the deer saw the ray of hope and thought: "One should cultivate good friends for escaping a calamity. Without good friends it is impossible to survive."

Hiranyak also asked him how he got into this predicament in spite of being well versed in life strategies. Chitrang reminded him that this was not the time for questions and answers but to free him before the hunter comes. But to answer the question in a few words - destiny paralyzes intelligence and knowledge. While the two were talking, Mantharak also slowly made his way toward the location. Laghupatnak saw him coming and said to Hiranyak:

"This is not good."

"Why? Is the hunter coming?"

"Forget the hunter it is Mantharak. He has acted against commonsense in spite of his being well versed in scriptures. We will all perish because of him. If the hunter comes I

will fly away, you will enter some underground shelter, and Chitrang also will run away. But what would this pond dweller do on ground? I am really scared thinking of him." Meanwhile Mantharak arrived. Hiranyak told him that he should not have come and asked him to turn back immediately. He replied that he could not contain himself as he was constantly thinking of a friend facing death. It is better to die than lose a great friend.

To make the situation worse the crow spotted the incoming hunter. Hiranyak quickly cut the net and freed Chitrang who quickly ran away. Laghupatnak flew into a tree and Hiranyak went underground. Having lost the deer the hunter became very sad but seeing Mantharak he consoled himself that even though the destiny robbed him of the deer at least he had the tortoise for meal. He tied and put him in a bag hanging by his bow and started for home. Seeing the fate of his friend Hiranyak started wailing: "Before I get out of one calamity another crops up. The destiny took away my wealth it did not matter; I lost my family, and had to leave the native place. But why did it snatch a friend who was my life support? There would be no friend like him."

While he was thus lamenting the crow and the deer came back also weeping. Then Hiranyak said:

"What use is weeping? Let us think of some way to save Mantharak while he is still near by. Just weeping will only aggravate the problem, it will not avert the calamity. That is the only wise thing to do."

The crow had a suggestion for the way out of this horrible situation.

"Let Chitrang go ahead of the hunter and lie down on some place near water in his way pretending to be dead. I will sit at his head and lightly touch him with my beak so that the hunter will be convinced that he is dead. He will put the bag containing Mantharak down on ground and run towards Chitrang. Hiranyak will then run to the bag and cut the grass rope tying the friend. Once freed, he will immediately get into water."

The other two friends applauded his ingenuity and proceeded to act according to that plan. The hunter saw the deer lying by a pond with the crow sitting by the head. He now thanked destiny thinking that the poor deer had lost vitality while tied and after reaching the forest he died of exhaustion. The tortoise was tied up in the bag and was not going anywhere. He put the bag on the ground and ran toward the deer. Hiranyak ran to the bag and freed Mantharak in no time, who quickly went into the pond. Before the hunter got near Chitrang got up and ran away; Laghupatnak was already in a tree. When the hunter, already ashamed of being cheated twice, returned he found the tortoise also gone. He started blaming the destiny.

"O god, you first robbed me of the deer that I had trapped. Then I got a tortoise but that also you made me lose. I am roaming this forest hungry and thirsty away from my

family. Whatever else you have not done you go ahead and do it now. I am prepared to bear it all". Thus weeping he went back home. After he was gone the four friends - crow, mouse, tortoise, and deer were happy thinking that they all had new life. They went back to their pond and lived happily carrying on their get together and pious discussions.
