

rākṣasa bade farewell to his disciple and departed leaving his body behind.

Vidyāsāgara then got down from the tree and performed the obsequies of his guru. Vidyāsāgara while he was learning used to note down the instructions of the guru on the leaves of the banyan tree. It had come to a huge bundle on completion. Taking the bundle along with him Vidyāsāgara left for his country. By the time he left the forest area the power of the mantra faded and Vidyāsāgara began to feel the pangs of hunger and thirst. By dusk he reached Kaliṅga and there he came to the door of a dancing girl named Mandākinī. The door was locked as the owner was away in a Śiva temple nearby. Exhausted by the journey, hungry and thirsty, Vidyāsāgara lay down on the doorstep and soon fell asleep with the leaf-bundle as a pillow. Mandākinī when she returned from the temple at about ten at night saw a brahmin sleeping on the doorstep, tired and exhausted. She soon asked her servants to get him inside and sent for a doctor. By the clever treatment of the doctor and the expert nursing of Mandākinī, Vidyāsāgara survived. When he was fit for travel he started to go but Mandākinī objected and requested him to marry her. Vidyāsāgara did not agree to it and she took him to the King and told him all that had happened. Finding Vidyāsāgara to be one with great erudition and good manners he decided that Vidyāsāgara should marry his daughter (a Kṣatriya), daughter of his minister (a brahmin), daughter of Kulapati (a vaiśya), and also Mandākinī (a Śūdra). There was an injunction in those days that a brahmin should marry a Śūdra only after having married from all the higher castes. The decision of the King surmounted this difficulty for Vidyāsāgara to marry the śūdra girl, Mandākinī. Marriages were all conducted in order. The King's daughter bore the name Kalāvati, the minister's Mālātī and Kulapati's Sumaṅgalī. Each delivered a son. The brahmin boy was named Vararuci, the Kṣatriya boy, Vikramāditya, the Vaiśya boy, Bhaṭṭi and the Śūdra boy, Bhartṛhari.

2) *Kingship*. When the King of Kaliṅga became old he gave the kingdom to Vidyāsāgara and when Vidyāsāgara died all his other sons made Bhartṛhari the King. Bhartṛhari gave his father on his death-bed a promise that he would see that no sons were born to him.<sup>1</sup> So though Bhartṛhari married three wives he was careful enough not to produce any children by them.

3) *Bhartṛhari becomes a sannyāsī*. Bhartṛhari was living happily with his wife when one day a yogī of divine disposition came to his house and giving him a ripe mango said: "If you eat this mango you will never become old. It is because you who are perfect in education and fortune should live long for the benefit of the people that I am giving you this." So saying he gave the mango and left the place. When the sannyāsī left him Bhartṛhari thought thus: "After some years my wife would become old and die. What is the use of my remaining alive after she is gone. So this mango should be given to her. Let her live long." He, therefore, gave the mango to his wife explaining to her the greatness of the fruit. That wife whom poor Bhartṛhari accepted to be very loving and chaste had a lover. He was none other than the horse-

groom of her husband and that prostitute thought thus: "Of what use is my life when my lover is dead. Let him live for ever". So thinking she sent for her lover and giving him the mango explained to him the greatness of the thing. But the horse-groom was well devoted to his wife and desiring that his wife should remain young always he gave it to her. The groom's wife was a servant-maid of the palace and it was at the time of her departure from the palace after her day's work that she was given the mango by the horse-groom and so she carried it home in her hand. Bhartṛhari who was returning from somewhere to the palace saw the woman carrying the mango and questioned her and knew how she got it. On coming to the palace he sent for the horse-groom and though at first the horse-groom tried to shield the queen, he was compelled to tell the truth in the end. The truth pained him much "Phew! It was this wretched and unfaithful woman whom I was believing to be very chaste and loving. Woman can never be believed. Look, she has fallen in love with an ugly-looking servant of mine and unless he was her lover she would not have given this mango to him. It is better that this matter is not pursued any further now. We will decide about the future course of action later". Thinking thus, he sent away the horse-groom and went to his bed-chamber and lay there immersed in thoughts. The horse-groom immediately informed the queen of everything that took place and the queen felt sorry that her secret had come to light. She knew that besides the punishment that her lover would get her name would also be blackened and so decided to kill her husband before the affair became public. At once she made an oṭṭaṭa (flat bread made of wheat or rice) with poison in it and bringing it to the bed-room told her husband thus with much pretended affection. "It will take some time for your lunch to be ready. Let not you lie with an empty stomach. Eat this now". So saying she placed the bread in the hands of Bhartṛhari and left the room.

Bhartṛhari suspected foul play and mused "This bread has been prepared by her with poison to kill me. It is better to give up living with her. There is no doubt about it. Of the four āśramas the fourth, Sannyāsa, is the best. It is pleasant and sorrowless. Therefore gradually that āśrama should be accepted". Thinking thus he came out from his room with the bread and placed it hidden somewhere in the lower end of the roof of the house remarking "Oṭṭappam Viṭṭeccuṭum" (The oṭṭaṭa will burn the house). Then taking an earthen bowl for begging he left the house unnoticed by any. The moment Bhartṛhari left the house the house caught fire and everything in it was burnt to ashes.

Bhartṛhari renouncing all and changing himself into the robes of a sannyāsī went about living by begging. After some time he decided that he would never beg but would eat only that which others gave him voluntarily. He had by that time reached a big temple<sup>2</sup> in south India where in one of the entrances to the temple, the east one, was sitting the famous sannyāsī Paṭṭanatt Pillayār. Bhartṛhari, therefore, went and sat at the western entrance with his bowl before him. Whatever food fell into the bowl was eaten by him. Sometimes for days together he went without food. But he never was sick or felt weak.

1. There is a belief that if a son is born to a Śūdra who was

2. This temple is believed to be the Chidambaram Temple.

himself born of a brahmin the brahmin father would go to hell.