

A merchant named Vardhamana loaded his ox-cart with wares of different sorts, and started on a trip to Cashmere. He was rich, but his friends were richer, and for that reason he was anxious to increase his wealth. Looking at the lowly, a man may become rich in his own estimation, but looking upwards all are poor. Water constantly falling, though but drop by drop, will fill the pitcher; accretion, though particle by particle, will make the ant hill; and after that method, knowledge, virtue and wealth may be acquired. In travelling through the great forest Sudurga, one of his oxen, Sanjivaka, fell down broken kneed, and could go no further. This made the merchant think that no matter how well laid a man's plans are, they can bear no fruit without the aid of Providence; and so long as a man does not lose heart he may succeed. Pondering over such thoughts, he went back, bought another ox, returned for his cart and proceeded on his journey, leaving the foundered ox to his fate. The injured ox did not perish, but grew strong, and in time roamed bellowing about the forest.

One day a lion, named Pingalica, who was lord of that forest, went down to the Jumna river to drink, but when he heard, to him, the strange sound of the bellowing ox, he turned tail and went back to his cover, wondering if his throne were in danger. This was witnessed by Damanaka and Karataka, two jackals, who had hereditary claims to be ministers at the lion's court, but who at that time were, for some reason, out of court favor. The two talked over what they had seen, as well as their grievances against the king, but Karataka thought that criticism of the lion's conduct was not their business; their business was to hunt up food, and if they went beyond their own sphere of duty, in the end they might share a like fate to that of the monkey, who lost his life by pulling out the wedge from the sawyer's plank. It might be all right, he said, for the chief minister to concern himself about his sovereign's doings; no one else had the right to do so, even from regard for the king, and if anyone were foolish enough to think he had, he would be liable to fare as the braying donkey did.

Damanaka asks to hear the story, and Karataka says: A laundryman in Varanasi, had gone to bed at night, and with his wife was soundly sleeping, when thieves broke in to steal his goods. In the courtyard of the house there stood a donkey tied up, and a dog lay near him. The ass said to the dog, friend this is your business,